

INPUT 1987

Broadside

A FEMINIST REVIEW



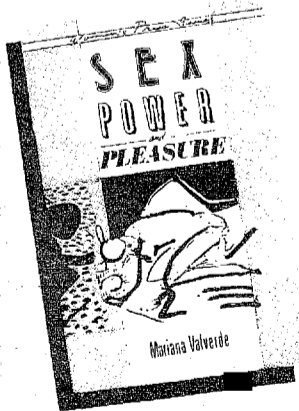
Claposis: Shelley Ledger (l), Ellen-Ray Hennessey and Siobhan McCormack in 'Claposis' at the 4-Play Festival. SEE STORY PAGE 11.

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INSIDE BROADSIDE

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OFF THE HOOK: There are good reasons why women are hooked on alcohol and tobacco, and good reasons why nobody considers it much of a problem. *Broadside* presents a report on alcohol addiction, and the testimony of a recent non-smoker. Page 8.



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EDITORIAL

Editor, Philinda Masters
Advertising/Circulation,
Ingrid MacDonald
Distribution, Susan Cole
Books, Carroll Klein
Calendar, Catherine Maunsell

EDITORIAL COLLECTIVE:

Susan G. Cole
Lisa Freedman
Donna Gollan
Amanda Hale
Carroll Klein
Ingrid MacDonald
Philinda Masters
Catherine Maunsell
Deena Rasky

THIS ISSUE:

Brett Dawson
Rebecca Dunne
Mary Gibbons
Molly Harrington
Kate Lazier
Lynne Patterson
Carol Rowe
Skye Stewart
Jennifer Stephen

Address all correspondence to:
Broadside
P.O. Box 494
Station P
Toronto, Ontario, M5S 2T1
Tel. (416) 598-3513

The *Broadside* Collective does not necessarily share the views contained in any article, even if the byline belongs to a collective member. Views of the Collective are expressed **only** in editorials, and essays signed by the Collective.

Manuscripts of articles should be typed on white paper, double-spaced (send us original, keep a copy) and accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope.

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LETTERS**Women and Words**

We want to thank the women from across Canada who shared in the vision of the 2nd Pan-Canadian Conference of *Women and Words* and who sent in comments and suggestions for workshops; however, the black women and women of colour have withdrawn from the organizing committee, and we understand that there will be no Pan-Canadian Women and Words Conference in Toronto in the summer of 1986.

Any organization that fights sexism must also confront racism. It was our understanding that the conference was to address the theme "Diversity is Strength," which in our understanding meant seeking the full participation of women writers (both self-identified and not) who have been traditionally excluded from the mainstream and ensuring that the conference address both the local and national concerns of women so that it would reflect our diversity of language, race, class, sexuality and geography. We were also committed to increasing the representation of older women, younger women, physically disabled women and poor women. The focus was not to be on women writers of the dominant race/class/language, but rather on the women whom the larger society has tried to mute.

In the interest of time, we will give but few of the incidents that led to our withdrawal.

- That we sought to draw in black women and women of colour was seen as exclusionary rather than affirmative, with the result that, we were told we ought to have done more to make white women comfortable in participating in the committee.

It is an outrage that we who have been excluded from all levels of the dominant society since colonization began 500 years ago are now expected to make white women's comfort a priority.

- We were criticized for not being "conciliatory," i.e., for challenging racist remarks, for not smoothing over "unpleasant" moments.
- We were criticized about how slowly we worked, how information about the conference took long in filtering through the "white" women's literary community.

What was ignored is that in our efforts to preserve the vision of the conference most of the active work—the outreach, the phone calls, the rental of office space, the incorporation of the society, the raising of funds, etc. fell on the black women and women of colour.

- There were complaints that white women in the organization "felt like minorities," indicating that they believed their concerns would not be addressed.

To assume that we would exclude issues that

did/do not appear to affect us directly is a projection and an insult.

- It was suggested that we were being unrealistic in wanting to address racism/multiculturalism and bilingualism.

What then was the conference about? Are we to believe that women's writing is divorced from these issues?

In withdrawing we wish to point out that:

- It is not our responsibility to comfort and reassure white women who are unaccustomed to working with black women and women of colour.
- Racist remarks and attitudes are not open to conciliation and negotiation.
- Any women's conference that does not seek to address a diversity of issues affecting the lives of women serves only women of the dominant race and class.
- It is not the task of black women and women of colour to educate white women about racism.

In closing, we'd like to say, that just as we have worked successfully in the past with white women who are confronting their racism, so too do we, in the words of Audre Lorde, look forward to working with "...all women who can meet us, face to face, beyond objectification and beyond guilt." Unfortunately, the Toronto Women and Words Committee does not appear to be the place.

Makeda Silvera, Sharon Fernandez,
Michele Paulse, Stephanie Martin
Toronto

Re: Fraser Report

Broadside:

I am writing in the hope that I can correct some of what I believe are serious misrepresentations of my work, related to the publication of my article in the December 1985 issue.

First, in the table of contents, you comment that I believe that the Fraser Report undercuts the feminist distinction between private and public by placing it within a liberal legal framework. This is not what I said. The distinction between private and public is not a feminist one; it is something imposed upon us as part of a process of controlling women. However, its utility is not limited to feminists, or women as a gender for that matter. Its generic organization is only one expression of the code, which is rooted in the very foundations of liberalism.

On to the editorial, where you state that I believe feminists have treated "the issue of prostitution with total neglect." What I said was that prostitution has taken a "back seat" to pornography on feminists' political

agenda: while feminist struggles over prostitution are nowhere near in scale to those over porn, this is not the equivalent to total neglect. I hope that women who have devoted a great deal of time and energy fighting for prostitutes' rights will not interpret that statement as a slight to or ignorance of their work.

Next, the title, "Sex and the Single Committee." Could someone please tell me what it means? It is certainly not the more mundane descriptive referent which I submitted with the article, identifying my work as a preliminary critique of the Fraser report's recommendations on prostitution.

And then there is the final paragraph, which contains the statement, "Far from achieving our goal of liberalism, our lives are becoming increasingly regulated." Replace *liberalism* with the original word in the text—*liberation*—and you might better conceptualize the intent of this statement. The entirety of the article had attempted to demonstrate the bankruptcy of liberalism as a political ideology for feminists: liberalism and liberation have nothing to do with one another.

There are other distortions of the original text as a result of the editorial work. For example, my statement that feminists are forced to fight on the terrain of the ruling apparatus appeared without the words, "on the terrain of," which undermined the point that we are struggling on terms which we have not set for ourselves. This places us at a decided disadvantage, and distracts us from envisioning and creating the type of society in which we want to live.

There is therefore another struggle in evidence here. We must strive to maintain as much control over our work and our work processes as possible, even where we regard ourselves as in a safe place, among friends.

Debi Brock
Toronto

Sins of Omission

Broadside:

You have to respect the courage of anyone who dares to publish a list of recommended books in a year "that has been particularly good for reading." Anyone can criticize the choice, and everyone usually does. Even though Carroll Klein and Gail van Varseveld take the precaution of calling their booklist idiosyncratic, I have to comment on one glaring omission in this year's list (December 1985): books by Canadian non-fiction writers. Yet this was a year when Erna Paris, Maggie Siggins, Sarah Spinks, Penney Kome, Sylvia

EDITORIAL**No Nods to a Bad Law**

Initial responses—albeit exaggerated—to the passing of Bill C-49 (which makes illegal "communicating" or "attempting to communicate" for the purposes of prostitution), suggested that any woman dressed for a party and waving for a taxi could find herself with a criminal record. In reality this law, which is intended to eradicate prostitution through the violation of the right to free speech, is being used not on any woman, but on any woman the police believe to be a prostitute.

