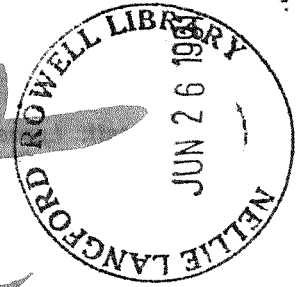


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The Womanist



Summer 1991

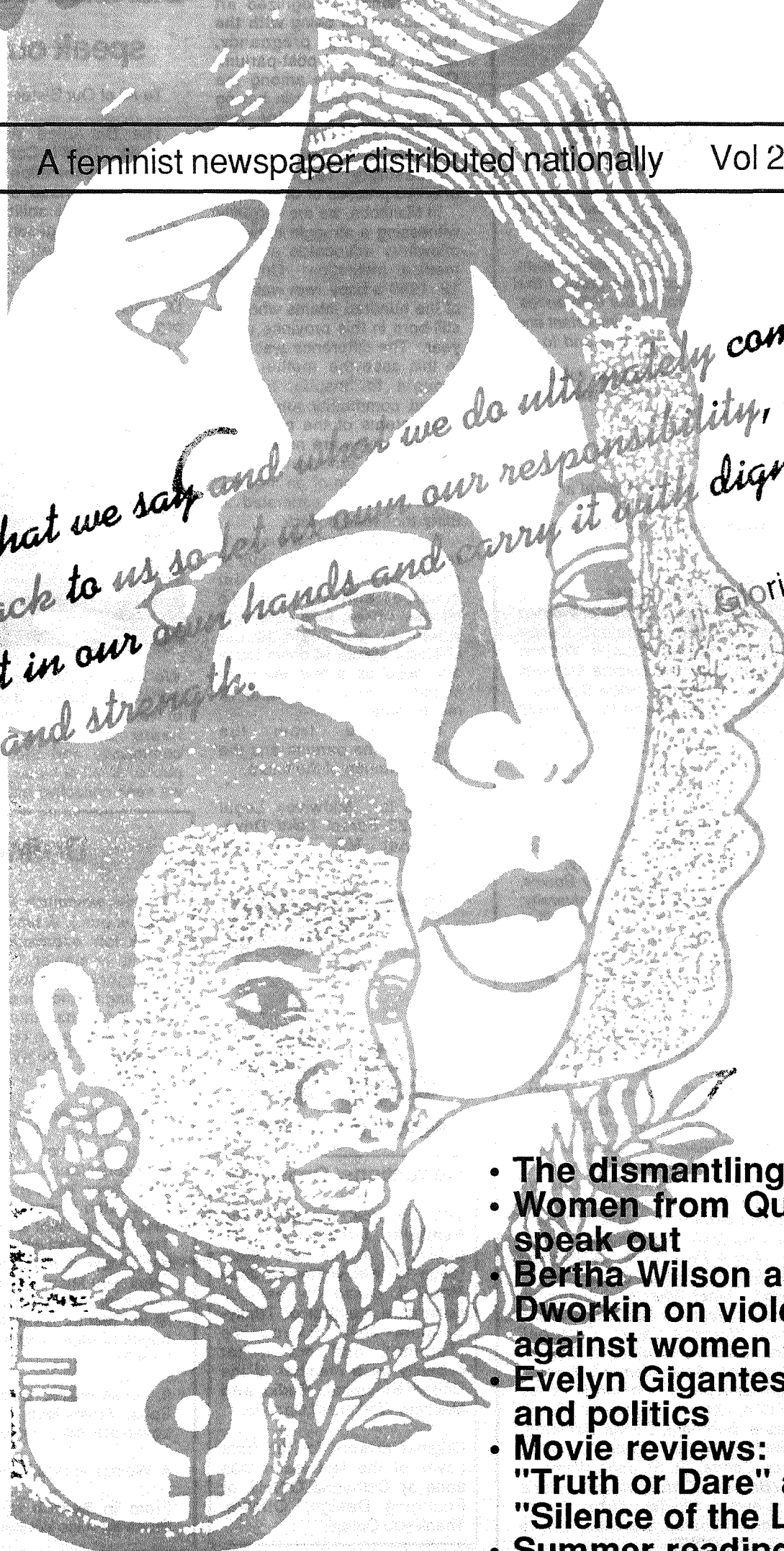
A feminist newspaper distributed nationally

Vol 2, #4

WOMEN!!!

*What we say and what we do ultimately comes
back to us so let us own our responsibility, place
it in our own hands and carry it with dignity
and strength.*

Gloria Anzaldua



- The dismantling of Canada
- Women from Québec speak out
- Bertha Wilson and Andrea Dworkin on violence against women
- Evelyn Gigantes on women and politics
- Movie reviews: Madonna's "Truth or Dare" and "Silence of the Lambs"
- Summer reading: 12 pages of book reviews

The Womanist

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The Womanist was created to empower and enable women. We want to get back to the basics, the common ground that built the women's movement, while celebrating our differences. What we can agree upon? That we as women are important and that we have a right to be heard, to be respected and to be trusted.

As a movement we have a responsibility to enable all voices to be heard, equally. That is the commitment of this newspaper - to empower with ideas, information and inspiration.

The Womanist appears 4 times a year.

Artwork: Thank you to Bernice Agino for the original artwork for "the Dismantling of Canada", "Regional Reports" and "Québec Sovereignty". The artwork used for the front cover is by Hope Osbourne.

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Womenspeak

Midwifery

Dear Friends:

Midwifery is the internationally-recognized art and science of being with the woman during pregnancy, labour, birth and post-partum. Canada is unique among the "developed" nations in having no legal provision for this woman-centered and respectful alternative to the increasingly technology-oriented practice of obstetrics.

In Manitoba, we are currently witnessing a struggle between midwifery advocates and the medical institution. On April 12, 1990 a baby twin was one of the hundred infants who are still-born in this province each year. The difference was that in this case the mother was brought to hospital by two skilled community midwives. The parents of the baby and their midwives are now facing the added emotional and financial burden of an inquest. Legal costs are estimated at thirty thousand dollars.

If you support women's reproductive rights, the right to choose whether or not to bear children and the right to choose where, how, and with whom to give birth to our children, please sit down today and send us a few words of support and/or a cheque or money order.

Thank-you from the midwives, the parents and the birthing women of the future.

Send to: Midwives Legal Fund, 23 Forest Lake Drive, Winnipeg, MB., R3T 4E8, Canada



Corrections/ Omissions

The "Finance" portion of the **Feminist Throne Speech** published in the last issue (page 15) was written by Joan MacNeil, based on research done as a member of Trinity-Spadina NDP Executive (Toronto), and not in her capacity as a member of the United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of Canada.

Original artwork for the front cover of the last issue was done by Catherine O'Neill, of Emerging Design, Ottawa. Thank you Cathy!

DisAbled women speak out

To All of Our Sisters:

The Dis-Abled Women's Network, (DAWN Canada) is a national organization directed by and comprised of women with varying disabilities from different backgrounds and regions, as well as non-disabled women who support our organizational principle. DAWN is a feminist organization advocating for and supporting women with disabilities in their struggle towards self-determination.



We seek to develop ways to permit the voices and concerns of women with disabilities to be heard by the women's community and the general public. In all of these concerns we seek collective solutions.



Herein, we wish to respond to the article "Exercising a Difficult Choice" written by the Canadian Abortion Rights Action League (CARAL), in the Winter 1991 issue of *The Womanist*. The purpose of this letter is to clarify some misconceptions, identify socially constructed myths, inform our sisters of some facts and reinforce the letter sent to CARAL by our chairperson P. Israel (to date, she has received no response to her letter).

In the above stated article, two diverse positions on the abortion question are amalgamated, one being the position of the anti-abortionists, and the other, the position taken by people with disabilities of "informed choice".

In the area of New Reproductive Technology, the Canadian movement of persons with disabilities is led by the dis-abled women's movement and we wish to emphasize that it is equivocally **pro-educated choice**. This means that informed

cont'd pg. 46

Definition of Womanist

1. From womanish (Opp. of "girlish", ie, frivolous, irresponsible, not serious.) A black feminist or feminist of colour. From the black folk expression of mothers to female children, "you acting womanish," ie, like a woman. Usually referring to outrageous, audacious, courageous or willful behaviour. Wanting to know more and in greater depth than is considered "good" for one. Interested in grown-up doings. Acting grown up. Being grown up. Interchangeable with another black folk expression: "You trying to be grown." Responsible. In charge. Serious.

2. Also: A woman who loves other women, sexually and/or nonsexually. Appreciates and prefers women's culture, women's emotional flexibility (values tears as natural counterbalance of laughter), and women's strength. Sometimes loves individual men, sexually and/or nonsexually. Committed to survival and wholeness of entire people, male and female. Not a separatist, except periodically, for health. Traditionally universalist, as in: "Mama, why are we brown, pink and yellow, and our cousins are white, beige and black?" Ans: "Well, you know the coloured race is just like a flower garden, with every colour flower represented." Traditionally capable, as in: "Mama, I'm walking to Canada and I'm taking you and a bunch of other slaves with me." Reply: "It wouldn't be the first time."

3. Loves music. Loves dance. Loves the moon. Loves the Spirit. Loves love and food and roundness. Loves struggle. Loves the folks. Loves herself. Regardless.

4. Womanist is to feminist as purple is to lavender.

From *In Search of Our Mother's Gardens*, Womanist Prose by Alice Walker.

The Women's Movement - Some Questions
pages 4 - 11

Lost vision

by Linda J. Archibald

As a child growing up the nineteen-fifties and sixties, I never doubted my good fortune in being a Canadian. In Canada, we never experienced hurricanes, earthquakes, mass starvation, tidal waves, wars, or race riots. We saw ourselves as living in a country which was good, tolerant, fair. I remember often using the rejoinder "It's a free country", and I truly believed it was my right to say and do as I wished; others might not like my words or deeds, but as long as I broke no laws and was not unkind, my rights were inviolable.

Jewish people fleeing Hitler to enter this country; of the fact that South African officials visited Canada to study our system of Indian reserves and use them as a model for establishing "home rule" for Blacks. These, and many other events in our country's history, were difficult to reconcile with my image of Canada as a tolerant nation which respects the freedom and dignity of all people. One of life's lessons, however, is that not everything is reconcilable; at least, in Canada we were able to work openly towards political and social change and sometimes, we saw progress. During this period of my life I clung to a belief in an evolutionary movement towards social justice but now this, like my

commonplace in Quebec. The increasingly popular western-based Reform Party is publicly opposing multiculturalism, and official bilingualism is under attack on a number of fronts. In this regard, it appears that we have regressed to an earlier time when racism was tolerated. Equally disturbing is the fact that, this year, Canada was actively involved in a war and no one seemed to mind very much. Yes, there were anti-war demonstrations, but here was not the public outcry that one would expect in a country which prides itself in being a keeper of the peace.

The Mulroney government frightens me because its vision of Canada is so alien, so contrary to what I think of as our "Canadianness", that it leaves me feeling unmotivated and powerless. As my childhood image of Canada matured, I was able to incorporate our national failings into my vision of what it means to be a Canadian because I believed we were collectively working towards the creation of a fairer, more tolerant, more open society. The prospect of the future is exciting when one has a vision of its possibilities; when that vision is lost, nothing matters very much. As individuals, in small groups, and collectively, we must find a way to overcome our alienation and begin to recreate a positive vision of the future. The alternative is to leave this work to the federal government and the prospect of our grandchildren singing "The Star Spangled Banner" in school each morning.

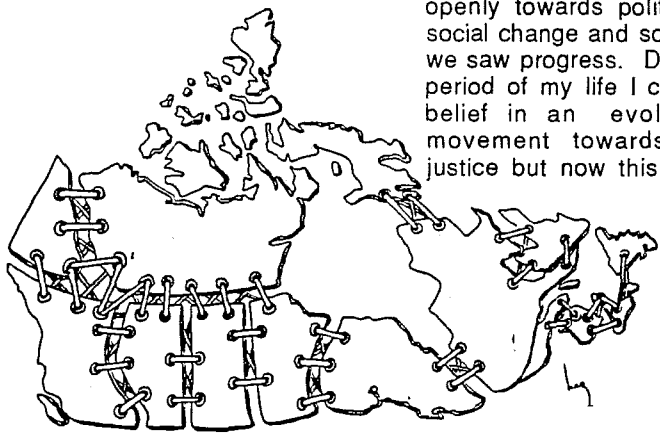
Linda Archibald is a Social Policy Consultant and Political Analyst specializing in Aboriginal, Women's and Northern issues.

Canadians believed our country to be far superior to those "behind the iron curtain" where free speech was forbidden by non-elected governments, but unlike the Americans we did not exhibit a crass nationalism. We valued our reputation as a peaceful country committed to peacekeeping throughout the world, and I grew up with a quiet, almost humble pride in my country.

Later, of course, I learned many things which challenged my childhood beliefs. I learned of our government's treatment of Japanese Canadians during World War II; of the government's refusal to allow

childhood image of Canada, appears to be naive and wishful thinking.

Today, like countless other Canadians, I am disillusioned with my country. During the period leading up to the demise of the Meech Lake Accord, I saw the federal government encourage French-English racism as part of its strategy to promote the deal as the only alternative to economic and political chaos. Last summer, when the Québec police and the Canadian Army declared unofficial war on Indian people living in Kahnawake and Kanesatake, street violence and open acts of racism against Aboriginal people were



We are in for a very, very long haul....I am asking for everything you have to give. We will never give up... You will lose your youth, your sleep, your patience, your sense of humor and occasionally, the understanding and support of people who love you very much. In return, I have nothing to offer you but your pride in being a woman, and all your dreams you've ever had for your daughters and nieces and granddaughters ... your future and the certain knowledge that at the end of your days you will be able to look back and say that once in your life you gave everything you had for justice.

Jill Ruckelshaus, 1977 speech
 from And Then She Said..., compiled by J.D. Zahniser

More on the Dismantling of Canada
pages 16-21

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In the movement



The women's movement, however you define it, continues to provoke thought and debate at *The Womanist*, both in our office and on our pages. As a result, we are planning to do a special section on the women's movement in our next issue, to address some questions percolating for us as women working for social change.

There is little doubt that the women's movement, including its very definition, is in constant flux. At the same time, there is a recognized body of knowledge that is the foundation of much of the work that organized women's groups undertake. That part of the women's movement which is institutionalized – established groups with funding, staff, and history – is the primary vehicle for this body of knowledge, and many of us support it, but sometimes without reflecting on whether we actually agree with it.

We hope that some of the articles in this current issue (by

A request from The Womanist

Andrea Dworkin, Salli Abbott, Bertha Wilson and others) will stimulate you to think about those questions, and ultimately prompt you to write for the next issue.

Some of the questions that we need to consider as a movement include:

- What do you think of when you hear "women's movement"? Does it include you?
- What are the goals of the women's movement now? Have they changed? Should they change?
- What is the role of women's organizations in achieving the goals of the women's movement? Is there a different place for the "institutionalized", established women's groups than for newer ones? for organizations representing certain groups of women?
- Are there any assumptions underlying the women's movement that need to change? Is it time to move on from some of the theories and positions that we have held for so long?
- How is a woman a victim? Are all women victims? As victims, is it possible to make personal and political change? How?

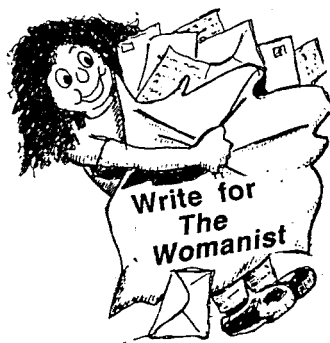
... And some more specific questions, perhaps, such as ...

- Do women have the right to

write fiction that is not based in their own cultural / ethnic context?

- Has the welfare state served women? Or has it just created another form of dependency?
- How well has the women's movement acknowledged the presence of lesbians and integrated their issues into the overall feminist agenda?

One of the cornerstones of feminist ideology has been the recognition of all women as victims of oppression, due to



the fact that all women are vulnerable to male violence.

But what is the definition of violence against women? When we talked about it in an earlier issue of *The Womanist*, we included racism, homophobia, and the economic violence experienced by a 32-year-old Toronto woman who grew up on welfare and a limited budget,

dying of a heart attack and leaving three children under six years of age.

Andrea Dworkin defines violence purely in relation to sexual and physical abuse. She seems to see all women as powerless victims because all women are equally vulnerable to sexual violence.

Yet this begs the question: What of the other forms of oppression? One of the greatest pressures placed on the women's movement in recent years has been the articulation and recognition of a myriad of oppressions.

Women's power varies according to a range of factors, including race, class, sexual orientation, ethnicity, language, etc. How do we reconcile the fact that all women are potential victims of male violence with the fact that we all have varying degrees of power in different ways and at different times in our lives?

None of us are completely victims, and none of us are completely powerful. There is a continuum between these two extremes, and each of us occupies a different point along that continuum, at different times in our lives. This constellation of issues, affecting each one of us differently and evolving over time, determines our relative power in any given situation and place.

One of the greatest challenges women face today

is to create new expectations of ourselves and other women. The question is: Can we do that as powerless victims? We believe not.

Women have the ability to choose the directions in their lives, although there are limitations imposed by poverty, male violence, and economic and social inequality. We begin from a position of love of women, hope for men and the imperative of our mutual salvation. And we believe we can effect personal and political change to erode the limitations placed on women.

At the recent mental health conference in Banff, "Women in a Violent Society", concerns were raised about racism and the lack of women of colour at the conference.

At *The Womanist*, we believe that inclusiveness is a foundation of an effective women's movement. We have been discussing the inclusion of women of colour, and many other women, for years. Collectively, we have the knowledge, skills, and resources to include a wide range of women. To continue to exclude them is no longer a matter of ignorance, but a choice.

Women can make change, personally and politically. Each of us must accept and use the power we have in order to empower all women.

The hidden sisterhood

by Ngaire Genge

Amid a general awakening of interest in Native women's issues, a smaller population, Newfoundland's Metis women, is finding it difficult to make themselves heard. The Metis of Newfoundland, who live mostly in the mainland area known as Labrador, are unlike any other Native group in Canada. Where "Metis" means Native-French heritage to most of the country, Newfoundland Metis may share their Native ancestry with Europeans of many nationalities, English, French, German, Dutch, Spanish, Basque and Portuguese to name but a few. To these women it often seems they are fighting for every disadvantaged minority and being acknowledged by none.

The old adage that token hirings should see every female Indian with one eye gainfully employed within the next five years can wear terribly thin when you feel overwhelmed by the sheer mass of inequalities facing you. Because of their mixture of heritages, Metis women in Newfoundland must address both sides of the English and French-language rights issue. They must consider the rights of the other minority language groups represented in their own traditions, both Native and non-Native. The majority of Metis live in disjointed communities physically isolated from the industry and government on the island portion of the province, so Metis women must



also speak loudly for the rights of the Labradorian citizens within the province. Because Labrador is home to two distinct groups of Native people, the Inuit being the other, Metis women often find themselves raging at a federal government whose ministers

insist that Native people must speak with one voice before Native issues can be addressed. Somehow, the luxury of being able to confront the powers-that-be over the rights of women as women, with no distinction between Native, non-Native Labradorian, and Metis often seems like an impossible dream.

Like others, Native Labradorians have endured forced relocations, inadequate communication with their government and society, the loss of traditional ways of life and the imposition of European customs. When a group of Metis women protested the lack of language translators in local courts, they were jailed. When an impasse over low-level flights by Armed Forces

aircrafts from CFB Goose Bay across traditional caribou hunting areas resulted in more protests, Metis women found themselves behind bars again. When a German soldier at the base was sued for child support by a single Native mother, the case was thrown out. When a Native woman was thrust into the position of health care worker for her community by a lack of trained staff, she was given a one minute blurb on the news that was more government bashing than a discussion of Native living conditions.

Yet even more disillusioning than any of this is the gap developing between those women who are visibly Native and those who can "pass" as

cont'd pg. 5

Supreme Court Watch

Rape shield law



In the next few months the Supreme Court is expected to bring down a decision which will have a profound effect on all Canadian women. The Supreme Court will rule on whether or not women can be questioned on their past sexual history in sexual assault trials. This has come to be known as the Rape Shield Law, which prevents the defense attorney in a sexual assault case from questioning the woman about her sexual history except under certain circumstances.

Two men, Steven Seaboyer and Nigel Gayme, have appealed their sexual assault convictions to the Supreme Court of Canada. They claim that their inability to raise issues and questions pertaining to women's past sexual history in their sexual assault trials hindered their constitutional right to a fair trial and an adequate defence. Rape Crisis centres and women's groups together with LEAF (Women's Legal Education and Action Fund) intervened at the Supreme Court to argue that a woman's past sexual history is irrelevant as evidence and is thus inadmissible, and that a man's right to a fair trial is not compromised by this. LEAF argued the fact that, as rape crisis centres across the country know, the prospect of being questioned about past sexual history discourages women from reporting their attacks and seeking justice

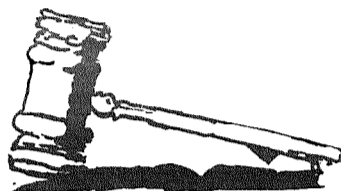
through the courts. It is interesting to note that the Canadian Civil Liberties Association intervened on behalf of the rapist, as they felt the individual's right to a fair trial and adequate defence was paramount.

At the Supreme Court, LEAF argued that Canadian laws concerning sexual assault have played a unique role in the history of women's inequality. Rape was historically treated by law like a property offence: an offence committed by one man against another man's property, as opposed to an offence against the person. At the time when the first rape laws were enacted, women could not vote. This meant that, not unlike today, laws relating to sexual assault were developed and administered by men, without regard to the experience and perspectives of women.

LEAF also pointed out that there has historically been a suspicion that women's accusations of sexual abuse were likely to be fabricated. Before the rape law reforms of 1982, the law required that rape complaints be recent, and that sexual crimes must be corroborated. It was legal for a man to rape his wife, and juries were cautioned by the judge at the trial that the woman's testimony be viewed with scepticism. The rules of evidence allowed a wide range of questioning in court on her past sexual history and sexual reputation.

LEAF argued to the Supreme Court that in the past the admission of past sexual history in sexual assault trials reduced the possibility of

getting a conviction, and lowered the sentences of those who did get convicted. When women do not conform to traditional sex roles (and who does anymore?) men who rape are less likely to be convicted and if convicted are less likely to receive a severe penalty. When "evidence" of past



sexual history is brought into a rape trial, it in effect transforms the courtroom into a sexual spectacle.

Even false questions or suggestions concerning past sexual behaviour plant suspicions and do serious damage to the victim's credibility. Once asked about her sexual past, if she refuses to answer she is perceived as sexually active and as more responsible for having precipitated the rape, than victims who were not asked.

With the sexual assault law reform of 1982, past sexual history was restricted as evidence. This was designed in part to protect and enhance the equality of victims of sexual assault, and provide them with equal benefit of the criminal law and equal protection within the criminal justice system. It is important to note that questions and cross-examination about past sexual history is still allowed, under certain circumstances. This allows, in many women's

Compiled by Carolyn Ford
from information from LEAF

groups' view, that the defence can provide an adequate defence. In fact, some women's groups are asking that even these circumstances be more tightly controlled. As an example, if a woman consented to sex with a man on one occasion, but not on another, her consensual sex with him is admissible as evidence. Or if a woman had consensual sex with one man in the same evening as she was raped by another, her consensual sex can be raised and questioned as admissible evidence. It is the view of many women's groups and LEAF that to allow questioning of the past sexual history of women is a giant step backwards in women's quest for justice in general, and for sexual assault survivors in particular.

Even if the Supreme Court does find that the Rape Shield Law does infringe on an individual's right to a fair trial, LEAF claims that it is necessary to ensure that women continue to report their sexual assaults. LEAF further articulated that sexual assault is an equality issue. They argued that rape and sexual assault of both women and children are in fact discrimination on the basis of sex and age. LEAF has claimed that women and children are groups that suffer from inequality in Canadian society, and deserve to be protected under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Rape, and fear of rape, functions cross-culturally as a tool of social control over women, and thus is not a gender neutral crime, or a crime that affects both men and women equally.



Thus, even if the Court decides that Seaboyer and Gayme's right to a fair trial is compromised by them not being able to question the women they assaulted about their past sexual history, women's right to equality must be considered. Women need the protection that they will not be harassed by questions that are irrelevant to the case.

We do not know when the Supreme Court will hand down its verdict on this important case. We do know that it is appalling that these cases went this far, that given the trauma and difficulty women have in reporting their sexual assaults, we must argue again that women's sexuality and sexual history somehow has an effect on the sexual assaults that are committed against us. Stay tuned for the decision, and an analysis of the ramifications of that decision in an upcoming edition.

Carolyn Ford is a member of the Sexual Assault Support Centre in Ottawa.

The hidden sisterhood

non-Native. Like most people, those who can "pass" aren't anxious for the often degrading attention given to more obviously Native mothers, sisters or grandmothers. Labrador has few opportunities for education or employment -- even if there were employers to offer token hirings. Young women wanting an education or business experience must travel to the university in St. John's, the province's almost completely non-Native capital. Once they arrive, those who appear Native are singled out as different, while those who "pass" are often overlooked. The culture-shock of finding herself in a dormitory that may contain more people than her whole community, with few of



those people having any knowledge of Native life, forces many women home in fear. The loss of companionship from those who "pass" is often the last nail in the coffin, and the start of another cycle of uneducated women returning to communities now devoid of those who gain acceptance in the non-Native culture.

If there are high points, they come from the knowledge that women can write from anywhere and that Metis women in Newfoundland have seen people of different cultural backgrounds working together in Labrador to find

solutions. Despite their varied backgrounds, Labrador women have formed the Labrador Native Women's Association, and Metis of both sexes have founded the Labrador Metis Association. The formation of their groups such as the Labrador Inuit Alcohol and Drug Abuse Program, the Labrador Trappers' Association, the Labrador Inuit Development Corporation, and the Labrador Friendship Center may yet result in Native people successfully attacking the underlying causes of their alienation from the rest of the country and their low standard of living.

Other Metis women may begin to write their stories and bring them to the rest of the country. A recently formed

Labrador Writers' Co-operative will be actively working on the part of its mandate which supports the efforts of Labradorians, men and women, Native, non-Native and Metis, to express themselves, their struggles, victories and defeats in forms that will bypass the physical isolation of Labradorians.

Although the notion of being able to devote their energies solely to the effort to uphold women's rights in any society is still a dream for many Metis women in Newfoundland, some of us have begun to find voices. Perhaps Canadians in general could gain much from observing the balancing act Metis women have fought so hard to learn. The lesson we have learned, that minority

rights are merely a subdivision of the human rights all Canadians are entitled to, harkens back to a heritage we had begun to believe was doomed if we were to survive in two worlds. Metis women, like all other women, are slipping and sliding on areas that few men have yet had to face. However, if we can continue to listen and learn from one another's dreams and victories, we may find truths that will help others view human rights as an unsegregated whole.

Ngairé Genge is a creative and business writing instructor and feminist living in Labrador City, Newfoundland.

In the
movement

Excerpts from the speech given by **Andrea Dworkin** to open the conference, **Women in a Violent Society**, organized by the Canadian Mental Health Association, in Banff, May 9 - 12, 1991.

Andrea Dworkin is an American feminist author of several books, including **Right Wing Women and Pornography: Men Possessing Women**.

We're here because of an emergency. We're here wanting to speak about the progress we've made but knowing that women are not any safer from rape now than when we started out. I am sick from the numbers of women who are being brutalized, and raped, and sodomized, who are being killed, who are missing, who in a women's culture of non-violence where we don't hurt the people who are hurting us, we do take our own lives. We do commit suicide.

So many women I have known have spent every day of their lives fighting to stay alive because of the despair they carry around with them from the sexual abuse that they have experienced in their lives - and these are great women, and these are strong women, and these are creative women.

These are women who thought that they had a right to dignity, to individuality, to freedom, to creativity, and, in

"We're here because of an emergency. You all know that".

These words, spoken by Andrea Dworkin in her keynote address, opened the conference, **Women in a Violent Society**, held in Banff in early May. We are in an emergency, and we all do know that. The very theme of the conference reflects the fact that we all know what the problem is; we don't need to hear statistics or gory accounts of the atrocities done to women. The fact is, wherever we are on this globe we live in a society that is violent, a society that not only condones but encourages the rape, beating, murder, torture, confinement, use and abuse of women.

Throughout the conference, in all the keynote speeches and workshops I attended, I really did not hear much that was new, yet I was inspired, energized, challenged to keep working and to find new ways of working to end violence against women. What was so inspiring was to be with 1150 women (well, about 1145 women and 5 men) from across the country, as well as from the United States, Australia and Greece, all of whom knew exactly what we were talking about. To be in a room full of feminists, a room full of people who know who Andrea Dworkin and Kate Millett and Rosemary Brown are, who were all thrilled to see and hear some of our foremothers speaking a

language we all understand.

It was inspiring not to have to explain what it was we were talking about. It can be damn demoralizing to know that, as Andrea Dworkin said, "we are not any safer from rape now than when we started out", but we were spurred on to continue the work we are doing, to not "allow ourselves to get amnesia" by forgetting the atrocities we hear of and are exposed to daily, and/or the names of the women who are killed, every day, in every city or village on this earth by male violence, nor to martyr ourselves.

Despite all that occurred, the only thing the mainstream media picked up on were the charges of racism at the

by Lisa Jensen

conference. Wrapping up the conference, Rosemary Brown referred to the incidents on Saturday night, saying, "racism is a form of violence from which there is no escape".

What happened on Saturday night was the scheduling of a poetry reading during dinner by a South African Black woman. It did not do justice to the poet nor to the audience (nor to those with no meal plan who thought they were obliged to miss the reading). Like the gruesome details of pornography, woman battering, rape, etc., racism is nothing new.

Women of colour were under-represented at this conference. Without succumbing to "huggy-muggy"



Andrea Dworkin speaks

fact, they couldn't even walk down a city block in freedom. Many of them were raped as children in their own homes by their relatives - by their fathers, by their uncles, by their brothers, before they were "women". Many of them were beaten by the men who loved them - their husbands and lovers. Many of them were tortured by those men and when you look at what happened to these women you say to Amnesty International "where are you?".

The prisons for women are our homes. We live under martial law! We live in places in which a rape culture exists. We live under what amounts to a military curfew enforced by rapists and we say, usually, that we're free citizens in a free society. We lie. We lie every day about it. We survive through amnesia - by not remembering what happened to us. By being unable to remember the name of the woman who was in the newspaper yesterday, who was walking somewhere and was

missing. What was her name? You read about her every day! The girl walking home from school, you read about her every day. She's missing. What was her name? I am sick to death of not being able to remember the names. There are too many of them. I can't remember them.

There's one name especially I can never remember. A woman who was gang raped on the pool table in New Bedford, Massachusetts by four men while everyone in the bar stood and watched. That woman died in an accident, the kind of accident the police always call suicide within one year after the trial for rape. It wasn't news to anyone. Three months before this woman was raped on that pool table, **Hustler** ran a spread of a woman being gang raped on a pool table. Everything that was done to the woman in the pornography was done to that woman in that bar that night. After the New Bedford gang rape, **Hustler** ran a photograph of a woman in a pornographic pose made like

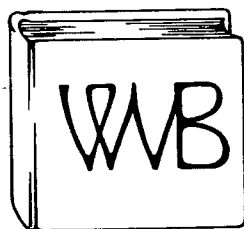
a greeting card, sitting on a pool table, saying "Welcome to New Bedford". The rape trial was televised in the United States. The ratings beat out the soap operas. In the United States, people watched this as entertainment every day. The woman was driven out of town, even though the rapists were convicted, and within one year she was dead. I can't remember her name, no matter how hard I try.



Hollywood made a movie called "The Accused" - brilliant, an incredible movie in which Jodi Foster, through her artistry and creativity shows us that a woman is a human being. And it takes two hours to establish that for a mainstream audience so that at the point where we reach the gang rape we understand that someone, someone has been hurt in a way that goes beyond the sum of the physical brutality that was done to her. The Hollywood version had a happy ending. The voyeurs were convicted of having incited the rape, and the woman triumphs.

And I sat in the theatre thinking "but she's dead!". What's her name? Why can't I remember her name?

There are women whose names I do remember - for instance, a woman in New York who was murdered in Central Park by a man who had been her lover. Her name is Jennifer Levin, and the reason that I know her name is that when she was killed - murdered by this lover of hers - the New York press put her name on the front page of every newspaper in tabloid headlines to say what a slut she was. Now I wouldn't buy any of those papers. It's just that I couldn't leave my house and not read the headlines. And so, the boy goes to trial. A white boy, an upper class boy, a wealthy boy. It comes to be called the "Preppy Murder Case". And we here in the United States, for the first time, developed something called the "rough sex defence" and it goes as follows: she wanted to have really rough, painful, humiliating sex; she was an aggressive bitch and she tried to tie him up and she hurt him and he got so upset that in trying to free himself, he accidentally strangled her with her bra, all right? Now, in this scenario, women are treated when they are murdered as they are treated when they are raped. She provoked it, she wanted it, she liked it, and she got what she deserved. When



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violent society

feminism, as Rozena Maart calls it, we must be able to celebrate together while recognizing the work that remains. We all know (or should know) that the women's movement has been a white, middle-class women's movement. I could add "able-bodied, heterosexual, middle-aged..." women's movement. Each of these can be broken into more sub-groups - Black women, Asian women, Latina women; women with physical disabilities, hearing disabilities, sight disabilities; lesbians, bisexual women, celibate women; young women, old women, teenage women - making each woman have some form of privilege and some form of oppression. I am

not trying to trivialize any of the "isms", I merely want to point out that the only way to go is to incorporate everything into everything else, to admit our mistakes as we go along, not in order, as Rosemary Brown said, to "put our guilt on a pedestal and worship it", but to change and move on.

All these issues urgently need discussion and action in the women's movement, but it only discredits us to discuss them in the mainstream media. Everyone loves to hear proof, from feminists themselves, that women cannot get along with other women. As far as racism goes, it seems to be a "hot" topic right now, but one that is never analytically reported by mainstream media.

The mainstream looks for sensationalism, and coverage of any event makes it appear to be some strange and new phenomenon. The women's movement will appear to be just another "example" of racism, while the whole issue of pervasive racism and how to eradicate it will never be addressed. I am not saying we should keep quiet, merely that when talking to the mainstream media, we need not fuel the sensationalist fires. Can you imagine what they will do if they hear of lesbian battering?

All this does not change the fact that the organizers did an excellent job. To organize such a huge conference is a great feat, and I would pat these women on the back, tell

them to take at least a few days off to rest, then evaluate the conference to see what can be done differently or better next time.

