

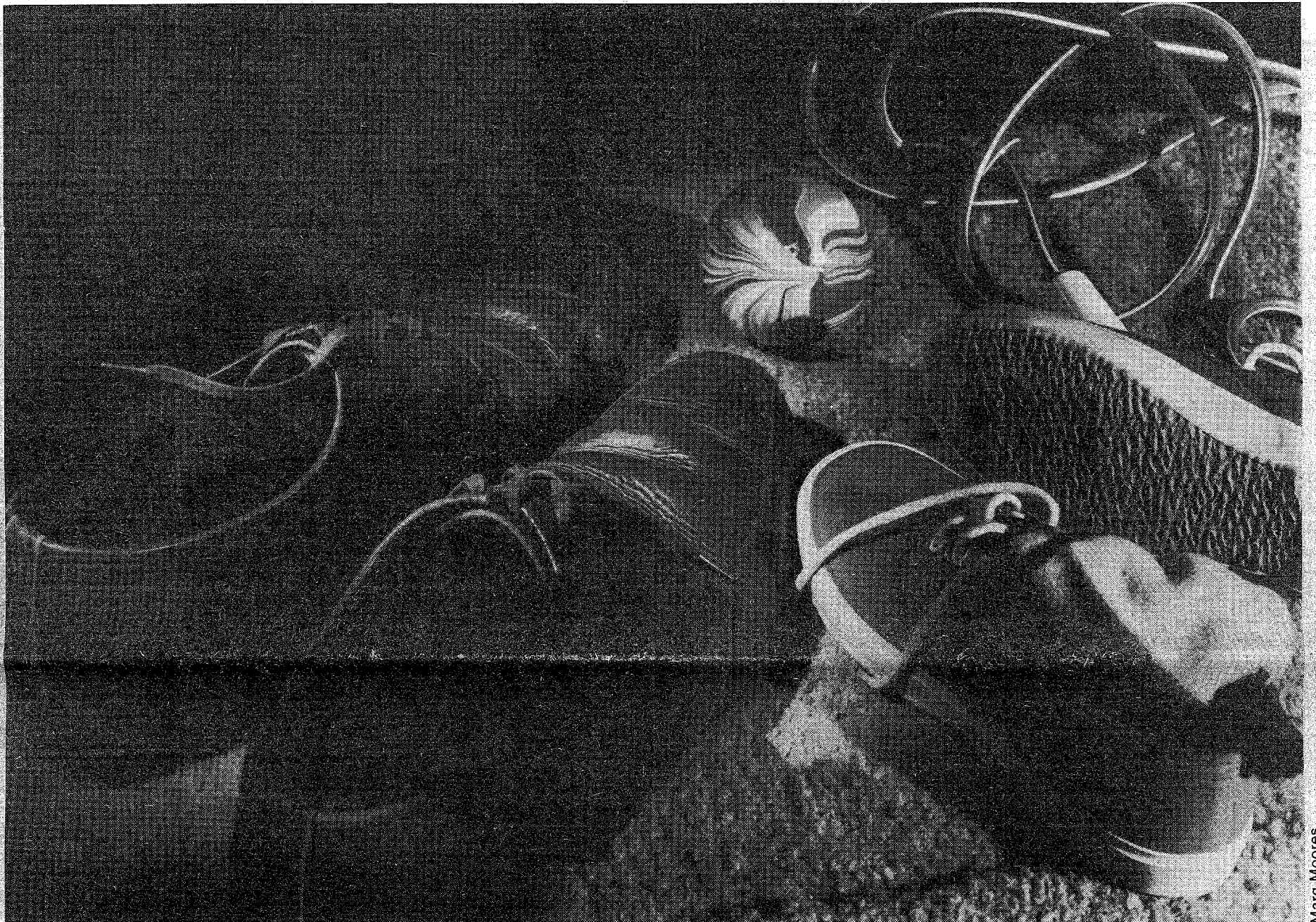
# Broadside

A FEMINIST REVIEW

Vol. 2, No. 7

May 1981

\$1



Marg Moores

## Incest: Secrets All in the Family

SEE STORY PAGE 10

### INSIDE BROADSIDE

#### FEATURES

**I'VE GOT A SECRET:** Incest, that previously hidden phenomenon, is beginning to be discussed and studied. And incest survivors are beginning to speak out in films, in books, in self-help groups. Page 10.

**IN SICKNESS, IN HEALTH:** The health industry is set up to promote ill-being, not well-being, especially where women are concerned — both women health workers and women patients suffer. Mary O'Brien addresses the 'Strategies for Well-being' Conference. Page 6.

#### I'M IN THE MOOD FOR REPRESSIVE DESUBLIMATION:

The sexual revolution, says Joanne Kates, is nothing more than a mechanism for letting off sexual steam in safely contained channels. Page 9.

#### NEWS

**FEAR OF FEMINISM:** In the Soviet Union, feminism is not part of the vocabulary, but the conditions for a women's movement exist. Tatyana Mamonova, exiled publisher of the feminist journal *Almanach*, spoke to *Broadside's* Susan G. Cole. Page 8.

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**UP AND AWAY:** The space shuttle, a politically neutral 'truck,' landed safely last month but NASA's future is shaky. And the agency, which is interested in promoting solar energy through space exploration, may be phased out to the private sector. Eve Zaremba comments. Page 4.

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**BLOOM OF MATTER:** *Broadside* speaks to artist Joyce Wieland about her latest show — drawings in coloured pencil — and about her past and future work. Page 13.

**A TALE OF TWO POETS:** Jean Wilson reviews the similarities and striking differences between two of Canada's best poets — Margaret Atwood in *True Stories* and Phyllis Webb in *Wilson's Bowl*. Page 14.

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# LETTERS

## Broadside:

Just recently I have become more aware of feminism by reading *Broadside*. I don't know very much about it yet but it seems to be the answer to my rotten feelings about life. So many times I've felt put-down or inadequate or too masculine. I think I haven't adjusted very well to what my place in society is supposed to be, which is a general door-mat to my husband, children, parents and even friends. But I'm glad I haven't adjusted.

Feminism is showing me it's o.k. to be strong and that being a woman doesn't mean being a door-mat. But I'm scared. If I defend women's rights and put out my feelings and not be what everyone else wants me to be, I risk losing some of the people I'm close to, like my parents or a man. It seems lonely.

I need support and validation and someone to listen to me and someone to admire and respect and someone to give admiration and respect back to me. I need someone to like me or even just accept me even if I'm confused or unclear or angry or sad or happy or confident.

I don't really know how to find anybody who could meet my needs, but even if I did, I'm not ready. Deep down I hate myself because I'm not perfect. I have to learn how to accept myself first. I'd really like to find someone who could help me but that seems like a lot to ask when I see so many people grappling with their own problems.

But reading *Broadside* and learning about feminism helps alot. I need more.

Kathy Dach  
Toronto

## Broadside:

I am not sure that the accompanying letter represents a small victory or a stalemate for the woman's movement here at Queen's University. Despite complaints about the sexist content of *The Friday Moon*, a publication of The Queen's Journal, from The Queen's Women's Centre, The Queen's A.M.S. Outer Council, The McArthur Students' Society, The Women's Residential Council, The Queen's Anarchist Collective, a number of individuals and people from the Kingston community, the lack of any sanctions being imposed on *The Queen's Journal* is very upsetting. Still, at least it was recognized as being sexist — which the editor and staff of *The Queen's Journal* still do not admit. Perhaps it might be of interest for you to note that Tim Murphy, the person who edited *The Friday*

*Moon*, is on the A.M.S. Sexual Harassment Committee. There is more than a hint of hypocrisy in such a situation.

Brian Burch  
Kingston, Ont.

Dr. R.L. Watts  
Principal & Vice-Chancellor  
Queen's University  
Kingston, Ontario  
K7L 3N6

Dear Dr. Watts:

The Ontario Human Rights Commission at its regular monthly meeting in February 1981, had the opportunity of reviewing the recent *Friday Moon* publication.

## Broadside

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## EDITORIALS

# Here's to Our Health

Throughout *Broadside's* two year history we have attempted to bring to our readers news of women's experience in the health care system. One contributor wrote of pregnant women being "risk-scored" by a computer and registered in a vast data bank located in a high-risk obstetrical unit. Another described how doctors have been plying women with valium, making them dependent on a drug that keeps them docile and guarantees a barrier to awareness. Recently, *Broadside* published a feature on the abortion crisis in Canada. And a story on the hospital workers' strike told of how women have second class status in the health care system not only as consumers but as workers.

Taken together these articles paint a picture that is pretty bleak. There is of course much more. While women must confront the force of modern technology that is creating assembly line obstetric units we have been denied access to the same technology that ought to have produced a safe and effective method of birth control long ago. We are nurses and not doctors; male

doctors continue to play God. Women are shunted through a health care system that is not addressing our needs.

The situation touches all women whether we are patients or whether we are delivering services. We all have bodies to care for. We *don't* have control over them or the system that does.

Last March, the Health Promotion Directorate funded a conference entitled "Strategies for Well-being." Organized by women with strong feminist principles, the conference featured workshops that helped to clarify our needs. Jennifer Penney, for example, explained how female cloth cutters were acquiring injuries using scissors designed for the average male hand; Allie Lehmann gave depressing statistics on the numbers of women below the poverty line. Judith Golden described how conventional medicine deals with menopause. The scope of the workshops was wide-ranging; the information in almost every case was bad news.

But the conference was organized to consider change, and that is good news. More important that crucial activity, networking, took place with a vengeance. It is estimated that at least five groups of women from different regions began the planning stages for women's centres, and a health-care network was established.

Mary O'Brien, in her keynote address to the 'Strategies for Well-being' conference (for the full text see page 6) remarked that "the title of the conference suggests that we think it's time we stopped hovering, backing off ... and that we actively create the conditions in which we take, or perhaps recover the power and the authority to *control* our well-being." O'Brien's was a call for action, the kind only a full-scale movement can take on. The 'Strategies for Well-being' conference was realistic in assessing the needs of women in the health care system. But that was not all that emerged that week-end. One thing became very clear: There is a national woman's health movement in this country. And that is exactly what we need.

## This is Broadside

All those whose subscriptions have run out recently, or are about to, are urged to renew NOW. Not only because sending reminders is a drag for us at *Broadside* but because **subscriptions rates are going up as of June 1, 1981.** The new rates are: for individuals, \$10 for 10 issues and \$18 for 20 issues (institutions \$16 and \$30). May is thus the last month in which to subscribe or renew at the old rate.

At the same time, we are instituting a Sustaining Subscription (\$40 for 20 issues) providing an opportunity for those who want to support *Broadside* tangibly yet cannot afford more than an extra \$20 or so dollars. We have on occasion had small donations included in subscriptions cheques. Naturally, we are pleased at such signs of support and believe that a Sustaining Subscriber is one way of acknowledging and encouraging it.

In these days of rising prices it hardly needs explaining why rates have to go up.

For a start, printing and paper costs have almost doubled since we started two years ago. *Broadside* continues to run at a deficit. We must take steps to remedy this situation since it cannot be sustained indefinitely. As a priority, *Broadside* must increase its revenue from subscriptions, sales and advertising. This means raising our sub rates, encouraging two year subscriptions, increasing the availability of the paper and selling more aggressively. In this way we expect to increase our cash flow considerably over the next year.

One thing should be made clear about the financing of a paper like *Broadside*. No matter how well we do, it can never be truly self-supporting through sales alone. Eventually, we may be able to break even at current costs, but meanwhile the deficit has to be covered. Future growth and expansion will have to be based on outside funds. These are essential. Since *Broadside* neither receives nor solicits government or institutional grants, our only sources of funds are

donations from individual Friends of *Broadside* and fundraising events.

The first of a series of fundraising events has been scheduled for June 14th at the Pauline McGibbon Cultural Centre in Toronto. It will be a Strawberry Brunch — providing strawberries, muffins, croissants and coffee (buy your own champagne) with musical entertainment by Susan G. Cole. Come hear Susan and natter with your friends. The room is small; only 125 tickets will be sold at \$15 and we expect to sell out! So get yours early. This is the event not to miss!

In case you've had trouble tracking us down lately, *Broadside* has moved from its enormous, dingy warehouse space at King and Bathurst to a neat little office at Spadina and College. Our new phone number is 598-3513. Call us sometime, arrange to visit, help with layout or mailout. Production dates until summer are May 23, June 20 and July 18. You're welcome.

Both the tone and the contents were sufficient to give my fellow Commissioners and I concern regarding the manner in which women and certain minority groups were portrayed. At our meeting it was further decided that I should communicate our concern to you and suggest that you ensure that the publication of such derogatory material should not continue in the future.

While it is beyond the purview of our Commission and your office to censor this publication, nonetheless it would seem clear that the contents of the *Friday Moon* fall beyond the acceptable standards set by a community which endeavours to foster the dignity and respect of all our people, regardless of their race, creed or sex.

Dorothea Crittenden  
Chairman  
Ontario Human Rights Commission

*The following letter was sent to James Ham, president of the University of Toronto in April by the Women's Coalition concerning the closing of the Equal Opportunities Office. A copy was sent to Broadside.*

Dear President Ham:

The University of Toronto Women's Coalition was outraged to learn that, owing to budget constraints, the University decided to close its Equal Opportunities Office. We understand that Robert Brown, director of Personnel, has publicly stated that he will try to retain some of its programs. But with no clear mandate, and increasing pressure on funds at this university, it is unlikely that any Equal Opportunity programmes will continue.

Research done by the Equal Opportunities Office made us all aware that women are under-represented in most of the academic fields in the university, and that more men than women receive the security offered by tenure. In her recent research, Ms. Gillmeister, officer of the Equal Opportunities programme, noted that proportionately more women than men are losing their jobs at this university. The closing of the Equal Opportunities office clearly demonstrates this fact.

Unlike the personnel department of this university, we do not believe that a service to promote equal opportunity for women and minorities is a "frill"; it is a basic service which the university cannot afford to lose. Our major concern is that the closing

of this office unduly harms the groups on this campus who are least able to defend themselves against financial constraints.

As an essential service, the Equal Opportunities Office must be reinstated. It must be given the authority to bring about real change in the hiring practice of the University of Toronto. Many other universities have advisors to the president on the status of women and minorities. With the elimination of the Equal Opportunities Office at this university, no mechanism whatsoever exists in the administration for confronting the problems faced by women and minorities. As an integral part of society, these disadvantaged groups cannot be ignored. At the very least, the mandate of the Personnel office must be explicitly extended to encompass the concerns of these groups.

Andrea Knight  
for the University of Toronto  
Women's Coalition

*Broadside:*

Just a bit of New Brunswick news, inspired by the article "Perils of a Disposable Work Force" in your March 1981 publication (Vol. 2, no. 5). As a Pro Feminae worker (an Outreach project funded by CEIC — Manpower) I made a proposal to the Manpower Needs committee back in 1976 for a pre-trades program for women. It was not heeded so two years later I dragged it out, polished it up and resubmitted the same proposal. This time, after some discussion, it was decided to pilot an 8

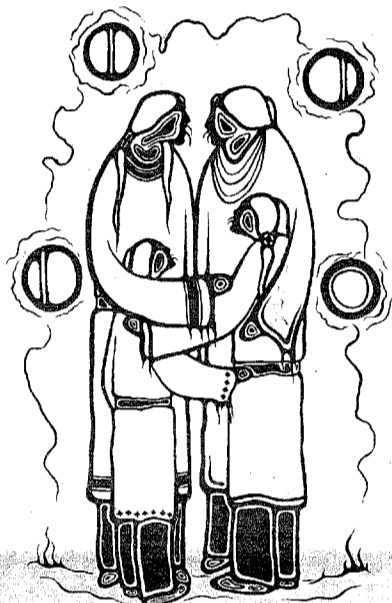
week program in the Saint John, NB Community College. The following year the Community College Curriculum Division hired a Pro Feminae client to develop the curriculum with the help of all the material so generously sent to me from other women across the country involved in pre-trades programs for women.

We call it Trades Orientation for Women (TOW, since initials that spell something are popular). The course has been presented with curriculum, in Saint John, Fredericton and Bathurst and is slated for Moncton in April. We are experiencing difficulty in getting women to enroll in the course, the usual problems in getting CEIC counsellors to suggest, discuss or encourage women to explore the skill trades. In the absence of a Women's Employment Co-ordinator who is away on language training, I have been given permission to do 'awareness' sessions with the major CEIC offices in NB in an effort to inform counsellors and to try to break down, or at least dilute existing biases. The film "Yes I Can" is excellent and I have been showing it to the CEIC's and high schools throughout the province. I hope TOW is here to stay ... we need it badly to broaden employment options for women in New Brunswick.

I thought you might be interested in hearing from one of your 'way down east' subscribers.

Marie Patrick  
Fredericton

• • •



## WOMEN: THE CENTRE OF THE WHEEL OF LIFE

by Judy Girard

As a participant in both the Native Women's and 'Strategies for Well-being' conferences, I can see that there are a number of reasons why it was important for native women to have their own conference, instead of becoming one of the workshop topics for the non-native conference. While each conference was looking at issues concerning women and health, the content and atmosphere were almost totally different. The non-native women looked at the oppression of women by modern Western medicine, while the native women's conference looked at health problems in relation to traditional culture and health practices. The focus was oriented to the Indian treatment of health/sickness in life. One day of the conference was devoted to skill development sessions such as self-help, self-healing, midwifery and herbalism.

This link of health to the native way of life gave the conference a spiritual connection. Every day started and ended with drumming by the North American Traveling College and the offering of prayers by elders, and it was this influence of the spiritual/cultural element that most distinguished the conference. Non-native women do not have this cultural bond. Native women have both sisterhood and culture.

One of the 'stars' of the conference was Norma Myers, a native woman from Vancouver who spent two sessions diagnosing, prescribing and telling herbal secrets.

Finally, the efforts of Edna Manitowabi, Jeannette Lavell-Corbiere, and Pauline Harper must be acknowledged for starting the network between native women and health, and sharing this network with the non-native women who chose to participate.

From March 27 to March 29, 1981, two women's health conferences were held simultaneously in Toronto at the Ryerson Institute. These conferences marked the first time ever that Ontario women gathered specifically to deal with the issue of women and health.

Although funding came from a government source (Health Promotion Directorate), the organizing structure drastically altered during the planning stages of the conference. Initially, two committees were struck to organize a conference on women and health: an advisory committee and a core committee. The advisory committee of Ryerson, *Healthsharing* magazine and the Health Promotion Directorate found it difficult to sponsor the conference without the full support of the core committee. As a result the core committee took on the task of the organizing of a conference to be entitled, 'Strategies for Well-Being'. One member of the core committee was a representative of Native women who thought this health conference could not possibly meet the needs and experiences of Native women. She resigned and a Native women's committee was formed and a conference planned for Native women to be called 'Women-The Centre of the Wheel of Life'. This conference proposed to explore the relationship of traditional medicine with contemporary concerns of good health and preventative medicine; to provide an opportunity to share and educate the non-native women to native needs and goals of good

health; to provide a base for linkages between non-native and native women's groups; and to come and share and learn with one another the meaning of the wholeness of woman and that Earth and woman are one.

The 'Strategies for Well-Being' Conference drew more than 200 women from all over Ontario (only 40 people registered from Toronto). What was added was a national voice when women from British Columbia, Saskatchewan, and Newfoundland turned up to participate.

The conference's basic objective was to provide a forum where women would exchange information and experiences, in the hope of promoting a better understanding of health issues from a feminist perspective. The emphasis of the conference was on identifying various strategies for improving women's health.

The conference opened with an inspiring speech by Mary O'Brien (see page 6). The next two days were filled with workshops covering a broad spectrum of health concerns, both theoretical (professionalism, taking responsibility, technology and women's health) and practical (how to start a women's health clinic, how to do vaginal and breast self-examination).

