

**JANUARY—FEBRUARY
1977**

**WINNIPEG
WOMEN'S
LIBERATION
NEWSLETTER**



Inside:

The Rape Tapes

Organized Working Women

Judy Chicago—An Interview

\$1.00

The Winnipeg Women's Liberation Newsletter is published by Winnipeg Women's Liberation located at 'A Woman's Place', 143 Walnut St., telephone 786-4581.

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Please send any comments, announcements, articles, poems, graphics, etc. that you may wish to have published to the above address, c/o Newsletter Collective. We would like to hear from you.

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Many thanks to those who sent in articles, gave suggestions and encouragement, and did our housework for us while we put this newsletter together.

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One and one
and fifty
make a
million.

EDITORIAL

This newsletter, as you may have noticed, is considerably larger than ever before. It is an example of the new thrust of the Newsletter Collective. We met at A Woman's Place over the Christmas Holidays and decided to re-organize and hopefully revitalize the paper. We feel that the Winnipeg Women's Liberation Newsletter is a valuable project that is helpful in maintaining communication among women, involved in various aspects of the struggle for women's liberation.

We urge your participation in all aspects of this newsletter to make it truly responsive to the needs of women, especially Manitobans, and genuinely supportive of our struggles.

LIBERATION BOOKSTORE

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8:30 pm - Feb. 26/77

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(above the House of Cheese)

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REFRESHMENTS

Come and browse through our new stock, records, books.

\$2.00 contribution.

NEW FORMAT

The Newsletter will come out 6 times per year and will contain approximately 40 pages per issue.

Each newsletter will explore one or two major themes, as well as have continuing features, eg. Women's Culture, Survival Skills, and Women's News.

To make it easier for everyone to contribute articles, we have defined women and work as our general theme for the next four issues. This newsletter explores some aspects of Organized Working Women. The following newsletters will deal with Unorganized Working Women (professionals, non-unionized women, artists and volunteers), Women Working in the Home, and the various social factors that influence where women work.

The Newsletter Collective

Any woman may join the newsletter collective. We've decided to try a rotating editorship system this year, which means that one or two women from the collective will be responsible for co-ordinating the production of each newsletter. The meetings of the the newsletter collective as a whole will take place at the House Co-ordinating Committee Meetings. So if you are interested, come out to the meeting on Tues. Mar 1, 1977, or phone A Woman's Place and leave your name.

Dear

Abortion must become a private matter between a woman and her doctor. Please urge the government to introduce a bill to repeal Sec. 251 of the Criminal Code in the 1977 session of Parliament. I also urge the government to increase spending for family planning programs and to assure adequate pregnancy counselling services across the country.

Yours truly,

Dear

Abortion must become a private matter between a woman and her doctor. Please urge the government to introduce a bill to repeal Sec. 251 of the Criminal Code in the 1977 session of Parliament. I also urge the government to increase spending on family planning programs and to assure adequate pregnancy counselling services across the country.

Yours truly,

Please sign the letters with your name and address and send them to your M.P., the Right Honourable Ron Basford, or to the Prime Minister. Give one to a friend to do the same.

WORKING WOMEN SPEAK OUT

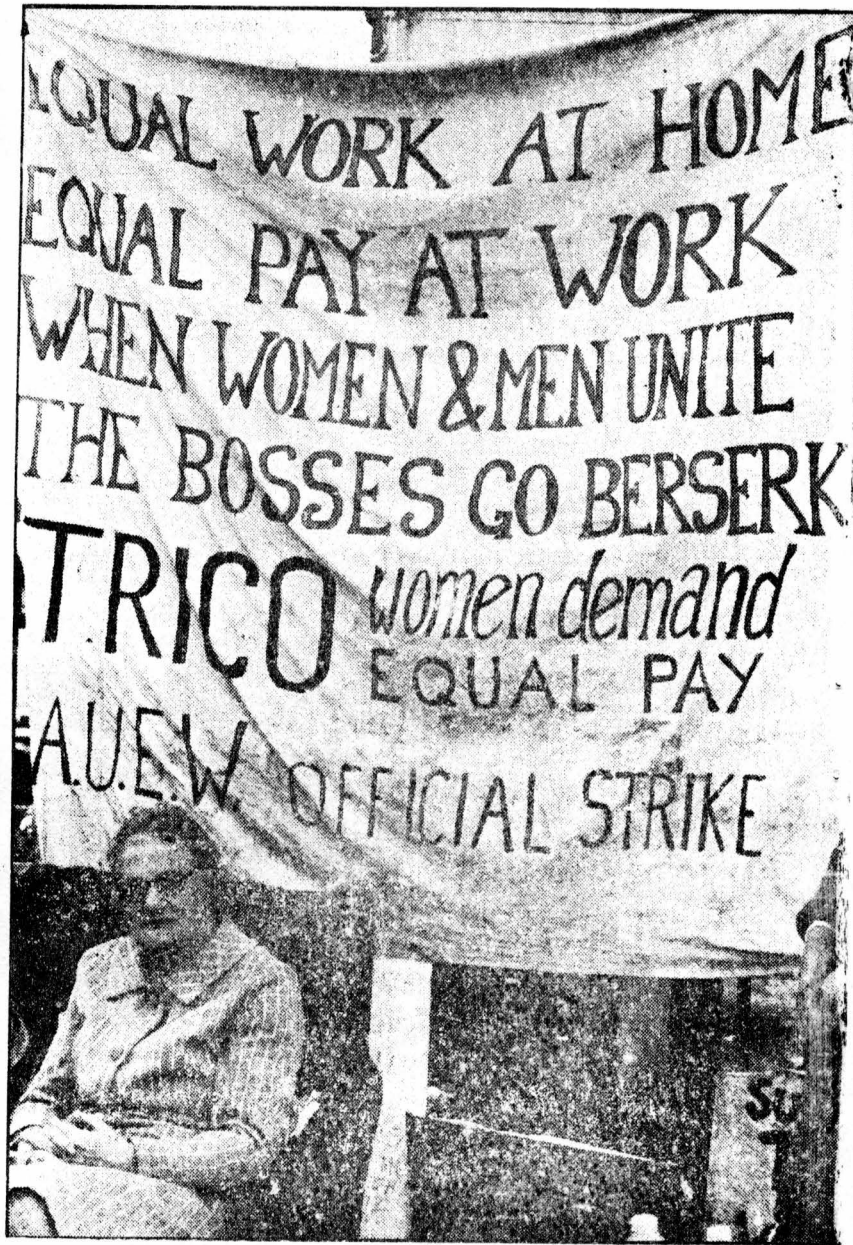
Working women in Manitoba continue to agitate for recognition of their demands in the trade unions and the NDP.

Both the Manitoba Federation of Labour and the NDP government recently held public meetings on the problems of women workers; meetings which reflected this continuing agitation, but which, in their lack of overall direction, reveal the futility of working with bureaucracy.

In January, the MFL sponsored a meeting of their "Status of Women's Committee" in Winnipeg, attracting about 30 supporters from trade unions across the province. While this was a progressive step, allowing women to discuss some of their problems within the trade union movement, it was not without its serious drawbacks.

For one, it was carefully guided by the MFL bureaucracy, whose male leaders and delegates were present for the full weekend and were given full speaking and voting rights. This was in what was supposedly a women's conference! More often than not, discussion centred on what trade union men would accept from women rather than what women should demand of their male co-workers and the trade unions as a whole. This theme was graphically illustrated in a study session at which one male delegate objected to the contention that "men dominated conversations" and then proceeded along with his partner to take up about 60 percent of discussion with 12 women present. "You have to take it easy--wait another 5 years (!) and we might just listen to your problems", they said.

Women were made to feel like they were negotiating a contract with the boss, rather than talking with sympathetic co-workers.



(graphic from "Inprecor")

In a heated debate on a name change for the "Status of Women Committee", it was proposed and narrowly carried (25-24) to change the name to "Equal Rights and Opportunities committee", specifically deleting "for women" so as to "not alienate male support". Including the word women was actually termed "discriminatory against men" at one point in the debate!

Although concretely little was accomplished, an emergency resolution was passed in support of daycare demands of increased provincial aid to daycare

centres and better pay for daycare workers. With the situation in daycare becoming more crucial (Knox Daycare may be forced to close by March) these resolutions become extremely important and may hopefully lead to concrete support actions in favour of quality daycare in Manitoba.

The convention brought out clearly the problems of working within a bureaucracy which tries to obscure the real concerns and issues confronting women in the trade unions today. The next will be the day before the MFL convention next September in Winnipeg. Women in the trade unions should be there to plan around their demands for equality both in the trade unions and the labour force.

EQUAL PAY AND EQUAL WORK???

As a response to the need for equal pay legislation, the Manitoba Department of Labour- Women's Bureau has been holding hearings on "Equal Pay for Work of Equal Value" across the province, as part of a report to be submitted to the NDP government.

One of three hearings held in Winnipeg in early February attracted about 50 people. In the submissions presented at the hearings, it became obvious the "Equal Pay for Work of Equal Value" was missing the essential point--equal work!! In a brief presented by the Socialist Women's Collective, Winnipeg Women's Liberation, and Women's Place (see reprint in this issue), emphasis was placed on the fact that women today need in the first place, the opportunity for equal work to destroy "female job ghettos" as well as being paid for the work they do. This sentiment was echoed by other individual submissions as well. It is noteworthy that the Communist Party submission did not take up this crucial point and furthermore stated that "Equal rights for women have been established by law and in practice in all socialist

countries today". This contention is not fully valid, as even some countries that have had a revolution, such as Cuba, will admit. In the Soviet Union and China, while legal discrimination has been removed, domestic labour still falls largely to women, whose roles as mothers are glorified in the media. Abortion, divorce and homosexuality all suffer official disapproval and legal restrictions.

An individual submission from the chairman of the board of the Health Sciences Centre in Winnipeg took the government to task on the daycare issue, stating that although the Health Sciences daycare workers were given a raise and were now, unlike other centres, being paid a decent wage, government grants did not reflect this increase and were forcing the daycare centre to close in less than three months. "If you're going to pay based on "Equal Pay for Work of Equal Value", you must deal with the consequences of more funding", he stated.

Although little active interest can be generated by hearings, hopefully drastic changes in laws around equal pay will facilitate more women challenging their role as low-wage workers in society today. Hopefully, more than ten women per year will lodge complaints around unequal pay as is the case now.

It is becoming increasingly evident, however, that women cannot wait for little "scraps" from a "benevolent" government--"priviledges" (sic) that like daycare, can be easily revoked.

Women have always had to and must continue to organize themselves and fight for their demands.

Andrea W.
Revolutionary
Marxist
Group

NOTICE:

SINCE WE ARE IN THE
PROCESS OF REORGANIZING THE
LIBRARY, WE WOULD APPRECIATE
THE RETURN OF ANY BOOKS YOU MAY
HAVE. Thank-You.
The Librarian.

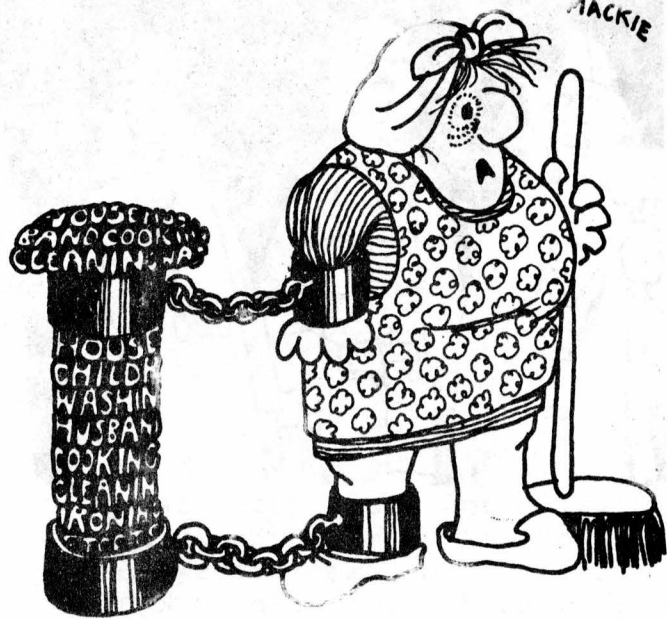
EQUAL PAY

Submission to the Women's Bureau Hearing on Equal Pay Legislation

We wish to discuss with you our concern for the problems of women in the labour force. In so doing we will examine the existing legislation and the changes that you propose. We wish to place this examination within the context of an analysis of the structure of the labour market and the reasons why women occupy our particular place in it. With this analysis, the solutions we propose go beyond the legislative changes you have proposed. We trust that you will give them serious consideration.

We perceive the most fundamental problem for women in the present economic system to be the way that work is structured. In a capitalist economy, work must be hierarchically organized in terms of privilege and remuneration. As a result, a large gap exists between jobs at the top and those at the bottom. Individuals are classified into different levels depending upon qualities such as background, experience and formal training - variables over which they often have very little control. This type of stratification makes it difficult for people to move upwards or into different kinds of work. People are locked into their place in the structure.

The most serious victims of this are those at the bottom - the last hired and first fired. This system requires a pliable pool of workers who will enter and leave the workforce in

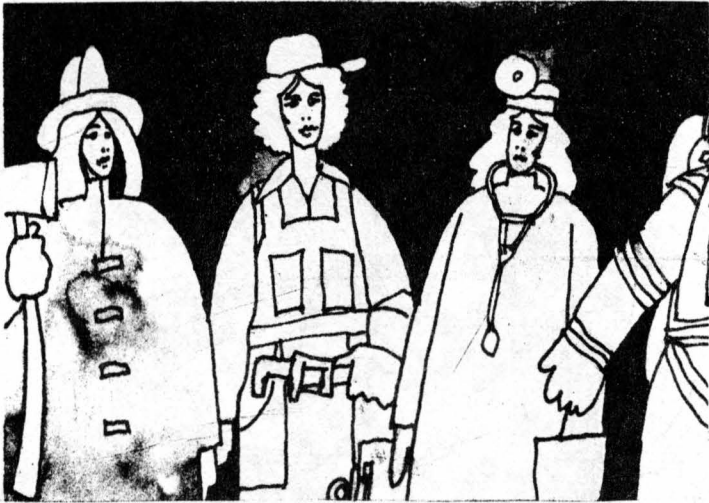


-Well, as long as you don't try to get away, you can hardly feel it.

response to the initiation - depression cycle and the demands of industrialization and war. These jobs are paid the lowest wages and rarely have any of the benefits attached to more permanent and senior positions.

Your statistics indicate that women are a major component of this reserve labour pool and are largely relegated to low-paying jobs. We feel that this situation is a reflection of the structure of the family in our society and women's role in it. Though the work that women do in maintaining the home and nurturing the family is essential to the reproduction of the workforce, it is entirely ignored in this economic system. In other words, women are not paid for the work they do in the home. The devaluation of this essential work is carried over to the jobs women do outside of the home. Most jobs in the "female ghetto" are extensions of work done in the home; i.e. in

cont. over →



health and social services or as office workers who maintain their bosses. Employers are able to devalue this work simply because it is women's work - because women's work is rarely paid for.

The low wages that women receive are further explained by labour market changes in the manufacturing and service industries. Recent surveys appear to indicate that the numbers of jobs in the manufacturing and production sector are decreasing, while the number of jobs in the service sector are increasing. Most workers in the manufacturing sector are organized while most workers in the service industries are unorganized. The majority of women workers, as described earlier, are in the unorganized service sector.

We wish to compliment the Women's Bureau for its analysis of the weaknesses in the present legislation. We agree that the legislation has been unable to effect the increasing gap between the wages of men and women because it is too narrow, excluding workers in female "job ghettos", and because it incorrectly places the responsibility for providing inequality on the shoulders of workers who may be either afraid to

take action or lack the knowledge necessary to do it effectively, and finally because the present legislation lacks a job-evaluation component.

It is clear that improved legislation must include the identification of a regulatory agency that will have the authority and resources to set and enforce guidelines and initiate the job-evaluation process. As well, responsibility for proving equality must be shifted to the employer. Without these basic components the legislation will continue to be ineffective.