Let's get on with our work. If sisterhood means anything at all, it should mean we can honestly give one another positive and negative criticism, not for the sake of criticism but because we all know the only way to move forward is to not get stuck in denial or guilt, but to recognize oppression for what it is, then get on with it!

Lisa Jensen attended the conference, Women in a Violent Society, organized by the Canadian Mental Health Association, in Banff, Alberta from May 9 - 12, 1991.

In the movement



the head of our Sex Crimes Unit, Linda Fairstein, tried to get a conviction of this man for murder, she had a problem. And her problem was that she couldn't find a motive. She didn't think that she could convince the jury that there was any reason for him to kill Jennifer Levin. And of course there wasn't any reason for him to, except that he wanted to, and he could. He plea-bargained and so the jury's decision never came in. Most of us thought he was going to be acquitted. After he plea-bargained, videos were shown on television of Mr. Chambers at sex parties, making fun of strangling a woman, sitting naked surrounded by women and re-enacting the murder and laughing about it.

We live in a world where men kill, beat and rape women and the motives are not personal. It is one of the most impersonal experiences you will ever have. You are a married woman. You live with a man. You think that he knows you and that you know him but, in fact, when he begins to hurt you he does it because you're a woman, not because you're who you are, whoever that is. I want us to stop lying. I think that we tell a lot of lies to get through every day and I want us to stop lying. And one of the lies we tell is that this kind of woman-hating is not as pernicious, as lethal, as sadistic, as vicious as other kinds of hatred that are directed against people because of a condition of birth. And we have recognized some, but only some, of the historical atrocities that have occurred. We say to ourselves, "This isn't the same. I'm Andrea. I'm

Jane. I'm me." But everyone has said that! Every Jew pushed on to a train said, "But I'm me. Why are you doing this? I'm me." And the Nazis didn't have a personal motive that could be understood in those terms.

In the United States there is no longer the belief, on any woman's part, that whatever her politics, whatever her class, whatever her race, whatever her profession, she will be exempt - no one of us believes that we will get out of this life, not only alive, but unraped, unbeaten, unused, unforced, let alone having actually experienced what we have a right to, which is freedom. We have a right to freedom!

I want us to stop smiling. I want us to stop saying we're fine. I want us to stop saying that this can be fixed after it happens. No, it can't be fixed. The question is, how do we stop it from happening to begin with? We have had a brilliant movement that has saved many lives. Especially, those of you who work in rape crisis centres and battered women's shelters. We have to change our focus now. We have to stop it from happening because otherwise we accept that our condition is one in which the rape of women is normal, brutality toward women is normal. And the question is, how do we regulate it?

You know that most women are hurt in their homes. You know most women are murdered in their homes. A political movement, as I understand it, exists to change the way social reality is organized, and that means that

we need to understand everything about the way this system works. And that means that every woman who has had experience with sexual violence of any kind has not just pain and not just hurt, but has that knowledge - knowledge of male supremacy. And the knowledge to begin to think strategically about how to stop it.

If the premise is that the freedom of women matters, and that the equality of women matters, then "education" is not enough. You know, they're educated. Did you know that? Do you know that the rapist still knows more about rape than we do? Really. Do you know that the pimps know how to manipulate and sell women? They're not stupid men.

Intercourse has been a way of owning women. We know it; most of us have experienced it. The fact of the matter is that the basic premise about women is that we are born to be fucked. Marriage was outright ownership of a woman's body. And intercourse was a right of marriage. Intercourse was *per se*, is an act of force because the power of the state mandated that a woman accept intercourse. She belonged to the man. The cultural remnant of this in our society is that men experience intercourse as possessing women. The culture talks about intercourse as conquering women, women surrendering, women being taken. We are looking at a paradigm for rape.

When the premise is that women exist on earth in order to be sexually available to men for intercourse, it means that

our very bodies are seen as having boundaries that have less integrity than male bodies. When a woman goes into court and she says, "I've been raped", the judge, the defence lawyer, the press, and many, many, many other people say, "No, you had intercourse". And she says, "No, I was raped". The question is, what comes first - men's need to get laid or women's dignity?


So then, are there other indications of this? Yes, there are. Because, as it is currently socialized and existing in our society, men can't have sex with women who are their equals. They're incapable of it. That's what objectification is about. The word that they mean when they do what they're doing, is "things". And in order to get the response from men one has to be the right kind of thing. Now think about what that means. That means that the woman polices herself - she makes decisions that make her freedom impossible because, if she is going to live, if she is going to make a living, then she is going to have to be the kind of object to which the man will respond in

a way that is important to him. And what that means is in a way that is sexual.

The women, the mothers who bound their daughters' feet so that their feet were three inches long and their daughters were crippled, did it because that was the standard of beauty. And if a woman wanted to eat, a man had to find her beautiful. And that meant that she couldn't walk for the rest of her life. It was a trade that had to be made. It was "let's make a deal", and we women are still playing "let's make a deal" instead of deciding what we want, what we need. We have a second class standard for our own freedom. We're afraid, not because we're cowards, but we use our bravery to sustain ourselves when we make these deals, instead of fighting the system that forces us to make the deal.

In the United States, violence against women is a major pastime. It is a sport. It is an amusement. It is mainstream cultural entertainment. And it's real. It

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In the movement



How are women's experiences being reflected in Canadian newspapers? To what extent are women doing the reporting or being reported on, and in what manner are they portrayed?

The first survey of Canadian newspapers occurred on February 15, 1990, when MediaWatch selected 15 newspapers from across the country. The results, although not surprising, were disheartening. Despite the fact that women represent over half of the population, on average they were mentioned less than

Report from MediaWatch

one fifth of the time. The language used to describe women included the tenacious male generics such as "man" or "he"; descriptions which robbed women of their identity and autonomy, and situated them instead in relation to men ("his wife" or "Donald Trump and Ivana"); and adjectives which described women by their clothes and body parts ("There was her tight, black mini-skirt and coltish, stockinged legs"). In terms of who was writing the stories on this particular day, women were accredited with less than 30 percent of the bylines.

The second survey was done on the same date a year later: February 15, 1991. Focussing on the same areas of concern, the second survey also reviewed 15 newspapers. Six of these papers had previously been reviewed while nine were studied for the first time. Choosing to look at some of the same papers again allowed for a year-to-year comparison to be made for these individual papers. The selection of nine new papers broadened the sample base, allowing us to gauge if the poor representation women received in 1990 was endemic to those particular 15 papers, or if it was a trend likely prevalent in all Canadian newspapers. As the following section highlights, the



results of this second survey clearly indicate that the findings of the initial study were representative of Canadian newspapers as a group; women are significantly under-represented in terms of employment and coverage in our newspapers.

Bylines

Study results indicate that, like last year, women continue to have less than 30% of the bylines in Canadian newspapers. Of the six papers studied in both years, 1991 research shows the average number of bylines for women dropped by 1.5%.

References

Like last year, for every four men mentioned in our newspapers, only one woman

is referred to. In fact, less than a third of this year's newspapers even managed to discuss women one-fifth of the time; most of the papers had less than 20% female references. The marginalization of women in the news was greatest in "Canada's National Newspaper," **The Globe and Mail**. For the second year in a row, this newspaper discussed women the least. In 1991, women received just over 9 percent of the references, a decline from last year's already abysmal rating of 13 percent. The greatest number of references to women in this year's sample was in Saskatoon's **Star Phoenix**, with a still paltry 20.88%.

While some would argue that these statistics merely reflect the low ratio of women to men in prominent positions in our society -- something which cannot be attributed solely to the influence of our newspapers -- they also raise the issue of what gets defined as "newsworthy" in the first place and who gets used as a "source".

The fact is that, although women are 50% of our population, they are discussed less than 20% of the time in our newspapers. The reality of

these statistics is that the issues and activities women in our society are involved in, and with, are not getting coverage.

Examples of Sexist Language

"His father Leslie, a mail carrier, died of a heart attack at 36, leaving his mother with the two-year-old John, his 16-year-old brother Les Jr. and a sister, Elizabeth Ann, about to be born." (**Vancouver Sun**, A11). The mother, who gave birth to all the named children, is the only one not named.

"A 17-year-old girl accused Ciccarelli and two other Caps of sexually assaulting her in a limousine in the Georgetown area of Washington last May." (**Calgary Herald**, D2). By the time a female reaches 17 she is no longer a girl. She has the right to drive, to live on her own, to have consensual sex. Young woman or woman should be used in this case. Seventeen-year-old males are not typically referred to as "boys". For example, in another story in the **Herald**, the victims whose murders Winnie Mandela is accused of being involved with are referred to as "young men". At least one was 14 years old.

Andrea Dworkin (cont'd)

is pervasive. It is epidemic. It saturates society. It's very hard to make anyone notice it because there's so much of it. We have had thirty years, basically, in the United States of the total saturation of society with pornography. In those thirty years, we have had many people who have wanted us to study the problem. We have had many people who wanted us to debate the issues. We have done it all. There has been the development of a very major population of men called serial killers. There are a lot of them and they're men who rape and kill mostly women, sometimes children. They usually mutilate the bodies. Sometimes they

have sex before, sometimes they have sex after - it's all sex to them. Now, we can say that it's a power trip, but the fact of the matter is that for them, that's the way they have sex: by mutilating and hurting and killing us.

We have, in the United States, an incredible, continuing epidemic of murders of women. We have huge, missing pieces of our populations in cities. In Kansas City, in the Midwest, since 1977, the police say that 60 women have been killed. Three-quarters of them have been black. They've been women of prostitution. They have been mutilated or left in what police and the media - the

euphemisms are extraordinary - call "sexually suggestive positions". One of the patterns of serial killers is that they do the things they have seen in pornography to their victims and they leave their victims posed as pornography. That's part of what many of them do. Pornography is involved in the biographies of all of them. Sometimes they use it to stalk their victims. Sometimes they use it to plan their crimes. Sometimes they use it to rev themselves up to commit the acts. And yet, we can't figure out what it is. How is it that these guys can get these ideas to do these things?

The fact of the matter is that it's being sold everywhere. It's in the pornography. It says, "Go get them". It says, "Do this to them". It says "It's fine". It says, "They'll like it too". It says society has to stay organized so that there are enough women to provide the raw material for pornography. And the material conditions that provide the raw material - the women - are poverty, usually incestuous child abuse, and homelessness.

You are here to talk about the violence against women and you're here to talk about healing. I wish that you could

raise the dead. That is what I would like to see. This is a political point. One of the reasons that the Right reaches so many women is that the Right has a transcending god that says "I will heal all your hurt and all your pain and all your wounds. I'd die for you. I will heal you". Feminists do not have a transcending god who can heal that way. We have ideas about fairness and justice and equality and we have to find ways to make them real. We don't have magic. We don't have supernatural powers and we can't keep sticking women together who have been broken into little pieces.

So what I think is that fighting back is as close to healing as we are going to come. And I think that it's important to understand that we will live with a fair amount of pain for most of our lives. And I think that if your first priority is to live a painless life, you will not be able to help yourself or other women. I think that what matters is to be a warrior. And I think that having a sense of honour about political struggle is healing. And I think that discipline is necessary. And I think that action against men who hurt women is essential. And I think that action against



institutions that hurt women must be real.

We need to win. We are in a war. We have not been fighting back to win this war. We are in need of political resistance. We need it above-ground. We need it with our lawmakers, with our government officials. We need it with our professional women. We have been failing each other. We have to end the impunity that men have, and they have virtual impunity to rape and to batter. Endurance is not enough without assistance. It is not good enough any more. Everything that didn't happen to you is a little slack in your leash. You see, every abuse that however, whatever way that you evaded it or it evaded you - you weren't raped when you were three or you weren't raped when you were ten, or you weren't battered, or you weren't in prostitution - whatever it is that you managed to miss is a measure of your freedom and a measure of your strength and what you owe to other women.



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NOT You've come a long way, baby SISTER

by Catherine Malone

During the 1920's the American Tobacco Company decided to capitalize on the suffragettes who were using cigarettes in public places as a defiant symbol of their fight for equality. Up until that time, smoking was considered a masculine act, taboo for women, especially in the public domain. Edward Bernays, an advertiser, was contracted by the American Tobacco Company to eliminate the label of "hussy" from women who smoked in public. The result was the 1929 Easter Parade down Fifth Avenue in New York where ten women boldly lit up their "torches of freedom". This simple act made front page headlines in the newspapers and the American Tobacco Company was well on its way towards significantly increasing its market by appropriating women's demand for equality and turning it into a jargon of consumerism.

Today, tobacco companies and advertisers still use smoking as a symbol of progress for women. Interestingly, the only growing market for cigarettes is young women, despite the innumerable medical studies which confirm that what is being sold is a harmful addiction. When the influential power and the endemic nature of the media is examined, this perverse situation becomes more understandable.

Media is everywhere and influences every aspect of our lives. It's the language we speak, the television set we can't live without, the portable radios we use to shut the world out when we take the bus to work, the newspapers that show up daily on our doorsteps and the magazines we read in the doctor's office.

What makes the media so influential in our lives and, therefore, so powerful, is that it affects us, separate from the specific bits of information it conveys. This is what Marshall McLuhan meant when he

coined the phrase, "the medium is the message". The images that we are inundated with through the media not only inform us about specific products, but assist us in shaping our beliefs, values and codes of behavior. They inform us on how to participate in our society and they set the standards for everything from fashion and beauty to morality and political power. We have allowed the media to replace the teachings of our elders, the rhetoric of our politicians, and the sermons we receive in church, as the instructors of how we should behave in society.

Media images of women are not nearly as diverse nor as flattering as the portrayals of men. A number of studies, including the February 1991 report issued by the National Action Committee on the Status of Women, confirms the extent of this situation. NAC's report specifically states that the media portrays women narrowly, either as sexual objects or care-givers to their families.

The media, as the new "teacher" of social norms, does not instruct women to develop their own individual potential. Instead, women are taught to concentrate on their physical appearance in order to attain many goals - from attracting male attention to becoming successful workers. According to Marjorie Ferguson, most women's magazines are about more than women and womanly things, they are about femininity itself - as a state, a condition, a craft and an art form which promotes a set of practices and beliefs. On the other hand, Ferguson says, men's magazines are aimed at particular groups of males and cater to parts of a man's life - his business, hobby or sporting interests - not to the totality of his masculinity, nor his male role as such.

What is even more restrictive about this process is that the commercial ideal of female beauty, which is held up to all women as the brass ring, is unattainable because it is artificial. Through makeup, special production effects, lighting and very often, surgery and starvation diets, even the models of womanhood do not, in actuality, resemble their media images.

top five box office hits: **Silence of the Lambs**, which tells the tale of two serial killers who brutally murdered women, and **Sleeping with the Enemy**, which brought wife battering into the movie theatres. Until recently, the hottest series on television was David Lynch's **Twin Peaks**, which was based entirely on the sex murder of a beautiful, young woman.



Your breasts may be too big, too eggy,
too pert, too flat, too full, too far apart, too
close together, too A cup, too lopsided, too
jiggly, too pale, too padded, too pointy,
too pendulous or just two mosquito bites.
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The images of women are often sexualized, even out of context of what is being sold. Dismembered, female body parts are used to display products in ads because the individual parts are considered better than the whole - if she has great legs, who cares who she is? Women are depicted in unnatural, clownish and even death-like poses. They are often made to appear shy, insecure, child-like and vulnerable. Jean Kilbourne, creator of the award winning films **Still Killing Us Softly** and **Calling the Shots**, states that the real tragedy is the many women who internalize these stereotypes and learn their "limitations", establishing a self-fulfilling prophecy. Kilbourne goes on to say that if one accepts these mythical and degrading images of women, to some extent one makes them real.

Another disturbing trend in the media is the increasing depiction of violence against women. Chic violence is now used to sell everything from jeans to greeting cards. Pseudo-rape scenes have appeared in popular magazines and on television in an effort to sell clothing and perfume. Hallmark issued a greeting card with instructions on what to do when meeting the perfect woman of the 90's - "if you see her, shoot to kill".

Violence against women is also popular on both the big and small screens, as evidenced by two of the recent

Music videos continue to produce demeaning images of women. Song lyrics also follow the trend towards violence and degradation of women. Sex killers are glorified on MTV through such songs as The Rolling Stones' "Midnight Rambler" which was an ode to the Boston Strangler. Many rap songs leave no doubt as to the demeaning view of women held by their performers.

The result of stylized, pornographic images in the media is that humanness and individuality is stripped away, reducing women to objects. Objects cannot feel pain, thus it negates the violence.

There are a number of strategies women may adopt in order to improve the portrayal of women in the media. Question the images around you and when you see something that offends you, do something about it. Write a letter. Boycott media products that are demeaning to women -



your money has a loud voice. Join an organization like MediaWatch and work for change. Advocate media literacy seminars and workshops for all levels of the educational system. Write the CRTC and tell them why their hands must not wash their hands of the issue of sex-role stereotyping. Educate yourself on how to deconstruct the media images that envelope you every day. Refuse to let these images just wash over you with a "that's just the way it is" resignation. McLuhan prophesied that the power of advertisements could only be diminished once their victims stopped ignoring them and started paying serious attention to them. Let's not be victims any longer.

If you are interested in learning more about MediaWatch or if you would like an outline on how to write effective letters of complaint, please contact:

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Catherine Malone works for a large, Canadian telecommunications company and volunteers some of her time to MediaWatch. Catherine also has a degree in communications from Simon Fraser University and has accumulated many years of anger and sadness over the images of women in the media. She is now working for change.

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In the
movement

All too often there are hurt or unspoken feelings based on misconceptions and misunderstandings between lesbians and heterosexual women. In the continual process of trying to bridge this chasm, a two-part workshop called "Bridging the Gap" was organized in Prince Edward Island this May with the hope of creating the opportunity for lesbians and heterosexual women to openly talk about issues, to explore our commonness and differences and to create a place where women will feel more comfortable with their own and others' sexual orientation choices and uniqueness. The workshop was organized by two lesbians and two heterosexual women and sponsored by the Women's Network, a local feminist organization in Charlottetown, and the Oxfam Local Committee.

The impetus to organize such a workshop occurred at the seventh annual PEI Women's Festival, "Well On Our Way", during the workshop entitled, "Where There is Fear

There is Power". A spectrum was done on sexuality. A spectrum is a way to create dialogue between people of differing views in an open and honest manner. Participants physically place themselves in a continuum and the ends of the spectrum are defined. For example, the sexuality spectrum set lesbianism at one end and heterosexuality at the other end. The women then talked back and forth from their place on the spectrum. When discussion began between the lesbians and heterosexual women, it was very obvious that there were many myths, misconceptions and misinformation that needed to be dispelled. It was a very painful process for the lesbians, as they were put in the position of having to defend their choices, as well as having to deal with many uninformed attitudes.

Part one of the "Bridging the Gap" workshop was designed to bring out the biases and judgements women hold, the emotional feelings that arise around the issue of sexuality and any other divisive energy. Part two of the workshop was designed to focus more on bringing women together - bridging the gap by looking at our common ways of being in the world and our aspirations as opposed to our differences. There is a two-week break between parts one and two of the workshop. This was done on purpose to allow time for the women to absorb, digest, and discuss issues among friends and colleagues that were raised during part one. This article is being written between

Bridging the gap:

Lesbians and heterosexual women talk together

by Salli Abbott

parts one and two of the workshop and will, therefore, only give a preliminary sense of the discussions of "Bridging the Gap".

So what happened in part one of "Bridging the Gap"?

We began by acknowledging

- are men capable of nurturing women?

- men sap women's energy for themselves and other women.

Homophobia:

- myths;
- language;



our biases and judgements in small groups. These biases and judgements were presented back to the larger group, but not discussed. The intention was to get the women thinking and feeling differently, to approach the rest of the day with a wider view.

These biases and judgements revolved around the following ideas:

Lesbianism as the highest aspiration:

- A woman is only one good woman away from being a lesbian;

- to be a real feminist, one must be a lesbian;

- heterosexual women are somewhat lacking in their commitment to women and their concerns;

- women are a better "class" of people than men.

The invisibility of lesbians:

- denying that lesbians exist;
- lesbians are continually asked/told to put their lives on hold in order to further the "women's movement";

- compulsory heterosexuality;

- lesbians feel like they're shit-disturbers/spouting off to get their concerns heard and acted upon;

- lesbians are told that when they create visibility for themselves, they don't take into account the needs of other women.

Distrust / lack of understanding of heterosexual women:

- heterosexual women lack a commitment to women in a deep sense;

- they are not really interested in "bridging the gap", but would rather deny that lesbians exist;

- lesbians don't understand why heterosexual women stay with men, given all the violence against women by men and power dynamics that arise between women and men in relationships;

- labels;

- some heterosexual women and lesbians deny lesbians their need to name themselves;

- to challenge lesbians is to risk being called homophobic;

- heterosexual women are offended by public displays of women's affection for each other.

The next step in the workshop was to look at the differences in the ways we define our sexual orientation and the differences in how much we think homophobia affects us. The two spectrums were:



1. How is your sexual orientation defined? The two ends of the spectrum were 'genetic' and 'social' and everything in between. Lesbians and heterosexual women placed themselves at both ends of the spectrum. In other words, there was no one opinion within the lesbian community or among the heterosexual women. The idea of choice was a foreign concept for most of the heterosexual women. This is not surprising given compulsory heterosexuality in our society. Some of the lesbians spoke plainly of choosing to be a lesbian for political reasons and others felt that to be a lesbian was no choice at all - that they were born that way.

2. How much does homophobia affect your life? The two ends were: 'not at all'

and 'very much' and everything in between.

Most of the women placed themselves from the middle to the 'very much' end. The main difference of placement seemed to be around whether or not the women were going to let homophobic attitudes affect them as compared to the reality of the situation. The heterosexual women were sensitive to the fact that although they too were affected by homophobia, they also recognized that lesbians are affected at a much deeper level and in different ways.

The workshop agenda was then going to explore women's stories/experiences on the subject, the use of language, and provide information on the legal status of homosexuals in Canada (and more specifically, in PEI). But the discussion shifted and moved to the concerns regarding lesbian visibility at the eighth annual PEI Women's Festival entitled "MotherWise" (This was an event that took place just three weeks prior to this workshop and was fresh in everyone's minds).

So the time had finally come within the workshop to be honest with each other and express our true feelings...

As a bit of background, each year Women's Network organizes the PEI Women's Festival and each year as lesbians work for greater visibility at the Festival, there erupts, proportionate to the amount of visibility lesbians achieve, concerns, hurt feelings and torn allegiances among lesbians, and between lesbians and heterosexual women. This year's Festival was no exception. The Festival is the one event of the year in PEI that draws women from all across the Island, women of tremendously diverse backgrounds and opinions, thus providing a concrete example of the kind of misunderstandings and misconceptions that regularly occur within the women's community.

The concerns about lesbian visibility at the Festival could be summed up in the following way:

- the degree of lesbian visibility and content at the Festival, i.e., how much space lesbians take up - workshops, physical presence, attitude;

- the fears around language, and promoting the Festival across the Island when the brochure states the word 'lesbian' (and more than once)

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cont'd pg. 13

Rethinking the privacy of the family: stopping violence against women and children

Excerpts from a speech given by the Hon. Bertha Wilson to the National Convention of B'nai Brith Women of Canada, in Toronto, May 1991.

There can be no doubt that the problem of violence against women and children is serious. Indeed, the statistics are frightening. Research has shown that one in every ten women in Canada is beaten by her male partner, and the situation is no better for children. In the last decade, 600 children were killed in Canada, one third of them under a year old and 70% under the age of five. Parents were the main killers. Abuse in the home has not been limited to physical attacks of this kind; it extends to sexual abuse as well.

Primarily as a result of the work of rape crisis centres, we have learned that the likelihood of a woman being sexually assaulted is high, and in fact a very large proportion of rapes are committed by men in intimate relationships with their victims.

Children have not been spared either. The prevalence of incest and other forms of sexual abuse of children was known to child protection workers years before it became the major public concern that it is today. In fact, it was the problem in four out of five of their cases. We now know that one in every four children is sexually abused and, like the statistics concerning adult women, most of this abuse is perpetrated not by strangers but by the parents and guardians of our youngsters.

In response to what can only be viewed as a social problem of striking proportions, a number of initiatives have been developed at both the grass roots and legal levels to bring about necessary change. For example, the women's movement has been responsible for the creation of shelters or transition houses for battered women in which they may take refuge and receive counselling and support. Similarly, rape crisis centres were created to offer support and assistance to women victims of rape and sexual abuse. For too long, however, women have been left to tackle this problem alone, since these centres were chronically underfunded and understaffed with only a few dedicated female volunteers.

Happily, governments have at long last accepted that violence in the home is a major social problem. Steps are now being taken to educate the public about these issues and to provide funding for those volunteer organizations which have been fighting the battle on their own. For instance, I was

interested and encouraged to read in the *Globe and Mail* a few weeks ago that the Ontario government had announced its intention to spend \$12 million on wife assault prevention and \$8.3 million on sexual assault prevention. This is in addition to the \$66 million already being spent for this purpose. As women, we welcome this.

In spite of the fact that measures such as these have been helpful, indeed vital, in uncovering the dimensions of the problem and in taking positive steps towards a solution, I believe that up to this point we have had to content ourselves with stop-gap measures. The provision of transition houses for battered women and the removal of abused children from their homes and their placement into the care of social agencies or foster homes are really band-aid remedies, designed primarily to bring some relief to victims. I do not mean to suggest that these measures are not useful; but they do not help us get to the root of the problem or even accomplish the first basic step of devising effective mechanisms for detecting abuse in the home, let alone deal effectively with the abusers.

I believe that the root of the problem lies in its systemic nature. Battery and sexual assault are behaviours engaged in by many men from all walks of life. Given the statistics, it can no longer be seriously contended that this sort of abuse is an atypical practice engaged in by a small group of aberrant men.

Battery and sexual assault are a common feature of women's existence: it does not happen just to poor women or young women or uneducated women. Finally, escape from the cycle of violence is a systemic problem also. We now know that women and children are caught in these situations because of the interconnectedness of familial abuse and other forms of subordination. It is fairly well known that the plight of the battered woman is exacerbated by her inability to venture out into the workforce and become self-sufficient. Many women simply stay with their batterers because no meaningful alternatives exist for them.

It is only in relatively recent years that massive research studies have disclosed the severe and long-term effects of the sexual abuse of children. We know now that there is a direct correlation between

those who were abused as children and those who become abusers as adults. We know too that there is also a correlation between the female child victims of sexual abuse and prostitution. And the relationship between the sexual abuse of children and runaway children and teenagers is now being documented. Fifty per cent of male and 86% of female runaway children are reported as having a history of physical abuse.

I believe that if we are to get to the root of the problem, as opposed to merely picking up



the pieces for the victims, we must begin to devise systemic remedies for what is undoubtedly a systemic problem. This involves making a critical review of accepted social norms and institutions, including those we hold dear, and being open to the possibility that some traditions would be better deposited on the scrap-heap of history.

One such tradition is the historic concept that men have a God-given authority over the other members of the family. Another is that relationships within the family are a purely private matter with which the law has no business. These propositions are summed up in the two sayings: "The Englishman's home is his castle", and "The state has no business in the bedrooms of the nation". I think we are now forced to recognize that family privacy has proved a two-edged sword. It has served the male members of the society well but it has done untold harm to those dependent upon them. We have to face the fact that not all men are kind and caring husbands and fathers, devoted to the well-being of their loved ones. The 20th century reality clearly shows otherwise.

Thus, the privacy approach to home and family must cease to be used to cut women and children off from protection against domestic violence. It

is no longer acceptable for the police to write off panic stricken calls for help as private family matters to be settled internally. We are dealing with serious criminal offences and the fact that they are being committed in the home is no reason to treat them differently from other criminal offenses.

Nor should it be left to the discretion of individual police officers to decide whether or not to investigate the calls for help they receive. The police response to such calls will depend to some extent on their understanding of domestic abuse, on their personal concepts of what appropriate male and female roles in the family are, as well as on a willingness to conduct a full investigation and, if appropriate, to lay charges.

I am glad that many municipalities are now issuing directives to their police forces to lay charges whenever they have reasonable and probable grounds to believe that assaults are taking place against women and children in the home. This is clearly a step in the right direction.

In the past, battered women or women whose children were being abused were, for obvious reasons, scared to lay charges and, if they did, they frequently, as a result of threats of further violence, withdrew them later. We must disassociate ourselves and our police from the view expressed by one American court that such behaviour by a husband is a purely private matter and that "if no permanent injury has been inflicted ... it is better to draw the curtain, shut out the public gaze, and leave the partners to forgive and forget."

Rethinking the notion of family privacy is but one example of the systemic approach which I would advocate.

More fundamentally, I believe that ultimately we must give full effect in our society to the principle of equality. Women will never have equal status with men in the home if they don't also have equal status with men in the world outside. Violence against women in the home is an expression and manifestation of power and is perpetuated by the fact that men do and women do not have power in our society. As long as women are systemically subordinate to men they will suffer, at the minimum, ongoing psychological domination and, at the maximum, physical and sexual abuse.

In the movement



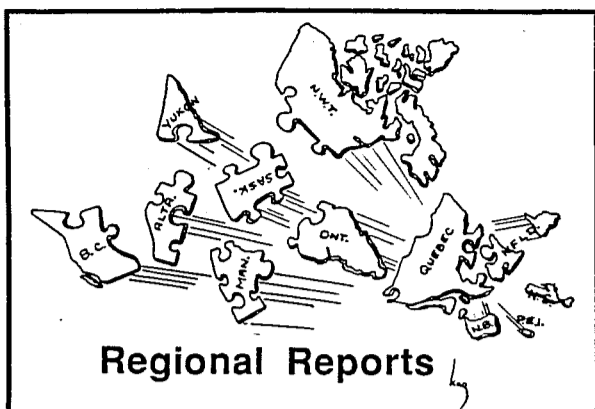
It is self-evident, I think, that if full substantive equality for women is to be achieved in our society, men must be part of the solution. Men must work along with women to achieve sexual equality because the problem is one between the sexes. Men must come to acknowledge that the problem is really theirs; women are simply the victims of a system which has traditionally reflected male interests and favoured the male viewpoint. In the search for systemic remedies men must be willing to cast aside their own system for the simple reason that justice demands it.

There is no doubt in my mind that women will continue to be exposed to violence within the family until such time as they are recognized as equal, respected and involved partners by the society at large and the institutions which comprise it. I am ashamed to say, as a lawyer and former judge, that the legal system, as one of those institutions, has failed women in this regard. Women frequently perceive the justice system as alienating and oppressive. In a brief to the House of Commons subcommittee on the Status of Women in February of this year, an illustration is given of one woman who, after being abused and calling the police, lost her children, was divorced by her husband, and compelled to go on welfare. These are her anguished words:

"Why did I ever call the police? They took my family, my home, my security, my dignity, and my belief in what is right. I would rather be beaten every day of my life by my husband than have a bunch of strangers take my life away without ever asking."

Let us hope that the decade of the nineties will bring an end to the brutal face of inequality.

Bertha Wilson is a former judge of the Supreme Court of Canada.



The disintegration of a community: Newfoundland's fishery crisis

by Glenda Winter



One of the most feared events to happen to someone is to lose their job, and to be faced with an uncertain future. Fishery Products International, one of the two major Canadian employers for fish plant workers in Newfoundland, announced in November of 1989 that they would have to close three of their sixteen plants.

Everyone waited anxiously. Of those sixteen communities, most are one-industry towns. The majority of the workers are skilled only in the area of the fishery - it has been a way of life for them for generations.

The three largest deep-sea plants in Newfoundland are in Trepassey, Marystown and Catalina. The remaining plants are mostly seasonal, with a lot of the fish coming from local fishermen. In 1984, several small private companies, including Lake Group, Fishery Products and Universal Fisheries, went into receivership. At that time, the

federal government paid off the \$400 million debts and formed one company called Fishery Products International. A few years later, the company was passed back to the private sector; all the employees received shares and everything looked rosy.

At about the same time, scientists were working on tests to see how plentiful the fish stocks were. They found a depletion in fish stocks, and so came about the cutting of fish quotas. In 1989, federal

plant workers are women. In most communities, both husbands and wives work at the fish plant.

The announcement was made in January 1990 that the three plants to close would be Trepassey, Gaultois and Grand Bank. The first reaction was disbelief! Trepassey, quite ideally situated for a fish plant, is Fishery Products International's oldest plant, with a total of 640 workers. How could our Federal Member of Parliament, also a

In Trepassey, the future is still uncertain. In September of this year, the doors will likely close on 640 workers. Where is there a job market to accommodate all of these people? All of the organizations, including the Fishermen's Union and town councils, have been lobbying both levels of government, looking for quotas and options. The National Sea plant at St. John's will be diversified to a shrimp operation with a scaled-down work force. Gaultois is looking for a licence for redfish instead of cod and other deep-sea fish. The plants are also looking for prospective buyers, but offers are few and far between.

The permanent closing of the fish plants has been devastating to Newfoundland both economically and traditionally. The fishery has been a way of life in Newfoundland for hundreds of years. This has made Newfoundland unique in its lifestyle as opposed to the more progressive ways of mainland Canada. The closing of the fish plants means the disintegration of whole towns. Three plants this year; more quota cuts; how many closures next year?

The crisis we are facing in the fishery will eventually extend to other industries throughout the country, which depend on natural resources.

One-industry towns will become ghost towns and so perhaps will our provinces. With an already high rate of unemployment and use of social services, the burden of thousands of displaced fish plant workers will strain the future of this province. How can our governments stand by and watch the total collapse of an entire industry? What a shame!

Glenda Winter has worked for Fishery Products International in Trepassey, Newfoundland, for 14 years.



Fisheries Minister, Tom Siddon, and John Crosbie, the MP for St. John's West, announced a cut in the quota for Fishery Products International.

While foreign over-fishing has become uncontrollable, our fishing quotas are cut. Our communities are faced with permanent unemployment and the problems that arise in a community with total job loss. Half of Newfoundland's fish

Newfoundlander, allow this to happen? What will become of us? After September 1991, the Trepassey fish plant will no longer exist.

Disbelief has now turned to anger. The provincial government has offered enough money to the failing fish company to help keep the affected fish plants open for an additional two years. The plants usually operate for forty to forty-eight weeks; now, however, there is only a guarantee of twenty weeks of work.

Families have begun to feel the loss of income. Programs were set up to upgrade and retrain workers. Some younger workers began to take advantage of this but what about our older workers? They have no other job skills and are now faced with the difficult task of beginning again after working at one job for most of their lives. To take the training programs, people will have to move to where those courses are offered. That means retraining for a whole new lifestyle. Already families have had to relocate. In some other cases, husbands have left to seek employment elsewhere and the wives and children are left behind. With her husband gone for weeks at a time, the burden of maintaining the household falls into the women's laps. Businesses have gone under and the morale of the people has sunk to an all time low.