The conference went beyond the workshop format and scheduled time to provide for regional strategies and planning as well as regional networking. Out of these interactions emerged plans for a francophone newsletter on health, a network for immi-

grant women on health, the northern women's health conference to be hosted in Dryden in November, and the Toronto health network which has already held its first meeting.

Women who generally work in isolation had the opportunity to share information and lend support to each other, establishing communication links that were non-existent before. The Northwestern women commented on how ironic it was they all flew to Toronto to meet each other for the first time and how exciting it was for all of them.

Although the conference had its usual quirks (male interpreters in an all-women conference, a building that was designed like a maze, etc.) the benefits far outweighed the problems. I look forward to more unified action on the health front for women in the future.

### welcome to Branching Out readers

We are pleased to be sending complimentary copies to some former *Branching Out* readers. We hope they will like us well enough to become *Broadside* subscribers.

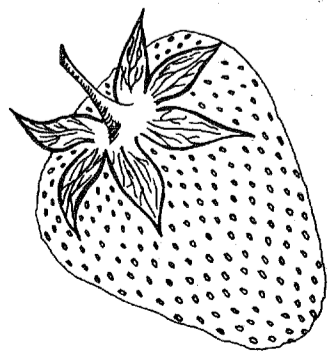
The *Broadside* Collective

## STRATEGIES FOR WELL-BEING

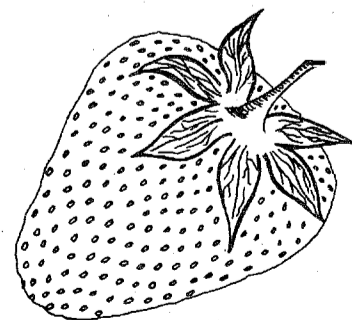
by Judy Stanleigh

### STRAWBERRY BRUNCH for FRIENDS OF BROADSIDE

Sunday, June 14, 1981 12 noon  
Pauline McGibbon Cultural Centre  
86 Lombard St., Toronto



Tickets \$15



Tickets in limited supply



# Shuttlecock and Battledore

by Eve Zaremba

Well, the Americans have done it again. The unlikely drama of Space Shuttle *Columbia's* departure and return to earth went off with Disney-like precision. It would be churlish to cavil at NASA's moment of triumph. Few of us are immune from enjoying the spectacle, the suspense and the hype of such occasions. We loved the show, however much we might hate ourselves for it, or try to pretend otherwise and make amends afterwards by being super-critical.

What we witnessed was an example of what Americans are best at: high risk technology. Enormous, complex organizational resources are brought to bear on a single, new technical problem; then the untried solution is presented to the world on the small screen as a live media event centered around two, too nice all-American guys acting reluctant heroes to perfection. All this against tremendous odds and in the nick of time.

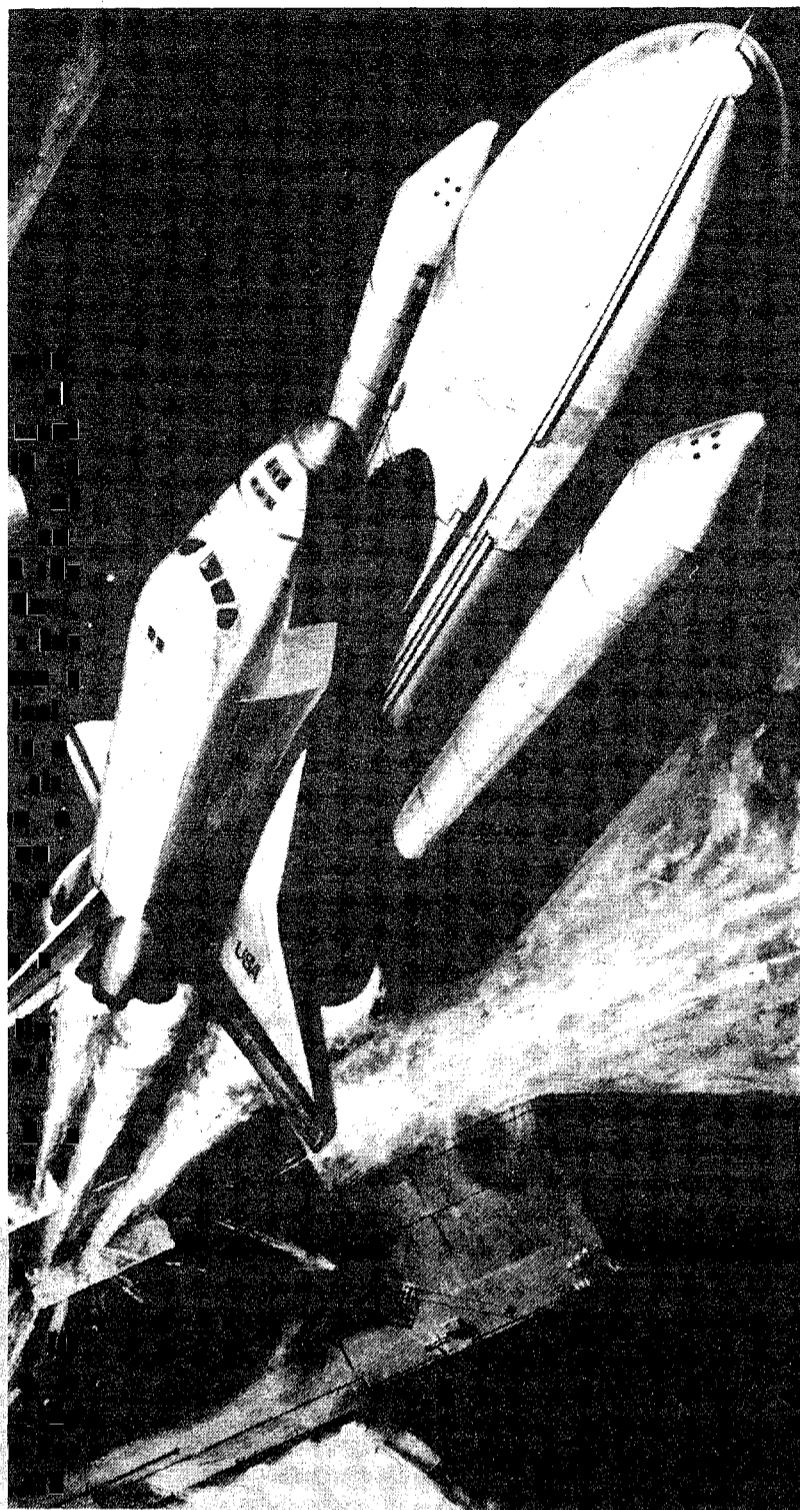
It was hard to believe that the whole thing had not been scripted, rehearsed, tested and taped in advance before a studio audience. But no, it was for real.

But just what is the significance of the achievement? What of the future?

Much has already been said about its military implications. The Pentagon is booked as its major operational user: the shuttle will carry satellites into space for surveillance and warning systems. The Soviets view this US development strictly as a military threat. They have in recent years spent billions, which they can afford even less than Americans, on arms searching for that elusive quality called security. They can hardly carp at the US using its technical and organizational knowhow to the same end. Both countries are firmly in the grip of an illusion: i.e. pursuit of the unattainable chimera of military superiority.

This is psychologically understandable in the USSR, a country whose policy is dominated by a pervasive fear of the West, fuelled by the Russians' historic inferiority complex. American technical achievements, military posture and political actions are forever fertile ground for Soviet paranoia. But what excuse have the Americans for chasing superiority as if it really promised security? On the surface the US should be more psychologically healthy than the Soviets. After all, the US has never experienced war on its own territory, was never invaded, did not lose 20 million in war. By testing its space program before the world — an unthinkable possibility for the insecure, secretive Russians — it has shown

enormous self-confidence. Why then do Americans need to stay in the destructive arms race with the Soviets? There is no rational, not even any military, justification for spending more and more money on maintaining armed forces on a scale designed for the total destruction of our globe.



It does not make sense that Americans would long support efforts of the military-industrial complex. The only possible explanation for the continuing aberrant behaviour lies deep in the American psyche. Examples of it can be seen on the tube any night of the week. It's the need to be Number One — whatever the cost. Win-

ning isn't the most important thing, it's the ONLY thing. The Numero Uno Syndrome is deeply masculinist. It is a continual need to prove potency through domination. Since it is expressed as 'winning' no matter how achieved, it has little in common with the pursuit of excellence.

Which leads us back to the Space Shuttle. Its success has undoubtedly made the US Number One again in space. Is there hope that, safe in this knowledge, the US can pursue space primacy without concurrently pursuing superiority in military hardware? Will it be enough for Americans to know they are winners in the space race without also needing to be winners in the arms race? Will they feel secure and potent enough? Can quality outweigh quantity? It must be remembered that the Space Shuttle is a transportation system, not an arms system. It's a truck, a vehicle for moving materials and people. It is technologically neutral. It does not determine what is to be transported into space or for what purpose. Those are political, not technical, decisions.

We know the military will utilize the shuttle program in service of the big bang; the corporations are in line to use it in pursuit of the big buck. The issue is whether NASA will continue in control or whether the job of running the shuttle program — if not the whole space effort — will be turned over to the private sector. There are indications that NASA may be downgraded. Reagan has already cut off funds for NASA's solar research. The shuttle makes it feasible (expensive, but feasible) to utilize solar energy for use on earth — a long term project which the Reagan administration seems determined to scuttle, but perhaps all they can do is delay it.

Over the years NASA has exhibited resourcefulness and longevity. Almost dead ten years ago, it lied in its teeth to persuade Congress to fund the space shuttle program (officially Space Transportation System) by underestimating time and money necessary for this experimental project. It was a risk which has now paid off handsomely. NASA's political position vis-a-vis its enemies, and they are many, has been immensely strengthened. Now a darling of the public and with the scientific community behind it, even Reagan may find it difficult to destroy.

It is easy to be critical of NASA and its partners in industry. But like the shuttle, NASA itself is merely a vehicle for American political will. It has enormous capabilities which, if properly utilized, could help the world solve some of its urgent problems and expand our knowledge of the universe.

## Making the Connections

by Judy Liefschultz

Toronto's week on Survival and Disarmament started off with a bang when US comedian Dick Gregory exposed some horrible but all-too-believable links between war, men and violence in his speech at Massey Hall on Sunday, April 12. On Monday women gathered for a day of talks on "Patriarchy and the Nuclear Mentality" to further document those connections.

The afternoon workshop was led by Julie Anderson and Jeanne Toma from the American group, Women Against Nuclear Development. The book published by WAND, *Patriarchy and the Nuclear Mentality* by Nina Swaim and Susan Roen (reviewed in *Broadside*, September 1980), laid the groundwork for growing numbers of women working against nuclear power and arms. It has helped articulate the connection between women's issues such as rape, lack of human services, sexism, and harassment to the priorities of men that produce and proliferate nuclear technology.

The workshop centered around women's experiences with many aspects of the patriarchy. Jeanne Toma described the health hazards and environmental destruction of the uranium mine in northern Ontario

where she worked as a geologist. Women who lived through both world wars described the death and destruction there. Women connected violence with men in their personal lives to the destruction of the environment and finally to militarism and nuclear weapons — the most deadly tool of

the men who perpetuate and control the destruction around us.

Small groups discussed everything from nuclear technology as a feminist issue to militarism in the schools. Voice of Women members recounted the collection of babies' teeth to measure strontium 90 many



Judy Stanleigh

years ago. These devoted women fought to end nuclear testing in the South Pacific, underground testing, and still work for world peace and disarmament. After each effort they thought their work was over, but here they were again.

The connection between sexism and violence in women's everyday lives and the militarism around us seemed to make sense, seemed to form the link that women have intuitively known down through time. We have never had the need to articulate it so strongly as we do today.

Ginny Macevicius, the organizer of the day, kept this theme going in the evening panel at 519 Church Street Community Centre. There, Pat Schulz from Action Daycare, Beth Sulman from the Rape Crisis Centre, Sue Gange of CUPE and the International Women's Day Committee, and Wiesia speaking from the lesbian feminist community traced these relationships further. They explained both the problems and the advances of women in counteracting sexism and violence against women in their respective fields. The day was particularly valuable because we were able to compare notes and stories with our American sisters, who further documented that our struggles have no borders.

# MOVEMENT MATTERS

Movement Matters compiled by Judy Stanleigh

## IWDC Activities

International Women's Day Committee, Toronto, is co-sponsoring a rally and march with the Communication Workers of Canada and Organized Working Women in support of women workers who have been on strike since November 24, 1980 against Tel Air in Oshawa.

It is scheduled for Saturday, May 9th. Buses will be leaving at 9:30 am from the Steelworkers Hall at 25 Cecil St. and will be returning by 2:00 pm.

The strikers came to Toronto to support International Women's Day with us, and we urge as many who can to come to Oshawa to show our support for them. For information, call Carolyn at 789-4541.

International Women's Day Committee, Women Working With Immigrant Women and the OFL Women's Committee are sponsoring a public meeting with Domilia Chungara, a Bolivian woman exiled in Sweden, who will be speaking on the participation of women in the struggle in Bolivia.

The film "Double Day" in which Domilia appears will be shown, and copies of her book *Let Me Speak Out* will be on sale. The Red Berets (the singing group from International Women's Day) will be performing.

The meeting is to be held on Wednesday, May 13, at 7:30 pm in the auditorium of University Settlement House, 23 Grange Rd., Toronto. Domilia is also speaking at OISE on May 14 on 'The struggle for a free Bolivia'. For further information contact Carolyn at 789-4541 or Maria Theresa at 922-1256.

The Committee of Solidarity with the People of El Salvador is planning a rally and demonstration for June 20, Queen's Park, Toronto, at 12 noon. The rally will protest the escalating US intervention in El Salvador and the complacency of the Canadian government.

IWDC, to help build and support this demonstration is organizing as large as possible a women's contingent to participate. For more information, call 789-4541.

## Public forum on fighting the right

The International Women's Day Committee is sponsoring a public forum on May 7, 1981, at 7:30 p.m., in the OISE auditorium (252 Bloor St. W. Toronto). This evening of information, culture and singing is designed to talk about and celebrate our struggles against the right-wing groups that are threatening our rights, and will feature:

- speakers from the feminist community, the gay movement, the trade union movement and the immigrant community
- songs of struggle and solidarity
- displays on how various groups in Toronto are fighting against racism, anti-feminism, homophobia, etc.
- literature tables, coffee, juice, conversation

For childcare, please call Brian at 535-6269. For information, call Lynda Yanz — 534-6672, Mariana Valverde — 532-8989, or Carolyn Egan — 789-4541.

## Why Movement Matters

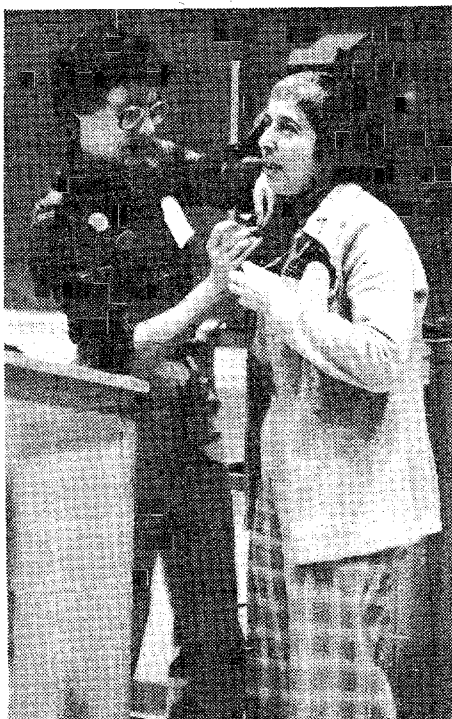
'Movement Matters' is a section of *Broadside* to act as an informational forum for the women's community: new and on-going services, programs and activities for women. Since *Broadside* is distributed throughout Canada, we would like this page to reflect the many communities it now reaches, and more. We encourage readers to send us information and/or photos or projects, programs and services in your local community, c/o Judy Stanleigh at *Broadside*, PO Box 494, Stn. P, Toronto M5S 2T1.

## Mothers' Day March

Women for Survival invite women, children and men to join us Sunday, May 10 at 2 pm in the park at Queen's Park, Toronto, for a Mothers' Day celebration of peace.

Come and enjoy a march, brief speeches, theatre, music and refreshments.

For more information, call 968-3218.



Judy Liefschultz and Rosalie Bertell at Women for Survival Day, March 1981.

## National Lesbian Conference

The Lesbian Conference will be held this year in Vancouver, B.C. on May 16, 17 and 18, for women from all over Canada. There will be entertainment, including Toronto performers Mama Quilla II, and April Kassirer. For more information write the organizing committee: Box 65563, Station F, Vancouver, BC.

## Money

On March 20, 1981 a news release from the Secretary of State disclosed the following information: Francis Fox has increased the budget for the Women's Program some \$3 million which triples the program's total funds to \$4.1 million.

The Women's Program was first established by the Department of the Secretary of State in 1973 to promote social development and voluntary action by providing resources, technical assistance and grants to women's voluntary organizations for the support of advocacy, skill development, research, information exchange, coordination and public education on the status of women.

## 1981 Institute — Women & Psychology

The Canadian Psychological Association's Section on Women and Psychology is holding a conference in Toronto, June 1 and 2, 1981. All women are welcome to attend the sessions which include workshops on 'Increasing Self-worth,' 'It's Just Your Nerves,' 'Psychology and Rape' and a keynote address by Esther Greenglass of York University. Other sessions will cover 'Gender and the Sense of Power,' 'Historical Perspectives on Female Prostitution' and 'Aggression Towards Women: Adaptation or Aberration?'

The registration deadline is May 30, 1981. For information contact: Paula J. Caplan, Department of Applied Psychology, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, 252 Bloor Street West, Toronto M5S 1V6; telephone (416) 923-6641, ext. 574.

## Another Women's Centre

The East York Women's Centre is located at Pape and Mortimer in Toronto in the old Centennial College's older building. For more information, phone 461-1713.

## WIT

### Women in Trades and Industry Conference

April 24 — 26, 1981  
Hamilton, Ontario

#### Purpose of Conference

WHY: In the last several years, a growing number of women have entered, or tried to enter, a variety of skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled "blue collar" occupations, occupations where traditionally only males have been trained and employed.

In other industries, ranging from textiles to telephones, which employ large numbers of women in lower-paying jobs, women workers are increasingly conscious and vocal about their special problems on the job, in the union, and in the economy and society as a whole.

One of the expressions of all this was the first National Conference of Women in Trades, held in Winnipeg in September 1980. Following this conference, a caucus of Ontario women decided to form the Ontario Women in Trades and Industry Conference Committee.

The purpose of the April conference is to draw together women from across the province; working women in trades and industry, women who are pursuing vocational training for such jobs, and women who have been denied access to such jobs and training. We need to establish an effective network of communication and develop an action perspective for long overdue change. We believe that such an exchange of information and ideas can help lead to more action to provide equal conditions for women workers in the economy.

NOTE: Conference sessions and workshops will be held at the Hamilton Public Library, 55 York Blvd. in rooms "C" (main floor); 215 (2nd floor) and the Board and Committee rooms (6th).

## Conference Call

A conference call has been issued by ISIS in Geneva, the International Feminist Network, to explore 'Women and Health' in an international context. The conference will be held June 6-8, 1981 in Geneva and will cover women's health issues in the Third World and in industrialized countries.

For information, or to register, write: ISIS, CP 301, 1227 Carouge, Geneva, Switzerland.