Although the working paper prepared by the Women's Bureau effectively pinpoints a number of weaknesses in the existing legislation, we would like to raise issues related to the problems of women working outside of the home which you have not dealt with, and which we feel are essential to any serious attempt to equalize the position of women in the workforce.

The demand for equal pay for work of equal value is essential. Yet it's proponents often miss an important corollary - the demand for equal work. As discussed earlier, those relegated to the bottom of the employment hierarchy are there often because they lack the experience or formal training required for better paying jobs. Statistics abound which illustrate the under-representation of women in the trades training and professional schools. It follows that if women are to occupy an equal place in the workforce many more resources must be channelled into job-training and upgrading specifically for women. Increased access to skills training and upgrading will significantly improve the possibility of women achieving the goal of equal work.

Equal Pay (cont'd)

7.

It is well recognized that women who work outside of the home often carry a double responsibility. We have noted earlier that within Capitalism women's work in the home is recognized as economically valuable and therefore not rewarded. This devaluation of women's work may also explain the reluctance of governments to provide sufficiently for such services as daycare, lunch and afterschool programs, adequate maternity leave, and job-security for part-time workers. Yet if both the nurturing of one's family and the work outside of the home are to be well done, these services are essential. Legislators who are committed to equalizing women's place in the labour force must recognize that women also carry the primary responsibility for child-rearing and home maintenance. Therefore, along with legislation to insure equal pay for work of equal value, must go legislation to protect the security of part-time workers, to improve maternity leave, and to provide adequate child-care services.

We have earlier pointed out that women largely occupy jobs in the service industry, and that few of these workers are organized into unions. We recognize that significant changes in this situation are dependent on women themselves, taking an interest in, and publicizing their working conditions and wages. It is also important to note the responsibility that unions hold for the unorganized. Yet we feel that a government that is seriously committed to improving the equality of women will enact legislation and, or, provide the resources necessary to encourage the organization

of unorganized workers. The Women's Bureau is in an important position to act as a propagandizing agent in the effort to stimulate interest in the working conditions and wages of women.

... summing up, may we repeat our contention that it is clear that equal pay legislation must address more than the question of wage differentials between men and women in the same employment situation if it is to have any effect on the eradication of female "job ghettos" and narrowing the wage gap. Job evaluation criteria that will truly assess skill, effort, responsibility, and working conditions must be administered by an agency independent of employers and it must have the teeth to enforce the legislation. To be effective, this legislation must be capable of upgrading thousands of positions that are paid at or below minimum wage. While present social attitudes allow women's work to be devalued, whether in the home or in the workplace, employers are saving great sums of money in wages. One of our supporters who works in food services for the University of Manitoba points out that large numbers of women workers are paid in the lowest salary classification regardless of skill or pressure or the working conditions of the job. It is clear that the implementation of equal pay legislation would, in this situation, cost the University, and therefore the government large sums of money. There will clearly be opposition to such legislation.

cont. →

Equal Pay (cont'd).

Yet a government seriously committed to equality and justice will necessarily take such opposition in it's stride. As well, committed legislators will recognize and act upon the links between equal pay legislation and increased resources for job training and upgrading, childcare programs, improved maternity leave, and legislated job security for part-time workers. We urge the Women's Bureau to present these concerns to the Government of Manitoba in full confidence of the support of Manitoba women.

♀



C.B.C.

AXES GAY'S RIGHTS

8.

The Gay Alliance for Equality (GAE) is being discriminated against by the C.B.C., according to the newspapers in the Atlantic Region Canadian University Press. (ARCUP).

The C.B.C. radio stations in Halifax, Ottawa, Toronto, Vancouver, and Winnipeg are refusing to run Public Service Announcements for the GAE.

ARCUP, at its last regional conference, unanimously passed a motion to the effect "that all CUP papers realize that racial or sexual bias or prejudice should have no place in the editorial policy of the paper and that the editor and staff should do all in their power to eliminate same from society," and therefore ARCUP papers agreed to boycott all C.B.C. radio advertising.

Here in Winnipeg, spokesperson Lindi Hagberg (C.B.C. Public Relations) when asked why the Winnipeg station did not run the announcements, said, "we got word from Toronto that it was too controversial." Hagberg also stated that it "may be offensive to some people."

What this all means is the C.B.C. is ignoring a large segment of the Canadian public, and their rights.

As for the announcements being too controversial, this is not true as the station also run Birthright PSA's.

At the last Uniter staff meeting, an agreement was made to support ARCUP's boycott, and from now on the Uniter will not run C.B.C. radio ads until they grant air time to the GAE.

♀

The Conditions of Our Lives.....

by L.B.

I worked for Greyhound Lines in Winnipeg from June 1974, to April, 1975. I managed to last that long mostly because of my shit-job, with no responsibility or headaches. I quit in good part because of my 'advancement' to a 'higher' position in the Travel Bureau, with a raise of 3¢ an hour, greatly increased use as whipping-woman and no credit. The enviable position of sandwich.

However, I was the envy of the other 'girls', for my position was indeed a major advancement. Until Janice Letz became the first female assistant terminal manager in Winnipeg's history my Travel Bureau was the best a woman could hope for from Greyhound Winnipeg. Oh, and a few cents increase each year.

The jobs the women held were clerical and switchboard operating. No women in administration. None in freight handling. And, most important, none in ticket selling, where the money is.

Twasn't always thus. When the depot was near Eaton's and all lines were one, women handled all tasks. For lousy wages, but the responsibility and recognition was there.

Then came the new depot and division of lines into separate companies. And the union, United Transit Workers, based in Phoenix and controlled by American bus drivers.

Work was divided and catagorized. Terminal workers, as opposed to drivers, had several stages of clerical, platform, express and ticket work, based on seniority. The jobs were exclusive. As a system, it probably does a good job protecting workers from exploita-

tion. But:

There was now a new promotion path. And that's where they got us. For, as I mentioned earlier, it's the ticket agents who make the bucks. And to become a ticket agent, according to union rules, one must progress from platform loader to express clerk to ticket agent. There is no other way. And no women are hired for the platform. (Are you kidding! Heavy work, man! No chick could haul this!)

There is no other way for a woman to make ticket agent, the money and the prestige (they run the place.) Oh, one could go on tickets for the summer rush, but when she bumped back to clerical work when no longer needed, she'd have lost all her seniority. However, the men (= platform loaders and express clerks) suffered no such seniority loss.

The women, then, were denied the possibility of advancement not only by a sexist administration but by a sexist union. All a woman can expect, unless it's changed since I left, is to climb the seniority ladder within her own classification. There is nowhere to go except, say, to the Travel Bureau, a dead-end job, as it is run by a ticket agent.

Why did we put up with this? Well, partly apathy and partly lack of organization and effective leadership. But primarily because of union resistance. United Transit is a male-run, driver-run union. Not only were we women, but terminal workers to boot. We submitted a proposal for change in promotion route everytime contract negotiations came up. The submission made it no further than the local union rep.

Now, that's a breach of union rules, as all proposals are supposed to go to the main union office. But it is a breach the union condoned.

One woman, May, has been with Greyhound Winnipeg for over 25 years.

cont. →

Conditions continued

10.

She's maintained herself since she was widowed. She's been a near invalid with arthritis for years. May had a large amount of responsibility at the old terminal. She knows the workings of the place inside and out. Now she is limited to handing out schedule times and taking abuse. She's making a lot more money than she did when non-unionized, but as a terminal clerk it is low compared to those in other classifications, especially in view of 25 year's work.

Her dues are the same as everybody else's, including drivers, who make about three times her wage. There is no sliding scale.

By the way, Greyhound Winnipeg is a closed shop. Upon starting work there, everyone must sign a pledge of loyalty to the union. It is chauvanistic and sexist. I never considered myself bound to that pledge as I signed it under duress. I believe I am breaking that pledge now.

♀

While in 1951, there were less than 300,000 married women in the work force-- by 1971 the numbers of married women working outside their homes had risen to just about two million (1,803,870) ...an increase of 506%.

The trend has continued. The revised (i.e. using the new labour force survey) annual averages for 1975 shows that there were 2,204,000 married Canadian women in the labour force, with a participation rate of 41.6%. In September 1976, there were 2,380,000 married women in the labour force, resulting in a participation rate of 43.9%.

In Manitoba in 1971, there were 91,190 married women in the labour force--a participation rate of 40.4%. These women comprised 61.6% of the total female labour force. More recent data for Manitoba is not available, but it can be assumed that there has been a continuing increase of married women in the labour force since the participation rates for women of all ages have continued to increase.

The revised data for 1975 showed an average of 159,000 women in the Manitoba labour force, with an average participation rate of 43.3%. The age groups with the highest participation rates were 20-24 (67.6%) and 25-44 (49.9%). In September 1976 there were 175,000 women in the labour force--a participation rate of 46.7%. Again, the age groups with the highest participation rates were 20-24 (70.1%) and 25-44 (54.8%). The years from

age 20 to 44 are the main child-bearing and child-rearing years for women, which leads to the assumption that there are also more working mothers than in the previous years.

♀

Status of Women Statistics

In an address to the Ottawa Women's Canadian Club in September, 1975, Marc Lalonde, Minister of Health and Welfare and Minister responsible for the Status of Women, made the following statement about working women in Canada:

●.W.W.

WOMEN WORKING THROUGH UNIONS :

The Organization of Working Women is one group that believes women can begin to change the conditions of work through our own unions. The following article is reprinted from The Superior Woman.

The Organization of Working Women's aims can be summed up in four words: jobs, union, health, and daycare.

Their activities include:

1. educating workers to understand that equal pay does not lead to loss of jobs
2. pushing for training by skills, not sex,
3. getting more women involved in getting into the union hierarchy by teaching them parliamentary procedure and how to make suggestions (Grace Hartman and Shirley Carr are exceptions. Yet women are very militant and stay longer on the picket lines, e.g. during Canada Packers strike).
4. pushing for equal opportunity legislation,
5. pushing for more and better daycare facilities, especially since the Henderson Report to cut back daycare,
6. trying to improve the health of women in industry-(Growth on hands develop from repetitious movements on the assembly line. Cashiers develop alignment problems with shoulders and backbones after standing for 20 years in the same position at work. Assembly line fatigue is a common complaint.)
7. doing research on organizing women to determine what methods are most effective,
8. offering consultation services on organizing women (A panel of speakers are available to speak to Ontario unions.)

The OWW formed as the result of an IWY conference on worker women at Humber College. It is Toronto based but has liason with civil service unions federally as well

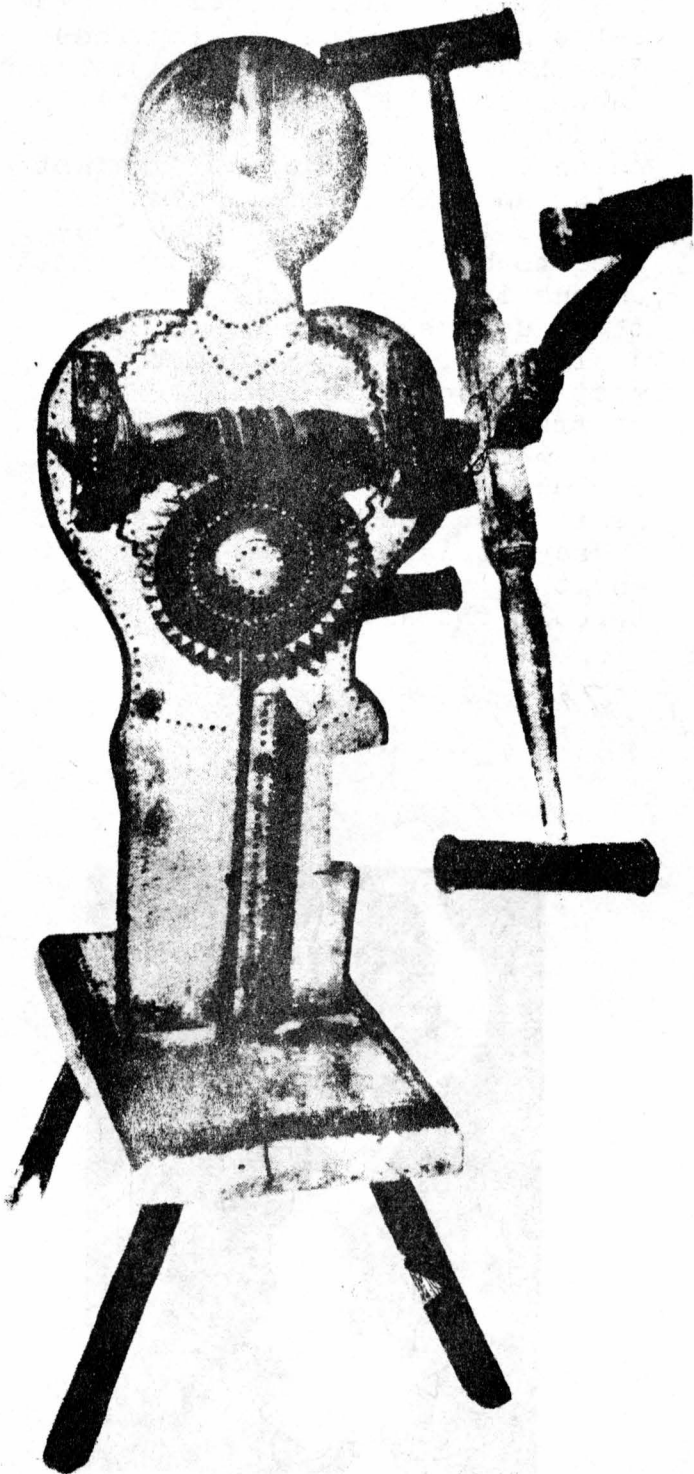
as interested people in Thunder Bay, Hamilton, B.C., and the Atlantic provinces. Nurses' associations, civil service alliances, teacher associations, the CBC Women Producers Association, and manufacturing unions are involved. They feel that if they concentrate on building strength in Toronto, one of the larger industrial centres in Canada, they will better be able to serve all Canadian working women. They have the support of the Toronto Labour Council and support (including financial) from most unions. The OWW decided against being an ongoing women's union because they believed that they need to be members of established unions in order to influence these unions. They are not a dual union. They are just doing what has not been done for 40% of trade union members. Although some women have criticized them for working with the establishment, i.e. the trade unions, the OWW says this is a starting place and things have been accomplished through the unions.

The Superior Woman [♀] is published in
Sault Ste. Marie
Ont.



SELMA

JAMES :



The following comments on the womens movement and unions is taken from a pamphlet entitled "Women, the Unions and Work...." which was published jointly by the London Wages for Housework Committee (formerly Power of Women Collective) and Falling Wall Press in 1976. We have attempted to excerpt those comments most pertinent to our own struggle which has meant leaving out a lot of significant examples and points. For clarification and further reading please refer to the original pamphlet.

"It is particularly urgent for a feminist analysis of the unions to be available now. Working class resistance to work, waged and unwaged, has thrown profits into crisis on a world level. In response, trade unions and government have together constructed an attack to which women are central. Prices are raised, real wages are cut, and social services are run down or abolished. Governments could not have done this without the unions. In Britain this is especially clear. A Conservative government could not have assaulted us as the Labour Party has the unions as their instrument. Between the Labour Party and the unions, women face the most concerted attack since the Second World War. We are being sent back home without a wage to work twice as hard as before. Our "flexible" working day at home is stretched to breaking point, cushioning the impact of the State's attack on others. The State calculates that our unwaged housework will bridge every gap in wages and social services. Every plan they make is premised on our work. They

cont. →

Helma James... continued

13.

have tried to use women to subsidise men's wages, to make up in extra work at home for the drop in money coming in. At the same time they have tried to use unemployed men and wageless women to further undermine wages."

From the Introduction to "Women, the Unions and Work..." London Wages for Housework Committee (formerly Power of Women Collective) London, June 1976



...The thousands of trained girls who come out of the universities every year are desperately anxious to escape from the triple trap of teaching, nursing, or shorthand-typing...