Although C-49 alleges to be a response to residential complaints about noise and nuisance from neighbourhoods in many Canadian cities, the law oversteps the requirements for a typical response to disturbing the peace. Because laws already exist to control harassment, loitering and noise, it is an unnecessary law. In that Justice minister John Crosbie did not, as the Fraser Committee recommended, repeal the bawdy house laws and offer an alternative location for the sale of sex, it is an unforgiving law. It allows local police forces to discriminate and harass the women working on the streets, by empowering them to arrest any woman they suspect or know to be a prostitute for speaking or attempting to speak (nodding, waving) about the exchange of money for sex.

Prostitutes and their clients face between \$500 and \$2000 fines or jail terms of up to six months. One could imagine a different set of circumstances if the money collected from the arrests were being funnelled back into social programs: perhaps for self defence lessons for the women, or legal rights education, or health seminars, or for the establishment of public bawdy houses. The government, however, seems uninterested in taking responsibility for the prevailing socio-economic conditions that make prostitution an option for women in the first place, or for the impact that acquiring a criminal record or incurring steep fines would have on a woman's ability to leave prostitution if she chose.

Instead, the law is attempting to sweep the streets clean of sexual activity, by making the sidewalk sale of sex illegal. In doing so it will not actually eliminate prostitution, but only make prostitution more difficult to detect as the women go underground. The further the women go from the arm of the law, then that much further are women from the safety of the law. As business becomes more disrupted by police surveillance and arrest, the less able a woman is to turn down or choose her tricks carefully.

While alleging to be a response to property

owners' complaints of nuisance, the law is an excessive and discriminating measure, coming at a time when a politically conservative climate has intensified economic differences between classes and genders. It is no coincidence, either, that prostitutes have been recently scapegoated in the mainstream media as perpetrators of the AIDS virus, despite the lack of evidence to support such a suspicion.

C-49 may well satisfy the puritanical motives of the Justice minister, police chiefs, and others across Canada, but it does so by leaving the process of justice wanting. Not only does it defy the recommendations set out by the Fraser Committee, which was established to consider prostitution and pornography in Canada, it attacks women who live most on the periphery of society. These women don't have the kind of federal networking alliances necessary to obstruct a bill like C-49, nor do they have the kind of money and legal savoir-faire it takes to launch a constitutional challenge against the law's flagrant injustices. The government may well have passed this bill knowing how few allegiances prostitutes, and in particular street workers, have politically in the country.

**Moving?**

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subscriber's address label
with your new address.
Please give us 4 to 6 weeks
advance notice.

Bashevin among others published important books. Some were even about women.

There are moments when I feel that so far as the movement is concerned Canadian women writing non-fiction are writing in invisible ink. I find it monumentally depressing that none of our work, not even *Women Against Censorship*, or the Women and Words anthology *In the Feminine* made enough of an impact on Klein's and Varseveld's consciousness to be remembered or mentioned.

Susan M. Crean
Toronto

Standards of Sisterhood

Broadside:

If "Standards of Sisterhood" is the issue, I am more concerned about the nature and impact for the women's movement of Catharine MacKinnon's attack on Varda Burstyn (*Broadside*, December 1985), than I am about the consequences of Burstyn's interview in *Forum*. MacKinnon has exaggerated the impact of the interview on anti-pornography feminists beyond belief. Her charge of "collaboration" reduces an important difference of opinion within the women's movement on political strategies to overcome women's oppression to a question of morality. From my understanding of Burstyn's work, her efforts to reach beyond the committed to build a broader basis of support is motivated by a commitment to revolutionary change, and not to collaboration with the dominant interests of society.

MacKinnon could have usefully debated Burstyn on alternative ways to build a progressive consensus among women from which to effectively challenge the relations of power in society. For this is the time, it seems to me, to acknowledge differences of opinions on strategies based on our political experiences (particularly with the state) of the last two decades, rather than obscure them in some absolutist "standard of sisterhood," an absolutism that is implied in MacKinnon's article.

Comparing the potential implications of Burstyn's interview in *Forum* and MacKinnon's article in *Broadside*, I cannot help but think that MacKinnon should worry less about the use of Burstyn's interview by pornographers to undermine her perspective and material existence (as she suggests), and more about the questions that her attack will raise in the minds of feminists about the validity of her analysis. MacKinnon has not been stabbed in the front or the back. She has committed political suicide.

Sue Findlay
Toronto

Broadside:

Many thanks to Catharine MacKinnon for showing us Canadian girls just one example of the type of holier-than-thou politicking it takes to fracture and divide a movement.

Mary Louise Adams
Toronto

Broadside:

I was very distressed by Catharine MacKinnon's vicious attack on Varda Burstyn in the Dec/Jan issue of *Broadside*. Although I disagree with the MacKinnon/Dworkin position on pornography, I had a great deal of sympathy for it, just I had some sympathy for the arguments of anti-abortion feminists—but like the obnoxious tactics of the protestors outside the Morgentaler Clinic—MacKinnon's article eroded that sympathy.

Burstyn's decision to be interviewed by *Forum* was obviously difficult and carefully considered (see *Broadside*, October 1985). I, for one, am glad that a mainstream magazine published an article about debates within the women's movement. MacKinnon seems to believe that the purposes of feminism are best served by presenting a univocal front—her front. Surely, the strength of the feminist movement lies in our differences and diversity, not in censoring and silencing each other in the name of "unity."

I disagree vehemently with MacKinnon's black and white vision of pornography issues. She appears to think that all those who oppose her tactics adhere to "the bottom line, which is: the pornography stays."

Of course pornography will stay; just like banning alcohol, banning pornography could not work. Although I deplore the sexism in pornography, I see no reason why representations of sex are necessarily bad. Many of the stories in the same issue of *Forum* as the Burstyn interview were not particularly sexist. Most of them were not what I would call erotica, they were too banal and "unartistic"; thus, I would call them acceptable pornography. I don't want the pornography to stay, I want it to change. I want pornography to excite not insult.

MacKinnon implies that all pornography is bad, even if it is made by feminists! This is where I become confused: if an explicit story about two people having sex is bad because it is pornography, not because it is sexist, what's going on? MacKinnon's position became explicitly anti-sex when she explained why she herself refused to be interviewed by *Forum*: "I didn't want men masturbating to the women and reading me." If a man masturbates while looking at a picture, is that in and of itself bad? If the picture is sexist, there is a problem, but what's wrong with masturbating? I enjoy it, why shouldn't men? If a man, against a woman's will, ties her up to match a picture and masturbates, yes, there's a problem. But just jerking off! So what?

There are many points in MacKinnon's article to which I could take exception, but instead I will only comment on her hysterical characterization of the possible detrimental effects of Burstyn's interview in *Forum*. If she seriously believes that the interview could be used to "support forcing anti-pornography feminists from jobs, revoking book contracts, evictions from homes, cited as legitimization for hostility and harassment and shunning," then she's got the wrong issue, Minneapolis needs a Landlord and Tenant Act, not a pornography ordinance.

