

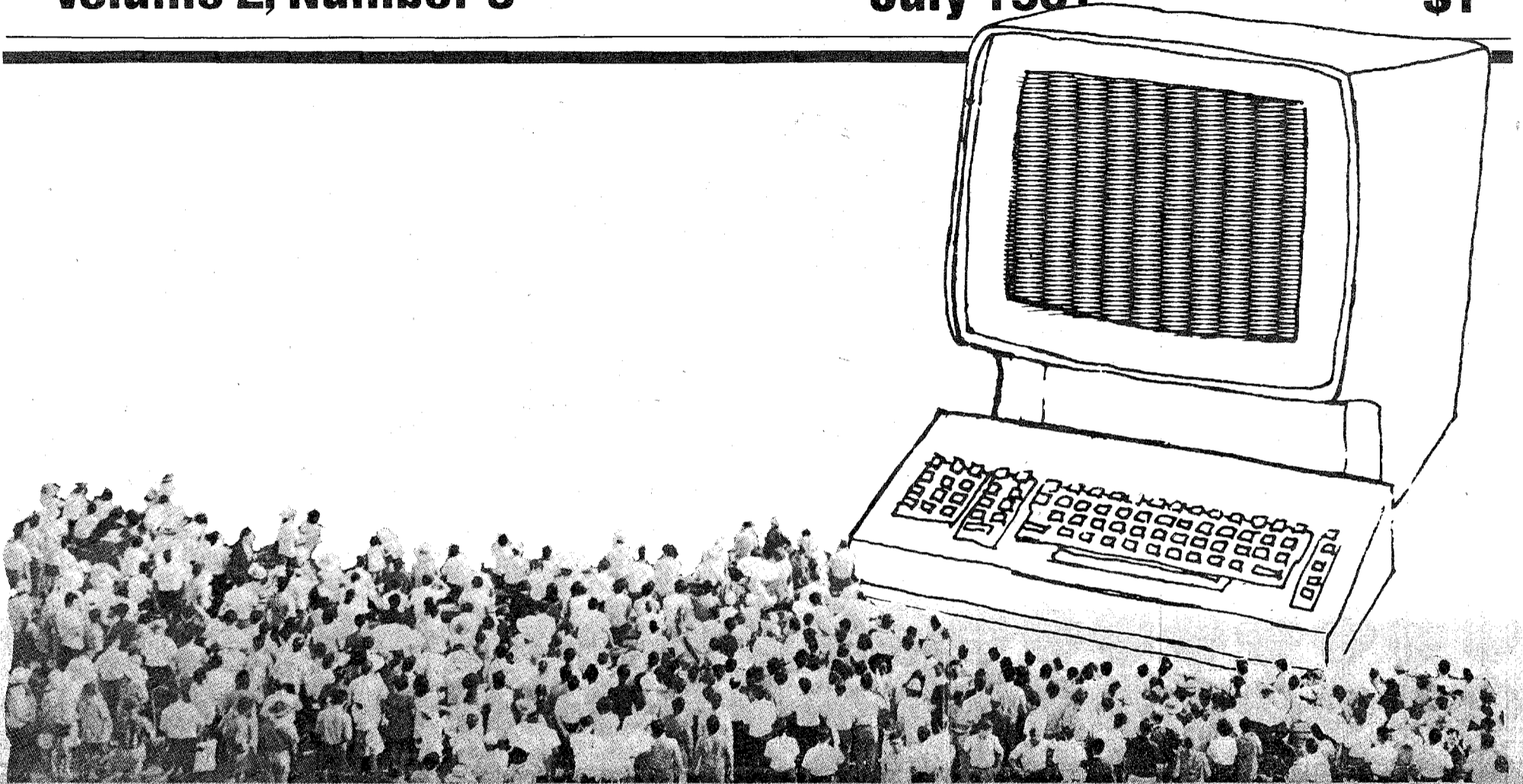
# Broadside

A FEMINIST REVIEW

Volume 2, Number 9

July 1981

\$1



## The Force Is with Us

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# LETTERS

## Broadside:

We were dismayed at your article on the US space shuttle in the May, 1981 edition of *Broadside*, both for the political attitude and technical inaccuracy it reflected.

It seemed ironic to see you describing NASA as "merely a vehicle for American political will," an agency with "enormous capability which, if properly utilized, could help the world solve some of its urgent problems" — just above an article on articulating "the connection between women's issues, such as rape, lack of human services, sexism, harassment, to the priorities of men that produce and proliferate nuclear technology." You virtually congratulate NASA for surviving a decade of budget cuts, presumably on the basis that the agency is only as bad as those who run it and we could surely do a better job. But what about solving earthbound problems

on earth, rather than attempting to reform NASA and gradually finding ourselves adopting the murderous values it represents?

Indeed, one is led to wonder whether just that kind of co-opting is at work in your cavalier and apparently unconditional support of NASA's solar program, particularly the assumption that the solar-powered satellite (SPS) is the best if not the only way to "utilize solar energy for use on earth" (sic). Besides the health hazards involved in beaming solar electricity back to earth — which in themselves are pretty disturbing — the SPS is just another large-scale, expensive, centralized megaproject which will serve to maintain and foster patriarchal control of even renewable energy sources. As readers of Canadian Renewable Energy News, an Ottawa-based monthly, we can tell you that a variety of small-scale, decentralized, low-cost alternatives are available now, just waiting to be used by people intent on taking back control of their own lives. As a movement inherently interested in self-determination, it is contradictory if not dangerous for feminists to ignore these technologies and promote the likes of Columbia or the solar-powered satellite.

**Helen Forsey,  
Mitchell Beer,  
Ottawa.**

(From Eve Zaremba:  
I am in full agreement with readers Forsey and Beer on the desirability of a variety of small-scale, decentralized, low-cost energy alternatives. However, my column was not about energy but about NASA. Solar research was mentioned in the context of NASA, of the many things NASA spends money on or could spend money on.

Given the orientation of the present regime in the US there is a distinct possibility that NASA will be dismantled and the US space effort 'privatized,' that is, turned over bit by bit to private industry, part of the military-industrial complex. In that case, nothing which does not bring an immediate profit or does not suit the military,

would be undertaken. Under those circumstances, it is better that NASA survive. That is my opinion, not necessarily *Broadside's*; others may disagree.

I regret that my column was not clear on this point and that this misunderstanding occurred. I am sure that Forsey, Beer and I are in full agreement on what would constitute a good energy strategy. Unfortunately our choices are not between good and bad but between degrees of badness. This has never been more true than right now.)

## Broadside:

I am sick and tired of the so-called "feminist" comments made about the film *Ordinary People*. With *Broadside's* May 1981 issue I finally realized that the other review I read of the film (in *Ms.* magazine) also missed the point of the film.

The title *Ordinary People* is somewhat sarcastic, but it is also about the experience of an attempted suicide, parental response to the situation and the agony and anger of going to a psychiatrist's office to discuss your problems (be the shrink Jewish or not).

That is the crux of the movie. I cannot understand why there is such paranoia about the fact that the mother refuses to deal with her son's experience. The father did not, either. Would you have applauded the film had it had a different ending — the father leaving and the mother dealing with her son in a compassionate way?

Both parents in the film are to blame for their son's guilt feelings. Only the teenager can work this out with his shrink. In fact, the boy found out that he could indeed love his mother and father despite their mistakes. The fact that the mother does leave is not a sexist issue. The mother (or shall we use a non-sexist term parent) did not want to deal with her child's problems. This was made clear in the film. Parents, be they male or female, often do not want to deal with a psychiatric illness or, for that matter, any other illness. That is the issue your film

critic fails to see. Try going into a movie theatre for once and see something through without immediately stereotyping the situation. Women as well as men have their foibles, as the movie showed. The lawyer father wasn't sensitive either. Or better yet, ask someone who has had such an experience.

This letter is not an attempt to say that women have not been stereotyped in other movies. What I am trying to say (although long and tedious) is that your reviewer missed the whole point of a very sensitive insight into a very serious situation — namely the relationship between children and their parents.

**Michele Krause,  
St. Louis, Missouri**

(From Barbara Halpern Martineau:  
"The relationship between children and their parents" — would that we lived in a world where this phrase rang true. We don't. We live in a world of specific oppressions, by, for the most part, white fathers, patriarchs. Sure, there are oppressive mothers; sure, there are sensitive, nurturing fathers. Howcum, though, we see, over and over, ad nauseum, the single, narrow vision of the white fathers and the white sons, when there is a kaleidoscope of other, more colourful visions to be had at the turn of a perspective?

## Broadside:

The Groupe francophone of Amnesty International, Toronto has learned from the head office that Natalya Maltseva was tried in Leningrad in May 1981 and given a 2-year suspended sentence.

From now on we must stop all actions on her behalf or it will do more harm than good.

We wish to thank you for the help and support you have given us.

**Gisele Igier,  
Groupe francophone,  
Toronto.**

## Broadside

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## EDITORIALS

### Coalition Politics

Coalitions loom large for most of us these days. They have formed around a variety of urgent issues: anti-nuke, anti-Klan, against cut-backs, Latin American juntas, etc. Women's groups and feminists generally are being asked to sponsor, support and join.

Coalition politics are a thorny problem for feminists. As Adrienne Rich comments in last month's *Broadside*, coalitions are never any kind of two-way street. Women are called upon to subordinate concerns central to our politics to issues always described as more important. Regardless how worthy are the goals of such coalitions, the politics are problematic for us.

Ultimately the issue is the seriousness with which we take our politics. Day to day, practical questions have to be faced and

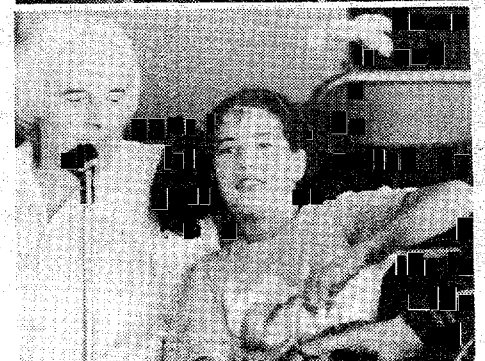
resolved. For instance, how do we deal with an anti-nuke coalition which threatens to include an anti-abortion group? We must face the fact that too often anti-nuke and generally environmental forces do not perceive themselves as being against the Right or do not see anti-abortion as part of the Right and do not give a damn about women's reproductive rights and women generally. So what do we do?

On the opposite tack, how about anti-Klan rallies virtually boycotted by black communities possibly due to the visible involvement of lesbian/feminists in the anti-racist coalitions? We must face the fact that sexism and homophobia are widespread even among politically active and aware blacks. It's not confined to Wasps, Right or Left. So what do we do?

Coalition politics has never been the primary strategy of the Women's Movement. And for good reason. If it is to be the 'strategy of the eighties' as is being claimed, we had better think all the ramifications through very carefully.

Next fall *Broadside* is planning a series of articles on the various aspects of coalition politics. We are now soliciting contributions from our readers — perspectives, opinions and experiences. All submissions should be typed double spaced, no longer than 1,000 words and in the office by September 14, 1981. You can call or write *Broadside* for more information: (416) 598-3513; PO Box 494, Station P, Toronto, M5S 2T1.

### The Brunch Bunch



The *Broadside* collective hosted a 'Friends of *Broadside*' Strawberry Brunch on June 14 in Toronto: Judith Lawrence (left) emcees; Philinda Masters (centre) gives away a door prize; Susan Cole (top right) entertains at the piano; Tammy Marcus (bottom right) draws a winner for the smoked salmon raffle.

Deena Rasky



# Femme Hy Hits New Low

by Susan G. Cole

The Toxic Shock Syndrome scandal brought home some tough points to women who had assumed that tampons were harmless and, if anything, a boon. We realized that we didn't know a hell of a lot about these handy items, what they were made of, how correct usage makes a difference, how manufacturers were content to put on the shelves a product that wasn't sufficiently tested and how the feminine hygiene industry was diddling with our genitalia for profit. The key issue was that we didn't have information.

One might have thought that the communications media would be on the case immediately, demanding of tampon manufacturers that advertisements for the products be clear, informative, and direct. But television has always had a hard time with the messy facts of life. The television advertising industry prefers to deliver an image of perfection, one that doesn't mesh too well with the fact that bodies sweat and smell. It has always been particularly difficult for the medium to deal with the truth that women, somewhere between the ages of 12 to 50, go through a monthly hormonal change for which there are probably more euphemisms than there are for the part of the anatomy affected.

More than that, there is a vocal part of the public that has protested vigorously against feminine hygiene ads on television, or "femme hy" as it is called in the trade. As a result, regulations have been changed in Canada so that on TV we are finding out less about tampons rather than more, Toxic Shock Syndrome be damned.

Before 1972 femme hy ads were hardly a phenomenon. Kotex and Tampax virtually dominated the market and large-scale TV ad campaigns, costly as they are — perhaps \$90,000 for a 26-week contract — are not much use to monopolies. Since 1972, however, the market has been glutted with new femme hy products that do away with belts and uncomfortable paraphernalia and, naturally, the new products have spawned an array of TV ads designed to give women the good news.

Suddenly there was a little truth-telling going on. Products with names like "Light Days" came dangerously close to suggesting that there is such a thing as flow that ebbs; the words "accident" and "spotting" crept into the copy in aggressive campaigns that were a far cry from the treacherous Kotex ad Kimberly-Clark had devised: fully animated butterflies flitting around a box of Kotex embedded in flowers. Inside the box there was, well gee, what was inside the box?

The fact is that certain consumer groups are determined to keep women as sheltered as ever. Nicole Parton, consumer columnist for the Vancouver *Sun*, spearheaded a coupon drive to get femme hy ads off the tube. The CRTC received thousands of these coupons, which bore the complaint that the ads were "invading viewer privacy" (sic). While tampon and napkin advertisers cheerfully sang the praises of their new and improved products, teenaged women in mixed company, or parents watching television with their children either did not want to know about it or did not want their children to know about it. Without control over when these "offensive" ads would hit the screen, they were forced to have conversations with their children they didn't want to have. Says Helen Murphy of the CRTC: "There was a groundswell of opinion that objected to the use of the words 'spotting' or anything that suggested that women bleed once a month."

In response to the public outcry, the CBC refused to carry any femme hy ads and the



Illustration by Gail Gelfner

Canadian Association of Broadcasters (CAB) revised its code of standards in 1979. The code now demands that femme hy ads be pre-cleared with the Advertising Standards Council, the industry's watchdog, and that ads must "keep the sensitivities of viewers in mind." Whether an ad does so is still left for the licensed broadcaster to decide, but other new guidelines are not as open for interpretation.

For example, no ad, whether for a femme hy product or for a household cleaner, can "play on fears." Accordingly, you'll never again see those unsightly flakes of dandruff that gross people out enough to convince you to buy dandruff shampoos. The American ad for Odor Eaters that features a shoe salesman falling into a dead faint when a customer removes his shoes will never be seen on Canadian television. And of course, it's good-bye to jungle mouth. Those ads play on fears.

This and other CAB guidelines would render the following femme hy ads unacceptable: A woman sitting in her summer whites appears to go into a panic. She runs over to a female friend and in dismayed but discreet tones confides that she's had a "surprise." "You should use Go with the Flow," her friend urges, and by happy coin-

cidence is able to produce a sample from her handbag. She takes her friend on a guided tour of the tampon. "It's reliable, absorbent, keeps you fresh and it has a great new applicator for comfort."

This ad would give the Advertising Standards Council cardiac arrest. It breaks every rule in the book. To begin with the woman is dressed in white and so the ad "plays on fears"; "surprise," "accidents," and "spotting" are verboten words because they make veiled reference to the fact that the unspeakable fluid has colour. (In the United States, by the way, any reference to the "fluid" is a no-no and a tampon cannot be "absorbent." It must "do what a tampon is supposed to do.")

An ad for Playtex tampons that showed an exchange between two women did not pass by the Advertising Council's watchful eye because the use of the pronoun "you" made the ad "too personalized." According to the new guidelines you cannot show the feminine hygiene product, so you can forget the guided tour of Go with the Flow. For that matter, if you insist on calling the product Go with the Flow, you will never get a TV slot because the name itself gives away the nature of a bodily function not fit for television. And since the CAB says that

an ad cannot "employ graphic details of the product or the product's capabilities," any dialogue about applicators would have to be tossed out. It's not the same for an underarm deodorant ad which can rattle on about a deodorant's roll-on or dry spray comfort for the full thirty seconds of ad time. You can stick whatever you like under your arms, but the CAB does not afford the same freedom when it comes to the area below the navel.

Femme hy ads can appear on television only in the afternoon before four o'clock and in the evening after 9. This creates the cluster effect that allows you to view a wide range of femme hy commercials in a short time.

Cathy Rigby swings on the parallel bars in an ad for Johnson & Johnson's Stayfree Maxi-pads. This is one in a series of ads for feminine hygiene products that suggests that if a woman works out in the gym, or (as in past campaigns) swims twelve laps, rides horses for hours, or plays seven games of tennis, she needs the special protection only the advertised product can provide. Many women who are not up to this kind of activity at any time of the month find this selling technique hilarious, but it meets the standards and that's what counts.

Brenda Vacarro huskily explains that Playtex believes every woman should use feminine hygiene products intelligently — a veiled reference to Toxic Shock Syndrome and the scandal that rocked the feminine hygiene industry. During the scare women seemed to talk of little else, but CAB and the rest of the bureaucracy couldn't quite bring themselves to accept the fact that the issue touches 53% of the population. In any event, the Playtex ad is about as direct as the advertising industry will allow.

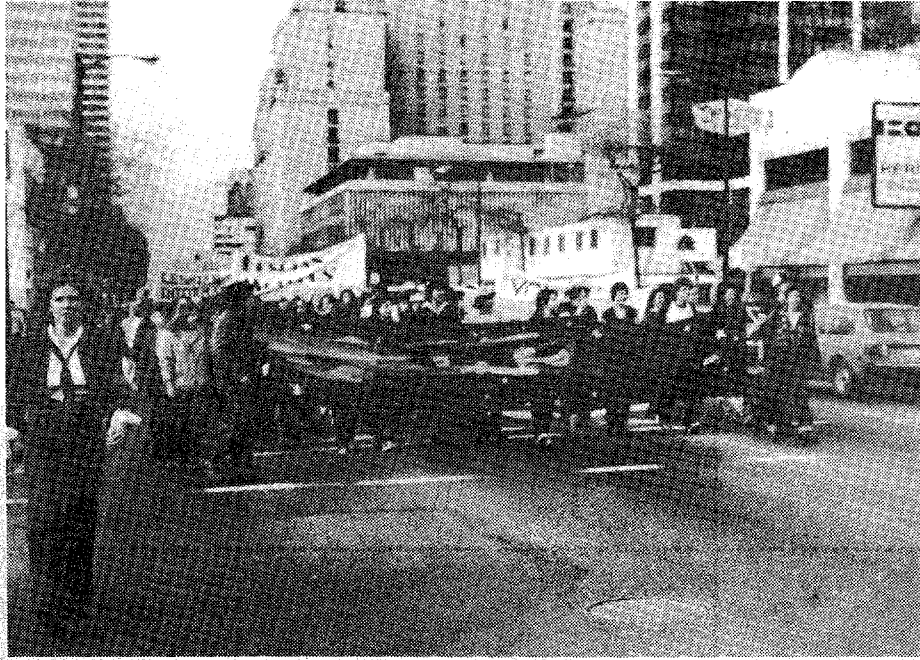
Fifteen minutes later, in the next commercial slot, you may see Scott Paper's homage to the art of fence-sitting. When the vocal minority called for the removal of femme hy ads from television, much of the protest was generated in the west, where Scott Paper has its headquarters. Scott dutifully pulled its ads for Confidets sanitary napkins off the air.