## Now More Than Ever — Feminist Party of Canada

Critical decisions will be made about the future direction of the Feminist Party of Canada, and the ways of organizing and building for the 80's, at a general meeting on Sunday, May 17, 1981, 2 pm at Trinity United Church, Toronto (Bloor & Robert). Mary O'Brien will chair the meeting and the program will include: a survivor of the Ontario Hydro siege speaking about the anti-nuclear group 'Women for Survival,' and the Ad Hoc Committee for Canadian Women and the Constitution discussing what's next in the constitutional battle. A social gathering is to follow the meeting. For information and daycare please call 960-3427.

## Let them eat apple pie: counter-demonstration on Mother's Day

On Sunday, May 10 (Mother's Day), the Right to Life is holding a demonstration against abortion rights. The International Women's Day Committee urges all individuals and organizations concerned with sexual and reproductive freedom to join in a counter-demonstration:

- Sunday, May 10, 1981, at 12:30 pm
- Northeast corner of University and College Sts.

For further information please contact: Linda Yanz, 534-6672; Mariana Valverde, 532-8989; or Carolyn Egan, 789-4541.

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# The Health Industry:

Keynote address delivered to a conference on Women and Well-Being, Ryerson

Polytechnical Institute, Toronto, March 27, 1981.

by Mary O'Brien

There is perhaps a certain irony in my being here to open a conference concerned with women's health, for it must be confessed that I am not all that healthy. In fact, were it not for the skill and dedication of the nurses in the Intensive Care Unit at Ottawa General Hospital, I have a suspicion that I might not be here at all. However, I imagine that one of the recurrent themes of this conference will be the recognition that there is a lot more to being well than the state of the physical organism, and I'm glad to be able to say that in terms of my passion for the feminist cause and the well-being of women, I'm in good shape! In any case, I console myself with the thought that having only one leg to stand on makes me fifty percent better off than, say Lloyd Axworthy.

We have so much to do in the field on which we gather here that it isn't the easiest thing in the world to get a handle on it all. There is a sense in which we convene in a very conventional way, for, after all, there are few tenets more beloved of conservative thought than that which maintains that the form which hovers over the sickbed should be a female form. Historically, it usually has been, though in the later part of Western history (and I am just not qualified to speak of Eastern or Third World health care) the hovering form has had to back off respectfully to make room for the medicine men of modernity. But here, tonight, we also convene in a way which is very unconventional. The title of the conference suggests that we think it's time we stopped hovering, stopped backing off, and start taking on not only the responsibility for health, but that we actively create the conditions in which we take, or perhaps recover, the power and the authority to control our well being.

This sort of opposition of the conventional and the unconventional makes our task difficult, but I would suggest it also makes it possible. Contradiction is, in my view, the very stuff of struggle, and I do not believe that it makes sense for women to hope piously that appeals to reason, or making the correct interpretation of existing data, or winning friends in high places who can make policy changes, or any of these sorts of strategies can bring about the social and economic conditions of women's well-being. This is not to dismiss this kind of activity as useless or misplaced. We can and must meet problems and concerns which are presented by our living in the world, by our experience and by our possibilities. It's a little bit like the constitutional question. Many women, including myself, believe that patriarchal politics, which have reached their gratifying if dizzy pinnacle in the Nation State, are essentially oppressive, essentially sexist, essentially class-biased, and all the amendments to the Constitution which we may care to make can only ameliorate, never really change this repressive relation. Whether this is true or not, it doesn't mean that we can sit back and wait for the contradictions in the political realm to burst asunder. We may not be much better off with amendments to the Charter of Rights, but we shall be infinitely worse off without them. We may never manage to reform existing health care systems to meet our needs, but we cannot destroy nor ignore them. What this means in terms of health issues as well as political issues is that we not only have to struggle, but we have to struggle on two fronts. We have to identify, by hard analytical and theoretical work, a sort of consciousness of the totality of where we are and where we're going and what our ends and purposes are. At the same time, we must meet individual issues as they arise, whether these be issues of technique, of organization, of particular modes of women's ill-being (such as for example, the apparent halt in the quest for safe and reliable contraception, the increas-

ing adulteration of the food we eat, the working conditions of hospital workers, the costs of health care or any of the huge problem areas which we shall deal with in our workshop sessions): we must meet all of these issues as they arise, in all their complexity. We must also, of course, earn our living, care for our kids, get ourselves educated, cultivate our gardens, learn to know and care for each other as women, and so forth. We all know, of course, that women "don't work", and that if we are fatigued it's all in our head. Pop another valium!

## WELL-BEING VS. ILL-BEING

This constant effort to deal with the big questions and the little ones, the ends we seek and the means we must find, is what I mean by struggle. It is, in my view, a struggle for all women, but I want to talk here about the forms the struggle takes in the area of health, of well-being. In our society, health and well-being stand over against sickness and welfare, a word whose meaning has been prostituted if ever a word had such a thing happen to it. It seems to me that the contradiction which is central to our field is one which emerges from a particular aspect of health care, and the position of women in this area. That tension comes, I think, from the fact that women are both producers and consumers of health care, and that they are exploited in both cases. To be sure, men are producers and consumers of health care too, but their situation is quite different. In the first place, they have no history, no tradition of being the 'natural' tenders of care, and they are not therefore frowned upon when they make no bones about the fact that they are in the business for reward, not for love. Media commentators on a recent confrontation between the Premier of the Province of Ontario, old Jingle-bells himself, and a very angry hospital employee — a woman — all felt that the scene, all that vulgar screaming, you know, had done hospital workers more harm than good. Implicit in this view is the endless slur on women: that they ought to be patient and dignified; that they have tedious and unlovely vocal pitch; that they should leave political business to men and, I suspect, at a deeper level, that it is their duty to cherish and nourish the sick while unseemly to expect decent wages. Men, too, while they have no tradition of vocation, do have a tradition of power and decision making, of making the big decisions and going off to the golf course while the women get on with the routine stuff. But we must note that this is not only the case with doctors: I well remember that in the pessimistic package of despair which finally forced me out of nursing, one ultra-weary burden was the knowledge that the non-professional staff, more than 85% female, had just signed a first contract which gave untrained male orderlies higher pay-scales than female RNA's, and gave unskilled maintenance men higher wages than the then un-unionized staff nurses.

Which raises the question of why women put up with it. This is not an easy question to deal with, because what I believe to be the correct answer — the fact that women have been incarcerated in the private realm for centuries not by choice but by force, the twin weapons of economic dependence and physical violence — is not as the saying goes "acceptable". But I shall come back to that point. First, I'd like to comment on what I see as some of the problems arising from the tensions of women as producers on the one hand and as consumers on the other. I do not much like this terminology, though it does reflect the degree to which the market economy affects our lives and thoughts. Perhaps a more appropriate pair of opposites are the older words "agent/patient". We don't always remember that agent — one who acts — is the opposite of patient — one who is acted upon. So I shall speak interchangeably of producer/agents and consumer/patients.



Mary O'Brien

Judy Stanleigh

## HEALTH AGENTS FOR WHOM?

When we regard women health workers as agents, we must ask: agents for whom? We are, in a clear enough way, the agents of the people who form the community we serve, and in this sense, the relation is between us as agents/producers and the people as consumers, and this is, traditionally and quite often actually, a relation of trust. At the same time, many of us are agents of a monolith I shall call, for the moment, the health industry. This, often enough, is a relation of suspicion. This amalgam of trust and suspicion in our working lives causes much tension, and it is not eased by the third group for whom most of us are agents: the medical profession. The rhetoric of well-being regards this as a relation of trust too, but the cold fact is that it is a relation of dominance/subordination.

Our relation to the health industry means that, however enchanted we are by the myths of professionalism, we are in fact workers. We work for a large corporation, the State, a company in which we are all forced to buy shares but whose distribution of dividends might be said to be a little erratic. This is because the State — and in this it differs from other corporate entities — is not in business to make profits for its shareholders: indeed, it exists to give away its shareholders' money, and not infrequently that wealth finds its way into the coffers of other corporations. Think what those of us who want to re-interpret "health care" as well-being rather than illness-doing could do with that \$60 million which Chrysler has dissipated somewhere outside of Canada! The fact is that our status as workers for the health industry gives us a vested interest in illness, an agonizing reality for many of us but a lucrative fact of life for others. I believe that a central contradiction in our experience as producers of health care is this great gap between what we think we ought to be doing — promoting well-being — and what we are actually doing, which is, often enough, depending on a climate of ill-being.

The final massive contradiction which assails the lives of those of us who are workers in the illness industry is the fact that this industry, like all modern industry, is blindly and uncritically in love with technology. I do not mean only scientific and medical technology, but of technology in general —

in administration, in work process, in 'processing' the patients to whom we stand over against as agents. It is extremely difficult to be selective about technological options in a society in which ArToo DeeToo is everybody's favourite wee brother. None of us, I think, would deny the advantages which technology has wrought in a wide number of areas of health care. I would not like there to be no anaesthesia, no dialysis, no vaccines, but I would manage to do without assembly line nutrition, about 80% of X-rays, perhaps something called nuclear medicine, though I confess to being too frightened to find out what exactly this is. But technology developed in response to definable human needs is one thing: technology for technology's sake, operating in the dim recesses of unknown half-lives and untested optimisms, is something quite different.

## TECHNOLOGICAL INFATUATION

Technology is significant to women both as agents and patients of the sickness industry. In technology, we begin to see the division between producer/agent on one side and consumer/patient on the other begin to crumble, for we see that the all-pervasive nature of technological infatuation is irrational from both angles. There are other factors which I shall speak of which make this division less divisive. It is very important, I think that we challenge the division of women into agents and patients for, though we live in it, it is very destructive to the goal of women's well-being. It has the effect of pitting women against women, of involving women in the exploitation of women, defining some women as agents of the controllers of the sickness industry and some women, as patients (some might say victims) of the industry. Most of us, of course, are really both.

The union of health workers with the industry is, in fact very problematic, and the recent strike of hospital workers showed this. It also demonstrated, however, the divisions among the ranks of health workers, a division not merely theoretical, but visible in a bruising way on those picket lines. This situation, in my view, also relates to technology, but to technology of a different order. I refer of course to organizational technology. As in all industries run by increas-

# Climate of Ill-being

ingly large and powerful corporations, the (sickness) industry is subject to the famous norm of efficiency which governs modern organizational theory. This involves as its basic component the ever-accumulating division of labour, whose prime social symbol is, realistically enough, the assembly line.

When I was a ward sister in Scotland in the early 1950's, I had no written job description. Sloppy, eh? But a brief look at the job is illuminating: it included not only the core tasks of supervising nursing care, keeping the doctors contented and maintaining the written records. But it also involved educating students: supervising diets and serving meals; checking out the home situation and arranging discharges; supervising the domestic staff — augmented, of course by the student nurses! — organizing recreational activities (this was a TB sanatorium with an average 18 months' patient stay); collecting blood and urine samples and doing certain tests on the ward; regulating linen supply, visiting hours and religious services; caring for oxygen equip-

tween nurses and social workers was virulent in the late nineteenth century, and shades of this hostility live on. I was taught that public health nurses were cop-outs who were more interested in having every weekend off than in caring for patients. This interpretation brought on an uncomfortable mind-set composed of a mixture of contempt and envy. But the division of labour in the illness industry has undoubtedly raised divisions among us and has placed us, as Ehrenreich and English have shown, ever more firmly under the control of 'experts'. In the ranks of these experts, women inevitably become experts without power over anything but fractionalized tasks. Super-experts are normally male.

But the contradictions are not only between agents and agents, but between agents and patients. As patients, consumers of illness care, women are perhaps even more disadvantaged. I believe that as workers the major source of our exploitation can be seen in the conversion of health care to the sickness industry, and in such circumstances struggles for change are essentially

is bad enough, but to be trapped in a culture dedicated to the maintenance of that feebleness in practical ways is much more significant. And let us make no mistake about it. This entrapment is neither natural or accidental. It is maintained by coercion and violence, propped up by ideological travesties of nature and ethics and justice and humanity, sustained by the isolation of women from one another in the fastnesses of the domestic realm and, as we now know, protected far more thoroughly and more often than we once realized by the free and unpunishable physical violence and sexual sadism for which all men carry a license — not, I may add, in their libido, but in their super-egos, a gift, not of nature, but of culture. \*

Thus, women come into the marketplace of the sickness industry not too well-equipped to deal with the conditions which they find there: they find a situation in which they may well be violated — sometimes seduced — by the pornography of power, be ravished by high technology, battered by bureaucracy, drugged, patronized, prescribed for, acted on and sent back to the

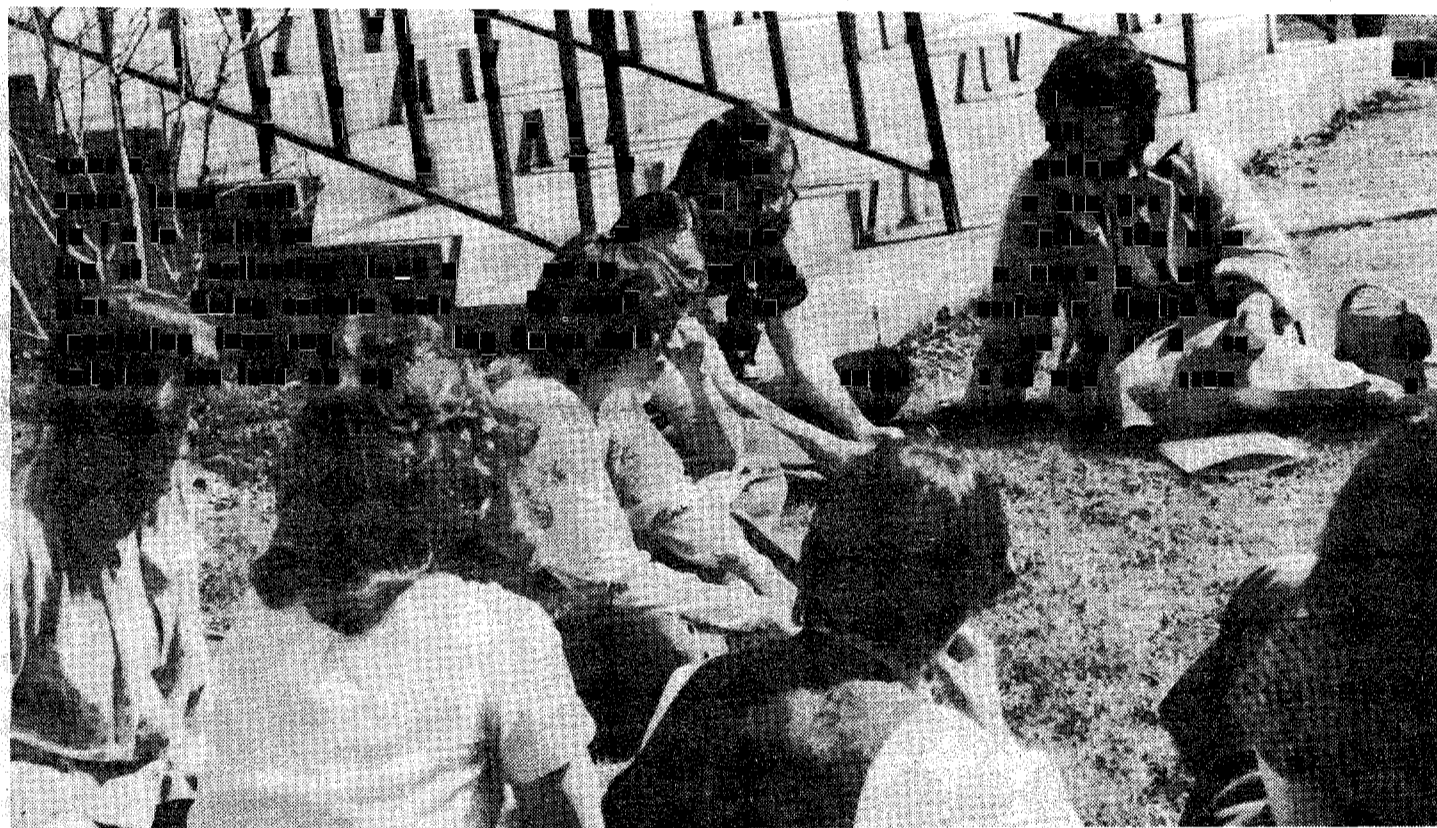
This kind of pronouncement, of course, is always met with questions as to why, if women are all that special, they have let themselves be pushed into a position of inferiority. I have already partly addressed that question, by asserting that we have indeed been pushed, and also kicked, fettered and subjected to economic dependence. The next question is why we did not fight back. That is a question we have no need at all to evade, for feminist scholarship is beginning to uncover empirically what we have always sensed in our brains, our breasts, our wombs: women have fought back, continuously and for a very long time. They fought long battles, our foremothers, and it is to this generation that the benefit of that long fight accrues and upon which the responsibility of ending the struggle in victory has become a still tenuous but enormously strengthening reality.

## THE OLDEST PROFESSION

You know, when I was a young and somewhat thoughtless student nurse, I used to say that I was a member of the second oldest profession. I thought this a rather clever wee joke. If you want an example of what existentialists mean by bad faith and marxists by false consciousness, there is an excellent instance of both. For it is very clear that the caring for the biological being is much older than prostitution. Prostitution requires that a notion of property and a conception of market value both exist, and both of these were relative late comers to the history of the race. What is as old as the race itself is the vulnerability of the organism to injury, disease and death, the need for food and warmth and care. The fact that women have, historically, assumed major responsibilities in this area is hardly surprising: of all our human vulnerabilities, that of the new born infant is clearly the most acute, and the front line defence of infant well-being is a woman's breast. Almost as vulnerable is the child-bearing woman herself, engaged in sweaty, dangerous, painful, devitalizing activity and quite often dying in the attempt. There are no historical records of men dying in the act of impregnation that we know of, although the ancients made this connection poetically. While poetry can be awful, it is not usually lethal! Ovid said "Let me die as I come to the foot of Venus", which makes one wonder if this phrase is the origin of the sexual usage of the word coming.

But even Ovid didn't die, for what men lose in procreation is not their life but their seed. This causes them much anguish, as history attests, and is, I believe, one of the primordial reasons for locking women up in the private realm. We must be protected from adulteration — one wishes that the same resistance to adulteration could be practiced on what we eat as has been practiced for centuries around whose sperms we may be hostess to. But this tremendous historical effort by men to reduce the uncertainty of paternity does not find its way into the history books, just as the reproduction of the species, the material base, after all, of history itself, does not find its way into theories of history. I believe that a recognition of the historical significance of human reproduction has to be restored to its proper place in human history. Reproductive hard labour is, after all, a highly integrative process. It affirms the continuity of the species, the historical nature of human experience and women's special relationship with nature and with time. At the same time, it is the basis on which women have been judged inferior, hopelessly in thrall to biology and therefore eliminated as agents of history, natural tenders of bodies and thus unfit for activities of the mind, carers for life and well-being and therefore unsuited, indeed resistant to the felt male need to kill and be killed for the greater glory of manhood, to torture and destroy in the name of nobility, and to punch and kick and rape women when they feel that male dominant society has not given them the power and the glory and the freedom which it proclaims as their natural right.

•continued page 16



Women at the health conference.

ment and looking after the a sepsis and administration of several procedures which were done on the ward — such as artificial pneumothorax and pneumo-peritoneum. Whether or not this kind of versatility was desirable and productive is a matter for debate, but it provides an excellent example of the way division of labour works over time. These jobs — this job — now requires social workers, assorted technicians, public health nurses, dietary aids, ward clerks, assorted therapists and, of course, schools of nursing separated from hospitals. But my job was never boring and in fact carried considerable authority.