Many of these girls are clearly of high ability, and they constitute a pool from which skilled middle management could be drawn. They would be as hard working and conscientious as only a grateful outsider could be, and it is conceivable that, in spite of the equal pay legislation, they might not cost as much as male equivalents, at least in the first instance. We will use such women, in increasing numbers, when we realise that they exist and feel able to recognise their qualities. Until then, a good deal of talent that is costing a lot of money to train in our universities will continue to be wasted, and British industry will have failed to see a source of renewed energy and vitality that is before its very eyes.

cont. →

"There are more ways than one in which the women's movement can be co-opted and be cut off from the possibilities of becoming an autonomous and revolutionary political movement. One is that we will assist capitalism to introduce and integrate women into new facets of its exploitative relations. The Financial Times of 9 March, 1971, has made clear to those backward capitalists who have not realised it yet, how useful we can be.



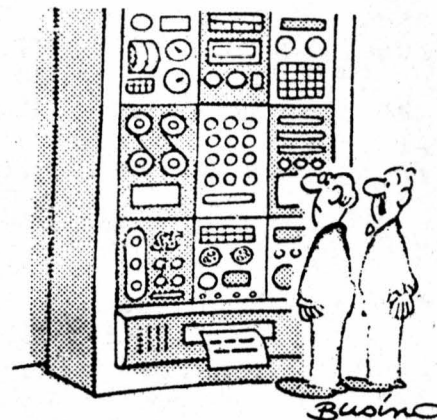
"This use of rebellion, for the purpose of developing capital with 'renewed energy and vitality', is not new and not confined to women. For capitalism to co-opt every aspect of struggle, to renew itself with our energy and our vitality, and with the active help of a minority of the exploited, is central to its nature. The ex-colonial world whom the British 'educated' to self-government, for example, is ruled by 'grateful outsiders'. We need to examine how we are to be 'used' closely and carefully if we are to prevent ourselves from organising only to assist capitalism to be less backward and in the process further enslaving ourselves, rather than organising to destroy it which is the only possible process of liberation.



"A major issue on which we have swallowed their orientation and been co-opted to defeat our own movement has been on the question of unionizing women....

"What has been the role of trade unions specifically in relation to women?

"1. They have helped to maintain unequal rates of pay despite the brave attempts by individual women (and some men) trade unionists to give this issue priority. As a matter of fact, once unions ask for a percentage wage rise, and not the same rise for all, they not only confirm inequality of wages but further widen the gap between men and women -- and of course between men and men too....



McNaught Syndicate, Inc.

12-12

"If you think this machine is complex, you should see the woman it replaced."

"They have never organized a struggle for equal pay....

"2. Grading is the basis for unequal pay where men and women work together. The unions take for granted job categories which have kept women lower paid and will continue to under the equal pay act. Even more, they worry that equal pay for women might 'disturb' the wage differentials among different grades of men....The question of equal pay is not only about the double exploitation of women and young people. It is about the way capital has carved up the whole class into grades and corresponding wage rates so that groups of workers see their interests as different from other groups -- for example, men in relation to women.

"3. They have not tried very hard to get us into unions.... We're not straightforward like men, you see. We have all these problems of kids and husbands and extreme exploitation. They don't really want us in the unions, although the dues are useful and we don't compete for their union jobs.

"Yet note: if there is a rash of strikes or sit-ins for equal pay or for anything else, the unions will be falling over backwards to bring women in....

Helma James... continued 15.

"4. But for those of us who are deprived of wages for our work, who are full-time housewives and do not have jobs outside the home, unions don't know we exist. When capital pays husbands they get two workers, not one. The unions are organizations which are supposed to protect (some) workers in (some) work institutions. Waged workers have organized unions (not the other way round, by the way -- workers organize unions, not unions workers) and have organized them to deal with their waged work situation. A housewife's work situation is the home, and every woman who does waged work (except the rich) also does unwaged work, is also a housewife. Yet when husband and father and brother are taking strike decisions which we have to support, we have no part in deciding the kind of action or the issues on which we fight. We get very little for ourselves -- if we win, not even some of the credit. Has anybody pointed out how much every strike of men is dependent on the support of women? The unions ensure that the struggle is segregated and women can participate only as auxiliaries....

"5. Until recently the capitalist class with the help of unions had convinced men that if they got a rise in pay they got a rise in standard of living. That's not true, and women always knew it. They give men a pay packet on Friday and take it back from us on Saturday at the supermarket. We have to organize the struggle for the other side of wages -- against inflation -- and that can only be done outside the unions, first because they only deal with the money we get and not with what we have immediately to give back; and second because they limit their fight -- such as it is -- only to that workplace where you get wages for being there, and not where your work involves giving the money back.

"It is not simply that they don't organise the shoppers; it is that the union prevents such organisation, by following organisationally the way capital is organised: a fragmented class, divided into those who have wages and those who don't. The unemployed, the old, the ill, children and housewives are wageless. So the unions ignore us and thereby separate us from each other and from the waged. That is, they structurally make a generalised struggle impossible. This is not because they are bureaucratized, this is why: their functions are to mediate the struggle in industry and keep it separate from struggles elsewhere. Because the most concentrated potential power of the class is at the point of production of commodities which are things, the unions have convinced the wageless that only at that point can a struggle be waged at all. This is not so, and the most striking example has been the organisation of the black community...

"You will see by now that I believe in order to have our own politics we must make our own analysis of women and therefore our own analysis of the whole working class struggle....there is no class 'in general' which doesn't include us and all the wageless.

"...a feminist movement based on autonomous class politics is the only viable alternative. Until we create that, we will continue to snipe at each other, and always as a reaction to what men are doing.

"Now the first thing that will pop into the heads of some of us is the benefit to be derived from unions.... But it is the way workers get unions formed, organising together and almost always going on strike, that abolishes the slave conditions, not the unions. It is their power that brings the union in and it is their power that abolishes slave conditions. The union has become a symbol of this power...but the power is the workers'.

cont. →

Selma James... continued

16.

"Secondly, if you go into a union or a non-union factory or office where both men and women are working, you'll almost always see that the men are not as pressed as the women. Their working speed is slower than women's, they take more time in the toilet, to smoke, to breathe. That also has to do, not with unions, but with power: Women come into industry less powerful than men, for the obvious reason of their manifold oppression through patriarchy. Their basic wagelessness and resulting dependence on men is the form patriarchy takes under capitalism; and this situation is internalised as the myth of female incapacity, which in turn reinforces the basic situation. But in addition, women have an actual minority status in industry. So they are uncertain not only of their own capacities but of the support they will receive from men and from the unions which are now identified primarily with men.

"The very structure of the unions puts women off. All those rules and regulations and having to talk at meetings and having meetings at night when we are putting our children to bed and washing up, often confirm to us that we are 'backward'. We know these feelings well. We formed a movement because of them....

"But if the power of the unions is an expression of the power of the class, and if unions have in essential respects been working against our interests as women and therefore against the working class, then we must organise that power, not those unions....

"6. Finally there is the question of women and 'unemployment'. First of all, we know that only rich women are unemployed -- that is, do no work. Whether or not we're in jobs, most of us work like hell. The only thing is that we

are wageless is we don't formally hire ourselves out to a particular capitalist and instead work in our kitchens creating and servicing workers for the capitalist class in general. It is characteristic that the unions and the labour exchanges (i.e. wage slave markets) in Scotland have made a deal not to give jobs to married women....they -- the unions and government -- figure we can be depended upon not to 'give trouble'. That is how we have been used all the time, and we have to prove them wrong or fold up. This damn capitalist class and their damn unions must not be able to count on our quiescence any more over anything....

CONT. →



Selma James... continued ^{17.}

"And this is the heart of the issue. The government, acting in the interests of the capitalist class in general, has created unemployment in the hope that, instead of fighting for more pay and less work, we will be glad for the crumbs that the master lets fall from his table....

"Women, the Unions and Work" by Selma James (originally presented as a discussion paper at a national conference of the Women's Liberation Movement in Britain in 1972)

"The working class has always created the organisational tools to wage its battles....

"The organisations which the working class will create--for creativity on a massive international scale can only come from the working class--we cannot predict. But the movement of women is not outside of that class or its creativity. We are part of that revolution--otherwise we are part of the counter-revolution-- and we must create the autonomous organizational network with other women which is an essential ingredient of class power. The autonomous organizational network is based neither on an abstract sisterhood nor on dividing women again by the class of their husbands and fathers, but on the fact that we are all capital's house slaves. Some women will struggle to escape from this individually, by joining with the power of the master. Most of us don't even have any choice but to organise to destroy the power of the master. That struggle to destroy the master's power is feminist struggle, the struggle of the wageless worker against being wageless and therefore against being a worker.

"There may be times when we can use the unions. But that is a tactic. Our strategy springs from autonomy so that we will not be used as we have been used for so long by a class struggle dominated by men, and managed by the unions which dominate women and men.

"As we women massively transform the terms of struggle, enlarge the arena of struggle, and increase our power, it becomes increasingly urgent for the feminist movement to decide between women on the one hand and unions and work on the other.

"The Perspective of Winning" by Selma James. Detroit. May, 1973.

Mother and Daughter

Mother. She sews the loveliest things
And moulds daughters to fit them,
One slow stitch at a time.

What she creates must fit her creations.
She labours the fabric that forms the growth.

Daughters. The eyes invent fear.
Smooth lines speak the dreadful pattern.
Decorations turn hideous, speak easy lies.

Ripping hems and trailing threads,
they rush out to search
for a liberal seamstress
who may have never learned to sew.

Hannah Van der Kamp

Rape Poem

by Marge Piercy 19.

There is no difference between being raped
and being pushed down a flight of cement steps
except that the wounds also bleed inside.

There is no difference between being raped
and being run over by a truck
except that afterward men asked if you enjoyed it.

There is no difference between being raped
and being bit on the ankle by a rattlesnake
except that people ask if your skirt were short
and why were you out alone anyhow.

There is no difference between being raped
and going head first through a windshield
except that afterward you are afraid
not of cars
but half of the human race.

The rapist is your boyfriend's brother.
He sits beside you in the movies eating popcorn.
Rape fattens on the fantasies of the normal male
like a maggot in garbage.

Fear of rape is a cold wind blowing
all of the time on a woman's hunched back.
Never to stroll alone on a sand road through pine woods,
never to climb a trail across a bald
without that aluminum in the mouth
when I see a man climbing toward me.

Never to open the door to a knock
without that razor just grazing the throat.
The fear of the dark side of hedges,
The back seat of the car, the empty house
rattling keys like a snake's warning.
The fear of the smiling man
in whose pocket is a knife.
The fear of the serious man
in whose fist is locked hatred.

All it takes to cast a rapist is to be able to see your body
as jackhammer, as blowtorch, as adding-machine-gun.
All it takes is hating that body
your own, your own self, your muscle that softens to flab.

All it takes is to push what you hate,
what you fear onto the soft alien flesh.
To bucket out invisible as a tank
armored with treads without senses
to possess and punish in one act,
to rip up pleasure, to murder those who dare
live in the leafy flesh open to love.

RAPE

of a Winnipeg
woman.

20.

A. I'd been drinking with another woman and we went to the Dominion Cafe on Jarvis Ave. for coffee. She asked one of her friends to give me a ride home. So I got in the car with this guy and his two friends. They drove out to McPhillips to a field. At this point I realized there was another carload of guys following us. When the car stopped, I jumped out and started running. The first one caught me and ripped my bluejeans right off me and started right to it. The way it was done, it was so animalistic and so hard I just fainted.

So the next day I woke up in a dirty old house on Jarvis Ave. with probably the remainder of one of the seven guys on top of me. Well I just freaked out. The next

24 hours I just can't remember but I got to a hospital, St. Boniface Hospital. I was ripped wide open, all in the top.

It was a typical situation of a gang bang. I was so sick I had to sit in the bathtub. I went back to the hospital two weeks later, and they told me I had gonorrhoea. So I was on penicillin for awhile.

Then I started getting nauseous and went back again to the hospital and found out that I was pregnant.

I decided not to throw the guy in jail because I checked on the guy, he was married, with kids, and all his welfare cheques went to his kids—they would have had to live with the stigma of the father in jail.

And the alcohol too, the guys were all drunk, and I was drunk. I blame myself more than anyone in this situation.

♀

CAN RAPE EXIST IN MARRIAGE?



"Soft Rape": Introduction

- L. Barker

A few weeks ago, a group of women met to discuss 'soft rape'. We were not all that clear on what soft rape is, and spent a good three hours trying to define it. We never did come out with a simple, succinct definition, but did decide on some characteristic features:

Soft rape involves no beatings, weapons, or overt physical threats. The soft rapist uses the woman's own guilt, or sense of responsibility, desire for a relationship, confusion, ambivalence, whatever, as leverage to achieve his ends. Soft rape is particularly destructive to the victim as she seems to be an accomplice to her own rape, and society, the rapist and herself lay the responsibility for the sex act in soft rape on her shoulders. Soft rape is a common experience for any women involved sexually with men. As a friend said, "Of course I've thought about soft rape. I'm married!"

Soft rape is such a common thing that a lot of people, men and women, wouldn't recognize it as rape. As we talked in the group, we found ourselves remembering more and more instances in our lives which we could now see, not as bad sex, or sex sooner than we'd planned, but as rape. Eventually, we wound up trying to define and differentiate between seduction and soft rape. And found it no easy task.

Society declares itself against rape, but what we call soft rape is widely accepted. It is often seen simply as sex and usually wears the disguise of seduction, or 'No means yes', or 'She'll like it when we get into it.'

Marke but this flea, and marke in this,
How little that which thou deny'st me is;
It suck'd me first, and now sucks thee,
And in this flea, our two bloods mingled bee;
Thou know'st that this cannot be said
A sinne, nor shame, nor loss of maidenhead,
Yet this enjoyes before it wooe,
And pamper'd swells with one blood made of two,
And this, alas, is more than wee would doe.

Donne, The Flea

Rape is an act of aggression. However, it is the sexual aspect of rape, rather than the violence, by which the crime has been defined. If one accepts the aggression in rape, then one must accept the penis can be, and is, used as a weapon. This is neither morally nor sexually flattering to men. But if one downplays the aggression, then one may see the rapist as unfortunately overcome by his own sexuality, because of virility or foolishness, through temptation or madness. Rape is unacceptable, but only when defined as rape. And it is not so defined in war, marriage, where there is no penile-vaginal penetration.. Or in soft rape, or any rape where sex is an issue.

'SOFT RAPE'- CONT

By practise, there is no rape in war, for to be seen as a crime, an act must be held to be either against society or a person. In war, the enemy is rarely granted the status of 'person'. For the rape of a non-person to be labled a crime, society must recognize the crime. Society is the army...

By law, there is no rape in marriage, for a wife gives permanent, non-conditional consent to her husband, simply by marrying him. It's illegal for a man to beat his wife, but then, that's not sex.

Rape is non-consenting intercourse. If one believes rape to be primarily sexual, then one will see the issue of consent as valid, even though sexual feelings are on the part of the man only. Did she, or did she not want it? Or: you can't thread a moving needle. It is difficult imagining one willingly giving money to an attacker, but when it comes to a woman giving her body, it's easy.

Rape is legally defined as forced

degree of importance of forced penetrations and to assess the value of parts of a woman's body, And what's more important than her vagina?

If rape is seen as primarily sexual, then society has assessed male sexual aggression and judged it acceptable, up to some indefinite, fuzzy breaking point.

This fuzzy braking point on the spectrum of sexual behavior is where seduction shifts over to rape. It's what might be called 'soft' or 'petty' rape. It's rape where the sexual aspects so obscure the fact of the assault that it is often (usually) not accepted as rape.

Seduction is an acceptable practise. The seducer is a romantic hero. We're all fo us, women and men, trained to expect and accept it. In the transcript which follows, we tried to decide what is seduction and what soft rape. Commonly, it seems, seduction means when both partners are happy and willing,

A shudder in the loins engenders there
The broken wall, the burning roof and tower
And Agamemnon dead.

Being so caught up,
So mastered by the brute blood of the air,
Did she put on his knowledge with his power
Before the indifferent beak could let her drop?