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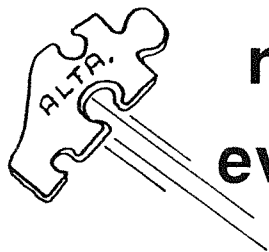
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Is Calgary just as roughneck as everyplace else?



by Lisa Jensen

On May 7, a woman dialed 911 (emergency) in distress. The operator thought it was "just" a domestic dispute and told police just that. The police therefore did not respond for several hours. When they did arrive, they found the woman had been sexually assaulted. Police say the main problem is that the operator and not police determined the urgency, and denied that police regard "domestic disputes" as less serious than other crimes.

I was asked by *The Womanist* whether anyone was writing about this incident, and about whether there are any parallels between this "911 incident" and the "incident" last year where a woman was raped in the middle of a major Calgary thoroughfare while passers-by cheered on the rapist.

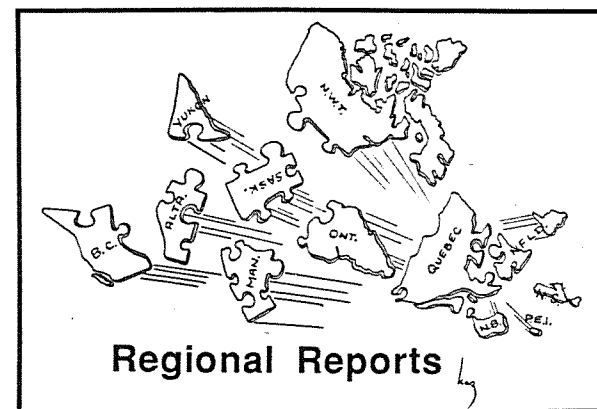
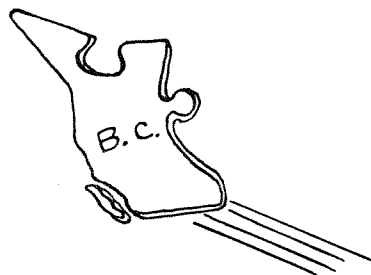
There is a connection between the "911 incident" and last year's incident, and I am sure that in any city on this continent or any other, one can draw the same parallels. I take offence at the notion that these two incidents have something to do with Calgary's alleged "roughneck" or "redneck" character, just as I take offence to allusions (or should that be illusions) of "Latin

American machismo" or Japanese women's subservience or any other "explanation" that make sexism or racism appear to be something other than pervasive throughout all societies.

I cannot imagine one city on this earth where passers-by would not cheer on a rapist, where police do respond with urgency to "domestic disputes", where women who have been raped are not asked, "Did he hurt you?". I cannot imagine one city where all of these events do not occur daily, even hourly. I cannot imagine one city where women live free from fear.

I am sure that Calgary is not the only place where women who work in shelters and sexual assault centres counsel women to shout "FIRE" and not "RAPE" or "HELP", or to tell police their home is being burglarized, not that their husband is killing them. We live in a society which encourages the violation of women. There is no place where we feel safe.

Lisa Jensen is regular contributor to The Womanist from Calgary, Alberta.



Rita who? BC's new invisible woman

by Luanne Armstrong

If I met Rita Johnston, the newly appointed premier of B.C., on the street, I wouldn't recognize her. Neither would any of my friends. I just did a random "woman in the office survey". Nope, they didn't know much about her either. Not that any of us, any more, pay much attention to B.C. politics, other than to bang our foreheads in despair, as once again, some new Socred inequity comes down the pipe.

But this woman is our new premier. I went back through the *Vancouver Sun* and other provincial papers for the past month. Nope...not a word about her. Only one fuzzy picture. Lots on the budget. Lots on Mel Couvelier, the finance minister who was fired by Johnston the minute she took office. Lots, still, on VanderZalm, who continues to garner headlines because he's loud and colourful, and never

shuts up. But nothing on Rita.

Who is this woman and why don't we know anything about her? When she took office, the media phoned various women's groups to gather our non-reaction to having a woman ride into the Premier's office in the wake of VanderZalm's scandal-ridden coattails. She has recently declared her intention to run for the head of the Social Credit party, but even that didn't elicit much interest. She says she is not a feminist. She has always supported Bill VanderZalm until she was persuaded that it was not politically expedient to do so any longer. Now she wants to be the next elected premier of B.C.

What little we do know about Rita ... she was born in Saskatchewan, married at sixteen, is still married with children, and at one point served as Highways Minister under the Zalm. This morning, as I listened to the news, I heard VanderZalm yelling at her

from his new seat across the House. His tone was hectoring and abusive. There was no tape of any reply from Premier Johnston. He sounded like a battering man, still attempting to assert control even from his disgraced position, unable and unwilling to admit to any wrongdoing.

Premier Johnston has arrived at her present seat of power by never upsetting anyone, by being invisible, by being a normal societally-defined "woman". No wonder she's invisible ... no story there, no media interest, no social interest, just another woman supporting the boys and getting a few rewards along the way. But, she's a woman, the first woman premier in B.C.

And the mainstream media wonders why we're not celebrating such an achievement?

Luanne Armstrong works at the Nicola Valley Institute of Technology in British Columbia.

Bridging the gap (cont'd)

i.e., how this will affect the reception of the Festival for women who traditionally have not attended the Festival, like fisherwomen, farmwomen, and other rural women;

- the public display of affection between women (lesbians), that lesbians 'flaunt' their sexual preference;

- lesbians work for visibility **without** taking into account the concerns of other women attending the Festival;

- the censorship lesbians feel from heterosexual women and other lesbians when trying to create open and safe environments for themselves;

- the unspoken attitudes, feelings, concerns and general dishonesty of what is really happening for each woman as we all go through the Festival planning process, i.e., fear of being judged homophobic or unsupportive to lesbians, lesbians always feeling like the bulldozers who get things through;

- fears of being labelled lesbian through association;

- the feeling around why lesbians always have to say

they're lesbians and talk about their sexuality all the time.

So the issues were out in the open and, as is always the case, the workshop had to end. Heart-felt feelings had been expressed, but not discussed at any length to feel satisfactory. Some women felt hopeful, while others felt desperate. And some grasped for solutions. As we all know, we were, in fact, doing the only solution - talking openly and honestly to each other with a strong commitment to the process and maintaining the vision we have of a unified women's community, while celebrating our differences and seeing them as the richness of our community's fabric.

Was part one of "Bridging the Gap" successful? Yes, and we have a long way to go - it feels all very much part of the process.

Part two of "Bridging the Gap" will examine each of the biases and judgements expressed in part one of the workshop. It is hoped that by doing so, we will become clearer on the 'whys' by looking

at our belief structures behind the biases and judgements, our fears, our intentions, our desires and our commitment to each other.

Like any community, it is unjust to describe the women's community/movement as one unit with one voice. But even though we diverge on many issues, we have many more common concerns than differences. The PEI Women's community is no different, yet it is a very special community and I believe we will work together to reach that place of unity, while maintaining the richness of our diversity.

Wish us luck.

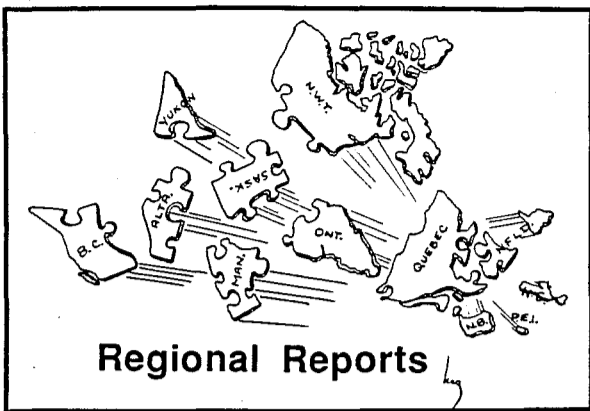
Salli Brock Abbott is a fire-breathing lesbian, who stretches and strains with each turn toward a place that embraces her way of being in the world. Her commitment to strengthening lesbian communities comes from a very powerful, clear and undeterred place deep within herself... She loves the Island of PEI and the way it so gently provides her the energy she needs to continue her struggle.

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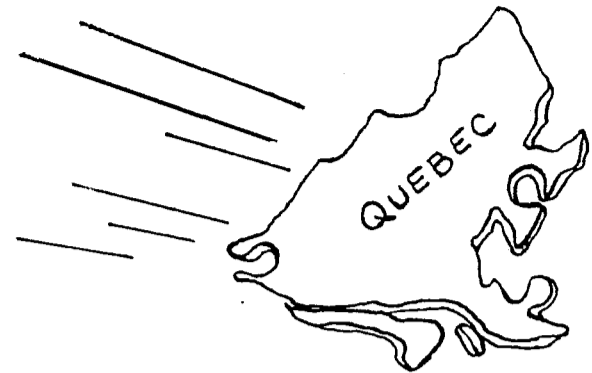
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The Québécois coalition against the Great Whale Hydro project



Regional Reports



by France Lafond

In Québec, a coalition of more than 50 environmental and native groups, political and social organizations, including the Grand Council of the Crees and the Parti Québécois, is requesting a public debate on energy policies and a moratorium on all new hydro dams, including the Great Whale Project. The coalition is making a tour of all regions of Québec, to meet with the public and promote the action against the Great Whale Project. We are not only addressing the environment issue but the government's assertion that building hydro dams to sell cheap electricity to the U.S. is good business. The Great Whale Project would be detrimental to the environment, it is economically unsound and the local people, the Crees, are determined to stop it.

Environmental groups have won battles in Québec before; a public debate held by an independent commission would be a major factor in determining future energy policies in Québec. It could in fact be a turning point towards the use of alternative means of energy production: solar and wind energy, co-generation and other energy sources of the future.

Since the Crees first addressed their concerns to the Americans, Hydro-Québec's plans have attracted a lot of international attention, and this has been helpful in putting pressure on the Liberal Government in Québec. Although Québec's record on environment and minority rights is no worse than the other provinces of Canada and certainly no worse than the

United States, the debate could be used in Canadian media to discredit the people and the Government of Québec as much as possible in the face of Québec's will to transform the Canadian constitution.

Not only rivers can be diverted, but also people's attention. While so much environmental groups' energies are focussing on the protection of the Great Whale River, Hydro-Québec's major competitors: nuclear plant and fossil fuel plant owners must be very satisfied. Is anybody watching while the nuclear plants are looking for the right place to dispose of their radioactive waste? Are environmental groups involved in the review of the "geological disposal concept" in Ontario and Manitoba? What about the fossil fuel plants of industrial

United States which are greatly responsible for the acid rains? Has anybody been picketing there lately? We don't hear that much from the media on these subjects.

The cancellation of the Great Whale Project will involve the loss of potential revenue and of potential jobs at a time of dire need in Québec. We will have to shift towards environmentally sound energy alternatives and adapt our economy very fast, a difficult task, but ultimately the very best solution. While the Great Whale project is delayed by court actions from the Crees and by the environmental review process, the coalition is racing through Québec to raise the awareness of the people. A demonstration is scheduled in Québec City on June 20th. Hydro has to be aware that

people will stand in the way and stop the bulldozers if needed. I urge everybody who cares to write, especially to Robert Bourassa, Premier of Québec, 885 Grande-Allée East, Building J, 3rd Floor, Québec, Québec, G1A 1A2 and Richard Drouin, Chairman of Hydro-Québec, 75 blvd René-Lévesque west, Montréal (Québec), H2Y 1K9.

Global activism is good, until we forget our own backyard.

France Lafond is an activist and feminist member of a family which includes Québécois, Cree and Algonquin Métis. She is the founder of Communications Nord-Sud Inc. whose purpose is the exchange of knowledge to improve living conditions. (word-processing, translation)

James Bay Phase II: A personal view

In the early seventies Hydro-Québec decided to build dams on Cree territory without consulting the people who lived there in any way. One of the rivers that was dammed was our river, the Big River, the Great River, Chisasibi. It was on this river that the Cree lived and survived for thousands of years. The river gave them everything they could ever want in order to survive: fresh water, fish of many kinds, beaver, muskrat, otter, geese and ducks, etc. Along this river the people paddled hundreds of miles into the interior to reach their traplines, over many long portages. There was life on the river. Today the river has been diverted, dammed and flooded and everything along this beautiful river has been destroyed or changed in some way forever.

Before and during the giant hydro-electric project many studies were done concerning the environment. As to how accurate these studies were, no one can ever be sure; the reports were made, and the project went ahead anyway.

Now the fish in the river are no longer edible because of mercury contamination. The feeding grounds and shelters

of many species of animals have been so completely destroyed that our elders say the animals may never come back to the areas that have been flooded or in any way affected by the project.

When I look at the way life has changed over the past ten years in the Cree communities I wonder if any amount of study would ever tell the human side of the story. I wonder if people outside of our territory will ever understand when we say that if the land is destroyed, the people will also die.

Our village of Chisasibi is relatively new. Our home used to be on the island of Fort George but erosion to the island would be greater now with the changing current of the river caused by the dam, and so we were obliged to move to the new town approximately ten kilometres inland from the original gathering place. The social impacts of moving a whole village were numerous and we are still feeling the effects of that move. Every person, no matter how old, was affected in some way.

Because of the hydro project, a lot of the essential services which are taken for granted in less remote areas, which we didn't have, were



revealed and brought to the forefront, such as health and education services. But these are services which should have been there in the first place if the governments had met their obligations.

The change in the lives of the Cree came so fast that we had hardly enough time to catch our breath. And now they're talking about Phase II of the James Bay Project...

An elder from one of our communities said that flooding the land would result in contamination of water in all surrounding rivers and lakes, which would in turn kill all fish and anyone drinking from these waters, animal and human.

James Bay is one of the last wilderness areas of the world. Can't people see what they're doing to the world? Every day on the news we hear of air pollution, oil spills, erosion to the ozone layer, extinction of animal life, continued destruction of the rain forest, global warming, pollution of the oceans from luxury liners, etc. What will be left for our children and all the generations to follow? What kind of world are we leaving behind for them? Aboriginal people know that we do not inherit the earth from our ancestors, we are borrowing it from our children.

When I look at my grandchildren, I wonder what

by Luci Bobbish-Salt

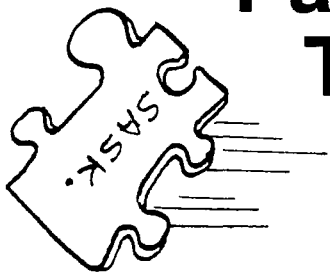
kind of world their children will be living in. Will they be forced to walk around with masks in order to breathe? Or will they ever be able to enjoy the life of their ancestors by surviving off the land?

Large corporations have been making money hand over fist and a lot of them do it at the expense of mankind by destroying the environment. I think these large corporations should spend some of their profits by cleaning up the mess they made on their way to the top of the financial charts, maybe by hiring some of the jobless. After all, it was the public that made them filthy rich by buying their products in the first place. If they destroy the environment they will also destroy the people. Who will buy their products then?

But we should not forget that many environmentally-conscious people around the world have been spending a lot of energy in making the public aware of what is happening or will happen if Phase II of the hydro-electric project is implemented. We urge you to come and see what we are talking about. Come and enjoy

cont'd pg. 47

Farming in Saskatchewan: The end of a way of life



by Vicki Dutton

If you have ever driven through or flown over the Prairies you will know. The Prairies are a patchwork quilt made up of miles upon miles of farmland.

This endless panorama of land provides the factory floor of Canada's important industry of grain exports. These factory floors annually yield the bulk of Canada's largest export commodities, wheat, and other export grains, like flax seed, canola, barley, lentils, peas and oats. The production of export grain supports jobs in the industry, and small communities throughout the country.

While many of us harbor nostalgic "apple pie" visions of idyllic farm life, for the real farmer the reality is far different.

For farm families the love of the land has remained the same, in the last few years a great sadness and pain in farm life has emerged. Few have escaped the negative impacts of the world grain war raging since 1985. With grain depression, everyone from the farm family to the rural community to the urban economy, has felt the downward pressure.

"For Sale" signs, boarded store windows, pages and pages of newspaper ads of farmland for sale or rent by financial institutions, and catalogues of auction sales, record the casualties. Everyone is hurting.

Net farm incomes unadjusted for inflation have declined 33% since 1985. Many farm families have been forced into poverty or seek employment off the farm to subsidize farm income, or dramatically expanded their farm size. Farmland values have declined 40%.

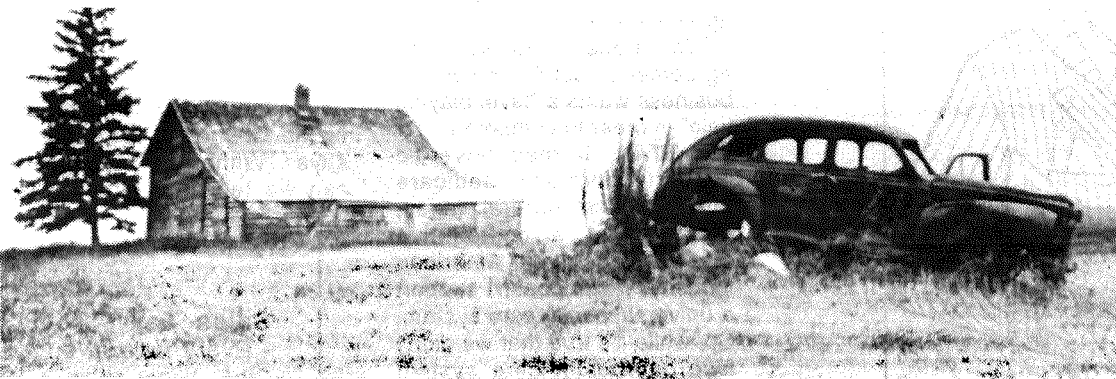
The future of this province is in jeopardy as young people

continue to leave in search of a better future.

Fewer young people, an aging farm population (over 50 years), and larger farm size means fewer people in rural Saskatchewan. With fewer people comes fewer taxpayers, fewer children will force schools to close and communities to shrivel. By the time this situation stabilizes, the rural panorama of the whole province will never be the same.

Why has this happened? Could it have been avoided?

In the '70s and early '80s the Saskatchewan economy was booming. We celebrated a population of over one million people!



Steady pressure on farm land has driven farmers out — 80% have left their land since 1945.

Farmers encouraged by the Canadian government to "expand, modernize and specialize" were being told to "produce, produce, the hungry world is waiting". And we did! The young ambitious farmers responded to federal advice and borrowed on the future.

Unfortunately the farmers of the world responded too well to the encouragement of politicians, and with economies booming politicians failed to notice that their initiatives had created a mounting oversupply of agricultural commodities. In 1985, with every storage

facility stuffed to bursting, the U.S., by a stroke of a pen, drove world wheat prices down 50%. The world Grain War had begun.

U.S. market share had declined. The Europeans once importers had become aggressive exporters. The American farm economy was angrily recording the lowest net income in decades. The American government responding to a study which outlined the importance of the agriculture to the American economy dug in for a battle over the grain trade.

The 1985 Farm Bill was designed to provide the tools for America to sell its surplus grain on the export market,

commodity is grain instead of gas) with the lowest prices used to attract the buyers.

For the smaller players like Canada, Australia, Brazil, Argentina and the third world, the lower prices were a direct loss of revenue to the farmer.

The results are in the statistics; American net farm income has tripled since 1983, Canadian net farm income has declined from an average of \$15,000 each to \$4,000.

American farm debt has declined 40% while Canadian farm debt remains at record high levels. Seven crop years later, grain prices have hit historic world lows. Real prices today are lower than they were in the depth of the depression

reduction reduced federal farm support to agriculture by 41%. Saskatchewan net farm income fell by 42% - 76% if depreciation costs are to be included. (stats from: "Market Commentary" Agriculture Canada, Dec. 1990, p. 78)

Canada's national agricultural policy, driven by the Conservative agenda since 1984 has failed dismally in response to a crisis situation in the grain production industry. The income support has been unpredictable and agricultural policy has not even addressed the problem of surplus production or environmental conservation.

While the federal government continues to espouse a "motherhood" commitment to agriculture and the family farm, their actions have created a very different reality in Saskatchewan.

These actions have a human face; it is recorded by statistics in the doubling of farm suicides, marital breakdown and the grain farmers forced to leave or rent the land. It is recorded in the exodus of young people from our province.

As well, these actions may be placing at risk the whole economic soundness of the future industry of export grain production.

Unfortunately, neither Saskatchewan nor its farmers can battle the treasuries of the U.S. and Europe indefinitely while waiting for a solution at the international General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) negotiations. This is a problem which can only be addressed by a redefinition of federal policy to meaningfully respond to the immediate political crisis created by the world grain war and its effect on the economic casualties: the farm families.

Vicki Dutton is a farmer and freelance writer living in Paynton, Saskatchewan

days of the 1930's.

Although, since 1985, Canada has made significant attempts to cushion the losses by deficiency payments, the record will show a system which corresponded better to election agendas than a proper addressing of the situation. The two billion dollar deficiency payments came in 1986 and 1988. 1986 saw the Saskatchewan election of Progressive Conservative Premier Grant Devine. 1988 was a federal election year.

Direct federal deficiency payments designed to help alleviate the revenue shortage created by the political situation in world grain trade has never been as high since.

In 1990, a federal government concerned with deficit

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Agnes McPhail
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who won for women the right to be persons.



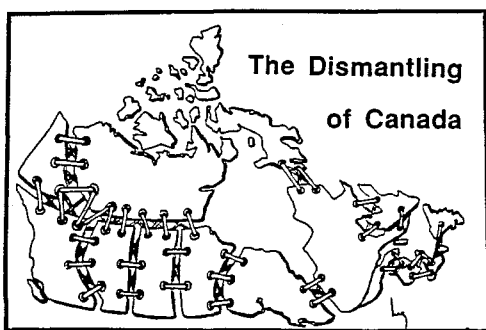
Nellie McClung
who, with her sister suffragists, won the vote for women.

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Nightmare on

by Catherine Morrison

In his first speech to the House of Commons, back in 1984, Brian Mulroney said, "Give us twenty years...and you will not recognize this country". In 1991, only seven years later, about the only thing Canadians can be sure of is that Brian Mulroney wasn't kidding. The changes this government has made already have been so fundamental, so wide-spread, and so destructive, that you can only wonder what will be left of this country after twenty years.

If you do lose your job, this government has made it harder for you to collect Unemployment Insurance. You must hold on to your job longer (difficult in some job sectors and in some regions of the country), and you can't collect as long - even though the economy is in a slump and nobody is hiring. What is interesting about these changes, and about the other big change accomplished in the April 1989 budget - employers and employees now pay the

decades--was followed by the announced "clawback" of family allowance benefits. And now there is talk of replacing the family allowance with some kind of guaranteed child care payment scheme. To qualify, you will undoubtedly have to pass some kind of means test. In other words, you will have to prove that you are poor. **This** is apparently the kind of Canada Brian Mulroney had in mind that we would not recognize.

Another of the pillars of Canadian life currently under attack by this government is our health care system. Remember in 1988 when the Tories swore that Medicare was not in the FTA? They even dragged out poor, elderly Emmett Hall, the "father of Canadian Medicare" and had him attest to the fact that Medicare did not appear in the agreement.

Well, it doesn't appear in the agreement. But Canadian big business wants a "level playing field" in order to compete under the FTA. If they have to support universal Medicare through their federal taxes, they are at a competitive disadvantage with American industry, which doesn't support a universal health care system. So, while it's true that we didn't lose our health care system because it said so in the FTA, the government has nonetheless begun to oblige big business with its recent passage of Bill C69, which cuts back federal transfer payments to the provinces. It is those transfer payments that pay for our health care. If such cuts continue, it is speculated that by the end of the century, there will not be enough money going to health care to ensure universality of standards and access across this country. This is apparently the kind of Canada Brian Mulroney has in mind.

Not content with attacks on the physical well-being of Canadians, this government would steal our soul as well. It has all but destroyed the historic east-west link represented by Via Rail. And now we can no longer subsidize our Canadian publishers thanks to that first "Free Trade Budget". At the moment, Canadian publishers, who make it possible for Canadian writers to voice the Canadian experience, are almost all either bankrupt or on the verge.

The February 1990 budget took away more voices--those of Aboriginal groups and

women's groups--when it chopped their communications budgets. The National Action Committee on the Status of Women, and a legion of other advocacy and social action groups, have been battered by deep cuts to their funding. This government does not want to hear from the disadvantaged and they will go to extraordinary anti-democratic lengths to stifle those voices.

They seem especially bent on stifling the most Canadian of voices, the means by which we talk to each other from British Columbia to Newfoundland each day, and see each other in Camrose and Broad Cove on the nightly news. The CBC is on the government's hit list. The most recent cuts - \$110 million worth - have resulted in the elimination of 11 television stations, 160 programmes and 1100 jobs. Canadians in several cities no longer have local CBC news or regional current affairs programming. As Maude Barlow, Chairperson of the Council of Canadians, says, "Without a voice, how can we tell each other what

Minister went to New York, where he told a group of American businessmen that Canada was "open for business." To show that he was serious, he disbanded our Foreign Investment Review Agency (FIRA), which reviewed and regulated foreign investment in Canada. He replaced it with Investment Canada, an agency that has representatives around the world out looking for buyers for Canadian business. They've been remarkably successful. Between 1985 and 1990 there were \$80 billion worth of foreign takeovers of Canadian business. What's even more horrifying is that these Canadian businesses have been taken over by foreign concerns using money raised mostly in Canada, including the savings that you and I, if we're lucky, have put in Canadian banks!

Almost as swiftly as they disbanded FIRA, the government cancelled the National Energy Policy, a plan put in place by the previous government to ensure that



Many of these changes have hit Canadians directly. Remember the "Jobs, Jobs, Jobs" that Brian Mulroney promised us would follow from his Free Trade Agreement? Since the FTA came into effect in 1989, 430,000 full-time jobs have been lost, 226,000 as a result of the FTA, according to the Canadian Labour Congress. Of the total, 290,000 jobs have been lost in manufacturing alone. So we know that those who are suffering are women and other minorities who make up the bulk of the manufacturing workforce. Is this what Mr. Mulroney meant by "Jobs, Jobs, Jobs"?

whole premium and government no longer contributes--is that our Unemployment Insurance system now looks remarkably like the American U.I. system. The Council of Canadians called that budget the "First Free Trade Budget", because it began the harmonization of many Canadian institutions and programs with the American way.

That budget also announced the demise to universal Old Age Pensions, with its so-called "clawback" of benefits to seniors over a certain income level. This first attack on the principle of universality--which has been fundamental to the Canadian way of life for

TAXES

Sales Tax

- Every federal budget since 1985 has raised the federal sales and/or excise taxes. (Excise taxes are those collected on goods imported into Canada.)
- The GST will further increase the tax burden for all Canadians. The value of the GST tax credit will decrease, as it is only partially indexed for inflation.

Income Tax

- In 1986, a 3% surtax was applied to **all** taxpayers, replacing the 5% surtax which had been applied in 1985 **only** to those earning over \$40,000.
- Between 1984 and 1991, total income taxes will have risen 60.2 percent for a working poor family with two children while a similar high-income family will see their income taxes fall by 6.4 percent.
- A two-earner family with two children and an income of \$ 26,000 (1988) paid 38.7 percent more in total taxes (sales and excise plus personal income taxes) in 1988 over 1984, while a similar family with an income of \$100,000 (1988) saw their tax bill increase by just 11.2 percent.

they're really doing to this country?"

At least some of what they're doing we can see and feel, painful as it is. What about those changes, equally frightening, that the ordinary Canadian knows little about?

In late 1984, the new Prime

Canadians would have adequate heat and light for long, dark winter nights well into the future.

Then, early on in their second mandate, (won with only 43% of the popular vote)

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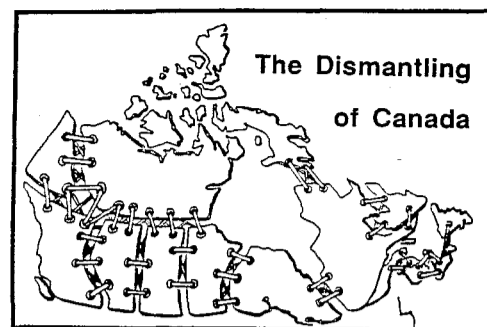
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ABORIGINAL PEOPLE'S PROGRAMS

- On a per capita basis, federal funding for the Indian and Inuit Affairs Program has fallen 11 percent between 1985-86 and 1990-91. The average annual decline is 2.2 percent.
- The 1990 Budget cut \$52 million from the Native Citizen Programs of the Secretary of State over the next five years. These cuts will affect nearly 100 Friendship Centres, 11 Native newspapers, 11 Native communications societies and 13 northern Native broadcast offices.
- An additional \$26 million was cut from capital and community services budgets, \$7 million from welfare services and \$2 million from economic development. These cuts will be duplicated in the next fiscal year.
- As a result of these cuts, reserve housing needs will not be met; new educational facilities will not be built; water and sewer lines will not be installed; and jobs will be lost.

of the border--or if the grants are for military arms production. It would be possible to write a book on the meaning of this last little proviso.

Nor will it be the Canadian people who are served when the current FTA becomes history because it's been replaced by a much grander deal involving the U.S., Canada and Mexico. According to senior U.S. trade negotiators, the little deal between the U.S. and Canada will be gone, a mere nuisance. And the bright, new and much better three-way deal which will replace it will have none of the meagre protections the Mulroney government managed to secure in the last deal. Cultural industries--films, publishing, television--forget protecting their fragile, yet uniquely Canadian character. Farm subsidies--not a chance. And you can bet there will be no Abrogation Clause in this super deal. Our FTA has one--we

"competitiveness", "leanness and meanness", and "the bottom line".

But will we even notice what's going on at those trade talks in Washington? Those of us who don't have jobs will probably be too busy worrying about feeding our families to notice. Those of us who are staggering under the effects of high interest rates will probably be too busy trying to pay the



mortgage, or rushing off to buy groceries and gas over the border, because we're overwhelmed by the extra burden of the GST.

The rest of us are too busy worrying about whether the country's powerbrokers will succeed in forcing the breakup of our country upon us. The Canadian people don't want that breakup. A recent

constitutional crisis. She says that it "plays right into the hands of the competitiveness captains. Québec's plans for a devolution of powers, demands being echoed by the Western premiers and championed by the Federal Tories, will create the corporate dream of a small, decentralized, ineffectual government--all in the name of 'saving Canada'."

"The corporate dream of a small, decentralized, ineffectual government..."--make no mistake, that's what Brian Mulroney was talking about when he said Canada would be unrecognizable twenty years after he got it into his clutches.

The corporate dream of Canada is one in which big business can operate unfettered by government regulations on employment, health and safety, and the environment; in which the welfare of Canadian citizens is of secondary or little importance; in which the democratic right of Canadian citizens to decide what kind of country they will live in is dramatically enfeebled.

This is not the Canadian dream. It is not the dream of ordinary Canadians.

The dreams of many ordinary Canadians have already been stolen from them in only seven years of this government's deliberate dismantling of this country and what it has stood for.

If we Canadians give them thirteen more years, if we give them any more time at all, the dream will have become a nightmare for us all. And that nightmare will be a Canada unrecognizable to Canadians.

they stripped the National Energy Board of its ability, and its duty, to protect the rights of Canadians to secure energy supplies. The National Energy Board has recently been sent off to new headquarters in Calgary, which is like sending a newly-sheared sheep to play with the wolves. Calgary is not the seat of Canadian energy interests--it is the branch plant headquarters for American and multi-national energy exporting concerns. This move makes quite clear **whom** government agencies ought to be serving, at least in the view of Mr. Mulroney, and it's certainly not the Canadian people.

Nor is it the Canadian people who have been served by a Free Trade Agreement that prevents this and future governments from giving regional development grants to those areas of the country that have fewer resources, a practice that has been an essential part of the Canadian belief that all Canadians should share more or less equally in our general prosperity. Oh, we can make grants of this kind if they are for energy exploration and development -- the multinationals are quite happy for the Canadian taxpayer to pay to find the energy which they will then sell, mostly south

GOVERNMENT PROGRAM SPENDING

- According to a current StatsCan study, 44% of the national debt is due to tax breaks for corporations and the wealthy, while another 50% is caused by the compounding growth of interest payments. Therefore, only 6% of the debt can be attributed to government program spending, of which social program spending is a decreasing fraction;
- Federal government program spending as a percentage of GDP has declined from 19.6% in 1984-85 to 16% in 1990-91 -- a decline of almost 20%.

could get out of the deal if we had a government with the courage and vision to make such a move. No such chances will be taken with the proposed trilateral deal. Canadians will be locked in, in perpetuity, to the economy, the politics, the social philosophy, and the foreign policy of the American giant.

And we'll be locked in before you or I have a chance to say a word. If President Bush gets his way, by June 1 we will all be hurtling along in so called "fast-track" negotiations which will see a three-way super deal signed by the beginning of January, 1992, at least a year prior to a Canadian election. The Canadian people will have no say as to whether we want to be part of this continental monolith, where the chief values will be those buzzwords of the Greed Decade:

CBC/Globe and Mail poll found that 83% of Québécois think Canada is the best country in the world to live in, and that 59% of English-speaking Canadians want to maintain two official languages.

Frances Russell, a columnist with the **Winnipeg Free Press**, has a very perceptive analysis of the present

Catherine Morrison is the Executive Director of the Council of Canadians. She was born in Brandon, Manitoba, grew up in Winnipeg and Thunder Bay, went to graduate school in Toronto, currently works in Ottawa and lives in Chelsea, Quebec--all of which explains, at least in part, her proud Canadian Nationalism.

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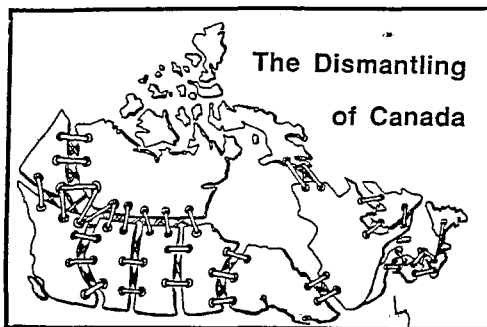
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Sowing Disunity: Canada's federal agriculture policy

by Nettie Wiebe

The headlines in the urban media trumpet yet more 'aid' to farmers. "Federal Budget gives farmers \$1.3 billion", "Farmers Get New Safety Nets", etc. In Saskatchewan, a key agricultural province, the government has instituted a provincial sales tax, harmonized with the GST, to help pay for farm programs. All this appears to signal a growing government commitment to keep farms viable and help farm families survive.