I do not doubt MacKinnon's sincerity, in that she believes her tactics are in the best interest of all women, but I'm not sure that her tactics are in my interest. I, for one, believe that the best of all possible feminisms must be one which is pro-sex, which promotes a world which is uninhibited and thus less obsessed with sex. (Oh for a beer ad about good brew not pretty gurls.) This pro-sex vision of feminism is best served by a movement which maintains a careful critique of pornography and creates feminist pornography.

Nancy Worsfold
Toronto

Broadside:

Re: "Standards of Sisterhood," December 1985/1986.

I hope that other feminists will react as strongly as I have to Catharine MacKinnon's insulting tirade against Varda Burstyn. What a pompous, arrogant way to express disagreement with something someone has said and/or where they've said it. I'm curious. How do we come by the MacKinnon article? Did it just arrive? Was it solicited? What role did *Broadside* play in this embarrassing display of venom against a Canadian feminist?

I'm certainly not always in agreement with Burstyn's views myself, but I've never thought that this gives me the right to question her integrity or cast such wild aspersions on her character. If MacKinnon is unable to take part in a discussion or argument and has trouble, as she obviously has, in expressing her own ideas in any coherent way, she should not be published in *Broadside*.

Hellie Wilson
Ottawa

Broadside:

Gee, the readers of *Broadside* are grateful the editorial collective called in the big guns to clarify our fuzzy thinking on the pornography debate, and landed that saviour of us all Catharine A. MacKinnon: legal beagle, and general feminist. You're absolutely right. We feminist readers need an expert prosecution witness, and MacKinnon's "Standards of Feminism," in order to try the wayward Varda Burstyn for her interview in the September issue of *Forum*.

MacKinnon implies Burstyn's *Broadside* discussion (October 1985) of her interview was "unsolicited." We collectively sigh with gratitude that MacKinnon's contribution to the proceedings didn't arrive, HORRORS, unbid-den. Are members of the feminist community

no longer welcome as contributors to *Broadside* in order to clarify positions, develop analyses of feminist issues, or report on events within the feminist community? Do we languish in silence waiting to be "solicited"? Or, do we boldly stumble toward the typewriter?

Curious that MacKinnon feels obliged to divide the "self-styled" fake feminists (women who don't agree with MacKinnon?) from the real McCoy (MacKinnon?). How odd that she takes it upon herself to shore up and make socially pure the authentic "standards of sisterhood." Thank god, she upholds the correct universal standards. Alas, here in the provinces, feminists who speak from diverse ideological perspectives sometimes talk to each other when no one is looking. We don't reductively triangulate our positions in order to polarize the enemy: us vs. creepo Reagan vs. them bad-ol-commie-socialists-some-o-whom-call-themselves-feminists. Imagine.

Perhaps MacKinnon's grasp of the Canadian feminist debate based on her "it seems to me, to put it tentatively" perspective, clouds the issues. Does she bother to inform herself and address issues current in our community? How does she justify her pro-censorship views in the light of recent charges against the feminist art collective, the Woomers, and Pages bookstore? Are we to feel comfortable with her proposals in the knowledge that the state's subtle interpretive framework managed to revise the charges against Woomers/Pages from considering their exhibition, first "obscene," then, full of "disgusting objects"? I can think of many reasons the MacKinnon/Dworkin "Minneapolis" Ordinance is unpalatable. None of them have to do with either my poor taste, or MacKinnon's defensive categorization of her critics as "Reagan appointed judges neo-conservative free market Social Darwinists."

But it's okay dokey. We're cool and so relieved that MacKinnon's public virginity is preserved. WOW her judgement was right on sight when she refused to "reach an important audience" by consenting to an interview with *Forum*. She says, "women first," and I say, "MacKinnon, you're a First Woman." Button your brass-buttoned boxer jacket and stand for the applause PLEASE.

Janice Williamson
Toronto

Broadside:

I am writing to protest Catharine MacKinnon's personal attack on Varda Burstyn which appeared in the December issue of *Broadside*.

Catharine MacKinnon seems to forget that it is the sexism of pornography which is the enemy of women. The enemy is not Varda Burstyn and it is not the many other feminists—socialist, radical or liberal—who are opposed to the strategy of promoting censorship of pornography as the solution to eradicating it. Just because we do not agree with the MacKinnon/Dworkin legal/legislative (and I would say liberal) approach does not mean that we are collaborationists, pornographers, or woman-haters. On the contrary, we are—like MacKinnon and Dworkin—dedicated feminists who care about women. That is why we oppose censorship and that is why we advocate traditional feminist strategies for fighting pornography: grass roots organizing and consciousness raising.

Broadside—the challenge is for you to open up your pages to a meaningful debate on this issue. So far, your record is poor.

Wendy McPeake
Ottawa

Broadside:

We are women who represent numerous standpoints in the pornography and censorship debates. Our opinions vary as to whether Varda Burstyn's decision to be interviewed in *Forum* was tactically a wise one. Some of us think that it was justified, others do not. What we share in common is our abhorrence for the type of statements advanced by Catharine MacKinnon in the December issue of *Broadside*.

Our "standards of sisterhood" cannot condone an attack on Varda Burstyn's personal integrity as a feminist activist and theorist. MacKinnon's letter did not add to our knowledge of the censorship debates, but was written to assail her in what were quite virulent terms. For example, MacKinnon labelled her

an enemy of not only feminists, but all women, in accusing her of being in "active cooperation with pornographers." We do not need the importation of tactics which have caused perhaps irreparable divisions in the U.S. women's movement. What we need is the space for open political debate and strategizing, and the wisdom to work towards a common ground, where we can unite against our real enemies, who are only too happy to stand by and watch our movement weakened by internal conflicts.

Susan Heald, Mary Anne Coffey, Linda Williams, Virginia Neale, Leila Simonen, Kari Delhi, Anne-Louise Brookes, Magda Lewis, Linzi Manicom, Debi Brock, Mariana Valverde, Carolyn Egan, Dorothy E. Smith, Carolyn Strange, Alice de Wolff, Judy Millen, Abbe Edelson, Mary Gellatly, Linda Gardner, Lynn Lathrop, Nancy Farmer, Deborah Gardner, Cynthia Wright, Pamela Walker.

Broadside:

We are writing to express our solidarity with Varda Burstyn for her opposition to censorship and our strong objection to the violent attack on her by Catharine MacKinnon in the December issue of *Broadside*.

We declare our support for Varda Burstyn as a sister, a feminist and a dedicated activist in the cause of women's freedom. She is a socialist feminist who opposes censorship as a means of fighting sexist pornography. Hers is a legitimate feminist position shared by many women in the Canadian women's movement who are active in every aspect of feminist politics—in the community, in the arts, in unions, in the solidarity, peace and environmental movements, in women's services of all kinds, as lesbians and heterosexuals, in black organizations and the growing movement among women of colour.

It is impossible to address all of the ridiculous and extreme statements contained in MacKinnon's attack against Burstyn. But to cite one—MacKinnon's association of Burstyn with pimps and organized crime is absurd. In fact, it is a smear tactic. We fear MacKinnon has fallen prey to that nasty habit of thought which makes monsters of people one disagrees with. Lest we forget McCarthyism! Does Catharine MacKinnon wish to be immortalized as an "ism" of feminist intolerance—MacKinnonism? Her slanderous denunciation of Burstyn in the pages of *Broadside* brings political debate among women to an all time low in Toronto.