I do not believe that doing just one of these things all the time is ultimately much more satisfying than being responsible for the left hand door handle on an automobile assembly line — though I understand that robots now do this — mechanical ones, I mean, not human ones. And paper-work was a minor part of the task. Whatever the gains in efficiency, much more important socially is the fact that the division of labour keeps workers in line — it facilitates control and creates a division of interest as well as a division of labour, and often hostile clamouring to guard one's tiny space against all comers. This is not, of course, new. Recent feminist scholarship is beginning to show how divisive these strategies are for workers, mostly women in this particular case. Jean Donnison in her excellent book *Midwives and Medical Men*, has documented not only the struggle between midwives and doctors, but the struggle of nurses, led at that time by the formidable Florence, with midwives. A hostility be-

class struggles, workers against bosses. Sexism is, of course, an important factor, as I have just pointed out, but as patients it is the significant dimension of the exploitation of women consumers. Women simply do not come to the market place of the illness industry on equal terms with men. We do not come with a historically verified version of our well-being, which says that 'man' is basically strong, fundamentally in control of himself, rational judge of the state of his mind and body, a reliable witness of his own signs and symptoms. To be sure, if there are men who correspond to that ideological picture, (and in my own 25 years in the industry I didn't come across them) it doesn't do them all that much good unless they can confront the super-experts of the illness industry on equal terms.

## ENTRAPMENT IN MYTH NOT ACCIDENTAL

Women never come to the merchants of the industry on these kinds of terms. The historically verified picture, not only of women's well-being and ill-being, but of female being in general, is *one which women have not created*. We do not control, and have not controlled for centuries, the bottom line process of all creativity, that quintessential creativity embodied in the labour which reproduces the race. We do not yet control who we are, culturally nor intellectually, we do not control who we might become. Female well-being is continuously subjected to an interpretation filtered through a long dominant ideology of male supremacy. To be defined as feeble

private realm to get sicker. Women have to operate in the realm of punitive well-being dragged down by the norm of their own intrinsic feebleness: feebleness of body, of mind and of spirit. This would be a recipe for total disaster, except for two factors. The first of these is that despite the power of the sickness industry there are still many workers who resist the dehumanizing tendencies of the machine, who persist in that old-fashioned way of life called vocation, who understand themselves and their practice as *humanism*. The costs are high, as many of you here know, the results sparse, the facilities minimal, but the norm of female feebleness is contradicted by the immense toughness of those who recognize the real-life situation but refuse to accept it. They, of course, are thought to be even sillier and more feeble than those who do accept it. That is part of the high price.

The second factor is this: strong though the norm of female feebleness is, it is still a feeble norm. For you know, my sisters, as I know: **WE ARE NOT FEEBLE**. We are not feeble in mind nor body nor spirit, we are not defective, castrated entities in a phallogocentric world. We have not arrived at our present position by a historical accident on the part of Nature, our mother. We have arrived at this position because we have no history, or, more correctly, because our history has been forcibly suppressed. Conferences like this, the determination to pursue and create a norm of women's well-being, are efforts to recover our history and create our future. This we must do as women and as agents of history, active makers of history, transformers of reality.

Judy Stanleigh



# Women: The New Soviet Proletariat

by Susan G. Cole

Tatyana Mamonova, the Soviet painter exiled from the Soviet Union for publishing the feminist journal *Almanach*, sat on the platform of the Medical Sciences Building at the University of Toronto. She bent her ear slightly to hear her interpreter whispering translations. At a certain moment she sat back upright, apparently no longer interested in listening to that member of the audience addressing her from the floor. The questioner was a Marxist-Leninist of some odd stripe, one of a vocal few whose noise at the public meeting was far out of proportion to their numbers and who persistently brayed contempt for Mamonova's pacifist position on the conflict in Afghanistan. Instead of cheering the armed struggle of the Afghani revolutionaries, Mamonova had suggested publicly that all parties lay down their guns. This obviously didn't sit well with certain members of the Canadian left, devoted as they are to an ideology developed in a Canadian vacuum.

As is usually the case in public meetings of this kind, and especially when the agenda consists of questions and answers only, the preamble to the question was getting out of hand. Mamonova leaned over to say something to her interpreter who then interrupted the speaker to say that Mamonova had been under the impression that she was the speaker this evening. "Ask the question," someone from the audience called out. After a series of subordinate clauses the question finally emerged: "How" (as in "How dare you call yourself a socialist when you cannot give your wholehearted support to the Afghani revolutionaries fighting imperialist Soviet tanks?")

"Because," replied Mamonova simply, "feminism is humanism."

According to the Soviet news agency, Tass, though, there is no such thing as feminism. The word has never even graced the pages of *Samistad*, the alternative Soviet press. When Mamonova and her sisters began to think about a feminist publication, they did so totally isolated, without the dynamic dialogue, support and media attention that bolstered western feminists in the exhilarating days of the early seventies. Mamonova collected the writings of diverse feminists so that the *Almanach* had a pluralist platform. There were far too few feminists in the USSR for editors to indulge in sectarianism. "Feminism is like a tree", said Mamonova at the public meeting. "It has many branches."

The *Almanach* was published, but not in the traditional sense. It was passed around from woman to woman, and copied — for the most part in longhand. It was a feminist chainletter which offered no financial rewards at the end of the line, only whatever benefits come with consciousness. For Mamonova, distribution of the *Almanach* brought with it a one-way ticket out of the Soviet Union.

She arrived an exile in Vienna where her first encounters with western progressives were not always successful. She was by virtue of her former citizenship and her politics a potentially potent ally. Feminists descended upon her, some to listen, others to extract from her what they could. One "feminist" publishing house wanted all the rights to the *Almanach* and even tried to copyright the phrase "Women's Liberation Movement", an example of capitalist hoarding that shook Mamonova up. She eventually moved to Paris with her husband and son where she now resides. She has more or less adjusted herself to life this side of the iron curtain, though she complained to me in a personal interview that her rent in Paris was exorbitant. The Soviet Union, with all its flaws, still provides cheap housing.

She came to Toronto as part of a tour through North America. Her goal was to forge ties with the international feminist network and to share her writings and those of others that are collected in the *Almanach*. It was obvious as she sat on the platform at U of T that she wasn't in the least

phased by the browbeating she was getting from those lefty throwbacks. Quite the contrary, Tatyana Mamonova, artist that she is, imbued with that special intensity that goes with the will to create, is nevertheless a highly skilled political animal. She arrived in Toronto and a good deal of trust was gone from her eyes. She maintained a disconcerting distance. She speaks more English than she lets on.

The hall in Toronto was jammed with people, most of whom were not there to make political hay. They realized a unique opportunity when they saw one. Here after all was a woman who had seen both sides, who could address the issues of socialism and feminism from a truly informed perspective, who had had some truck with a Soviet dissident movement lionized by the west and who had been thrown out by the Soviet establishment because she was a subversive.

"Lenin felt that socialism would resolve the woman question," she explained through an interpreter in an interview I had with her the day before the public meeting. "But he felt that the most important aspect

well. Indeed that most resilient of institutions, the nuclear family, continues to demonstrate its staying power even in the context of the Russian socialist experiment. In the aftermath of two devastating world wars, Soviet leaders addressed themselves to the task of repopulating and took the easy way out, the familiar way, the one they believed to be the most efficient for the purpose of making babies and maintaining a social order. By giving the nuclear family its blessing, Moscow sent the socialist experiment to its doom. The party leadership failed to come to terms with the practical issue most likely to "resolve the woman question" — that is, the means of reproduction. As a consequence, the family — the institution that has historically kept women in their place in whatever social order is alive and well.

It is alive and well complete with its familiar hierarchy: Dad is at the top. There is a trace of disgust in Mamonova's laugh: "They say women are the weaker sex. Ha. Men are allowed to have all weaknesses." Vodka apparently is one of them, and its consumption invariably leads to violence in

works. It is never socialism per se that is less than what it should be, but its implementers. Mamonova's solution calls for women to take socialism into their own hands, and that sounds like feminism pure and simple to me. Whatever the case, the Soviet experience illustrates that feminism cannot be sacrificed to anything without women suffering the consequences. At best we are forced to conclude, as fleeting as was our collective encounter with Mamonova, that socialism without feminism does not take women far along the road to liberation.

While Soviet women showed signs of nascent consciousness in the early seventies, feminists turned to the dissident movement in the USSR for support. With the exception of vocal approval from writer André Sakharov, the results have been pitiful — and telling. Mamonova, who was at one time the only female member of the dissident group, explained that the dissidents maintained a "phallogocentric structure." Hierarchically inclined, saddled with gargantuan egos and the artistic temperament to boot, the artists had priorities that seemed somewhat skewed.

They would not accept Mamonova's paintings for a collective exhibition. Mamonova's works consist of delicate watercolours, landscapes, still life. They are not "realistic" in the style that suits the politburo, but neither do they have the qualities that would send Soviet dissidents to the barricades. "Our non-conformist painters are really conformists," she shrugs. The substance of the dissident art movement as Mamonova perceives it is an unseemly commitment to the sexist sexual expression. This involves, for example, the right to access to bawdy houses. The right to freedom of speech has been reduced to the right to use profanity, which Mamonova believes exploits women. "You want to know what is their definition of freedom?" Mamonova asks. "Freedom is pornography."

Here, just as with the incidence of violence against women, east meets west again. Dissidents ostensibly struggling against the Soviet social order are bent on replacing it with one that threatens to be as hellish as the one fashioned by the gerontocracy. These brave souls, these freedom fighters celebrated by the west, bear a remarkable resemblance to self-styled sixties radicals who believed that "fuck" — both the use of the word and the activity itself — was revolutionary.

In the inexorable ebb and flow of the Soviet revolution, however, the conditions for a feminist upheaval in the USSR do exist. Women, according to Mamonova, have become the new proletariat. They are a single economic class with shared experiences that they are only beginning to discover. Without the class barriers that pose the greatest obstacle to solidarity among women in the west and which have confounded western feminist strategists, Soviet women have enormous revolutionary potential. They could be the feminist wave of the future.

But their press has been closed down and their leadership exiled. Without both, it is difficult to imagine where the inspiration will come from. At least Mamonova has not succumbed to the decadence this side of the iron curtain. Western propagandists like to think that one taste of capitalist luxury or one encounter with western democracy and a Soviet exile is the west's for life. But it hasn't worked that way for Mamonova.

"Pornography. It's everywhere. It is the first thing I noticed: on billboards, on magazine racks, everywhere. How do you live with this abuse, visible all the time?" We live with it only because we're used to it. We hardly even notice it. Those of us brought up in this meat market we call a culture are almost immune to its oppressiveness. We take it in stride. But like Dorothy who goes over the rainbow, Mamonova finds herself in the Land of Oz, except that the wicked witch is a pimp and the wizard makes snuff movies.

"Freedom. You call this freedom?" Tatyana Mamonova has every intention of returning to the Soviet Union.



Tatyana Mamonova

of the revolution was the working class, and he was more than willing to sacrifice feminism to socialist goals." What Lenin could not predict was that war and famine would weaken the socialist revolution. "Out of the bloodied body grew the parasite Stalinism and a new bourgeoisie. Women have been waiting sixty years for the woman question to be resolved."

The question that has been plaguing feminists, especially those who have made a point of trying to reconcile socialism with feminism, is whether the "sacrifice" of feminism to socialism has been worth it, particularly for women. Compelled to be members of the labour force lest they be accused themselves of parasitism, women in the USSR work outside the home. And so they are workers: score one for socialism. But they are not equal members of the work force. Women have recently been barred from jobs in heavy industry and through a process of a new-fangled "division of labour" have been consigned to menial jobs, clerking and janitorial. The increase in the number of female medical doctors in the USSR has been touted by Soviet apologists as the symbol of real advancement. But these women see 40 to 50 patients a day in clinics that resemble factories more than health care facilities. And the factory has a foreman, a male who administers the clinic and has little contact with patients. In the meantime, with women forming an ever increasing percentage of medical professionals, the status of doctors has plummeted.

The janitors in the public sector, women do all the domestic labour in the home as

the home. Here is one of the crucial links among women around the world. It doesn't matter whether we are behind the iron curtain or part of the capitalist machine, women get beaten. Wife battery is an epidemic in the Soviet Union.

But there are promising developments that suggest that even if the family is the toughest fibre of the social fabric, that fabric is beginning to fray. There really is no women's movement in the USSR. But there is divorce. Naturally statistics are not readily available. In fact, Mamonova steers clear of statistics, insisting that since they come from Tass they are of little use anyway. But she knows that there are rumblings back in her country. "Even though consciousness is not high, divorce is a manifestation of women's personal, individual protest. Divorce is so widespread, it is a phenomenon."

While it is fairly obvious that women have not made the greatest possible gains in the Soviet Union, Mamonova is still convinced that socialism can resolve the woman question. The problem, she says, is that there is no socialism in the USSR. The government is not working class or leftist. It is rightist, she claims, operating by a gerontocracy that is out of touch with the Soviet people. It was only when she spoke of this that she showed great signs of "faith" rather than of practical political sense. It is a conundrum to be sure. If a socialist experiment fails, then it is not really "socialist." The moment the socialist revolution goes sour it is not the fault of the objectives but of some "parasite," as Mamonova called Stalin, who put a wrench in the

Gail Geitner



# I'm in the Mood for Sexual Revolution

by Joanne Kates

Erotic desire is the most delightful of all the forces that drive human beings. Making love is the most intimate thing that two people can do together, it can be sweet and strong and slow. It can engage two minds and bodies in complete congress. Wonderful sex engages the heart and the soul as well as the body and takes them on a magic carpet ride to places that cannot be reached by any other method. You know you've had it from the immense feeling of well-being, like waves on a hot beach. None of this erotic transport is possible when you wear your mask to bed, when you leave your heart and mind outside the bedroom because it's against the rules to show who you really are. Sex is hot, anonymity is cool, and when you mix them, what you get is lukewarm.

Welcome to the (hetero)Sexual Revolution! We know it's here because we read about it in the paper (not this paper). In his 1980 bestseller *Thy Neighbour's Wife* Gay Talese said: "This nation...is being gradually overtaken by a silent revolution of the senses, a departure from conventionality. And even within the middle class, where I'm concentrating my research, there is now an ever-increasing tolerance for sexual expression..." Talese spent nine lascivious years researching his book on sex. With a six-figure advance from Doubleday, he traversed America and Europe buying sex directly, in massage parlours (that was his favourite) and indirectly, through his (male) author's access to private orgy retreats in California. He got all the sex he wanted while his wife stayed home and raised their two daughters, and the story he wrote is very much determined by the way he did his research.

Talese is an extreme example of the pundits who have been touting the Sexual Revolution, but there is no qualitative difference between him and his less privileged brothers. From the men who bring us the daily cheesecake photos in the *Toronto Sun*, to *Playboy* to Gay Talese, the message is the same: Hurrah fellas, jump on! It's the Sexual Revolution. Women have been "liberated" to flop on our backs at the slightest provocation, rotate our pelvises perfectly for any man who asks, and act as if we enjoy it.

Before the late sixties and the so-called Sexual Revolution, the pressure was on women to be chaste and virginal, and now the pressure is on women to put out. It's a simple reversal of pressure, and women who do not give in to the pressure to put out are labelled frigid or uptight, and they are scorned. Catch-22 is that in spite of the nominal Sexual Revolution, the double standard is alive and well in heterosexual relations. Women who say no to casual sex are called cold and they get rejected, but women who say yes to casual sex get rejected afterwards for being too easy. As one man I interviewed said: "Sure I'd go to bed with almost anybody I met in a singles bar, but I wouldn't ask for her number in the morning. I don't want to go out with anybody who's that easy. If she was that easy with me, she'd probably be that easy with other guys too." The good girl/bad girl stereotype lives on: The "bad girl" gets a reputation as an easy lay and she's despised; the "good girl" is the one they marry and then if they're successful (à la Gay Talese) they leave her at home with the kids and go out and play around with the "bad girls."

This is not to imply that casual sex is bad and the only good sex is that which occurs inside the confines of a long term and committed relationship. That is not true. Sex between friends who are also lovers has all the potential to be splendid, but most casual heterosexual encounters probably don't occur between friends. Why? Because only equals can be friends, and the relations of power between men and women are—so skewed that it's hard for a man to be any more to us than what the French writer Colette called "dear enemy." Sex and power are inextricably linked; if one person has power over another, it's impossible to keep that power relation out of the bedroom. The source of that male power over women lies in all the social relations between us. By

and large they are the bosses and we are the employees; they are the doctors, we are the nurses and the patients. In the realm of production the wage gap between men and women in Canada is growing, and unemployment for women is substantially higher than unemployment for men.

In the realm of personal life too, women are subordinate to men: in the family, father earns the most money (and power) and tradition says father knows best. Men tend to rule the domestic roost, and this is proven by the fact that most women still have to work a double day of labour: first in the office or the factory and then at home. In the bedroom that power differential still translates into women's silences about our sexuality. The sexual arrangements between men and women are no different from any other arrangements: man proposes, woman waits and hopes that something to her taste will come along. If she protests, she's likely to be rewarded with accusations of being a ball-breaker.

In the area of sexuality, the relations of power between men and women are particularly acute, exacerbated by men's fear of female sexuality, which they imagine is so dangerously powerful that it will variously swallow them up, cut off their penis with a blunt instrument or with the teeth they imagine to be hiding in the vagina. The fear of female sexuality leads men to punish women whenever our sexuality is showing. How do they do that? The vitriolic reviews of Judy Chicago's art exhibit *The Dinner Party* for its images of vaginas; the attacks on our right to abortions; male managers' choices to leave birth control technology where it is and let women be physically damaged by contraceptives like the Pill and the IUD; firing pregnant women, the only people in society who bear the visible evidence of their sexual activity; firing lesbians and taking away their children; clitoridectomy (surgical removal of the clitoris) in some cultures.

In this ersatz Sexual Revolution, women are still not permitted to be sexual in our own right. We are permitted to have more frequent sexual encounters that we were in the 50's, but we get punished for doing it too much. We are still trained to use sex as a necessary tool with which to snare a man. We've been schooled from girlhood in the feminine art of how to look and act in order to tempt men, in the interests of getting them to meet us at the altar. In doing so, all a woman's real sexual power must be relinquished. Sexual power is the power to determine a sexual situation in co-operation with your companion, it is the power to make love fully, to engage yourself at all levels, to get what you need in order to be fully present, and women are not generally allowed to do that with men, particularly not if they have to use their sex as a tool to get something else. Furthermore, she has to relinquish her sexual desire, because it gets in the way of sexual teasing. She has to look sexy, smell sexy, dance sexy and talk sexy, but at certain carefully calculated moments she also has to turn off and play hard to get in order to keep him wanting more. Because sexual desire is no mechanical impulse, it cannot be turned on and off like a tap. You can fake the desire, but it goes into hiding. Think back to all the women you've seen whose sexuality is being publicly used: hookers on the street; *Playboy* centrefolds; strippers; movie stars wearing décolleté on the cover of *People* magazine; the women dancing half nude in the movie *All That Jazz*. Do they look sexually aroused?