But appearances are deceptive. The much-publicized 'aid' is a temporary wall thrown up to deflect the wind while the long-term shelterbelts protecting farm families are being uprooted and demolished. While most Canadians, including many farmers, are busy reading and interpreting the upbeat messages about a more competitive agricultural industry, the erosion of people from the land because of farm foreclosures and economic hardships is accelerating.

Unfortunately, the effects of the publicity about farm subsidies is to perpetuate a rift between farmers, who are portrayed as economic liabilities, and urban taxpayers who are footing the bill. The neon signs on the wall are creating disunity between rural and urban Canadians while hiding the real changes that the farming community is suffering.

The objectives of agriculture policy in Canada have been radically redrafted during the life of this Conservative government. Agriculture is being refitted to be competitive in a global economy. Canadian farmers are told to be more "efficient", "competitive" and "market-oriented". For farmers, successfully competing in this free-market environment means selling products for lower prices at the farm-gate and still surviving. But as prices continue to slide, there are fewer successes.

In 1989 Agriculture Canada released their Green Paper called "Growing Together", which articulates the new policy direction being pursued in farming. Consistent with the rest of its economic agenda, that direction is one of free trade, deregulation, privatization and the elimination of support programs that ameliorate the injustices of 'the global market-place'. In agriculture, that has meant an attack on orderly marketing structures that shield farmers somewhat from market fluctuations and the elimination of any social considerations from farm programs.

The government has moved on many fronts to implement the new agenda. Orderly marketing structures which are designed to enable farmers to produce food for Canadians are being systematically dismantled. Because of the Free Trade Agreement, we have gone from a two price wheat system, where millers paid a set price for Canadian wheat, to Canadian millers paying the much lower American stock market price for wheat and, most recently, to an open border on wheat. This allows Canadian millers to buy U.S. wheat and opens the border to U.S. baked goods. For grain farmers, this has meant the loss of an assured domestic market and, even more seriously, a price cut giving us less than half the price we were getting two years ago. Meanwhile, the price of bread to consumers has gone up. Who is getting that profit? It isn't Canadian farmers or anyone in the Canadian economy.

The above example is one of many. Farm programs are being dismantled on all fronts. Everything from public transportation systems (VIA Rail) to product quality control to farm financing has become more costly for farmers. The government is systematically

withdrawing from supporting agriculture, leaving the production of food and the farming community to the dictates of an international market-place dominated by transnational corporations. The results are that both prices and policies are increasingly set by forces external to Canada.

communication services. The abandonment of rail-lines, the cuts to the CBC (which especially targeted farm-related broadcasts such as "The Food Show", "Country Side" and "Land and Sea") and the closure of hundreds of rural post offices are serious losses to farming communities.

Fewer, more expensive services and travelling long distances to get to them is especially difficult for country women as we struggle to maintain an adequate quality of family life.

The deterioration of the rural infrastructure undermines the very possibility of living in farming communities. At a time when incomes are abysmal, farming families are watching the receding back of a federal government that is withdrawing essential services.

Unity among Canadians is undermined by cultivating a rural/urban split. National strength is sapped by policies that transfer economic decision-making in food policy to external forces. Patriotic loyalty and faith in national government are not enhanced by policies that leave rural people feeling abandoned and ill-served. A switch from present market-driven economic and social policies would do more for national unity than many rounds of constitutional talks. Agriculture policy geared towards achieving food self-sufficiency, sustaining the environment, assuring adequate incomes for farming people, and building healthy rural communities must be an integral part of our nation-building agenda.

Nettie Wiebe is the women's president of the National Farmers Union.



The long list of program cuts and policy changes designed to make farmers more "self-reliant", combined with low international prices for exported food, have resulted in such low incomes for farm families that most can no longer make a living on the farm. More than half of farm family income has been earned from off-farm sources over the past few years.

The necessity of subsidizing food production with off-farm wages has fallen heavily on the backs of farm women. As well as doing an increased amount of farm work because there is no money to hire help, almost half of Canadian farm women now hold off-farm jobs. On many farms, these wages are the difference between the survival of the farm and bankruptcy. Like their urban counterparts, farm women continue to carry the load of domestic work and childcare. The long triple workdays that many farm women put in go unnoticed by those who push for more 'competitive' (read lower) farm-gate prices.

The overall government agenda of cutting public services is having a major impact on farming communities across Canada. Because of the distances, rural people depend heavily on transportation and

The freezing of federal transfer payments to the provinces will again hit rural health and education services the hardest, because sparser populations mean that these are the least 'cost-effective' in rural communities in terms of cost per client. And despite the need, a childcare initiative for rural communities seems to have disappeared from the government agenda altogether.

CBC

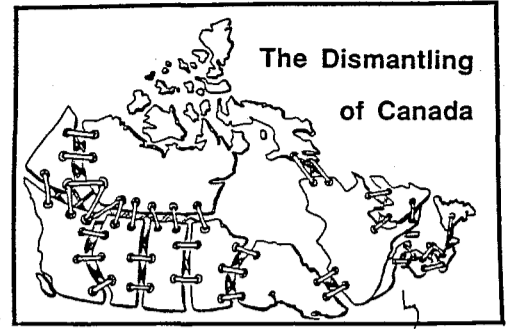
- Total Government funding of the CBC in 1990 was 12% less than when the Tories took office in 1984.
- In 1984, the CBC had 12,400 employees. In 1990, this number was reduced to 10,733 (before the announcement of cuts in Dec. 1990 which will result in 1,100 further jobs lost).
- Between 1985 - 1990, \$133 million has been cut from CBC
- December 1990: CBC, to address projected shortfall of \$108 million in fiscal year 1991-92, took the following measures:
 - 3 of 17 local television stations closed (CFLA Goose Bay; CBGAT Matane; CBLT Toronto)
 - 8 of 17 stations reduced to bureaus (CUBY Cornerbrook, CBIT Sydney, CJBRT Rimouski; CBST Sept-Isles, CBET Windsor, CBLFT Toronto, CBKST Saskatoon, CBRT Calgary.
 - 150 regional programs cut.

Toronto Rape Crisis Centre

business: 416 - 597-1171
crisis line: 416 - 597-8809
T.D.D.: 416 - 597-1214

Canada Post: Profits before people

by Cindy Wiggins



Re-printed from *CLC Today*, May 1991.

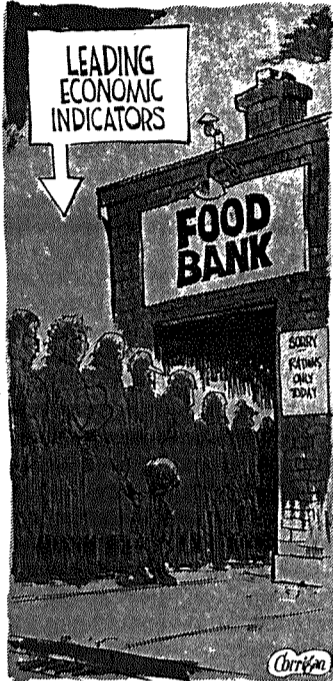
Canada Post management has a strategy to make private postal outlets more acceptable than the public post office. It goes something like this:

- Open a private franchise close to a public post office.
- Understaff the public office and reduce hours and types of service so the private outlet is more convenient for the public.
- Close the public office. Claim it is inefficient and not cost-effective.

Canada Post's ultimate goal is to close all public post offices by 1996 -- that's 5221 rural and 734 urban -- and replace them with private sector franchises.

Along with the cuts to VIA Rail, the privatization of postal services in rural Canada is savaging small communities.

Over the past two years, 66 communities have lost all their postal services and 3,500 households must travel up to 58 kilometers to obtain retail services. Management projections for 1989-1993 show



that over 8,000 postal jobs will be cut while mail volume is expected to increase by 35 per cent.

Canada Post is representative of our fine tradition of providing public

services to meet the needs of the people. It has contributed greatly to our economic, social and cultural life, linking people in every nook and cranny of the country. Mail delivery to rural Canada and to isolated northern communities has been subsidized to ensure fair and affordable access for all. It is also a critical link for the elderly, the disabled and the poor.

The piecemeal privatization of Canada Post will continue to mean the loss of well-paid, public service jobs in return for low-wage, part-time, unstable



jobs; a further savaging of the viability of rural and northern communities, and a decline in the quality and accessibility of service to the public.

Through the extended use of group and community mailboxes in all new subdivisions, not only is the public being denied equitable service, but letter carrier jobs are being limited and delivery of mail to the superboxes is increasingly being contracted out. By 1994, well over one million households will pick up their mail this way.

Cindy Wiggins is a Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) researcher.

PRIVATIZATION

Crown Corporations, wholly or partly owned by the federal government, sold since 1984:

1985

- Northern Transportation Company
Employees affected: 324

1986

- De Havilland Aircraft of Canada Ltd.
Employees affected: 5,400
- Pecheries Canada Inc.
Employees affected: 460
- Canadian Arsenals Ltd.
Employees affected: 924
- Canadair Ltd.
Employees affected: 5,431
- Nanisivik Mines Ltd. (18% government-owned)
Employees affected: 195
- CN Route (division of Canadian National)
Employees affected: 2,227

1987

- Northern Canada Power Commission (Yukon)
Employees affected: 34
- Teleglobe Canada
Employees affected: 1,100
- Variety Purchase Warrants
Employees affected: not available
- Fisheries Products International Ltd. (62.6% government-owned)
Employees affected: 8,650
- Canada Development Corporation (47% government-owned)
Employees affected: 11,387

1988

- CN Hotels (division of Canadian National)
Employees affected: 3,400
- Terra Nova Tel (division of Canadian National)
Employees affected: 400
- Northwestel (division of Canadian National)
Employees affected: 450
- CNCP (division of Canadian National)
Employees affected: not available
- Northern Canada Power Commission (NWT)
Employees affected: 272

1989

- Air Canada (43% sold 1988, 57% sold 1989)
Employees affected: 22,640

Initiatives Underway:

CAMECO, Petro-Canada, Telesat, CN Exploration, Nordion, Thermatronics

WOMEN'S PROGRAM FUNDING

1989

- After years of frozen funding, the 1989 federal budget cut \$2 million from the Secretary of State's Women's Program (15% of its funds).

1990

- A further 15% cut (\$1.6 million) to Women's Program was slated. This included 100% of the core funding for 75 women's centres. After much pressure from women across the country, the government restored \$1.2 of the \$1.6 million cut, for operational funding to the women's centres as a "transitional" measure.
- 3 women's publications, **Women's Healthsharing, Canadian Women Studies and Resources for Feminist Research**, had 100% of their funding cut. Women's research organizations were targeted for 20% cuts.
- Child Care Initiatives Fund and social housing funds were reduced by \$1.75 million.

1991

- \$1.2 million restored for women's centres funding, announced in January.
- However, with the 1991 federal budget of February, the budgets of Canada's equality-seeking groups are being cut by \$75 million this year and \$125 million every year thereafter. Among the still-anonymous (after more than three months) victims will be feminist organizations that contribute to policy-making and legislative reform at a fraction of the cost that bureaucracies would charge.



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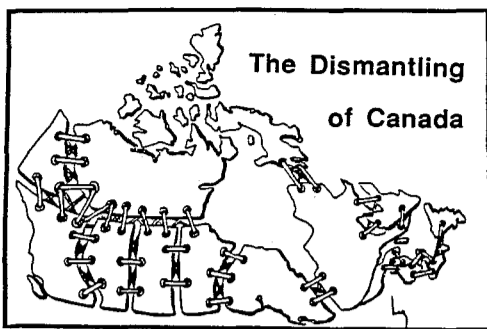
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Solar Energy... what a novel idea

by Ruth McKlusky

Energy policy in Canada should be designed to encourage efficiency, employment, reliance on renewable sources, small-scale competitive enterprises, decentralized facilities and long-term stability of prices.

The current federal Conservative government has accomplished precisely the opposite since coming to power in 1984, by providing subsidies to conventional and nuclear energy.

The government's performance has been particularly pathetic in the area of non-environmentally damaging alternate energy sources, also called "renewable" or "solar" energy sources.

Unfortunately, we are stuck with a government suffering from the "big is beautiful" syndrome: big nuclear power plants, big hydro-electric dams, and mega offshore oil projects; a government preoccupied with trying to climb technological Mount Everests rather than pursuing the obvious - that age old source of energy, the sun.

Surely Canada deserves better than this.

Unbelievable as it may seem, my pet cat napping on a sunny window sill is more cognizant of passive solar gains than the Conservative government. Canadians are notorious energy hogs. Yes, we live in a cold northern climate but by effecting simple measures such as requiring developers to orient new subdivisions north-south and encouraging architects to practise passive solar design (the capture and use of the sun's energy through proper building design) the government could dramatically lower our energy use per capita.

There is a passive solar house in Brampton, Ontario that features increased levels of insulation and very energy efficient windows. Undiscernible from other houses in the subdivision, this Advanced House consumes 75% less energy than the neighbouring one. The technology exists. The political will to act does not.

Contrary to government rhetoric, the Conservatives have cut R,D&D (Research, Development and Demonstration) funding, eliminated solar programs and downsized government departments responsible for alternate energy.

The figures speak volumes about Conservative commitment to sustainable energy development. Funding for alternate energy resources has plummeted from \$410 million in 1984 to \$35 million in 1991 -- a 91% reduction. According to the International Energy Agency, in 1989 Canada spent less than 5% of its total energy R&D (Research and Development) budget on alternate energy sources, while in comparison 83% went to conventional (oil, gas, coal and nuclear) energy sources.

Canada is also near the bottom of the barrel on the international front. Countries such as Japan, West Germany

produce the energy efficient homes we need because we will not have done the research or have the technology.

Moreover, tremendous export markets exist for alternate energy technologies. There are more than three billion people in the world without access to electricity and still more than a billion people without access to a safe and reliable supply of water. Small scale photovoltaic systems and pumps are specially well-suited for rural electrification and water pumping programs. Unless immediate measures are taken, the opportunity for Canada to remain



Photovoltaic (solar electric) systems are especially well-suited for rural electrification and water-pumping programs.

and Italy are pouring money into alternate energy research. In 1989, Japan spent U.S.\$47 million on photovoltaic (electricity generated from sunlight) R&D while Canada spent a paltry 1.2 million.

What are the ramifications of this? Well, in the not-so-distant future when fossil fuel reserves run out, Canada may perhaps have to import these technologies. My dream is that 99% of houses will one day have solar systems on the roof. My nightmare is that 95% of them will be manufactured in Japan or Korea, as are many of today's high-end consumer items such as computers and microwaves. There will be few jobs generated in Canada to

internationally competitive will disappear.

The environmental problems associated with our indiscriminate consumption of energy hardly need repeating. Not a day goes by, it seems, that we do not read of global warming and climate changes.

On the one hand, government members led by Prime Minister Mulroney have publicly affirmed their commitment to the principles of sustainable development and endorsed the report of the Brundtland Commission on Development and the Environment, which reminds us that renewable energy sources should form the foundation of the global energy structure

Government spending on Research and Development:

1984 - 1.4% of Gross Domestic Product
1991 - 1.3% of Gross Domestic Product

U.S., Japan, Germany, Sweden:
1991 - more than 2.5% of GDP

during the 21st century.

Meanwhile, the Energy Minister continues to subsidize fossil fuel projects through tax incentives and loan guarantees. It's a classic case of the right hand not knowing what the left hand is doing. If the government is truly serious about the environment, then the energy policy implication is that supply projects like Hibernia, off the coast of Newfoundland, should not be supported.

It will cost more than \$115,000 to create a specialized job in a crude oil production like Hibernia and workers will be required to work under dangerous conditions in areas away from local centres of employment and their families. The benefits are focused on a small geographic area under a short-term boom and bust scenario. In contrast, a solar project creates more permanent jobs (costing approximately \$20,000) at manufacturing plants located anywhere, under safer working conditions as well as additional jobs in distribution and maintenance for unskilled workers, while supplying almost three times the energy. Economic analysis has shown that Hibernia would not proceed without government intervention whereas a solar project is economical.

Energy is a vital concern for all Canadians. It drives the economy, affects our environment, our standard of living, our international competitiveness and national security. The oil crisis in the early seventies stirred interest in renewable energy. Seventeen years and one change of government later, we just fought a war over oil. The government willingly used armed force to secure oil, when it could have directed the money to programs that would wean us of our non-renewable energy addiction. Is the solution for the addict ensuring supply of the addictive substance?

We seem to have come full circle. Has the federal Conservative government demonstrated political

leadership or long-term vision in the area of energy policy? Apparently not.

Ruth McKlusky is the executive director of the Solar Energy Society of Canada in Ottawa, which promotes energy conservation and the responsible use of renewable energy.

Energy Sources that Don't Damage the Environment

Passive Solar

Passive solar systems use natural heat transfer principles such as north/south alignment of a building to use the sun's energy for heating.

Active Solar

Active solar systems in buildings use pumps, fans, thermostats and other electrical and mechanical equipment to circulate solar-heated liquid (or air).

Photovoltaics

The direct conversion of light to electricity -- a good example is a solar-powered calculator.

Wind Energy

Energy from the motion of wind as it spins the blades of a windmill can be converted into power for immediate use or for storage in a battery.

Geothermal Energy

Power derived from using the heat (in the form of steam) which is naturally conducted from the earth's core to the surface where it is often trapped and concentrated.

Biomass Energy

Power derived from the combustion of organic matter, such as wood, corn, peat, etc.

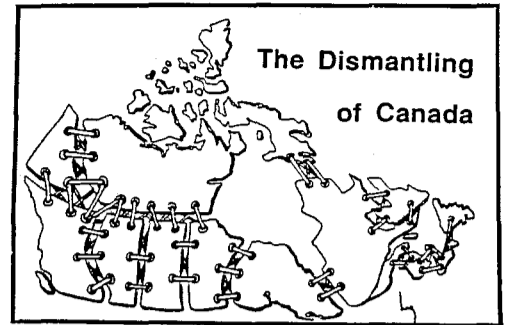
Tidal Energy

Power derived from harnessing the kinetic energy in the ebb-&-flow movement of ocean tides.

Small Hydro

Power produced from the flow of moving water -- on a small scale as opposed to mega-projects.

Making sense of economics



by Jane Robinson

Why is economics so hard for most of us to understand? Part of the problem is the language it uses. When we read about concepts such as inflation, interest rates, exchange rates, deficits, debts, our minds – or mine anyway – often go blank. What do all these things really mean? How are they related to each other?

Economics doesn't have to be complicated. But the courses available are usually at universities, and most of the professors have bought into the discipline and the language.

formula – in which rates of profit must increase. That's the bottom line.

After the Second World War, most Western governments agreed that they should spend money to stimulate the economy. This approach was called "counter-cyclical fiscal policy", or Keynesian economics. The purpose of Keynesian fiscal policy was to avoid another Depression like that of the 1930's. The policy involved exactly what the Ontario government has chosen to do in its 1991 budget to bolster the economy.

departments. They control the exchange value, the cost and the supply of money. Because of the influence of monetarism, we have seen the federal government put a lower priority on reaching a compromise between business and labour, and a higher priority on meeting the needs of big business.

Monetary policy has become a weapon that is used against the average Canadian. Interest rates have been kept high by the Bank of Canada to bolster the value of the Canadian dollar. The dollar climbed steeply just before the free trade deal was signed. Evidently, the U.S. wanted this because Canadian exports were selling cheaper than U.S. exports. So with the dollar rise, Canadian exports became more expensive, export sales fell, and many jobs were lost.

With interest rates so high, Canadians couldn't get access to credit to buy homes. So the housing industry went into a nose-dive, which caused more people to lose their jobs.

Another reason for high interest rates was to encourage foreign investment in Canada (as if we didn't have enough already). Meanwhile, Canadian business investment in Canada is decreasing. Many Canadian companies (many of which are U.S. owned) are sending their profits elsewhere. This is called "capital flight". The result of less investment is less jobs, and a depressed economy.

Just as free trade in goods is being forced upon Canadians as the only way to deal with "international competitiveness", so also is the free flow of money throughout the world happening at an alarming extent. National governments in the West, and international financial bodies like the International Monetary Fund (IMF) are all pushing monetarist policies. They say: cut government spending; cut business taxes to give private companies a free rein; remove market restrictions and barriers (such as tariffs which protect local industry); don't let domestic policies distort the "natural" flow of goods in the free market. The IMF and the OECD (Organization of Economic Co-operation and Development), a group of 22 industrialized Northern countries, are both telling Canada to let the number of unemployed people rise, as a way of forcing wages down (even though real wages

haven't risen in the last 10 years, while prices have). They say to cut unemployment insurance even more, and to remove interprovincial licensing and trade barriers. These policies not only hurt workers; they hurt small local business, and ultimately destroy the basic economy.

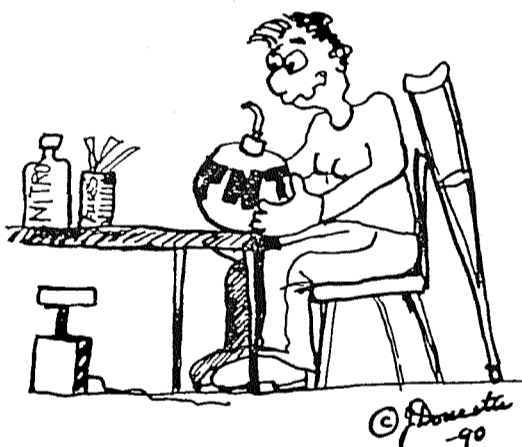
attempt to ease the burden of economic slowdown on working people by providing subsidies. Instead it takes a "balance the budget" approach, the kind of approach which led to the Great Depression.

There is no reason why economics should be out of reach to women. But most economists speak to other economists. They speak from a position of privilege, without acknowledging that position. They do not speak to people. They do not help us deal with the nitty-gritty of our everyday lives, perhaps because they don't need to speak for anyone, be accountable to anyone. People are seen as victims of, rather than agents of, development. This is why part of our task is to de-mystify and reclaim economics, and change it.

Economics is not an island. People make economics happen. Joan Robinson, a famous British economist (no relation), said that the economic is really the social. What we want for our social good, our social goals, should be the most important thing. Then through our economic policy, we should try to reach those goals.

Jane Robinson is currently studying in Toronto at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education. Prior to that she worked in St. John's, Newfoundland with Oxfam-Canada.

Tired of waiting for her welfare check, Joanne found joy in creation.



Economics is not "outthere". People make economics. It is a practice, not just a theory.

Economics is also a male bastion -- another reason why women find it unreachable. In Canada you could probably count the female economics professors on one hand. Yet women know a lot about economics. For it is often women who run their family budgets; who shoulder most of the responsibility for feeding, clothing and sheltering their families; who do the bookkeeping on farms or in small businesses. And many women work in accounting.

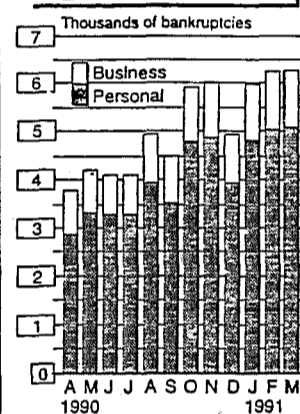
The practice of economics -- the economics which runs countries and companies -- is a part of ruling. It has been removed from the social and the humanitarian spheres to a context where complex computer programs operate according to a carefully laid-out

In Canada, policies such as regional development, unemployment insurance, social assistance, old age pensions and medicare were developed. These enabled people to have money to spend, even when they were out of work. Their spending would stimulate the economy. They would buy things and this would provide jobs to workers and profits to employers, which would create more demand and therefore more jobs. Trade unions were accepted as part of the family compact, along with government and business.

The current trend in economics in industrialized capitalist countries of the North is called "monetarism". It means the economy is managed through the control of money. And who is in the best position to control money? Bankers, big business and government finance

Bankruptcies climb again

March bankruptcies rise to 6,258
↑ 53% from March 1990



Source: Consumer and Corporate Affairs
T. Johnston, Southam News Graphics

Monetary policy serves the interests of bankers, politicians and multinationals who control the world economy. It is not generous to workers or to peoples' organizations. Unlike fiscal policy, it does not

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A place of one's own: Women in government

Excerpts from a speech given by **Evelyn Gigantes** to the Ontario NDP Women's Committee in May 1991.

A few months ago - I think it was when I was home over Christmas - my husband and I happened to stretch out in front of the TV and found that the most likely program to watch was, if I remember, "An Evening with Virginia Woolf". It wasn't quite what we had in mind. Both of us had read a couple of her novels, and admired her but we weren't really in the mood for a one-woman performance of Virginia for the next hour.

By the time it was over, we were both in that kind of breathless excitement that overtakes you every once in a rare while when you are so full of the emotional-intellectual richness of an artistic experience that you don't want to say anything because words are too paltry to express feeling or thought; when feeling and thought are so perfectly joined that nothing should be allowed to divide and alter that union. Not a word, hardly even a glance was exchanged, only some sighs.

The performance, we learned, was based on a book, which in turn was based on a lecture Virginia Woolf had given when asked to speak to a women's university on the subject of women and literature in the early 20th century. A few days later, I learned that my parents had also watched the program and my dearly-beloved step-mother was surprised that I had never heard of the book. At the family Easter reunion she gave me **A Room of One's Own**.

The thesis of this book-lecture is that when a woman can have a room of her own and 500 pounds a year income, she can be a writer. When several generations of women have that choice and that power to write, a literature by women will create standards and a base of literary work which will, inevitably, produce genius equal to the best in all literature.

To describe what she says and how she says it is to do injury to the wonder of what she does. It is a thrilling, funny, painful, truth-spitting ramble on a very precise idea about

women, money, power, and freedom to choose - how to live, how to write, how to read.

Some of you probably saw "An Evening with Virginia Woolf". Some of you have read **A Room of One's Own**. Maybe you also saw TV Ontario's "Imprints" recently, the night that host Daniel Richler invited four literary women to discuss feminist writing. The contrast between Richler's tortuous animation of the discussion and Woolf's marvellous examination was quite shocking.



As I've thought about what Woolf's genius gave us to understand decades ago, and the shallow discussion Richler gave us two months ago (it was like one of those dreadful political discussions in which the question of guns is supposed to be elucidated in a five-and-one-half minute debate between the president of the local sharp-shooters club and the local sociologist), the gap between the two ways of examining the important matter of women and literature has haunted me.

I think that, in many ways, it is part of the struggle we go through when we wrestle with the very similar, and similarly important matter, of women and politics. I think a similar gap exists between, on one hand, women's excellence at expressing and living the truth about women's relationship to politics and the evolution of a woman's kind of politics and on the other, the facile measures and tests which will be, for

decades, pronounced and relied on to judge women's politics.

I think our recent experience in a government in which there are an equal number of women and men of high quality gives us a seven-month intensive course in just how important and long-lasting the gap will be between people who see women's relationship to politics as a central struggle, and people who see that relationship as unessential and irritating.

Let's take a closer look.

Without wishing to sound worshipful or overly appreciative, I suggest to you that the premier of Ontario has done something no other political leader has done. He has deliberately, and determinedly appointed women from his caucus to positions of power. It is my conviction that the real reason he was deliberate and determined on this point is that he felt it was right. I think Bob Rae sees women's relationship to politics as central. His view of this matter does not go uncontested.

What his decision has produced, in real terms, is a remarkable working situation in a government. For every woman involved in the decision-making part of the government, it has meant an unforeseen and quite unparalleled chance to work with each other and with male colleagues in a political framework where women's views and women's experience carry weight.

There is no easy way to describe the difference that framework makes. One bright young woman reporter rushed around a month ago interviewing each of us on the run about whether the number of women in the government made a real difference. Three or four of us talked to each other briefly about the difficulty we had trying to explain why each of us had vehemently asserted that the number of

women made a huge difference.

Part of the difficulty of explaining is, of course, that you can't tell secrets out of Cabinet. But there is more to it than political etiquette. There is a profound joy in the experience of having discussions and making decisions when you know that a large number of the people you are with understand the background and the reality of the simple statement you throw into a discussion. They may disagree with your conclusion, but they understand very well how you came to the conclusion.

I'm sure the women's government of Iceland must have felt this kind of self-respect and heady sense of liberation. I guess it has also happened in Sweden. But it is certainly not what any of us individually expected would happen to us here in Ontario in the 1990's. It is a wonderful thing.

And because it has happened once, it will happen again. But not because everyone thinks or even accepts that we are acting out one stage in the demonstration of the centrality of women's relationship to politics. Not at all.

The Ontario NDP government has raised welfare rates and is

in the process of putting social assistance reform back on track. We are building the administrative strength to enforce child maintenance payments by delinquent parents. We have devoted new funds to continuing the biggest social housing program ever undertaken in Ontario. We have set aside money to ensure that employees of bankrupt firms receive the back pay, holiday pay and severance pay they are owed. Most of these employees are women.

We are expanding childcare spaces, childcare subsidies and we are increasing pay for childcare workers. We are taking 100,000 more low-income people off the provincial tax rolls. These moves are good for men, good for children and especially good for women. We are moving ahead with employment equity.

Above all, we are showing people right across this country that the struggle of women to build their own relationship to politics is a struggle that helps produce the best in politics. It's not perfect politics, it's not easy politics but it's the best and it's going to get even better.

Evelyn Gigantes is an Ontario MPP for Ottawa Centre.

The voices of black

As I watched Parliament in session with my twelve-year-old, he asked a very pertinent question: Why were there so many white men in black suits making decisions for me? As well as pertinent, it is also sobering. What is the short answer to that very involved question?

Well, for me it meant running in the '91 provincial election. It meant that I had to do more than just lecture to my children about their rights and what they can accomplish in the future.

What women as a group bring to the political arena is unclear. I am still trying to figure out what Barb McDougall, Kim Campbell and Mary Collins have done differently from men. If anything they have legitimized the oppression of women by supporting anti-women legislation. What Black women could bring to the political arena that is not already present is a far more interesting question. Apart from visible representation that positively affects the lives of

young Black women who then see themselves as having a vested interest in society as a whole, there is the power of a Black women's voice to represent all women. When Black women have the proper representation in the political arena, then white women will be less likely to speak for us. As well as taking the opportunity to monitor, reform and create legislation, we will also be speaking for ourselves.

For Black women, being involved in politics means participating in a political structure, however patriarchal, to make changes from within as well as without. Our most powerful voices as Black women come from the streets.

Black women have always been matriarchs, running households, churches, community organizations, but the political structure seemed to be out of reach for all but a few. While that draws attention to the issues, we must also be talking from the equal position of Parliament and Queen's



Long term advocate of women's rights; dedicated to the creation of equal rights, pay equity and the elimination of violence against women and children.

Marilyn Churley, MPP

517 Pape Avenue, Toronto, Ontario M4K 3R3
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Women and municipal politics

by Kathryn Barnes

One often wonders why such simple and logical things are often so complex. Why are women not equally represented in municipal governments?

The answer to this must, to some degree, rest with women themselves. Those who have volunteered in their communities, those who have been the secretaries in numerous organizations, those who have been the organizers and fundraisers and those who have been the active workers in many political campaigns suddenly balk at the thought of running for a Municipal Council. Why?

Municipal government is the logical conclusion for women who contribute actively to their city, town or village and whom wish to stay within the confines of that municipal area. Or, municipal politics could well be a good training ground for those women who we hope one day will become the provincially or federally elected representatives for their areas.

We need women who can offer a different perspective to the male-dominated Councils, Legislatures and Federal Party Caucuses. Change is occurring, but not nearly at the speed required to make a significant difference.

Women still shrink from being called "Feminists" and often do not support one another. As

well, women who run for public office or those who are being considered for boards or commissions have their qualifications and experience carefully dissected and assessed, while male candidates usually are not subject to the same in-depth scrutiny.

In the small city where I live, Moncton, with a population just under 60,000, only three females have ever been elected to municipal office in its 100-year history. A spinster school teacher with a love for history and her city was the first woman elected as a Ward Councillor in 1957. It was 1986 before I was elected as the first "At Large" Councillor. One must question why an otherwise progressive city has not elected more women to its Municipal Council. Does the answer lie with women themselves?

By accepting to write this article, I did so with the hope of motivating you, the reader, to either offer for municipal government yourself, or support another woman who will.

My own personal experience began with involvement in the community when my children started school. Home and school was my training ground as a volunteer, followed by participation on several boards

and commissions -- Community College, Transit Commission, Block Parents, etc.

Active participation in a political party offered invaluable experience with election campaigns and opened the door to other politically active citizens. In 1977, I was elected to the Board of Trustees.

Municipal politics seemed to be a natural progression and I am sure the same holds true for thousands of other women. I ran for office hoping my voice on Council would make a difference; our Council was without female representation; I wanted to clean-up, beautify and promote our city and instill pride in its citizens. I ran for the challenge and a new experience.



My family was used to having me involved, so they were supportive. Fortunately, all five had reached adulthood and this removed one of the barriers which often prevent women from seeking public office.

What other obstacles deter women from seeking public office and how can they be overcome? In many cases, I have found that: 1) women wait to be asked; 2) they do not know how to go about it; 3) they lack the support they need. This is why women need to be "conditioned" to politics and be assertive in their quest for equal representation. I have a button with the message, "Politics Isn't Just a Man's Game". Women have to believe this if they expect to share both power and responsibility.

Several important considerations come to mind as I look back upon my own experiences. Possibly a reflection on these necessary components will help prepare others as they seek public office.

Organization is a crucial component to any campaign. Key people at the grassroots level can make the difference between success or failure. Your organization is in place to inform the voter, keep the candidate informed, carry out

election procedures and, most importantly, get out the vote.

Funding: Unfortunately, the same legislation does not cover municipal election financing as it does provincial and federal donations. Receipts cannot be claimed for income tax purposes, therefore one must rely on personal finances - or have a group of supporters who are able to solicit donations. A budget should be prepared early in the campaign so a candidate knows the probable costs and approves them. It is essential for a municipal candidate to have someone she can trust to keep all expenses within budget.

Cost: The cost of a campaign depends to a large degree on the numbers of voters in the municipality and the area to be covered. One should consider expenses such as: advertising, signs, brochures, telephones, travelling expenses, refreshments for workers, etc. Women are very good at getting the most for their money so these goods and services can be donated.

Campaigning, particularly, requires a great deal of time and energy. A candidate should expect long days of speaking engagements, public appearances, participation on panels, hand-shaking in malls, meetings with steering committees, consultation on advertising and, most importantly, door to door campaigning. Voters today want to meet their candidates face to face.

In addition to those important areas I have already mentioned, I would suggest a few other ingredients for successfully attaining municipal office:

Think Positively: Believe in your own abilities and know that your input will be as valuable as anyone else's.

Do Your Homework: Know the issues, attend local Council sessions, read background material, be able to speak on initiatives you intend to put forth.



Be Motivated: Talk to people who share your concerns and gain strength from their enthusiasm. A small nucleus of family and friends who will offer advice and support are essential to any candidate.