The tone of the article and the accusations within it smack of paranoia. One is reminded of Barbara Aniel's diatribes in that other little Toronto paper. Sisters at *Broadside*, is this responsible journalism? "Movement Comment" was designed to create the space for open, democratic discussion. Instead, the debate has been poisoned. Our common enemy, the system of authoritarian patriarchy, is the only beneficiary when we stoop to this level of intolerance.

MacKinnon disagrees vehemently with Burstyn. Fine. But this is no excuse to engage in character assassination. After all, MacKinnon is not the only one who is angry. We don't like MacKinnon's position on pornography either. We think it is wrong, counterproductive to the cause of women. MacKinnon's self-righteous attitude as expressed in her article tempts one to retaliate by defining her attack on Burstyn as outside of feminism. Her discussion of Burstyn's interview in *Forum* is unilaterally to say the least, but since she has drummed Burstyn out of the sisterhood, anything goes. The virulence of MacKinnon's attack potentially invites the accusation that she, rather than Burstyn, by employing the methods of patriarchal discourse, has gone over to the enemy. This is said by way of illustration to show how these things can escalate.

So let's not get carried away.

We, too, must be careful that our anger and indignation do not lead us down the same dangerous path of rhetorical extremism. We are serious about our commitment to democracy and freedom of expression. Although we feel aggrieved by MacKinnon's unilaterally attack on Varda Burstyn in *Broadside*, we don't dispute that MacKinnon and the sisters at *Broadside* are feminist. In our movement there are a variety of strategical approaches to the struggle against sexist pornography. All are worthy of consideration. Let's keep our differences in perspective in the spirit of a democratic and progressive sisterhood.

Deirdre Gallagher, Carolyn Egan, Laura Sky, Susan Kennedy, Frances Lankin, Amy Gottlieb, Lisa Steele, Shelley Acheson, Sue Findlay, Dinah Forbes, Lorie Rotenberg, Sandy Fox, Pamela Walker, Susan Goodfellow, Judy Rebeck, Fern Cristall, Roberta Hamilton, Katy Pellizzari, Bonnie Bliss, Susan Ditta, Mercedes Steedman, Cynthia Wright, Mariana Valverde.

The High Price of Prostitution

by Jennifer Stephen

While members of the Senate were considering whether to co-operate with justice minister John Crosbie in his efforts to rid the streets of Canada of prostitution, many others were gathered at OISE to talk yet again about the politics of pornography and prostitution. This time, however, the feminists and social activists were joined by women in the sex trade. The conference organizing committee, under the sponsorship of the Ontario Public Interest Research Group (OPIRG), made every conceivable effort to include representatives from prostitutes' rights organizations including the Alliance for the Safety of Prostitutes (ASP) from Vancouver, the Coalition Organizing for the Rights of Prostitutes (CORP) in Toronto, and Margo St. James from COYOTE (Call Off Your Old Tired Ethics) in the US. The purpose of the event was to create a dialogue between sex trade workers and the rest of the grass-roots movement for social change. The theme was "Challenging Our Images: The Politics of Pornography and Prostitution." The ensuing action was focused on ridding the audience of our false conceptions of work in the sex trade, and challenging our politics in general.

My first discovery came with the knowledge that working in the sex trade is not a uniformly negative experience. This was one of the first items out of the common mythology to be unpacked: the image of prostitute as victim. Since nobody particularly enjoys having the label of 'victim' permanently branded on their forehead, conference participants and panelists struggled, sometimes in isolation from each other, to reconstruct that image to allow for a greater degree of cultural legitimacy and self-determination. Leading the defence were women like Margo St. James, whose version of prostitution sounded like a manifesto for sexual liberation on the entrepreneurial model: if it pays well, and if freedom can be bought, then I'm both wealthy and free. What that approach relies on, however, is the familiar analysis of the origins and root cause of sexual repression. According to St. James, the vilification of prostitutes lies not in the vilification or subordination of women generally, but rather in the fact that prostitutes demand cash where 'good women' do it gratis: "Asking for the money is what the women are put in jail for, not the sex." Sexual autonomy, signified by cash for sex, is what separates the 'good girls' from the 'bad'. It is this flagrant challenge to the double standard of the male/female sexuality model, according to St. James, that invokes the cultural

wrath with which the whore is regarded.

While it was tempting to follow St. James and others, that is to define prostitution simply in terms of the basic cash-equals-sex transaction, I could do so only at the risk of overlooking the economic and social context in which the terms of the transaction are negotiated, if not actively constructed. Of course, it's possible that this is all prostitution is about for some people. For example, a gay male in the audience (a white, affluent male, I hasten to add) came out twice-over to relate to us his experience while in Cuba: in his view, the exchange of sex for a pair of shoes for the Cuban youth was a model of egalitarian social/political/economic/sexual relations. He didn't look beyond the "I wanted sex and he wanted shoes" to even begin to consider the question about choice, options, material wealth, or material gain. To me, the exchange is not as equal as it may superficially appear to be: social relations are reproduced both sexually and economically in the transaction. It is

Margo St James's version of prostitution sounded like a manifesto for sexual liberation on the entrepreneurial model: if it pays well, and if freedom can be bought, then I'm both wealthy and free.

this action which speaks to the core of prostitution as an institution which is not static, and which is not isolated from the surrounding cultural and economic context.

When these questions are put to one side (as they were during most of the discussion in the sex trade forum) we are left with the central issue of choice: does anyone choose to become a prostitute? Under what conditions is this choice made? It seems a very curious thing that the vision of 13-15 year old people on the street track almost always raises the ire of moral majoritarians, sex trade workers, and social activists generally. For those who are clearly below the age of consent, people often concede that consent, or choice, is not an issue. And yet, having passed that almost magical age, the liberal concept of consent springs up, even though the person is the same, just older. As though people were not historical subjects, each with her/his personal history and accumulated experience, including that of sexual coercion in and out of the institution of the family.

When Marie Arrington (ASP, Vancouver) spoke, she spoke not as an 'expert', but rather as someone who has lived what others mystify in a cloud of professional objectivity. Arrington gave a candid account, based on her own earlier experience, of the position of children on the street track. While some, like Arrington, are taken under the wing of women working the street (running errands rather than turning tricks for a living) others lack that option. The order of the day, however, is survival as a street person by whatever means. That is, having escaped the regulatory agency known as the family with whatever conditions prevailed there, those who are below the age of consent, i.e., those who are deprived of the capacity to consent, simply become runaways in the statistics. The Badgely Commission refers to these people as "society's castaways," a disposable minority. With the further criminalization of juvenile prostitution, as all of the sex trade workers pointed out, the revolving door of juvenile court, social service agencies, and group homes are just another way of bringing these 'minors' within the ambit of State regulation, all for the crime of being sexualized and autonomous at too early an age. Mary Johnson (from the now defunct Canadian Association of Burlesque Entertainers, Toronto) added clarity to the question by noting that prostitution is just a symptom of the larger problem, namely, that which puts young people on the street in the first place. Prostitution doesn't cause these problems, isn't the problem: "Persecuting prostitutes won't do anything." And as Valerie Scott (CORP, Toronto) added, "These kids are there to survive, they haven't made a conscious decision to be a prostitute." All of which points to the basic tension between explaining prostitution in terms of some kind of individual pathology (i.e., at the level of individual action), or at the level of cultural pathology, to include the structural conditions

which effectively influence the shape and range of individual choice. And it was more or less conceded that the sexual and economic options available on the street are limited, particularly for young women who are escaping assault or any other intolerable condition within the family context. Given what we know about sexual coercion in all of its forms (and incestuous assault is just one) we can hardly overlook the role of the family in its present political form in maintaining a system whereby one group (generally young and female) exists to service the sexual needs/desires of those who can afford to pay (generally male, but otherwise racially and economically diversified); and, moreover, a group which is prosecuted for doing so.