But with its share of the market "stagnant" and Scott's Confidets now new and improved, Scott wanted back in the TV ad arena. Question: How to do it without really doing it? Answer: Do it but insist you're not.

A woman enters a set decorated with plastic greenery and a floral patterned sofa. The woman is carrying magazines. "We at Scott Paper," she begins, "believe that there are certain products you don't want to hear about on television," whereupon we are invited to learn about Scott's new improved product by reading its magazine advertisements. Translation: Here we are on television, paying thousands of dollars for the privilege, telling you why we're not on television.

All of this demure nonsense is the result of a conservative backlash that hasn't uttered a sound about exploitation. An ad for a safety razor makes the sniggering point that "you don't have to get wet to get close." Models cosy up to each other in a celebration of the sexual rewards that accrue to wearing the right designer jeans. Sexy is "in," sexual is "out." And as ads continue to portray women as housewives or as adjuncts to cars and to men's colognes, another facet of our culture is made plain: we can't get any information about sexuality, our health, or our bodies without causing hysteria in reactionary quarters, but these forces of reaction are perfectly comfortable with sexism. After all, sexism is always "in" — everywhere. ●

# Lesbian Conference: Agony and Audacity



by Maureen Fitzgerald and  
Daphne Morrison

One woman at the May, 1981 Lesbian Conference in Vancouver, when complimented about her spiffy new haircut, remarked that she figured meeting 500 lesbians all at once warranted at least a new haircut! However, not all the participants were equally well prepared for just how terrific meeting 500 lesbians all at once can be. Indeed, among the activist lesbians in Vancouver, who are prepared to organize around a number of issues but who seldom organize around their sexual preference, the pre-conference mood varied from indifference to cynicism. The post-conference assessment by the same women is different. Many wish they had attended more of the conference, and there is general agreement that the conference was not only terrific but also productive. The contagious energy that was generated in three days was put into the practicalities of starting to organize for the 80's.

At any conference, whether of anthropologists or Shriners, reporters are likely to make gross generalizations about the participants as some sort of sub-population of the nation. From this conference, one could say that lesbians write (especially poetry), talk (endlessly), make and debate art, make music and love (but not as uninhibitedly as the myth would suggest). Some are spiritual, some are political, some put their energies into the women's movement, some into alliances with gay men. Some are mothers, daughters, sisters. Some are disabled, some are warriors and some consider themselves witches. We are sometimes afraid but mostly we are not. We will not be boxed in by what is politically correct and we defy categorization.

Having failed at gross generalizations about lesbians (and at maintaining a reporter's distance) we shall now try some conference specifics to convey something of what it is to be a lesbian in Canada in 1981:

#### • Some Conference Highlights

A lesbian backlash against the right. A very crowded workshop (over 100 lesbians) on lesbians and the right spilled over into a second unscheduled workshop the next day. There was, in these two workshops, enough commitment to move to create a national lesbian movement with a political focus.

#### • A Large Scale Consciousness Raising Session

At the workshop on lesbian sexuality, 90 lesbians found themselves very nervously talking about a topic on which the straight world assumes we are entirely and effortlessly focussed. That we are able to accomplish talking at all made us feel that we had

been through some collective rite of passage.

#### • *Dancing in the Streets*

Well, we were not exactly dancing in the streets but we were in the streets and dancing in relatively quick succession. A very joyous march through the west end of Vancouver ended at the Westend Community Centre. With music from Mama Quilla II, and 600 women in attendance, up and down was the only direction to move. At least one woman was able to stand and listen raptly to the music in the middle of all that turbulence.

#### • *The Poetry after the Night Before*

10:30 Sunday morning and some women gathered to read their own poetry and some prose. They lingered for a while on the agony and audacity of writing from their experience as women and as lesbians. "You always have a voice inside of you demanding 'Who do you think you are to write'." They confronted the fear that comes from the change that underlies their experience and that can be precipitated by their writing. The advice to these writers from Anne Cameron could apply to us all. "Being brave is when your guts have turned to water and you do it anyway."

#### • *The Good News Amongst the Bad*

At the lesbians and work workshop a CUPE woman from a Saskatoon local told of a woman who won parental leave when her lover had a baby. The bad news concerns the backsliding of CUPW, which at its last national convention dropped from its constitution mention of no discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation.

Other bad news is that non-consensual violence in lesbian relationships is a reality; the good news is that there was an incredible openness in the workshop that dealt with it. Women took risks and acknowledged their anger which expressed itself along a continuum from psychological to physical violence.

We don't want to give the impression that 500 lesbians were peaking continuously for three days on euphoria and commitment. One woman remarked on a lunch break, striding off down the hallway as she spoke, that the conference made her realize "just what I do and don't have in common with other lesbians." She sounded more concerned with what she *didn't* have in common. In most workshops there was a core of vocal, articulate women — women who considered themselves political activists and who spoke as such. Women without that sense of themselves and that experience may well have felt intimidated, nervous and on the periphery. In some workshops there was the acknowledged discomfort expressed when pre-feminist lesbianism meets the political correctness of post-feminist les-

bianism. (For the record, monogamy has now been declared P.C.)

Talking about how comfortable or uncomfortable the lesbians who attended the conference felt raises the broader question of the accessibility of the conference. It was held at a community college, in very much the school atmosphere. It's hard to express personal thoughts and feelings while sitting for two and a half hours in a school desk (no matter that the desks were arranged in a circle!). And it's equally difficult to find a place to hold such a conference. The conference focussed on workshops, with the cultural events tacked on at the end of each day. There are lesbians who feel quite at home in a school atmosphere, talking for three days. There are lesbians who wouldn't touch it with a ten foot pole.

If it's true, as a woman in the lesbians in the women's movement workshop said, "We have to reach out as much if not more to other lesbians as we have to straight women", then we have to think of ways to do this at national conventions. Organizing a lesbian event along the lines of a festival might attract a more varied set of participants.

Perhaps because we were such a like-minded crew, there were very few contentious issues. Some exceptions — the report from the bisexuality workshop sounded defiant: "We are not going to go away even if some of you don't think we exist," and the lesbians and art workshop debated (but not very vigorously) whether and why feminist art is boring. After Robin Tyler announced in her keynote address that separatism is reactionary, we expected to find the workshop readying for the rebuttal. Alas, the workshop was subdivided; committed separatists were in one group and since we weren't separatists but had come to listen to them, we left that workshop. We listened for the rebuttal in the plenary but it didn't come.

Tyler went on to say "there is only one division we should recognize as dykes: that is the division between the very rich and the rest of us." That is indeed a major division in the world as a whole, but there are also divisions between the rest of us dykes that need some acknowledgement. Like the women's movement in Canada, we often operate out of the assumptions and interests of being white and middle class. But some of "the rest of us" issued a report from the workshop on "lesbians and welfare" that sounded angry. The report demanded active recognition of the fact that many lesbian mothers live below the poverty line. It also stated that it was time those lesbians in a position of privilege concerning money, education and increased opportunities, "stop paying lip service to those who don't have that privilege." "Start sharing it," these women said. There was no debate on this report although we think it's time there

was. At the least, it was a call to lesbians to acknowledge the fact and implications of class differences.

Building a lesbian movement was the hot topic for the conference. If we are to build such a movement, we have to consider who we are building the movement for, who we are as lesbians and where we're coming from.

Another issue that potentially divides us and which needs our consideration is the responsibility for children. Two resolutions were contained in the report of the Lesbian and Feminist Mothers Political Action Group from Vancouver: "WHEREAS mothering women find it difficult to become involved in political work within our community because of lack of childcare during political meetings or events, BE IT RESOLVED that all groups doing political work provide adequate childcare for their meetings." "WHEREAS children are seen as the private possession and sole responsibility of their parents and this leads to the isolation of both children and mothers; BE IT RESOLVED that we find ways to take more community responsibility for our children."

This group also brought the issue of childcare at the conference to the foreground at the plenary. The childcare was not adequate. The college wouldn't allow the conference to use its daycare which meant that the children were in a separate location and were hard to check on. There weren't enough qualified people to run it and in some cases it fell apart, so events were still going on although there was no daycare. Ironically, in one instance the daycare ended just before the showing of a film on lesbian mothers. The women of LFMPAG made a strong point that they were not criticizing the organizers of the conference for this; they wanted to explain the problems and point out ways to avoid them in the future. We don't make good childcare a high priority in political organizing, they said. It's hurriedly put together because it's not recognized as a job that can take months to organize. And if it's not good, it defeats its purpose. Our society doesn't make collective childcare a priority, but we have to.

In all the workshops, lesbians were similarly starting to set priorities for action, moving to take collective responsibility for our own interests. We have come out of this conference with a two-year plan that will concentrate on building lesbian organizations in the regions next year, leading to the founding of a national organization of lesbians at the next national conference in 1983. By this time next year we fully expect to have had a national day of action against the right organized by lesbians. March 27, 1982 is the date set. So you thought last March was hectic?



Photos by Bernice Bradshaw



August 6, 1945

# Flashback to Hiroshima

by Kay Macpherson

Sadako Kurihara is a "hibakusha" — a survivor of the Hiroshima A-bomb. She still has symptoms resulting from that morning in August 1945. The strong sunlight still bothers her.

Sadako Kurihara is also a poet. Since 1945 she has devoted her talents and energy to trying to prevent a repetition of that "hell on earth" which killed 300,000 men, women, and children in Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

I met Mrs. Kurihara in Hiroshima after we had spent a day visiting the Hiroshima Peace Park and Museum. She came to our hotel with a young professor who had offered to act as interpreter. She brought me some of her poems and articles written about her. Although she had missed a newspaper interview herself, she smiled and greeted me and allowed me time to finish being interviewed by a local Hiroshima newsman who was asking about the women's movement in Canada.

Sadako Kurihara is a tiny woman with a smiling face and eyes which seem almost closed in order to shield them from the light. She and Professor Kanokogi, who has a car, offered to drive us wherever we would like to go. So we started by visiting the new Art Museum. After a cup of tea and some talk, we looked over the beautifully designed circular museum, which, as well as Japanese paintings of the last hundred years or so very much influenced by the French had a good post-impressionist collection.

We talked a little about how opposition to nuclear bombs and desire for peace dominate the life and work of many Hiroshima victims. Mrs. Kurihara's poems all reflect this passion. She is considered a radical by many, and is not always popular with a government which is planning to increase its "self-defence" forces and to sell

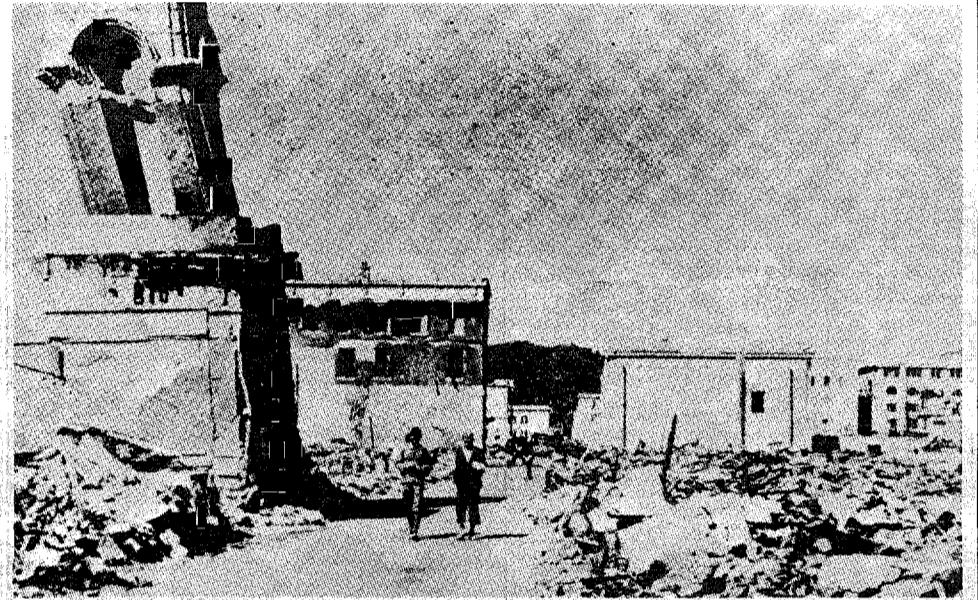
arms to the United States. We talked too about education and schools in our two countries and about why there is increasing violence among students. There have been instances in Japan of young people, apparently quiet and co-operative, suddenly attacking their parents and going wild without any particular provocation. We agreed that one factor may be that young people today cannot be sure that they will have a chance to grow up at all. They don't know whether they will live very long, so what is the point of preparing for the future? It's as if they were saying — eat, drink, for tomorrow we die.

Mrs. Kurihara has spent most of her time since 1945 trying to prevent another nuclear bomb being exploded — she was five kilometres from the explosion that morning in Hiroshima. She saw a flash and felt the blast which blew out all windows in the neighbourhood. Luckily, her two children were at school further away from the centre, but the confusion and panic affected everyone. She found the two little girls on their way home. She put them on her bicycle, which had a little trolley attached, and rode all night to get away from the burning city and leave the children with relatives in the country. Her husband, who worked for a big company, had been drafted to help clean the city. His clothes were covered with spots from the "black rain" which fell on the city and was later hospitalized for a month, but he recovered from the effects of radiation. Mrs. Kurihara bicycled back to the city the next day to help a neighbour find her little girl's body in the school where she had died. They brought her home to be buried. The child's handkerchief was stuck to her burnt face so that her mother could not pull it off to look at her face for the last time.

The total devastation of the centre of Hiroshima has been documented, recorded on film and shown in pictures painted by

some of the survivors. Black and white film of the time did not show the colours of the catastrophe but many of the paintings do this most vividly, thereby increasing the impact of the appalling scenes and horrifying suffering which the victims saw all around them. Everything burned. An orange-red light lit up the city and many more people perished after the blast where buildings burned and collapsed. One of Hiroshima's seven rivers — part of the estuary of the main river — disappeared completely since it was at the epicentre of the blast. The Peace Park and other memorials contain thousands of unidentified remains of those who died.

When the Pope visited Hiroshima earlier this year he said, "to remember the past is to commit oneself to the future." It is this conviction which motivates the present citizens of Hiroshima. They remember those who died and how they died and how future war can only lead us all to a similar fate.



This is why the children of Japan are brought in their school classes to learn about the bombing of Hiroshima and why Mrs. Kurihara and her colleagues spend their energy on promoting peace and disarmament.

It is why I agreed with a woman professor whom I met at a Kyoto University who said that it is women who must take responsibility for making the decisions about war and peace that so far have been made only by men. If we don't do it soon, we may well be too late. This is where we must act, not only each year on Hiroshima Day, but whenever and wherever we can speak up.

The Japanese *Times* recently reported the formation of a "supra parliamentary league" composed of 104 members of the Diet (Parliament) to promote disarmament. Perhaps our women MPs could take some similar actions. There's a lot to be done and tremendous odds against us.

## Conference Reconstituted

by Nancy Jackman

The Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women held its long-awaited conference in Ottawa on the last weekend of May for women to discuss the constitution — and its implications.

Women were in Ottawa on Friday night and Saturday, sitting quietly in the West Block of the Parliament Buildings and being 'told' what the issues were. The issues raised are important, but I am used to women working together to decide what to do and how to do it — not being told what to do. Besides, some women's groups such as the National Action Committee on the Status of Women, the Ad Hoc Committee on the Constitution and C.U.P.E. were boycotting the conference because CACSW wouldn't agree to an external review of its work and its direction.

Lucie Pepin, President of CACSW, welcomed us and set the theme by telling us that "we must make things happen." Her motivational statement, "we should work for our children and grandchildren" was interesting — if only single women and women without children could be appreciated just for who they are, rather than what they produce. Pepin's speech avoided any mention of the February 14th Conference. That conference was organized by the Ad Hoc Committee on the Constitution as a result of Doris Anderson's resignation and delay of the CACSW conference, and resulted in heavy lobbying with MPs and the inclusion of an equality clause for women in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Luckily, Kathleen Ruff (BC) followed up by thanking the Ad Hoc Committee for its work, and then gave a run-down on the many areas in which women are still discriminated against.

• Being part of shaping the new framework for the ongoing Constitutional debate, and getting what we need in order to function, e.g. money, research, and strong positions on issues. Lloyd Axworthy, the minister responsible for the status of women, said we should

"seize upon the symbolism and the Charter to change and reform political institutions and provincial governments."

- Redistribution of income between the federal and provincial governments, especially as it affects the social services.
- Minimum wage laws, and their variance in the provinces.
- Representation of women in the Supreme Court of Canada, and more women in the provincial courts.
- Native women, the repeal of Section 12 (1)(b). Marlene Pierre-Aggamaway, President of the Native Women's Association of Canada, suggested that Indian women might sue the Indian governments, i.e. the Brotherhoods, for not protecting Indian women's rights with the government!
- Implications of marketing boards for women.
- Barriers of movement for employment of women.
- Women need to take initiative in choosing the topics that we women want to see discussed, and not rely on what the men, the government, says are the issues.
- We need to be prepared to make presentations to the ongoing federal provincial task forces as they move across the country. Sending us notices of these task forces and doing research is something CACSW can do for us. Let's encourage them to do so!
- We need to assist the provinces in bringing their laws into conformity with Section 15 of the Charter, so that laws are equal, both for women and men.
- We may need to go to court to make our points heard. So we should prepare inventories of discriminatory laws and pick the laws that we want to fight first, second, etc. When we've decided what to fight, then we need to pick the best plaintiff in the country to fight the case on behalf of women. It's like fighting the Person's Case again.
- We need to set up a tax-deductible defence/attack fund to fight the issues in the courts (contact Nancy Jackman, 184

Roxborough Drive, Toronto M4W 1X8, if you're interested) and form a group to make the list of discriminatory laws in your area. Alice Desjardins, Director of the Advisory and Administrative Law Section, Justice Canada, said that because Canada was a signatory at Copenhagen last summer Canada's laws must conform to that UN agreement.