Networking: Often this is one area where women have not had the same "old boy's network" as male candidates. Begin now to take advantage of opportunities and membership in organizations which will offer the networking capabilities so important at election time.

A Sense of Humor is important: Be able to laugh at yourself and others rather than complain. This will sometimes help you survive media accounts during a campaign, and later.

Be Sincere: You cannot fool the public. If you are not honest and sincere, it will show. A genuine concern for people is a must.

Elections for municipal office are held throughout Canada at different intervals and for varying terms of office. Determine when your municipal elections will be held and start planning how to get involved.

Without political power where women's thoughts and actions can make a difference, legislation - and our society as a whole - will continue to reflect male values.

Kathryn Barnes served as Councillor-At-Large, Moncton, N.B., 1986-1989. She was unsuccessful in seeking the Mayoralty in 1989 but with the closeness of the contest, she is seriously considering the Mayoralty position next year.

women in politics

by Carolann Wright

Park to monitor and reform legislation that has served to exclude and oppress certain people in society.

Pay equity, for example, has been on the agenda of the broader women's movement for years, but what I have not heard discussed is how do we ensure that mandatory employment equity/affirmative action for women does not mean the hiring of white women only. The political voice must, therefore, be present from conception to prevent exclusion.

It is important to change the face of politics, so it becomes more representative, more accessible, less mysterious, less rigid. It is important to note that although we as Black women did not design this system, we will be more than happy to re-design it.

Carolann Wright ran in the Ontario provincial election and was a close second. She has also run in the Toronto mayoralty election.



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BOOKS



The One You Call Sister
edited by Paula Martinac
Cleis Press, 1989

In her introduction to this fiction anthology on the theme of sisters, Paula Martinac expresses her hope that "these stories will make us all -- no matter how long it's been or how great the distance -- want to pick up the phone and call our sisters."

I must confess that after reading these stories, I did not rush to the phone. However, I enjoyed reading what is probably the premiere anthology devoted exclusively to the subject of sisters.

Martinac has assembled a remarkable range of material in this book. There are the relationships of older to younger and younger to older sisters, of mothers and their sisters, of the curious symbiosis of twins. With the exception of a few pieces, all are written in the first person, giving an immediacy to the writing.

The collection covers the struggle of sisters with careers, of families trying to hide their past, of birth, death, coming out as a lesbian, mental illness, poverty, family violence, as well as cultural and linguistic pressures of assimilation, the imaginative power of artistic expression, and the role of disguise in individual growth and change.

The One You Call Sister

Hey, sister!

reviewed by Elaine Auerbach

The settings range from New York, San Francisco, and Oregon to Nova Scotia, Ohio and Georgia. Chicano, Jamaican, Jewish, Chinese, Afro-American and Irish Catholic characters create a wealth of varying viewpoints on the experience of sister relationships.

The book begins with Canadian writer Marianne Paul's story, "yin and yang." Here the sisters -- divided by age, taste, and economics (the unnamed narrator is a successful commercial artist while her younger sister, Arista, is struggling to make it in the fickle world of art) -- are entwined in cruel rituals of self-punishment and guilt. Ironically, it is not the starving artist Arista who experiences the power of an artistic vision, but her elder sister who undergoes a Taoist epiphany which frees her from the stifling conflict with her younger sister and her guilt over selling out to commercial interests.

"yin and yang" sets the tone for the stories which follow and emphasizes the tension between self and other in sibling relationships, a tension which can also be discovered in every close relationship, regardless of biological ties.

It is hard to select a particular story that is my favourite because all are compelling pieces. Three stories, however, stick out in my mind: Shay Youngblood's "Funny Women", Jean Roberta's "Secrets of an Unkosher Home" and Linda Ostreicher's "My Sister/My Eye."

"Funny Women" challenges social conventions in terms of class, race and gender. The story evolves from the point of

view of a Black girl living in Georgia who is taken under the wing of an older woman; "Miss Tom was not a pretty woman, she was handsome like a man. Tall, broad-shouldered, big-boned, lean and lanky like a man." While fishing together, the child notices that Miss Tom is distraught. Her innocent, engaging sympathy becomes the bridge to Miss Tom's narration of her life story. Brought up on a cotton plantation, Miss Tom fell in love with her younger sister, Juliette, a sister born from the



rape of her mother by her white master. Tom and Juliette loved each other with their eyes closed, as if the sweetness of their experience were a dream. When Juliette is sent up north to "pass for white," Tom disguises herself as a man, taking on a variety of non-traditional jobs, living in the hope that she may one day be reunited with her sister-lover.

I interpret the separation of the sister-lovers as Youngblood's way of conveying her feelings for the treatment African-American

women and their families received under the oppression of white racism -- the horrors of violent severance become analogous to the joy of indiscriminate passionate love. She renders the voice of her characters with an incisive power as well as authentic delight. I have known several women who have loved women of their own family; I am glad that Youngblood dealt with this almost taboo subject from a perspective that balanced the personal and the political.

In Jean Roberta's "Secrets of an Unkosher Home," the conflict between sisters fairly bristles from the page. In a family coming apart at the seams, everyone is devoted to keeping silent and upholding appearances. One sister threatens another with a knife; the straight sister mocks the lesbian one. "We both call ourselves feminists," Miriam, the narrator, writes to her estranged younger sister, "but what does that mean if we each hate the only woman we can call 'sister' in the most literal sense?" Though the sisters make an attempt to communicate by the end of the story, their convergence is only a beginning: "We parted with promises to get together, promises as fragile and dependent on our passing moods as all other commitments, even between

The following pages include reviews of books and summaries of the most recent books by publishers. The summaries are based on the publisher's press releases.

people who know each other well."

"My Sister/My Eye" is a monologue delivered by a woman who always wanted a sister. The lonely narrator decides to overcome what she perceives as a loss by inviting her cousin to share an apartment with her in Manhattan. While gazing in the mirror one day she discovers a growth in the middle of her forehead, a growth which turns out to be the eye of her twin sister. The rare occurrence of asymmetrical Siamese twins -- where one unformed twin lives parasitically off the body of its completely formed host -- becomes the center of a comedy focussing on a woman's need to live an independent life. "There have turned out to be so many ways to look at things," the sardonic narrator announces while doing a head stand.

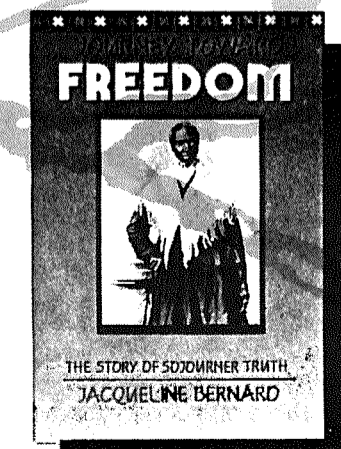
The One You Call Sister deserves a wide readership. Re-publication rights have already been sold to Attic Press in Ireland. Based on the quality of the writing, I am sure this anthology is going to please many readers besides myself.

Elaine Auerbach is an ongoing contributor from Waterloo, Ontario.

Journey Toward Freedom:
The Story of Sojourner Truth
by Jacqueline Bernard
The Feminist Press, 1990

The remarkable woman known as Sojourner Truth was born a slave in 1797, gained her freedom some thirty years later, and at the age of forty-six began a new life, traveling the country to preach about God and crusade against slavery. Known for her wit, her songs, and her great common sense, she electrified audiences as she also championed women's rights, prison reform, and better working conditions. She continued her work after the Civil War, helping emancipated Blacks find employment, land, and freedom in the North.

First published in 1967 and based on extensive primary research, Jacqueline Bernard's



widely praised biography is an important historical document, as compassionately told as it is engrossing to read.



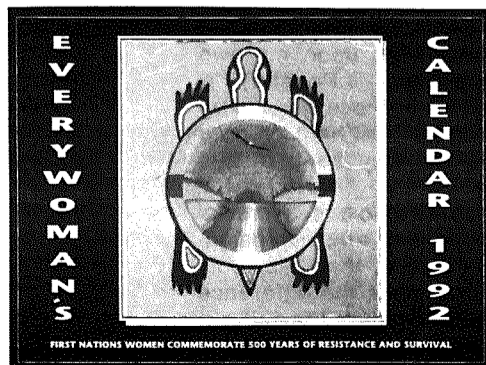
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Gaudi Afternoon

Sleuthing in Barcelona

reviewed by Joanne Steven

Gaudi Afternoon
by Barbara Wilson
Seal Press, 1990

The feminist mystery novel is a growing genre, a welcome antidote to all those sexy but sexist macho private eyes à la Hammett or Chandler, or the clever but paternalistic policemen like Ruth Rendell's Reg Wexford. New feminist writers like Sara Paretsky, L.R. Wright and Sue Grafton are evening up the score: their P.I.s are smart, assertive and female. They may like to sleep with men but not so that it interferes with the job at hand.

Seattle writer Barbara Wilson has already written several mysteries featuring sleuth Pam Nilsen, one with the intriguing title **Murder in the Collective**. In **Gaudi Afternoon**, her latest novel, we meet Cassandra Reilly, a tough adventurous woman in her forties who works as a translator of Spanish literature and dabbles, it seems, in detecting.

Mystery fans might be forgiven for at first mistaking this book for another Lord Peter Wimsey story: the clever pun on Dorothy Sayers' **Gaudi Night**, the similarities in strength and wit between the two detective heroines, as well as the subtle but steady stream of feminist musings (albeit separated by five decades and a huge body of feminist theory). But there the similarities end.

No classical allusions and pointed quotations here. In **Gaudi Afternoon**, Wilson has written a truly modern story in which the mystery derives chiefly from the gender-bending plot rather than the more traditional murder and criminal activity. Reilly is asked to go to Barcelona, which happens to be a favourite city in her well-travelled world, to find the missing "husband" of American Frankie Stevens. To elaborate much more on the plot would be to give away its secrets and thus spoil the surprises, which are numerous. The other characters in the novel, including Reilly's cohorts - Ana, the childless architect and Carmen, the buxom hairdresser - are as surprising as the plot.



Trouble and Strife

For this vicarious traveller, one of the most fascinating aspects of the novel is its alternative tour through the streets of Barcelona: with Reilly we visit sidewalk cafes, hair salons, gay bars and fashionable apartments. And for architecture buffs, much of the action takes place in and around Antonio Gaudi's famous undulating and surreal buildings. Along the way, as new clues surface in the mystery, Reilly treats us to glimpses of her latest translation assignment, a South American author whose flord political novel (**The Big One and her Daughter**) sounds suspiciously like those of Isabel Allende. Reilly's translating efforts allow Wilson an opportunity for gentle parody.

Perfect escapist literature, this comic thriller entertains without guilt. I plan to check out Wilson's other mysteries very soon.

Joanne Steven is a M.S.W. student the School of Social Work at Carleton University in Ottawa and a recent (and therefore zealous) convert to mystery novels.

Out of Time

A mystery looking back

reviewed by Lucy Chapman

Out of Time
by Paula Martinac
Seal Press, 1990

Out of Time, by Paula Martinac, is the romantically intriguing story of a woman who unexpectedly finds herself pulled from her life in the here and now, into a world of lives which are already over. It is the tale of Susan, a woman so delightfully open to new and sometimes strange happenings, that it is not at all hard to believe completely in her experiences. In what at first appears to be random chance, Susan finds herself stealing a scrapbook of 1920's photos from a New York antique shop.

Susan becomes increasingly fascinated by the lives of the four women in the photos,

these visits, Susan embarks upon a journey through time, space, and emotions. Her searching finally brings her to the truth she has been seeking, and to her own personal peace.

This novel was such a joy that when I wasn't actually reading it, I frequently found myself daydreaming about it. Paula Martinac's descriptive skills are so strong that the characters were actually visible to me, as though I was looking at the photos so often referred to in the book. Because these characters are so lovingly presented, I had the sense that stories of long lost relatives were being retold once more. All of the women, both those alive and those in spirit, had such powerful strengths and such endearing weaknesses that by the end of the novel I truly felt privileged to have "met" these women.

As well as wonderful characters, I found the storyline of **Out of Time** very appealing. The author draws us along a continuous thread of mystery, yet always leaves enough clues so that the reader never feels lost. On a few delicious occasions, she gives us enough hints so that we can figure out what will transpire, before it actually does. These moments of knowing more than the characters do give the reader a feeling of actually being involved in the action of the novel.



wanting to know more and more about them and their relationships to one another. The photos span a number of years, and it becomes clear that they are in fact a history of two couples, and of the friendships between these four women.

Being a lesbian herself, Susan becomes even more intrigued and haunted by a desire to know more. Her desire is soon fulfilled by a ghostly visit from one of those pictures, and what was once an abstract interest for Susan, becomes the very real focus of her days and nights. Susan is "visited" occasionally by one or more of the foursome, gradually getting to know about them. Despite this, she is driven by a need to know the complete stories of these four fascinating women. Plagued by questions which arise from

As a lesbian, I am often frustrated by our limited knowledge of our own past, and as a result I sometimes feel a sense of historical isolation. Although this novel is a work of fiction, it definitely fulfilled a part of my need to know more about our collective past as lesbians. After reading **Out of Time** I felt that I had a better sense of how the lives of those women who came before me might have been experienced. I found that although times have changed, love, ambition, and relationships have remained timelessly the same. Paula Martinac's first novel, **Out of Time**, will haunt me for some time to come. I look forward to reading her next work.

Lucy Chapman is an Ottawa carpenter.



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Living the Changes

Joan Turner, editor

In prose and poetry, song and art, 37 women explore their experiences "living the changes" sought by the women's movement over the past two decades in music and culture, academe, birthing and aging, spirituality, body image, drugs, violence, sexual abuse, prostitution, and reproductive technology. Contributors include:

Di Brandt,
Rosemary Brown,
Margrit Eichler,
Evelyn Lau,
Emma LaRocque,
Mary Meigs,
Helen Levine,
Kathleen Shannon.

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Sexing the Cherry

A tale of fantasy and power

reviewed by Susan Dwyer

narratives is, "The Story of the Twelve Dancing Princesses", a dozen or so pages that reveal the things that women can achieve and the power that we have in spite of our oppression which closes certain options to us.

Sexing the Cherry is an odd mix: a tale of human mortality and loss, and an optimistic story of the potential in us all. It is a story of who we can be. In Winterson's fictional world, human beings time-travel, words have colours, the improbable Dog-Woman flourishes. In the world of shadows, these things are impossible. But in the "cities of the interior" everything is possible. The world can be a magical place. This is no idle

romantic speculation; Winterson is too much the hard-nosed realist for that. She makes us all too aware of our mortality and fragility, and of the ways in which we hasten our inevitable death and the decay of the planet we inhabit.

For human beings, only two things are inevitable: decay and love. All else – time, place and gender – are mutable. A life fully lived, one that is not simply a "walking through this world like a shadow", is an exploration of the possibilities that confront us, of the choices we can make. It is a fantastic journey through space and time, a journey of discovery.

But **Sexing the Cherry** is not a drab and fatalistic tale. Winterson's real gift is her ability to show us how the world looks from the perspective of another. Nothing is just as it seems. If we learn to look where others look, to follow their gaze, we will see things differently. And in doing so we will better understand the myriad of possible roads that are open to each of us. People value different things, and what they value is revealed by what

demonstrate just how superficial the exterior markings of gender are. Winterson has an acute sense of age and how that alters our experience in the world. The old are at once reviled for their physical deterioration and envied for their wisdom. The young are uncertain and afraid, in need of heroes to help shape their identities. At the same time, they desperately try to break free from powerful parents whom they love, misunderstand and despise.

A violent and terrifying eroticism pervades Winterson's writing. More constrained in **The Passion** (Winterson's last novel), it finds explicit expression here. Phallic symbols and castration myths abound. We peek inside brothels and secret places wherein perverse and "unnatural" acts are performed. And while we would like to ignore it, there is something deeply sexual about the monstrous and evil-smelling Dog-Woman. Perhaps it is her size, her physical strength, and the sureness with which she goes about the world that makes her so attractive. After all, power has always been

erotic. But there is abuse of power here too. And I must confess to finding some of the violence gratuitous.

This is not a book that should be read at one sitting; rather, it is something to be savoured a little at a time. Its themes are complex and its images often overpowering. Winterson's narrative is not linear; it bends back upon itself. It stops and starts. We move from character to character, from a story within a story to yet another story, and so on. This has the effect of making the novel appear to be patchy and inconsistent. But this impression dissipates once the reader gives up the idea of reading it from cover to cover.

Sexing the Cherry certainly reveals Winterson at her stylistic best. The prose is beautifully crafted, and every sentence counts. Winterson's words are rich, even redolent. **Sexing the Cherry** is disturbing and thought-provoking. The reader will carry its images for a long time.

Susan Dwyer is a professor at McGill University in Montréal in the Department of Philosophy.



Drawing by Marwahi, Lalgar Nagar, New Delhi

BOOKS

Sexing the Cherry
by Jeanette Winterson
Lester & Orpen Dennys, 1990

For human beings, only two things are inevitable: decay and love. All else – time, place and gender – are mutable. A life fully lived, one that is not simply a "walking through this world like a shadow", is an exploration of the possibilities that confront us, of the choices we can make. It is a fantastic journey through space and time, a journey of discovery.

Sexing the Cherry, Jeanette Winterson's fourth novel, takes us on such a voyage. As the young adventurer Jordan remarks, "I'm not looking for God, only for myself, and that is far more complicated". Through the eyes, ears and noses of Jordan and his gigantic mother, the Dog-Woman, we experience 17th-century London and much more. We see things that fascinate and repulse us, things that mesmerize and seduce us.

The baby Jordan, discovered abandoned in the stinking Thames, is raised in a remarkably modern way by a grotesque giantess who breeds fighting dogs. **Sexing the Cherry** tells of his growing-up, his journeys inward and outward. And while we read of Jordan's adventures, we are spared no detail of the life his mother leads in London during the Civil War, the Plague and the Great Fire. Nestled in the middle of these intertwining

romantic speculation; Winterson is too much the hard-nosed realist for that. She makes us all too aware of our mortality and fragility, and of the ways in which we hasten our inevitable death and the decay of the planet we inhabit.

Despite the ultimate fluidity and changeableness of the world, love – the love of parents for children, of children

they risk. A person's passage through the world is affected by the sex they are thought to be (i.e., their perceived gender). But none of this is fixed. We can and do value what we please, and, crucially, there is nothing essential to being male or female. Each of us can just as easily love a man as love a woman. Winterson returns to the theme of cross-dressing to

Living the Changes
edited by Joan Turner
University of Manitoba Press,
1990

Living the Changes explores the nature and extent of women's changing realities. The contributors include writers, artists, academics, street kids and social workers, and range in age from nine to 73. Their topics reflect the diversity and complexity of the concerns of contemporary women – birthing and aging, body image, culture, drugs, violence, sexual abuse, prostitution, reproductive technology, and spirituality, among others.

Telling it: Women and Language Across Cultures
by the Telling It Book Collective
Press Gang Publishers, 1990

This book contains some of the current analysis and debate on the issues of racism and homophobia within the women's movement, as it unfolded "live" at a 1988 conference of the same name, and as subsequently reflected upon by some of the participants.

The bulk of **Telling It** is drawn from the conference, and includes talks by participating writers, edited transcripts of the ensuing discussions with the audiences, works by some of the participating writers, and one of three plays performed by Vancouver Sath, a Punjabi theatre collective.

A second, shorter section gives the thoughts of three of the participating writers (Sky Lee, Lee Maracle and Betsy Warland, who collectively edited the book with organizer Daphne Marlatt) reflecting on the conference, the issues and questions raised there, and the ongoing challenge of racism and homophobia in the women's movement.

Telling Hours: Journal Stories
by Sheila Delany
Second Story Press, 1990

In this collection of stories, Sheila Delany explores the fragile boundaries between "truth" and "fiction". In the concluding non-fiction piece, "Journals and Fiction", Delany examines the problematic relationship between lived experience and the narratives we construct in an effort to make sense of our lives.

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Writing the Circle

First Nations women speak

reviewed by Shirley Minquen Bear

Writing the Circle: Native Women of Western Canada
An Anthology compiled and edited by Jeanne Perreault and Sylvia Vance
NeWest Publishers Ltd., 1990.

Writing the Circle is an anthology of native women's writing through poetry, essays, short stories, journal entries and other as yet undefined categories.

There are 54 writers in this anthology, ranging in age from twelve years to elders.

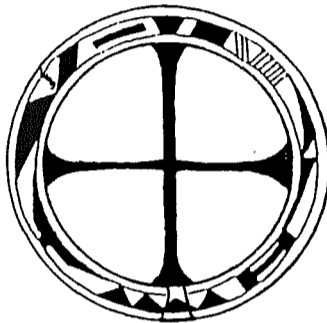
I was extremely happy to see another book of First Nations women's writings, women writing from their own voices. Yet, I had problems with the range of emotional and psychological responses this anthology of stories provoked within me. Many times I was tempted to put the book away and not continue reading, let alone review the contents, but the book demanded a persevering and honest response.

Writing the Circle is affirmative action from the source. I have often been very critical of writers assuming ethnic minds and voices. This, instead, is a positive way of informing the reading public that there are writers within the First Nations community who are very capable of telling their own stories. We have too often been written about, with glowing reviews, by non-Aboriginal persons using our minds. We need to project alternatives by producing literature, albeit in the French or English language and not our own languages, but from our own sources of knowledge.

There are several short stories and poems that deal with violence and abuse toward women and children. Healing seems to be the thread that weaves in and out of most of the writing. The story "Broken Promises" by Norma Gladue about sexual abuse is not only an empowering story but definitely has healing strengths. It's an old issue with a contemporary idea and awareness written in the "old genre". The only problem I had with the story was a line which seemed to cause an imbalance in the total feeling of the story:

"The fucking bloody insolent bastard fell asleep on top of her". I feel that this line could have been replaced with words of equal strength and more in line with the rhythm of the story.

Emma LaRoque's "Mom Poems" were very powerful. This is sometimes a very difficult relationship for anyone to deal with, and yet she is able to convey the complexity of feelings we have as mothers and for mothers.



"God's Man on Earth or First Communion" is a witty and sad story of a young girl's realization of her mom's vulnerability as well as the stark reality of the clergy's potential abuse of power. Barbara Higgins has accurately identified many key issues that young women are confronted

with as they grow up.

Laura Lockert's story of a farm woman crosses ethnic boundaries and becomes a wonderful story of pride and dignity that many women will identify with.

Clare E. McNab's "The Porcupine Quill Saga" is a story that will remind women and men who have ever taken the traditional path of the left-handed fast ball way of learning, with all its humorous incidents.

Discovering a new 'woman' writer for me is always very exciting and I enjoyed the woman-centredness of Alice Lee's poetry. It was also encouraging to read another favourite, Mary Morin's woman-positive poetry. I am always encouraged when women question the patri-power system, no matter what the issue is. These two writers were for me a very positive inclusion in this anthology.

The reader should remember that this is a regional grouping of writers and does not speak for the spiritual or cultural norms of the rest of the country; for instance, the power colors used by the medicine people are different from region to region. On the

other hand, sweetgrass is found in different parts of the country and should not be seen as only representing the west.

Despite that, this book is educational for anyone who knows little about First Nations women, particularly in Western Canada. It was difficult to review all the writers because of the range of topics, but this is a definite read for anyone who enjoys creative, heart-wrenching, real and informative literature.

Shirley Minquen Bear, a member of the Wabənakik Nation in the East, is a visual artist, writer, pipe carrier, sweat keeper and fast helper.



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No More Secrets

Healing the wounds of child abuse

reviewed by Maria Stewart

No More Secrets
by Nina Weinstein
The Seal Press, 1990

With every tragedy we experience emotions we cannot understand or act in ways that are equally mysterious to us. In our attempts to survive, the very survival mechanisms we develop can become more harmful to us than the tragedy itself.

Our first reaction to a devastating event in our lives is denial. Then, as time passes, we may begin to bargain with ourselves. Is there something we could have done to prevent this tragedy? And we continue to run over in our minds the sequence of events that led to the culminating pain. We may begin to go through stages of guilt, and anger at ourselves and others. Finally, if we're lucky, we come to accept what has happened to us and carry on with our lives.

In Nina Weinstein's novel, **No More Secrets**, we read the account of sixteen-year-old Mandy Baker's personal tragedy. Trapped between her mother's obstinate silence and her awakening process of coming to terms with a rape at the age of eight, Mandy



struggles to reveal the secrets that have begun to destroy her young life.

Told in the straightforward, and sometimes irreverent, language of a young teenage woman growing up in the 1960's, Mandy leads us through her suffering.

Who was that man, Link, who entered her room that late winter evening? And where was her mother when the tragedy struck? These are the untold secrets Mandy tries to uncover while her family, particularly her mother, continues to suppress them in silence.

Shortly after the rape, Mandy visits a psychiatrist but because of her own feelings of guilt and shame she is unable to reveal what really happened to her that night. Her mother, unable to deal with her own feelings of guilt, forbids Mandy to ever talk about Link or that night again, and comforts herself with the belief that at least her daughter is still "intact".

At the onset of puberty, Mandy develops health problems. She begins vomiting, and shortly afterwards, loses her period. After Mandy is hospitalized, she finds herself once again in the care of a therapist. Mandy begins, through the help of Dr. Wong, her bestfriend Steffie, and a new boyfriend, Paul, to reveal her secret rape and confront her mother about what had happened to her eight

years before.

Once her mother's secrets are revealed, Mandy is able to continue her own healing process by first becoming enraged with her mother, while at the same time forcing her mother to begin this necessary process with her.

The reader becomes as involved in the need to understand the circumstances of the rape as Mandy. It is this empathy that keeps the reader captivated. **No More Secrets** is not a multi-layered fiction file filled with metaphor

and symbolism. It is a story as stark, and encouraging, as the title implies.

Nina Weinstein, a student of applied linguistics and world literature, has taught in many programs including Harvard University and UCLA Extension. **No More Secrets** is her first novel, winning first place in its category at the Santa Barbara Writers Conference.

Maria Stewart is a poet and freelance writer/editor living in Ottawa.



Woman at Mile Zero

Prose poems by Linda Rogers

"Rogers walks the linguistic high-wire with an intuitive balance that gives *Woman at Mile Zero* a hallucinatory force reminiscent of Verlaine and Rimbaud at their best."

— The Vancouver Sun

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On Double Tracks
by Leslie Hall Pinder
Lester & Orpen Dennys, 1990

On Double Tracks

Ambitious courtroom drama

reviewed by Sara Fisher

There are people (not too many these days) who can afford hardcover fiction. However, I imagine that authors whose work is more widely known than Ms. Pinder's are those whose books are snatched up by devoted readers, even at \$24.95. As far as this novel is concerned, I'd wait for a paperback version. After finishing the book, I thought that perhaps novelists should start their careers with poems, short stories, essays - anything to give us a taste of their skills before they attempt fiction of 244 pages.

Leslie Hall Pinder has previously edited an anthology and another novel. I haven't had the opportunity to read either work - although reviews of the novel are complimentary - and can only say that **On Double Tracks** is a frustrating and annoying book to read.

The story revolves around two main characters - Megan Striclan, former corporate lawyer and angst-ridden yuppie, and Theodore Selbie, obnoxious, nearly senile judge who should probably be pensioned off. They are involved in the courtroom drama of Aboriginal land claim actions, with Megan as 'the great white defender' of a First Nation band; there's an under-

handed prosecution team that buys off a defence witness, and Judge Selbie who rants and raves in court like a bigot, but mellows as the days go on, perhaps a side effect of becoming increasingly befuddled.

The manner in which Megan becomes involved with the



band members, who are never named and always referred to as **Indians**, is pretty bizarre. Megan, escaping up north to visit her mother and sister after having a nervous breakdown, quitting her job and fighting with her boyfriend, hits a swan on the road. She puts it in her car and while looking for help, comes upon a group of Native people sitting around a

campfire. Their leader Steven takes the swan to be mended, invites her to stay the night, and she soon volunteers to help them fight for the land they feel belongs to them.

The narrative switches from Megan's point of view to Judge Selbie's and back again. They remember their childhoods and relationships with their fathers in particular. All this and courtroom drama too!

To write a story with a social message, trying to develop strong characters, dipping into symbolism and mystical matters is an ambitious project, and I'm sure Ms. Pinder had all the right intentions. But I found her depiction of First Nation peoples (whom she consistently called **Indians**, speaking Indian) patronizing and at times offensive. They are portrayed as naive and needing her 'white saviour' help to negotiate their way in the white system of law; at the same time, she mythologizes their lives as though she's amazed that they're so tapped into the real meaning of life! I'm a little leery of novels where the heroine finds redemption through involvement with a people closer to God or Nature. It's not their job in life to save middle-class yuppies.

Sara Fisher
Montréal, Québec

Womens' Studies

from

ISER Books

Midwives in Passage: the modernisation of maternity care

by Cecilia Benoit

Benoit explores the social factors that undermine or enhance midwives' control over their education and practice, and calls into question both traditional and recent assumptions concerning professionalism for female service workers.

1991 (ISBN: 0-919666-70-1) Price: \$24.95 + GST (softcover)

To Work and To Weep: women in fishing economies

Edited by Jane Nadel-Klein and Dona Lee Davis

"This fine collection questions the assumption that in fishing communities 'men must work and women must weep'...consistently interesting, finely honed chapters that effectively integrate maritime anthropology with gender studies in a cross-cultural context." *American Anthropologist*

1988 (ISBN: 0-919666-60-4) Price: \$20.00 + GST (softcover)

Blood and Nerves: an ethnographic focus on menopause

by Dona Lee Davis

What is universal and presumably physiological in women's experience of menopause? What is variable and cultural? Can status change in middle age affect or mediate menopausal symptoms? How does one go about conducting an ethnography of menopause?

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Medical Anthropology Quarterly

1983 (ISBN: 0-919666-41-8) Price: \$13.95 + GST (softcover)

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Salad Days
by Claire Rothman
Cormorant Books, 1990

If you are English and spent your formative years in Montreal, this book of short stories by Claire Rothman is for you. It doesn't matter if you are sixteen or sixty, Catholic or Jewish, from the West Island or Westmount, Claire Rothman has captured the essence of being an English-speaking Montrealer in **Salad Days**. There may be something unclear about being Canadian but any Anglophone who grew up in Montreal understands intuitively the Montreal experience. You can sense it immediately when you meet another person. That is not to say you need to be a Montrealer to enjoy this book. In fact, of the ten short stories, only four actually take place in Montreal and two occur completely outside of Canada.

Salad Days

Growing up in Montreal

reviewed by Roberta Hill

I picked the book up while waiting for a friend to arrive for a meeting and immediately became immersed in the feelings and troubles of a four-year-old boy named Jacob. "Enough" is the story of a single mother as told through the eyes of her child. We see the pain of a child trying to understand why adults behave in the ways that they do and the agony of the mother torn between raising her son while trying to maintain a new relationship. Neither appears to be getting the attention they desire and need in life.

These stories take us from childhood to the youth of our discontent, and lead us to our approaching middle age. Each story feels autobiographical, and you begin to feel your own female adolescence in the short stories "August" and "Salad Days". I kept saying to myself, "I remember this". The only disappointment is "Wing-beat". Although well written and curious, it seems too juxtaposed to the others stories to have its meaning

fully appreciated.

Salad Days clears the palate, making you anticipate the more complex and full diversity of the remaining meal to follow. Unfortunately, it is devoured far too quickly and leaves one anticipating something more. I look forward to seeing Claire Rothman write a full novel. She obviously has the skill of story telling and has not lost the essence of the excitement, pain, and confusion of one approaching adulthood. This book is about our roots, wherever they may originate. Claire Rothman's experience comes from Montreal but each of us can relate to the invisible ropes between ourselves and our families. **Salad Days** is about the decisions we make, based on our perceived wisdom in our youth, and how we must live with the consequences of those decisions throughout our lives.

Roberta Hill is an Ottawa based consultant who specializes in management training.

The Montreal Massacre

Lest we forget

The Montreal Massacre
 Edited by Louise Malette and Marie Chalouh
 Translated by Marlene Wildeman
 Gynergy Books, 1991

Last fall, while taking a university journalism course, the attack on the female students in Montreal came up in our class discussion. My instructor, a journalist, said she didn't like the way feminists were using the event to "their advantage." I was incensed. I asked her what she meant and, of course, a political discussion ensued. She admitted she felt feminists were taking this isolated event to further their "ideologies". (Heaven forbid feminists should react to the violence inflicted upon women!)

Marc Lépine's attack on the fourteen women at the engineering school, Ecole Polytechnique, in 1989 is an overwhelmingly emotional event, but as members of the journalism class we managed to bring the issue into its proper place: squarely within the realm of politics. And that is precisely what the book, **The Montreal Massacre**, hopes to do: encourage discussion of the massacre as a political act.

The Montreal Massacre is a compilation of articles, poems, essays, and published and unpublished letters from Montreal's major newspapers, written by forty Québec feminists, four of whom, it is interesting to note, are men.

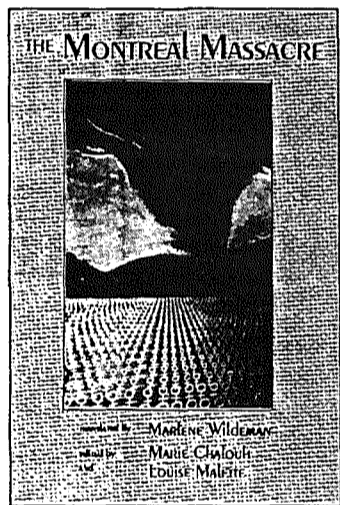
The book was first published as **Polytechnique**, 6 décembre, les éditions du remue-ménage in April 1990. The editors of this English-language edition have decided to include two things not found in the French-language original: information about the women who were killed (not all were students) and a copy of Marc Lépine's

suicide letter, which was finally published in the November 1990 edition of **La Presse** to a great deal of controversy.

Why an English-language edition? In the publisher's note we find three important reasons.

First, because the massacre was not an isolated act of a madman but a reflection of misogyny in our society and should be addressed as such. As one of the editors, Louise Malette, states in the preface, "Public acknowledgement of the connection (between domestic violence and misogyny) would be the key to developing new values and constructing a new world."

Second, because the reaction in Québec, and specifically the French-language media, differs from the reaction in the English-language media. Some of the



essays and articles in this book address the question of why denial and censorship of feminist analysis of the massacre was so powerful.

And third, because much of the writing in this book found a readership only through its publication in book form. As the publisher states, "These writings are a testament to the immediate pain and grief felt by their authors and, even more importantly, to the strength and courage of voices compelled to speak hard truths."

Throughout most of the book

the question that haunts all the authors is "why"?