Unfortunately, many of these questions were given short shrift, and probably for good reason. Questions pertaining to the social construction of gender and power, the social meaning of male and female, and the experiences of male/female sexuality come together in feminism in direct relation to the struggle for women's choice and self-determination in real, and not just formal, terms. For women in the sex trade, however, choice and self-determination resonate with a very different meaning: to maintain the sexual status quo, but to fight for the same rights as those in straight society. That is, to keep the money earned, to exist without harassment from police ... to exist, period. Prostitutes' rights activists seek to organize around their own political agenda to gain legitimacy as sex trade workers, not ostracization as either victims or sexual deviants. Peggy Miller (CORP) put the matter succinctly: "What we want is prostitutes out speaking for themselves, not represented by other political organizations." In that sense, self-determination translates concretely into the political struggle to survive. The resulting atmosphere of the OPIRG conference, particularly during the major forum conducted by sex trade workers, was fraught with all the ambiguity and drama which has characterized the sexuality debate both in Canada and in the United States. Although the overall motivation for the conference was to generate a dialogue in which

For women in the sex trade, choice and self-determination resonate with a very different meaning: to maintain the sexual status quo, but to fight for the same rights as those in straight society.

prostitutes would have the same legitimacy of access more generally accorded those in 'straight society', this same strategy produced a current of animosity which occasionally seemed inimical to feminism and women alike. All of which suggested to me that the road toward an open dialogue between feminists and women working the sex trade, one which will be equally constructive and credible to both, will be arduous and long.

One area that will require careful scrutiny concerns the role of heterosexual marriage and monogamy. Here was a prime example of how prostitutes defined society, and not prostitution, as the source of their, and not women's, oppression. After it had been granted that men segregate women into madonna/mother and prostitute/whore, thus "ripping them both off badly," Cathy, a sex trade worker, went so far as to allege that this same segregation is maintained by, and protects the interests of, women whose material and psychological security is safeguarded through marriage. According to Cathy, and those who accept the myth of the frigid wife, prostitutes' clients are the property of other women, "living in the harness of ownership of other women." Society's greatest fear is that if prostitutes come out, the clients might come out also. This means that men will be liberated, finally, from the oppressive grasp of monogamous marriage and monogamous wives. Unfortunately, for those of us who are working on the issues of rape, woman-battery, and similar forms of wife-assault, Cathy (and the myth of the frigid wife) doesn't really speak to the experiences of all women. And this is what any analysis of prostitution must do.

The one area in which everyone agreed dealt with the most immediate issue: Bill C-49. As was pointed out by Valerie Scott,

"Every woman should be outraged by this bill.... It denies not only prostitutes, but every woman, free access to their city, freedom of association.... Society will not be allowed to communicate with us, we will no longer be allowed to communicate with society." With a maximum provision of a \$2,000 fine and/or 6 months in jail, Bill C-49 places enormous scope for discretionary power in the hands of police, without any concrete limitation or even additional training. In addition to continued sexual discrimination at the level of enforcement, C-49 is discriminatory by virtue of the extent to which prostitution itself is deemed criminal behaviour. The legislation, which passed through Parliament in record time, effectively prevents sex trade workers from organizing, setting up a network to protect each other, even to live or associate with a male partner. The laws relating to pimps define a pimp as "anyone who lives with or is habitually in the company of a prostitute." In the absence of direct evidence, police are able to fulfill any evidentiary requirements. And as Scott maintained, "We all know, they lie in court." Similarly, prostitutes will be unable to gain access to the legal process in order to report and prosecute 'bad tricks', crusading moralists, or coercive pimps: reporting a case of rape, battery or extortion will immediately bring the woman herself under scrutiny.

Organizing against Bill C-49 was a major imperative of the conference and must become a central imperative of the women's movement in Canada. And that requires a concrete understanding of how criminalization both creates and maintains the stereotype of the prostitute as a social pariah; as a 'them' marginalized from 'us'; as the embodiment of sexual deviance in the extreme of criminality. This also requires that feminists recognize the insensitivity of Take Back The Night marches, walking tours through the street track during the peak hours of work or into the sex/skin clubs to survey the victimization of table-dancers and the women on stage. Women on the sex trade panel pointed out repeatedly how actions such as these, and the attitudes to which these actions attest, have been formulated without any consultation with the women who will be made the object of such exercises. But this also requires that we begin to work through the differences between what prostitutes want and what feminists want.

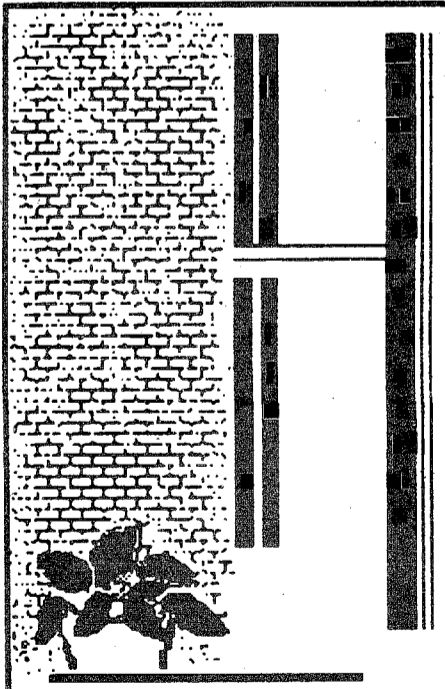
What do prostitutes' rights activists want? A working environment for sex trade workers, not sexual slaves. An environment that is safe, secure, free from external coercion by pimps and the State. Security from the violence done to them by pimps, tricks and the State. Freedom from the grasp of social service agencies which define prostitutes as victims who are on the street due to some individual pathology, failure or short-coming, some inability to cope, lack of education, or

Feminists have to recognize the insensitivity of Take Back The Night marches, walking through the street track during peak hours, or into sex/skin clubs to survey the victimization of table dancers.

some manifestation of sexual deviance. An environment in which they can work, have lovers, keep their children; remain free from harassment, judgement, morality crusades and violence: to be regarded on or off the street just like others who conduct business transactions on or off the street, in or out of the public 'gaze'.

When feminists speak of prostitution, it is the institution and not the individual that is in focus. Prostitution as an institution *does* something to women, and is in turn evidence of what is done to women in the practice of gender hierarchy — in the name of our nature, of entertainment, of sexual class and sexual caste. That is why some women refer to having *escaped* from prostitution, from enslavement and bondage, both physical and psychological. The institution is profitable, flourishing and thriving on a global basis. And meanwhile, the majority of women who are engaged in it continue to live from trick to trick.

Jennifer Stephen is a co-producer of *The Pornography Tapes*.