- Family Law. Myrna Bowman, a Manitoba lawyer, said that Manitoba is the only province that will help a parent whose child has been 'kidnapped' by the parent who was not awarded custody of that child, whether or not the child is now in the province that awarded custody.
- Nicole Bénard, a Québec lawyer, made a strong case as to why Québec won't give up its civil code on family law and divorce. We who live in other provinces need to listen to the Québec women on what they have to say on this.
- Muriel Duckworth from the Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women raised the issue that our society is based on violence, the violence of men — who run the government. Duckworth said that the vested interest of the state is violence. She spoke of women as "refugees with children," "the poor," "the exploited," "the reserve labour force." To change this, women need to oppose arms sales, nuclear plant sales, and push for no women in the armed forces. All levels of government should have 40% women, 40% men, and 20% mixed within the next few years.
- Hold on to Medicare at all costs.
- Louise Dulude, a lawyer and researcher for CACSW, gave a clear picture of the mess women are in re pensions. The only pensions we have that are to our benefit are the CPP and Old Age Security, i.e., the government pensions — and they aren't very much. Private company plans aren't to our benefit, as women don't earn the salaries that command good pensions, and survivor benefits vary. Women must become informed on

this and lobby hard for change.

Mary Eberts, a Toronto lawyer, summed up with Kathleen Ruff by making specific suggestions to the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women. (We should support their suggestions by writing to the CACSW, 151 Sparks Street, Suite 1005, Ottawa K1P 5E3.)

1. That the Council prepare a research paper on what has been done in the US regarding 'defence' funds for fighting legal battles of women's (and other) issues.
2. That the Council prepare a series of guides as to who, what, why, when and how women can speak on issues of pertinence to us.
3. That the Council, in concert with other major women's groups, institute conferences across the country concerning women and pensions. These conferences would gather data, and inform women of the seriousness of the pensions issue for women, and give women some ways to start lobbying.
4. That the Council make a proposal to the government concerning a National Day Care Act.
5. That the Council prepare bibliographies of materials of federal/provincial jurisdictions, relations and concerns, in readable language.
6. That women refuse to accept the 3-year moratorium that the provinces will have before they are forced to make their laws conform to the new constitution. The provinces should conform immediately.

All in all, the conference was informative, and the calibre of the speakers very good. It was unfortunate there wasn't more interchange for the women there. There is a basis for women to talk now on what we want to do, and to encourage the CACSW to do what we want. If the CACSW won't do an external review of Canadian women's needs in the 80's, it is up to us to let them know what we want, and to do that now and every time we see a new need arise.

# MOVEMENT MATTERS

Movement Matters compiled by Judy Stanleigh

## Latin American Feminist Abducted

Alaida Foppa, at age 67, is a distinguished art critic, poet and broadcaster, who founded the Mexican feminist magazine *Fem*. She was abducted on December 19, 1980 in Guatemala City. It is believed that members of the Guatemalan army carried out the abduction.

Signora Foppa had been living in exile in Mexico since 1954 but returned home to Guatemala to visit her ailing mother. Since her abduction, several organizations have tried unsuccessfully to determine Signora Foppa's whereabouts.

Anyone who wishes to help locate Signora Foppa is requested to write to:

His Excellency, A. Arturo River G.  
Ambassador of Guatemala  
294 Albert St.  
Suite 500  
Ottawa, Ontario K1P 6E6

If you wish to write it is important that you:

- identify yourself and assume a respectful attitude toward the ambassador
- explain that you have heard about the valuable work done by Signora Foppa
- express your shock and dismay at her abduction
- request information about her present whereabouts
- do not mention Amnesty International

If you receive a reply from the Ambassador, please send a copy to Amnesty International, 10 Trinity Square, Toronto M5G 1B1.

International pressure can help to bring about the release of Alaida Foppa, if she is still alive.

Women's Latin American Support Group

## Axworthy to Intercede?

In a letter to women's organizations in April announcing the Report of the Task Force on Immigration Practices & Procedures "Domestic Workers on Employment Authorizations", Lloyd Axworthy, Minister of Employment and Immigration, said he hoped the Report "will result in changes that will benefit foreign domestics in Canada".

He was referring to the thousands of women "imported" annually into Canada on temporary work permits to do live-in domestic work — a job with such substandard wages and working conditions that Canadians and permanent residents won't do it. If these "guest workers" want to apply for landed status, they soon discover that the assessment criteria are stacked against them. The government wants to keep the option of shipping them back home after a few years of hard labour.

The Task Force Report criticized the work permit system as it presently operates, and recommended that the assessment criteria be re-vamped so landed status could be a possibility for these women. After all, the Report said, there's a high demand for domestic workers, so why shouldn't they have the right to permanent residence in Canada.

Mr. Axworthy *appeared* to agree, raising the hopes of thousands of these women. A few weeks later, however, those hopes are being dashed as the Immigration Commission begins implementing some of the Task Force recommendations — using the strictest possible interpretation. Recent changes allow ten points for occupational demand to "nannies" and "housekeepers" — classifications that demand training and job experience that the majority of foreign domestics in Canada do not have.

Many organizations across Canada have echoed the domestic workers' growing concern that the Task Force Report is going to result only in a few cosmetic changes, while the work permit system continues to be the predominant source of cheap household labour.

For more information contact: Intercede, 348 College Street, Toronto M5T 1S4; (416) 922-8017.

'Movement Matters' is a section intended as an informational forum in *Broadside* 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.

## Michigan Womyn's Music Festival

August 13-16, 1981

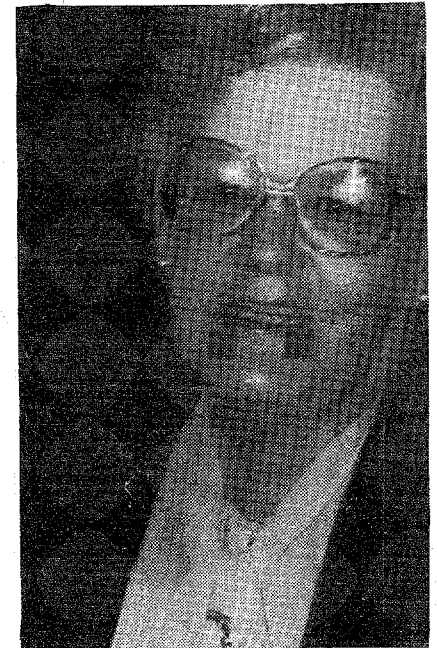
Tickets:  
Low income - \$40  
Average - \$44  
Supporting - \$52

Four days of music, food, camping and parking. Rates available for fewer days.

This year's performers include: Alive!, Ferron, Sweet Honey in the Rock, Meg Christian, Terri Garthwaite, Alix Dobkin, and Ginni Clements.

For tickets, information and a map of how to get there, write:

**We Want the Music Collective**  
1501 Lyons  
Mt. Pleasant, Mich. USA 48858



Jane Hastings

For her part in the Ontario hospital workers' strike, CUPE president Grace Hartman received a 45-day sentence which she will serve at Vanier Institute for women in Brampton.

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Are you willing to help organize (or meet with) FPC-PFC members in your area? \_\_\_\_\_

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toronto rape crisis centre

## SUMMER BENEFIT DANCE

At 519 Church St., Toronto 8:00 pm to 1:00 am  
Saturday, July 11, 1981

Women Only. Alcoholic & non-alcoholic beverages.  
Price: \$4.00, or what you can afford. Tickets at door.



Womynly Way Productions  
Presents:

## A Midsummer Surprise!

Friday, July 10, 8:00 pm  
Innis College Town Hall, 2 Sussex (at St. George)

Featuring: April Kassirer  
Sharon and Fran  
Linda Ryan Nye

Tickets:

\$5.00 advance at Toronto Women's Bookstore  
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## Cultural Equity For Women

The under-representation of women in Canada's cultural life constitutes a form of censorship, according to the National Action Committee on the Status of Women in its brief given June 4th to the Applebaum-Hébert Committee. Presented by Lynn McDonald, Diana Mason and Thelma McCormack, the NAC brief charged that cultural policy is shaped by men for men. Women are patronized while men are subsidized.

This inequality is no longer acceptable to Canadian women who want and expect equality of opportunity. In addition women want the freedom to develop new art forms and different standards of judgement that honestly reflect the cultural experience of women. Under present circumstances, the agendas and definitions of taste are shaped by men who teach the courses, write the texts, and give the prizes.

Three guidelines were proposed to the committee. First, positive steps to remove sex discrimination. Second, self determination. Third, equalization. Concern was expressed about distribution systems in the arts. The brief noted that experimental feminist films were shown in university classrooms while pornographic films were shown downtown.

Covering both the arts and the social sciences, the NAC brief made ten recommendations: Periodic surveys of the participation, levels of employment and income differentials of women in the arts; special funding for women's groups who are developing a feminist culture through films, dance, music, sculpture, magazines; funding for the distribution of new works by women; renewal of broadcast licenses to depend on broadcasters' record for the improvement of programming by women for women; special research programmes in the social sciences and humanities to foster scholarship about women; half of all panels making grant-awards to be women; encouragement to libraries for collections by women and on women; steps to give women in rural and small communities opportunities to participate in the arts; all media, print and electronic, to select women as reviewers of books and art shows by women authors and artists; training programmes for mature women who wish to undertake careers in the arts; children of all ages be

# Not In the Picture

by Sasha McInnes-Hayman

*The following is a summary of the brief presented to the Federal Cultural Policy Review Committee, in Toronto, June 4/81.*

I have been looking forward to being here today and am pleased to share this opportunity with my colleagues, Kay Armitage, a distinguished filmmaker from Toronto, and Janice Hladki, an accomplished performance artist, also from Toronto. Although our media are different, the problems we encounter as arts-related women are similar and we will be pleased to respond to any questions you have relating to this subject. My comments today will focus primarily on arts education.

## Applebert Cultural Hearings

**OTTAWA:** Due to the extraordinary number of briefs received from Ontario organizations and individuals, additional hearings have been scheduled by the Federal Cultural Policy Review Committee for July 6-10, in Toronto.

The decision was made to ensure that a reasonable number of those requesting a hearing could be accommodated.

The Committee investigated the possibility of holding the hearings outside Toronto, but no other location proved to be as convenient and central as Toronto, for out-of-town interveners.

The July 6-10 hearings will be held at the Westbury Hotel, 475 Yonge Street, Toronto. Hearing times each day will be 9:30 am-12:30 and 2-6 pm.

given opportunities in schools and community centres to develop creative skills regardless of sex.

The present situation of women in the arts in Canada is a replica of women generally in Canadian society. Such inequality is no longer acceptable to women, and is recognized by many men to be a serious impediment to the development of Canadian culture.

I won't belabour statistics beyond pointing out as an example that there are 18,647 arts-related students in Canada who are women and who make up close to 70% of the entire student body while only between 1 to 20% of all arts-related positions are filled by women and only approximately 8% of the teaching faculty are women. Something is terribly wrong.

Art schools, like all of our society's institutions, reflect the condition of our male dominated world.

It has been demonstrated that the major textbooks in use across the country in Art History courses virtually ignore women artists. Jansen's "History of Art," a text of over 500 pages, does not include a single woman artist. Hauser's "The Social History of Art" acknowledges the existence of only one woman artist in a list of over 450 names. To bring it closer to home, the text, "Painting in Canada: A History" by J. Russell Harper, which is a large, lavishly illustrated volume contains references to 343 artists. Out of these, only 7.3% are women and only 1.4% of the illustrations therein are of women's work. Where is the work of distinguished Canadian women artists such as Eva Bradshaw, Nan Cheney, Ethel Seath, Kay Morris, to name only a few? Why has this aspect of Canada's cultural heritage been lost, hidden and forgotten?

The experience of women as reflected through their art has been systematically excluded. The young woman student using these texts is subtly and insidiously reinforced in the idea that her own experiencing of the world is irrelevant and invalid. This has appalling consequences. Tillie Olsen, in her essay "Silences" warns us of the terrible toll that being ignored can take on creativity. Women are not just silent, they are silenced.

It is awesomely difficult for anyone to be an artist. But the young man in art school has the advantage of seeing all around him numerous examples of male artists; all manner of "role models" in galleries, museums, the art press, books, Art History classes and especially in the persons of his teachers. The young woman does not have this encouragement. She is told in dozens of ways

that she has no heritage, that there have not been significant women artists in the past and that their numbers today are insignificant.

It is indeed time to put women artists in the regular Art History curriculum and most important, in the standard textbooks, so that they can be seen by the next generation of students as natural phenomena and not exotic hot-house plants.

Images tell us who we most profoundly are and also what is possible for us to be. Without our cultural heritage we are crippled when we come to make the important decisions of our lives. I believe that the impact of the various arts on the shaping of a society's basic values cannot be underestimated. When only half of our society's artistic expression is available to us, our health as a society is dangerously threatened.

As women, we demand our heritage. We also demand the freedom and support to express our experience and perceptions freely through our art.

We have seen clearly through recent ongoing studies that arts-related males and perspectives predominate. The *unspoken* assumption that male culture *is* culture, that Canadian male culture *is* Canadian culture is the worst kind of lie. It is the unspoken assumptions behind the patriarchal structures that institutionalize sexism in our society.

## Recommendations:

That the Federal government initiate measures to:

1. Include equal representation of women on boards, art councils, art advisory committees, juries, and in managerial, administrative and policy-making positions.
2. Appoint and fund a central advisory committee of women experienced in and committed to improving the status of women in the arts.
3. Initiate measures to increase the participation of women artists in competitions, grant awards and commissions.
4. It is clear that women are the major caretakers of home and children. Therefore, child care must be seen as a legitimate art expense in grant application budgets. ●

# Rags to Roaches

by Judith Lawrence

How strange are the workings of the law. It seems during the past month that in BC and Ontario it has been quite legal for people to dress up in sheets and tall white hats with eye-slits, and appear on the public streets, but men can be arrested for wearing dresses, except on Halloween, and in lots of places you can't get a hamburger if you're not wearing shoes.

Of course, we know that under these pointed hats the Ku Klux Klan hide their pointed heads, but it does raise the whole question of what is decent and what is indecent.

And now there's a move to get women back into skirts, begun, of course, in Washington where Reagan's arbiters of fashion have put the word out that pants suits are unsuitable attire for female civil servants. Hang the expense, go out and buy all that paraphernalia, wear it, and like it.

Somehow this takes me back to the merry widow, that's the garment, not the opera. Now there indeed was a garment to be reckoned with. It was like armour, with breasts. You laced yourself into it so that your breasts were up under your chin, and everything else was stuffed in at the back. This was done so that you could wear strapless dresses, which also meant that you shaved your arm-pits, which in turn produced very interesting varieties of skin rashes.

I'm talking about how things were in the fifties, and I don't suggest we're going back to that, yet. But we should be on our guard. One of the good things about the seventies was that women started wearing anything they wanted. There was a certain built-in anonymity. It was hard to tell the sheep



Moiria Armour

from the goats. It looks as if we're going to have to choose if we want to be a sheep or a goat, and dress accordingly. There will also be the odd wolf in sheep's clothing, but we'll know who they are.

Well, there was a time when talking about clothes was considered to be politically incorrect, if not down-right indecent. That was back when talking about real estate was also indecent.

Funny how things have changed. Listen

to the conversation among a group of women, and it'd just as likely to be about houses as politics. Not that houses aren't political; the whole question of who decides about the disposal of the roof over your head can't be anything but political. Having decided to get involved in real estate, the first thing you have to learn is how to interpret the euphemisms in the ads. Loaded with charm (has inadequate plumbing and dangerous wiring), handyman's special

(falling down), Quaint Victorian architecture (old house in Toronto, or any house in Victoria).

Actually, Queen Victoria never lived in a house. She lived in castles, palaces or estates, and a lot of her children ended up living in schlosses. Which is not too surprising when you consider their penchant for marrying Bavarians. Queen Victoria is always blamed for the excesses of Victorian architecture, but in fact it was Albert who had the rotten taste. Come to think of it, he grew up in a schloss.

All of which brings me to the subject of cockroaches. Toronto cockroaches are having a hard time right now. It used to be that, when people started renovating, the roaches could just move next door, and wait it out. But now that whole rows of houses are being gutted the roaches have had to move to other neighbourhoods. Rosedale has become pretty popular, and some of the trendier downtown restaurants. In fact, they have been spotted dining in some of the very smartest places. But it's a hazardous existence. I'm told that some cockroaches have even decided to move to the cottage to wait out the crisis in a more bucolic, if more rugged environment.

The roaches will, however, have the last laugh when they find that they are the only species to have survived a nuclear holocaust. They'll have their pick of whatever is left of the desirable neighbourhoods. They'll be seen in the Roach Plaza, sipping a cocktail, or dining in the Roach Garden. It will all be written up in Zena Roach-cherry.

But in the meantime the roaches are keeping a low profile — with their eyes on the interest rates, and their backs to the newly-plastered walls. ●

# Adrienne Rich:



Last month *Broadside* interviewed Adrienne Rich about the New Right, the contemporary women's movement, and coalition politics. This month *Broadside* features an account of Rich's personal history, the conclusion of which will appear in the August issue.

by Jean Wilson

In a 1973 review of Adrienne Rich's seventh book of poems, *Diving into the Wreck: Poems 1971-1972*, Margaret Atwood observed that the book was one "of explorations, of travels":

The wreck she is diving into ... is the wreck of obsolete myths, particularly myths about men and women. She is journeying to something that is already in the past, in order to discover for herself the reality behind the myth, "the wreck and not the story of the wreck/the thing itself and not the myth." What she finds is part treasure and part corpse, and she also finds that she herself is part of it, a "half-destroyed instrument." As explorer she is detached; she carries a knife to cut her way in, cut structures apart; a camera to record; and the book of myths itself, a book which has hitherto had no place for explorers like herself. (*New York Times Book Review*, December 30, 1973)

Eight years later, Adrienne Rich is still exploring obsolete myths, but she is no longer detached. As her remarks in an interview with *Broadside* in May indicate, she now finds herself diving deeper into her own past in an exploration of her own sensibility as a poet, feminist, and lesbian.

This fall, her latest book of poems will be

published: *A Wild Patience Has Taken Me This Far*. It concerns in part the fear and uses of power, the lack of political and historical consciousness, and in part Adrienne Rich's personal history.