Yeats, Leda and the Swan

penile-vaginal intercourse. Therefore, forced anal or oral penetrations are not rape. Neither is it rape if anything but the penis is used as the weapon. The idea of rape as sex has been much at work here. "Normal" sexual intercourse has been used as the model for rape laws, although anal and oral rape are just as horrible to the victim. It has been thought necessary to decide the

or when one person is so ambivalent or confused as to be unable to act against the sex. It's quite possible for one of a couple to see something as seduction and the other to see it as rape.

I don't accept the idea of seduction at all, but it's taken me a long, long time to come to that. It took me a long time to learn to say no, then to say no with-

'SOFT RAPE' cont

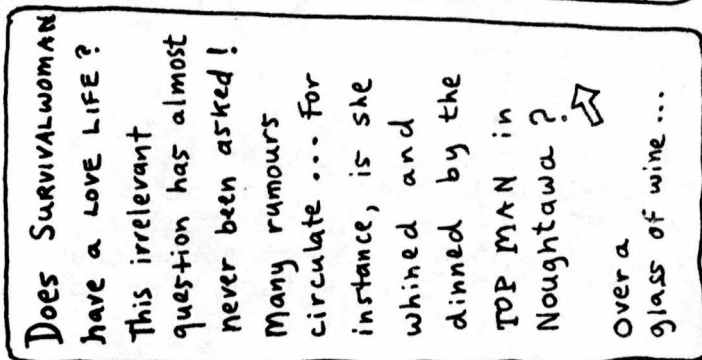
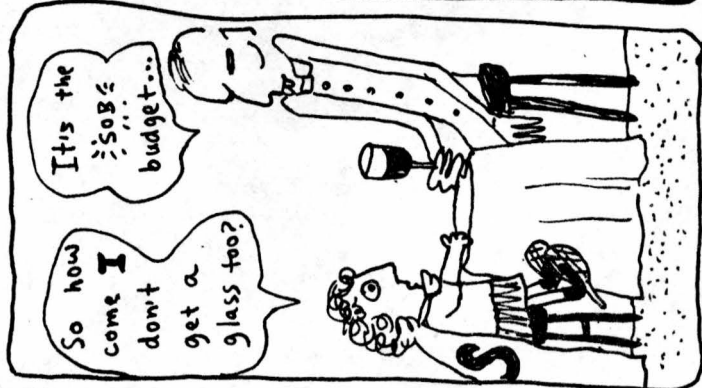
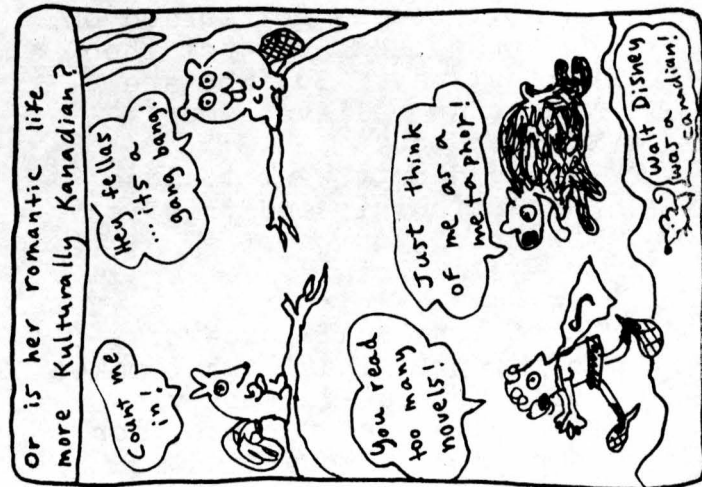
out feeling responsible or guilty for his erection. What probably saved me from more miserable situations was an almost complete obliviousness to come-ons. As good a defense as any, in what we've been wryly calling the Battle of the Sexes.

We were right. Sex, seduction, it's an adversary situation. And our weapons don't fit the field. We've been trained to work within the parameters of male protection and we're not prepared for the failure of that protection. We're taught it is the woman's role to determine the extent of the sexual involvement, while we protect the male ego from confrontation. That leaves us hoping for understanding, while faced with somebody in single-minded pursuit of penetration.

In soft rape, there is no knife, no sudden attack. Soft rapists are men who make use of our own confusion to win through to their ends. Soft rapists make use of the assumption that if you don't say no with sufficient force (and who decides the sufficiency?) then the answer is yes. Somehow, they never see the go-ahead signal as a definite yes, and anything else as a no.

In the tape, which we could not print in full, we found that as we talked about soft rape, we kept sliding over into talk about sexuality and sexual rights. Understanding our right to feel no, as well as to say it; to define our sexuality ourselves, rather than through men, was central to our understanding soft rape. As we talked, we remembered more and more instances which we could now define as rape, but which we once called seduction. And we could see why we feel, and are seen as, accomplices to our own rapes:

cont →



'SOFT RAPE' CONT

-We should've retained control.

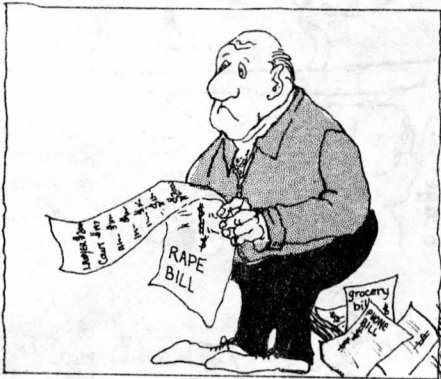
-We should've been more forceful or clear.

-Our bodies got turned on. We wanted sex, but not then or that way. But who are you gonna believe, your body or you?

-We didn't want to lose a relationship and this is the price you pay.

-We're frigid.

That's the real force of soft rape. That's what makes soft rapists even more vicious than hard rapists, for they prey on your mind as well as your body. That does not make them abnormal or their actions unacceptable, however, until their actions are redefined as unacceptable.



We ended the tape talking about anger. For until we recognize, accept and act on our anger, we remain victims and we can't expect to be seen as otherwise. Although we do expect just that, always.

♀

24.

Extradition Papers

Here are the concessions
for my removal:

The landscape cauterized;
The walls knocked out of the ghost;
A disease so slow to spread
That each cell
Forgets its way to the next;
Time for the interlocutor
To draw out a cradle of veins
To hold between his hands;
That he finds the miscalculation,
And its axis
As each day returns
Will gradually subtract.

Janie Kennon

Aunt Prudence

An orange and banana
evening
(Now it is time, she said)
silent to her
except for the colours
knocking about in her
brain.
The house
spoke to her feet
drew her to the freezer
with a package of cigarettes
wrapped up as a gift
addressed to
herself.

She carried seven
cigarettes in her other hand
left one behind the television
set one balanced
on the red lampshade,
five others sticking
in a flower pot
with dead snowdrops.

Behind the freezer door
she moved the stiff hamburger
on top of the steak,
slipped the ribboned box
beside three cold oranges
and a paralyzed banana.

Susan Vaulkhard



Waylaid on her trip to Texas and raped.

WOMEN CAME cheap in the Old West. In some ways they were treated like cattle.

When William Cardwell, an erstwhile Cherokee strip miner, became hard up financially he announced that he was going to sell his wife to the highest bidder.

The sale came off in the autumn of 1894 outside Cardwell's cabin in Guthrie, Oklahoma. There were half a dozen bidders present, and, as the woman was buxom and pretty, bidding was spirited. John Insley, a grass widow of Guthrie, secured the woman, bidding \$100 in cash, a colt revolver, a horse and a lot of household furniture.

The wife seemed to be wholly unconcerned about the matter and departed with Insley, smiling, after he had turned over the amount of his bid. The pair, soon afterwards, left for Texas in a covered wagon.

But before they traveled too far out-of-town, a group of masked men on horseback ambushed the couple. They took the woman to a nearby ravine, tied her to a tree stump, and took turns seducing her; then they untied her and brought her back to the covered wagon.

M: We want to talk about soft rape or I think grey rape is what you call it?

D: Yes, that's what the Rape Crisis Centre calls it. The kind of rape that would probably never make it to the courts.

L: Germaine Greer calls it petty rape.

THE RAPE TAPES:

25.

B. When you asked me to participate, I didn't think I had anything to contribute because I didn't think I had ever been raped. Then I started to think about some of my - sexual experiences and I decided that I was raped. And I guess you could call it soft rape. It was somebody that I'd been going out with for a few months and you know, right through the whole spectrum of dating and petting and it came to this particular important event and the big day was his graduation in Gimli where he was getting his wings and I was invited to go. I knew a few of the fellows and it was a really good evening. Arrangements had been made with my parents that I would be staying there because they didn't want him driving me back after drinking. They had confidence in him and figured that he would take good care of me. I was going to be staying in a motel. So after the dance, he takes me back to the motel. We were sitting in the car for about 10-15 minutes saying goodnight and you know, we kiss and the whole thing and then he leaves. And I'm feeling really good. I wasn't drunk or anything. I take all my clothes off, get into bed, and was sort of semi-asleep and I hear a key at the door. The

Cont →

Rape Tapes...cont'd

26.

door opens. He comes in. He comes in to stay. I didn't know what to do. He proceeds to take his clothes off and comes into bed. And, well, things are a little bit foggy. I guess I was eighteen, maybe not quite eighteen. But I remember struggling all night, trying to get him out of the bed, get him off me, get his hands off me, no I don't want to, you know and then finally sort of drifting off to sleep, and then in the morning, the whole thing started all over again, you know. I guess at one point I just sort of figured, well, what am I going to do? And then, sort of deciding that I'm going to make some kind of a little game out of it and pretend that it's something that I want, you know, getting chased around the room, aha, ha, ha. But I didn't want to be there, I didn't want this guy to fuck me, and I didn't know what to do about it. I was in a strange place, miles away from home, nobody I could call - so I just, it happened.

He went away and I didn't care if I ever saw him again. I never considered myself raped. I think I just figured that because it was - had been sort of a relationship, this was sort of O.K. and it was something that was expected of me, even though I didn't want it, I just got caught up in it.

D. That's really understandable.

L. I have been in similar situations which I would now define as rape. I think you have to define these things as rape in your own head before you respond that way. If you don't call it danger then you're not going to respond as you would in a dangerous situation, right? If I didn't call it rape then it was seduction. I would recognize it as a situation out of control if I responded as if I had been attacked. But I just did not think of it as anything like that. And also you're going to lose the guy, if he's at all important to you, you know. You're going to have to change your evaluation of the whole relationship.

D. Did you take it as seduction?

L. The first time I was raped? The first time I had sex? Ya. I was at a party and someone slipped

cont →

With cobwebs between elbows and knees,
I say that I ahte violence:
there have been street fights;
two wills glaring eye to eye arm
wrestling-;
hours struggling for my soul or hers
with a woman in a taxi

Purdy, Notes on a Fictional Character

Rape Tapes... cont'd

27

some drugs on me. I guess it was acid, I don't know. I recognized that something bad was happening to me so I called a friend whom I knew knew about the world of drugs. He took me to a Crisis Centre where I completely freaked out. I was quite self-destructive, too. This guy who was a worker there held me and calmed me and the whole bit. The Crisis Centre shut down -

D. And you were left there all alone?

L. Ya, everybody had to leave and I couldn't go home so he took me to his rooms. We had this scene where we were sitting on the bed and - I can't remember very much at all. I presume that either I figured that we would just sleep and there would be no hassle - but what wound up happening was both of us in bed and - he screwed me and I didn't want to be screwed. And I think part of it was I was feeling as if, because of the drugs, I was a very evil person. I did not accept this as anything I wanted and I felt very evil about the sex. Virginity was really important to me then. I hadn't been beaten, I didn't put up any kind of struggle. I was just exhausted. I don't know if I would have had any more willpower if I hadn't been on drugs... I just sort of thought of it as going to bed with him. But the next day I was extremely upset and extremely ashamed but I remember being very angry at him

because I knew he hadn't used birth control. I was very angry at him; I considered myself a child at the time, I was eighteen, no, seventeen, and I thought this was not a good initiation. I could have gotten pregnant.



But it took me a long time to call it rape. Although the aftereffects were really bad. But it took me until a friend was raped to call it rape.

D. Did you think of it as seduction?

L. Oh, ya. Obviously I didn't get turned on so he told me I wasn't a real woman. And that really bothered me.

B. Ya I remember the guy unpleasantly and blaming myself for making such a poor selection, for a guy to spend time with and sort of choose from a number of people. Ya, that was poor judgement... **cont →**

Rape Tapes... cont'd

28

A. I remember thinking that. My first experience with sexual intercourse was a rape situation too. It's interesting because I did define it as rape in my own head but I knew that no-one else would so I decided to just forget it.

Mine was a weird situation. The lever the guy used on me was, well you're a liberated woman, aren't you? Why can't you get into this free love trip? And that really got to me. Plus the fact that I was drunk and I knew I couldn't make it up the stairs by myself.

I was at a Conference on the situation in ghettos.

We had had a celebration that night. It was the second time in my life that I had been drunk, and I couldn't handle my liquor at all. This guy was somebody that I really, really admired, intellectually and for what he was doing with his work. It was so strange.

It was a very old building and he took me back to this elevator that wasn't working. We were necking and everyone else went to their rooms. We had been talking about sexuality and all of a sudden he wanted to do something, not just talk about it. He laid this trip on me about being a liberated woman. I remember being angry at the time. He wasn't at all gentle. I was angry that he didn't care that he was hurting me or that he didn't settle down and take it easy. In

I didn't have any hang-ups about losing my virginity but I did about the manner in which



it was happening. It really made me angry, I mean the fact that he wouldn't listen to me. Then I remembered trying to get up and being so dumb I couldn't co-ordinate myself very well. I got really dizzy and had to sit down and the it started all over again with him.

L. This guy whom I was mildly interested in for awhile came over to my place.

We were in the kitchen, had some cider-alcohol, okay, no that's not going to go to court-and he came on with this pitch. I was very confused because I liked the guy, I wanted to continue seeing this guy but I didn't want to go to bed with him right then. This thing went on and on and I wound up getting extremely upset. I was extremely upset because I didn't know how to get it through his head. I was angry at myself because I didn't know how to say " Lay the fuck off me". I didn't know how to say it! I was chastizing myself as this went on. I was very angry because

Rape Tapes ... cont'd

29

I was sexually turned on-or my body was but I did not want to have intercourse. Now that's quite an understandable situation because-well, people talk about sex as intercourse. " I slept with him only if we had intercourse or I made love with him only if we had intercourse." But everything else they call foreplay-which is sex! Okay so my body was responding to the sex but in his terms that meant I wanted to have intercourse with him. Here I am sending out these signals " I want to have intercourse with him and I don't want to." I was having a real battle with my body so we wound up with this thing in my bedroom. It was incomplete intercourse. For a long time I didn't call it rape, I called it attempted rape or I didn't call it sex I called it attempted sex but I would call it soft rape now.



L.B.

A. That's a perfect example of how all of our experiences with men are defined by their experience, not our experience.

L. That's how rape is described legally as well as in their terms. It has to be penis-vagina. Now what I just described is not rape in their terms.

B. Other things are put under gross indecency or sodomy.

A. I don't have the problem you were talking about with mixed responses. If I don't want them my body doesn't respond.

B. Ya, but that doesn't stop them either. It just makes for a nicer tight cunt or something. That's what they say!

L. Well I was in a relationship with a guy for quite awhile and eventually what happened was going on-because everything was going down and we were well-what goes with me is sexual response, like, just forget it. What was happening was that he would start to fondle or whatever and there wouldn't be very much foreplay except he would check the vaginal area to see if I were wet. But after awhile he'd just start shoving in. And I, didn't well because he was a very important person to me and because I was upset at myself for being frigid. I didn't tell him to stop this till one day I told him no and he did it anyway. I defined that as rape and told him that he had raped me and he had a fit on the spot.

cont →

He too wanted it all but was too busy getting on with the business of getting it to have it.

Kearns, The Business

A. I would guess most of, or I would say at least half of my sexual experiences have been soft rape. And most of those situations were ones in which I had a high regard for the person and did like them and did want to have a relationship with them, and did want to have sex with them from time to time but maybe not in that particular situation and not under those circumstances. I wasn't prepared to sacrifice the whole relationship because of one bad sexual experience. Women don't assume that they can do that.