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Prostitution's Worldwide Profits

An interview with Charlotte Bunch

Charlotte Bunch first visited Toronto in 1977. Shortly after her appearance here, feminists, inspired in part by her perspectives, founded Women Against Violence Against Women. In 1982, she returned to participate on a panel entitled 'Sex, Freedom and Violence' sponsored by *Broadside*. She recently visited Toronto again, to give the keynote address at a conference on international violence against women sponsored by the Metro Toronto YWCA.

Every time she shares her views, Charlotte Bunch has a special impact on the Toronto feminist community. *Broadside* interviewed her about her work on international female sexual slavery. She spoke with Susan G. Cole about forced prostitution, sex tours and global feminism.

Broadside: I'd like to start with the work you're doing globally, particularly the work you are doing on forced prostitution. What does the term forced prostitution mean, and how do you use the term female sexual slavery?

Charlotte Bunch: We use the term female sexual slavery in its broadest sense. It includes more than just forced prostitution. It also refers to sexual mutilation and to sexual abuse. Because the network is international, it has picked up on the work of different groups and situations where there's a problem of women being sexually abused and where women cannot escape from that sexual abuse. Forced prostitution is only one of the phenomenon we're looking at. The women in India are dealing with a whole range of things: forced and arranged marriages, and the interaction between that and women going into prostitution, so it isn't just the prostitution end of it that we're interested in.

Broadside: I was intrigued by your report, *Networking Against Female Sexual Slavery* (Barry, Bunch, Castley, eds.), and the way it described the cross-cultural fact of forced prostitution, as well as the varying conditions in those cultures that generate forced prostitution or allow it to exist: monogamy in one culture, polygamy in another.

Bunch: We've found that no matter what the cultural form of oppression, in almost every culture the one out, the one way in which women could get out of the conditions which they had been forced into, is prostitution. It didn't matter whether you were trying to escape an arranged marriage, or an abusive marriage, or whether you were trying to escape a monogamous situation or a polygamous one, all of them share in common the fact that women have very few choices and control over their lives. When women are trying to escape poverty or an abusive home, prostitution has been set up as the place women can go.

What is forced and what is not forced? Prostitution is set up for the benefit of men. In order to ensure that there will be some women to be prostitutes for the benefit of men, women who can't or won't fit into other structures, structures that are oppressive to women, will get channeled into prostitution. It's not necessarily important whether prostitution is worse or better than where they came from. It seems to me that prostitution is a continuation of that first oppression in another form.

There are women who do see prostitution, even in a country like India or in the Philippines, as an escape from either an abusive marriage, or an escape from poverty or no jobs. When it happens, the woman may not understand whether it's better or worse. She just knows she can't stand what she's been in.

Broadside: Is that at all connected to our experience here at a recent conference, in which participants opposed to Bill C49 were asked as well to accept prostitution as an all-out choice?

Bunch: In North America, the majority of women who end up in prostitution more likely perceive themselves as having had a choice, an active choice, than is necessarily true in Third World countries. Part of it is the rhetoric of our society which makes everybody feel as if they have had a choice in their lives, because that's supposedly what we want. Also, the situation of women may not be as dramatically impossible here, so that you can actually think about whether you're going to become a waitress or a prostitute. For the majority of women with whom we work in the Third World, that isn't the kind of issue they face. By and large, their lives are much more haphazard. They may get out of one evil situation and they will have no idea



Charlotte Bunch in Toronto, November 1985

what's going to happen to them. They only know they're trying to get away from something they don't like. They may end up just running away. They become prostitutes along the way in order to survive. Then they become caught in the web. A very small percentage of prostitutes who work outside North America work independently. Once they are prostitutes, they enter a web of increasing controls, and in most of these societies, there is nowhere for them to go back to. Their families, their societies, won't accept them back once they've become prostitutes. This is the triple bind of prostitution that makes it possible for women to be trapped even further. Prostitution is looked upon as a shame, as the woman's fault, rather than as a circumstance women are forced into because society demands this cheap pool of labour.

Broadside: Why does the pool have to exist, for the pimp or for the john? Where does it all come from, and can we change it just by focussing on the traffickers?

Bunch: I don't assume that anything is inevitable. The deeper psychological, sociological political question, why do men think they should have the right to women's bodies whenever they please? is a deep question. No feminist should give in to the notion that men need to control and dominate women's bodies, that it's natural and inevitable and something to which we have to accommodate ourselves. I don't think it's a service women have to provide. Now, how do we go about challenging the notion? It seems to me we have to work on a number of levels. On one level, on the level of education and the sociological, I am interested in questioning why society accepts men's right to women's bodies, in every arena, whether it's rape, prostitution, pornography or any other area. That's long-term education work.

The more immediate work is challenging those structures, and businesses that traffic women, that keep women trapped. I am not interested in working to force any woman out of prostitution who, for whatever reasons, says she wants to stay there. There are so many women in forced prostitution that are

looking for a way out, that working to find ways that they might escape is enough for the rest of my life. If 10%, some people put it as high as 30%, don't want to get out of prostitution, I don't feel any need to challenge that because there's enough work to be done to find some means of escape for the women who want it, and to diminish the ease with which the primary traffickers—and I'm not referring to pimps, I mean the trafficking industries—move women from country to country and set them up into sex tours. The primary focus is on strategies that make it more difficult for traffickers to operate, strategies that reach the women and allow them to leave. That's enough work for me.

Broadside: Governments do protect their sex industries, don't they?

Bunch: Absolutely. Governments collaborate, and so do tourist industries. The sex tours have been structured mostly for Asian and European men. North American men tend to be involved in other forms, like the mail-order brides, and the importing of women.

Mail-order brides do fall into the category of female sexual slavery. For one thing, it's about the sale of people. One of the essential definitions of slavery is that people are bought and sold. Our primary focus is what makes women vulnerable to that situation, and educating women as to what they're getting into. The groups in our network who have worked with mail-order brides are primarily interested in ways to reach the women once they come into the western country and want to escape. Because of the way they have entered, because they have been purchased as brides, most of them feel they have to take whatever the man gives to them. In that sense they are slaves because they have no rights and no alternatives. They, most of them, can't go back to their own countries, and if they want to do something about their husband's abuse in their new countries, they're sent back. We are not as interested in eliminating the institution, although that is a long term goal, as we are in finding the women and making sure women know about their rights. On the other side, the women in Asia are trying to let the women know, before they become mail-order brides,

what happens to them once they get here. Women in Thailand, for example, are trying to get women who have been mail-order brides to come back and talk to women about what they're getting into.

Broadside: So the strategy is to get women to talk to other women about what the experience is really like?

Bunch: To end the isolation.

Broadside: Some prostitutes complain that feminists think there is something bad about the exchange of money in sex, as if there's something wrong with just that. Do you think that there can be an exchange of sex for money that is an equal exchange?

Bunch: While working on this issue I have become very pragmatic about what questions really alleviate the situation at the moment. Maybe that's also why it's been easier for me to focus on women in the Third World. The situation there is so much more dramatic. The women there really want to work to end these practices and I'm not so caught up in these debates. It's not that as an intellectual and theoretician I'm not interested in those questions in the long term. It just seems to me that a lot of theoretical debates in this area are interfering with being able to do some of the work we have to do. I have chosen to put the more practical work in the forefront.