Rich has been thinking a lot lately about origins, "mine as well as other people's. I've been thinking about the fact that I have lived almost all my life in the northeast and that all of my roots are southern — Alabama, Georgia, Virginia. This is a fact of some significance in the United States. That particular sense of local ethnicity that southerners have is very complicated and very unexplored...the South has been perceived as the racist sector of the US. It has been the region that has borne the onus for all the racism, criminality, darkness, swampiness, torrid sensuality, unspeakable acts, and so forth, of the country at large. There's been a particular dichotomy between New England and the South. New England was on the 'right' side. New Englanders were abolitionists. Very little is made of the fact that there were slaves in the North. The myth is that there is no racism north of the Mason-Dixon Line. I've been thinking a lot about how the South is a place where the rest of the US projects its shadow self, the one it doesn't want to accept or acknowledge."

Rich herself is simultaneously at home and not at home in the South. She grew up surrounded by southern accents, though she was taught by her parents to lose her own. She was born in Baltimore, Maryland, "which doesn't count as the South in the South but does from a northern city such as Boston." Another ambiguity in Rich's origins is that her father was a Jew and her mother is not. Her father was "an intense assimilationist" with a great deal of "inter-

nalized anti-Semitism."

"I was raised to pass as a Christian, in a genteely anti-Semitic, WASP world." It was a world into which Rich was supposed to marry and lose all vestige of Jewishness. Rich said she'd been wrestling with these two strands of her origins for a long time, as early as a poem called "Readings of History." Recently she has written poems about her grandmothers, both of whom seemed to be "beaten down by patriarchy," which has furthered her exploration of the southern, Jewish, racist character of the South and the situation of white women in the South.

Rich thus grew up in a family which was very closeted about their Jewishness. There were strong constraints on discussing family life with outsiders. Rich's father was a brilliant pathologist and scientist and internationally recognized for his work. Her mother, who grew up in Atlanta, was trained to be a concert pianist and composer, but gave up both pursuits on marrying. Now in her eighties, she still plays, and recently she wrote a paper recounting how she was sexually harassed as a young piano student. As Adrienne Rich observed, she may have seen marriage as a protection from such harassment.

In her family, much value was placed on "good taste"; that is, "being excessively WASP and Christian in one's demeanor and lifestyle and things of the mind." For Adrienne Rich, one benefit of that particular attitude was that she was encouraged to read and write and play the piano.

"I was taught early to write letters at home, and they would give me poems to copy. I guess I was also naturally verbal, but I got an enormous amount of pleasure from this activity, which was approved of and en-

couraged. So from a young age I knew I could and wanted to write. The later discovery that you're loved and encouraged as long as you write on a certain kind of topic was yet to come."

However, increasingly through adolescence, Rich felt she had to escape this family life. Subsequently, she went to Radcliffe and there had her first "crisis" — falling in love with a woman and not knowing what to do. The result was the break-up of a friendship and the most profound emotional experience of her student life. Shortly after, she became engaged, as that seemed the thing to do, but the engagement fell through. In 1952, at the age of 21, Rich went to England, having won a Yale fellowship to go abroad. She felt dislocated and uncertain, however, and too young to have had a book published, which by then she had (*A Changing World*).

To the outside world, Adrienne Rich seemed a success, but she personally did not feel like one. She felt particularly isolated as a poet. While she was in school and university in the late forties and early fifties, there were few poets visible, male or female, and of those who were visible most were "vast old fogeys like Eliot and Auden and so on who were incommensurable with anything I could relate to." However, winning the fellowship did enable Rich to separate further from her family and to begin to make some connections with other poets who weren't "incommensurable." At Oxford, a friend introduced her to the local poetry society, where she did at least meet two women poets, Elizabeth Jennings and Jenny Joseph, who gave Rich much-needed encouragement and support.

When she returned from England to Cambridge, Massachusetts, in 1953, Rich infuriated her family by marrying a Jew and becoming a faculty wife. "I was no longer the promising student or poet. I got patted on the head for being a promising student but not for being a grown-up woman who also wrote poetry." During this period, Rich had three children, "the first profoundly radicalizing experience of my life." She consequently felt "furious" much of the time but also experienced "levels of anger and love I hadn't known existed."

Also during this period, important developments were occurring in her poetry, the writing of which could only happen spasmodically, in fragments. "I realized that these fragments were really one long poem, and were all about one thing." And by the end of the fifties she had found Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex*. "That was a beginning. There was some kind of formulation of the problem, but it was so early that I had no one to talk to about it. I remember that as the major theme of the fifties — women in situations together with small children and forever on the verge of saying something but thinking about it in private."

By 1953, Rich had published two books of poetry, both of which were "praised to the skies by all the right people for being all

Photos by Beverley Allinson



# Journey Towards a Common Language

the right things." They were early fifties formalist poems, "extremely technically competent and adept. I was well trained." In the late fifties, Rich began to write poems which were more broken and organically connected to her personal situation. These poems were coolly received by critics. "Some of them spoke in a woman's voice as a woman and that was what I was warned against." At this time, Rich says, she was influenced by such poets as Denise Levertov, who also provided a great deal of personal support, William Carlos Williams, and Wallace Stevens — poets whose work was open and colloquial rather than like "the pronouncements of a disembodied spirit."

The sixties were "the beginning of an opening-out period" for Adrienne Rich as well as for many other people. Among other developments, she stopped having children and began to think about leaving her marriage. At this time, too, the civil rights movement began. "That came to me as a kind of deliverance of the mind. I had grown up with segregation and with the guilt and double-think of racism as a constant in life. There began to be a way to look at all this terrible material and to handle it openly." Rich began to read work by black writers and analyses of what this movement was about. That political experience led to the anti-war movement for Rich and to "the questioning of the whole concept of how human beings use each other and which ways are worthy and deserving and which aren't."

By about 1969 Rich was leaving her marriage, and "feeling that all kinds of things were possible. There were beginning to be off-prints and radical literature by feminists in bookstores. I remember walking around New York for about three weeks being unable to pick up this literature because an inner voice said: 'you went through this in the

fifties. What does this have to do with you now?'" But this "intense final resistance" soon broke down.

When Rich left her marriage in 1970, she had by then "buried my lesbianism quite thoroughly, but I was reading with fascination all the feminist material then available, almost all of which dealt with lesbianism."

For Adrienne Rich, another influential event of the sixties was Sylvia Plath's death. "There was an enormous amount of turmoil and upheaval on the part of women poets and poets in general." Besides Plath, other poets had died by apparent or confirmed suicide, including John Berryman, whom Rich knew quite well. "There was this legend of the suicidal poets, of the poets who went all out. I wanted to write poetry to the hilt too, but I didn't want to have to kill myself," though she wasn't sure that could be avoided.

The emergence of the women's movement at the end of the sixties, Rich thinks, was crucial in saving her life because she doesn't know how otherwise she would have handled "all the rest of it."

In the seventies, Adrienne Rich finally did come out as a lesbian. Her feeling is that after all the years of denial and repression of this essential fact of her life, she "flew into a thousand pieces." One day, reading Judy Grahn's "A Woman is Talking to Death" in *Amazon Quarterly*, she came to the passage: "Have you committed any indecent acts with women? / Yes, I have, and most of them are acts of omission."

"I absolutely fell apart! I'll always treasure those words. When someone says to me that one of my poems has changed her life, I know exactly what she means. But I also know that lives change and poems become the occasion, the catalyst."

When Adrienne Rich left her marriage, she thought she would remain friends with her husband, that they would be separated



Photos by Beverley Allinson

but still connected. Unfortunately, he committed suicide, which was in many ways a catalysing event for Rich, as well as extremely painful. But women friends were very supportive, and insisted that Rich was neither guilty nor responsible for her husband's suicide. That support was galvanizing. Suddenly, Rich was a female head of household with three male children in their early teens. "In some sense, I began to take myself more seriously than ever before. I insisted on a full-time tenured position teaching English. I felt very strong and equal to life. That was empowering."

And, on reflection, she remarked, so was another earlier experience. From 1966 to 1971, she taught basic writing and reading skills at City College in New York to ghetto students. These students were admitted to the college on a pre-baccalaureate level, which was a new development resulting from more liberal education policies in the US inspired by the civil rights movement. "It was an environment of intellectual excitement. The students were very political and incredibly motivated. For example, they were desperately reading Frantz Fanon (*The Wretched of the Earth*) because they knew it was important for them. Their ages ranged from 17 to mid-twenties. It was the most exciting teaching experience I've ever had, including women's studies, because that optimism and excitement within an institution is something I've never encountered again. Of course, there were people there looking on in absolute horror!"

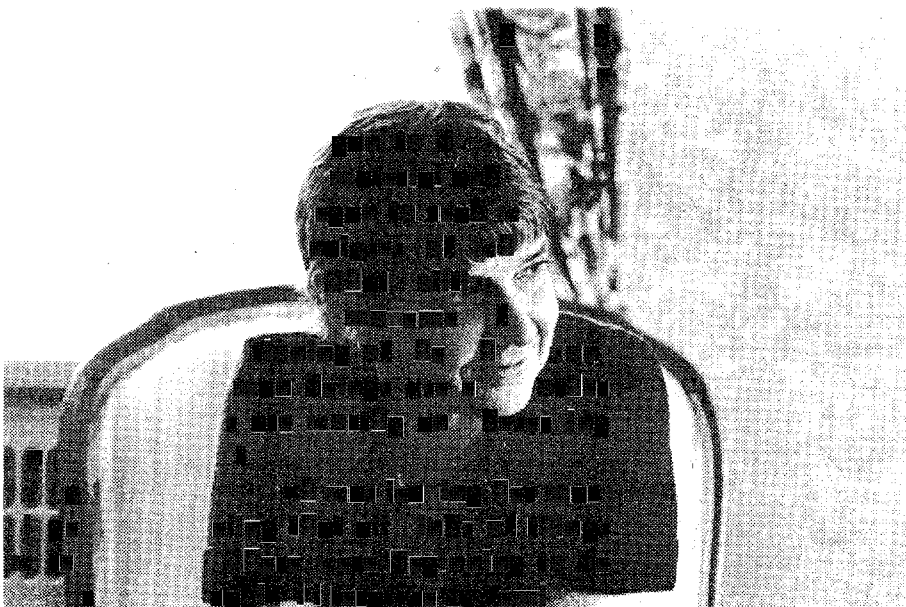
This period was also for Rich one in which she was re-examining the question of language. Explaining standard English to her students made Rich examine for herself how the language was used and how it could oppress. It was a time of intense politicization too — controversy raged over whether the college would have an open admissions policy so that every student in

New York City would have a chance to participate in this kind of program.

Rich also heard her first strong feminist statement from a black woman faculty member after a meeting in which a group of black women had prepared a statement but was told that a black male would read it because it was important to keep the image of a strong black male before the media. At this point, a woman who had worked on the statement made a devastating speech, saying that if this was how it was to be she would just go home and cook a chicken instead. Then she wheeled on the white women and said: 'you're going to have to deal with this too. It's not just among us.' " How right she was.

Just after coming out, Adrienne Rich remembers trying to explain to a straight woman at Cornell University who was upset by the notion of lesbianism and by apparent hostility from lesbians she knew, just what that moment is like when a woman's entire world perspective changes and she sees with fresh eyes things she'd never seen or named before. "That continuing discovery over decades that the world was not what I thought it was started very far back, particularly the realization that parts of life and whole areas of human experience were to be kept wilfully covered up. It's been the first thing last for me. This attempt to look at both my southernness and my Jewishness has come very late for me, but that's where I began and that was the first cover-up. That's where crushing silence first came down and I knew that but didn't ask why."

Since 1976, Adrienne Rich has lived with Michelle Cliff, a writer and historian who recently published a book about being a woman of colour called *Claiming an Identity They Taught Me to Despise*. They live in northwest Massachusetts in "an unretired, semi-rural state" and among other activities edit *Sinister Wisdom*. •



# Micro-technology:

by Patty Brady

Some readers, particularly those with a prior knowledge of the subject of the new technology, may find this treatment of the topic either sketchy, or odd in its emphasis, or both.

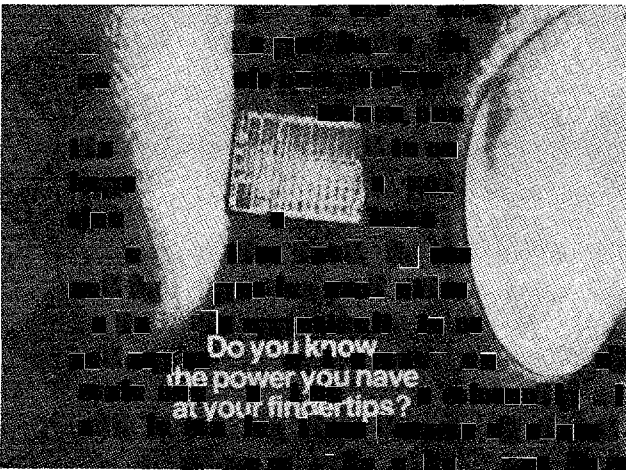
I have attempted to describe the new technology and its very recent origins, some of its applications and its most threatening consequences. There are fuller treatments of all of these areas available and these are indicated in the selected reading list provided.

What I try to stress in this article is that the new technology represents a truly awesome augmentation of human and physical power, and that right now it is firmly in the hands of corporations who are compelled by the logic of the capitalist system to further develop it and apply it wherever it seems to them to be profitable. Conversely they do not apply it where it may be needed or useful if this would not be profitable. To do otherwise would be to go under to their competitors.

What is of enormous consequence for the rest of us is that if they are allowed to continue their usual practices unimpeded, we are in for such times as will make the depression of the 30's look tame.

On the other hand, by realizing what we are up against and by supporting each other in the struggles that lie ahead, we have the opportunity to create a world where the needs and aspirations of the many, not the profits of a few, are the main considerations. The microchip will aid us immeasurably in making these dreams of shared plenty a reality.

But first we must have the power. To mix a metaphor and coin a slogan — **THE CHIP STOPS HERE!**



Silicon microchips — they're called the job crunchers and the job killers. Because of them, we're on a collision course, in a race against time, and, to top it all off, the chips are down.

Alternately, corporations view them as ushering in the second industrial revolution and governments all over the industrialized world are scrambling to make sure their nation's industries get a piece of the action, the bigger the better.

They're tiny, cheap, reliable, extremely powerful, incredibly smart and can have almost as many applications as the imagination allows.

## A VERY BRIEF HISTORY

In February 1946 the first electronic digital computer was switched on at the Moore School of Engineering in Pennsylvania. Designed and built over a thirty month period in response to the needs of the American military, ENIAC (Electronic Numerical Integrator and Computer) weighed thirty tons, and needed 18,000 vacuum tubes to perform its tasks which, even so, it did none too reliably.

In the early 50's most computers in the US were either owned by or at the service of the military establishment or the designers of nuclear reactors.

By the mid-50's, again in the US, there were about 1,000 large scale computers with increased computational power and a corresponding increase in size. Ten years later there

*Patty Brady used to live in Ottawa and work at Upstream. She now lives in Toronto, works as a typesetter, that is, sits in front of a video display unit all day, and is a member of the International Socialists.*



were approximately 30,000 computers and by 1976, 220,000. Of this latter number, 40% were large scale, the rest being mini-computers (by definition those costing less than \$50,000). By this time, prices had gone down, computational power increased still further and ownership was now heavily concentrated in private industry. For example, the American federal government had only 3.4% of computer facilities, while manufacturing industries accounted for almost one third, and financial and wholesale/retail sectors owned another third.

Nevertheless, this is not the area where the "revolution", only recently heralded, had occurred. The most dramatic development took place in 1969 with the invention of the microcomputer.

Up to this point miniaturization of computer components had developed fairly rapidly. From first using vacuum tubes, which were large, consumed energy voraciously, and were often unreliable, the next generation of computers were outfitted with transistors, and then with integrated circuits that contained thousands of micro-miniaturized transistors imbedded in silicon chips. This latter step made for the possibility of some very small computers, e.g. suitcase size if desired, but their logic units were limited to one task. It was thus still necessary to have very large computers containing hundreds or thousands of integrated circuits in order to perform a variety of functions.

In 1969 an engineer at Intel Corp. of Santa Clara, California, succeeded in achieving a breakthrough in miniaturization and built a whole computer on three tiny silicon chips. One chip contained the "brain" or the central processing unit, another moved data in and out of the CPU, and the third provided the program or instructions.

By the time MCS-4 hit the market in 1971, it contained 2250 miniaturized transistors on one silicon chip less than 1/6" long and 1/8" wide and it was almost as powerful as ENIAC, that first computer which filled a room the size of a basketball court.

Even more important, it was a general purpose computer that could easily be programmed to perform a whole range of tasks, and above all, it could be mass produced.

In 1976, the year there were 220,000 conventional computers in the US, there were also 750,000 microprocessors (the heart of the micro-computer) and by 1985 there could well be 20 million.

Their power has increased since 1969 by a thousand fold, each chip containing up to 225,000 transistors as compared with the original 2250 and the latest chip advertised by Hewlett-Packard boasts 450,000 transistors. Meanwhile, the cost has plummeted.

Five years ago an equipment manufacturer speaking to a convention took 18 microprocessors out of his pocket and threw them into the audience. "That's \$18 million worth of computer power — or it was 20 years ago." Explaining that the \$20 microprocessor was as powerful as IBM's first commercial computer which cost \$1 million in the early 1950's, he concluded, "The point I'm making is that computer power today is essentially free."

## THERE'S MONEY IN CHIPS

In the sense that the microcomputer runs on a minute amount of energy, that silicon, the semi-conductive material on which the circuits are etched is plentiful and cheap, and that the integrated circuits themselves are for the most part assembled by lowly paid Asian women in Free Trade Zones (one of the very latest creations — an absolutely stunning combination of exploitation, oppression and superprofits), then it's true that computer power is now free or almost so. But, given that, it's certainly not being given away.

Rather it forms the basis of the only real growth industry in the world today. In the midst of overall depression and slump, the new microtechnology appears as the beacon light to a beleaguered capitalist system.

There's money to be made in chips, money to be made in all kinds of hardware, software and gadgets, and money to be made by drastically reducing the amount of human labour required to make products and to process information.

Consider the following examples. Neither are quite technically feasible at the moment but they do provide excellent insight into what corporations envisage as the most effective applications of the new technology.

- There are approximately 58,000 industrial robots in the world today. 80% of them are in use in Japanese industries and according to a spokesman there they expect that within five years all blue-collar workers will disappear from the assembly line. The eventual goal is factories without *any* workers at all.