*The Hite Report* asked 1664 women if they ever fake orgasms, and 1093 of them answered yes. Why? Because the rules of the Sexual Revolution dictate that we're supposed to have orgasm after orgasm, that if we were really women, we'd be having multiple orgasms. The New Woman (a media creation and the female counterpart of the Playboy Man) is supposed to come like crazy, and if she doesn't, she must crack the fragile male ego by letting him know that he didn't do what she needed him to do. The majority of women in *The Hite Report* said that casual lovers did not usually touch their clitoris. Masters and Johnson's

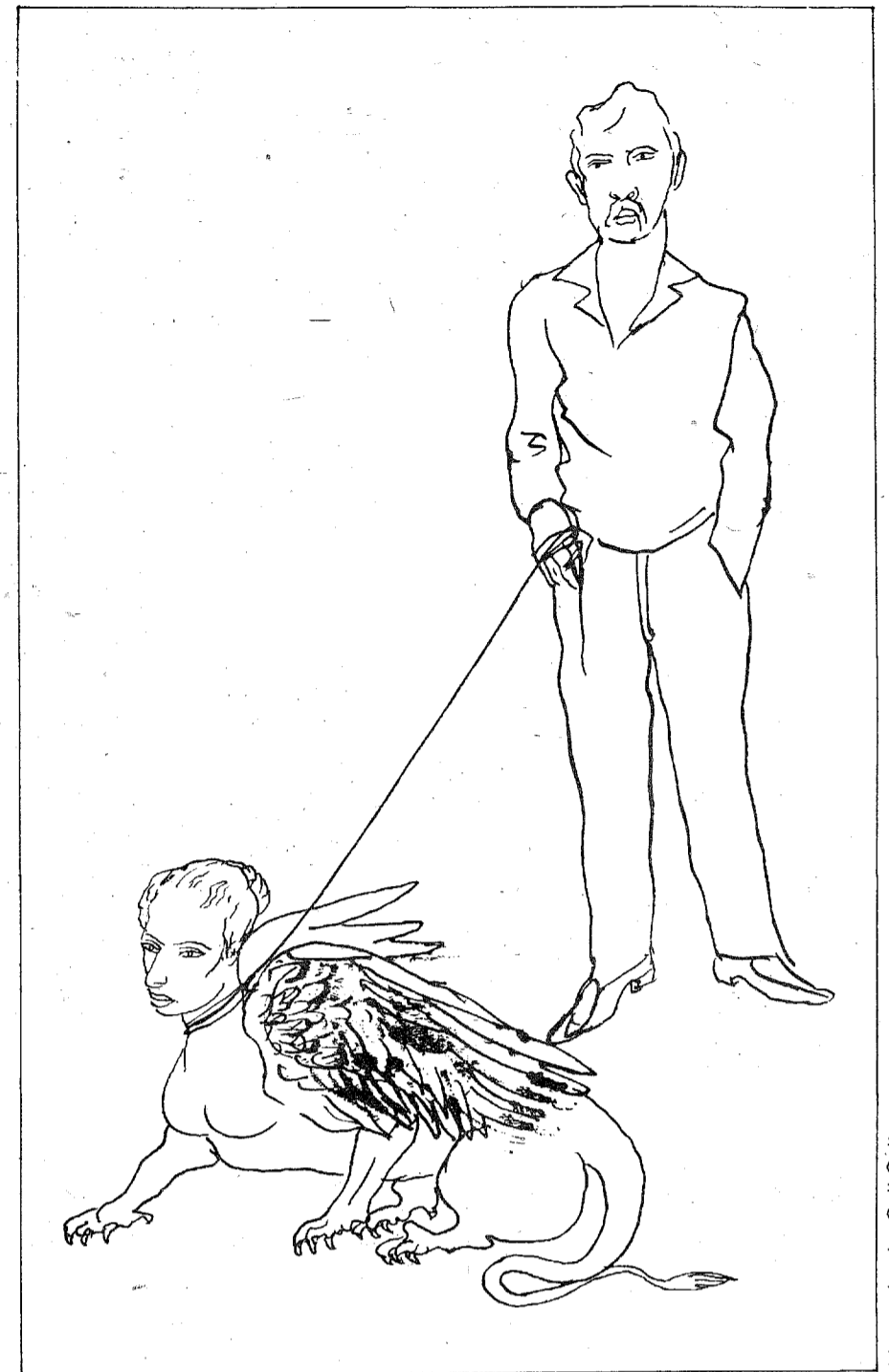


Illustration by Gail Geltner

definitive study, *Human Sexual Response*, proved that most women need direct clitoral stimulation in order to have orgasms; they're not getting it in casual sex with men.

What is strange and terrifying is the fact that so many men are blissfully unaware that the women they go to bed with are not having orgasms. I interviewed about 25 single men and asked them if their lovers were having orgasms. They all said yes. I then asked whether these orgasms were the result of direct clitoral stimulation or just intercourse, and the majority answered it was just intercourse. They all said they performed so well it made women come.

This view is shared by the majority of the 4,000 men surveyed in *Beyond the Male Myth*, a 1977 US sexual survey book: "Our study shows that nearly one third of men brought their partners to orgasm through intercourse nearly every time, and more than half succeeded 60 per cent of the time." The authors, lacking electrodes and a laboratory, relied on the men's reports of what was happening in their bedrooms. They got the same answers I got because the men did not want to admit, either to themselves or to anyone else, that they had failed in the main task of the modern male stud. Their self-deception is of course facilitated by the utter lack of communication between women and men.

The vicious circle is that women are afraid they'll get rejected by men if they don't stroke the male ego by seeming to erupt like Mount Vesuvius from his ministrations, so they fake orgasms. The men then have a good excuse not to bother figuring out that it's not working, so they continue to bang away like a piston on a Chevrolet. She then gets more disappointed, and her hopelessness about ever having a satisfying sexual encounter is intensified and she is therefore even less likely to take the risk of stating what she really wants.

The alienating encounters of the Sexual Revolution are more socially useful than they appear at first glance. In much the same way as alcohol and drugs, they function as a pressure release valve for the woes of the repressive social system. The encounters look so free, but in fact they are anything but free.

Herbert Marcuse, the radical German philosopher, married psychoanalysis, which is the study of individuals, to the study of social life in capitalism; he used psycho-

analysis to analyze exactly how the system gets under our skins so that we play along with it. Marcuse had a particular interest in sexual repression, and in the modern mores that masquerades as sexual freedom but in reality results in more repression of what's alive and erotic in human beings. He theorized that there are two kinds of repression: Basic and surplus.

Basic repression is the repression that Freud identified in the training that all children go through in order to become "civilized." It includes learning to repress urges to defecate on the living room floor and write on the walls and chew on electric wires; these are the socially necessary repressions in virtually any political system, and children are taught to sublimate those anti-social desires into activities like finger-painting and useful work. Those are the kinds of repressions and sublimations that society needs in order that we may live together in relative harmony. But Freud failed to understand a whole other layer of repression, the surplus repression which is not necessary for human beings to become human, but which is necessary to train us to fit into the system of domination in which we live.

Surplus repression is the repression of the power and the vitality and the sensuality present in all children that would make them too rebellious to be useful if it persisted. It is surplus repression that keeps women acquiescing in our oppression. We have been trained through surplus repression to agree to be dominated by men, to let them keep the power. Men too have been diminished by surplus repression. When children are taught to be quietly obedient in school and not argue with the teacher, that's surplus repression. Their high spirits and their power are being repressed so they'll learn to be quiet and obedient workers. When little children are caught "playing doctor" and are punished for it, that's surplus repression: their sexual curiosity is being repressed in order to teach them that their bodies are not to be freely enjoyed, so they will settle down in chaste, monogamous marriages and go to work every morning and raise quiet children, instead of having sexual adventures that keep them out of the family and up half the night. Basic repression makes us human; surplus repression makes us obedient.

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by **Ottie Lockey**

*"The dilemma of the sexual abuse of children has provided a system of foolproof emotional blackmail: if the victim incriminates the abuser, she also incriminates herself. The sexual abuse of the child is therefore the best kept secret in the world." — Florence Rush, *The Best Kept Secret*.*

Suddenly, everyone's interested in incest. In the last two years Toronto reporters have presented newspaper features and TV special reports, social workers have attended special incest conferences and workshops, the YWCA offers a group for incest survivors, and bookstores are stocked with new books about incest: Charlotte Vale Allen's *Daddy's Girl* (reviewed in *Broadside*, Vol. 2, no. 5), Florence Rush's *The Best Kept Secret* and Robin Fox's *The Red Lamp of Incest* to mention just a few. The Toronto scene reflects a North American fascination with the previously taboo topic. Psychotherapists, sociologists, anthropologists and writers are offering seminars, lecture tours, and publicizing their perspectives on what incest is about.

According to the Oxford American Dictionary (1980), incest is: "sexual intercourse between people regarded as too closely related to marry each other." But marriage has nothing to do with it, and incest is shorthand for incestuous assault, which isn't limited to intercourse. Incestuous assault includes oral sex, fondling and any other act performed on a child with the intent of giving sexual pleasure to the adult. In Canada, intercourse is the only sexual act for which there is a legal penalty when it occurs between blood relations of a certain degree. The legal focus on intercourse presents several problems similar to that faced by rape victims including a court procedure which can be devastating for the victim.

Several comprehensive studies (see bibliography) confirm that the most common form of incest in North America is between female children and male heterosexual adults. The average age of a sexually exploited girl is eleven.

Just as feminists have directed our attention towards rape and battering and have struggled to create Rape Relief Centres and Transition Houses throughout Canada, we must now work together to find ways of helping victims of incestuous assault.

A treatment program for incest victims and their families was founded over ten years ago in Santa Clara County, California. Known as the Giarretto Child Abuse Treatment Program, it is used in 50 cities throughout the United States. Henri and Anna Giarretto presented their treatment model in Toronto at a workshop for professionals in February 1981. In brief, this is the way the Giarretto program operates:

1. report of incest
2. investigation by police
3. father gets choice: court or therapy
4. self-help groups contact all family members; there are separate groups for mothers, fathers, and children.
5. counselling in this order: individual, for each family member, mother/daughter, mother/father, then the whole family

The Giarretto program can operate comprehensively because fathers agree to participate in order to avoid going to court, the police, courts, hospitals and child protection workers co-operate; and the schools offer preventative programs. The increase in numbers of families in treatment in Santa Clara makes it clear that public awareness of the availability of help will dramatically increase the numbers of reported cases. According to the Giarrettos, a measure of the program's success is the fact that the divorce rate of families in treatment is only 10% compared to a national rate of 50%. Whether the survival of the family is an adequate measure of success is a moot point from a feminist perspective.

A Toronto proponent of the family treatment approach is Joyce Weinburg, who leads a survivor's incest group at York Finch Hospital. In her March workshop on 'Father/Daughter incest' at Queen Street Mental Health Centre, Weinburg refused to discuss the effects of sex role expectations in incest situations. She is committed to a narrow therapeutic model which isolates the 'problem family' from the social environment and ignores the power imbalance between male and female, adult and child.

I have emphasized family treatment because Toronto and other Canadian cities are gearing up to produce a Canadian version. In Toronto, a planning group including Metro Children's Aid, Catholic Children's Aid and the Family Court Clinic are about to submit an incest treatment proposal to Metro Chairman Paul Godfrey's Committee on Child Abuse. The intent of this group, says Metro Children's Aid Director Doug Barr, is to coordinate the efforts of Children's Aid workers and the courts in a Giarretto-like approach. Women's services such as the Toronto Rape Crisis Centre or the Women's Counselling Referral & Education Centre (WCREC) have not been asked to participate in this planning.

Unfortunately, the very groups involved in establishing the new incest treatment program are the least desirable choices. The Children's Aid society is a very traditional institution which is responsible for the protection of children from sexual abuse. The name of the institution varies — in some provinces it is called Family and Children's Services — but its mandate is the same. In Ontario a highly touted law requires any adult who knows that a child is abused to report the situation to the Children's Aid Society. If Toronto is any example, CAS workers have no idea what to do.

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# Incest: Sec



Cast and crew prepare for the taping of 'Equal Time in Equal Space.'

## INCEST VIDEO COMING TO TORONTO Equal Time In Equal Space

Father-daughter or brother-sister incest has not been a topic of concern in the mainstream films or broadcast television. The subject has remained mysteriously taboo in an era of "hard-hitting" journalistic drama, where everything else done to women seems permissible. There is a conspiracy of silence about incest that made it possible for Francis Mankiewicz to get away with having a little girl lie about sexual assault in *Les Bons Débarras* and subsequently sweep Canada's Genie Awards with a film which viciously distorts the reality of sexual assault. There is a conspiracy of silence which invalidates the feelings and fears of every woman who has endured such assault in shame, afraid of more than the experience itself, afraid of being disbelieved, blamed, stigmatized, afraid with good reason.

Described by one of its makers as "a project that gave women a voice to the silence that has been screaming inside us for too long," *Equal Time in Equal Space* is a giant step for womankind (very much less costly than the walk on the

moon by US astrotoddlers, very much more imaginatively conceived and executed). In this six-monitor video installation about incest, the audience sits in and around a circle which includes the TV screens. On each of the screens is a woman's face, telling her story, or listening as another woman speaks. The result is the dramatic recreation of a consciousness-raising session, based on ten weeks of actual CR sessions from which the participants created the material for the tapes. Each incest survivor who appears on screen worked with a "buddy," a camerawoman who shared with her the creative process whereby survivors became performers.

*Recounting, retelling, speaking our stories of incest and sexual abuse, I was enraged by our pain, amazed at our strength, and empowered by our commitment to each other and to the project and its vision. — Geraldine Hanon, camerawoman.*

## Incest Survivor Group

by **Judith Golden**

The women enter the room, slowly and cautiously. They have decided to be members of the Incest Survivor Group that I lead three times a year, at the YWCA in Toronto. I am convinced that one of the hardest secrets to tell is the secret of incest. In not telling their secret, the women are prey to feelings of intense alienation, guilt, shame, lack of trust and rage against men and sometimes other women. None of these feelings are congruent with being able to sit down in a group of women and talk about incest experiences. And yet, although nervously, they have plucked up incredible courage to be part of the Incest Survivors Group.

In the first of seven sessions, the women draw up an agenda of topics that they want to discuss. There is an immediate feeling of relief which surges through the group as issues are identified by others that women thought only applied to them, individually. Some topics are: "How can

we help our sisters?" "What do we do with our anger?" "How can we relate to men, now, and to women?" "How do we deal with parental denial?" "Why do mothers and fathers do what they do?" "Am I to blame because I didn't stop it?"

Most women can expect to re-experience some feelings that have been dormant for years or expect new ones, with a different perspective. For all the women there can be considerable pain and reliving of old memories and experiencing memories. But the feelings seem to lift slowly. Many of the women go on to meet with either individual therapists or continue in their group after the seven sessions. For few of the members this is the last step. The most important factor seems to be that finally the conspiracy of silence is broken.

As for me, I have never before experienced the electricity



# rets All in the Family

## A Personal Account

by Alicia Dowling

Frightened, oh you bet your life I'm frightened to sit down and start this article. It means opening up a whole tender area for me that I would like to think I've dealt with. I am a twenty-eight year old nurse and I was involved in an incestuous relationship with my father for approximately 3 years — from the time I was eleven to fourteen years old. I am the oldest of five children in a middle-class blue collar family. Since my mother worked full-time outside our home, I assumed a great deal of the 'mothering' responsibility. I cooked, did laundry, cleaned and generally took care of my younger brothers and sisters and Daddy. Though occasional terrifying arguments punctuated my childhood, I remember it primarily as a warm, loving environment.

Always "Daddy's girl," I was accustomed to being physically close to my father as well. So it was not unusual one morning after my mother had gone out, for me to make my way downstairs to the living room where my parents slept and cuddle up to my father. This morning I sensed something different however; his voice took on a muffled, husky tone while he pulled me closer to him.

I wondered what the hard object was that seemed to be pressing into my buttocks but tried to ignore it and be comforted by Daddy's words: he was "so glad to have his little girl with him." As his hands ran over my body caressing me, I began to relax and believe that surely whatever Daddy was doing to me must be all right because he would always protect me and allow no one to harm me. This was the first of many times I was to repeat this litany during the next three years. I struggled to believe that Daddy was protecting me.

Early in the relationship I had no idea what label to attach to what was happening between Daddy and me. I knew instinctively however that this was a secret. I considered telling my mother many times, but realizing that I would break up the family made it impossible for me to act.

I knew that Daddy's touch on my body felt good but I was frightened by his glazed eyes, husky voice, huge erection and his demands that I touch him. Although vaginal intercourse was not a part of our relationship, I participated in masturbation, fellation, and anal intercourse. I rarely needed to be physically forced; emotional blackmail was usually enough since I wanted to make Daddy happy.

As I grew older and sex became a topic of for discussion with my friends, I realized that there was something terribly wrong with what was happening between Daddy and me. I heard stories about women who asked for rape, and I decided that I must be responsible for this sinful relationship. I had seduced my own father! By this time Daddy and I had established a pattern. After he masturbated me to orgasm, feeling a mixture of guilt and pleasure, I would do whatever he wanted and get away as quickly as possible.

In order to do the things he asked, it was necessary to distance myself and blur the experience. It was an instinctive form of defence at which I became very adept. The ease with which I blur reality has haunted me for years.

The pain of the relationship eventually overshadowed the pleasure and I refused to be a partner for him again. But my guilt was so profound that I kept the secret for another five years. Although I had relationships with boys my own age I couldn't integrate sex into those relationships. I felt that sex was the only thing I was good for, but when approached I couldn't respond sexually. The boys called me a "cockteaser".

I told my boyfriend the secret I carried when I was nineteen. I confessed to a crime and I couldn't believe him when he insisted that it wasn't my fault.

Bringing all these long suppressed feelings back to consciousness was like opening a floodgate. I felt responsible for a relationship which contravened one of society's strictest taboos. In my own eyes I was something lower than a piece of shit and I began to live a lifestyle consistent with this self-image.

In my job as a cocktail waitress it was easy to find men who wanted one-time-only sex with a young woman. Imagine how it feels to crawl out of bed with someone whose name you can't recall and try to remember where you are and how to get home. This promiscuity was a way of punishing myself for the sexual pleasure I had experienced with Daddy. I also overdosed on pills but without satisfaction: part of me didn't want to die.

Recovery was a long slow process. I approached three male psychiatrists — each one more interested in the details of the physical acts than in my feelings of worthlessness and pain.

At this time I began to understand that I was a victim. The extent of my anger and rage at my father frightened me. But on the outside I was successful in my work, attractive, intelligent and nurturing. I had never felt more totally alone in my life.

I met and married a gentle, sensitive man whom I felt would protect a weak frightened person like me. He was

outraged at what my father had done but my growing anger at Daddy expanded to include my husband as well. We had many difficulties in the early days of our marriage, difficulties related to my inability to trust anyone lest that trust be betrayed again.

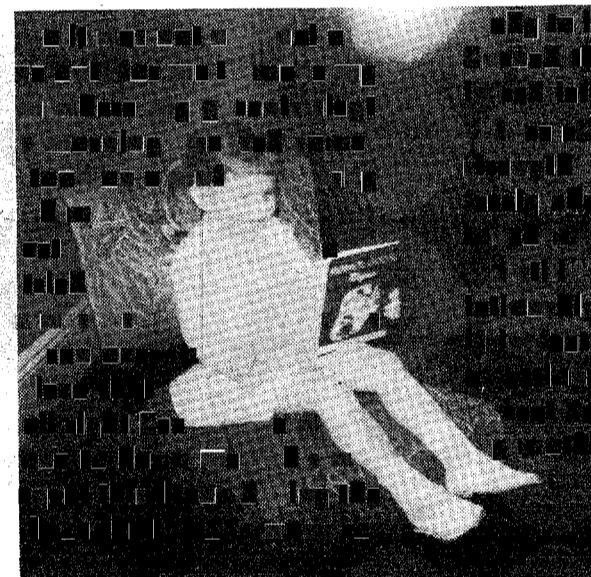
I began to talk with other women, hoping to find someone who understood my anger and could support my feelings. I found a friend whose father had abused her sexually. Something inside my cracked as I heard my fears and feelings in some other daughter's words. I wept. I was not alone any longer.

Still, my energy was spent in containing the rage that now threatened to erupt at any moment. I found a therapist who I could work with. At last I had a safe place to allow the rage to surface. I fought with my shame, pain and most of all, my hatred of Daddy.

With the help of the therapist I swore and screamed and hit out, telling my father my pain and anger. It was not important that he hear those words, rather that I articulate my child experience of hurt and bewilderment. Then I felt ready to let go some of the burdens of the past. I made lists, burned them and cried. Later I made a list of new feelings in red letters, feelings that I wanted to celebrate.