D. I was just thinking of the movie (Not a Pretty Picture). What I took the guy as saying was, O.K. that women seem to want to be raped. But, I think, he was failing to make the distinction between wanting to be taken forcefully and wanting to be—wanting and rape—you can't put them together.

A. Yeah, they're a mutually exclusive thing.

D. Yeah, his idea of rape was forceful intercourse or some kind of really aggressive intercourse. And he wasn't taking into account the feelings of the woman. Like,

a woman may want to be passive, to be sort of, to have a passive, aggressive kind of sex, but no one wants to be raped.

L. When you say rape, you're saying she doesn't want it. That's the definition.

A. Yes, this is the issue of consent.

L. That's the legal definition anyway.

M. Maybe my definition of rape is a little different then, because I'm thinking of rape as something that happens to you when you don't want it, but I'm also thinking of rape as something you get manipulated into.

L. Yeah, but then you're not fully consensus.

M. Not fully consensus, but I don't think you have to define rape as something you don't want—I think some of the experiences we've been talking about are something you get conned into.

L. If you're left with feelings of guilt afterwards, or feelings of doubt, I would now define that as rape.

The things we've been talking about, games or types of roles can go along with going along with anything like that, but it doesn't mean its something you want to do.

A: Like anything else, many of our experiences are ambiguous. And I think my sexuality is like that. Many

cont →

Rape Tapes.... cont'd.

times we want the affection, concern and approval implied in mens' sexual interest, but we don't want to go to bed with anyone.

M: I would like to talk about the context in which this is operating, the society. The whole Brownmiller thesis of men being used as the advance guard against women. Because I don't see why this should have to be. I don't see that the nature of penetration is to dominate women, but the emphasis has been placed on that by society, to maintain certain power relations.

One of the real benefits of rape is that it benefits all men, even good, kind, sensitive men. Part of the whole thing about rape is that it keeps you constantly aware of the danger. Not only do you need a man for heterosexual privileges and to protect you, but also, you know you are very lucky to have an even moderately nice man, because most of them are into soft rape. Some men being out and out rapists and the general run being soft rapists disciplines women and keeps them in line.

In fact, I think the fact of rape has so permeated our society that our sexuality, which could be open, healthy, an equal giving and sharing, has been perverted for the purposes of the powerful.

And you're so used to that kind of power! To being attracted to people with power over you. Women are always saying they could not be attracted to someone unless he has money or is smarter. And that kind of power gets mixed up with sexuality. Power, penis, sexuality, it's all used against you and you don't recognize it, it's so common.

31.
The Guest

Everything as before: blown snow beats against the dining-room windows. I have not changed, but a man came to me.

I asked, "What do you want?" He said, "To be with you in hell." I laughed, "No doubt you'll ruin us both."

But he lifted his thin hand and softly touched the flowers: "Tell me how they kiss you, tell me how you kiss."

His dull eye looked fixedly at my ring. Not a muscle moved in his radiant, evil face.

Oh, I know: it is his delight to know intensely and passionately, that he needs nothing, that I can refuse him nothing.

Anna Akhmatova

B: There's sexual exploitation in these power relations, on the job and that. And you're so intimidated because you know it means your job. And there's also entertaining for business, being a good corporate wife.

A: That's when you get into soft rape, too, because your behavior and your responses in that situation have nothing to do with your needs. And we learn not to say no, to go along with these difficult situations, even before we are active sexually. This sort of prepares us for these soft rapes.

L: I had a limit then, up to the point where I lost my virginity, and then I no longer had an 'excuse' for 'holding out'. cont'd

Rape Tapes.... cont'd

Don't you find my lord
that it's hard to relate
to her ladyship
at the other end
of the twelve-mile poster-bed?
Na't'all.
I've installed
walkie-talkies every fifty-feet.
And the binoculars
cost a thousand pounds
on the black-market.

A: And by the time you lose your virginity, you're so conditioned to go along with it, it doesn't seem to make much difference. We're taught there's so many benefits for going along, but also there's this constant threat that if you do say no, this guy's going to get violent. To a certain extent, I've always prided myself that I've never experienced hard rape because I was always clear about my choices and I chose soft rape. I saw that as a survival tactic.

M: I think this is a good time for my story:

I was at the pub with some women friends. We were invited to a party upstairs in the same hotel after the pub closed. We went and had a great time. Well, 5:00 am rolled around and it was time to go. I knew my car would not start and when one of the guys, who was the bouncer and had the run of the hotel, said I could have a room on that floor, I decided to take it. I traipsed into the room, thinking how nice and gentlemanly these men are, I really must not be so paranoid and anti-male as I have been, look at what pleasant times one can miss, etc. But I locked the door from the inside anyway.

I woke up an hour and a half later with the bouncer in my bed, fondling my body. I was too tired to panic. I asked him what he was doing and he said I couldn't stay there, but he had an extra bed in his room, I could stay there. In one minute 1000 plans of action flashed through my head. Should I shout and scream and tell him he had no right in my bed? This might make him angry and mean. It actually ran through my mind that I should just fuck him and get it over with. What stopped me was realizing that, as a lesbian, I am not thrilled with the prospect of having sex with a man. Plus, I'm not using birth control. Most of all, what came

cont'd



Rape Tapes.... cont'd

as a startling revelation was memories of similar situations, and having done it - had sex, and then going through all kinds of mind gymnastics to convince myself I liked the guy, that it was seduction, it was alright, etc.

I decided I had to get out of the situation as best I could. I got out of bed, got dressed, kept up a running patter, talking about what fun the evening had been, we should get together sometime, no, I really couldn't go to his room, much too hung over, all the time backing out of the room, smiling and nodding, bowing and scraping, till I got to the exit stairway, zipped out and ran to A Woman's Place.

You see, I didn't want him to realize how much power he had in that situation. I realized I was in a potential rape situation that I had been in often before, and this was the first time I hadn't allowed myself to be raped, that I recognized it as rape.

L: I wouldn't call that soft rape. The scene in my kitchen, where, depending on whose definition, I had much more responsibility or involvement, I would call that soft rape, where your's is much more clear-cut. Why did you call it soft rape?

M: I don't know. Because he wanted to see me again, to date me.

A: He didn't get violent.

L: But that's normal! Most rapists don't think of themselves as rapists, but as virile men.

A: Do we have any comments to sum up?

L: I still don't know if we've decided what's seduction and what's rape.

Listen - a matter for more than a smile!
Just now I found a young boy
stuffing his girl,
I rose, naturally, and
(with a nod to Venus)
fell and transfixed him there
with a good stiff prick,
like his own.
Catullus

B: Especially once you realize you have to set limits, to self determine things we want and not go along with everything else.

A: That, and how to accept the consequences of that.

L: That's bugged me all along, that it's something we have to do. I realize I'm in a world where, if I give just a little, I'm going to 'get myself into' a bad situation. But I'm angry that I have to learn how to make some man understand 'no', to learn how to break through all his definitions so it finally reaches him. I'm tired of adjusting my life to men. cont'd

Rape Tapes..... cont'd

34.

A: Even with men you really care about. It really pisses me off that, even if I were to get into a situation with a man that had some potential, I'd be the one who would have to teach him to be sensitive to my feelings and needs.

It's important for us to be aware of our anger and that we shouldn't have to be taking all the responsibility.

L: If we should start recognizing our anger, we could start acting on that anger, and understand we have a right to be angry and not have to justify it.

B: Men are expressing their anger against women all the time.

L: Yeah, but nobody's catching them up on it, there's no rationale they have to raise. While we worry about these hassles, we have to lay out the definitions and limits. There's no consistent moral right or wrong in this.

Even this discussion makes me angry, that we have to have it. If anybody tried this kind of shit on men, they would very quickly recognize their rights and power.

A: And they don't have the kind of struggles we have with what we want being good. Men are not taught to think of their desires as inherently bad. That's sort of the first hurdle, to know it's ok and to know what we want and don't want and to be able to express it and act on it.

L: It always falls back on culpability and so does seduction. Seduction winds up being defined by how loudly and long you say no.

M: As far as I'm concerned, seduction is rape.

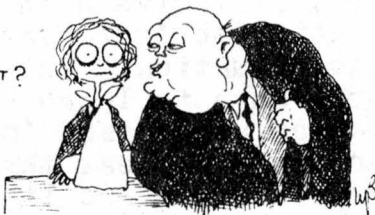
L: I don't see what's so acceptable about a situation where you have to change somebody's mind, that somebody can work on me and be determined I say yes. Sometimes I blame myself and say I am contributing to my own rape and that makes it hard, but I don't draw those distinctions between seduction and rape anymore.

A: I can. I'm very clear about when I wanted to have intercourse and when I didn't, and when I didn't, I call rape, and when I did, I call seduction.

M: But men will say, "I didn't rape her, I seduced her. How the fuck am I supposed to know, they're all responding the same way. When they say no, they mean yes. She wants to be seduced, she wants to be raped, it's all the same thing." As far as I'm concerned, we should be up front. If you want sex, you should say so.

A: If I say no, I'm not going to change. But, in a lot of situations, when I was with a guy I was not particularly interested in sexually, in the course of a period of time I became interested...

DID YOU ENJOY IT?



cont. →

Winnipeg Lesbian Society
is sponsoring....

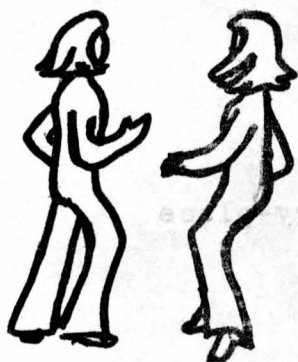
International Women's Day Social

Saturday March 5, 1977

Army & Navy Hall ... 299 Young St.

8:00 P.M.

Admission - \$ 3.50



All Women Welcome!

Rape Tapes.... cont'd.

L: Yeah, but is that this guy spending $\frac{1}{2}$ an hour diddling with your body, or is that getting to know each other and developing this reaction?

A: Developing.

L: But when people talk about seduction, often they just mean getting the body moving. They are not talking about reaching any sort of...

B: Consensus!

General laughter

M: What people often mean, too, candle-light dinners, tresting someone really well, in that situation seduction is

B: Mutual.

A: Seduction is always mutual.

Group: NO

M: Seduction is when you manipulate someone into it by what ever means. And rape is when you do it physically and violently. I think the point of this discussion is that there's no difference between seduction and rape. It doesn't matter how you manipulate someone into going to bed with you, whether you do it physically and violently or with money and candlelight stuff, you are...

A: Violating.

M: Violating their personal space.

B: OK, what do we call that other thing, that mutual turning each other on?

M: A good, healthy, open sexual relationship.

Eighteen-Year Old Victim

What are afraid of Linda: (Linda?--sir?)
 physical hurt ? sex, my lord
 ugly, sir
 mental hurt ? disinterest, sir
 and responsibility
 expectations
 and infinity of guilt
 self-hatred, sir

 but people like you: what, sir
 players on a stage
 manufactured emotions
 in a dark, demonic misery-place
 a far-away
 an unreality

there's myself, sir a no-where sir, a non-real
 sir, a fake sir, a fraud sir
 a loneliness sir, an emptiness
 a nothing to give, a no how-to-take
 nothing to be but a greyness and pain and fear and
 loneliness and questionable tears not to come
 nothing sir but misery sir springing from
 nowhere and ending in nothing
 nothing sir but crawl-away sir, into
 a hole with bones of the past picked clean
 with though but always the remnants of
 putrifaction to remind one with the stench
 of past evils and sins, sir and never to
 be swept out the door with their guilt-hatred
 tentacles grasping my heart
 nothing sir but the fear sir oozing thru
 all the room-layers of being, wrenching the
 boundaries with panicking mind and contorting
 tensing bodying pain, and continuous danger
 that the remnant fear-belly-ache will rise
 again, grow again, no control
 and where is the real sir
 what do I fear sir

Exerpt from The Female Man
by Joanna Russ

"Look," I say, grinning... uncontrollably, "I want to be perfectly clear. I don't want your revolting lewemaking. I'm here to do business and relay any reasonable message to my superiors. I'm not here to play games. Cut it out."

But when do they ever listen!

"You're a woman," he cries, shutting his eyes, "you're a beautiful woman. You've got a hole down there. You're a beautiful woman. You've got real, round tits and you've got a beautiful ass. You want me. It doesn't matter what you say. You're a woman, aren't you? This is the crown of your life. This is what God made you for. I'm going to fuck you. I'm going to screw you until you can't stand up. You want it. You want to be mastered. All you women, you're all women, you're sirens, you're beautiful, you're waiting for me, waiting for a man, waiting for me to stick it in, waiting for me, me, me."

Et patati et patata; the mode is a wee bit overfamiliar. I told him to open his eyes, that I didn't want to kill him with his eyes shut, for God's sake.

He didn't hear me.

"OPEN YOUR EYES!" I roared, "BEFORE I KILL YOU!" and Boss-man did.

He said, You lead me on.

He said, You are a prude. (He was shocked.)

He said, You deceived me.

He said, You are a bad Lady.

This we can cure! - as they say about pneumonia. I think the J's will have sence enough to stay out of it. Boss was muttering something angry about his erection so, angry enough for two, I produced my own - by this I mean that the grafted muscles on my fingers and hands pulled back the loose skin, with that characteristic, itchy tickling, and of course you

are wise; you have guessed that I do not have Cancer on my fingers but Claws, talons like a cat's but bigger, a little more dull than wood brads but good for tearing. And my teeth are a sham over metal. Why are men so afraid of the awful initimacies of hate? Remember, I dont't threaten. I don't play. I always carry firearms. The truly violent are never without them. I could have drilled him between the eyes, but if I do that, I all but leave my signature on him; it's freakier and funnier to make it look as if a wolf did it. Better to think his Puli went mad and attacked him. I raked him gaily on the neck and chin and when he embraced me in rage, sank my claws into his back. You have to build up the fingers surgically so they'll take the strain. A certain squeamishness prevents me from using my teeth in front of witnesses - the best way to silence an enemy is to bite out his larynx. Forgive me! I dug the hardened cuticle into his neck but he sprang away; he tried a kick but I wasn't there (I told you they rely too much on their strength); he got hold of my arm but I broke the hold and spun him off, adding with my nifty, weighted shoon another bruise on his limping kidneys. Ha ha! He fell on me (you don't feel injuries in my state) and I reached around and scored him under the ear, letting him spray urgently into the rug; he will stagger to his feet and fall, he will plunge fountainy to the ground; at her feet he bowed, he fell, he lay down; at her feet he bowed, he fell, he lay down dead.

♀

Rape in Wertmuller's Films

38.

The following are a few comments on Lina Wertmuller's attitudes towards rape as expressed in her films, "Swept Away", "Seven Beauties" and "All Screwed Up".

There are two aspects of her treatment of rape that I find interesting; first, that as a woman making films that glorify and sensualize rape, she seems to be expressing her own and probably other women's rape fantasies. If we assume, as I do, that "fantasies" and other expressions of the "sub-conscious" are products of the society in which we live, then the fact of women having rape fantasies is a very disturbing one, one which reflects the depth and thoroughness of the psychological warfare being used against women to "keep us in line". For, among other things, rape is a very effective disciplinary action against women. It is even more effective if our resistance can be diffused by having our sexuality male-defined and rape-defined.

The second point I wanted to make is that Wertmuller understands only too well that rape is used by men to discipline women. The more feminists know and understand this process, the more enraged we get. Wertmuller, however, has a different perspective. In her view, women need to be disciplined and rapists are doing the world a service.

How are these attitudes expressed in her films? In all three of her films that I've seen, the major character is a man whom she portrays sympathetically. In both "Swept Away" and "All Screwed Up", the hero is a young working class man struggling bravely against daily exploitation and the capitalist system. In "Seven Beauties" the man is an out and out creep who prostitutes himself at every opportunity, yet is treated by Wertmuller with humour and compassion. In each film, the "hero" rapes a woman and is rewarded for it.