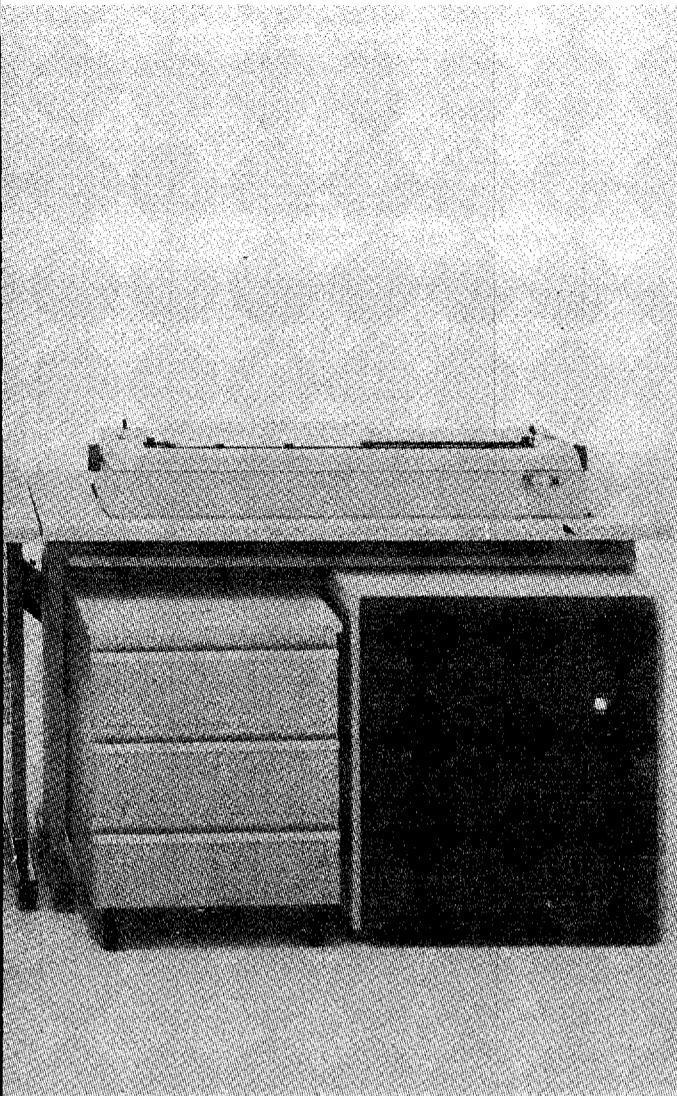
- One of the authors of a recent report by Evans Research Corp. of Mississauga, Ont. described the Integrated Office of the Future (IOF) as follows: "In a very real way the integrated electronic office will become less visible as it matures." Canadian Pacific Ltd. in Montreal already has a version of the IOF in operation right now. It consists of MERLIN (Multi-function Electronic mail Report retrieval and Linked Info-systems Network) and a number of managers, each with a desk-top terminal, who can access electronic files, dispatch memos and reports, review messages or refer items to others for action, evaluate business results and see to other inter-corporate items. Add voice recognition (maybe ten years off, which eliminates keyboarding) and portability (there need not even be an "office") then ask yourself the question: How many people are missing from this picture?

## THE ELECTRONIC OFFICE

The issue of job loss is crucial. It affects almost every one of us — those currently employed, those now unemployed, and the young who may never have the chance to work if things develop along the present course.



# Shorting the Circuits



Not only will individuals be displaced, involuntarily or on quitting or retirement, but whole categories of occupations which now employ large numbers of people will disappear. Those that remain will require only a fraction of their current workforce.

Moreover, new jobs created by the micro-electronics industry, particularly systems design and software, will represent a very negligible proportion of those wiped out.

• continued page 17



## Job Loss

"Though it may have escaped the average factory worker, the goal of the industrial revolution was to provide for human survival with the least effort on everybody's part. The same thing is happening in the office. The challenge is for industry to handle more rationally and humanely the gradual reduction in the length of the work week." — H. O'Rourke, Evans Research Corp. Ontario.

"What can't be automated will be done by executives and part-time personnel." — Xerox representative

"People will adapt nicely to office systems if their arms are broken. We're in the twisting stage now." — A Vice-President of IBM in 1975

- The elimination of 40% of all office work, with a 25-30% drop in labour requirements (Siemens study, West Germany, 1976)
- 30% of bank and insurance employees redundant in 10 years (Nora-Minc Report, France, 1978)

## Health Hazards

"It can be stated unequivocally that video display terminals do not emit levels of radiation of any wavelength that could possibly be hazardous to the operator, whether pregnant or not, and therefore do not represent an occupational hazard." — Health and Welfare Canada

"This whole thing may end up like Three Mile Island. We won't know the damage for another ten or 20 years." — American Newspaper Guild official

"You don't sit 12 inches from a television screen eight hours a day unless you really want to fry your brains." — Paul Brodeur, author of *The Zapping of America* (re: identical standards of allowable radiation emission levels for VDT's and recreational television sets in North America)

Video display terminals constitute a health hazard of unknown proportions. It's estimated that about 250,000 people in Canada and seven to ten million in the US use them on the job. These include workers in large government and business offices, airline and train booking clerks, newspaper reporters, typesetters, some retail clerks, library workers, telephone employees, and the number is growing everyday.

- Emission of non-ionizing (ultra-violet, infrared, microwave) and ionizing (x-rays) radiation

Possible dangers include cataracts, birth defects, cancer, premature aging resulting in rapid bodily deterioration and early death.

It's now possible to manufacture a VDT without a cathode ray tube, the source of radiation, but to date none has been marketed.

- Eyestrain and deterioration of eyesight

This is usually caused by low quality machines and by inadequately designed and improperly lighted work stations.

- Visual and mental fatigue

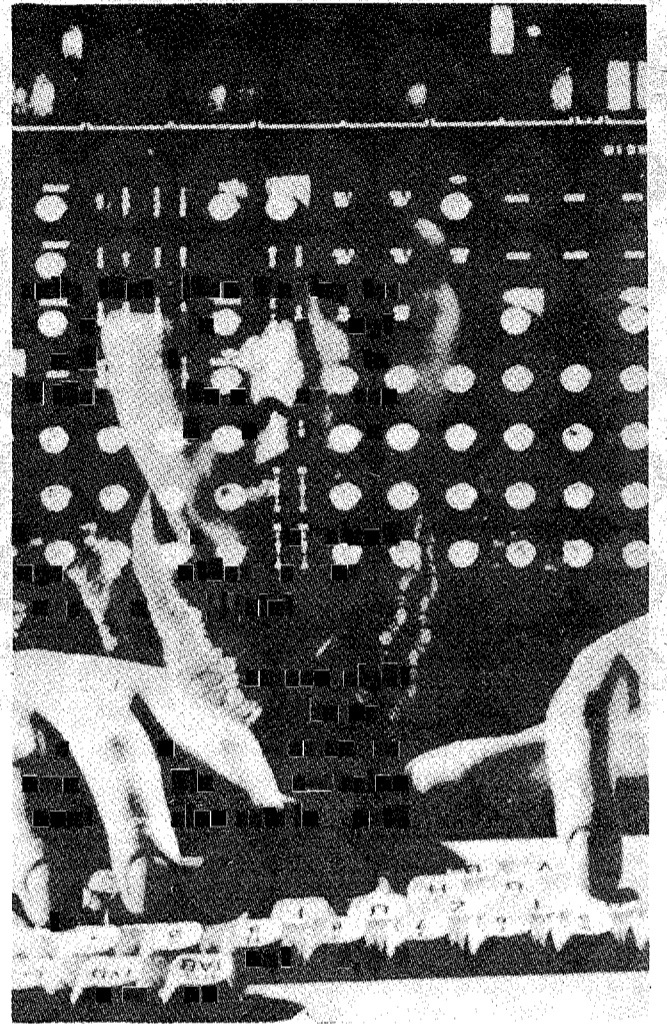
Symptoms include headaches, dizziness, nausea, indigestion, insomnia, irritability and nervousness.

Often caused by boring and/or repetitive work done at high speeds with the pace controlled by the machine, not the operator. Also caused by eyestrain.

- Stress caused by shift work

Management often introduces shift work to keep machines in operation for longer hours in order to recover costs of equipment as soon as possible.

Results include disruption of sleep patterns, digestive disorders, increased proneness to ulcers, excessive fatigue and deterioration of social and family life.



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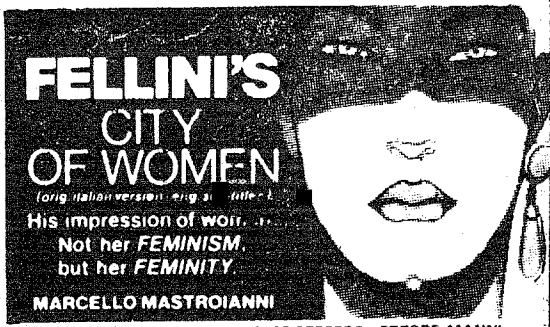
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# ARTS

## Fellini's Fears and Fantasies

Spellbinding,  
a dazzling visual display."



**FELLINI'S  
CITY  
OF WOMEN**  
(orig. Italian version - orig. title -)  
His impression of women...  
Not her FEMINISM,  
but her FEMINITY.  
MARCELLO MASTROIANNI  
with ANNA PRUCNAL BERNICE STEGERS ETTORE MANNI  
Daily at 1:45-4:20-6:55-9:30

**8th Fantastic Week!**  
CUMBERLAND  
FOUR  
CUMBERLAND NEAR  
AVENUE RD. 964 5949

...tive this film really is, although I also firmly believe it reflects his deep-seated resentment and distrust of women in general, mainly because, as he has several of them remark about Marcello in the course of the film, he is entirely incapable of understanding women. At some future date, the film will be invaluable as a document of patriarchal response to feminism — I'm sure we will be able to learn a great deal about the workings of defence mechanisms in male brains by studying the imagery and structure of *City of Women*. Why, for instance, is it repeatedly assumed by men, all available evidence to the contrary, that when women gather together their main and only interesting topic of discussion is sexuality, mainly with men, possibly with women? (In this patriarchal context, lesbianism is initially an allowable premise, explained as an understandable indulgence of women who either have no access to men or who are so insatiable that their lust extends itself in all available directions. Later in the film the terrifying — to Fellini — implications of the lesbian "threat" are suggested.)

At an early point in the film Fellini goes so far, in his fascination with the contemporary phenomenon of feminism to allow that (hetero)sexuality does have its consequences, and he seems to see the feminist point that it is women who carry the burden of childrearing as well as childbearing, while continuing to be sexually available to their husbands. Seeing a point is not the same as demonstrating it sympathetically or convincingly, and the Fellini vision of a woman dressed as a housewife, theatrically and exaggeratedly portraying the condition of most Italian women while an audience of women claps mechanically, is far removed from any experience of feminist theatre I have had. What Fellini's vision lacks is precisely the element of feminism, *awareness* and *analysis* by the artist and her audience, and *interaction* between them.

Apart from that single, woefully handicapped vision, the film is standard Fellini obsession with female sexuality and the mystery/invitation/menace it poses for his male surrogate, Master Inanity himself, affectionately and self-deprecatingly known as Signor Snaparaz (pun evidently intended). Not a hint of female creativity, ingenuity, inventiveness, not an inkling of the genius of feminism which has brought this panic-stricken century to a new sense of possibility. Only the boredom of "femininity," that patriarchal stereotype which repetitively relegates women's energies to matters of dress and innovation in sexual gameplaying. The apex of "feminine" achievement is demonstrated when Signor Superkock (yes!) commands his ten thousandth "conquest" to do her trick, and the sweet little lady demurely spreads her legs and *wills* the gold coins Superkock flings on the floor to gravitate towards and into her vagina. So much for psychic power in Felliniland. This is prostitution as the patriarchy has established and maintained it over the centuries.

Why is this film destructive, not just boringly inept? Because Fellini brings to bear his considerable powers of filmic hypnosis, sharper wit expressed visually and verbally, effectively enhanced by the skills and expensive resources of the cream of the artfilm industry to construct a vision which is technically superb, bound to be held up as an object lesson for film students and film buffs for years to come. Years of academic experience promise me that the implications and explications of the film with regard to women will go largely unaddressed or be complacently accepted by the patriarchal majority of film teachers and crit-

ics. In future, the courageous woman student who speaks up in protest will be patronizingly dismissed, discredited, discriminated against on the grounds that she is one of those strident, hyper-reactive young women's libbers, with tunnel vision and a one-track mind — you know the type. Besides, she didn't even realize that Fellini was way ahead of her — Superkock and Snaparaz are jokes, jokes on Fellini, who knows perfectly well he can't presume to explain feminism, and so doesn't demean himself by trying, just uses it as grist to his delightfully indiscriminate mill of satire.

Why is this film so destructive? Towards the end of this two and a half hour paean to male security, while waiting for Signor Superkock to dress for his party, Marcello Snaparaz amuses himself in Superkock's gallery, which consists of portraits of women in sexually inviting positions with buttons under them. Press the button — the portrait lights up and a tape goes on of the woman's exclamations during lovemaking (if you can call it that). Snaparaz is dazzled by the toy, impressed with Superkock's evident machismo. At the end of the gallery he finds, in the well-dressed elegantly lean flesh, his own wife, expressing her defiance of their stale marriage by her presence here, in Superkock's house. Later she dances decorously with one of the "lesbian" policewomen who come to end the party and inform Superkock that they've killed his favourite dog, a scene of lachrymose black comedy coyly recalling fascist antics, in which I found no humour at all.

The fear of female bonding is evident — the form that fear takes, endless, intricate objectification of female sexuality, finally epitomized in the image of the Ultimate Woman as a deflating balloon crumpling threateningly over Marcello as he falls and falls — this sale of sexuality, not love between two consenting adults, I call pornography. The two young women, clad only in G-strings, who shimmy and shake for Marcello, tuck him lovingly into bed, breasts dangling over his face, and then teasingly leave, are pornographic images; the fat older woman who lusts for Marcello and pantingly presents him with her bare breast, which he spurns with disgust, is a pornographic image, the cheap and threadbare joke of her ancient scrawny mother attacking her for her immorality and kicking her through the fields, all the while apologizing to Marcello: "We're just poor people" — this too is pornography. It is the sale by a pimp of our own sexuality, a sale which tries to pass itself off as humour, but there is no compassion in this "humour," no understanding, no enlightenment. Only fear, resentment, and fascination, the fascination of a mongoose for a deadly cobra.

What is essential to bear in mind, and difficult, in the course of this film, is that the deadliness posited by Fellini has nothing to do with the realities of power in the world of men, women, feminism, and patriarchy. It's more like the accusation of witchcraft which served as a convenient excuse for the burning of millions of women, or the "threat" of international communism in alliance with the Jews which enabled Hitler to move so swiftly towards his "final solution," or the "threat" posed by the women's movement, the gay rights movement, and all other progressive movements to the New Right today, which is serving as an excuse to cut back on government funding, eliminate public services, and, in the US right now, to enact increasingly repressive legislation (Canada has no constitutional protections of civil rights, so it's not necessary to take them away).

### by Barbara Halpern Martineau

A man (Marcello Mastroianni) whose vocabulary about women seems to consist of "cow," "ass," and "bitch," whose only question prior to initiating sexual foreplay is "Are you married?" nevertheless survives his inadvertent entry into a country hotel taken over by a conference/festival/gathering of women, er, that is, images of women arranged, selected, presented by the teeming and well-funded filmic imagination of one Federico Fellini, the same Federico whose fears and fantasies of falling, and whose memories of his boyhood spent peeking through knotholes of bathing cabins and assaulting the family maid have been lovingly and exhaustively documented over and over and over.

The Toronto *Star* ad for the film carefully eliminates any grounds for the charge that Fellini is pretending to "deal" with feminism — I therefore went to see the film fully prepared for another extravaganza of technical virtuosity, circling endlessly around Mastroianni (Fellini's surrogate) in relation to women in all the usual stereotyped ways. No surprises in that respect, and some nice visual bits, as when Marcello crawls under his bed looking for the source of a mysterious voice and emerges through a velvet funnel into a light sky and a neon cabaret — Fellini film unconstrained by any pretense of realism, fullblown fantasy, a stimulation of the editorial imagination.

What I wasn't prepared for was the travesty of feminism. The phenomenon of the feminist movement, its amazing courage and persistence in the face of Italian machismo, is almost incredible fact that Italy now has the most liberal abortion law in the West and has just voted to keep it, has obviously fascinated Fellini, and he couldn't resist the subject. Not being burdened with any doubts about his ability or eligibility to tackle it, he therefore waded right in. I honestly suspect Fellini has no idea of just how destruc-

# SIDELINES

## Women of Studio D

Issue No. 71 of *Cinema Canada* (Jan/Feb 81) contained an article by me about women and film in Canada. The response to that article from Bonnie Kreps in Issue No. 73 and from National Film Board women, including Diane Beaudry at a panel discussion held at U of T in March, and most recently Diane Beaudry's letter to *Broadside* (June '81), all indicate that the women of Studio D do not like being criticized. That is clear. What is not clear is how they respond to the specific criticisms I have made of the monopolistic practices of their employer, the Film Board, and the consequences of those practices for independent film-makers, especially feminists. This, for me, is the heart of the matter — I have never attacked the existence of Studio D; on the contrary, my article in *Cinema Canada* which sparked most

of the controversy details many of the positive contributions I think Studio D has made. All this is ignored in the paranoid reaction to my specific and well-documented criticisms, intended not to demolish, but to provoke thoughtful response and greater co-operation. Until the women of Studio D recognize and respond to the damage done by their patriarchal institution to women working outside, they cannot claim to represent the larger community of women in Canada. To point this problem out is not to do harm to the women's community, as Beaudry and Kreps suggest; it is not the danger sign which is the source of destruction, and removing the sign does not remove the problem — it makes it worse. So long as one woman has de facto control over the overwhelming majority of resources, the potential for growth and experimental development of women's films in this country will be stultified. The problem is complex, based on harsh

realities of marketing and distribution; it is not insoluble, but turning a blind eye will not aid in finding a solution. The pages of *Broadside* are the best available forum for discussing such issues within the community, constructively, and I hope other film-makers will take part.

—BHM

## AGO Lay-offs

The Art Gallery of Ontario recently laid off a number of employees at short notice, almost all of them in the public service sector of the gallery, (and all of them union members), terminating their positions and thereby virtually eliminating many public services offered up until now. Among those laid off was Margaret Cooper, whose film programming has been intelligent, stimulating, and progressive, and whose

program last winter of films written by women was a model of its kind, consistently well attended. Anyone interested in protesting the direction being taken by the Art Gallery away from public service should contact CARO (Canadian Artists' Representation of Ontario) at 534-8218 or write Reuben Baetz, Ministry of Culture and Recreation, 77 Bloor Street West, Toronto M7A 2R9.