I celebrated with the therapist my belief in my own strength, worth and beauty. My marriage has become a freely chosen partnership. And this summer I was able to touch my father and tell him I still care for him.

I still don't know if my mother was ever aware of our relationship. I'm past wondering why she didn't protect me, if in fact she knew. She is and always has been a loving, affectionate and supportive parent. I choose to believe that a great deal of my survivor's strength is an inheritance from my mother.



Alicia Dowling, aged 4.

Deborah Rountry

Performers and camerawomen picked each other as buddies to support each other in this process and to develop a connection that would permit the camera to be primarily a recording tool, rather than an examining eye. — Nancy Angelo, director.

When *Equal Time in Equal Space* opened in Los Angeles in 1980 it was received within the framework of community support created by the Incest Awareness Project, the work of Adriadne: A Social Art Network. The project set up the first public dialogue on incest in Los Angeles, the first national art exhibition in the US about incest survivors, and the first feminist media campaign to educate the public about incest, coining the term "incest survivor."

*Equal Time in Equal Space* will be presented in Toronto in October, 1981, by WCREC (Women's Counselling, Referral and Education Centre), A Space, and University College Playhouse. The director will be present to facilitate discussion after each screening of the tapes. — B.H.M.

that pulses through the group from week to week as women began to confront their feelings, their memories, their molestors and other family members. The change is rapid, and builds confidence that further work will bring more results. I see the women change, before my eyes, from victims, to women with power. The transition is crucial to their growth. And I am grateful to the women who have allowed me to be part of the process.

Judith Golden is a Toronto therapist who conducts a private practice in couple, sexual and individual therapy. In working with over 100 women in sexual therapy groups, she became aware of the high incidence of incest in sexual dysfunctions. This sparked an interest in possible treatment modalities for women with incest experiences and hence the innovation of groups for incest survivors.

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# ARTS

## Musings on the Moral Majority

by Barbara Halpern Martineau

When you think about it, January is a strangely arbitrary choice for the year's beginning. April makes much more sense, with its buds and new life stirring. That March should be the month of looking back, awarding honors to films well made and well received, before the planning of April and May, the warm weather filming, the fall of editing and post-production, with release coming to cheer the dark days of mid-winter, makes sense, more than most things make sense in these times of media mendacity and global dis-ease. It's the choice of awards by the pundits (and the choice of pundits) which seems odd to the cynical feminist film watcher — no, odd isn't the word — it is entirely consistent with the politics of the film industry and the social hierarchy it faithfully serves that *Ordinary People* should have swept the Oscars this year, that *9 to 5* and *The Incredible Shrinking Woman* got one minor award each, that Bo Syberberg's *Our Hitler*, one of the major film events of 1980, went unmentioned, as did *My Brilliant Career* and Kevin Brownlow's re-issue of Abel Gance's *Napoleon*.

From a Martian perspective, say from the point of view of a Martian media freak, the following stories might make an interesting comment, placed in juxtaposition, on the peculiar ways of this culture in which the pale-faced creatures with vulnerable pelvic protruberances hold such immense power over creatures with dark, sallow or copper faces and/or protected genitalia.

There is a film about middling-rich white Protestant Americans which shows the problems visited upon a decent man and his sensitive son by a neurotic, selfish, shallow wife/mother, and ends with the banishment of the woman from the scene of father and son tenderly becoming reunited as they sat on the back steps of their huge white clapboard house, blessed by the hovering presence of the Holy Ghost in the form of a paternal Jewish shrink who enlightened both father and son about the evil squatting in their midst. This film, which reinforces every stereotype of white male supremacy and could serve as a rallying force for the Moral Majority, won four Oscars and was hailed as a sensitive, insightful look into "family conflict." The director, Robert Redford, remarked while accepting his trophy that the film was about his "two favorite subjects: feelings and relationships." Not a whisper about "male lib," backlash, chauvinism; god forbid sexism should be mentioned at the bare-bosomed Academy.

*Ordinary People* was not labelled as a male, white, upper-middle-class film with misogynistic attitudes — but try to imagine the response to a film about a strong sensitive mother and her talented but confused daughter, finally uniting to banish an overbearing husband/father from their suburban bungalow. At the end, with neither Alan Bates nor Kris Kristofferson in sight, they sit on the porch eating watermelon and seeing who can spit the seeds farther. Imagine the media being content to let that film pass as being about "family conflict," or "feelings or relationships." The harassed female director would constantly be asked to defend her treatment of men, and to account for their final absence.

Ever try communicating with a doctor... a lawyer... a computer?



Mariette Hartley and Sarah Stevens in 'Improper Channels.'

Implicit in the praise of *Ordinary People* has been an assumption that somehow this film "tells the truth." The title reeks of realism. One of our culture's many profound confusions has to do with the relationship between "truth" and "facts." Realistic films are constantly being defended on the grounds that such things really happen, without recognition of the importance of sifting freak occurrences from daily realities, or of the crucial role played by interpretation.

Another story has to do, not with film, but with a newspaper article written by a young black woman for the *Washington Post*. This article was about heroin addiction in Washington, D.C., and focussed on the case of an 8-year-old heroin addict who was given his daily shot by his mother's boyfriend, and who wanted to be a dealer when he grew up. The article won a Pulitzer Prize for its author, then the scandal broke. There was no eight-year-old subject — the story was a "composite," according to the author, who "cracked" after "eleven hours of conversations with senior editors" (CBC radio news). What's more, her credentials were faked — she hadn't graduated with honors from a prestigious women's college, as she'd claimed in her resumé — she had only attended for one year. The integrity of the *Post*, the unimpeachable claim to objectivity, "all the facts," the foundation of American journalism had been opened to question. Of course the young woman resigned in disgrace and returned the prize money. Justice was appeased.

I couldn't help wondering, if I were a young black journalist working for the Man, wouldn't I have done precisely the same thing, as effectively as I knew how? Hoping to bring the most pressing problem in my community to public notice, without exploiting or exposing individuals, especially children and their families, I would create a "composite" case, using the most touching and compelling details I could weave together from my experience. Why call it reportage? Because I work for a newspaper, and that's what they publish. Besides, who'd pay attention to a short story on such a subject, who would use it for a feature film? This issue needs action now. Knowing perfectly well the biases of my bosses, I would never dream of confiding in them, for the same reason that I, like so many other aspiring young people, exaggerated my "qualifications." Their standards are not mine, their "truth" is different from mine — but I must speak their language if I am to make myself heard.

At a Toronto forum on censorship a few months ago, Mary Brown of the Ontario Censor Board spoke with emotion of her commitment to "preserve community standards of decency." This would be admirable in a society where there were such standards, but the most obvious flaw in her statement is its total lack of relation to any contemporary reality. Searching for a movie I could take my nine-year-old son to see over Easter weekend I discovered that *Excalibur*, *Fame* and *The Stunt Man* are now "restricted to persons 18 years of age and over." The usual basis for such restriction in Ontario is the explicit depiction of sexual activity, a subject of immense natural interest to my son, one I have no objection to him watching, thinking about, exploring, provided it is free from violence or coercion of any kind. What I do object to him seeing is the glorification of violence, the subtle and blatant stereotyping of women, racial minorities, gays, anyone "Other," which leads to more violence. Such films slip easily past the inattentive eyes of Mary Brown and her cohorts, tuned as they are to the evils of Sex.

So we went to see *Star Wars* Saturday night, and once again watched the fathers and sons doing glorious hi-tech battle. Sunday night, starved for more humane and local content, I took him to *Improper Channels*, intrigued by the Toronto Star review which compared this Canadian film to *9 to 5*, suspicious of the casual remark by the reviewer that this is a comedy about a mistaken case of child abuse. A mistaken case of pseudo-liberal fascism is more to the point. Please don't waste your time, money or political indignation on this shoddy piece of sexist, racist garbage masquerading as liberal humanism. But, if it wins any awards next year, we should be ready to fight back. I propose in advance that *Improper Channels* be awarded the special *Ordinary People* award for best epitomizing the confusion and contradictions of the Moral Majority — the Happy Families trophy, symbolized by a rubber statuette of Donald Duck. Just to satisfy any lingering curiosity which might tempt you to see this film, it is about an ordinary white upper-middle-class professional couple on the brink of divorce, who are reunited when a meddling, fat, suspiciously Semitic female social worker mistakenly assumes that the couple's five-year-old daughter is being abused. By the end of the film bureaucracy has been overthrown, Social Welfare is on the run, and the right to privacy of the perfect nuclear family in their gleaming station wagon is solidified. Why, they even have two children now, a boy as well as a girl. Although Mum has been shown tinkering competently with her car to forestall the outraged cries of sexism they must have known they were courting, the film firmly establishes Dad as the ingenious hero who rescues the little family from the terrors of the state.

Only a few days before we saw the film, the *Globe & Mail* ran a front-page article on the government report on child abuse in Canada — a report which various officials have attempted to keep from public attention — which documents the increase of child abuse in all economic and social classes. Sure, computers and Social Welfare are tools of oppression — but the solution, I think, in disrespectful opposition to the Moral Majority, is not a return to dead values of the old patriarchy. However, letting our children see and examine alternatives, exposing to them the way movies and TV systematically distort reality, is getting more and more difficult, as so-called "community standards of decency" are imposed from above. As buds burst and new green explodes, the time is ripe to fight back. We could start by uniting the various groups in Ontario against the Censor Board, and simultaneously draw public attention to offensive films by picketing and boycotting. Across the country we could require the Moral Majority to look more closely at their own contradictions — they just might turn out to be a collection of minorities like the rest of us.

### Amsterdam International Conference

At the April 14 Toronto meeting of Women in Film and Video, names of proposed delegates to the Amsterdam International Conference in late May were selected to be forwarded with a funding application. Another meeting will be called for mid-May to plan representation to the conference. For further information call Janis Lundman, LIFT, 593-1808.



# Joyce Wieland: She Speaks in Colours



Deena Rasky

Interview by Deena Rasky and Barbara Halpern Martineau

The question "Who is Joyce Wieland?" usually elicits responses that range from — 'She used to make quilts, didn't she?' to 'She made that feature film *A Far Shore* a few years ago' to 'Her work is at the Spadina Subway Station.'

Her press release material whimsically reminds you that her *Reason Over Passion* quilt is the only Canadian artwork to be destroyed by a living Canadian (Margaret Trudeau) in a marital squabble. Her early underground films from the 60's have been described as "sometimes recalling Manet ... and getting the deep ovular splendor of a Carravaggio."

On exhibition last month at the Isaacs Gallery in Toronto, was her most recent work, over 30 coloured drawings themed 'The Bloom of Matter'. Upon entering the gallery, the senses were enticed by the aroma of hyacinths and the doorway was converted into an arbour of leaves and pussy willows. There were chairs in the centre of the room and a carpet-covered table with copies of her 1971 National Gallery book 'True Patriot Love' alongside elaborately framed drawings. The walls had been freshly painted a pale pink. This was no ordinary exhibition.

This *Broadside* interview started by asking Joyce Wieland how she got the idea for this wonderful gallery transformation ...

• • •

**Joyce Wieland:** I wanted it to be similar to those pictures of people in the 1880's or so. I went to the studio of Delacroix and I wanted the feeling of one of these old studios. The Grange (in Toronto) used to be like that when I was a kid. Years ago there was a big carpet and a big table where you could sit down. It really gave a focus to the room. The arrangements at the Isaacs Gallery were not exactly what I wanted but with the money and the time that's about all we could do. I just wanted to keep it like a little entrance to a garden, or maybe an exit from a garden. I had a pathway planned, but then I thought, 'Well, if there's a lot of people at the opening they wouldn't be able to observe the path.'

**Broadside:** You have mentioned in the past that you consciously use feminine art forms, whether it's your quilts and sewing or imagery in your films, and this has forced people to take domestic art seriously. Have you found with your recent show that some people have reservations because of the so called feminine content?

**Joyce Wieland:** Well, not from any woman. But one guy came up to me, hemmed and hawed and said, "It's very pretty ... I know I shouldn't say that, but it's very deep, too." Then this guy from the London Free Press said, "People say it's very pretty and feminine, because the colours are feminine."

**Broadside:** But it's not true. What's feminine about red, yellow and blue?

**Wieland:** I told him that those are the things everything is made of. I guess if you see those colours, they look sweet to you and if you're a guy, you're likely to pass by.

**Broadside:** It certainly would seem that a lot of men, and some women, would feel very threatened by the kind of sexuality in your most recent work, mainly because the women are very much in charge of their own sexuality. Usually when an image is in pastel colours, the women are passive. What sort of feedback has there been on this aspect of your show?

**Wieland:** Whenever I went in there a woman would come up to me and say, "You have a lot of courage to open yourself like this."

**Broadside:** Your work since the 1950's has dealt with sexual imagery and it's been controversial but it always has been shown at major galleries across the country. Do you think that you would have been able to show your work and have gotten a favourable response if those images had been lesbian instead of heterosexual?

**Wieland:** I don't know ... If I had felt that way about a woman then maybe it would have been all right. You know, maybe people would have liked it. I wonder ...

**Broadside:** On the other hand, the mainstream press has been over emphasizing the sexual aspects of your work, subtitled *The Bloom of Matter* as *The Joy of Sex*, which is hardly accurate. The cohesive elements seem to be that women are all goddesses, or soon to be, that the women are very much a part of the environment.

**Wieland:** I think the overall feeling was important to me in doing them. The sexuality is there the same way the trees are there. It's a feeling of being able to draw that way... with that wonderful feeling of light. It was a great feeling to put all the things I liked in my life. For the first time everything was fused in light.

**Broadside:** Some of the drawings would be suitable illustrations for a children's book.

**Wieland:** I've always wanted to illustrate children's books. In the old days you couldn't get that kind of work. I like story telling. I find I'm happiest in these little stories or vignettes because of their narrative streaks.

**Broadside:** The drawings you made in connection with *The Far Shore* seemed to be a prelude to this recent show. Exactly how did this work come about?

**Wieland:** It started by my going to the Arctic and doing a lithograph of the woman Soro Lectutu, and just getting a look at the light there. It's very clear, being able to see the primary on the edge of things. When I came back, I started doing some drawings, I don't know which were the first ones, of this woman who sometimes was a goddess and sometimes was a woman who pointed things out. In the beginning, some of the drawings were very pale. I was knocked out by the paper and what these little pencils were doing, and the kind of light I was

working with. I had a big bay window facing south. That's why it's just like a little blush, a little bloom. It didn't matter to me that they were pale.

In the show you can tell which ones are the later ones because they're bursting out more, like in *The Victory of Venus*. In the earlier drawings bands of light would burst the edges, but not the figures.

**Broadside:** Could you tell us a bit more of what happened in the Arctic and how it came about.

**Wieland:** I went there because I wanted to do a lithograph. I wanted to ask a woman artist to do a drawing of me, and I would do one of her. It was very idealistic. When I got there I found they cared nothing about me, why I was there, or why I would want to do a drawing. I could not ask her. It had no significance, no meaning to her. I didn't know her, nor would I get to know her unless I spent a couple of years up there. I simply had the translator ask if Soro Lectutu would pose for me with her baby.

**Broadside:** How did you choose this woman?

**Wieland:** I found her work among the stacks of work in the co-op. There were wonderful coloured drawings full of her humour and simplicity, but not too stylized and over-simplified.

**Broadside:** In your show you have included your bronze pieces from the 1971 *True Patriot Love* exhibit at the National Gallery. In a sense they do lead up to your current work since they have goddess-like qualities. The people in your drawings aren't really people because they have wings, they become animals, they aren't what they seem.

**Wieland:** They're getting into their environment by becoming part of it. Like *Women in Solution* with their fins.

**Broadside:** Even your work from the sixties had this quality.

**Wieland:** Especially the cartoons. The *Lapin du Nord* — the Little Rabbit of the North — had nothing on top, just this little polka-dot skirt. Her boyfriend is Tuktu, the cariboo. It's an anti-American cartoon because it has Shithouse von Whorehead, the guy with the drill who drills for all the minerals. It's really a great story. Then there's Bunny Crazy, and the first drawings of cariboo, then the cariboo quilt. But it seems like sometimes you think since you're doing serious art you shouldn't let these childhood things come in. This time I have them as 'extras'. It's almost like a movie, because you'll see that when the man is stabbing the woman on the side there's a rabbit in the foreground.

**Broadside:** Yet the rabbit doesn't obscure the political message of violence against women in that particular drawing. It clearly speaks of how men, after being confronted with an aggravating situation will turn around and recreate the scene violently when they're telling a woman. She can be the scapegoat.

**Wieland:** The drawing was about a man I

knew who was in a rage, but was unconscious of his aggressive behaviour. Not that he hit me or anything. But I felt like I was being hit by something unconscious. When you're involved with that kind of person you have to get *something* out of it. When rage is unconscious, it's most dangerous because it's a free channel for negativity. At that point the man was an open channel for all negativity funnelling right through him. People don't tend to talk about that drawing.

**Broadside:** With that one exception, there seems to be a curious lack of any political messages. In 1974 in an interview with Debbie Magidson and Judy Wright you said "I don't want to just harp on the politics in my art. I want a really sensitive combination of all areas of our life: Canadian independence, northern mysticism, organic farming, sex." Your political meanings are not as obvious as they were in the past.

**Wieland:** All those things I've worked on separately — like ecology, nationalism, or my feelings as a woman artist — but they are rarely joined. Now they just seem to melt together so that landscapes, flowers and figures all join the light together. For instance, *The Love of Trees* expresses a love of trees, water, magic pools. That's ecology. It's the poetry of nature in an essential form rather than as a statement about ecology...the magic properties of landscapes and glades and pools.

**Broadside:** That is where you differ from Judy Chicago, a didactic artist whose political message is foremost in her work. Laura Rabinowitz, in her article in the *Woman's Art Journal*, didn't mention this when she compared you with Chicago, but she does write at length about your Maritime project, which very few people know about. Could you briefly describe what it was?

**Wieland:** In 1970, when I was working at the Nova Scotia College of Arts, I would go around and meet women who did crafts. I found Jo McGregor's knitting and Valerie McMillan's embroidery. I had the basic design in mind for my project and I looked for the people in local fairs who wanted to try it. I'd draw the mouth for the animated mouths that were embroidered in 'O Canada' and someone would send me back a sample. I traced it on a big cloth, then I'd pay her per hour and a portion of the profit. Not that many women were involved. I didn't have time to do it on a big scale.

**Broadside:** There is a group of women dedicated to bringing the Dinner Party to Canada. If such a group of women were to get together to make a major retrospective of your work, would it be possible to assemble?

**Wieland:** The Isaacs Gallery has a record of where everything is, so it could be done. **Broadside:** Your recent show was open for less than one month. When the Albright Knox Gallery in Buffalo showed Sonia Delauney's work it was up for less than a month too. There should be some way of

•continued page 17

# 'Screams Should Be Heard and Not Seen'

by Jean Wilson

Margaret Atwood, *True Stories*. Toronto: Oxford University Press 1981. Pp 103. \$5.95

Phyllis Webb, *Wilson's Bowl*. Toronto: Coach House Press 1981. Pp 97. \$7.50

Margaret Atwood and Phyllis Webb are two of Canada's best poets, and to have recent books from both is a cause to celebrate. Atwood has published relatively little poetry since her initial appearance in print in the sixties and Webb is simply a 'hoarder' of words, as she describes herself. She is hard to find in print because she has published few books. *Wilson's Bowl* is her fifth, the last being her *Selected Poems, 1954-65*, which appeared in 1971. *True Stories* is Atwood's ninth book of poetry.