A man with a gun enters a classroom and orders all the men out. To the remaining women he yells, "Bunch of feminists", before shooting them and, then turning the gun on himself. Is this the act of a madman, or a premeditated political act?

For the most part, the media tried to avoid representing the event as political. Almost all the authors in this book address this fact and bring out some interesting arguments.

Élaine Audet states in her unpublished letter to **Le Devoir**, "...if the killer had picked out a visible minority, everyone would have cried racism and remembered the Holocaust."

The French-language media, at times, even excluded using the feminine gender when describing the victims.

Mireille Trudeau points this out in her unpublished letter to **Le Devoir**. When referring to the students who were shot, the newspapers only used the masculine gender. "How to not read this as the obstinate refusal to recognize female reality, to name it as such and, more important, to acknowledge its right to exist?"

For an enlightening glimpse of one author's personal experience with the unwillingness of men and women to deal with the event for fear of provoking more violence, read Renée Quimet's, "A Little Story of Censorship".

Still, some of the articles offer hope and an offering of how change in society can occur. Greta Hofmann Nemiroff in her essay, "Where Are the 49% When We Need Them?", states:

"Unless men commit themselves to changing male culture, violence against women will continue with their passive collusion, their uncomfortable silence and nervous laughter. Without recognition and renunciation of the power of silent collusion, our society has no hope of honestly honoring the victims

of the December massacre, those vibrant young women prepared to contribute to their society on new and radical terms."

The Montreal Massacre is an important book. The massacre is an event, I regretfully admit, I paid too little attention to in the past. I am grateful to the editors, and the translator, for producing **The Montreal Massacre** and thereby shedding light on my shadowed ignorance.

Maria Stewart is a poet and freelance writer/editor living in Ottawa.



BOOKS

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BEVERLY J. RASPORICH

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Visions of Flight
 edited by Kelly Wheeler and Gem Wirszilas
 Kelly Wheeler / Trabani Productions, 1991

This collection of essays, poetry, and art began as a response to the need for a vehicle to reveal the scope and beauty of the creative talent within the disabled community; to give readers the voices of women with varied backgrounds, ages, philosophies and disabilities.



Dark Jewels

Pain and passion in
Cape Breton

reviewed by Fairlie Ritchie

Dark Jewels
by Rita Donovan
Ragweed Press, 1990

Rita Donovan's book is said to be a novel. That is valid. But far more descriptive of this particular volume is the term "prose poem". Donovan is a poet. **Dark Jewels** is a swelling drama of prose poetry.

It is dark, a painful book to read. Life batters the characters until they, and we, are gasping. Yet it is not depressing. For there are jewels lurking in the crevices that refuse to be dimmed.

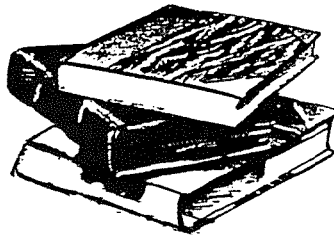
The story is that of a small group of people who live in a Cape Breton coal mining harbour town during the 1920's

(and in the years of their past). Or they live in hell - a symbol that pervades the atmosphere.

It is Donovan who brings this story to us. But it is not she who tells it. Instead, she delves into the thoughts of her characters and draws them out so that they may tell it from their own varied perspectives.

The characters she calls on are the members of Murdoch Macfarland's family and a couple of other individuals. There is Murdoch himself, the patriarch whose imagination and memories envision his grandparents landing in the harbour a century before, the young wife he buried, the lad brought up alone until he married Holly Danvers years later. There is Allan, his miner son, ground down into bitter hatred of his brother, due to his hopes for marriage being constantly frustrated by poverty and oppression. There is the brother, Jemmie, a factory worker, a good-looking cheerful man with a warm heart who falls passionately, loyally, in love. There is Helena, his lover, a Polish girl who has long lived with the loneliness of

prejudice and goes on to live in the added loneliness of disease. There is Holly Danvers, Murdoch's present wife, who seems frigid at first and yet buries a secret life within her wherein she burns with a love. There is little Morag, whose innocent wisdom aches with the truth she senses and the constraints she does not comprehend.



And there is Rife Tamer, gypsy-milkman-bootlegger, an outsider who sees clearly, philosophically, and sympathetically into the crushing circumstances of the community.

The plot builds out of the unfolding awarenesses and experiences of these people. By using the technique of oscillating point of view, taking us into the hearts of one

person after another and back again, Donovan guides us into their lives in a way that would be impossible with a single external narrator's perspective. Using this method makes it difficult for us to see where we are going. We do not understand, and in our puzzlement we belong with the characters. With them we think, we feel, we question. With them we respond to the mysteries, the agonizing, battering mysteries, of their lives.

Donovan weaves these broken impressions into a connected, meaningful design in tiny bits and pieces. Poet-novelist that she is, she taps that powerful source of creation, symbol, to convey this design, this meaning. Images of nature, sexuality, and religion burgeon and bear a breath-taking vibrancy throughout the book.

For example, there is the symbol of hell. Hell is through the hole in the bedroom floor, in the mine, and, as Morag realizes, in the factory:

"These buildings been here forever. They always were here taking in men, black with

dirt from long years ago, and bodies and souls lying all over the place. One man's working without his soul, he doesn't see it flying away. But it can't fly out on account of it's Hell, and that's why there's all the noise from the wings, these souls trying to fly out and getting pushed back."

But there are the other symbols which persistently subvert this hell: a cascade of water symbols - the harbour, the sea that flows over the mine, fish. Water is the medium of imagination and of dreams. It has its fearful, black aspect, yet ultimately it is a symbol of hope. The little boat which Murdoch has been building for Morag throughout the story is set to sail in the harbour at the end, and it evokes a means of escape from the hell. The hell still exists. It is powerful. The future is still dark. But there are jewels, and the characters can glimpse them. So the tale ends:

"And it was all right. It was all right."

Read this book. Live with these people. Ache. And hope.



Sadie
Brower
Neakok

MARGARET B.
BLACKMAN

An Inupiaq Woman



Sadie Brower Neakok, An Inupiaq Woman
by Margaret B. Blackman
Douglas & McIntyre, 1989

This is the life history of Sadie Brower Neakok, daughter of an Inuit woman and her husband, the first white settler in Alaska's northernmost community of Barrow. Now in her seventies, she devoted her life to becoming a

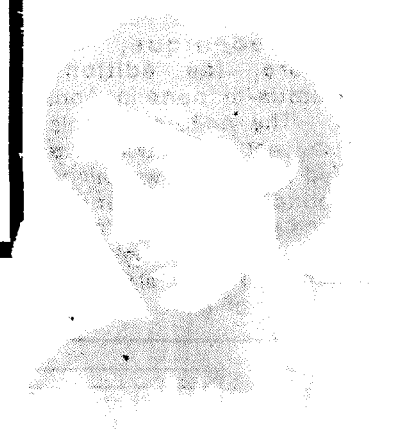
key advocate for her people. Professor Blackman interweaves cultural and historical data from various sources with Sadie Neakok's own perspectives on herself, her people, and the outside world that has increasingly affected them. The book makes an important contribution to North American cultural and legal history, to life-history methodology, and to studies of women in a cross-cultural perspective.

A Passionate Apprentice: The Early Journals 1897-1909
by Virginia Woolf
edited by Mitchell Leaska
Lester & Orpen Dennys
Publishers, 1991

"Here is a volume of fairly acute life (the first really lived year of my life...)" So writes Virginia in her first journal, begun at the age of 14 in small irregular handwriting. Seldom, if ever, has a major writer left so full an account of her early life and the circumstances in which she learned her craft. Besides their obvious literary importance, her journals are a delight in themselves for all readers - a vivid record of the daily life of a precociously gifted yet vulnerable girl who was to become one of our greatest novelists.

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A PASSIONATE APPRENTICE



VIRGINIA WOOLF

suffered her first encounter with madness and family tragedy. At the same time she is, already, wonderfully observant, entertainingly honest, and acerbically funny. Many of the events described in these years were to affect her for the rest of her life, and form the raw material of her novels.

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Women of Smoke Through the veil

reviewed by Marie Lovrod

Women of Smoke: Latin American Women in Literature and Life

by Marjorie Agosin, translated by Janice Molloy
Williams-Wallace Publishers, 1991

Marjorie Agosin's *Women of Smoke* is a deceptively slim collection of essays that draws attention to the women writers and artists who were silenced by the brutal authoritarian regimes in Latin America during the early seventies. Many of those women are the "desaparecidos", the "disappeared". Translated from the Spanish by Janice Molloy, the text is dense with poetic and informative descriptions by such courageous women as Elvira Orphée, Alaide Foppa, Alicia Portnoy, Roser Bru, Lotti Rosenfeld, Frida Kahlo and others. Side by side with the beautifully written introductions to the literary works, paintings

and photographs of these women are stories of the less well-known and sometimes anonymous women who continue to suffer and protest the violence and cruelty characteristic of totalitarian military governments bent on the eradication of the "subversive" notions of intellectual freedom. Agosin offers brief insights into her own personal journey, as an exile from her beloved and violated Chile. She is able not only to explore and expose the atrocities of dictatorships like the Pinochet government, but also to recover a vision of the vital spirit of the land and the people she knew and loved as a child.

What emerges from these scant hundred or so pages is a clear and compelling image of the dispossessed feminine genius of Latin America. Although many women have been tortured, raped, burned alive, starved and tossed from helicopters into the ocean, or have watched their children die or simply have no idea what happened to them, many carry



QUEHACERES

on the work for peace and justice, marching defiantly in Argentina's Plaza de Mayo, plastering the walls of Chile's cities with photographs of the vanished victims, stitching anonymous arpilleras, folk tapestries that depict the pain of the grieving craftswomen who produce them. *Women of Smoke* offers insight into the ways all of these women challenge the denial of those who have turned their backs on Latin America's best and brightest.

Agosin's text teaches that feminine genius survives and will continue to survive as long as women work together, despite totalitarian efforts to veil their force. Her text defies the obscuring smoke of those totalitarian regimes and implicitly challenges readers to become part of the movement that refuses to tolerate it. She insists upon justice for those lost and mourns the losses, while recognizing the terrible and noble beauty of the traces that remain.

A professor of Spanish Literature at Wellesley College, Marjorie Agosin is one of the

"appeared", a woman in exile from her home, refusing silence. Her text, *Women of Smoke*, is a seed. For some readers it may offer a brief but profound education, invoking powerful and haunting images of the anguish borne by so many in Latin America. For others it may inspire further study, so that the spirit of Latin American feminine genius, lost and living, may be rescued, revered and nurtured in a more socially and culturally responsible environment that recognizes and appreciates the pain and beauty from which it springs.

Marie Lovrod
Calgary, Alberta



**B
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S**

Disappearing Moon Cafe

Generations of struggle

reviewed by Emily Burton

Disappearing Moon Cafe
by Sky Lee
Douglas & McIntyre Ltd., 1990

Sky Lee's *Disappearing Moon Cafe* chronicles the lives of four generations of Chinese Canadians from 1892 to 1987. In the prologue, Wong Gwei Chang searches for bones of Chinese railroad workers in British Columbia around 1892 and encounters Kelora, half Chinese, half native Indian. He stays with her and her father and makes plans to marry her.

In chapter one, and nearly 100 years later, Kae Ying Woo, investment research analyst, and later writer, gives birth to a son. Beatrice, Kae's mother, after thoroughly inspecting the baby, decides to reveal the truth concerning what has been "much trouble in the family."

Throughout, Sky Lee skips back and forth between the generations and characters. Chapters are divided into sections subtitled by a year and (usually) a character's name. The reader is never lost but always aware of the traps Sky Lee has set: When Wong

Gwei Chang reappears he is married to Mui Lan; what became of Kelora? It is the first puzzle presented, and the last solved.

Kae's grandmother, Fong Mei, and great-grandmother, Mui Lan, emerge as the most



powerful characters, precisely as a result of their own powerlessness within the male-dominated culture. When Fong Mei and husband Choy Fuk fail to produce a child of either sex, it is assumed to be Fong Mei's "fault."

Mui Lan forces her to accept a plan whereby Choy Fuk will impregnate another woman, Song Ang, and pass the baby off as Fong Mei's. Mui Lan is villainous, yet not entirely so, for she had earlier rescued Song Ang from an abusive husband and then from starvation. Nor is Fong Mei always the innocent victim, as is revealed in her treatment of her lover, Ting An, and of her two daughters, Beatrice and Suzanne.

There are more puzzles: since the fertility problem is obviously Choy Fuk's, how is it that both Fong Mei and Song Ang eventually have children? Why do Kae's parents so dislike Morgan, whom they tell Kae is a distant relative? Gradually, inevitably, the answers are revealed. (This reader did not attempt to understand the Wong family tree until after reading the text.)

The "Kae" section, written in the first person, contains that character's musings on her relatives' behaviour; in particular, how women could so mistreat each other. Kae's friend and muse Hermia provides an answer: "We have

been ... made to cling to a man's world -- which refuses to accept us -- as best we can, any how we can." When Kae's Aunt Suzanne becomes pregnant by Morgan, with devastating results, Kae jumps in and assumes Suzanne's persona, to brilliant effect.


While Chinese women attempt to survive in a patriarchal society, all of Chinatown attempts to survive in white society. Whites, at best, remain peripheral; at worst, they are malevolent. Racism is both institutionalized, as evidenced by the Chinese Exclusion Act,

and random: Fong Mei fears violence while in detention at immigration; Choy Fuk encounters it on the street; Wong Gwei Chang must act to avert violence against the whole community when a white woman is murdered and a Chinese man is suspected.

If *Disappearing Moon Cafe* is in part about survival itself, it also maintains that there is progress; life can improve. As Kae observes, "After three generations of struggle, the daughters are free."

Emily Burton
Ottawa, Ontario

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Lives of Their Own

Our changing lives

Lives of Their Own: The Individualization of Women's Lives

by Charles Jones, Lorna Marsden, and Lorne Teppermen.
Oxford University Press, 1990.

Three sociologists teaching at a central Ontario university (apparently Toronto) were intrigued by the increasing diversity of their students, especially the women. The result is **Lives of Their Own: The Individualization of Women's Lives**.

It is a scholarly volume, but it invites and speaks to readers who are non-specialists as much as to those who are specialists. True, there is a great deal of statistical data and discussion of methods; but the book is well edited, the data is all relevant, and the statistics are integrated with comments by women, examples, and the authors' considerations of what it all means. As a consequence, the book is interesting – fascinating – for anybody wondering what is going on in the rapidly changing lifestyles of women in Canada.

The book is about individualization, described by the authors as a process "by which each generation of women is now involving itself in work and education in ways unlike those of earlier generations". They begin by reflecting that "no two lives seem quite the same", even if they were best friends, went to the same high school – "they will be living very different lives a decade or two later". This book attempts to answer the question "why?".

The book is broken down into three parts: the causes of change in women's lives (both personal and in the labour market); the proof of individualization (what its characteristics are, evidence of it in other countries, and evidence of it in Canada); and the results of individualization (a projection into the future to try to discern the coming scenario, and questions of the meaningfulness this has for Canadian women and for the nation as a whole).

The data shows the 1960's as a watershed. In that decade birth control became safer and, generally, legal; higher education grew more accessible; and a steep rise in divorce rates followed the 1968 easing of divorce laws. Following all this, women bore fewer children, over a shorter time, and women demonstrated a stronger career commitment.

All of the transformations so in evidence in the 1960's had been nurtured through a long gestation. Women had been gradually moving from work in only the home to nursing and teaching, to clerical work, and then to the professions.

Women are steadily spending more and more of their adult lives in paid work. But their work patterns don't replicate those of men. Three terms – variety, fluidity, and idiosyncrasy – are individualization's trademarks, and each is discussed fully in relation to women's lives:

"The *variety* of jobs open to them is wider than ever before. But because of the way these jobs have been organized – on a part-time and/or contract basis – women are encouraged to be more *fluid*: they move more rapidly from one job to another. The nature of the alternatives available to them also makes women's behaviour more *idiosyncratic*, sometimes appearing random in the sense that it is more and more difficult to predict." (pg. 50)

full-time opportunities? Or is it a sign of growing free choice and more stimulating opportunities? There is plenty of evidence for either interpretation.

The authors do not pretend to provide "the" answer. However, in the final chapter they pull together all the evidence, emphasize connections and cause-effect relationships, and thus give the reader the tools for working toward a future which offers maximum life meaning for individual women and men. These tools include ones for persons trying to imagine and plan for their personal lives, and ones for organizations, such as governments and businesses, whose decisions affect society more comprehensively. We are

reviewed by Fairlie Ritchie



Because of this expanding individualization, and the dissimilarities of men's and women's lives, and of women's lives from those of their mothers, certain consequences have become inevitable.

"One is *confusion*: People will ask: 'Where is this process heading? Is it good or bad? If bad, can we stop it? How? Why am I getting this life, and not the one I had planned?' Another consequence is *anomie*, or normlessness: 'What are the rules of living in this new order? Are there to be new ideas of good and bad, right and wrong? How should I plan my own life, and help my daughter plan hers?' A third is *disorganization*: 'How can people organize a happy, comfortable family life under these circumstances? How can we balance the demands of work, parenthood and marriage? Is there any possibility of planning for the future?' (pp. 72-73)

These comments lead us to wonder if the changes are improvements. There are different opinions. Is individualization occurring because women are ghettoized in socially vulnerable jobs and have fewer good permanent

launched with an exciting, wide-ranging array of courses for thought and action.

I am in my late thirties, just completing a degree and entering my third (at least) career. Often I have felt as if my life has lacked direction. Now I have a better understanding of my own situation, as well as those of others. And I have gleaned valuable insights with which to move forward in this environment, and clearer ideas about the society I want to work for. What higher recommendation for this book can I give?

Fairlie Ritchie
Toronto, Ontario



CANADIAN RESEARCH INSTITUTE for the ADVANCEMENT of WOMEN announces 4 NEW PUBLICATIONS.

ON WOMEN'S AUTOBIOGRAPHY IN CANADA

Criaw Paper No. 24 - Canadian Women's Autobiography in English: An Introductory Guide for Researchers and Teachers by Helen M. Buss, 1991. This study surveys a wide range of Canadian women's autobiographical writing in order to describe the ways in which women have constructed themselves as female subjects. A selected list of texts on the study of autobiography is also included.

ON A FEMINIST VIEW OF THE SCIENCES

Criaw Paper No. 25 - Searching for Subjectivity in the World of the Sciences: Feminist Viewpoints by Roberta Mura, 1991. This article argues in favour of applying a feminist perspective to the "hard" sciences since they are ultimately created by human beings, most often, by men.

ON THE WOMEN'S MOVEMENT

Criaw Paper No. 26 - The Women's Movement and Its Currents of Thought: A Typological Essay by Francine Descarries-Belanger and Shirley Roy, 1991. This article examines the different currents of thought that have developed within and around the women's movement over the past decades. Eg. from feminism of equality to femalinity and other theoretical frameworks.

ON EFFECTING CHANGE IN PUBLIC POLICY

"A Policy Handbook: Strategies For Effecting Change in Public Policy" written by the CAAWS Policy Collective, 1991. This tool will interest any group working to effect change in public policy; the steps and guidelines are not specific to sport and physical activity.

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Dance of the Sexes

A celebration of Alice Munro

Dance Of The Sexes: Art and Gender in the Fiction of Alice Munro

by Beverly J. Rasporich
University of Alberta Press, 1990

Beverly Rasporich has written what is both a celebration of Alice Munro - the "female-as-artist" - and an exploration of the "feminist possibilities" in her fiction. Her book, **Dance of the Sexes: Art and Gender in the Fiction of Alice Munro**, is rich and satisfying, much like the fiction she examines.

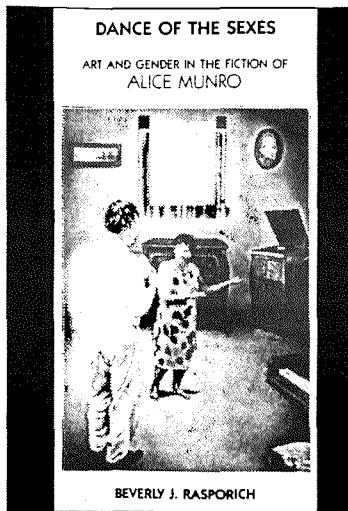
In her introduction, Rasporich rejects the "single thesis", or one-theme style for her study of Alice Munro, seeing it as something of a phallogentric demand. Instead, she approaches Munro's fiction from a number of different angles. Likewise, Munro's six collected works are not dissected in chronological order, a feature of academic scholarship; rather, they are examined as a totality. The only nod given to chronology by Rasporich appears early in the book when she notes that the corpus of Munro's work is

constructed through the physical aging of the author and her heroines. From **Dance of the Happy Shades** (1968), to **The Progress of Love** (1986), the reader is witness to Munro's interpretation and critique of the roles assigned women from childhood to post-menopause.

Rasporich describes Munro as "a passionate woman writing passionately about women", as she appropriates the feminine and makes it her art. In all of her fiction, Munro's heroines journey through their lives within the space accorded them by patriarchal authority. Del, for example, in **Lives of Girls and Women** (1971) is an intelligent adolescent struggling with the meaning of sexual urges, maiden aunts, an ambitious but frustrated mother, and the realization of a male-female order. Rose in **Who Do You Think You Are?** (1978) is the voice of female protest - a victimized survivor of male authority in the sexual dance.

The "feminine" is also evident in Munro's recurring motif of women in domestic surroundings. The decor of homes, the fine detail of fabrics

and foods, all underline the feminine space of women's lives, particularly the poor, rural and rustic women of Munro's stories. Female



culture is brought to the fore to be examined and contemplated.

Perhaps the most prominent feature of Munro's writing is her ability to weave stories about women, told by women to other women. The young females in her fiction are both intrigued and repelled by the "wrecked survivors of female life", as Del is by her Aunt Moira in **Lives of Girls and Women**:

reviewed by Mary Frankoff

"She sat on the veranda in the wicker rocker, wearing, in spite of the hot weather, some stately, layered dress, dark and trembling with beads, a large hat like a turban, earth-coloured stockings which she would sometimes roll down, to let the bandages 'breathe'."

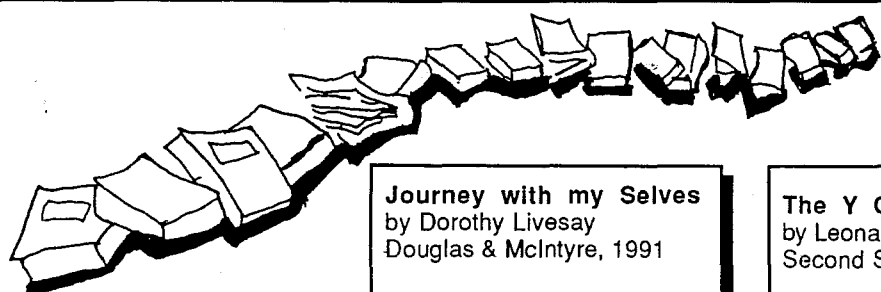
By incorporating references to the elements of traditional female concern, Munro not only establishes female reality, but more importantly, registers the irony of the female conception of self and sexuality in collision with the male perspective.

Avid fans of Alice Munro's fiction, and I count myself among them, will enjoy Rasporich's endeavour to tease out the various "feminist possibilities" in her work. Rasporich herself envisions her readership as students of contemporary Canadian fiction and "interested readers of Munro". I think she has targeted her audience faultlessly.

Mary Frankoff is a feminist teaching in Ottawa.

Women, AIDS & Activism by ACT UP/New York, Women and AIDS Book Group
Between the Lines, 1990

A comprehensive and progressive book about women in the AIDS epidemic. With informative discussion of safer sex and sexuality, HIV testing, public policy and activism, **Women, AIDS & Activism** is a thorough and up-to-date analysis of AIDS issues for women. It examines issues specific to lesbians, heterosexuals, bisexuals, prostitutes, intravenous drug users, teenagers, mothers, pregnant women, and women in prisons.



Journey with my Selves
by Dorothy Livesay
Douglas & McIntyre, 1991


The Y Chromosome
by Leona Gom
Second Story Press, 1990

In this absorbing memoir, Livesay tells her own truth about the people and experiences that have influenced her as a writer and as a woman. As one of Canada's best-known poets, Dorothy Livesay has never chosen to take the easy path, and she writes frankly about her struggles to free herself from the constraints imposed by family and society. As a young writer, she broke with literary convention to tackle subjects like racism, women's sexuality and the lives of working people. **Journey with my Selves** is a fascinating self-portrait of a woman who has always insisted on her right to live by her own standards.

In her new work of fiction, prize-winning novelist and poet Leona Gom, author of **Zero Avenue**, departs from her previous books and challenges the reader to meet an all-woman society of the future. Taut and gripping, **The Y Chromosome** examines the relations and value system of a culture of women. The few men still alive are in hiding, socialized early in life to regard themselves as inferior.

Avoiding caricatures and easy answers, **The Y Chromosome** is an ironic and provocative novel which probes the lives of women and men in a society which, despite striking differences, bears many similarities to our world today.





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Jamaican Nightingale

reviewed by Ann Darbyshire

fever. Most of these were also common in the Crimea. Mrs. Seacole used methods for treating cholera which were still used until antibiotics were discovered a hundred years later. Her description of one epidemic in Cruces is fascinating and horrifying. It was at that time, that in order to learn more about the disease, she performed an autopsy on a small child.

In Panama at that time there were many unscrupulous and lawless people going to California and to the gold fields. The main form of amusement for these people was gambling. Guns and knives were frequently used. As a result Mrs. Seacole learned how to treat gunshot and knife wounds, another skill which would be useful in the Crimea.

When Mrs. Seacole arrived in England in 1854 none of the people she spoke to believed that she would be useful in the Crimea. In the end she formed a partnership with a friend, Mr. Day. She took with her as many provisions in the form of food and medicine as she was able.

She stopped at Constantinople and visited the hospital in Scutari. At that time she describes herself thus, "Time and trouble combined have left me with a well-filled-out portly form." No wonder she was called "Mother" Seacole. After this stop she went on to Sebastopol, and eventually set up the British Hotel which was as finished as it would be by summer 1855. "The buildings and yards took up at least an acre of ground, and were as perfect as we could make them." In the yards there were carts and animals. Mrs. Seacole needed a horse or cart or both in order to administer to the men on the battlefield as well as to fetch supplies from the port. At the British Hotel she could serve meals, and minister to the ailments of all who came. Those who had money, paid

her, those who did not were still cared for. One of the major problems was thievery. Besides the humans there were "the Crimean rats, for instance, who had the appetites of London aldermen, and were as little dainty as hungry schoolboys."

When the war ended in 1856, Mrs. Seacole visited a few nearby places and disposed of her stock as best she could.



3. The bust of Mary Seacole by Count Gleichen, 1871.

Her venture had been a considerable monetary loss. She arrived back in England with no money but with many friends. Some of these people discovered her predicament and rallied round to help her. Writing her autobiography was one of the things she did to raise money. It was published in 1858. She lived until 1881 in reasonable comfort, mostly in England, but also visiting Jamaica.

I do congratulate and thank George Cadogan for this book. I particularly like the way he compares the work that Mary Seacole, a Black woman, and Florence Nightingale, a white woman, did in the Crimea, and the way they were treated in England afterwards. I do not know if he has seen the edition of the Seacole book which was published by Falling Wall Press in England in 1984. The introduction and notes by Ziggi Alexander and Audrey Dewjee in that edition add further helpful information, especially for Mrs. Seacole's later years.

Ann Darbyshire
Ottawa, Ontario

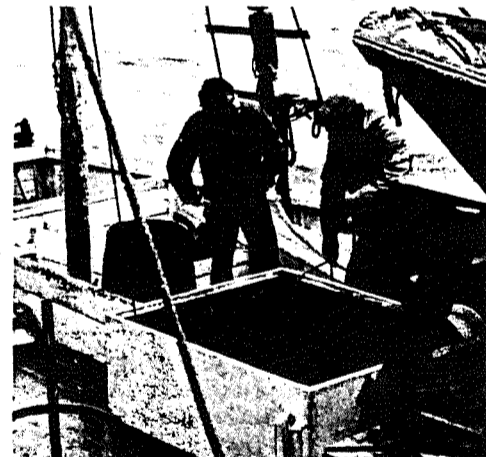


To work and to weep: Women in Fishing Economies

reviewed by Nonita T. Yap

To Work and To Weep: Women in Fishing Economies
edited by Jane Nadel-Klein and Dona Lee Davis
ISER Books, 1988

To describe *To Work and To Weep* as a collection of ethnographic essays on women in fishing communities would be correct, but it would not be fair, for the essays tell the reader almost as much about the men, and more. They are about power, the power of individuals and communities to make choices over lifestyles and economic activities, the distribution of that power, and the conditions that enhance or erode that power. The essays illustrate the influence of ecology, kinship networks, history, ethnicity and social class on the survival strategies of marginal communities. An integral part of these strategies, of course, is the gender division of labour.



To Work and To Weep is a collection of the most illuminating and entertaining essays in "women-in-development" or "women-and-the-environment" (as such studies are referred to in international development circles) that I have come across in many years.

The essays challenge the tendency of gender researchers to assume that women's contribution to development and position in society are the same the world over, regardless of culture, history, ecology and political economy. Reading women-in-development literature frequently leaves one with the impression that women, particularly of the South, are passive and seemingly hopeless victims of a double curse - biology and culture.

The women in *To Work and To Weep* are dynamic social actors, creatively responding to the challenge of change, whether this change be planned, as in the periodic absence of the males in the family when they go deep sea fishing, or unplanned, as in the encroachment of "modernization" and the cash economy. What a refreshing change!

The very titles of the essays hint at the diversity and complexity of women's roles across and within cultures: "The Cooperative Nature of Women's and Men's Roles in Btsisi' Marine Extracting Activities" (Malaysia); "Does Absence Make the Heart Grow Fonder or Only the Influence Stronger?" (Peru); and "Shore Skippers' and 'Grass Widows': Active and Passive Women's Roles in a Newfoundland Fishery".

The Btsisi' women of the Selangor Coast of western Malaysia fish in full partnership with their husbands, the conjugal pair being the basic economic unit among the Btsisi's. Both man and woman formally lose their individual

identities at the wedding ceremony, and are known henceforth only as a couple, working together for mutual benefit. The San Josefinas, the "fishermen's women" on the northern coast of Peru, are skillful fish vendors and crafty financial managers. "Sometimes they tell their fishermen how much they have received from the sale, and sometimes they do not." Along the Sherbro Coast of Sierra Leone, both men and women derive status and profit from a wide spectrum of economic activities. The activities are clearly divided along gender lines, but are seen as complementary rather than competitive.

cont'd pg. 35

Jamaican Nightingale: Wonderful Adventures of Mrs. Seacole in Many Lands.

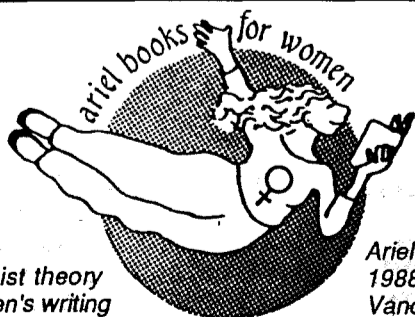
by Mary Seacole, 1805-1881
edited by George Cadogan
Williams-Wallace Publishers,
1989

What a pleasure to find another edition of the autobiography of Mrs. Seacole!

When I was a young girl growing up in Jamaica my favourite aunt had many items of historical as well as family interest in her house. I remember a bunch of buttons which she told me had originally belonged to Mrs. Seacole. She said Mrs. Seacole was a remarkable woman who had been a nurse in the Crimean war, but I did not know just how remarkable until I first read her autobiography a few years ago.

The book is easy to read as Mrs. Seacole has a clear, flowing style and tells her story with humour and understanding of people. She devotes most of the book to her experiences in the Crimean war, but the first seven chapters are about her life before the war. In these we are given a graphic description of how she lived and learned while growing up, and her travels to England, Cuba, Haiti, and New Granada, now Panama.

In that country she had ample opportunity to practise her skills of doctoring and providing accommodation. She had to deal with dysentery, diarrhea, cholera and yellow



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A woman's language

by Ngaire Genge

Sixteen years ago, when I really began to discover the difference between men and women, I could find no words to express the subtleties of emotion that I felt. Today, this lack of words seems even larger, more difficult to overcome as I recognize that I must have two languages, neither my mother's tongue.

It is not enough for me to know words to describe myself. Neither "feminist" nor "womanist" begins to explain myself or my sisters. Above all, I am a humanist. I need balance in my life and in the language that reflects my life. I feel as adrift as the men who search for a way to describe themselves. Masculinist? Surely such a word would harbour meanings a man never felt or intended. Asexualist? The loss of so many layers of self is indescribable. Feminist? Are women creating for themselves a language with the same flaws as men's stifling language?

I've been told the words don't matter; the feelings and thoughts are what's important. Perhaps for some, but not for me. I feel no joy in discovering yet another side of myself that I have no language to express. What use are my new insights if they serve only to separate me from humanity, and to what purpose will I put them if I can't share them with men or women?

I have learned to express anger in a man's voice - as hatred and betrayal. To a woman I would speak of disillusionment, emptiness, confusion, terror and anguish and still not make myself understood. I can find no translation nor translator to express the rage I feel at being locked in a room of my own.



Expression is as necessary as contemplation. If the room I create for myself has no doors to admit companions I can speak with, it is no longer a haven, but a cage. If I cannot define, in words, love for a woman, for a man, for a child, or for something larger, I am shackled by chains that no one can break. Love is not a word I can use, neither are anger or hate. How then am I to define myself in my own society?

Without language to describe

what women need, what a man strives for and fears, without language to bridge the distance between us, is there any hope for the bright garden I've heard described? No.

If women wish to follow in men's footsteps and cut themselves off from the greater thing we call "humanity", then our language is sufficient.

of the emotion and the thought would be sufficient if I lived in a world by myself. But I don't. Why struggle with ideas at all if all we create are lonely women and men? I know that women must talk to women for a time to build the language that will unite us, but when can I begin to talk to everyone and be understood? Only then will I believe that real changes are possible.

How could the crime of rape be described to a man, or to a woman who has never felt those emotions? Where are the words for things that are not woman-specific? How many crimes have I committed against men and not known it because they have no words to describe them? Where there is no language, the only communication possible is physical, with all its dangers and inaccuracy.

And why must I speak in euphemisms? "Taking back the night", "breaking the silence", what do these words really mean? Symbolism is valuable only if it clarifies a thought, not if it makes the thought more obscure or ignores those who don't understand it. If we "take" back the night, who are we taking it from? Are trying to frighten men by using a language they don't understand and by using language that we ourselves have defined as violent? Yet I

can't "share" the night as an equal either; "sharing the night" already has another meaning I do not wish to convey. Is there another way for me to say what I mean? I have not found the word to replace "share", but I know it is **not** "take".