## Amsterdam Video

Lin Rankin, who just returned from the Amsterdam International Conference of Feminists in Film and Video, will be reporting on her experience there at a meeting and screening session to be held at Trinity Square Video Thursday, July 2 at 7:30 pm, Trinity Square Video, 299 Queen St. W. For information 593-1332.



# This Too Will Pass



by Jo Saxby

"You have touched a woman. You have struck a rock. You will be crushed!" Angry words. Fighting words. Words sung in anger, defiance, resolve by our sisters in South Africa in the fifties. The echo still reaches us today — the threat, the promise.

*You Have Touched a Woman, You Have Struck a Rock*, a film by Deborah May, premiered at Innis College, Toronto, on May 28. The film documents women's resistance to the "pass" laws in South Africa, focusing particularly on the anti-pass campaigns of 1955 and 1956. Interviews with women central to these struggles catch the spirit, the determination, the humour of these powerful women, these rocks.

The apartheid government first tried to force women to carry passes in 1913. Passes. Bits of paper. Bits of paper that say where you can go, when you can go, in what capacity you can go, for how long you can go. Bits of paper that mean you may be beaten, tortured, arrested, forced into labour.

Non-white women in South Africa had too long watched their men regulated by these passes to submit to any decision by government that they too carry them. Passes are the means by which the apartheid system controls labour. Labour enters the "white" economy at the latter's demand; passes regulate the flow. Women's successful defeat in 1913 of the first attempt to regulate their movements in their own country prepared them for the renewed, more determined attempts of the 1950s.

By then the more traditional authority and economies of the "tribal reserves" had broken down and more and more women were forced into the urban areas, into wage labour in order to survive. The "white" preserves had to be protected against this "invasion" and the government was determined to force women to carry passes. But the fifties saw, too, a more developed politi-

cal consciousness and organization among women. They played an integral role in the Women's Leagues of the Indian, Coloured Peoples and African National Congresses. These organizations formed out of a consciousness of the struggle as one of race and class. But there also developed an increasing awareness of women about their struggle as women. They faced a three-tiered oppression on the basis of their race, class, and sex. Freedom from oppression would not come about by the defeat of the racist system alone. A strong public statement of this position was made in 1954 at the Congress of Mothers as women situated their position as workers in the society along with men, subject to the same working conditions, the same living conditions. Yet their wages were inferior, their living conditions inferior, their lives subject to oppression by their men. The statement was unequivocal:

The battle for democracy and liberation can only be won when women — a half of the whole population — can take their rightful place as free and equal partners with men.

It was at this Congress that the Federation of South African Women was formed, a broad-based, multi-racial organization that spearheaded and organized the women's campaigns against the pass laws. Women such as Lillian Ngoyi from the African National Congress Women's League, Helen Joseph from the Congress of Democrats, and Bettie du Toit from the Garment Workers Union provided inspired and courageous leadership to the upsurge of resistance from the majority of South Africa's non-white women, women who were workers for the most part, poorly paid, living in conditions of poverty and hardship; women prepared to fight, to endure jail, beatings, torture. Women knew what awaited their defiance; they went ahead.

Deborah May's film beautifully illustrates the spirit of these acts against the pass regulations, not only in her use of historical footage but also with the moving recollections of women telling of those times. Stories by women now old, whose flash of youthful vigour and determination has not been quelled. Time has stopped them no more than did the jails, bannings, and arrests. There are flashes of the film *Union Maids* here. Women discovering the power in unified action, old women glowing with remembrances of past struggle and victories, their joy in these victories. One cannot but be affected by the power of these women and especially by their humour in their tactics in defeating and outwitting a powerful enemy, an enemy who constantly underestimates them. The apartheid government could not believe that women themselves organized the marches to Pretoria. Communist agitators, they said, as the women gathered from all over South Africa; 2,000 in 1955, 20,000 in 1956. When the government took away permission at the last moment for a meeting against the

pass laws in 1956, the women cleverly planned that small groups of two or three would just happen to arrive in Pretoria on August 9 to hand in their individual protests to the prime minister. And so they came. Thousands and thousands. Tiny groups of two, three, four in dignity, in determination, and in song. Each tiny group singing a song specially composed for that day, "Strydom, you have touched a woman, you have struck a rock, you will be crushed!"

But Prime Minister Strydom would not listen; the pass-issuing continued. But he had been warned; he had dislodged the boulder and with that dislodging came a massive landslide. Grassroots demonstrations sprang up all over, women marched on local native commissioners offices and huge bonfires raged with the burning of their passes. Arrests, fines, jailings. But the women kept on. More subtle divisive means were tried. One of the few means of escape from the drudgery of domestic or factory labour was for women to teach or nurse. So the government made it mandatory for women training or registering in these occupations to have passes. It failed. In a demonstration of solidarity with their class, their race, and their sex, those who would be nurses and teachers declared they were the daughters of workers, of washerwomen; it was their mothers who had educated them and they themselves would become washerwomen rather than betray this trust and carry passes.

The government could not defeat the unified action of the campaigns so they next struck at the most vulnerable of all the workers, of all the women — the domestics. Domestics are the most isolated and most oppressed of all women workers, living in isolation from their families and fellow workers. They work long, hard hours, living in tiny, squalid rooms far in the back of their "madam's" back garden. Threatened not only by the government but also by their madams, many of the domestics were forced to take passes. News of this situation did not defeat those still struggling but became a rallying cry for further action. Protests, deputations, demonstrations increased; so did mass arrests, imprisonments, and beatings. But with each repressive act the anger and determination grew until, in 1959, after holding off the government for five years the African National Congress held a special meeting of recognition for the women. A huge red banner floated over the event: "We thank the women!"

Then it was 1960. Sharpeville. A new level in the struggle. The Pan African Congress called for nationwide, peaceful demonstrations against the pass laws. On March 21, 1960 several thousand women and men gathered in Sharpeville, near Johannesburg to protest the passes. Without warning, police opened machine-gun fire on the demonstrators. Sixty-nine people lay dead, most shot through the back of the head; hundreds more were injured. The government declared a state of emergency, outlawing the movements, imprisoning the leaders, and detaining over 20,000. Having thus paralyzed the movements, the government then moved to its next stage. They virtually made it impossible to live without a pass. Residential permits, employment permits, old-age pensions, railway tickets, admission to schools and hospitals — none was available without a pass. And so in 1963, fifty years after its first attempts, the govern-

ment forced women to carry passes. But this was only a momentary victory, for the legacy of defiance lives on as powerful, determined and eloquent as ever,

The government forced women to carry passes, but they have not won, and nor have we lost. The struggle is still on ... it's inevitable that we shall win.

And indeed it is inevitable that they shall win. The film is testimony to that inevitability; one feels it not just in viewing the footage from the anti-pass campaigns of the fifties, but also from women like Helen Joseph and Lillian Ngoyi before the camera in 1979. Helen Joseph laughing as she recounts tales of "tea parties"; political gatherings were outlawed so the "ladies" held "tea parties." Delicate china cups, pink cakes — enough for a lifetime! She laughs again — and the women continued to plan the defeat of the hated apartheid regime. Lillian Ngoyi is silent before the camera of 1979 because as a banned person she is not allowed to make a public statement. Against the moving footage of a powerful young Lillian Ngoyi urging on her sisters in the struggle, one compares the silence now forced on her by the government. But they do not succeed. Even in her death she defies them as a thousand women don the outlawed uniforms of the ANC and the Federation of South African Women to march together at her funeral in 1980.

One leaves this film in hope; long after it one remembers the joy of these women in the struggle. In the face of the power of the regime the most simple, everyday acts become their weapons; they sing and dance their defiance until they forge together an action of militancy by their bravery and joy.

While the film is one of the history of the anti-pass campaigns and does not comment on the present, the struggle continues. Like many organizations, the Federation of South African Women was forced into hibernation after Sharpeville, but it is again on the move, involved in grass-roots organizing. With many others, it boycotted the twentieth anniversary of Republic Day in May 1981.

More and more women in South Africa recognize the class origins of their oppression and increasingly engage in strikes and link up with other union struggles in the country. They see their struggle as that of an exploited race, an exploited class, an exploited sex. Their fight is to end all forms of oppression and exploitation in South Africa. Within the framework of the ANC, the Women's League continues to organize women. After the student uprisings in Soweto in 1976 we witnessed again the power of the women; a new generation of Lillian Ngoyis, strong, angry, defiant young women committed to the struggle against the apartheid regime. The rocks rumble, they roll, they will crush!

(For more information about the film, contact the TCLSAC office at 967-5562.)

Jo Saxby works with the Toronto Committee for the Liberation of South Africa.

## Jump Cut

The most recent issue of *Jump Cut*, a film magazine from Chicago, has a special section on lesbians and film, the first of its kind, with a filmography and bibliography.

## Mama Quilla II

Rock band Mama Quilla II, recent winner of the CFNY Great Ontario Talent Search, and another exciting Toronto band TBA will be performing at the 3rd annual *Fireweed* benefit dance at the Palais Royale Ballroom, Toronto, Friday July 3rd.

*Fireweed*, a popular feminist literary and cultural journal, will have tickets available at Glad Day Bookshop, 698-A Yonge St.

## Crystal Fragments

There will be performances of music recently composed by Toronto women. The concerts will take place Saturday, July 11 and Sunday, July 12 at 8 pm. In addition, a workshop will be held on Sunday at 3 pm to discuss relevant topics with the composers. All the activities will be located at the Brigantine Room, Harbourfront, Toronto. Admission is free. The concerts are co-sponsored by Harbourfront and the Toronto Musicians Association Trust Fund.

and the Toronto Women's Bookstore, 85 Harbord St. Tickets are \$7 in advance and \$8 at the door. Doors of the Palais Royale Ballroom, 1601 Lakeshore Blvd. W., open at 8 pm. Everyone welcome!



# Les Fées Ont Soif

by Keltie Creed

Denise Boucher's *Les Fées Ont Soif* is the kind of play I would expect Kate Millet to love. Gusty, dry humour and honest emotion that take a close look at women's lives (especially those with Catholicism and/or marriage as part of their experience), it makes a palatable hit each time it criticizes the patriarchy.

The play witnesses the angers, yearnings, frustrations, and hopes of a housewife on Valium (Marie), a prostitute (Madelaine), and a statue (the Virgin Mary). Accompanied by a pianist and a flutist, they speak, sing, dance and cry their lives to us. Each has her own physical area she leaves only for musical comment until she has broken the bounds of her situation, from which point she never returns to it. The three each challenge the institution that imprisons them: Marie, marriage; Madelaine, the legal system; the statue, the Church. They call out: "We are political prisoners. Our tears do not corrode the bars of these our prisons." But they survive, together, ending with vision and energy.

When I first saw York University's very spirited English language production in April, I was moved and excited by the script, but felt uneasy about Ron Singer's direction. I was disappointed that such a strong, angry, independent feminist work was being directed by a man rather than by a woman, but felt that the play would stand of its own accord with any competent director. However, it was not until Holly Dennison of Montréal's Concordia University brought her production to Harbourfront in May as part of the Open Stage in the Toronto Theatre Festival, that I understood my uneasiness. Although Singer obviously believed in the play and his messages, he couldn't identify with or totally understand it and what was presented was cerebrally feminist but viscerally confused. Dennison, however, was strong and clear on both counts.

The most evident difference in the two productions, was seen in the treatment of Madelaine. Shelly Spiegel portrayed her as bored with, and tired of, prostitution. "I chuck their sperm out the window...I've come to hate their sex as a cookie dipper hates chocolate." Her sensuality was reserved for herself, gently rocking and learning self love, and her compassion was for other women, as she comforts and cradles the battered Marie. Ron Singer, however, directed Janet Sears in the same role to be vibrant, sensual and saucy. Her legs were invitingly spread then teasingly closed for "Sorry, your three minutes are up!" Quite the contrast to Spiegel's bittersweet irony.



Catherine Batchelor played the Virgin Mary in Concordia's production of *Les Fées Ont Soif*.

The program notes for both productions quote playwright Denise Boucher: "Whether she be mother or whore, a woman who does not enjoy pleasure is a virgin. Women are exiled from the pleasure of their bodies." Madelaine tells us "I'd like them to see me pure. A virgin...I've been force-fed on your jobs without ever having nourished mine. I choke on your pleasure. Without ever a breath to call mine. It's been so long that I've been waiting for myself." Where did Singer find his teasing, raunchy woman?

However, nothing could dilute the impact and emotion of the rape and trial scenes in either production. Here, Janet Sears, the strongest and most skilled of the six actresses, was outstandingly vulnerable and real. Her prose and songs were highly emotive and effective. She both transformed and transcended the earlier portrayal.

The treatment of Marie had a similar pattern. Dennison directed Irene Arseneault to be restless but restrained, intelligent but restricted, and loving but abused. Her growth and developing awareness were detailed and convincing. I felt a real need for and accomplishment of the communication with her mother. "Mother — if I can't find you, how can I ever find myself? I long for the woman who is locked up inside of you. Mother...I want to be close to you." Mimi Zucker, on the other hand, seemed to blame and accuse her mother for her boredom and entrapment, and unlike Arseneault, seemed much too perky and cheerful to be a Valium addict. Her housewife was far more familiar to me from television ads than from reality. But once more, from the moment of her assault to the end of the play, Zucker's character became rooted and solid. Why is it that only through trauma did Singer allow these women to be women, not merely roles, whereas Dennison's women were women trapped alive within the roles and were struggling?

Again, seduction was introduced in Singer's production at inexplicable times.

Marie tells us, "I've had two kids, but it's like I've never been touched" and sings the Santa Claus song — "Ain't no presents for me/at the foot of your tree," to which Zucker does a joyous bump and grind, completely undercutting the content of the song. This is, fortunately, followed by the assault scene where Zucker is allowed to use her own instincts and talent.

The statue of the Virgin was also perceived differently by the two directors. Catherine Batchelor from Concordia was a riveting, dynamic presence who could take focus with a line or a turn of her fascinating face. Her movements were simple; she was confined, but her emotions and mind projected into the space of the other women. I felt a true caring and compassion for them as she watched their struggles. She yearned to join them, straining at her metal and stone restrictions. The women in turn related to her as symbol and as power, but were unable to see through to her real self until she physically destroyed the structure, "liberating" and "devirginating" herself. Tony Laraso from the York production was energized and angry, but lacked the compassion and awareness. Her prison and helplessness was individual — it didn't extend to the others. They related to her as a person, and hence her physical breakthrough had less desperate necessity, less joy and less impact.

On the overall, the York production was lighter, slicker, and more humorous than Concordia's, but I question at whose expense the laughter comes. Ron Singer gave us a play that was far less angry and less threatening to men. His were certainly more attractive characters, but I felt that Holly Dennison gave us more accuracy, more honesty and hence more impact. All six actresses gave well honed performances, and both productions deliver Denise Boucher's messages strongly, but perhaps Singer was too threatened by the play itself to allow the perceptions and realities or the women he worked with to be developed and utilized as well as they might have been.

## Director, Holly Dennison

Holly Dennison, director of Concordia University's production of *Les Fées Ont Soif*, shown in May at the Toronto Theatre Festival, was interviewed by Ruth Dworin and Keltie Creed for *Broadside*.

**Ruth:** What happened with the original (French) production of *Les Fées Ont Soif*?

**Holly:** First, the Montreal Arts Council read the script and decided not to fund it. I think it's the first time they'd censored through not funding, and their excuse was that it wasn't a play. A lot of men made that criticism, they just negate it, they say it's not theatre, it doesn't have a story, it's just a lot of political ideas. I've never heard anyone develop the argument. When I'd pursue it, they'd change the subject and walk away. They didn't want to let on that they're threatened by the play.

When the play actually got put on, the Church freaked out. There were a couple of extremely right-wing organizations that joined the Church and tried to get an injunction against both the performance of the play and the sale of the script. They didn't stop the play but they did get an injunction against the sale of the script for five weeks.

Then we did it in English, we had only performed two nights when the set was burnt. Arson was never proved — arson investigations cost too much money.

**Keltie:** Who do you find your audience usually consists of, feminists, or people who heard of the controversy, or general theatre audiences?

**Holly:** It depends on where we are. At Concordia, a lot of university people. I invited a lot of feminist organizations in Montréal. I'm sure there were some who were curious about all the blasphemy and "nasty bits," but I think they were disappointed. At the Centaur Theatre we had a very strange mix — we had a supportive crowd, along with the west Island crowd who came because it was at the main

anglophone theatre. The men came partly because their wives dragged them. There was definitely a mixed response — middle-aged men who didn't know why they were there, and a lot of middle-aged women who were really glad that they came.

**Keltie:** When you directed this, did you envision speaking to the women in the audience or to the men?

**Holly:** Definitely, it was primarily to the women, but I know that the play was not particularly hostile towards men, though I wasn't going to stop doing anything that might offend.

**Keltie:** Did you say that it's not hostile to men?

**Holly:** I don't think so. I think that it's really outraged and angry about male structures and traditional male behaviour. Personally, I don't think that it is hostile towards men, but I imagine there were men who felt that it was. Did you?

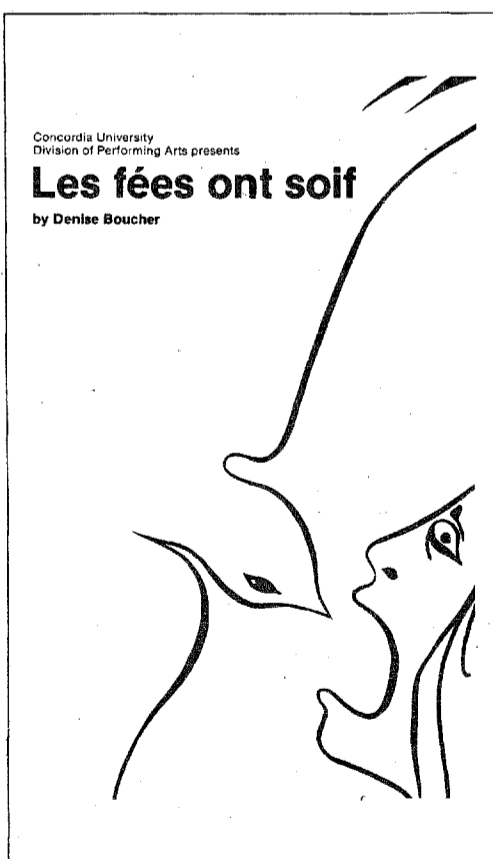
**Keltie:** Yes, but I don't think that's necessarily a negative thing. It's clearly hostile towards the patriarchy.