Seven Beauties

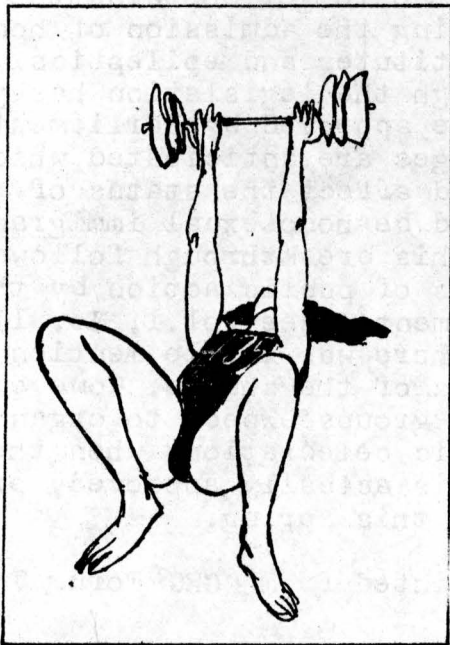
In this film, rape is promoted as a valid expression of male sexuality and normality. Our hero has contrived to be in a mental institution to escape the death penalty for a murder he committed. He successfully

cont.



Wertmuller cont'd...

carries off his nut-case sham until he rapes a woman patient who is strapped to her bed. She bites him and screams. The orderlies drag him off and hosed him down.. Cut to him in his bed with a woman psychiatrist leaning over him emoting sympathy telling him that he is obviously quite normal and making plans to help him gain his freedom.



All Screwed Up

The young country boy in this film is "all screwed up" by the big city, by his oppressive working conditions and by his relationships with women. His girlfriend, a virgin, who is gradually changing from a nice young thing to a slick city woman, refuses to have sex with him. His friend advises him that the only way to get a Sicilian woman is to take her by force. He goes into her room, locks the door, turns the lights off, chases her into a corner and pulls her onto the floor.

39.
In their struggle, the television begins to fall off the table. She catches the edge of it and holds it balanced precariously above her head. The implication is that she must choose between saving the T.V. or saving her body from being raped. With her arms occupied holding the T.V., the young man joyfully rapes her among screams of protest. The next shot is the two of them nestled together lovingly in bed with glorious morning sunshine pouring through the window.

The message here is loud and clear. The morning scene is one of the few in the movie where the woman responds openly and lovingly to the man. Not only do woman need to be raped, but rape is necessary to acquaint women with their sexuality. Women, or at least the women in this film, are materialistic creatures who can be "redeemed" or disciplined by rape.

Swept Away

The rape in this film is the most overtly violent and prolonged of all three films. The woman is a rich, upper class bitch who finds herself alone on a desert island with one of her menservants after they have been swept away from her yacht by a storm. Just as she had used her money and class position to humiliate and exploit him on the boat, so now does he use his physical superiority to beat her into submission. He uses a combination of physical violence, and food withholding to train her to be his slave. The actual rape takes a long time. In their first violent confrontation, there is a long "rape chase" down the beach until she is too exhausted to resist. She has resigned herself to the

Cont. →

Lena

Wertmuller

continued...

fact that she is about to be raped. He does not want to rape just her body, however, but must rape her mind as well. He stops at the moment of penetration. It is not until he has robbed her of every vestige of selfrespect, until she accepts him completely as her master, until she grovels at his feet and begs to be raped, that he completes the act.

From that point on, their life on the island is idyllic, their happiness complete. Wertmuller has justified rape on several accounts. The woman deserved it, she wanted it, it made her happy. For those who interpret the movie allegorically, it was the overthrow of capitalism, or the upper classes (the woman) by the workers (the man). In either case, Wertmuller has made her point. Rape is a matter of power, of taking power away from the raped. In our sexist society rape is used to systematically undermine the power of women and maintain the oppressive and exploitative power relationships that are necessary for the smooth functioning of an unfair system. Men are the tools used in this process, but they also benefit from it.

For Wertmuller to condone and romanticize rape, in the name of radical struggle, is in my view irresponsible and destructive.

by Marilyn MacDonald ♀

40.

OUR FIRST VICTORY

In the Canadian gay movement's

OUR FIRST VICTORY

In the Canadian gay movement's first major victory at the federal level, the government has withdrawn the prohibition against homosexuals immigrating into Canada.

The new Immigration Act, which the government tabled in the House of Commons last November, no longer contains the section barring the admission of homosexuals, prostitutes and epileptics. Although the legislation has yet to be approved by Parliament, no changes are anticipated which could affect the status of would be homosexual immigrants.

This breakthrough follows years of public action by the gay movement. (see Vol.1, No. 1)

There was little mention in the media of the change. However, NGRC groups expect to organize public celebrations when the new Act is actually approved, probably this Spring.

Reprinted from NGRC Forum Vol2, No 1



**DYKES
ON
BYKES**

Review:

"Not a Pretty Picture"

-L.B

Rape, Not a Pretty Picture is a film about making a film about a rape of which the director, Martha Coolidge, was a victim at age 16. It is also, despite an advertising campaign which billed it as telling more about sexual behavior than Last Tango and Deep Throat, the most sensitive movie on rape I've seen.

Seven people, whose comments were printed in the Winnipeg Free Press, seem to have found it neither relevant nor realistic, however. I was surprised to read this. But not too surprised, for we still believe more in the blitz rape than the 'casual' rape upon which this film is based. And in this time of 'heightened awareness' and 'improved communications' maybe people believe the dating rape, where a guy just goes ahead, despite protests, because "she'll like it" and "you gotta have it", no longer exists.

Those comments above are Jim's, the actor who plays Curly, Martha's rapist. He is trying to explain the adolescent rape, the rape most common to his experience, which he sees as non-malicious, but non-caring, prompted by peer pressure to score. In fact, it would seem from Jim's words, that adolescent rape is the most common sexual experience for adolescent boys (and presumably teenage girls).

This is the type of rape Jim first tries acting out as he and Michelle, the woman who plays Martha, reconstruct the attack. The story is set in New York in the late 1950's. The party to which Martha, Curly and three friends are going does not come off and the five wind up in a deserted apartment. Curly calls Martha in to a private room, demands a kiss and when she doesn't comply, rapes her.

Curly doesn't see this as rape, however, but seduction. Or 'just what happens'. And neither does Martha. It took Ms. Coolidge many years and therapy to define the act as rape and remove her feelings of responsibility. This is not unusual in a society which places the responsibility for controlling sexual behavior on the woman.

The reenactment is broken often for discussion; how do the actors wish to do the scene, what are their thoughts and feelings. I found this extremely effective. Rape scenes are common in movies, but the woman's perspective is not. The out-of-role sequences allowed the audience to get beyond the immediate action into the minds and the emotions of the people involved. The rape scenes were powerful enough to bring out strong memories from Martha and Michelle of their own rapes. These were openly discussed. Jim, who really immersed himself in Curly, made some interesting points about the motives and thoughts of the rapist. The story and the discussions gave the audience a lot to work with and understand. A number of points were of particular interest.

While Jim expresses concern and amazement at the aggression he feels towards Martha/Michelle during the rape scenes (If she doesn't stop fighting, I'm going to fucking kill her. And I love Michelle.), Michelle doesn't pick up on those feelings at all. And while Jim, as Curly, feels anger towards Martha/Michelle for not going along and making it easy, neither woman expresses any anger towards the men who hurt them. In fact, Michelle says she felt pity for her rapist.

There's a lot of anger in the film but it is mostly aimed at Martha. It comes from her peers who abuse her, from Curly, who, having had her wants rid of her, and from

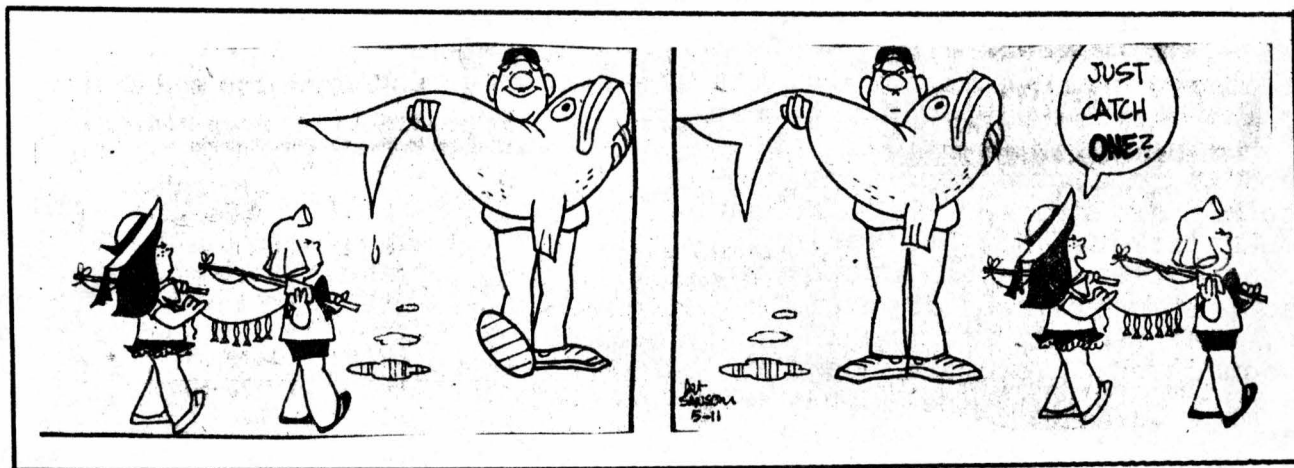
'NOT A PRETTY PICTURE' CONT

Martha, who fears pregnancy and rails against her womanhood. Far from expressing anger towards Curly, Martha reaches out to him for help during a pregnancy scare. And is rebuffed.

The role of peers is illuminating. Peer pressure is presented as a strong motivating force, and acceptable reason, for Curly's actions. Curly pretty well has to screw Martha, so he believes, because it was expected. Others are around. He has to perform for his reputation's sake. After the rape Curly sends in West Virginia, a male member of the party, to have his turn with Martha. Although he obviously wants no part of this, W.V. has to pretend he is having sex. And although he is distressed by Martha's misery, he cannot bring himself to comfort her.

To recognize Martha's pain and innocence would mean recognizing the rape and the whole value system at work. This is too dangerous. Martha's peers and Martha herself lay the guilt on the woman. Curly's actions are only to be expected.

The movie ends with Martha Coolidge talking about her problems with trusting men and maintaining any sort of relationship with one, so many years after the rape. It is a strong and bitter ending to an excellent movie. Not a Pretty Picture should be available to as wide an audience as possible (why doesn't some group buy it, and rent it out for a fee. Make money and educate people at the same time.) Hopefully, it will change attitudes and assumptions about rape. Hopefully, the seven people to whom the Free Press talked will rethink their opinions. ♀



Martha's peers, for their part, ostracise her and attack her verbally and physically. The reaction is extreme, but one should remember that nobody has defined the rape as rape. It is seen as seduction, or illicit sex. Martha broke the rules or lost control.

If you want more information on rape, contact the Rape Crisis and Information Centre.

545 Broadway

Judy
Chicago

granted this interview while
at University of Manitoba^{43.}
Festival of Life & Learning '77'

Interviewed by Alissa McDonald,
reprinted by permission of
CJUM-FM

Q: Why do you have trouble working cooperatively in a co-op situation?

A: I didn't say that. I said I don't have any trouble working cooperatively. I said I cannot be in a collective; because I am not willing to give over to a group decision, and it comes out of my experience that the real growth of civilization comes in the dialogue between the individual and the collective. But there is sometimes times when the individual voice and individual necessity is inconsistent with the collective need, and at that point, if one cannot pursue one's own vision, ultimately it is destructive to the group in the growth of the whole community. So that when I knew I needed to leave the woman's building, and I said I needed to leave and everyone went on this trip that I was abandoning them to make it in the male world, and I knew that it was just fantasyville and they said, "But Judy, everybody thinks so." and I said, "Well, everybody has been wrong before." and they were wrong. And at that point I could've trusted my own impulse which was for my own growth and ultimately for the growth of all the values I had been committed to for me to make this step, or I could've submitted to the collective.

In which case all that would've happened was I would not have done the Dinner Party. Now, a lot of good that would've done. Right? I would've been in there doing the same thing I had done before and not making a step in growth.

So at that point, I am not willing to give up the right for me to pursue my individual vision, whether it is consistent with the collective or not. That doesn't mean I don't believe in having responsibility through a cooperative effort. That's different and I work very well cooperatively, but I feel that I am, at this moment, the woman of the people I work with who has the greatest vision of what is in front of me. I think that one of the things that has operated as role conditioning for women in the woman's movement is that one of the things we have always been afraid to do as women is act as individuals with no support. And women look around and say, "Well, are they going to do it? Is everyone going to do it together?" and that's not how it happens. You do it, and you do it alone, and that's issues of life; and hopefully once you've done it, other people would say, "Well, she didn't drop dead and lions didn't get her. I can do it, too." Then you get support and that's a good experience. If I waited for everyone to do it, it would never have gotten done.

Q: Now, can you say a few words about the way your studio is organized?

A: My studio is structured in a very flexible hierarchy, which means that how you move up the hierarchy is you take on more and more responsibility. Like a woman who came in and is working 5 days a week, like a job, felt she didn't have enough responsibility. Other women who have more responsibility say to her, "Well, you're not working long enough and hard enough, that's why you don't have more responsibility." "Oh," she says. So now she's working more and, lo and behold, she now has. What we are learning, what women are learning, that the way you acquire power and authority, not power over others, but personal power and authority, is to take responsibility.

cont. →

Judy Chicago continued....

44.

The degree to which you take responsibility is the degree to which you have authority in our structure. If you decide you want more, you can move and if you decide you want less, you can move back. People say, "Now listen, I have a lot of personal needs and I don't want the authority now. I want to go do something for myself and then come back." It's extremely flexible.

Q: So the fact that you have the final word has to do with the fact that you have the final responsibility?

A: I have the final responsibility and the peace after all. I may be the one who will be held responsible for the quality of the piece, so it is ultimately my responsibility. No matter how much anybody else does, they'll never have the same identification with the piece in terms of the world. So they'll never be held responsible like I will. So responsibility and authority go hand in hand, and the burden of responsibility is not wonderful. That's the part I don't think we, as women, have really been prepared psychologically for. It's really heavy. I can understand how men ended up being so screwed up. Carrying out responsibility is really hard, especially if you can't take vacations. You can't take vacations from being a man, right?

What I mean by that is, that's a role that man has had laid on him as a life long role. They're always expected to take responsibility. He's not supposed to make any mistakes. He has to know the answers. He can't be a person. That responsibility is there all the time. You have to be able to take a vacation from that. When we change things around, we have to have built in vacations.

Q: To what extent does the more

political aspect of feminism form your art?

A: My goals are not short-ranged and politics, as we know it, essentially considers short-ranged goals. To that extent, I'm really not interested in politics, in short-term gains. I'm interested in long-term gains. That means a different concept of politics. I know that that's one of the implications in my work but I think of politics hardly at all. The political implications in my work are also, in a certain way, tied to short-range issues. My work is political because it is unfamiliar. It's introducing images and ideas that shock people because they're new. But when the newness wears off, they won't be political anymore. They'll just be art, and it's really them as art that I'm really interested in. The political dimension surrounds the historical moment in which the art is appearing. But the political implication is in this moment. If we break the historic down, transform the planet, and make a place for feminine perspective in the world, my art will be what it's supposed to be, just plain old art.

Q: Would it then no longer have to do with the power, in the sense that a lot of this has to do with power and taking our own power?

A: Well, then its power would be different. It wouldn't be threatening in any way. It wouldn't imply change in political structure. It would have its own personal, poetic, aesthetic power. See, its got two kinds of power, my work. It's got one that's just the forms and the shapes and the colours and the sensuality of the surface and the way its done, and the power of the image. But its got another power that comes out again, in the fact that those images have not appeared before, and so people get frightened and think, "Oh, God, she's going to do this thing." Because it's threatening in terms of the power structure as it now exists, which has

Cont. →

Judy Chicago - Continued

45.

not wanted that work in it. So this again is two different kinds of thought. I'd love to be able to be just an artist, to have my work be able to have just its personal power, but that's not realistic given this moment in history. And that's what it means to be oppressed, that we can't have that. We can't have only personal power, cause if we're willing to have personal power, it means that entire political structure of the world has to change, and gets called into question, until it's exactly the same as my work. I like to find out what people say about me. You know, they meet me and "She's very, very nice," but as soon as I leave, I find out, "She's threatening." It's hard to do with two different things.