If I "break" my silence, is it gone forever? And where are the words that are big enough to fling into that vast silence? Can they reflect even some inkling of the ideas women try to express? If we speak only in symbols, the words become pale reflections of the meanings they began with.

To speak strongly does not deny us our womanhood. Nor does using a man's language make us less than we are. I would not expect a child to understand concepts it has no words for, yet I ask this of my sisters and brothers. Until we can educate one another, grow a language that spans and encompasses gender, and teach that new language to our children, men and women will rage in lonely rooms and no one will understand the hammering on the walls.

Ngaire Genge is a creative and business writing instructor and feminist living in Labrador City, Newfoundland.

To work and to weep cont'd

The weaving of anecdotes into the prose adds credibility and power to the writers' analysis. For example, we are told about the woman who, "in soothing tones", greeted her somewhat tipsy husband returning home from a visit to his lover with, "Ay, ay, ay hijito, quieres cafe?" (Ay, ay, ay my little son, do you want some coffee?). When the writer states categorically, "Women are assessing the situation wisely and choosing from a whole repertoire of skills they have carefully and knowingly cultivated ... I maintain that San Jose women know the machismo complex very well, and that at times they choose to act within its parameters and at other times, they choose to act in opposition to it", you are likely to believe her. Why? Because you would have read in a previous page about the young woman who one day was sent shopping by her oppressive mother-in-law. "She carried her first-born, a six-month old, into the general

store, and good humoredly asked her friend the storekeeper for chocolates. Both laughed heartily and the clerk reached for a package containing a one-month supply of contraceptives. "Wouldn't my mother-in-law be furious?", she whispered."

The reader does need to remember that these essays are written by academics for academics. So one must shrug off "androcentric bias", "conceptual device", "nexus", "unitary construct", and "argot" (!) because the writers do walk you through the fascinating history and the meaning of "fishwife", "shore skipper" and "grass widow".

Before writing this review, I only managed to read five of the eleven essays. I cannot wait to read the rest.

Nonita T. Yap is currently with the National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy. She also works as a consultant on women in development for CIDA.

Women and Social Change: Feminist Activism in Canada
edited by Jeri Dawn Wine and Janice L. Ristock
James Lorimer and Company, 1991

Across Canada, women have become increasingly active in groups that practice feminist politics and activism. In this collection, feminist writers describe organizing efforts, from theoretical and practical approaches, and reflect on their successes and failures. The book's contributors are leading academics and activists from across the country.

Food & Spirits
by Beth Brant
Press Gang Publishers, 1991

In this collection of short stories, Brant writes of the experiences of Native people in their everyday lives. She began writing because of her belief in the power and beauty of language to change the shape of racism in her people's lives.

Uneasy Lies
by Eve Zaremba
New Star Books, 1991

In this fourth novel in a series of Helen Keremos mysteries, the detective has taken on what looks to be an easy assignment. She is the temporary chief of security for a new Toronto condominium complex. The job seems routine at best — that is, until a body shows up.

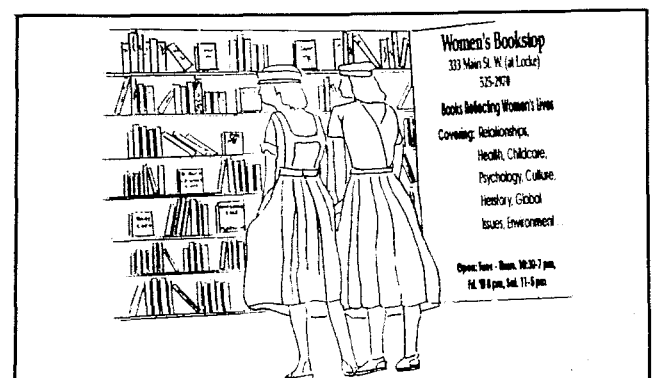
The **Whig Standard** describes the book as "a delightful thriller, featuring that street-smart woman of few words, lesbian detective Helen Keremos".

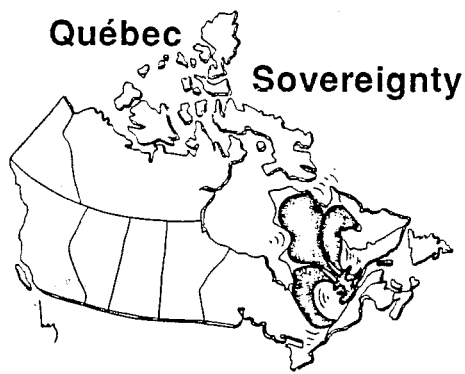
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Passionate Ambiguity

by Dorothy Todd Hénaut

Who says Canadians aren't a passionate people? We just won't admit it. And that gets us into trouble.

As an immigrant from Ontario thirty-seven years ago, after a year of French at the Sorbonne in Paris, it didn't take me long to fall in love with Québec. I put my roots down here, brought my children up in French, and have one foot planted firmly in the Québécois culture and one in the English.

Watching Québec change

Watching the Québécois awaken from Duplessis' thrall and plunge passionately into the Quiet Revolution in the 1960's, fleeing the Church and its iron grip, democratizing education, taking control of energy by nationalizing Hydro, and dreaming out loud about an independent Québec, I felt complicity with the dreams and aspirations of my friends. The FLQ's violence horrified me. But so did the brutal police repression of peaceful demonstrations that characterized the sixties. Poets and singers raised their voices for independence and social justice. Thousands of people came out to poetry readings. I had never seen culture so vibrant, so connected to the world.

With the October Crisis, and Trudeau/Bourassa's violent response to the FLQ's senseless violence in 1970, I knew that, ironically, Québec's independence had taken a great leap forward. The repression coming from the central government pushed a huge number of fence-sitters into the separatist camp. I said at the time that Trudeau was

the best organizer for independence they had. It took only six years to get the Parti Québécois elected.

If some academic evolved an irony theory of Canadian history, it would probably hold water.

The divorce analogy

Perhaps we are what Saul Alinsky called "well-integrated schizoids". I think I am. I've always loved Canada, and been very proud that we are different from the Americans. And here I am, sympathizing with the *indépendantistes*. I finally understood that there is a strong identification process involved in watching a group of people struggle for their autonomy. They were saying,



"We don't just want separate bedrooms, we want a divorce -- but we don't mind sharing the duplex". As a young divorcée, I felt strongly that if you want a divorce, you shouldn't be forced to stay in a marriage.

Strong women

Women's rights were an integral part of my consciousness of Québec. I had worked on a brief to the Laurendeau-Dunton Commission for La Voix des femmes/Voice of Women. Feminist voices entered into a dialogue with the body politic -- instead of being ignored and

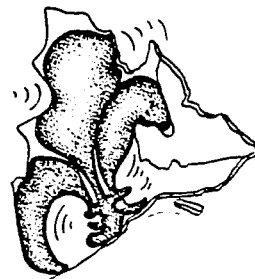
marginalized as they were in English Canada. The women's voices made an impact, in politics and in the media, whether discussing "women's issues" or any issues. Women didn't apologize for being feminists, they just took their rightful place -- not without struggle, not that the job is complete, but the struggle is passionate and ongoing.

Broken hearts

After the incredible high of the P.Q. victory in '76, the P.Q. government made impressive changes in legislation for social justice and human rights even as they established the primacy of the French language and encouraged the development of small and medium-sized businesses which catalyzed economic self-confidence in Québec. At the same time, ironically, Québec's sudden success within Canada made independence feel less necessary. Nonetheless, after the 1980 Referendum, all my friends' hearts were broken. The spirit went out of them. Bourassa snuck back into power. The "me" decade of the 80's did not spare Québec. Hopes for independence had evaporated. When Trudeau and Chrétien slapped Québec's face in 1982 by dealing them out of the constitution, there was barely a whimper.

Then in 1987 Mulroney negotiated the "Québec Round" of the constitution, the Meech Lake accord, and it seemed that Québec and Canada were going to make it. But then, the independence movement seems to be able to count on a little inadvertent help from the central government

periodically. In 1988 the Supreme Court of Canada declared the French-only sign laws of Québec unconstitutional, instigating marches of 60,000 people in the streets shouting "Québec français!" and forcing Bourassa to use the "notwithstanding clause" of the constitution. The need for independence reappeared.



Then, in 1990, with the deadline for ratification for Meech approaching, it all of a sudden became, not the Québec Round, but the Everything Round. It was rather as if a husband and wife, having gone to buy an apple orchard, found the husband insisting that they also buy the Brooklyn Bridge.

Was this vengeance for Québec's support of Free Trade? Had Québec re-elected Mulroney in the Free Trade elections because of Meech? For the Québécois, Free Trade means options, means not being hamstrung by Canada. Personally, I think they have an unhealthy lack of fear of the American bully next door.

Meanwhile, I am watching my beloved Canada disintegrate before my very eyes. Our Branch Plant Prime Minister is giving Canada away, not only in the Free Trade deal, but in lack of control of foreign investment, destroying VIA rail, selling off Air Canada, debilitating the CBC,

undermining the social security system, and deregulating everything he can think of in a slavish imitation of Thatcher and Reagan. I'm starting to feel there is nothing left of Canada to belong to. And I want to belong to a community.

The self-serving posturing of the likes of Clyde Wells during the Meech fiasco infuriated me. The lack of journalistic intelligence, especially in setting a context for the debate infuriated me. Mulroney's incompetence always infuriates me. How can people forget it was the Québec Round? I was ashamed of English Canada.

Can democracy function in a world with TV?

What has happened to our democracy? How can such small-minded people be running the country? Is it because of TV? Opinion polls run the country, and opinions are formed by 60-second bites. No room for intelligence and depth of reflection; takes too much time. Complex ideas might confuse the consumers ...er... audience... voters.

Normally, in a democracy, the people elect delegates to a parliament which then is empowered to make decisions on behalf of the electorate. This works well when the parliamentarians have some kind of integrity and keep in close touch with the electorate, including its great diversity. Opinion polls aren't the same thing as keeping in touch.

Now we're in a situation where there is enthusiastic talk

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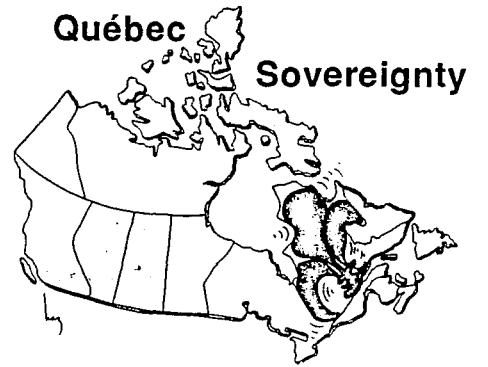


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**DAWN BLACK, M.P.
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Québec's largest women's group speaks



Below is *The Womanist's* interview with **Germaine Vaillancourt**, president of the *Fédération des femmes du Québec (FFQ)*, conducted and translated by **Ginette Busque**, vice-president of the *Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women*, shortly after the *Annual General meeting of the FFQ* in May 1991.

This position was first developed by the board of directors of the FFQ and presented to the Bélanger-Campeau Commission. A symposium took place a few weeks ago, followed by a special general assembly

Why is a Québec with greater political autonomy the most desirable option for the women of Québec?

The FFQ believes, that greater political autonomy in Québec would mean greater control of its economy, its policies and its programs. Traditionally, Québec women have been more at ease in dealing with their provincial government than with the federal government.

In Québec, it has been easier for women to act and have an effect on a smaller political and geographical territory. The provincial government could not use the distribution of jurisdictions and the economic structure of Canada as an excuse for not moving on certain matters.

It is easier to lobby at the Québec level only, as two levels of jurisdictions bring uneasy situations. As Claire Bonenfant put it in her presentation to the Bélanger-Campeau Commission: "You marry under provincial formalities, divorce under federal law, but apply the provincial division of property".

We think that it is easier to change Québec than it is to change Canada.

What are the principles of the new social contract that the FFQ is proposing?

The FFQ is proposing a non-sexist and non-racist society that would fully recognize the rights of the First Nations and be open to minorities. The proposal includes elements as diversified as the constitutional

status of women, electoral reform, regional development and the rights of children.

Women's groups will be called upon during the next year to complete this agenda of the new Québec society.

I could not say that the analysis has been made under a perspective of compatibility or that such a term has been used. There is a clear feeling, if not a certainty, that although Québec might have to suffer in the short run from becoming a sovereign state or country, it would, in the long run, benefit from having full control of its economy. Québec women would therefore be in a better position to attain certain objectives like better salaries, pay equity, education, child care, maternity benefits etc.

Looking at the numbers and nature of groups participating in the constitutional debate, and the experts called in by the Bélanger-Campeau Commission, have women been heard in this political debate?

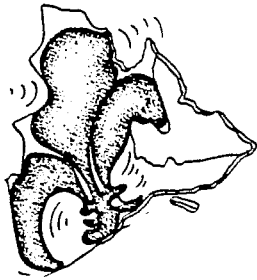
Yes and no -

No, in the sense of a social group recognized as having a right to representation in the composition of the Commission. Yes, to the extent that, as far as I know, no groups were refused the right to present a brief to the Commission. No again, to the extent that the briefs presented by women's groups did not seem to attract as much attention as other groups' or institutions' briefs. The coming months or years will be a better indication of the impact women will have on the future of Québec.

Where do Immigrant and Visible Minority women fit into the picture of sovereign Québec?

At the meeting, the FFQ voted "yes" to a motion asking for the establishment of a committee whose mandate would be to reach out to Immigrant, Visible Minority and Anglophone women so that they will have their input in the feminist proposal of society. Once Québec will not have to fight for its own place, it will have the means to be more inclusive. The objective to be inclusive and open to a pluralistic society has been clearly expressed by the FFQ members.

How compatible are Québec's economic priorities with those of Canada? Will women benefit from an economy controlled by Québec rather than by Canada? How?



where the position was discussed and endorsed by the members. The position in favor of the sovereignty of Québec was ratified.

What was the debate at that meeting? Was there consensus on the FFQ position? Are there dissenting voices among women's groups, both members and non-members of the FFQ, on this issue?

The debate was more on what should be included in the feminist vision of society than it was on the position in favor of sovereignty. Some women were concerned that we were non partisan, not supporting a political party, and yet we were taking such a political stand. When the vote came, there were a few absentions but no opposition. All the women's groups that presented briefs to the Bélanger-Campeau Commission were in favor of more autonomy for Québec and some supported the principle of sovereignty for Québec.

The *Fédération des femmes du Québec* represents 115 associations and approximately 100,000 women in Québec. What is the position of the FFQ on the constitutional future of Québec?

The FFQ was very involved in the debate over Meech Lake. At that time, the FFQ was of the opinion that the "distinct society" concept was not a threat to women's rights in Québec.

The Bélanger-Campeau Commission was established at a crucial moment, as we attempted to define the future of Québec. To our great dismay, the FFQ was refused a seat on the Commission and the only choice that remained for the FFQ was the presentation of a brief at the public forum.

The FFQ chose not only to indicate the direction Québec has to take in order to build a society based on a feminist perspective but also took a position on the political structure best suited to reach that objective.

The FFQ came to the conclusion that the sovereignty of Québec would offer better guarantees than any other structure for the development of the feminist vision of society. Sovereignty is a tool for the promotion of equality rights.



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Best Wishes
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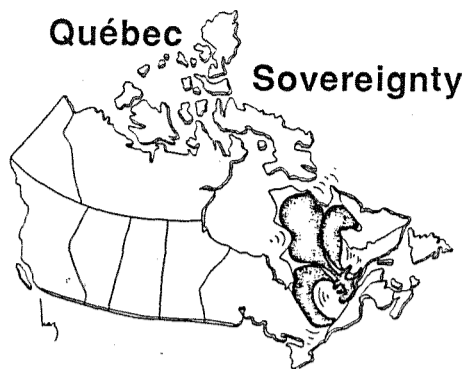
Mary Clancy, M.P.

Official Opposition Critic for the Status of Women



Best wishes to the Womanist, its staff and readers in the battle for true equality.

Mary Clancy



Passionate Ambiguity (cont'd)

of a "constituent assembly" to make decisions on the constitution. Who the hell is going to choose the members of the constituent assembly? The Chamber of Commerce? What kind of hogwash is that? Our parliamentarians are the only ones elected by all of us to work for us. They are the ones mandated to negotiate constitutional arrangements and anything else that needs to be done. If they're doing it badly, we kick them out and get a new bunch in.

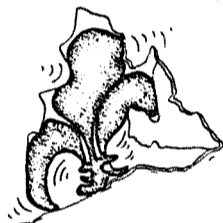
Don't underestimate hurt feelings

Meanwhile, back in Québec, through thick and thin, the Québécois have a love affair with their country, with all that entails of blindness to its faults and fury when it is insulted. The failure of Meech Lake was an insult to Québec. It doesn't make any difference what English Canadians say about it - they wanted other things in, not Québec out - the results are that, ironically, Canada became the catalyst for the biggest wave of Québec nationalism ever. The Québécois were truly hurt by

the rejection, even as they sensed their goal of independence come nearer. They live perhaps with an emotional paradox, a deep love of Québec, but a Québec that has been part of Canada for a long time. That may partially explain the enormous mood swings of the Québec people, their passionate ambiguity.

Oka

After Meech, furious with Canada, I felt as if I belonged in Québec, that it was my only country. But then along came Bourassa's fascist reaction to



the problems at Oka and Kahnawake, catalysed by Ottawa's incompetence. Québec looked pretty bad and I was very disturbed. Where were the voices that should have been criticizing Bourassa? Well, there were "Artists for Peace", a strong

group of artists, writers, singer/poets and filmmakers. But they had trouble getting their voice into the media. It appeared that phobias against the native people were winning the day. Jumping on the band wagon, a radio station boycotted Kashtin, a very popular music group in Québec that sings only in Montagnais. Their listeners were furious. Within two weeks, Kashtin was back on the air. Some influential columnists came out with pro-native statements. Eventually brawn won out over brain, under the leadership of Tweedledum and Tweedledee - Bourassa and Mulroney - and the problems haven't gone away. But at least now the issues are receiving broad discussion in the press. Even the James Bay Hydro project is coming in for its share of public criticism and open discussion - far more than the government would like it to have.

The importance of being critical

There is a problem in Québec, the "you can't publicly criticize the government because Québec is too vulnerable; you can't publicly criticize Hydro-Québec

because it is our flag-ship" corporation. Loyalty to Québec ties people's tongues. This is dangerous. Would it be different in an independent Québec? I like to think so. But then, there will be a need to protect the fledgling country. Yet the very essence of a democracy is the interplay of government and opposition, with a wide variety of critical voices.

What about the English?

Speaking of diversity, what about the English in Québec? Aren't they hard done by? Well frankly, no, I don't think it's unreasonable to ask them to speak the language of the majority, and to respect the French face of Québec. When I first arrived here, I was horrified to see the English attitude towards the Québécois - it hovered on the border of contempt. Ironically, since they have been obliged to learn French, a whole new world has opened up for them, and those who are staying really like it. I myself, originally anglophone but bilingual for thirty-seven years, receive a lot of respect and friendship from the Québécois, although I never

pretend to be anything other than what I am. There is definitely a place for us here.

...and the immigrants?

What about the immigrants, the "allophones" as they are called? During the Duplessis regime the Québécois were indeed closed to outsiders, but they have been opening up ever since, welcoming allophones who learn French. Of course, as a white society, they are no less racist than the rest of us. But they are acknowledging and struggling with the problem, and change is occurring. I personally think that the next decade or two holds the biggest challenge Québec has ever faced - the integration of its immigrants. Without that Québec will die, whether independent or still part of Canada.

No, Virginia, it's not a province like the others

There is one thing I don't understand. Why can't the rest of Canada accept that Québec is not a province like the others? Trudeau refused to give Québec an ounce of difference. Mulroney rushes headlong to give Québec everything it wants and so gives it to all the provinces, thus seriously undermining Canada's ability to function as a single country.

"Decentralizing" all of Canada in order to "match" Québec is a recipe for destruction. Why does every province have to be exactly the same? Why can't Québec's needs for autonomy on the political, social and economic fronts be met, while Canada's needs for cohesion, interdependence and connection be met? Canada never has been a "rational" country, strung out as it is along a thinly populated border with a giant. Enormous governmental efforts have always had to be made to create the country and keep it together. Those efforts have been made for emotional reasons. If there is any passion for Canada left, why can't an effort be made now?

Dorothy Todd Hénaut is a filmmaker at the National Film Board. Her most recent film, A Song for Québec, about the last four decades of Québec history, is called in French, not accidentally, Québec... un peu... beaucoup... passionnement.

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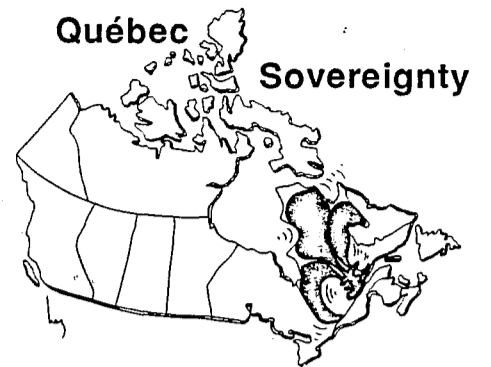
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Two more solitudes: no thanks



by *Micheline Piché*

It is a healthy reaction to reflect on ourselves when the one next to us is in the process of re-evaluating his or her own situation... this introspection allows for the redefining of relationships, even if it may lead to separate living arrangements. For each to have its own place does not mean locking the doors to each other. Ideally, it should allow for the development of ties based on mutual respect.

In their quest for autonomy and equality during the past twenty years, women have had to reassess their situation more than once, despite the risks involved. They have redefined their relationships with men and society. The new definition took the form of a vision for a society based on non-discrimination and on democracy, a goal which the Fédération des femmes du Québec hopes to concretize with the sovereignty of their province. (See the report of the Fédération des femmes du Québec presented to the Bélanger-Campeau Commission.) The feminist discourse, in my view, represents the future of society. Sooner or later, we'll have to face it.

While Québec women are attempting to get their message through to their changing society, French-Canadian women elsewhere are doing the same. For us, the failure of Meech Lake triggered a reflection upon our own future as francophone women within Canadian Confederation. As francophones living in the midst of an English majority, the feminine population has had a long and strenuous experience fighting for such fundamental rights as education in their own language, and the preservation of their culture and identity. Women have struggled for years to maintain the French heritage with almost no signs of support.

Despite their invisibility, or maybe because of it, French-Canadian women have adopted the struggle for equality and for the recognition of their status and their rights within society. They have joined forces and have been organizing for more than ten years in order to bring about the recognition of their specific rights while acknowledging their inherent diversities.

What can a francophone

woman from Sudbury and a francophone woman from Victoria have in common? The link that connects them is found in the fact that both live in minority settings, both are physically separated by a vast territory, and the isolation felt by each is enhanced by the dual status of "woman" and "francophone" they share. (See the report of the Fédération des femmes canadiennes-françaises, "Femme francophone: double infériorité", published in 1981). The burden seems heavy at time. Acting as both a restraining and a motivating factor, the dual status has



compelled women to increase their efforts, with vigour and patience, towards the achievement of a better society. The message they put forth often meets strong objections as it inevitably stirs up the long-established values of an entire socio-cultural organization.

Like the Québécoises, French-Canadian women want their vision for a just society to be recognized in theory as well as in practice. It includes the enhancement of the dynamic and tenacious character of the francophones in French Canada as well as the development of a position based on their strength as nation-builders, as outlined by the Fédération des francophones hors Québec. Women respond with a resounding "yes" to the challenge... but not without their participation. Women must be seen as partners, respected and committed to

the development process of this vision, no less. According to the Fédération nationale des femmes canadiennes-françaises, the participation of women in the social and economic dynamism and in the safeguarding of the French-Canadian cultural identity is essential for the survival of a French Canada, whether Québec remains within Confederation or not. Canada's linguistic duality made it possible for francophones to lay out the groundwork on which the Canadian people and the French international community can build new ties.

However, other types of links must be established...

To begin with, Québec must recognize our existence and our worth, if only because it is part (as we are) of the francophone minority in North-America and that, like it or not, we are its closest relative! The lack of attention given by the Bélanger-Campeau Commission report (not to mention the report of the FFQ) to future relations with Acadia and the Canadian francophones



denotes not only a lack of understanding but also a definite shortage of perspicacity. Yet, women have long been aware that the development of strong ties is the first step towards a better future.

French-Canadian women want their relationship with Québec women to also evolve as a partnership. This was the position contained in the report they presented to the

Bélanger-Campeau Commission last November. They do not want to be taken care of! They intend to show that they are valuable partners and want to be recognized as such. For women evolving in a minority setting, the women's movement has demonstrated the importance of solidarity – a solidarity which acknowledges the diversity of its members, the kind of solidarity which we, as francophone women dispersed in all areas of the country, have come to recognize as vital.

Our identification to the women's cause compels us to set aside frontiers and to learn from one another in spite of our differences and even our differing views. No matter where we come from or our nationality, we must rely on each other. And the same could be said of all francophones in North America, should Québec recognize that it has allies worthy of the name in all areas of the country.

It is up to Québec to decide if it wants separate living arrangements. However, Québec, in the name of the same identity it tries to defend and promote, will have no choice but to follow the lead of the women's movement, in establishing new alliances. It must open its doors to the francophones of the country, not lock them out.



Micheline Piché is the Editor of Femmes d'action, a feminist magazine published by the Fédération nationale des femmes canadiennes-françaises, Ottawa, Ontario. The text has been translated by Annie Tremblay. Femmes d'action is distributed in all provinces.

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Towards a feminist constitutional agenda

by Barbara Cameron

What kind of constitution do feminists want? This will be one of the topics for discussion at the Annual General Meeting of the National Action Committee on the Status of Women.

As feminists we do share a common vision of society. We want economic and political institutions which promote equality -- sexual equality but also racial, ethnic, national and social equality.

Our problem in realizing this vision is that we have inherited patriarchal institutions which are riddled with all kinds of inequalities. In order to get on with our agenda for a feminist society, we have to dismantle these structures left to us. Different kinds of oppression are structured into all our institutions including our families, schools, and workplaces. Because we grew up in these structures, we sometimes don't even notice the forms of oppression that don't directly hurt us but may hurt others.

National oppression is a case in point. The women of Québec and the First Nations are acutely aware of national inequality. Those of us who grew up in English-speaking Canada are often unaware of it. These different experiences can be the source of serious divisions. During the Meech Lake debate, the fundamental problem to be solved for women of Québec and the First Nations was national inequality. Women in the rest of Canada tended not to see this as an issue for the women's movement.

A serious problem in the Meech Lake debate for the women's movement was that the concerns of women outside Québec for gender equality got counterposed to the concerns of women inside Québec for national equality. Politicians, of course, tried to exploit these differences. We cannot let this

happen again. The challenge for the women's movement is to come up with a feminist approach to constitutional change which reconciles all forms of oppression.

A starting point for such a reconciliation is for feminists in English Canada to learn what national oppression means to our sisters in Québec and the First Nations. And to understand national inequality, we have to be sure that women from Québec, the First Nations and English Canada are using the word "nation" in the same way.



In English Canada, we often use "nation" to mean the same thing as "country" or "state". When our sisters in Québec and the First Nations are talking about national rights they are referring to communities of people who share a common culture and who live in a common territory and, as a result, have common social institutions.

A nation may or may not have its own government or state institutions. Under international law, nations (in this definition) have a right to have an independent state if they so choose. This is known as the right to self-determination.

Using this language, Canada is a country with a common state but it is not one single nation. Rather, Canada is

made up of different nations: Québec, English Canada and the First Nations.

In Canada, the people of Québec have always had a strong sense of a common national identity. In recent years, the First Nations have come to see themselves as nations. English Canada, however, has not had a strong national identity.

Part of the reason is that English-Canadian society has been in a constant process of development because of the continuous arrival of new immigrants. Once primarily

British, English-Canadian culture is increasingly a rich mixture of different cultures.

Another reason is that since 1759 the dominant elites in the country have been the English elites. English-Canadians have not been disadvantaged within Confederation by virtue of being English-Canadians. On the other hand, French-Canadians and First Nations peoples historically were disadvantaged because of their nationality.

Within English Canada, of course, there have always been inequalities and divisions, but they don't relate to the fact that we are English-Canadians. Historically, Ontario has been a privileged region compared to the Maritimes or the Prairies. Similar divisions also exist within Québec society.

A common question raised in constitutional debates is why is so much emphasis given to the issue of Québec's relationship to the rest of the country? Doesn't this give privilege to national inequality and establish a hierarchy of oppressions? Why aren't issues related to gender, race or other kinds of inequality given the same importance?

The choice about this was not made by the women's movement, or even by the current generation of male politicians. Choices here were made a long time ago. They have to do with the structure of inequality that we have inherited.

Confederation in 1867 accepted as legitimate two acts of force. The first act (or, more accurately, acts) of force was the seizure of land from

the First Nations, first by the French, then by the British. The second act of force was the taking of New France by Britain as a result of a military defeat of France in 1759.

A main objective of Confederation was to secure within the framework of one state the territory on the northern part of North America. The fact that this territory came under British control as the result of acts of violence of one kind or another tends to be ignored.

During the Confederation process in 1867, the First Nations were never consulted and were recognized under Canada's constitution only as one of the responsibilities of the federal government. The people of French Canada could not be so easily ignored because they made up such a large chunk of the total population and their economy was so important to the new country. Their elites were consulted and concessions had to be made.

The concessions involved setting up two levels of government, one which would have power over religious and educational matters. But this concession was not given to Québec because of its unique national status - all provinces were given the same powers.

This may seem like ancient history, but it is at the basis of our constitutional problems to this very day. First Nations women are fighting for the settlement of land claims and for the recognition of the right of Native people to their own political institutions. Québec women support the recognition that Québec is a nation, not just a province like the other provinces.

In 1867, women did not have the right to vote, own property, or get an education. The constitution in 1867 was the product of negotiations among the white male political elites - in much the same way that the Meech Lake Accord was.

As women we are not responsible for the inequality upon which the country's political institutions are built. But we have to find a solution to this inequality if we are to get on with promoting a feminist vision of what our society

should look like.

The way forward for us is to commit ourselves to creating a new voluntary relationship of equality among Québec, English Canada and the First Nations. While we are doing this, we have to devote ourselves to fighting for the rights of women and for minorities within these societies.

English Canada must support the right of self-determination for Québec and the First Nations. At the same time, we must put forward a democratic and feminist vision of English-Canadian society: a multi-racial, multi-cultural society in which the equality rights of women and minorities, including the Francophone minority, are protected and advanced; a society in which a common national government has sufficient power to ensure nation-wide social and economic programs. It means a society which negotiates a relationship of equality, in whatever form, with Québec and the First Nations.



We want a total feminist vision on the table during the round of constitutional discussions which will begin in the fall of 1991 as the federal Tories launch their next constitutional initiative. We want to make the political elites respond to our agenda this time - we have been responding to theirs for long enough.

Barbara Cameron is Co-chair of the NAC Constitution Committee. She teaches political science at Atkinson College, York University, and is a union researcher.

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Karen Haslam, MPP
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Reform Party: the New Right

by Anne McGrath

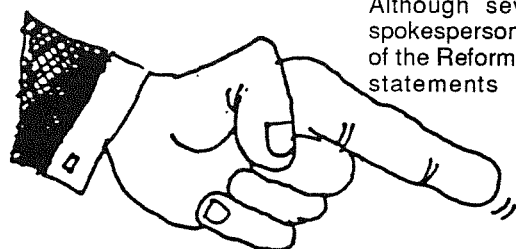
Poll after poll conducted in Alberta indicates that the Reform Party has enough support to form a majority provincial government if it chose to form a provincial party. To this point it has remained federal in focus and has recently decided to branch out beyond the confines of western Canada and seek converts in central and eastern Canada. In keeping with its roots of anti-Québec anglo chauvinism, it has decided to recruit and organize everywhere except Québec.

The rapid increase in popularity across Canada should cause great concern. The Reform Party is a party of the New Right or radical right. It has been accurately dubbed a party of "friendly fascists" by the mainstream media in that it mixes the grassroots appeal of populism with the racism, sexism and heterosexism of the far right. Reform candidates Stan Walters in the Senate and Deborah Grey in the House of Commons provide us with a clear picture of the kind of bigotry, ignorance and hatred espoused by the leaders and supporters of the Reform Party.

Alberta is no stranger to the dangerous politics of the far right. Many of the country's most well known and committed racists and anti-Semites make their home here. The trials and tribulations of former Eckville mayor Jim Keegstra have made headlines across the country, as have the racist pins, the petition against Sikh turbans and ceremonial daggers, the cross burnings in southern and central Alberta and of course the Aryan Nations training camp in Caroline. We have the distinction of being the province where the forerunner of REAL Women was created. The Alberta Federation of Women United for Families (AFWUF) was formed to organize anti-feminism and fight for a return to the good old days when women knew their place. Not coincidentally, this is also a place where men's rights groups are active in their opposition to feminism. But most of these groups represent

a very small, vocal minority committed to erasing any gains of the feminist movement and instituting economic, social and political policies and practices based on racism, sexism, heterosexism and class oppression. The Reform Party, on the other hand, enjoys fairly significant support.

It is probably accurate to say that many of the Reform Party's supporters are not completely aware of the party's platform. This is partly



because they have managed to avoid developing any substantial body of policy and have instead focussed on fairly sweeping, generalized statements manipulating people's genuine dissatisfaction and disdain for the federal government. Much of their support does seem to come from disaffected Tories or people who have not previously voted or supported political parties. However, their leadership is firmly entrenched in the ideology of the New Right. Indeed, they have consciously avoided developing policy, most likely because of the probable decline in support that would engender.

A large part of the Reform Party's support can be laid at the feet of the major political parties who botched up the constitutional reform issue with the Meech Lake Accord and effectively excluded the majority of Canadians. The Accord alienated many people living in the western provinces, most who are hardly big fans of central Canadian political processes. Not only has this contributed greatly to the Reform Party's growth in popularity, but it has also alleviated much of the pressure for them to formulate policy and let Canadians know what they

really stand for. They have concentrated much of their public policy statements on their position for a triple "E" Senate (equal, effective, elected) and some fairly inflammatory statements about making Québec get out of Confederation with nothing but the spoils of the defeat they experienced at the Plains of Abraham. Aside from that, we know that they are opposed to funding for advocacy groups and that they oppose women's right to choose abortion. Although several prominent spokespersons and supporters of the Reform Party have made statements opposing child



care, affirmative action and immigration, they have yet to pronounce themselves officially on many other issues. It is not hard to imagine what kinds of policy they would espouse.