**Holly:** Clearly.

**Keltie:** I think there's a need for men to know about that hostility and anger.

**Holly:** And rage. But it is not a play that excludes the possibility of positive relations with men, for me. I'm a heterosexual and...uh...the play didn't bother me. I wouldn't have done a play that excluded the possibility of a good future for any kind of sexual orientation, including heterosexual. I'm not pessimistic about it.

One of the most important parts of it in terms of effecting any change is that it speaks to women who haven't worked through a lot of stuff, who haven't gotten out. I think that the strongest response I've had so far is from middle-aged women



whose children have left home, and who hadn't understood their frustration and resentment. It speaks to them.

**Keltie:** Do you consider yourself a feminist?

**Holly:** Yes, but the actresses in the play have never been active feminists. None of them were hostile to feminism, but none of them had ever labeled themselves feminists, or committed themselves to the movement. It was an interesting experience because they were making discoveries. I would bring in literature, and we would talk about rape, and slowly their own experience would come out. It would be a kind of conscious-

ness-raising for them. They are now much more articulate about feminist issues and about their own relationship to the issues in the play.

**Ruth:** It seems to me that all of the most exciting feminist theatre in Canada these days is coming out of Québec and is French.

**Holly:** There's a very strong tradition of political theatre in Québec, so naturally a section of that is going to be feminist. There is wonderful stuff being created, but not a lot of it has been published. I'm always frustrated because the English theatre milieu is so impoverished, never mind the left of that milieu.

**Keltie:** How much of this production is your interpretation and how much is in the script?

**Holly:** A lot is me, a lot of it's the actresses. What is me is the movement, the whole choreography, the flow of the piece. For me, the movement fits with the poetic style of the play. Denise (Boucher) incorporated in the script the idea of the space — of having a space where each of the women were isolated, and very rarely did anybody else enter that space — and the sense of isolation and moving out of that space whenever any kind of realization was happening.

**Keltie:** Is there much humour in the play?

**Holly:** Yes, there's an ironic humour, but I think that the laughter comes as a surprise, and some if it is relief. We've been pushed up against this reality, and we need to laugh. But Denise told me that when she wrote it she wasn't thinking of this stuff as being funny.

Myself, I don't go for the laughs. I don't believe in directing people to make something funny unless you are doing pure comedy. For me, you are making a point. There are moments in the play where we are definitely laughing at ourselves. I am glad that people can laugh.



# Lulu's a Loser

by Patricia O'Leary

Last month in *Broadside*, Anne Cameron described a secret society of women who used their "soft power" to heal and teach. Men didn't have it and were not allowed to know its secrets. But they were threatened by this mysterious power, and jealous of it, and since they couldn't understand it, tried to twist it, to make it seem evil, and finally to destroy the women who had it.

Some men still seem to believe in the existence of an uncontrollable alien force in women which must be stamped out. Literature is full of these images of "woman-as (insidious)-witch"; a belief in a sort of generic witch-woman has arisen, against whom there is no defence. The image has spread to become a stereotype of all women.

There are still plenty of instances of the stereotype in the arts. One of these recently appeared in Toronto at the St. Lawrence Centre, in the guise of a play called *Lulu*, an adaptation of two plays by the 19th-century German impressionist playwright Frank Wedekind. This is supposed to be a "morality play": all the characters are stereotypes and pretty ugly ones at that. Wedekind was a precursor of Brecht, with much the same stark cold flavour and black humour.

I didn't like it. I hated the premise: that Lulu, a sex-kitten dancer from the streets, was able to screw and whip her way to fame and fortune, leaving a trail of helpless, ruined men (and one lesbian) in her wake. Lulu is a "victim of her own sensuality" and her own egocentricity; even she is helpless against herself. Finally she falls on hard times and is reduced to hustling on the streets. She picks up Jack the Ripper one night; at least he is defence against her. He first kills her lesbian lover Countess Geschwitz (who has stayed faithful to the end, "monster" that she is), and rips Lulu to shreds which is, apparently, justice. The "soft power" is finally destroyed. Except that, seen through Wedekind's eyes, the power is anything but "soft": it is destructive and tragic.

I hated the idea that some people, seeing the play today, will still think that this is a caricature of the true picture; that women are all, by and large, like that. Maybe the play would have made more sense if it had been produced and acted with a bit more of the bitter flavour that must have been intended for it. But this production by Theatre Plus was lifeless and dull, as well as offensive. Most of the actors seemed straight out of high school, with the exception of Jennifer Phipps, who played Countess Geschwitz, Neil Vipond as the one man Lulu really loved, and Donald Ewer as Lulu's down-and-out father. The direction was a bore.

Thank God I liked Jennifer Phipps, I thought afterwards, since I had arranged to interview her the next day. Phipps is a re-

spected veteran of Canadian theatre, has acted all across the country, and has also directed. I wondered what she thought of it all, but in fact she didn't say much about the play; there wasn't much to say, and she is seemingly a discreet woman.

But we discussed the fallacy of the play's view of women; Phipps agreed that the portrayal of the women as stereotypes comes from a man's point of view. A man only sees what's happening from the outside; he can't understand why something is happening. As Phipps said: "A man only sees that Lulu is giving her body for the moment; he doesn't know the reasons for it." Perhaps Lulu learned that this is the only way to get through to a man; perhaps she has learned that the only way to get on in 19th-century society is to latch on to a man. "And of course," says Phipps, "men will take advantage of a woman like Lulu, but they will put her down for allowing them to do it."

We discussed the possible difference in production if there had been a woman director, someone like Pam Brighton, who directed *The Taming of the Shrew* last winter. Perhaps the characters would have been more human (if one can have "human" characters in an impressionist play). "This adaptation, by Peter Barnes, cuts everything to the bare bones," commented Phipps. There are very few directions for actors, very terse dialogue. Phipps felt that director Marion André directed with tremendous "purity"; that is, he stuck very faithfully to the script. But that meant that there wasn't much fleshing out of the characters.

Phipps thought Countess Geschwitz was potentially a more interesting character than Lulu. "In the original," she said, "Geschwitz was closer to being the lead. Wedekind had a feeling for those people who had to cope with society who were not 'normal.'" Geschwitz was faithful to Lulu, not only physically but also because she was captivated by the woman's art. "She calls her 'my Star,'" says Phipps, "by which I think she means that her talent as a performer was above all others, that she must have been magnetic." She at least was not attracted only by Lulu's fatal sexuality.

Getting into this part was fairly typical of Phipps' method. She tries to feel the textures of things — clothes, furniture — as they would have been in reality, instead of costumes and sets. When she is dressing she pretends her dresser, Nancy, is a maid of the times.

"You must create the place," she said. "And yet, you can't forget the audience, or it becomes psychodrama." "As William Hutt once said, you have to remember that acting is a triangle. The words go from one actor, out through the audience, and back to the second actor." One can't get so far into the part that one forgets that process. I asked whether this was a temptation for an actor in real life: to be standing back watching yourself be emotional. "No, that is a



Jennifer Phipps (L) as Countess Geschwitz and Kimberly Ross as Lulu in the Theatre Plus production, Toronto, May 1981.

fallacy about actors," she emphasized, "that they are not real people and can't really feel anything. And yet, the only time I remember doing anything like that was when I was about 8. I was in a state about something and I was crying, and I remember looking in the mirror and thinking, 'I have to remember this'."

Phipps had a lot to say about the intelligence of actors. "In the past, maybe in the very recent past, most directors didn't trust them as thinking people who could make a play go forward," she said. "But now I think people are beginning to realize that actors can work in a collective art form; that they can help to interpret the meaning of the play." She believes this is the major change in the Canadian theatre scene over the past 20 years. That, and the growth of the actors themselves as professionals.

In this vein, what Phipps wants from a director is "why" her character acts as she does, not "how." Telling an actor how to interpret a role, especially a professional

who has a lot of experience, can be very crippling. But she would like the director to tell the cast, at the beginning of rehearsals, what his or her concept of the play is, so that the actors can do their part in the interpretation of it. "Sometimes I'll realize, part way through rehearsals, 'so that's what he wants,' but till then I've been of little use to him." She also believes that each actor is part of a chain. "We are the 'end-result' artists," she said. "The chain starts with the writer trying to get an idea across; we are the ones who have to do it, and we have to do it together. There really can't be any concept of the 'star'."

Jennifer Phipps is also preparing to play the lead in the fall production of Theatre Plus' *Philumena*, an Italian play which promises to be more fun, at least, than *Lulu*. It's about a man's mistress who gets him to marry her because she's on her deathbed, but who miraculously recovers after the wedding. No matter what the play is like, Phipps, at least, will probably shine.

## Onstage '81 In Search of Feminist Content

The following is an overview of some plays in the Toronto Theatre Festival, "Onstage '81," chosen for possible feminist content.

by Ruth Dworin and Keltie Creed

We saw a number of "works in progress" (pieces presented for audience reaction as part of the process leading to the finished form) at the Toronto Theatre Festival. Of these, the most exciting was *Picnic in the Drift*, written and directed by Rina Fraticelli of *Fireweed*, a Toronto feminist quarterly, and Tanya Rosenberg. The installation contains a reasoned and powerful indictment of the nuclear mentality. It utilizes fabulous lighting effects, slides, and taped narration in addition to the acting talents of Wendy Springate (as The Woman from Monroeville), Alex Fallis and Lee Wildgen (The Competitors) and Margaret Dragu (Celeste/The Nuclear Mother). Springate gives the strongest performance as she develops from the naive cheerleader/valedictorian, praising the soon-to-be-opened nuclear power plant as a symbol of progress in her small town, to an embittered widow of a Karen Silkwood-type "accident". The Competitors represent the macho male mentality, vying with each other physically, intellectually and verbally. Their archery contest is beautifully choreographed (and the second time we saw the piece, mercifully

shortened). Their intellectual competitions, whether quoting classics or engaging in pseudo-Marxist debate, are typically full of bullshit. The emotional peak of their performance is a horrifying "trivia" contest about nuclear war, accompanied by a violent game of "catch".

The purpose of the character of Celeste/The Nuclear Mother (a pioneer woman) was a bit obscure, although it may be that her interminable list of tasks performed and the obvious hardship of her life represent the original motivation for the quest for energy sources that led to the adaptation of nuclear power for "peaceful" uses.

*Passages* and *Shamanizing* were two short pieces presented by Patricia White and Dawn Obokata, respectively, co-directors of Actors' Lab Theatre. *Passages* uses dance, song fragments and fabric to evoke White's memories of her family and childhood. The piece needed more cohesion; some of the characters, the mother in particular, could use further development. There was, however, throughout the piece a strong sense of woman's identity. Particularly powerful was the image of her grandmother. *Shamanizing* is essentially a spiritual exploration using the media of the earth, water and fire plus a representation of a tree. Obokata's character is presented as powerful and independent, and the transitions worked well, but the overall intent

of the piece was obscure.

Jane Foster's *Venus Envy* is described as "a look at the battle of the sexes through the eyes of a transsexual." Foster seems to be developing the idea that a transsexual, by the nature of its unique combination of experiences, has a clearer picture of the various images society requires both men and women to project. While we're not sure we agree with this thesis, we did find accurate the portrayal of a (male-to-female) transsexual as a man who is enamoured of traditional female roles: pampered helpless pretty face, respectable protected wife, sexy vamp. Once the physical transition is made, s/he learns that each image is just another facade. We wish that more emphasis had been given to this realization and less to the glorification of the roles. While this play asks the question: What is Woman/Body/Soul/Summed Experience? it wisely does not attempt to provide an answer.

*Pink Triangle Tears*, by Gay Bell and Marcia Cannon, perhaps should have been billed as a "work in progress". While the piece has some funny lines and makes some good points, it needed much stronger direction. Marcia Cannon has some talent, but needs to learn control, particularly in her vocals. The musical accompaniment by Leslie Yost was sensitive and effective. The set was, for the most part, ugly and amateur-looking, appearing more so in contrast

to Anne Quigley's skillfully executed TV screen. The major fault of the script was its attempt to cover a wide range of topics in a short piece: gay rights, nuclear power, police brutality, provincial politics, racism. Focus on one of these issues would have given the piece more impact.

*The Kin of Ata* was a structured improvisation performed by Impulse Theatre, an outgrowth of the U of T Drama program. It's based on the Dorothy Bryant novel, and was quite true to it in both spirit and execution. The main events in the novel were depicted quite clearly, even though most of the action was non-verbal. The actors were quite sensitive to one another and worked well as a group; but perhaps they could have opened themselves to the audience a bit more instead of being so wrapped up in their own group process. It would also have been interesting to see them use some creative lighting.

*L'Atelier* (The Studio) was billed as a story of the lives of six women working in a garment factory in postwar Paris and dealing with anti-semitism. We thought it sounded promising. We were disappointed. The women were presented as flat, one-dimensional and stereotyped — bitchy, catty, constantly picking at each other. The pain

• continued page 16

# Opinion, Not Dogma



by Mariana Valverde

*Outlander*, by Jane Rule. Tallahassee, FL: Naiad Press, Inc. 1981. Pp 207. \$8.55.

Jane Rule's last book, *Contract with the World*, was published by a large establishment press and received favourable reviews in what is known as the "straight" press.

Her new book, *Outlander*, consisting of short stories and essays relevant to lesbians, gays, and feminists, is published by the small feminist press Naiad: and if it were to fall into the hands of *Globe and Mail* reviewers it would surely provoke a homophobic reaction. (For one thing, it debunks the myth that lesbian sexuality is all cuddles — raw lust is neither hidden nor explained away.)

The two books, however, are not as different as all that. *Contract with the World* deals with the problems of expressing oneself through art, raising children, being married, and going insane; but love between members of the same sex is an important aspect of this complex novel. (See review in *Broadside*, Vol. 2, No. 3.) *Outlander*, on the other hand, is primarily concerned with lesbian life; and yet, every story and every political judgement reflects Jane Rule's own contract with the world. A consistent attitude of thoughtful tenderness informs both books, and allows her to address herself to different audiences without betraying or shelving any principles. Unlike other "famous" women — Cris Williamson, for instance — Jane Rule does not turn her back on the collectivity in order to shine as an individual artist in what Cris Williamson calls "the real world" (which is in fact the world of mass media). She makes no bones about the fact that her sexual preference is not a mere preference, and does not shirk from the task of reflecting on her lesbianism as a social and political reality.

This reflection is no futile search for the True Lesbian essence, however; indeed, the debunking of the myth that there is such an essence is Jane Rule's main political contribution. Many of her views on specific topics — child sexuality, coming out — are as debatable as those expressed by a bunch of friends over a beer; they are opinions, not systematic theories that explain the universe. But her attitude to these debates among lesbians and gays is one that we would all do well to share; a tolerant, lovingly skeptical attitude that encourages everyone to be responsible, without gaiting us when we fail.

For example, she is committed to the gay as well as the women's community, but she does not elevate her commitment to the status of a dogma, and she has few illusions about this uneasy alliance. She writes: "I think there may be less hostility between gay men and lesbians than between straight men and women simply because not many of us try to live together and therefore face at close and daily range an imposed inequality that women no longer accept and men haven't yet learned to live without."

Well, one could quarrel with this explanation, but if every dyke in the land shared this humble attitude toward small victories, we'd be on the way to figuring out some of our problems. This non-dogmatic approach comes as a particularly refreshing surprise in the moralistic wasteland of personal politics; Jane Rule describes and comments on various sexual and emotional arrangements

that lesbians enter into, without ever falling into the role of lesbian inquisition.

The refusal to proclaim that any particular arrangement is superior by nature to all others does not mean that we are supposed to stop thinking in order to be supportive. The short stories — not to mention our own lives — make it clear that certain attitudes, such as possessiveness, are harmful. And the essay "Homophobia and Romantic Love," although not as clearly argued as it might have been, raises serious questions about the girl-meets-girl model of lesbianism. Her point that the "weed" of childish romanticism tends to choke the flower of sisterhood is first-rate poster material.

Jane Rule's skepticism about romantic love as a form of lesbianism helps to explain why there's a remarkable amount of casual sex and non-monogamy among her characters. Not that these unconventional ways of being a lesbian are always, or even usually, portrayed as successful; but the strong women we read about, who know what they feel and often act on it, are good counter-models to romantic heroines such as the tragic Stephen Gordon in *The Well of Loneliness* or the storybook Ladies of Llangollen. This is one reason why these stories are far better — as literature — than early novels such as *Desert of the Heart*, which made lovely coming-out presents but were seriously impoverished by the Romantic imperative. The tiny slices of lesbian lives in *Outlander* shake our collective prejudices as well as warm our collective heart.

## JEB — The Camera Communicates

by Laura Jones

On Saturday, May 9 in Toronto, JEB (Joan E. Biren) presented her thought-provoking slide presentation "Lesbian Images in Photography, 1850-1980."

"Promote Lesbian Visibility" appeared on the screen as over 200 women crowded into the Bathurst Street United Church. For 2 1/2 hours, about 300 images were shown and such a wide variety of issues were touched on that the experience was very intense.

JEB presented her material with a rare openness and sense of humour. Included in the show are portraits, erotic photographs, and, of particular interest, documentary photographs of the lesbian movement. There were photographs of lesbian mothers with their children, women who defined themselves as Jewish lesbians and even a group of red-haired lesbians sitting in a circle in deep discussion. One lesbian couple photographed themselves during an argument.

Over 30 different women photographers were represented in the showing, including several who worked in the late 1800's. Most of the photographers were self-defined lesbians, others were JEB-defined lesbians. JEB, not having adequate written evidence, relied on careful study and interpretation of the photographs, based on her perspective as a lesbian. She referred to knowing the "code", studying the woman's photograph with an awareness of the look in the eyes of the subjects, their clothes, and their stance. Her approach makes for an excellent exercise in reading photographs.

JEB's definition of Bernice Abbott — a well-known photographer and author of many books on photography — as a lesbian when she has not publicly declared herself is

the only thing I have strong qualms about in JEB's presentation. When Abbott, who is 83, was asked directly about being a lesbian, there was no response, yet she was still included in the show. She should have had the choice to remain silent about her sexuality.

The slide presentation and talk, however, was superb. It would be of interest to photographers and students of photographic history — they would never see a photograph in the same way after hearing JEB — but JEB isn't concerned with this audience. She directs her talk to the lesbian community and it is this commitment that gives the presentation much of its power. The photographers included are devoted to their subject: they make statements using photography as their means of communicating.

The photographs are the strongest and most interesting I have seen in years. The contemporary lesbian photographers are determined to document their own culture, to make a visual statement of their lives. The technical quality, the variety of techniques and subtleties of their work are also impressive.