They write very different kinds of poetry but there are overlaps and reading these two books in tandem is interesting. Margaret Atwood's poetry focuses on the harsh or at least concrete realities of life, using those incisive images for which she is especially well known. Remember the fishhook in the open eye? Phyllis Webb remarks, in a sequence of 'Letters to Margaret Atwood,' 'you say what they don't want to hear and the assured form of it, the cold uncomf, hurts them.' Webb, on the other hand, quoting Roland Barthes, declares that she is 'both too big and too weak for writing. I am *alongside* it, for writing is always dense, violent, indifferent to the infantile ego which solicits it ... My poems are born out of great struggles of silence.' Thus her poetry is more introspective, allusive and elusive, preoccupied with personal 'failures' and intellectual and literary cross-references. Like Eliot in *The Waste Land*, she even provides a few helpful notes to explain interior references in some poems.



*True Stories*, as its title suggests, attempts throughout to fix experience, to name the unnameable, to capture an emotion or an incident and describe it without embellishment or any other kind of distortion. Atwood insists that we see the facts clearly:

The facts of this world seen clearly  
are seen through tears;  
why tell me then  
there is something wrong with my eyes?

To see clearly and without flinching,  
without turning away,  
this is agony, the eyes taped open  
two inches from the sun.

What is it you see then?  
Is it a bad dream, a hallucination?  
Is it a vision?  
What is it you hear?

The razor across the eyeball  
is a detail from an old film.  
It is also a truth.

## Poems by Webb and Atwood

Witness is what you must bear.  
(Notes towards a Poem that Can Never Be Written, V)

Not all of *True Stories* bears witness to the unbearable though. There are also wry poems on love — 'Nothing like love to put blood / back in the language,' ('Nothing'); 'This is a word we use to plug / holes with' ('Variations on the Word Love'); and five bittersweet 'True Romances.' And there are vivid recreations of the 'natural' world:

Hermit, hard socket  
for a timid eye,  
you're a soft gut scuttling  
sideways, a blue skull,  
round bone on the prow.  
Wolf of treeroots and gravelly holes,  
a mouth on stilts,  
the husk of a small demon.  
(Landcrab I);

The surreal surfaces occasionally as in 'Hotel,' where 'a voice on the ceiling' 'repeats over and over/the same absence of words'; and there are also the poems which ironically describe and defend the poet as observer and recorder:

You think I live in a glass tower  
where the phone doesn't ring  
and nobody eats? But it does, they do  
and leave the crumbs & greasy knives...

There's no mystery, I want to tell  
you, none at all, no more  
than in anything else. What I do  
is ordinary, no  
surprise, like you  
no trickier than Sunrise.  
(Small Poems for Winter Solstice' 8)

Atwood can insist that what she does is 'ordinary,' but she can do the ordinary better in poetry than most people. *True Stories* is a welcome book, provocative and entertaining.

*Wilson's Bowl* is more demanding of the reader's attention but no less rewarding to read and absorb. There is a kind of crescendo of intoxication with the language and images in this book that develops as it progresses. One has the sense that Webb fights incessantly and at great spiritual cost against even having to use language in the first place and then with making it express precisely what she wants it to. In some ways, the poetry is harder than Atwood's to fix in place and time because although it starts from concrete images and incidents and touches on themes and characters in the world at large, it is concerned primarily with Phyllis Webb's own interior monologue and her struggles with silence and the 'strange gestation' her poetry requires.

*Wilson's Bowl* of the title (and illustrated on the cover and jacket) is a bowl-shaped Indian rock carving on Salt Spring Island, BC, where Webb lives, named for Wilson Duff, an anthropologist at UBC before his suicide in 1976. It was discovered and so named by Lilo Berliner, a friend of Webb's who also committed suicide (after Duff). Several of the poems in *Wilson's Bowl* are musings on the significance of such anthropological evidence and of its connection with Berliner's death in particular. 'The Bowl' illustrates the beauty of language and rhythm in this book as a whole and how Webb spins off from the image of the bowl:

This is not a bowl you drink from  
not a loving cup.  
this is meditation's place  
cold rapture's.

Moon floats here  
belly, mouth, open-one-eye  
any orifice  
comes to nothing  
dark as any mask  
or light, more light/is  
holy *cirque*.  
Serene, it says silence  
in small fish  
cups a sun  
holds its shape  
upon the sea  
howls, 'Spirit entered  
black as any raven.'  
Smiles —  
and cracks your smile.  
Is clean.

Another sequence of poems in *Wilson's Bowl* is from a projected work called 'The Kropotkin Poems', which Webb began in 1967 but did not complete. Essentially the work and the fragments of it which did survive concern power, as demonstrated in the lives of such socialist and literary figures as Kropotkin, Dostoevsky, Pound, and Rilke. Webb includes an interesting apologia for the dominance of such male figures in the book:

These poems were not written as a group, nor at one time, but spread over many years, like the silence. Some have suggested that these figures could be masks, personae, my animus, my male muse in many guises. I wonder and I think. I think that those interpretations are significant — I might even agree with them. They signify the domination of a male power culture in my educational and emotional formation so overpowering that I have, up to now, been denied access to inspiration from the female figures of my intellectual life, my heart, my imagination. The 'Letters to Margaret Atwood' are an exception; I was asked to write on the subject of women at that time. The others — the unwritten poems — are the real 'poems of failure.'

One suspects that having recognized and acknowledged the overwhelming influence of the patriarchal culture on her life and poetry so far, Phyllis Webb is unlikely to allow that influence to continue or be so unduly reflected in any subsequent poetry she might publish.

Webb is not all hard intellectualism and preoccupied with internal reference, although I think it is those very aspects of her work which makes it fascinating. Like Atwood, she has a marvelous wry humour which comes through in many poems such as

Three?  
Mile?  
Island?

and a delight in language that infuses a poem like 'Metaphysics of Spring':

Blossoms —  
powder of pink  
moths, sift  
of mystic wind-  
watchers  
shift of desire's  
bled light  
gloss of — ah, gross  
matter (great  
matter), it does  
not, even  
matter  
burning/the  
shudder of/in  
the wing's!

in shell's pink  
growing, birth  
of the world  
/feathery  
flesh or love  
what matter?

This is lovely language to twist your tongue around. *Wilson's Bowl* is full of it and if you're a follower of poetry in this country, a very important book to know.



As a postscript, both *True Stories* and *Wilson's Bowl* are physically attractive books. That isn't so surprising in the case of the former as it is published by Coach House Press, deservedly well known for its innovative typographical design and the high quality of its paper and printing. Betty Fairbank's cover and jacket photos of *Wilson's Bowl* and Phyllis Webb are effective. *True Stories* is published by a 'big press', Oxford, but it has been reasonably well served too, although its paper and layout aren't particularly striking. The front cover is by Margaret Atwood herself and is called 'Light Heart.' The illustration works well as an eye-catching front cover, and the latest Graeme Gibson photo of the author on the back cover also works well.

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# Bright Lights on the Theatre Scene

by Constance Brissenden

Is there life in the theatre beyond comedy, cabaret and crass commercialism?

There have been a few, a very few, occasions during my theatre-watching career when I have been moved at a more intimate level than I normally am watching television or reading a touching story in a magazine. Not as often, admittedly, as at the movies but still, often enough. And recently I've yearned for more of these unique theatrical experiences, yearned to connect, to feel, to care, to be incited to thought and action by what I'm watching on the stage.

This month I set out in search of the magic of theatre that communicates on these profound levels. Surprisingly, I did find it — not wholly satisfying but surely breathing strongly in two of the 15 or so productions I saw. One was *Bent*, written by US author Martin Sherman, running into May at the Bathurst Street Theatre in Toronto. The other was a weekend-only event, Samantha Langevin's *Simone Weil: Patron Saint of the Outsider* at Homemade Theatre (one of Toronto's original and now growing number of intimate backroom theatres). Both *Bent* and *Simone Weil* moved me to tears; both lingered in my spirit long after the actors took their bows.

Writers do not normally tackle this type of play because it's not boffo at the box office and it's also extremely difficult to write well. But it can work, as Martin Sherman has proved.

*Bent*, by the time it came to Canada, had been a long-running Broadway show. This year marks its first production here — Larry Lillo's version at the Arts Club Theatre in Vancouver, followed by the Toronto

opening of the Joseph Deane/Ernest J. Schwarz/Brian Sewell/Toronto Truck show last month. By all reports, Lillo's production was an enormous success. Unfortunately, here in Toronto, the hoopla that surrounded the opening (huge ads in the major dailies, for example, that altogether must have vied with the staging costs) overshadowed the finished work. Fortunately, however, *Bent* is a play that even a shabby production can't destroy.

To be a homosexual in Nazi Germany meant to be on the bottom rung of Hitler's obscene ranking of human lives. *Bent* begins in the early days of the slaughter, when Max, a young German, is unwittingly embroiled in a political vendetta against "fluffs" (as his elderly, quietly homosexual uncle calls themselves). He is forced to escape Berlin with his dancer-lover and after two gruelling years, both are apprehended by the SS. On the train to Dachau, Max denies and even beats his lover who dies at his feet. Then he "proves" his manhood by having intercourse with a dead 13-year-old girl before a raucous band of SS officers.

For these acts he survives, marked by a yellow star as a Jew although he is not Jewish. In Dachau, his deception is constantly challenged by his friendship with a "Pink Triangle," a gay man whose only crime is his sexuality. When Horst, as the result of an act of Max's compassion, is shot by an SS officer, Max dons the overcoat bearing his pink insignia and commits suicide by throwing himself against an electric fence.

At times, watching *Bent*, the horror is almost too much. The frightening reality intensifies as both the audience and the characters in the play together live a nightmare in which freedoms are wrenched away, re-



Samantha Langevin as Simone Weil.

placed by a bestial existence. The struggle to remain human, to retain a thread of hope is almost impossible. *Bent* challenges our complacency, encourages us, by extended analogy, to speak out with great courage for human rights and world peace.

On a very different production level, Samantha Langevin's one-woman portrayal of WW II freedom fighter Simone Weil also left me with intense feelings and thoughtfulness. Weil, a frail intellectual struggled throughout her brief, illness-ridden life to do something truly meaningful for humanity. She left a war-torn France because she was advised that her literary efforts in England would be more useful to her political cause but instead she found herself cruelly cut off from her homeland and its suffering people. Even more frustrating, her health began its fatal deterioration and she became a bed-bound tubercular patient in an English country hospital. She wrote articles and letters that have survived her struggles and give encouragement today to a world still struggling for peace. And she starved, because she could not bear to eat more than her beloved, starving French people. This refusal to eat, as much as her illness, finally killed her at the age of 34.

I had not known of Simone Weil before Langevin's play but the combination of the actress (Langevin looked like Weil incarnate), her obvious love for her subject and the writings of Weil herself made a moving statement. Soon I slipped beyond the tiny studio, beyond the few rows of risers and the street noises filtering in from nearby Yonge Street. Without Langevin's deter-

mination to complete what has been a two-year project, I may never have shared in the triumph of Weil's deeply passionate, deeply caring being.

Recommended reading along these lines are three Canadian plays that prove we have the capacity to accomplish more of this type of theatre. They are: George Ryga's *Ecstasy of Rita Joe*, David Freeman's *Creeps* and *Esker Mike and His Wife*, Agiluk by Herschel Hardin, all of which should be in your local library. These plays are well over 10 years old, which says something about our theatrical direction in the seventies. It will be curious to see what will come from the eighties as world and human affairs progressively deteriorate. Will our playwrights look deeper inside themselves for the inspiration to write for a better world or will we go laughing wittlessly all the way to Armageddon? Time will tell.

## Books to Note

These books are for sale at the Toronto Women's Bookstore, 85 Harbord St., and on loan from the YWCA Women's Resource Centre, 15 Birch Ave., Toronto.

Faderman, Lillian; *Surpassing the love of men*; William Morrow, N.Y., 1981.

- excellent examination of women's emotional, sensual and sexual relationships with each other from the Renaissance to the present.

Sandmaier, Marion; *The invisible alcoholics: women and alcohol abuse in America*; McGraw-Hill, N.Y., 1980.

- focuses on the experience of alcoholic women; why women drink, the difference from that of alcoholic men and why traditional treatment usually fails them.

Feminist International, no. 2; *Asian women '80*; The Feminist Inc., Japan, 1980.

- an annual publication with articles primarily about women in Japan, but also has a section covering women in Asia.

*Woman and Russia: first Feminist Samizdat*; Sheba Feminist Publishers, London, 1980.

- powerful anthology of articles and poetry from Russian feminists.

Van Herk, Aritha; *The tent peg*; McClelland and Stewart, Toronto, 1981.

- novel about a woman's experience as a summer cook for a uranium company and her relationships with the men in the camp.

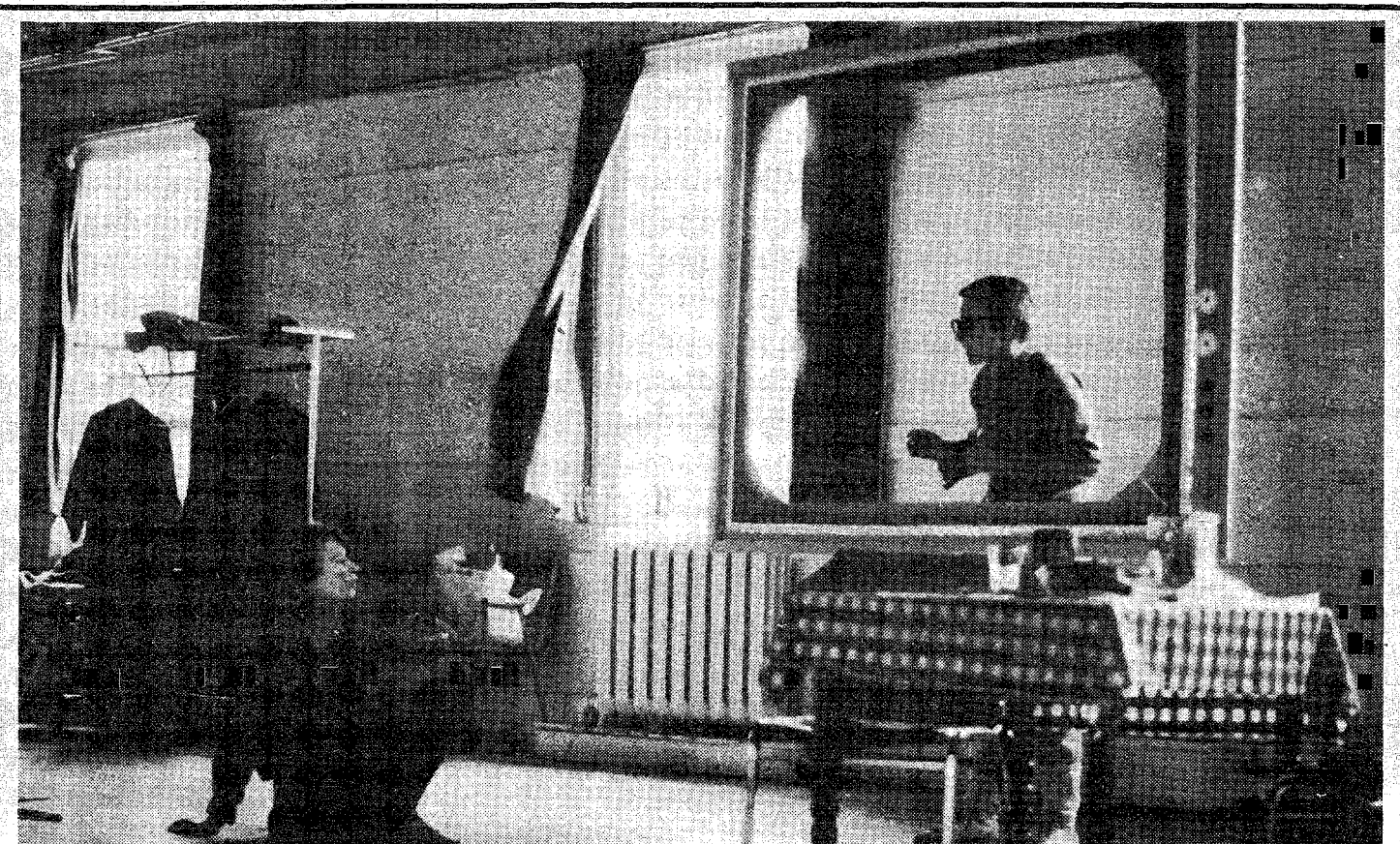
Hall, Radclyffe; *The unlit lamp*; Lester & Orpen Dennys, Toronto, 1981.

- reprint of early novel.

□ Elaine Berns, Co-ordinator  
YWCA Women's Resource Centre



Brent Carver (L) and Richard Monette in 'Bent.'



Gay Bell (L) and Marcia Cannon in 'Pink Triangle Tears,' a play performed at GLARE's Fight the Right Day in Toronto.

Elinor Mahoney

•SICKNESS INDUSTRY from page 7

## WOMEN DEPRIVED OF CULTURAL CONTINUITY

The natural continuity of women's experience over the generations, the integration-through-pain aspect of reproductive experience, the concern for the helpless, the care of the body, the peace of the mind, the survival of the species, the special relationship with nature: all of these are considered in male dominant society to be subhuman. It has therefore been important to keep women from ganging up on men, in case these kind of values — values of life and well-being — challenge male values of domination and control. This is not fanciful. The devices which separate women from women are all too real, all too human. There is the prime device, the attempt to isolate women physically in the household. There is the legal institution of marriage, which submerges wife in husband. There is the practice of denying to women a family name. I was looking the other day at a newspaper ad for personalized stationery. Clearly Simpson's thought that women are the best customers, for their samples of the types of print available were all women — Mrs. Charles F. Williams, Mrs. Lorne Ellison, Mrs. Robert C. Anderson. It occurred to me that they might well be grandmother, mother and daughter — but how would one know? And this refusal to name women as women has gone on for generations. Women create historical continuity biologically only to be deprived of it culturally.

These are the reasons why we have lost our history. We may speculate that, before the modern age, the extended household was not only a busy economic unit, but was also a hospital, and probably a very modern one in its equal concern for well-being as well as illness. Malinowski tells us that his anthropological studies indicate that capitalist society is the first culture which has not embedded rituals of physical exercise in its social structures. Modern China suggests

that this need not be lost, and bus stops provide exercise space in Peking. Perhaps car repair outfits could ease our frustrations by doing something similar, though they are generally more interested in our credit rating than our health. However ancient households practised the pursuit of well-being, it does seem that it was the responsibility of the women — Xenophon instructed his child wife to learn the arts of healing so that she could tend the children and the slaves: the men consulted physicians, a newish and much admired profession in Classical Antiquity. When women did escape the private realm, they turned to the two great female responsibilities of women — the well-being of people and the education of children — to express their creativity. The names of the non-royal women which have survived attest to this — Sappho ran a school where the sexual expression of women was but part, if I understand her poetry at all, of the general quest for women's well-being, for health of body and mind. From Eleanor of Aquitaine to Florence Nightingale unmarried women in a position to do so turned to social forms of health care. This fact has been used to deride them — all they were fit for — without any notion of the actual importance of being fit.

## RISE OF THE SICKNESS INDUSTRY

Nonetheless, we cannot turn back the clock, and what we are left with is the sickness industry. Given the relation of this industry with government, it seems quite clear that the attempt to convert the industry from sickness to health is, in the first place, a political problem, which presents complexities in terms of strategies of well-being. Women's capacity to influence government is relatively increasing, but is still quite miniscule. Ministries may fund limited projects and conferences like this one, some of these small dividends I talked of for our tax in-


vestment in the state. But I think most of us here are familiar with funding difficulties. As far as larger and more overtly political agitations are concerned: I noticed a tiny report in the Globe and Mail the other day that (Health Minister Dennis) Timbrell has decided to ignore the minority report which Doreen Hamilton so bravely presented on the question of High Risk Pregnancy, and which hundreds of women supported. Six million dollars can be found in shrinking health budgets for a computerized program of case-finding. No money was reported as being allocated to community based programs in the area. To be sure, the High Risk project may have some success, but there is clearly no contest in the funding struggle between technologically based, disease oriented research carried out by the men of the sickness industry and community based, personal service projects conceived and executed by women. But I also noticed that the first candidate to be declared elected in the recent Ontario election — seven minutes after the polls closed — was Dennis Timbrell.