As with other formations of the New Right, the Reform Party plays a very significant role in moving politics to the right. Its existence makes right wing ideology more acceptable and popular to other parties. Many media commentators have noted the ease with which Brian Mulroney mouths the well worn phrases of Reform Party leader Preston Manning. Alberta Premier Don Getty has been very comfortable with the atmosphere of acceptance around the "return of family values", "less government interference in the economy and social life", and "resistance to pressure groups". Only last month Premier Getty was featured on the fundamentalist TV evangelical show **100 Huntley Street** urging Canadians to turn to prayer to keep the country together. The existence of the Reform Party makes it more possible for all three major political parties to shift to the right.

Of course, Alberta Tory Members of Parliament have required very little coaxing to move to the right. They have, for the most part been ardent supporters of New Right ideology. We have only to look at the recent memo sent to

Bleeding us dry: the taboo tax on tampons

by Barbara Saunders

In the spring of 1982 the Progressive (regressive) Conservative Government of Ontario placed a sales tax on women's sanitary pads and tampons, claiming these items as non-essential. A province wide petition protest played a major role in having the tax removed after the Tories were defeated.

Well! They are at it again with the GST, only now it is national. In keeping with their misogynist attitude, the PC's now claim that canoe rentals, frozen pizza, donated sperm and other similar products can be exempt but **not pads and tampons!** And yes, women are outraged and showing it! We cannot allow this government to think that we will sit back quietly and condone their implications that our bodily functions are considered "goods" and/or "services", therefore subject to GST. The Taboo Tax Canada Petition Campaign will underline the government's systematic oppression of women through funding cuts to women's programs, centres, education, health etc., etc., etc., and now this personal assault through the taxing of our menstrual cycles!

A petition has been sent to over 200 women's groups across the country. Opposition MPs have each received a letter and a copy. To date, 20,000 signatures have been gathered. The petition reads "The Progressive Conservative Government of Canada has applied the Goods and Services Tax to women's sanitary pads and tampons.

We, the undersigned, believe that women's sanitary products are necessities, not luxuries, and therefore demand that the GST be removed from all these products." Jackie Burnett from Sarnia started the petition and she is collecting all the petitions so we can be sure they are hand delivered. The petitions will be presented on June 17th after the NAC General Meeting in Ottawa. The



protest has been raised in the House by a PC member, however, no results are available. We must keep up the pressure!

The government will make over \$30 million from menstruation in less than one year. Contrast that to the \$9 million they will spend on the women's program this year. Think about it and act! Contact your local women's group, or media and ask for a petition. Call your MP too and see how much of that 30 million he or she is getting.

Barbara Saunders is from Waterloo, Ontario and is part of Taboo Tax Canada.

former Finance Minister Michael Wilson by the Alberta Tory caucus to see the ease with which they argue the far right position. They urge Wilson to continue and deepen cuts to social programs, eliminate funding to advocacy groups, institute user fees for all federal government services and scrap any plans for a national child care program. It appears that Wilson may not have needed the advice since this is more an accurate reflection of the federal budget than a proposal of something to come.

Feminist groups have often debated the strategic value of taking on the New Right. It is argued that because they are so small and extreme, they are not worth tackling. In the case of right-wing women's groups it is sometimes argued that women should not be fighting women and that these women are mostly uninformed and misguided. I agree with the position of not engaging in one

on one debates with REAL Women and others, as they represent a small, unrepresentative, extremist minority; yet, we cannot ignore the New Right. They are a well-organized, well-financed and dangerous group committed to policies of exclusion by race, gender, sexual orientations, physical and mental abilities, class position, and they endorse rigidly proscribed social mores. The Reform Party represents a significant and influential component of the New Right. They should be exposed, challenged and organized against. The mainstream parties should be pressured to reject them both in word and deed and should be encouraged as much as possible to move away from the demagoguery of the "friendly fascists".

Anne McGrath is vice-president of the National Action Committee on the Status of Women.



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Diane Holmes
Alderman/Échevin

The toxics trade

by Andrea Prazmowski

Pssst! Want a quick way to reduce Canada's deficit? Why don't we choose some remote coastal areas, reveal their location to a few shady characters, and then let a steady stream of tankers dump other nations' poisonous wastes on our land? Soon, the government will be cashing cheques for hundreds of millions of dollars, and we'll be able to say good-bye to the GST forever.

"Never!" we cry. We'd rather live with the deficit and the GST than further spoil our environment with other people's poisonous garbage.

But imagine we were a country where the average annual wage is \$170, the average life expectancy is 46 years, and our yearly export earnings are only \$20 million. It would be very tempting to make substantial amounts of money by accepting toxic wastes from other countries.

Too tempting to resist for countries like Guinea-Bissau, in West Africa, which fits the above description. Guinea-Bissau is estimated to have accepted about 15 million tons of hazardous waste from Western nations in 1988. In one deal, they agreed to accept 15 million tons of toxic waste from a Swiss company over five years, for a payment of \$600 million. That is three times the country's Gross National Product, and nearly 25 times its annual export earnings.

Guinea-Bissau cancelled that particular deal though, when it was publicly exposed by a European environmental group in 1988.

The frequency of such deals, between developing nations and Western companies, was revealed to the world for the first time in 1988. One of the most memorable episodes -- ludicrous and tragic at the same time -- was the journey of a tanker which travelled to five continents in two years, going through three name changes, while looking for a place to dump its load of toxic ash from Philadelphia's garbage incinerator. During that time the ship -- the *Khian Sea* -- left part of its load on a beach in Haiti, saying it was fertilizer.

Finally, according to its owners, it unloaded its poisonous cargo in a country which the owners refuse to name. However, the international environmental group Greenpeace claims the ash was actually dumped in the Indian Ocean in November 1988.

There was no international law at that time to regulate the transport of hazardous wastes among nations. The only international law in existence simply prohibited the disposal of toxic wastes into the sea. But national and international

disposal. But too often, with the lure of big payments, the absence of stringent laws and inadequate monitoring, hazardous wastes and the dangers that accompany them end up far, far from their source. And too often, it is developing countries with little or no disposal facilities which end up with the wastes no other nation wants.

Industrialized countries produce about 90% of the world's hazardous wastes; yet the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) reports that as many as 115

trade. After the incident in Nigeria, the Economic Community of the West African States ratified a law which makes it a criminal offence to dump any type of industrial wastes in any country in the sub-continent. Many other countries began the process of passing similar laws, and by the end of 1990 more than 81 countries had passed import bans.

In March 1989, UNEP sponsored the development of an international treaty which put in place a system requiring exporting nations to notify recipient governments of intended shipments and receive their approval. Also, the proposed disposal facility would have to be "environmentally adequate".

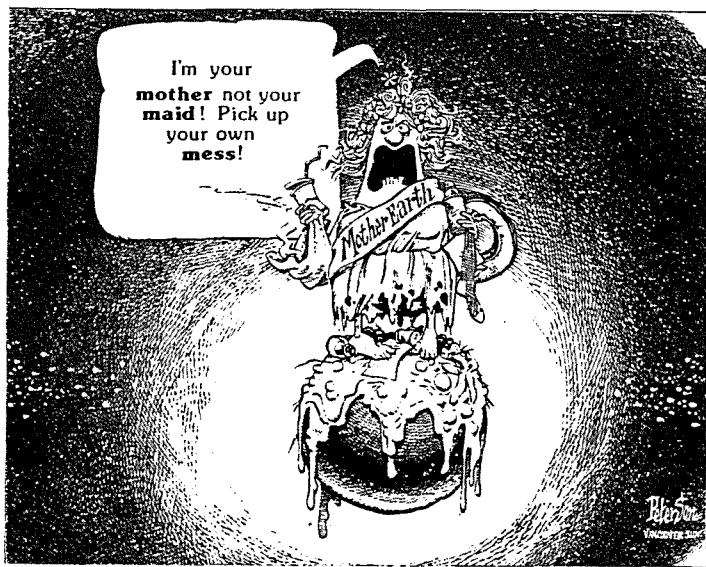
Many people in the developing nations were disappointed with the treaty, noting that it could easily be subverted by corrupt officials. They lobbied for a requirement that disposal sites must meet the standards that exist in the shipping nation, but industrial nations objected. At the time, African countries refused to sign the treaty because of its shortcomings.

There are other forms of hazardous waste dumping going on in the world. Often, chemical companies will dump their products, such as

pesticides, on to Third World markets after facing restrictions or bans on their products in the developing world. Similarly, entire production plants have been relocated to the developing world in order to escape tight regulations in Western nations. In their new home, they are welcomed by governments desperate for foreign exchange and people desperate for jobs.

All of these trends fit in with a global pattern of the poor bearing the brunt of pollution and environmental degradation. In the Western nations it is most often the poor who live near hazardous waste sites or near factories and smog-laden freeways, and who must work in jobs which expose them to unknown health risks. The poor within nations and the poor nations of the world have limited choices, and little political clout to oppose these forces. And, to add insult to injury, as noted in the report of the World Commission on Environment and Development, "many who bear these risks do not benefit in any way from the activities that produce the wastes."

Andrea Prazmowski is active in the local environmental community in Ottawa, and is on the board of directors of ECOVISION Coalition for the Environment.



regulators were spurred by the voyage of the *Khian Sea* and by other highly-publicized incidents.

For example, a villager in Nigeria, in West Africa, allowed Italian ships to dump drums containing 3,800 tons of European chemical wastes on his property. The landowner was paid around \$100 a month for the storage; disposing of the waste in Europe would have cost about \$350 -1,750 per ton. It was later discovered that several chemicals on the site were among the 10 most dangerous in the world, including radioactive waste, yet the drums were leaking and villagers were using empty drums to store water. Eventually, after a major diplomatic furor, the drums were removed.

In this case, those who deposited the waste were held responsible for its safe

shipments of such waste have been received by 15 developing countries, including Argentina, Morocco, Senegal, Thailand, Nigeria and Venezuela. Researchers estimate that Western companies dumped more than 24 million tons of hazardous waste in West Africa alone during 1988, with 15 million going to Guinea-Bissau and 5 million to Benin.

Industrialization has already contaminated the Western world, and the clean-up of old hazardous waste sites and the safe disposal of new wastes poses a huge technological and financial challenge. Cleaning up existing hazardous waste sites in the United States could cost as much as \$100 billion, according to the World Commission on Environment and Development.

So, with disposal costs rising and environmental standards becoming increasingly more stringent, some companies have taken the easy way out by dumping their wastes on poorer nations. And many countries, trying to cope with staggering foreign debts and immense social need, seem to have no choice but to look for economic recovery in steel drums leaking unknown chemicals and in the holds of ships carrying toxic ash.

Yet, in the past few years, measures have been taken to clamp down on the toxics



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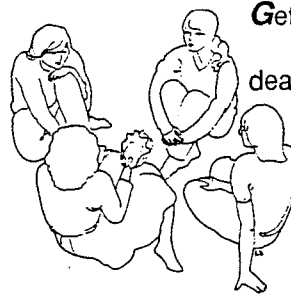
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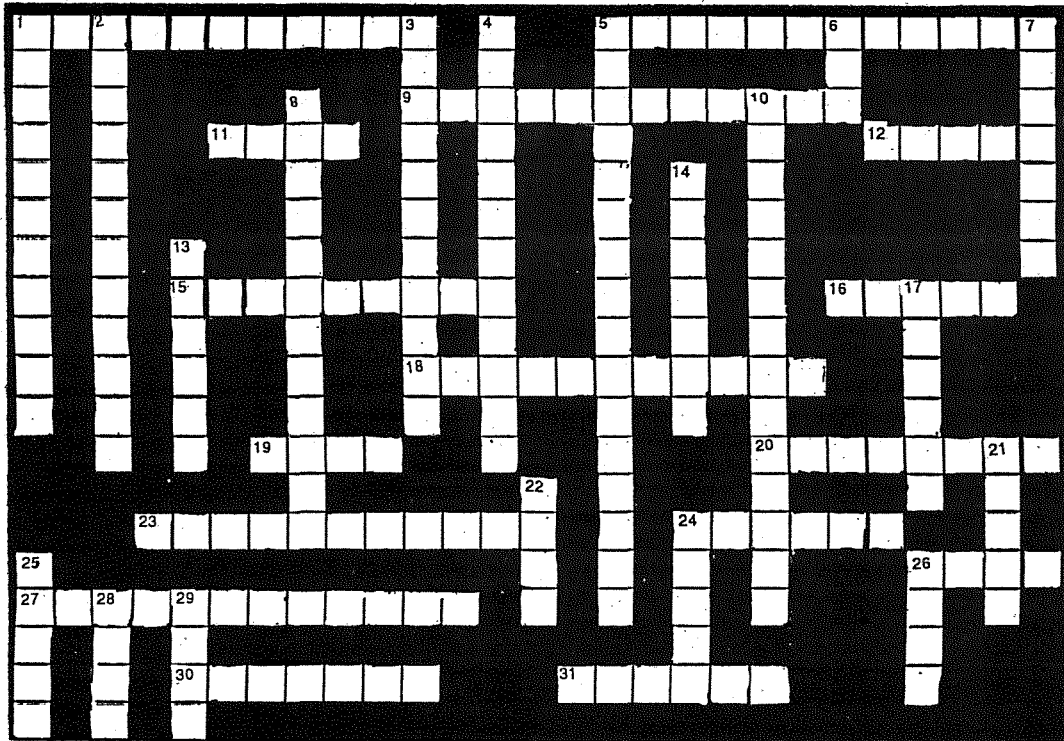
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ACROSS

1. First woman President of the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) (full name)
5. Became President of the Philippines in 1986 (full name)
9. First woman appointed to the Supreme Court of Canada (1982) (full name)
11. Egyptian goddess, and the name of an international women's organization.
12. Author of **Sister Outsider** and **The Cancer Journals** (last name)
15. Sparked the U.S. Civil Rights Movement by refusing to give up her seat. (full name)
16. "I want to be alone", said the actress who later became a recluse. (last name)
18. Novelist, author of the definition of "**The Womanist**". (full name)
19. Writer, author of **Fear of Flying** (last name)
20. First female Prime Minister of Great Britain. (last name)
23. First female Governor General of Canada (1984-89) (full name)
24. First female leader of an Islamic Country (last name)
26. Canadian activist, folksinger who played at Woodstock. (last name)
27. First Black woman to own her own TV station.
30. Female pop superstar who called Toronto a "fascist state". (first name)
31. President of the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women. (first name)



CROSSWORD

Answers are on page 45

DOWN

1. Deputy leader of the Liberal party. (full name)
2. Prime Minister of India assassinated in 1984, son recently assassinated. (full name)
3. Author of **Sisterhood is Global**. (full name)
4. "Laughter is by definition healthy", said the author of **The Golden Notebook**. (full name)
5. "Whatever women must do they must do twice as well as men to be thought half as good. Luckily this is not difficult", said by a former mayor of Ottawa. (full name)
6. "We don't see things as they are we see them as we are", said the diarist who was **Henry and June's** lover. (last name)
7. American artist whose images of flowers are like women. (last name)
8. "If the world were a logical place, men would ride side-saddle", said the author of **Ruby Fruit Jungle**.
10. "We do as much; we eat as much; we want as much", said a black abolitionist from the U.S. (full name)
13. The sisters: Charlotte, Emily and Anne.
14. Spokesperson for the African National Congress. (last name)
17. President of the National Action Committee on the Status of Women. (last name)

21. Native woman Liberal M.P. (first name)
22. "Women want mediocre men, and men are working hard to be as mediocre as possible", said an American anthropologist. (last name)
24. Executive Director of MATCH International (last name)
25. "As a woman I have no country...As a woman my country is the whole world", said the author of **A Room of One's Own**. (last name)
26. First name of author of **Ain't I A Woman** and **From Margin to Centre**.
28. First female American astronaut (last name)
29. The Pretender's song "- - - - to her"

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MediaWatch is seeking an Executive Director for its newly relocated national office in Toronto. Candidates must have a university degree; administrative, financial and personnel-management experience; exceptional interpersonal skills and a demonstrated interest in the fields of communications policy and feminist media studies. Bilingualism is essential. Responsibilities include the administration of national office; policy development and analysis; media relations and public speaking; working with the National Committee and the coordination of advocacy and lobby activities.

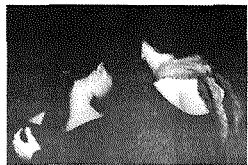
Starting date is September 3. Salary range is \$30,000 - \$34,000. Please send by June 14 a detailed resume and three work-related references to the MediaWatch National Committee c/o 342 Dundas Street East, #3, Toronto, M5A 2A1.

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Silence of the Lambs

by Marlon Haas-Miller

Jodi Foster and Anthony Hopkins star in the successful box-office, horror-suspense movie **Silence of the Lambs**.

As an avid fan of the silver screen, I have always been intrigued by a well-crafted movie and from the positive comments circulating about this film, my interest was definitely sparked.

Despite my curiosity, however, I did not immediately attend the movie because according to the critics, **Silence of the Lambs** was, after all, the tale of a serial killer and the stalking of his intended female victims. (Now tell me, where have I seen this story-line before?)

Nevertheless, a few months after its release, I attended the film, overwhelmed by the seemingly never-ending line up. The tremendous crowd seemed to confirm my suspicions that this was indeed the traditional "woman as victim" script that has been endlessly re-worked.

The movie opens with Foster's character, Clarisse frantically running through a wooded area. Immediately the suspense commences as the audience assumes her to be the next victim. As the tension continues to mount, we are abruptly put at ease by the FBI lettering visible on the back of Clarisse's t-shirt. The theory of the victim is dispelled. Clarisse is not fleeing from a crazed killer but merely following an intense training regimen. The opening scene indirectly conveys to the viewer that Clarisse is not, nor ever will be, a victim in this movie.

Foster's complex character is as fit mentally as she is physically. Clarisse's inner strengths, specifically her honesty and intelligence, enable the investigator to gain the trust and acceptance of a convicted serial killer Dr. Hannibal Lecter, played by Anthony Hopkins. It is through Clarisse's strange relationship (for lack of a better word) with

this highly intelligent killer that she is able to build an accurate psychological profile of the murderer at large. Armed with this knowledge she identifies and tracks down the madman thus putting an end to the repulsive massacres. Never once does Clarisse need to be rescued by her male superiors.

Silence of the Lambs is a violent movie. Women, like in most other movies, fall victim to violence. A bizarre twist in this film is that the killer, "Buffalo Bill", appropriates the skin of women in order to fulfill his desire to be a woman. However, I do not believe that **Silence of the Lambs** propagates violence against



women. Rather, the horrendous violence against women exhibited in this movie reflects the extreme acts of misogyny that do occur.

By concentrating on the uniqueness of the heroine, I saw this movie in a positive light. It challenges the theme of all women as victims. Clarisse has brute strength, "masculine" intelligence and "feminine" beauty. This strong and positive portrayal of a female certainly strays from the typical role women play in Hollywood movies. It is mainly for this reason that I enjoyed **Silence of the Lambs**.

Marlon Haas-Miller is the advertising coordinator for **The Womanist**.

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Blonde, but not blind, ambition

By Joan Riggs, with the help of *The Womanist* staff and friends



I like Madonna. I've always liked her. She is provocative. She makes me think about what it means to be a woman, what it means to sexual, to be beautiful, to have fun ("fun" is not an overworked word in the feminist dictionary). So I knew that I was going to go to her new movie, **Truth or Dare**. When I mentioned to *The Womanist* staff that I was going, I found that everyone else was also interested in attending.

I was pleasantly surprised that they wanted to go. Too often, feminists tell me that they don't like Madonna. She is too politically incorrect, she is objectifying herself and all women, she is a "boy toy", she is too sexual. As feminists, we often view sexuality as related to violence (for good reasons - it is grounded in many of our realities). Those feminists who do like her, rationalize that view by concluding that her behaviour suggests that she must be an incest survivor. "She is working through her experiences." "She is not having fun, but rather her performances are part of the healing process."

I disagree. I think Madonna is a smart businesswoman who understands the terms set by the entertainment industry for women and meets them. She does this because (1) she is a consummate performer; and (2) she is ambitious and a workaholic.

Madonna has surprised me. Her videos at times have been thought-provoking, not simply in the narrow range of sexual self-expression but on the issues she has attempted to address. The "Like a Prayer" video was not just about Jesus being Black, but it was about the racism inherent in the justice system and in American society (crosses burning in the background à la Ku Klux Klan), and about salvation taking the form of a woman (when

Madonna is falling from the sky, it is a Black woman who catches her and then releases her again). This is interesting imagery and worth looking beyond the sexual nature of all of Madonna's videos. That is not to say that some of her material is not pure pabulum. Some is - but not all of it.

Truth or Dare is similar in nature to her videos. Madonna has done something that no other performer has done - she



has gotten political on us on the difficult issues. She clearly has things she wants to say now and she recognizes the vehicle she has available to use. Her strong statements in the movie, not just about AIDS (which many performers have identified as a life and death issue) but on homophobia (which is also a life and death issue) are thought-provoking and important. The reaction of the audience (who were quite young) to two men kissing was boos and yucks.

It is difficult to know with Madonna whether she cares, or whether she just knows that this is one of those issues that will definitely get people's attention. I like to think that she cares and that, for example, her putting in the film the attendance of her male dancers at a Queer Nation march in New York is a testament of political concern.

The movie is interesting, mostly because it is entertaining - she is a good performer. If you are not comfortable with your sexuality or watching another person give full expression to her analysis of sexuality, you might not find it a great show. Madonna is excessive and in many places it almost seems cathartic for her, and perhaps for us. (The "Like a Virgin" performance, where she is almost arrested by the Toronto police for simulating masturbation, is truly the art of excess.) Madonna describes herself as a performer whose role is to push people to think about things, particularly related to sexuality.

"Sexuality, self-love, self-exploration, masturbation, whatever - I think these are big parts of people's lives, if only people would deal with them."

Yet in many ways, Madonna is in danger of dealing only with sexuality. She describes sexuality as the major expression of self-love, but she seems to identify sexuality as the **only** expression of self-love. Madonna seems to lack the full range of possible forms of expression for love. She doesn't appear to understand how non-sexual relationships with other people can be expressions of self-love, partly because she doesn't appear to have any close relationships.

Madonna is quite ignorant

about some basic issues, like the pain women have experienced around their sexuality and the violence that has been done to women. There is an insensitivity about her - she risks everything throughout the movie and therefore risks everybody around her; nobody is worth protecting or caring for. Her brother is exposed as an alcoholic and "loser". Her childhood friend is exposed as an ex-drug addict and someone she "finger-fucked" in her first sexual experience with a woman. Probably her most ignorant comment is with Sandra Bernhard when she kiddingly says that she would fall asleep in her father's bed "after he fucked" her. Not too amusing, Madonna.

Warren Beatty's statement that life is only worth living if it is on camera accurately reflects how Madonna likes to live. It appears the only people who can be close to her are like her - willing to have their personal lives exposed to the public. She almost appears ignorant of the depth of human experience, emotion and despair. When Sandra Bernhard asks her who she wants to meet next because she is bored, Madonna replies, "I've met everybody." Clearly, this is not a woman who recognizes the unique human qualities inherent in each person, nor is she striving to

understand herself better as a woman through relating to other people.

It is ironic that Madonna has a lot in common with Andrea Dworkin. They are both performance artists, they both seek to inform us of the reality of women's sexuality, and to stimulate us to think about the context within which women's sexuality is based, yet they both have placed women in extreme (and opposite) positions. With Dworkin, the limitation is feminist rhetoric. With Madonna, the limitation is her own personality and her inability to go beyond being a performer and relate her humanity to her performance.

Despite all of that, I like Madonna because she fundamentally challenges the notion that all women are victims or sell-outs if we choose to enter the mainstream or choose to express our sexuality. I like what Madonna has to say about herself: "I can be a sex symbol, but I don't have to be a victim and I don't have to be fragile, and life is not consumed with placating people and being victimized."

ANSWERS

Across

1. Shirley Carr
5. Corazon Aquino
9. Bertha Wilson
11. Isis
12. Audre Lorde
15. Rosa Parks
16. Greta Garbo
18. Alice Walker
19. Erica Jong
20. Margaret Thatcher
23. Jeanne Sauvé
24. Benazir Bhutto
26. Joan Baez
27. Oprah Winfrey
30. Madonna
31. Glenda Simms

Down

1. Sheila Copps
2. Indira Gandhi
3. Robin Morgan
4. Doris Lessing
5. Charlotte Whitton
6. Anais Nin
7. Georgia O'Keeffe
8. Rita Mae Brown
10. Sojourner Truth
14. Winnie Mandela
15. Bronte
17. Judy Rebick
21. Ethel Blondin
22. Margaret Mead
24. Rosemary Brown
25. Virginia Woolf
26. bell hooks
28. Sally Ride
29. Hymn

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A WORLD OF WOMYN FOR PEACE

Womenspeak (cont'd)

counselling should be made available to all women prior, and after, undergoing amniocentesis and that women should be assisted and supported no matter what they decide to do in their reproductive lives. We have never suggested to women not to abort when they are told that the fetus they are carrying may be "defective" (disabled). Abortion is and should always remain each woman's personal choice. Women who consider any choice should have the

benefit of consulting with women with disabilities that hold a feminist and disability consumer perspective and who are informed about facts concerning amniocentesis. We maintain this position because we know more than most people about the difference between the myth and reality of living with disabilities.

People with disabilities maintain diverse analyses about our social oppression, just as there is diversity in

analysis about women's oppression among all women. There is likewise, a diversity in the sentiments among women, men, and children with disabilities; we are no different in our expressions of happiness/unhappiness, anger/passion, etc. Thus unhappiness/happiness, etc., as mentioned in the above article, will vary depending on income and other factors in the lives of each person.

One rationale for suggesting that non-disabled women have the opportunity to consult with the above mentioned women with disabilities is to enhance their informed choices. Social positions and conditions (poor people, women, racial minorities, persons with disabilities, etc.) are not biologically determined. Rather, the above conditions and positions are socially constructed by a "capitalist,

patriarchal, racist, heterosexual and handiapist/ableist system". This system values individuals according to their ability to compete in the reproductive market system. Reproduction here refers to giving birth to either the next able-bodied, white, mirror image of those in positions of power or to other 'productive elements' in the competitive labour market.

Historical events show that the roles, positions and conditions of persons with disabilities have changed from one century to another and can be differentiated among cultures. Furthermore, history has also rendered some hideous facts invisible about the conditions and treatment of various powerless groups, including people with disabilities, for example, during the period under Nazi Germany where persons with disabilities

were used in experiments and killed in order to "purify the Aryan race". Although the anti-choice groups misuse this argument to serve their purpose, the background and rationale as used by women with disabilities is solely for the purpose of showing how this group has been historically oppressed and demeaned because of its biological characteristic (disability). It is part of our history as it is part of the history of homosexuals, and other 'undesirable' (as perceived in that particular society) oppressed minority groups.

More recently in history, society has been informed of how women with disabilities were sterilized against their will and knowledge. Likewise, let us take the case of the Depo-Provera controversy. (Depo-Provera is the brand name for depro medroxyprogesterone acetate. It is a synthetic progestin usually given in injection form. When used as a contraceptive it inhibits ovulation by disrupting the normal hormonal cycle associated with menstruation). During a federal hearing in the mid-1980s the public was informed that Depo-Provera was an incompletely tested dangerous drug and known to cause various forms of cancer in animals and humans with long term usage. It also became known that women with disabilities were given this drug for the sole purpose of interrupting their menstrual cycle for the convenience of their service providers. Thus these women were used as guinea pigs for a drug still not totally tested and approved in Canada. This practice continued during the federal hearing and in some cases it is still going on now, even though it is not approved as a contraceptive for women at large.

Saying that society "takes care of the disabled" is ableist in the same way that it is sexist when society expects women "to be taken care of" by the men they marry. All of us are unequal; some of us in multiple minorities are more unequal than others. Since those in positions of power have the tools and the means to construct even greater myths about our conditions, we must ensure demystification of these socially created myths to achieve collective liberation. It is therefore imperative that we work with each other and not against one another. Let us begin by responding to one another's letters now!

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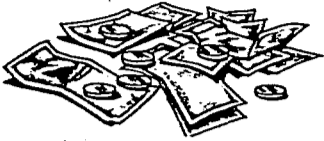
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James Bay Phase II: A personal view cont'd

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the beauty of the land which we call our home. Come and look at the destruction and you will see what we mean.

When the Creator made us and put us on Mother Earth, he gave us everything we needed in order to survive. We took care of the land and the animals and treated them with respect. No animal on Cree land was ever considered endangered or extinct. And now the so-called modern world is closing in on us, so that now some animals and fish have disappeared from their natural habitat due to Phase I and oil spills from the oil tankers travelling on Arctic waters. The fragile Arctic environment is dangerously affected by global warming and yet Hydro-Québec wants to go ahead and destroy more land and animal life and most of all the people whose home is in the north. Our weather since the first phase of the project has been altered so

much. What will happen when the beautiful Great Whale River, and all the other rivers along the eastern James Bay coast that are on the Hydro-Québec's 'hit list', are also flooded?

Our people have been survivors on the land for thousands of years and we will continue to fight for our lives and the lives of our future generations. We will not give up our heritage and our leaders know that this is our objective and our goal.

Together we will fight the continued assault on our lives from the outside world and together we will be strong. We will stand together as we have for countless generations for our children and for all children of the world.

Luci Bobbish-Salt is a Cree woman living in Chisasibi, Québec.

- It costs Hydro-Québec 2.7 cents per kilowatt-hour to produce electricity for its industrial clients. The amount charged to Norwegian metal company Norsk Hydro is 1.5 cents per kilowatt-hour.

Average Québec consumers pay 4.2 cents per kilowatt-hour.

- Twelve other smelting companies are also clients of Hydro-Québec.

- Spokespersons for the Grand Council of Cree say that cut-rate prices to big energy users artificially increase demands, which Hydro-Québec then uses to justify the construction of new dams such as the James Bay II megaproject.



Rosemary Brown, Executive Director of MATCH International, will be leaving her position in early summer. • Beverley Wybrow, formerly with the Government of Ontario Women's Directorate, has been named as the new Executive Director of the Canadian Women's Foundation, a new foundation set up to help women and girls across Canada achieve greater self reliance and economic independence. • Rita Karakas, CEO of the YWCA of / du Canada, will be leaving this summer to move on to new opportunities. She is one of the outstanding senior managers in the women's movement, and, for our sakes, we hope she stays connected to the movement in her next position. • Sally Ballingall, of Toronto, has been elected as the new President of the YWCA of / du Canada, replacing Lynne Tyler.

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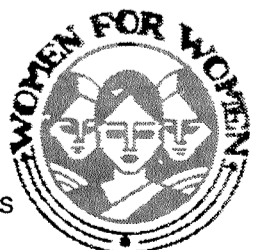
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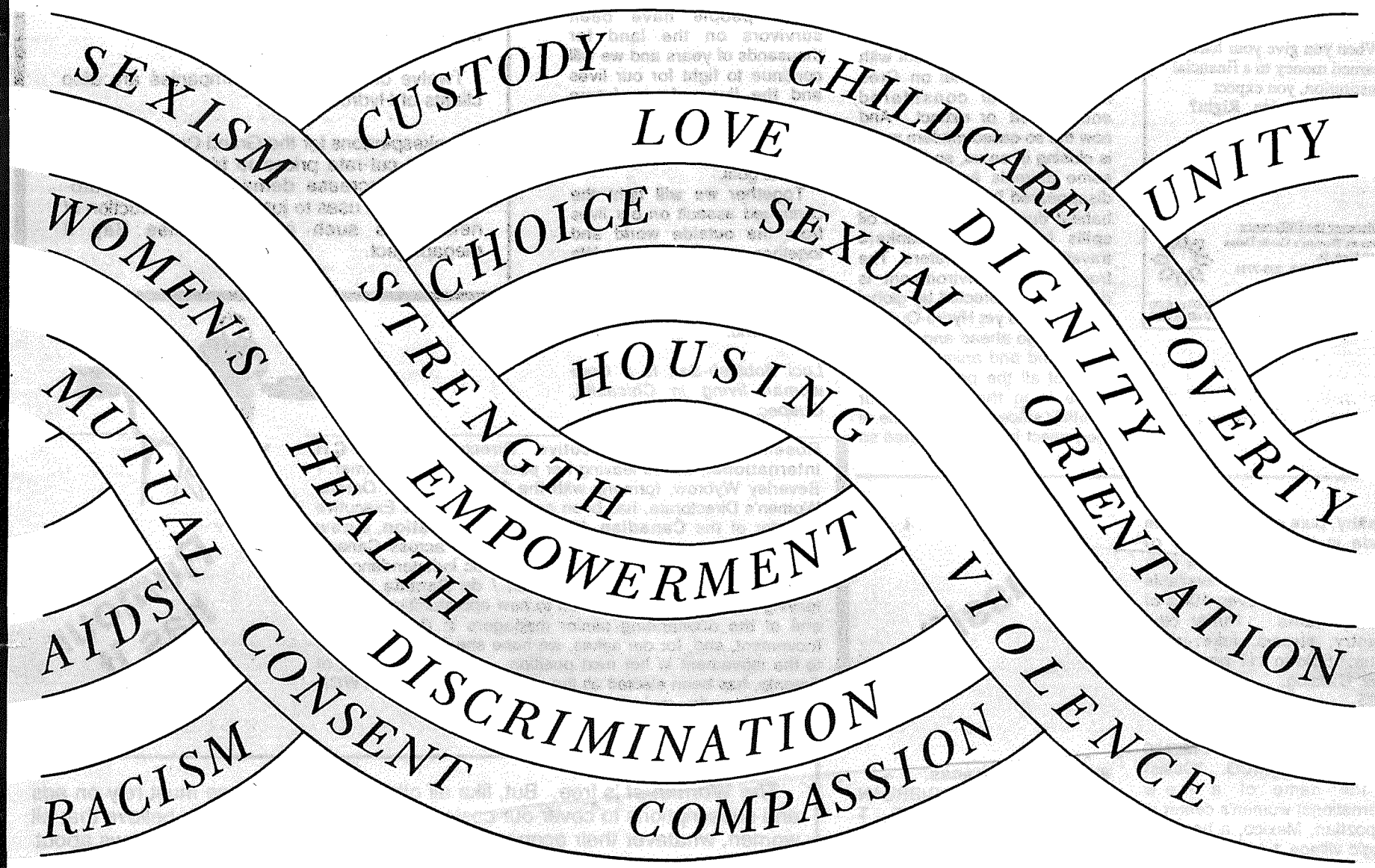
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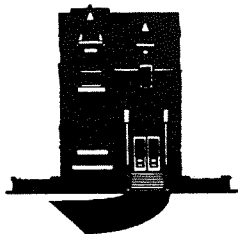
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