Q: Do you look beyond the Dinner Party project at this point? Are you dreaming beyond this point?

A: Well, I'm not allowing myself to look too far beyond it. I'm very interested in it, but how long the Dinner Party will preoccupy me, how long before I'm free... I'm going to need a rest. I want to travel. At the moment I'll just have to put all that into hold until I'm finished and then I'll have to take a break, and then I'll have to look and see what faces me next. Whether I can address something new, or whether still I have to take care of what has happened to the piece. I don't know what will happen. I would like to be able to dream but I'm not alone. I just can't until I find the reality. I still have a lot to do about finishing the piece, a lot of money, a lot of help. That's why I did Broken Butterflies, actually, out of a certain point of terror, as to whether I would

ever get the piece finished. I still won't believe it until it's actually finished. Everybody at the project says, "Oh, Judy, don't be silly. We're going to finish it whether you like it or not." Then I say, "Ya, ya, ya, that's wonderful." But, you know, it's nearly \$20,000 and all the good intentions in the world won't help the fact that it's \$20,000.

Q: Where's the financial and emotional support coming from?

A: Emotional support. Well, the studio uses the support system. There's no question of that, for everyone who works there and for me. My assistant spends her life making it possible for me to work. She answers telephone calls, takes care of business, goes to the post office, picks up my cleaning, handles emotional problems that come up at the project, helping my husband move out. She does all that she has to do so I can focus. And the people in the project do provide support for each other. It's interesting with direct things, like what do you do for pressure? It's on me and everybody. It's a long haul. Some people have been working for a year with no money. We haven't got a dime. Food stamps. Unemployment. We're selling posters. We're doing everything, applying for grants to raise money, begging for donations, taking out loans. I think we'll probably make it, but it's going to be real tough all the way to the end.

Q: Is there some sort of feminist network providing some money?

A: The problem with the feminist network is women and money. Women have some problems in relationship to money. People with money don't give it to women. The whole thing happened in Detroit. It revolved around women's terror of money and really manipulating large sums of money. So maybe some-

Graphic: JUDY CHICAGO

46.



In trying to "pull out" the structure I have used in my work because I feel that I had to hide the real content, I found myself making it vaginal form. I was not so interested in drawing a cunt but there is a big gap between my feelings as a woman and the visual language of the male culture. Whenever I want to deal with the issue of vulnerability, emotional exposure, or submission feelings, the only image I can think of is a vagina, probably because those aspects of the human experience have been relegated to the status of the feminine and then appreciated. My struggle has been and is to find a way to let the female experience be represented in such a way that it can stand for those areas of human experience that male society denies, thus challenging the prevailing values I don't know how to do that yet. He has done anyone else. It is the major problem those of us face who are trying to forge a new language, one that is relevant to women's experience. Recently, I was criticized for the gap that exists between my "historic" and my work. On one level, the criticism was justified and helped me begin to "pull back" the structure that I had imposed upon my real content in order to make an identity as an artist in the record. But, in another way, the criticism makes me angry because it implies that it is my failure as an artist that creates the gap, and that is simply not true. Whatever gap exists grows out of the fact that I have been trying to bridge a gap that exists in the world—the gap between feminist consciousness and sophisticated art language. In the years I was developing as an artist, I was consistently rejected as a woman and even more violently rejected if my womanliness was reflected in my art. How anyone really understand what it means to have to suppress your femaleness in order to be able to express your artisticness—oh what it does to you? I was not willing to be an artist in a closet and now I am not willing to be a woman in a closet. So chosen to take on the struggle to be myself in the face of society's rejection in the hope that by so doing, my work will help change society. So now I'm put down because I haven't got it all together. Even my husband, who loves me and understands my work and my struggle, rejected the image of my hidden femaleness in this drawing. How many people in this world can stand up to the consistent rejection male culture subjects women to? How many husbands are willing to struggle with their feelings like my husband did, in order to embrace this drawing? How many women are willing to face rejection and rejection and rejection and rejection and rejection and rejection and still insist on keeping their femaleness?

Female Rejection Drawing

Judy Chicago 1979

one will come along and say, "I have some extra money, here it is." It happened to me once before. A woman wrote me a

cheque for \$8,000 and said, "I'll donate it to whatever museum you want." So maybe it will happen again.

♀.

ON BECOMING -

HERSELF : Sherry
LEE

This is being written by a woman still in the process of defining herself as an artist. It's going to be written in 2 or more parts - it depends how verbose I get. This first part deals with early experiences. The second (and maybe third) will describe art school experiences and my present work.

I began to draw seriously, that is with a conscious sense of what I was doing, when I was four. My older sister had created an Indian princess on pink construction paper. My mother had praised it and taped it to the living room wall. I recall studying the drawing with concentrated effort. If drawing pictures equalled praise and recognition, then draw I would.

Although my original motives were based almost exclusively on sibling rivalry, they soon changed. Drawing was fun. (It still is.) Jealously and rivalry gave way to simple, pure enjoyment. (Mind you, the recognition and praise were still powerful forces.)

I am now going to describe those early drawings - the ones done until age 13. They were small and always of people. The space was very flat, full

of intense bright colour and decorative pattern. They were wholly of the imagination and with each drawing (although I told no one) I created a story. They were illustrations - illustrations of what happened between and among people, and those people were usually women.

By age 11 I knew quite simply that I was destined to be a great artist and I fantasized an inordinate amount about the fame, power and recognition that were soon to be mine.

And then I was 14. Changes. I began drawing from life - students in class, pens, rulers, books (most of this drawing was obviously at school). I drew various parts of my anatomy with careful precision. (At one time I even drew my thighs while I sat - a disembodied view as seen from above. The finished drawing was upsetting and I went back to careful, disembodied hands). It was thrilling to draw from life - the concentration required was exhilarating. There was also a certain smug sense of accomplishment ("I may have big thighs but I can draw.")

Oh, I continued my imaginative drawings, too, and what a sorry lot they were. They had changed with my pubescence, and not, I fear, for the better. They continued to be of women. But not the powerful, mysterious, often threatening women of my pre-adolescence. These women were tall, skinny, beautifully dressed and they just stood there. The women did nothing (no, I see now that they did wait). As drawings they were often cute, and, almost without exception, terrible. They soon bored me and I no longer made up drawings, preferring instead the cool logic of realism.

My realistic drawings strengthened my sense of myself as an artist. I knew I could draw well - which is to say, better than others. (Competition and recognition were tangled together in my mind.)

At age 16, I received my first 'formal' training, in the guise of a summer workshop. Many admired my precocity - I learned a little, painted my first picture, and left with a most obnoxious sense of superiority. The next year I returned, left comparing myself smugly with the other students, and applied to the Alberta College of Art.

My future was decided - I should enter advertising, quickly become rich and famous, and then in a fashion quite altruistic, quit and become a social worker, while devoting myself to more serious art.

The college rejected my application. I had applied too late as an out-of-province student - however, I could enter next year.

I went into my bedroom, cried for half an hour, and left to live with relatives in Germany for a year.

And now comes an analysis of those years:

Looking back, I realize that I was always given a lot of support and my creativity was actively encouraged. My strongest support came from my mother. This situation, while giving me a strong base, also created a deep conflict, one that was to cause much anguish in later years. (Yes, you'll have to read Part 2 to find out.)

My mother possessed a great deal of artistic talent but she had never developed it. In fact, she started art school relatively late and left after one year to marry. She then spent the next 15 years largely ignoring her creativity. (Only in cooking, making costumes and inventing games did it really appear - she rarely drew and never painted.) Finally, after a serious personal crisis, she returned to painting - but painting only when all chores were done and other people's needs met.

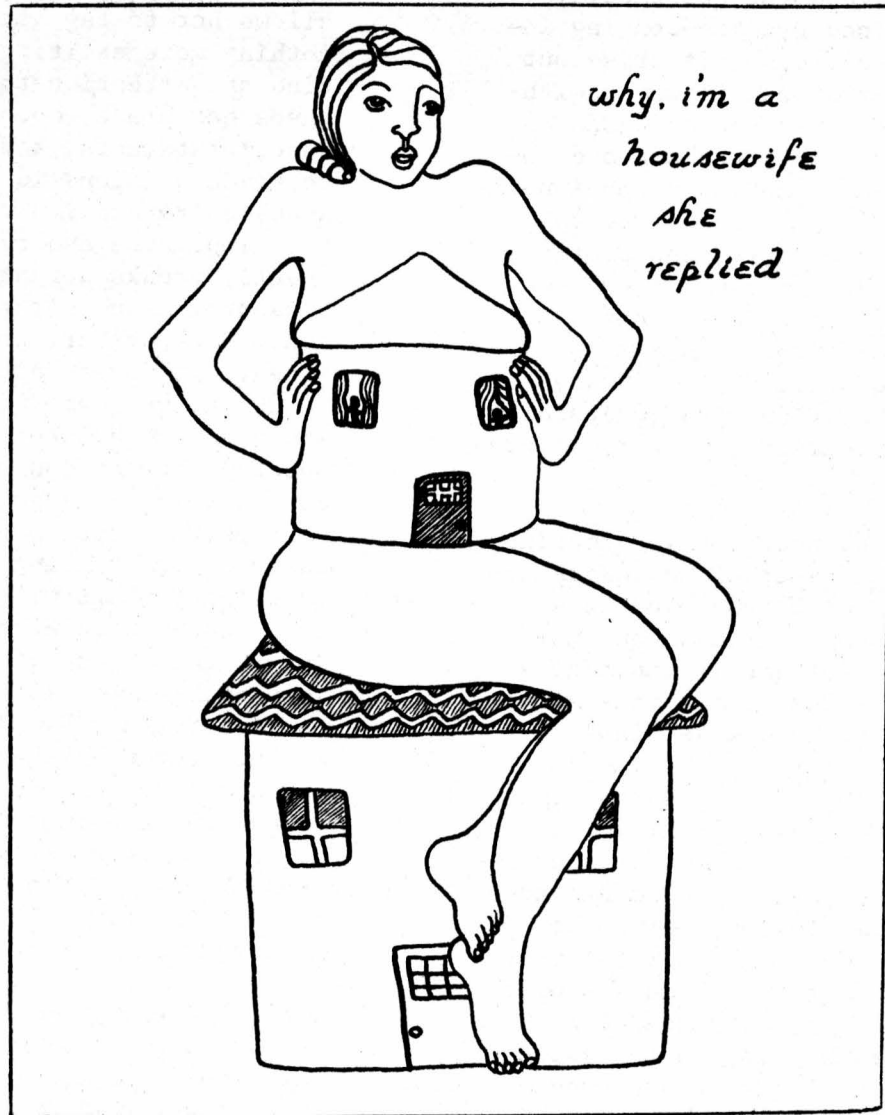
So - before me I had a woman saying, "Yes, you can," but before me I saw a woman who had to choose. Developing as an artist was important - but so was developing as a woman. And it didn't seem possible to do both.

And in this state I entered art school - happy, excited, anxious, and just starting to grow as a feminist.

What happens?

♀





This is Sherry's 1st feminist drawing, & still 1 of her favourite pieces.

W O M E N I N
L I T E R A T U R E

By: Millie Lamb

Emily Bronte's *Wuthering Heights* transcends such limited choices for women. It affirms their need for freedom and spontaneity, for love unrestrained by life-denying inner and outer compulsions. It cries out for relationships that can flower unwithered by oppressive social bonds based on property and class. Those taboos and restrictions which imprison women emotionally and socially arouse the indignation and rebelliousness of Jane Eyre, the protagonist of Charlotte Bronte's novel of the same name, with its vivid description of the humiliation, deprivation and agony inflicted on the daughters of the shabby genteel, the pupils of charitable boarding schools, by their wealthy Christian governors.

Mill on the Floss by George Eliot imaginatively explores the facet of socialization concerned with the difference in the expectations of boys and girls in patriarchal society. The setting is the English countryside in the 1840's, and the characters are drawn from the middle-class families engaged in milling, trade, and banking; and worshipping possessions and commercial success. Maggie Tulliver is the despair of her family: she is a self-willed hoyden whose passionate nature and quickness of intelligence endear her only to her father. But the hopes of the rest with her older brother Tom, a dull stolid boy who is provided with the academic education denied to Maggie, in the expectations that this will ensure his success in the business world. When his father's business fails, and his health as well, the relatives expect that Tom will shoulder the responsibility for the family's welfare, and will redeem its honour and fortunes. Nothing in his studies has provided Tom with practical skills in the business world, yet the fact that they were part of that design, and that he was expected to play the man gives him a measure of confidence, the grudging help of his relatives and the motive to succeed. Maggie is expected to remain

silent, to comfort her mother, and allow her brother to provide for her. Her efforts to achieve independence are restricted to taking in a sewing or teaching in third-rate schools, and these are frowned on as disgracing the family.

All her life she has adored Tom whose youthful assurance and daring exploits have made him a hero in her eyes. He enjoys her worship, patronizes her, and allows her to tag after him when he has nothing more exciting to do. He is kind and affectionate as long as Maggie keeps her place, does not show off her superior talents, and does not presume to voice opinions in matters regarded as male prerogatives. Since she is clever, impulsive and rebellious, he frequently breaks her heart by expressing disapproval and withdrawing his affection.. His brotherly regard cools increasingly with every attempt of Maggie's to assert her own individuality. He wants her to bolster the family's respectability by conforming to the standards of ladylike gentility. He is angered when she upbraids her rich relatives for scolding her mother, and refusing to part with a penny to help her. Later when he discovers her friendship with the son of the man he believes responsible for his father's bankruptcy, he is enraged. Finally an unconventional incident with the suitor she renounces disgraces her in the eyes of the community, and Tom forbids her the house. Only her attempt to rescue him from the rising flood waters in which they drown brings them together in a final embrace.

While Tom has been encouraged to develop qualities of initiative and persistence which enable him to achieve his goals, Maggie whose intelligence and daring were regarded as unbecoming and somehow wicked is paralyzed by conflicting desires of renunciation and assertion. Her need for acceptance, approval and love prevents her from breaking with the past, and going forward with all the rich bounty of her nature towards self-realization.

Other fine novels that focus on women by these great women writers are Jane Austen's *Sense and Sensibility*, *Emma*,

and Persuasion, Charlotte Bronte's Villette
and Shirley, and George Eliot's Adam Bede
and Middlemarch.

Through the study of women in literature secondary students will find freshness and relevance in their English studies, a vital context for work in literature. They will find treasures of understanding and self-discovery. It is a use of English in which the student's whole being can become deeply involved, because the purpose seems real to her. It will help her to find a positive image, a sense of identity and self-worth. This should lead to the pursuit of excellence in the reading and writing of English. ♀

Night Poem

Under the snow
and foxes barking,
a skull winked
- my grandmother saw it -

Snow on the wind
and yard lamps
blinking
- she could hear her footsteps
on the unpaved road -

Cold dreams in the night
drilled the wet untired dark
- in the hour, the season
she tamed them with her plow -

Ice in the well
and broken windows
- she would glue together
the shattered pieces,
set them in
like precious stones -

Snow on the hill,
imaginary lane
- she would die first
for all the others dying,
carted away
thick and blistered

Absent in the dust and
patient in her chair.

Susan Musgrave

NEWS

CUSO Manitoba

Meeting-March 13-14

Kate Molale, who is a member of the African National Congress-Women's Secretariat, responsible for East Africa, will be in Winnipeg March 13 and 14th.

The African National Congress and CUSO are sponsoring a speaking tour for Kate and another person from Soweto to discuss the current situation in South Africa and in particular the role of women. They would like to meet with various women's groups in the city.