We have therefore a long way to go, but I do not believe we can shift the concentration on ill-being to a constructive program of well-being unless we understand very clearly the extent and strength of the political and cultural factors ranged against us. It is my view, quite simply, that capitalism and patriarchy will have to go down together or not at all, or at least not without destroying the life of people and the other denizens of our planet, even destroying the planet itself. This is the major reason why I personally chose to leave nursing for the study of politics, and why my professional practice is now devoted, within the small space which heavy bureaucratic structure allows, to the development of a raised consciousness for women. I do believe that in this rather dismal picture of divisive tactics, profitable illness, of technology rampant, the only progressive political force in sight is feminism. I believe that women's concern for the well-being of the race and the good

earth itself is a force which we have, by our efforts, liberated from historical anonymity to stride onto the world's stage as the active agent of a more humane future. I do not for one moment think that our task is simple, but I take heart from these centuries of women's toil, the survival of female culture in the teeth of repressive forces, our willingness to accept the role of service as an honourable one, our endless struggle to become educated enough to understand the things we have to do and fit enough to do them, our refusal to deride 'women's values' of care, concern and biological well-being, our rejection of the use of the word motherhood as a euphemism for ineffectiveness. The big question is how, and this conference suggests that we know that this is the question and are convinced that we are beginning to develop some answers. We know now that we must work both inside and outside the industry, and that this division of labour need not and must not produce a division between those of us who choose different roads. We know now that the insistence we must make in terms of our personal economic well-being is not a betrayal of vocation, but a necessary condition of the strength and unity which we know we need to achieve our objectives. We also have learned the strength of working together, even when we disagree as to priorities and strategies. We are no longer enslaved by the contemptuous myth that women cannot work together, for we have discovered and rejoice in sisterhood. Some may think these puny weapons to bring to the transformation of very powerful political realities, but this is simply not true, for history, which has finally let us look upon who we have been with pride and admiration must, at the same time, let us look upon who we shall become with determination and with purpose.

We shall succeed, for we must succeed: the well-being not only of ourselves but of the race depends on it.

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## •REVOLUTION, from page 9

But libido is such a strong force that the renunciation of sexual pleasure can never be complete; so there is always a chance that the sexual impulses surplus repression keeps down will boil over, will refuse to be sublimated in the service of a repressive system and will blow the lid off the system. It's therefore useful to build safety valves into the system so that some of the sexual steam gets let off and the explosion is averted. Marcuse named those safety valves *repressive desublimation* — desublimation because some of the previously sublimated sexual urges are allowed to take a sexual form; repressive, because that's the result.

Repressive desublimation is the heartbeat of the Sexual Revolution. People get to let off a little sexual steam in an environment where the rules of the game are written beforehand: nobody is allowed to have feelings; men must have constant and huge erections; women must "liberate" their bodies for all takers, and enjoy it too. The very existence of rules, as well as the particular rules of the Sexual Revolution, make it a repressive phenomenon. People's sexuality gets repressed even more than it was before, but it all *seems* so sexual. The promise of sexual liberty is everywhere, in bikini billboards advertising vacations in the south, in the singles bars, in the slinky clothes in every store, in the unwritten dress codes for office receptionists, in the movies and the magazines, in the peep shows and the commercials, in the rock and roll songs and the sports car ads. But the sex that they're all announcing is just another product, it is carefully managed to fit into forms harmless to the system (and in marketable ways that protect the system). It is scientifically controlled to operate in certain ways, so that it ceases to be erotic and becomes a mechanical exercise. It does let people release some frustration, making it more possible for them to accept the scripted and restricted nature of the encounters, and therefore to be pulled deeper into their own surplus repression.

As Marcuse wrote in *One-Dimensional Man*, the effect is to "extend liberty while intensifying domination...Sex is integrated into work and public relations and is thus made more susceptible to (controlled) satisfaction...Pleasure, thus adjusted, generates submission." It was thus in Nazi Germany. Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, sociologists of the Frankfurt School, pointed out that sex was liberated for the purpose of repression in the Third Reich. Young people were rebelling and high unemployment was fuelling their anger (sound familiar?), which was clearly a threat to the Fatherland. Hitler defused

their rebellion by encouraging sexual promiscuity as an outlet, while at the same time making people even more obedient followers of the Fuhrer. He dressed the men in tight sexy uniforms and had them goose-stepping to the rhythm of marches in a mesmerizing imitation of sex. At night people would carouse in night clubs like the one in the movie *Cabaret*. Sexual promiscuity was sanctioned; people were liberated from their old morality in very specific ways, to have sex with each other and save their love for the Fuhrer. The siphoning off of their sexual energy in decadent ways was the safety valve that took the pressure off their legitimate rebellion and anaesthetized their humanity, and it was in part that repressive desublimation that let the Nazis get away with their brutal oppression of women: It all *seemed* so free.

The similarities between 1939 and 1981 are unfortunate but undeniable. Economic crisis, rising unemployment, angry young people and sanctioned sexual promiscuity to keep the citizenry quiet. In a society like ours where conspicuous consumption masquerades as pleasure, sex is just another item on the shopping list. Men experience puberty to the alienating tune of *Playboy* and *Penthouse*; women are taught to package their bodies as consumer goods to attract the highest bidder, which cannot be erotic. Sexual taboos can be relaxed because sexuality has been so smoothly integrated into profitable conformity: \$1,000 a week at Club Med or \$4 for a shot of bar scotch. People's sensuality is mechanized for profit and thereby reduced to a safely contained encounter with the erotic potential smothered by the packaging. The pleasure principle has been harnessed by capitalism and you can watch it as it limps along every night under the glitter.

Conformity is the death knell of freedom, and sex that's "liberated" for profit is profoundly un-erotic. Such is the stuff of the Sexual Revolution we are supposed to be enjoying. A real sexual revolution would not look like this one. A real change would constitute everyone's sexuality as free, not as freely available for purchase by the highest bidder. That does not mean, however, an instant removal of all the strictures on sexual relations, because as long as relations between people are power relations, sex will be one of the most painful ways in which the powerful express their domination over the weak. In a society where adults have power over children and men are taught that women are sexual objects to be plucked like fruits from a tree, sexual freedom would mean the freedom of men to molest little girls and the freedom of men to rape women. That is not freedom for us. We need all domination to end, we need a world where no person has any power over any other person — not financial, not social, not physical power. And in that world where everyone is truly equal, we need a sexual revolution to go with the revolution against sexism and capitalism. People will be encouraged to make love with their minds and their bodies in any way they desire. In a world where the politics of domination have been beaten to the ground, no one would be fool enough to choose sex that is a power game over free love.

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## •WIELAND, from page 13

having a show that lasts.

**Wieland:** There should be works like mine and others in smaller museums ... where people can have access to them, phone ahead or write and say 'I want to see that.' The big museums are useless to us. I think there should be smaller reservoirs, and more books. If they only had books, then at least people would have lovely reproductions. But in Canada you can only get that if you are a big-time photo-realist.

So few people get credit here for what they've done, whether it's men or women. They have not been given credit. There have been great innovators who are not known anywhere. It's a secret art world, bound and gagged.

**Broadside:** Is there anywhere you could get the funds needed to get this kind of project off the ground?

**Wieland:** I don't know how many thousands of dollars would be needed to do a show, but I would like to have a book done of a portfolio.

**Broadside:** Speaking about money and art ... whatever happened to the *Diviner* film?

**Wieland:** Judy Steed worked really hard on *The Diviners* film for two years. I was there to discuss things. We had some money together. The basic problem with *The Diviners* was that it could come off only the way Judy dreamed of, but that would mean a co-production with Hollywood. She went down there and tried to do it. The only way to get a Canadian story across to Canada was to go really big and do a co-production. She really learned the hard way that it's a

man's prerogative to make a co-production. It takes going to the meanest backrooms in Hollywood and she couldn't do it. She started losing control of the picture. She did not get to see anyone in Hollywood. The erosion starts with that.

**Broadside:** So does that mean that the film has been shelved altogether? What's the status?

**Wieland:** I think we'd hate to say it, but — shelved all together. We don't even talk about it anymore. I don't know if we still have the rights to Laurence's book.

**Broadside:** You've had a hard time, first with *The Far Shore* and now with *The Diviners*. It's been over five years since the public has heard about you and your work.

**Wieland:** After *The Far Shore* I got really depressed. I was very sick in the middle of it. My mental state was nil. I soon realized that you don't have to work all the time and I began to take it easy. So I fixed up my house and made a studio the way I wanted it. Then I went to the Arctic.

**Broadside:** How do you see yourself working in the future?

**Wieland:** I can see myself just working alone, and on a very small scale. I don't have the energy. It's impossible for me to take any stress; two or three phone calls in a day is enough. I couldn't even look at a larger project. Even if there were grade A producers available, I wouldn't look at it.

Now, to be involved in a small activity, it's not 'small' at all. In a way it's shamanistic in the highest way. It can be nourishing to others, even though it's small. It's like a well, if it's good water it's a pleasure to drink from it.

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•INCEST, from page 11

They are overworked, hampered by bureaucracy and with no special training in dealing with incest. If the father/male adult is 'respectable' and denies the charges, the tendency is to blame the child.

Nevertheless, some help is available for incest survivors. Sexual Assault Centres throughout Canada are starting to offer self-help groups for women who have been assaulted. Vancouver has a self-help group for survivors which meets at the West End Community Care Team. In Toronto, several groups for survivors are meeting:

- Rape Crisis Centre self-help groups
- YWCA group led by Judith Golden (see box)
- York Finch Hospital group led by Joyce Weinberg
- Peel Family Services group led by Margaret Bogue

A plan to help incest victims was developed by WCREC in 1980. In the spirit of *Equal Time in Equal Space* (see Barbara Martineau's article) WCREC proposed setting up a hotline, self-help groups led by incest survivors, and a public education program. The Ontario Ministry of Community and Social Services flatly turned WCREC down. WCREC learned that the Hotline project wasn't eligible for funding because it would be too difficult to evaluate. WCREC was told that it would be necessary to isolate a 'high risk' group first and then target a program which could be successfully monitored. WCREC explained to no avail that all parts of society are at risk since incestuous assault crosses all class and ethnic boundaries. It is clear that government funding will now be channelled into the CAS planning group, possibly into an expanded hospital unit for child abuse victims. Feminist and community-operated groups will not receive any of the riches. No surprise there.

As feminists we have an understanding of incestuous assault which links various forms of violence against women to the patriarchal society in which we live. We understand that wife battering, rape, and sexual molestation of girls are permitted within the privacy of the family. Men get nervous when these acts of violence occur in public since a public setting may signify loss of property rights, loss of face or trouble with the police. Economic dependence on the bread-winner prevents many wives from leaving abusive husbands. The conspiracy of silence (to borrow Sandra Butler's apt phrase) is connected with economic reality. When society will not provide adequate day care, job training, or transitional financial support, staying silent is often

the only way to survive.

Feminists have pointed out the direct relationship between sexual violence in movies and child pornography and the rising number of assaults women endure in our homes and on the streets. Child pornography flourishes in North America; "kiddy porn" can be found in corner grocery stores in small towns and big cities alike. Child prostitutes, runaways, and juveniles in trouble with the law are frequently acting out self-destructive feelings which result from incestuous assault. Scenes in movies which link sex and violence against women are acceptable even to the Ontario Censorship Board, and Hollywood's sultry sex symbols look younger each year. Men write the film scripts and produce films in which mothers seduce their sons. Mother/son incest is extremely rare in real life, but it feeds a common male fantasy. Incest at home actualizes the fantasies generated by the media hucksters.

Another fantasy widely believed by therapists is that incest victims turn to lesbianism as a manifestation of sexual dysfunction. It is a common myth that lesbians are man-haters or sexually non-functional with men. When homosexuality is perceived as a dysfunction by the therapist, the damage to the incest survivor can be considerable. Lesbianism is not a result of incestuous assault nor is it an abnormal sexual orientation. Homophobia puts the onus on the survivor who must prove to her therapist that she is straight.

The relationship between homosexuality and incest needs to be further explored since homosexuals are now under attack by the New Right. Although the New Right accuses homosexual men of child molestation, legitimate research proves that 97% of child molestation is performed by heterosexual males. But the *Body Politic* printing of "Men Loving Boys Loving Men" in December 1977/January 1978 and the reprinting in March/April 1979 blurred the distinction for many feminists between supporting the *Body Politic's* right to publish and supporting sex between men and boys. The *Body Politic* collective responded to feminist criticism of the article by claiming: "It's no surprise that women do not usually see sex as a casual and recreational activity...it's dangerous though to apply heterosexual judgements to homosexual acts." The best response to this position is Florence Rush's: "A child molester is neither heterosexual nor homosexual...He is a child molester."

Fictional accounts such as Nabokov's *Lolita* support a widely held misconception that children seduce adults. Children sometimes act seductively and get positive reinforcement for their cute flirtatious behaviour. This behaviour can evoke erotic feelings in adults but that is not the issue. In any circumstance involving child/adult sexual activity, it is the adult who holds the power and carries full responsibility for the act.

Children are attracted to expensive toys, but Daddy doesn't encourage a joint toy store robbery. Should he do so he would not get away with claiming "My kid made me do it." It is the role of the adult to act responsibly.

Meanwhile, a new concept of 'positive incest' has been invented and popularized. A two part series on positive incest appeared in the November and December 1979 issues of *Penthouse*. It's no accident that *Penthouse* printed the series featuring a new look at incest; just the kind of soft pseudo-scientific pornography that sells.

Warren Farrell, author of *The Liberated Man*, who teaches a course on incest at the University of California made a guest appearance recently at Niagara County Community College. Farrell has done five years of interviews researching his soon-to-be published book *Incest: The Last Taboo*. In *Cue* magazine in November 1979 Farrell wrote: "For some of the 300 participants in incest I interviewed, making love with a close family member established a connection for which some spend their whole life searching... the ultimate form of narcissism...Incest is likely to be positive if the woman is older or initiating."

The language Farrell chooses is in itself an indictment. "Making love" is not the way incest survivors describe the sexual acts they were coerced into performing. Farrell, like the other proponents of positive incest, claims that young boys enjoy early sexual experiences with their mothers or older sisters. There is an interesting similarity here between Farrell's position and that expressed by the *Body Politic*: both claim that for boys, sex with adults (females in the case of Farrell and males in the case of *BP*) is positive, whatever it might be for girls. These are inherently sexist assumptions, blatantly in line with stereotypical views of male and female sexuality.

For feminists there can be no such things as 'positive incest.' It is a concept exploitative of children for the sexual gratification of adults.

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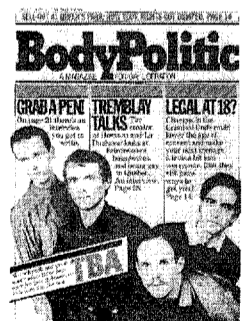
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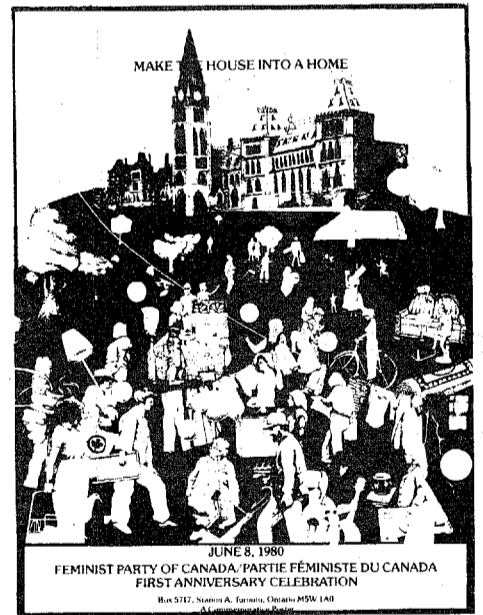
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# MOVEMENT COMMENT

## Occupational Benefits

While anti-nuclear demonstrators marched outside Ontario Hydro headquarters in Toronto on Monday March 30th, and occupiers in the building's lobby sang songs of protest and peace, Ronald Reagan was being rushed to hospital, a victim of the violence he himself embodies and perpetuates as president of the United States. For those women joined in a circle, singing, the moment was ironic and powerful.

As feminists we embrace a new vision — born out of a process of participation, equitable interaction and unconditional positive regard for *all* human beings and our Mother Earth. There are alternatives that will permit us to live in harmony with nature and each other and will not tolerate the frightening concentration of power in the hands of a few men who cherish accumulation of profit more than quality of human life.

Women for Survival is a newly formed group for whom the economic and political justifications for slowly poisoning our water, making our birth defects rise, and making our environment unsafe for generations to come are unacceptable. We are all ages, straight and lesbian, mothers, non-mothers, grandmothers. And most of us were strangers to one another when we came together for our first meeting in January.

Some of us had never been involved in political activity. Some were old hands, arrested and jailed for not being civilly obedient. Many had never before participated in an all-women group, but we were strong in our determination to stage a woman-only action. Only in this way could many women find the comfort and strength to participate without the inevitable domination/submission pattern of mixed groups. Those of us in relationships with men were encouraged and supported. We appreciated the help of men in support roles during the action, but the organization and occupation was our own, and we were stronger for it.

We had no executive, no chairperson, but rather worked with alternating facilitators each meeting. Decisions were arrived at by consensus, taking longer but giving each person's concerns and objections equal consideration.

We all tackled jobs we had never done before. We co-ordinated, shared, postered, made buttons, baked, listened, learned and worked hard. We spent a whole Saturday in non-violence training — a day filled with fun, masses of new information, fatigue, and — when we role-played cops vs. women occupiers — just plain fear.

And then we marched, Monday morning broke bleak and drizzly. But as we gath-

ered, the sun shone on our action, warming our spirits and bodies. Entering the Hydro building just after noon, we rejoiced at how well we had done our media work. There were more of them than us.

Our three-woman negotiating team met with Hugh Macauley, chairman of Ontario Hydro, and Milan Nastish, President (oh those titles!). Under pressure, our negotiators were wonderful. Crushed by media people and flooded by lights, they stood strong and pressed for our demands, which included:

1. the phasing out of nuclear energy in Ontario,
2. 52.6% of Hydro's advertising budget be spent in educating public re radiation hazards,
3. immediate installation of pollution control devices in coal-generating stations, and
4. an immediate halt to construction of the Darlington nuclear generating station.

Macauley refused to discuss these demands. "We are involved in generating at least one-third of our electricity by nuclear means in the province," he said. "And it's important to our future. We're not going to turn away from nuclear power. There's nothing to negotiate."

So we sat, and sang, and waited. Our support team brought us mounds of food — raisins, almonds, cheese, bagels, cider — and lots of encouragement.

Police and Hydro security warned us throughout the day of our impending fate and the easy alternative. Leave by public closing time. We stayed ... and sang.

At 5:30 pm the long male arm of the law tapped the first woman on the shoulder. "I am here to inform you that you will be arrested if you refuse to leave the building now. Will you go?"

"No."

And so it went. Fifteen times. A police woman and a female Hydro security officer dragged us off one by one, some by the feet, others by the arms. And the women in the circle sang. Each body was ticketed (\$53.00 for trespass) and then dumped outside the lobby doors on the cement. Supporters cheered, helped each of us up, and hugged us. And then we waited for the next limp body to emerge. By 6:15 it was over. But the bond of warmth, love and trust that we developed will be the source of our strength to continue this struggle, and we welcome other women in the community to journey with us.

We are Women for Survival.

□Lindsay Hall-Smeets

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