As long as we're caught in arguing on moral grounds about what's better or worse, and who's more caught up in the system, we won't get anywhere. My interest is in why women have so few options; what happens to women when they are forced into this option; what are the forces that make it impossible for them to get out of it if they want to get out of it. There are different kinds of pressures brought to bear on prostitutes, even in North America. But really, we should be working on the concrete questions—decriminalizing prostitution because legalizing it or making it illegal works against all our interests—on the violence prostitutes experience, working with the prostitutes themselves. Most of the women who have done that—worked with prostitutes in North America—have found that the great majority of them want to get out. If your primary concern is to make it possible for women to do other things in their lives, you'll find that there are a lot of prostitutes who want to do something else. There are a lot of women in marriage who want to do something else. I don't consider prostitution and marriage the same, but I think women feel trapped by these institutions, and so there's a similarity.

Broadside: How can we get involved as North Americans?

Bunch: I think there is a role in every city in North America for people concerned with this. The first thing is to find out what are the trafficking operations that come into their city, whether there is a particular route bringing prostitutes into the city, or a prevalence of mail-order brides. For example, there are women brought in from the Philippines, and in many cities there are Philippine immigrant communities. One of the goals is to find Filipino women to work with other women, perhaps to develop shelters or work with Y communities who have programs on violence against women.

One of the women we work with in Peru has a little table, and she sits in the market all day long in the area where there are prostitutes. She's been doing this for five years. The prostitutes know that if they have a problem with abuse or legal rights that they can go and talk with her. By being there every single Thursday for five years, always available to them, the woman at the table—she and others she works with—has gradually been able to help these women escape, to find out what their legal rights are, to help women with child care problems. The goal is to help women get out of the institution of prostitution, but also to help women who haven't chosen to get out to better their situation. As that occurs, gradually the women seek more and more ways to get out.

Broadside: Do you ever fear that someone might accuse you of paternalism when you're dealing with other cultures?

Bunch: I don't go to the Philippines and try to work with Filipino prostitutes myself. We bring together the people who are doing the work, finding out what resources we can offer internationally. I am more likely to be asked by the Filipino group to find out what I can

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The Shape of Desire

The following piece has been excerpted from Mariana Valverde's book *Sex, Power and Pleasure*, which will be published by *The Women's Press* in February.

by Mariana Valverde

The shaping of female desire

Psychoanalysis envisions all sensual desires as based on the absence or lack felt by the baby when separated from its mother or from other sources of pleasure and nourishment. This means that whatever the character of our desired objects, the form of our desire is often a longing not just to be with but to become one with the desired object. This longing is surrounded by a constant anxiety about loss, as both our actual separation from the mother, and our potential separations from other objects of desire.

The male baby grows up to be a man whose masculine, phallic desires for the mother can then be satisfied to some extent by his conquest of women and of the world at large. The female, on the other hand, soon finds that the actualization of infantile desires is frustrated by the strong encouragement to redirect her energy and longing away from the maternal breast, in order to exclusively eroticize the male body. The original object of her desire, then, has to be completely repressed. Even if she accomplishes this redirection, and is comfortable in the heterosexual role, she will as an adult have particular, feminine difficulties in fulfilling her sensual desires. Her lack of power in the patriarchal world is one obvious problem. Another is that she not only has to change the nature of the desired object, but also the form of the desire itself. The baby's desires are enormous, selfish, and often destructive. They are shaped by the yearning to encompass everything, to absorb all alien or even potentially independent objects such as the breast into oneself. In adult life, men are allowed some measure of selfish desire, and as long as they do not exceed certain culturally determined boundaries they are rewarded and respected for showing ambition, drive, and ownership, in other words their mastery and power over other people and objects.

Women, on the other hand, are conditioned from a very early age to become mothers. Their desire is channelled into selflessness. Although Freud believes that there are unchangeable psychological reasons for women to transform their active, phallic desires into the desire to nurture a (male) child, the reasons for this transformation/distortion of female desire lie rather in the social structures of male dominated societies. In Freud's account, the bare physical fact of women's lack of a penis is used, by an interesting sleight-of-hand, to argue that women necessarily wish not only for a baby but for a whole nuclear family. From earliest girlhood our wish to possess and swallow up the Other is turned back, so to speak, and transformed into the opposite wish to be possessed by a stronger male. This is accompanied by the equally "innate" wish to become not just a biological but a social mother.

The complexities of human desire are thus simplified for us: women are offered only two basic forms of desire as possible models. One is the wish to become the object of male desire, giving up our autonomy to a stronger (male) will. The other is an identification with the "higher", selfless ideals of nurturing and mothering. Since female desire is always relative, we need to examine how phallic desire is itself constructed.

* * *

Question: My "problem" is that I much prefer foreplay and oral sex to intercourse. I don't see anything all that odd about these inclinations, but most of my lovers do. Should I seek help? I'm orgasmic during the kind of sex I like.

Answer: Preferring such activities isn't necessarily a problem, but the fact that you make men aware of your proclivities in a manner they find upsetting leads me to suspect you may have hostile feelings toward them. ... Possibly, you shy away from penetration because you fear being hurt by closeness. While cunnilingus and other preliminary techniques can indeed be an important part of intimacy, these methods, used alone, also serve as a way of avoiding more personal contact....

—'Analyst's Couch'

by William S. Appleton, M.D. Psychiatrist

Dr. Appleton, who has read Freud but not *The Hite Report*, is the *Cosmo* oracle on emotional health. Women who are otherwise enjoying themselves leading the liberated *Cosmo* lifestyle are encouraged to peer into their lives and discover a "problem" that Dr. Appleton can solve, much as Catholic children are supposed to construct sins out of their experience for the satisfaction of the priest's desire. The letter writer has discovered that she likes sex, and she enjoys it when men make love to her. (This is referred to by Dr. Appleton as "proclivities" and "preliminary techniques".) On the other hand, she doesn't much like intercourse, possibly because it hurts, or simply because it's boring. She has thus managed, despite her upbringing and despite hundreds of years of patriarchal attempts to deny women pleasure, to find her

"upsets" men by revealing them. *Cosmo's* Dr. Appleton is not a Victorian; he is vaguely aware that women have sexual pleasures of their own. But according to him women should silence their desires and simply try to manipulate the situation so as to maximize their own pleasure; they must never actually confront men.

This example reveals the fundamental contradiction of the *Cosmo* ideology, which proclaims women's right to have affairs and even be aggressive both in and out of bed—while never facing up to the fact that at some point both the boyfriends and the Dr. Appletons are going to find their authority directly challenged. *Cosmo* portrays women with glamorous jobs and even more glamorous lovers. But it never shows direct struggle between those women and the men in their lives. If

her own desires, to name her pleasures directly and not as relative to the male's. We can accept men's "gift" of sexual desire—as long as we do not point out that it was not theirs to give in the first place. Women's desire has to be shaped so as to allow for an appearance of wildness, a veneer of autonomy. But its development, radical as it is in comparison to the ideal of passionlessness, still takes place within a phallogocentric context.

The new spirit of chic: Masculine desire

If females are subject to a process which subordinates the naming and the realization of their desire to the development of masculine desire, then one might think male desire is somehow free from distortion, and that what we see out there (aggressiveness, competition, rape) is indeed the expression of man's "true" desire. Yet this conclusion is completely false, for it ignores the complicated process by which males are "gendered" or made masculine. From the time the kindergarten teacher says "boys don't cry" males are instructed in the behaviour and feelings appropriate to the claims of masculinity. Anxiety, sadness, confusion, weakness, affection and fear are some of the emotions that are supposed to be rooted out and replaced by a small selection of acceptable feelings: aggressiveness, competition, pride and courage.