CUSO Winnipeg's tentative plans for this tour are a large public meeting to be held on March 13th at 2:00 o.m. at the YWCA, and a 'women's only' meeting to be held in the evening at 7:30 at the YWCA.

The two women will be free on March 14th to speak with women's groups. If your group is interested in having a meeting with them, please contact Lois Kunkel at 284-8488. We would really like to hear from you. We would also be pleased if you would publicize the public meetings among your constituents. If you would like to have posters and an updated schedule of the events when these women are in Winnipeg, please contact Lois Kunkel.

HEATHER BISHOP

in Concert

SCANDINAVIAN HALL

360 Young St.

Sunday, March 20 8:30 p.m.

admission only \$2.00

tickets - Bev B., Debbie R.



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FEB. 26-27 1977 ROOM 1022, EDUCATION BLDG.

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SAT.: 10:30-1:00: WAGE CONTROLS & POLITICAL CRISIS

SAT.: 2:30- 6:00: WOMEN'S & GAY LIB.

SUN.: 11:00-1:30: QUEBEC- after the PQ victory

SPEAKERS-GROUPE MARXISTE REVOLUTIONNAIRE
-LIQUE SOCIALISTE- OUVRIERE

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Presentation: Family Law

FAMILY LAW REFORM

Women's Liberation was one of the groups involved in organizing the Family Law Coalition, which eventually included Woman's Place, Women and the Law, the Canadian Congress of Women, Manitoba Teachers Society, the Manitoba Librarians Association, the Fort Garry Action Group, the Voice of Women, the Council of Self Help Groups, the NDP Status of Women, the United Nations Association, the Action Committee of the Status of Women and others. Each group presented an oral or written brief which supported the Coalition's position. Those groups which rejected participation in the Coalition included the Y.W.C.A., the Provincial Council of Women and the Junior League.

Other groups such as the nfu and the West Manitoba Childrens Aid Society supported us, but did not formally endorse. The Y.W.C.A. and the Provincial Council presented similar briefs to those of the Coalition members. Arguments presented against their joining included "they are all lefties", "disorganized", "won't get much done" etc.

The Coalition was marvelously successful. We have kept close touch with the Committee and feel they will introduce legislation well beyond that proposed by the Law Reform Commission.

They are reticent about legislation to provide public support to women not receiving maintenance, but we are discussing alternatives with them and will keep pushing. Letters to the Premier or Attorney General Pawley are still in order.

Watch the papers and respond to the proposed legislation when it is introduced! To be added to the mailing list, write Coalition on Family Law, 143 Walnut.

Following are excerpts of the presentation of Women's Liberation and Woman's Place.

We would like to begin our presentation with a statement of principle. We are committed to the full equality of all citizens in a society based on cooperation and democracy; free of poverty, exploitation and discrimination. We see the reforms proposed by the Coalition not as an answer to the needs of women but a step forward - a beginning.

Until society recognizes its responsibilities towards children and no longer defines them as primarily women's responsibility, until women have control over if, when and how many children they will bear, until all adults are independently economically secure and the value of the work women perform given full recognition, until women participate in all aspects of our society and are no longer trained to be subserviant and docile the full equality of women inside or outside the family will not be achieved.

We remind the legislators here today of their continued responsibility to press for changes to remove discrimination in all areas of public life and we ask for the support of all parties for the proposed changes in the family law.

For the more affluent members of our society the equal division of assets in the event of divorce will assist in providing those opportunities. But for the large number of children in economically deprived family situations, the division of property will only slightly affect their circumstances.

For these children it is not accumulated property, but the

wage labour of their parents which provides the only economic security they will experience. Let us look for a moment at the conditions of single parent families. Ninety percent of these families are headed by a mother and according to Statistics Canada more than one-third of them live in poverty; about one-quarter of them are supported through welfare payments. And yet, in spite of this, about 75% of court-ordered maintenance payments in Canada are not received by the spouse with care of the dependent children.

We quote from the Royal Commission Report "The biggest single and continuing problem of sole-support mothers is a basic financial insecurity and a subsistence level of living which they have no real hope of improving". Therefore, we believe that a special agency should be created which would maintain a registry of all maintenance orders, collect and enforce all child maintenance orders and make this payment to the single parent whether or not the full amount is collected.

The community of property system is essential to an equitable reform of family law; Woman's Place and Women's Liberation would like to go on record as supporting its immediate introduction.

We wonder why a law would be introduced that would distribute property equally upon the dissolution of a marriage but deny it during the course of the marriage.

We disagree strongly with the position of the Law Reform Commission that during the first six months following the passage of Family Law Reform Legislation that one spouse could unilaterally opt out of equal sharing of all assets acquired up to that time.

New laws must protect not only good relationships, but also difficult or deteriorating relationships. We do not have to create laws for those who behave in socially acceptable ways; we create laws to state principles that the society feels are just and to deter those who would abuse our principles, who would seek to undermine societies' values.

Unilateral opting out would encourage unfair and manipulative spouses to immediately attempt to ignore the principle of equality and it would be necessary for lawyers to support their clients attempt to gain whatever they could under the old and unjust system.

Every Mrs. Murdoch in this province, and there are many women who make the contribution Mrs. Murdoch made, would find past injustices perpetuated.

This committee is meeting to make better laws, more just laws, laws which recognize the value of the work women do and have done in the family. These laws must apply to all of us. A unilateral opting out provision is simply not acceptable.

In conclusion we wish to reiterate that we have touched on only about three areas of family law, but we remind you that Woman's Place and Women's Liberation support all of the proposals as set out by the Coalition on Family Law.

We urge you to examine these recommendations seriously and to support their adoption.



Up from the kitchen
Up from the bedroom
Up from under
Women unite!

VERBAL SELF-DEFENCE

--by Diane Seidel
Optimist-Dec.Issue

While I was an executive secretary at a large Bank, I was faced with some humiliating duties. One was the old "get me a cup of coffee" routine. I, being new at this game, was eager to please the boss, "did my duty" like all the other secretaries. It was to the point when I would have to serve a whole conference room full of "male" executives, (unfortunately there were very few women in high positions at that time). I felt like a waitress (nothing wrong with that, except I was hired to be an administrative assistant) never having time to complete my work. I came across some articles about a woman in the same position who refused to be a waitress, messenger, and various other duties that were not in the job description in which she was hired for. So she was fired! This caused a series of articles in the local papers, I would bring them to my boss (subtle hints). He joked about it, then asked for his coffee. Finally, being as assertive as I could, I told him exactly how I felt and it did the trick!

If only I had taken the Verbal Self-Defence Class before, it would have saved me a year of hassle and frustration.

Last October we were treated to an evening with Diana Bissell. Equipped with "verbal self-defence, a handbook for feminist", she enlightened us to the point where we were feeling very good about being Female and able to handle almost any cracks made about our liberation. Just for an example, here's a few:

(at a job interview)

"Do you have any family plans?"
ans. "Does this have any effect on my ability to do the job?"

"What does your husband do?"
"It's O.K., he already has a job!"

"Hey, I'd sure like a cup of coffee"
ans. "So would I, here's my cup."

(about your appearance)
"I didn't know you owned a dress"
ans. "Actually, I borrowed it from my brother."

"That's no way for a lady to talk"
ans. "Why, am I mispronouncing it?"

"Why aren't you married yet?"
ans. "Sheer luck" or "I haven't asked anyone yet"

"I'm a male chauvinist pig and proud of it"
ans. "Bet you are proud of being a racist too"

"All you need is a good lay..."
ans. "You seem to know a lot about sexual frustration."

and a final quote from Naomi Weisstein:

"As women, we live in a coercive, threatening, unpleasant world; a world in which one of us is reported raped every seventeen minutes every day; a world which tolerates us only when we are very young or very beautiful. If we become stupid or slow, jumpy or fast, dizzy or high-pitched, we are simply expressing the pathology of our social condition. So when we hear jokes against women, and we are asked to laugh at them, and we are asked why we don't have a sense of humor when we don't laugh at them, the answer is easy, simple and short. Of course we're not laughing...."

LETTER to the EDITORS: 56

Dear Madam:

I am writing to your organization in the hope that you may be able to offer me any help or advice that you can, on the problem that I have with my status as a woman in full time employment, at the present moment.

I am 29 years old and am employed as a draftsman for a firm in Winnipeg. When I was interviewed for the position by the General Manager, I was told that he was no "male chauvanist" and there was certainly no discrimination at the company. There would be courses offered to me later on, out of town, all expenses paid, etc., (although I would be probably the only woman): also there would be advancements in pay should I progress admirably throughout the year. Well, that was the start and I settled in for some hard work. Although the starting salary was advertised at \$550.00 per month, I was told that as I had no experience in the architectural field I was to be offered only \$500.00 on a 3 month trial period. The G.M. had phoned Manpower and Immigration to check to see if this was in order - and it was.

After 3 months I was told they were more than pleased with my work and I would be getting the \$50.00 to bring me up to the original \$550.00 per month. I might add, at this point, that there are 2 other girls working at the company, one being the receptionist, and one in accounts. The first time I found my real status was when in the same day after feeling good about the job I accidentally found application forms for my job - all from men and all asking \$1,000.00 to start, then I was told that the man who did the job before me was earning \$900.00 per month and he left for a further increase in pay. I did not feel so good after this, and felt that I had been "got" cheaply.

If there are any menial tasks to be done at the office then the girls are always asked to do them. Like, clean up the lunch room, make more coffee, arrange the fixings for the Christmas Party, organize the gift buying for leavers, wrap boxes for customers, etc.: Meanwhile the men are simply not asked.

In the middle of the summer there was, for the employees, a fishing trip arranged for a whole weekend. All the food and booze was paid for by the company and transport was arranged. The girls were simply ignored. We were not offered the chance to go as the notice was for the attention of the male employees only; Nor were we offered the chance of our spouses to go in our place, nor we offered any alternatives or compensation. We women talked about the fact of saying something, then we felt sure that we might be offered something later. Nothing came. The only thing we did get were ludicrous comments everyday for 6 weeks before the event by the other 38 male employees at the plant.

Last week was "raise" week at the company. Now, they were not obliged to give anyone anything, or so I was told, but all the men were offered 10% and the women 5%. When my turn came - I expressed my disappointment, asking if it was my work that was at fault. I was told that it was not and I was possibly the best person ever to be in that particular job although maybe I had still a lot to learn on the technical side of things. So I brought up the question of the "course" that was mentioned at the original interview.

At first he said I was not ready for it but then after much debate - out it came and reared its ugly head in all its full glory - These were his words to me. "I would have to seriously consider the possibilities of sending you on this

Cont. →

ON BECOMING -

HERSELF : Sherry
LEE

This is being written by a woman still in the process of defining herself as an artist. It's going to be written in 2 or more parts - it depends how verbose I get. This first part deals with early experiences. The second (and maybe third) will describe art school experiences and my present work.

I began to draw seriously, that is with a conscious sense of what I was doing, when I was four. My older sister had created an Indian princess on pink construction paper. My mother had praised it and taped it to the living room wall. I recall studying the drawing with concentrated effort. If drawing pictures equalled praise and recognition, then draw I would.

Although my original motives were based almost exclusively on sibling rivalry, they soon changed. Drawing was fun. (It still is.) Jealously and rivalry gave way to simple, pure enjoyment. (Mind you, the recognition and praise were still powerful forces.

I am now going to describe those early drawings - the ones done until age 13. They were small and always of people. The space was very flat, full

of intense bright colour and decorative pattern. They were wholly of the imagination and with each drawing (although I told no one) I created a story. They were illustrations - illustrations of what happened between and among people, and those people were usually women.

By age 11 I knew quite simply that I was destined to be a great artist and I fantasized an inordinate amount about the fame, power and recognition that were soon to be mine.

And then I was 14. Changes. I began drawing from life - students in class, pens, rulers, books (most of this drawing was obviously at school). I drew various parts of my anatomy with careful precision. (At one time I even drew my thighs while I sat - a disembodied view as seen from above. The finished drawing was upsetting and I went back to careful, precise, disembodied hands). It was thrilling to draw from life - the concentration required was exhilarating. There was also a certain smug sense of accomplishment ("I may have big thighs but I can draw.")

Oh, I continued my imaginative drawings, too, and what a sorry lot they were. They had changed with my pubescence, and not, I fear, for the better. They continued to be of women. But not the powerful, mysterious, often threatening women of my pre-adolescence. These women were tall, skinny, beautifully dressed and they just stood there. The women did nothing (no, I see now that they did wait). As drawings they were often cute, and, almost without exception, terrible. They soon bored me and I no longer made up drawings, preferring instead the cool logic of realism.

Cont. ->

Editor's Note Cont.

We'll let you know how her strategy worked out in the next newsletter. She was really interested in being in a working woman's group at Woman's Place. Anybody else with similar problems at work? under-payment? unequal advancement opportunities? deadend jobs? menial tasks assigned? Write to Woman's Place, 143 Walnut Street, Winnipeg, Manitoba with stories about work or feelings about participating in a group.

Obee's Steambaths
are now open on
Tuesday evenings for
WOMEN ONLY.

020



**MANITOBA ANTI-APARTHEID
COALITION**

Invites you to the

SAMPLE
NAMIBIAN FREEDOM DANCE

♀♀♀

Woodward Hall 426 Osborne st. south

Friday 8.30pm March 18

Music by Nick Kool Sounds

Food Served

Donation \$4.00

IDEA CENTRE
SPRING SOCIAL
Sat. March 12, 8:00 P.M.
St. Luke's Church, Nassau +
Stradbrook
MUSIC JUICES TEAS etc. \$3.00

"WE MAY NOT BE
SOLEMN, BUT
WE ARE SERIOUS."

*paraphrased
somewhat
accurately from
some Anarchist
magazine.*

FEbruary

MARCh

APRIL

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
20	21 SOCIALIST WOMEN'S COLLECTIVE 7:45	22	23 Theatre Women, 1100 Wolsley Ave ----- W.L.S. Phone Lines.	24 WINNIPEG LESBIAN SOCIETY 8:00	25	26 LIBERATION BOOKSTORE OPENING PARTY 160 SPENCEST.
27	28 SOCIALIST WOMEN'S COLLECTIVE 7:45	1 MARCH HOUSE CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE 7:30	2 For Theatre Women, call Millie Lamb at 774-4180 ----- Phone Lines	3 WINNIPEG LESBIAN SOCIETY 8:00	4	5 INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY SOCIAL 8:00 P.M. 299 YOUNG ST.
6	7 SOCIALIST WOMEN'S COLLECTIVE 7:45	8	9 Theatre Women 1100 Wolsley ----- Phone W.L.S. Lines	10 WINNIPEG LESBIAN SOCIETY 8:00	11	12 IDEA CENTRE SOCIAL St. Luke's Anglican, Nas- saut + Stradbroke
13	14 SOCIALIST WOMEN'S COLLECTIVE 7:45	15	16 Theatre Women 174-4180 ----- WLS Phone Lines	17 WINNIPEG LESBIAN SOCIETY 8:00	18 NAMIBIAN FREEDOM DANCE 8:30 P.M. (MARAC) 426 Osborne St. South	19
20 HEATHER BISHOP IN CONCERT SCANDINAVIAN HALL 360 YOUNG ST.	21 SOCIALIST WOMEN'S COLLECTIVE 7:45	22	23 Theatre Women 774-4180 ----- WLS Phone Lines	24 WINNIPEG LESBIAN SOCIETY 8:00	25	26
27	28 SOCIALIST WOMEN'S COLLECTIVE 7:45	29	30 Theatre Women 1100 Wolsley ----- WLS Phone Lines	31 WINNIPEG LESBIAN SOCIETY 8:00	1 APRIL	2 Women's Coffeeshouse 8:30 P.M. A WOMAN'S PLACE - 143 Walnut St.
3	4 SOCIALIST WOMEN'S COLLECTIVE 7:45	5 HOUSE CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE 7:30	6 Theatre Women - Come one, Come All. ----- WLS Phone Lines	7 WINNIPEG LESBIAN SOCIETY 8:00	8	9 Women's LIBERATION SOCIAL ARMY & NAVY HALL 299 YOUNG