JEB has presented her show in 50 US cities; this was her first in Canada. Rosemary Barnes, Lynn Johnston, Carolyn Walters and Val Edwards arranged the event, with assistance from the Gay Community Appeal Loan Fund and the Women's Counselling, Referral and Education Centre. JEB's book, *Eye to Eye: Portraits of Lesbians*, is available at the Toronto Women's Bookstore.

Laura Jones is a Toronto photographer, for many years involved with the Baldwin Street Gallery.



Courtesy JEB

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of their lives and the stress of long hours of work was constantly undercut for laughs — at their expense. The only character who showed development is Leon, their boss, whose part in the play is in fact relatively small. The play is, of course, directed by a man. The script may have possibilities — there are some good lines:

"I don't want my daughter to be a seamstress like me when she grows up. I want her to have opportunities. Maybe she'll be a machinist!"

"Machinist! That's a man's job!"

"Why, are they pushing the pedals with their balls these days?"



# W-M-NLY W-RDS

• ANSWERS TO LAST MONTH'S CROSSWORD PUZZLE BY MARY O'BRIEN

- |               |               |
|---------------|---------------|
| <b>Across</b> | <b>Down</b>   |
| 1. Phallus    | 1. Patriots   |
| 5. Lioness    | 2. Actresses  |
| 9. Tattler    | 3. Lil        |
| 10. Retread   | 4. Stray      |
| 11. Aid       | 5. Lords      |
| 12. Ideally   | 6. Oath       |
| 14. Otis      | 7. Elect      |
| 17. Testator  | 8. Sadist     |
| 18. Warp      | 13. Leader    |
| 21. Seer      | 15. Press     |
| 22. Shipload  | 16. Happen    |
| 24. Toms      | 19. Protracts |
| 26. Funeral   | 20. Adulates  |
| 29. Extract   | 23. Athene    |
| 30. Last cut  | 25. Mitre     |
| 32. Ejector   | 26. Felon     |
| 33. Nemesis   | 27. Salt      |
|               | 31. Sam       |

• **New Tech**, from page 11

The usual experience is that the use of word processors requires less, not more, skill. According to one equipment manufacturer, "to learn the whole complex of operations which a word processor can perform would take a qualified typist three to four days. An unqualified typist could learn the most basic procedures in half a day." Further, this time from a word processor teacher: "A less experienced typist is able to produce the same quality of work as a really skilled girl (sic) and almost as quickly."

The companies which manufacture equipment for the IOF are after an enormous market, estimated to be between \$150 billion and \$300 billion annually in North America alone. In Canada, with about 50% of the Gross National Product being generated by information industries but only 5% of company budgets now allocated to electronic processing, the sales potential for such equipment is staggering.

### WHO NEEDS MAIL?

I've focussed on the electronic office because that's where all sources predict the next series of applications will come about most quickly, where the largest number of people, particularly women, will be affected, and where management seems to have realized that the most effective way to increase productivity is not to automate specific tasks but to re-organize the whole work flow.

Meanwhile, some areas of employment where women are also heavily concentrated have already been highly affected by microtechnology. The telephone companies are an excellent example, likewise the banks where automatic tellers (Green Machines et. al.) will make further inroads into the

work force there, and the promise of a cashless society (electronic debiting and crediting of accounts) will have a tremendous effect on a whole range of other industries as well. For instance, the post office will be threatened with extinction. Take away the business mail by eliminating the sending of bills and return payments and you take away much of their revenue. Similarly, take away the advertisements or junk mail by making this information available to people in their homes via personal computers and you eliminate the communications of all but the most determined letter writers — grandmothers and people in love. But even they seem to prefer the telephone these days.

The main point is that re-organization of work augmented by microtechnology has the capacity to destroy not just one job at a time but also those to which that job is related.

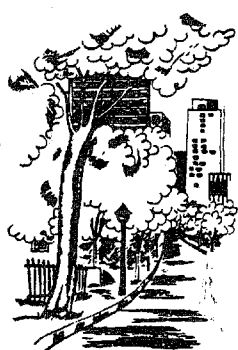
The reporter's terminal, capable of accepting a whole page worth of input replaces the typesetter and the layout artist. The word processor replaces the personal secretary and the file clerk. The electronic cash register not only speeds up the cashier's work but it also keeps automatic inventory, eliminating the jobs of stock clerks.

Over the next five years, the major area of assault will be the service sector of the economy. It's estimated that fully one-half of the labour force in North America is employed in service industries (banking, insurance, sales, communications, etc.). To a very large extent they are the domain (or ghetto) of women, and employ the vast majority of women engaged in wage labour.

These service (or information) industries and occupations provided 85% of all new jobs created during the 1970's, and women's spectacular rise in labour force participation occurred through such jobs.

Now, however, workers in this sector, especially in strictly "office" jobs, the secretaries, typists and clerks, are regarded by management as being extremely unproductive. In

• continued next page



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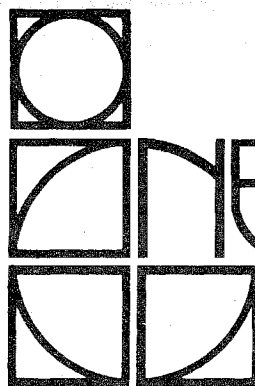
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• continued from previous page

relation to workers in primary and secondary production, service sector employees have, until very recently, escaped the rationalization of work flow, and ensuing greater control of their performance, by management. There has also not been the capital investment in office equipment that allows for higher productivity. The most expensive item an office worker was likely to have access to was an IBM Selectric or the communal xerox machine: \$2,000 or so compared to \$50,000 and on up for the average industrial worker.

The situation has changed rapidly with the advent of the word processor. Basically a video display terminal (keyboard and viewing screen) attached to a microprocessor, it allows for the preparation, editing, storage and retrieval of all kinds of textual and tabular material. In conjunction with a high speed printer, the amount of output possible is increased phenomenally.

The abilities of a skilled typist are now part of the machine's capabilities, e.g., decisions as to formatting and their execution. This aspect is actually a feature of all microprocessors regardless of the machine to which they are attached. They impart new capabilities to any instrument, and at the same time make it easier to operate. Whereas skilled workers were previously required to perform relatively complex tasks, now unskilled persons activate highly skilled machines.

Fewer people are thus required for the same amount of work because of the high speed at which the machines can operate, but, being less skilled or less highly trained and thus more numerous, they can be paid less.

The following anecdote illustrates a number of points, notably the desire of business to pay as low salaries as they can, the impossibility of the word processor operators retaining anything more than very temporary employment advantages because of a shortage of "skilled" people in the field, and the presence of some very nimble hucksters on the periphery.

It's alleged in an office trade magazine that companies, pulled by their desire to reduce payrolls by automation and pushed by equipment manufacturers to install relatively costly systems that promise increased productivity, may find themselves momentarily without capable staff. This is largely due to the variety of systems on the market and a person familiar with one may take a bit of time to learn a different model. Kelly Services Inc. would like to solve the problem which is described as follows: "Competent word processing operators are not nearly as plentiful as the equipment they operate. As a result, personnel can claim extremely high salaries and exercise a high degree of mobility. This is both bothersome and costly for business..." Kelly's plan is to reduce this shortage by providing training

courses that would allow operators to work on any system.

It's all a bit of a gimmick because the customer would end up paying Kelly twice — once for the temporary staff and once again for the training provided on the job. It is interesting to see an honest statement, though, of what management considers bothersome.

And so on, and so on. The applications are endless.

Meanwhile, as the costs of microtechnology decrease even further because of mass production and even more general applicability, attention is turned once again to the primary and secondary sectors to increase productivity and a whole other round of jobs is on the block again.

I want to emphasize at this point the huge gap that exists between capitalist management and the ordinary women and men who must work at a job to support themselves and their dependents.

On the one side is a small ruling group committed to the logic of competition and profit, for whom any other considerations are purely secondary. If it requires a person-less factory or a clerk-free office to remain competitive, then that's what they'll try to implement.

### WHO NEEDS JOBS?

On the other side are people who, given the system, must work in order to eat, clothe themselves, raise families, etc., and who spend large chunks of their days, weeks and lifetimes working under conditions that management decides are most productive. If the job is stressful, if it's boring, if it degrades one's intelligence and personal integrity, if it's unhealthy to the point of physical or mental breakdown, that's too bad — so it has been and so it must be, or so the story goes.

And if there are no jobs? Well, then we must learn to enjoy our leisure time, however that might be possible in the context of mass unemployment.

In the face of a determined management offensive, an uncertain and confused response on the part of unions, and a large proportion of the labour force at risk not even in unions (women in the service industries), the prospects appear decidedly bleak. This is especially true if one merely projects the present onto the future.

History is full of occasions, however, when people have taken stands against conditions they considered threatening or intolerable, and against which they were prepared to fight even when the odds seemed overwhelming.

The micro-chip revolution is just beginning. It can move at lightning speed against us, but there are important holding actions we can take effectively immediately.

In the first place it's necessary for management to re-organize the work flow before micro-electronic equipment can be effectively introduced and displace people. This means that they have to find out from the people now doing the jobs just what these jobs entail and how they are

performed at present. This provides an important opportunity for outright or subtle non-co-operation that will at least slow down the process.

Second, where management is in a position to introduce the new technology, or has already done so, workers should threaten to boycott it if certain stringent demands are not met. These will include: no reduction in the total work force, a shorter work week in exchange for increased productivity, no increase in shift work, which is a common element of work flow re-organization, full safety and health precautions, the involvement of all workers in discussions of any changes to be brought about by the new technology, and final decisions about acceptance or rejection of these changes to be made by all employees, not just those immediately affected, and not just by union officials acting in the workers' "best interests".

These tactics and demands will be labelled unacceptable, impossible, impractical and whole slew of other adjectives (including illegal) designed to persuade us that we really have no recourse but to go along with what management has in mind.

Union leaders and negotiators, accustomed to thinking within the limits defined by capitalism, will be reluctant to articulate the demands that have to be made. They can be pushed a bit to enlarge their vision, but it will ultimately devolve upon working people themselves to make the demands that will protect their jobs and bring about decent working conditions. And these demands must be backed up with action where necessary. No one, least of all governments which are increasingly assuming the role of financial backers for the various micro-tech companies, is going to do it for us.

In the struggle that lies ahead to determine the applications of the new technology, the uses to which it will be put, and for whose benefit these uses are, the question of ownership and control will increasingly come to the forefront.

If the possibilities for increased wealth, increased leisure, ease of access to vast amounts of information and communication devices that enhance democratic participation are all inherent in the new technology, then why are we faced with nightmarish predictions of mass unemployment and stockpiles of nuclear weapons that consume vast amounts of money desperately needed for other things at the same time that they threaten us all with total destruction? The new technology could help us extend our capabilities to feed and clothe and educate people all over the world, it could help us increase our store of effective medical knowledge, and help us in the absolutely crucial task of returning our ecologically threatened planet to a more balanced state. Why then do we see it's wonderful possibilities squandered on yet more consumer gadgetry, on mass entertainment products that deaden the senses and the sensibilities, and on sophisticated weaponry that keeps whole populations of the globe in fear and slavery? •

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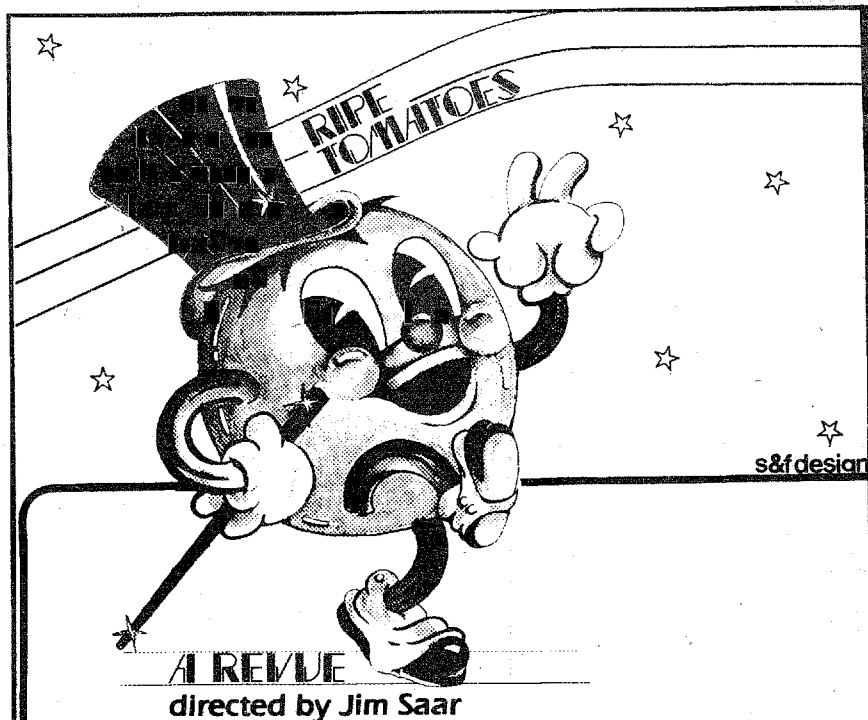
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# MOVEMENT COMMENT

## Voicing the Unspeakable

by Eve Zaremba

Is there such a thing as lesbian sexuality? Is it a discrete phenomena, a separate category of female experience? Is it an integral component of female sexuality, or a 'dysfunction'? Does the word 'lesbian' in this context indicate any more than society's disapproval of certain expressions of female independence? To what extent is it a physiological/emotional reality, to what extent a social/political label, to what extent both? What's the connection between lesbian sexual experience and the Women's Liberation Movement in the past decade or so?

I cannot possibly answer all these questions. Yet I am obliged to ask them. For I am in the throes of writing on lesbian sexuality for The Women's Press anthology of original essays on the Canadian Women's Movement. Wish me luck.

Raising the topic of lesbian sexuality with any group of women produces an interesting variety of responses.

One witty friend, not long 'out' after marriage to a nice man, threw up her hands at the enormity and complexity of the task. She compared defining lesbian sexuality with defining the class struggle. A frightful prospect. Finally she opined that 'lesbian' is only a social category of recent historical vintage having little to do with sexuality properly understood. Thus I was free to skip that aspect and concentrate on producing 2,500 trenchant words on female sexuality.

It is a fashionable platitude that we are all born undifferentiated 'sexual' creatures who, in a perfect world, would be equally attracted to both sexes throughout life. It is a pleasant idea with little to support it. Saying that we are 'sexual beings' means no more than that we all have a central nervous system, pleasure centres in the brain and erogenous zones on our bodies. True, but so what? This assertion leaves out most of what is important about human sexual reality.

It is common to lump lesbian sexuality with male homosexuality as if they were aspects of the same phenomena. This is what happens when all sexuality is understood in male terms. Male sexuality is totally penis-fixated. A penis is a necessary referent in all male sex, whether hetero or homosexual. It is a male physiological reality. For sexuality which is uniquely female, the penis is an irrelevance. That is our psychological reality.

Unless and until the concept of human sexuality is freed from its excessive penis-fixation, it will not encompass female, and therefore lesbian, sexuality.

The unique character of female sexuality is well understood by another friend, a life-long dyke. She was convinced that I was complicating matters unnecessarily. Her definition of lesbian sexuality was the epi-

some of simplicity: "Lesbian sexuality is when you are turned on by women," she said. She has been conscious since adolescence that she was attracted exclusively to women, never by men.

For my friend and women like her there is no sexuality except the lesbian-kind. However, many women are not consciously 'turned on' by anyone, and many more take years to allow themselves to think about women in this context. The experience of such women is fully as authentic as any other.

What makes some people sexually attracted exclusively to women while others, from apparently identical environments and backgrounds, are not? Why do women, after years of satisfactory married life with men, suddenly fall in love with women?

There is a theory around which claims that if only men weren't emotional vampires and/or pigs women would not be choosing women as sexual and emotional partners. In other words — nasty men create lesbians! This is an improvement on the old game of blame-the-parent — especially the mother — for inducing homosexual tendencies by being too strong or too weak, over-protective or uncaring, or whatever seemed to apply. An improvement but not much of one. Apart from its essential chauvinism (everything relates to the male) it just does not make sense. After all, there are always other men if one or two turn out to be duds. Some men are at least as nice as many women. The romantic fallacy — this one will be/is different — is pervasive. There is absolutely no social encouragement for lesbianism. The social and economic advantages of heterosexuality are enormous. Given all the above, it is absurd to imagine that women would freely choose

to live as lesbians unless there were some unique positive quality about the experience.

But I seemed to have strayed off topic, which is advertised as 'lesbian sexuality' not 'living as a lesbian,' two different if obviously connected things. And both different again from just plain sex.

'Living as a lesbian' must be understood as involving a social choice. It is possible to be a lesbian but not live as one. In spite of considerable barriers, this life choice has become a viable option in recent years for some women in western, urban societies. Elsewhere it is actively repressed or not a possibility for economic reasons. Only when women can be economically independent from individual men is living as a lesbian a real option. Living as a political lesbian, i.e. a politically conscious, active, 'out' lesbian, is almost entirely a product of the present Women's Movement, which created the conditions for it.

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'Sex' on the other hand is any overt sexual activity between women. Women who need not identify as lesbian, certainly need not 'live as lesbians' and indeed, need not

know the word! 'Lesbian sex' is, and always has been, more prevalent than conscious lesbianism or living as a lesbian.

Finally, lesbian sexuality is the most prevalent of all. It exists where there may be no sexual acts or any conscious social choice. It need not be expressed by any genital or other activity which would commonly be termed 'lesbian' or even 'sexual'. Lesbian sexuality exists among actively heterosexual and among celibate women as well as self-defined lesbians. Lesbian sexuality has a reality beyond these labels.

Lesbian sexuality lies in the realm of what Adrienne Rich calls the *unspeakable*:

"Whatever is unnamed, undepicted in images, whatever is omitted from biography, censored in collections of letters, whatever is buried in memory by collapse of meaning under an inadequate or lying language — this will become, not merely unspoken, but *unspeakable*". (from *On Lies, Secrets and Silence: Selected Prose 1966-1978* by Adrienne Rich. Emphasis in the original).

It is Rich who has put words to the *unspeakable*. Her phrase 'primary intensity between women' is the most resonant expression on lesbian sexuality that I have come across. As Rich affirms, it is this "intensity which in the world at large was trivialized, caricatured or invested with evil."

That's as far as I have gone to date. Suggestions and comments are welcome as soon as possible. By the end of July it will be too late for the anthology but *Broadside* will publish letters on the subject no matter when they arrive. Write to Eve Zaremba, c/o *Broadside* PO Box 494, Station P, Toronto, Ontario M5S 2T1. Indicate whether it's for publication or not. Thanks.

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