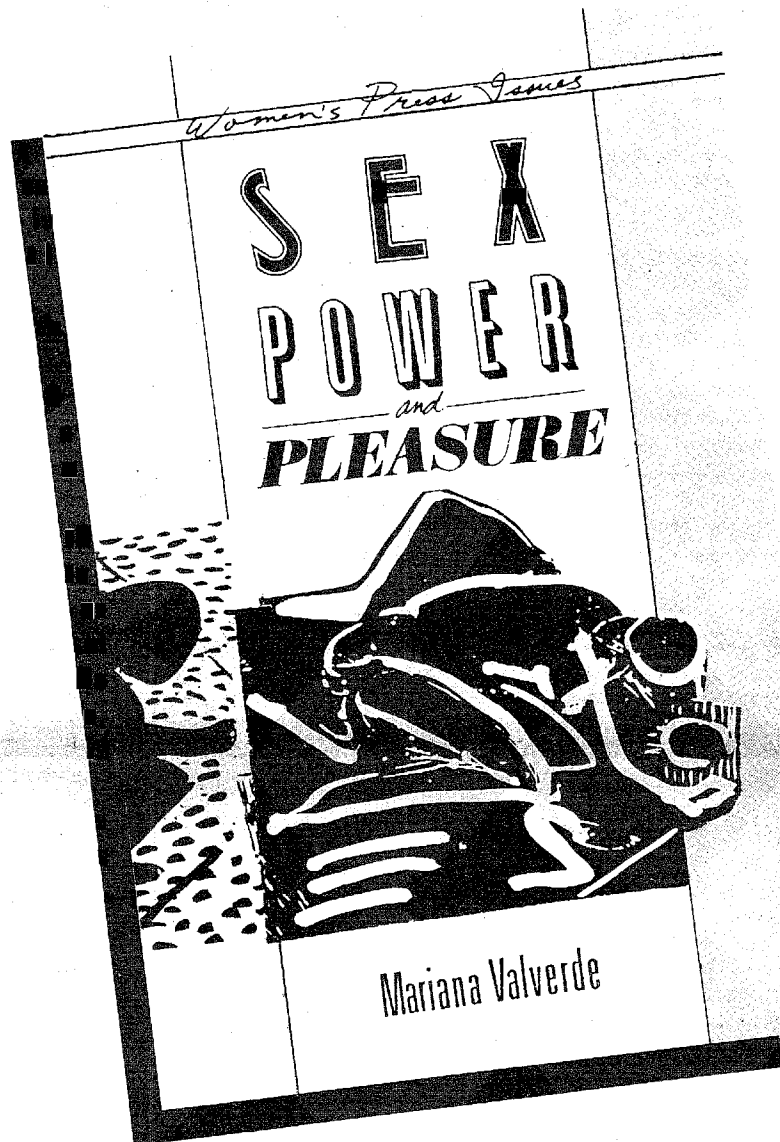
This is not to say that masculinity is also an oppression, as some rather naive men have concluded. It is not an oppression because it is designed precisely in order to allow men to dominate women, in a "natural" way without self-reflection or guilt. The process of instilling masculinity in individual men does limit and stunt their growth. But these limitations are constructed so as to fit men into a structure which gives them privilege, power and wealth. Even men who are not at the top of the male pyramid by virtue of their class, colour or sexual orientation have power—at least over some groups of women.

Most of the requirements of masculinity—especially in a capitalist society, where competitiveness and ruthlessness are economically rewarded—involve creating in men the kinds of desires which often result in violence. However, just as some of the desires created in women by the requirements of femininity are not in and out of themselves negative (such as the desire to nurture), neither are all masculine desires completely disagreeable. The desire to work hard and to create a good product (as found in craftsmen, skilled male workers and male farmers) is a worthy one. But its expression may lead to deplorable consequences if it involves a ruthlessly individualistic climb to the top, or a collective assertion of superiority over "inferior" groups. The pride of white male skilled workers is often intertwined with sexism and racism so it can often be associated with exclusivist union policies and other retrograde measures. Because all desire has been conceptualized and experienced as primarily masculine, it is difficult to sort out which aspects of masculine desire are rooted in patriarchal domination, and which have been appropriated by masculinity but belong to the human species at large.

Moving from the working world to the world of aesthetic and erotic pleasure, we can ask: is the desire to look at pictures which are both aesthetically and erotically pleasing a specifically male desire? Or is it, like the desire to realize oneself in skilled work, one which has been inextricably linked to gender and race privilege but which one could imagine as being separate from the system of domination?

Some people believe it is only men who enjoy looking at pictures of naked bodies, and that this desire is rooted in maleness. Women might have an intellectual appreciation of high art, but, so the argument goes, even the classic masterpieces are essentially male, with females being portrayed as objects or static symbols. Women therefore cannot really enjoy art or films or sculpture, because in order to do so they would have to identify with the male point of view of the artist or camera. Even if they can momentarily take this position, they constantly fall back into an identification with the object, thus preventing their visual erotic pleasure from being realized.

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source of sexual pleasure and seek satisfaction. And yet, enough patriarchal attitudes have seeped into her mind that she wonders "Should I seek help?" even while adding that she does have orgasms.

The doctor, who would never wonder if he should seek help if his wife were less than ecstatic with their lovemaking, decides that she does indeed need help. Identifying completely with the male lover's frustrations, he knows enough not to attack the woman directly. So he doesn't just say "Male pleasure is what counts, you fool." No, that would give the game away. So he pretends that it's "natural" and "normal" to regard intercourse as the final goal of all sexual activity, thus reducing sex to sex for the man. If the woman avoids vaginal penetration, it can't be for the prosaic reason that she derives no pleasure from it, since woman's pleasure is not the purpose of sex as defined by Dr. Appleton. It must be—surprise!—because she is a cold, frigid bitch, despite all evidence to the contrary. She must be "hostile" to men, for any woman who puts her own pleasure ahead of men's must be pathologically anti-male. She "fears being hurt by closeness." The fact that many men actually hurt their female lovers when having intercourse is irrelevant. Women must surrender to the great penis in order to be true women, and their own pleasure or pain are indeed irrelevant.

The woman's desires are thus turned into pathological symptoms. Without actually saying so, Dr. Appleton suggests that women must be delighted to let male orgasms determine the shape and rhythm of lovemaking, leaving their own pleasures to the second class status of "foreplay" and "preliminaries." But her great sin does not lie in her actual sexual desires; the main problem is that she

things get out of hand, women are encouraged to dump their lovers. But during the affair the satisfaction of women's own desires must always be carefully orchestrated so that women's pleasure does not threaten the basic structure of the relationship. Women are encouraged for example, to spruce up their sex lives by fantasizing various taboo situations while making love. This is something they can do on their own, without any need to talk to men about their desire.

Female desire does exist, then, and indeed is constantly created and recreated by the culture in which we live. But female desire does not originate in women's autonomous existence. Neither is it rooted in a woman-positive community, a harmonious social whole whose requirements could be internalized by women without any need for the distortion or suppression of their desires. In our society, we enjoy neither individual freedom nor the benefits of a well-ordered collectivity. Our desires are constructed by the same forces that produce patriarchal structures and individual sexist men. Sometimes our desire is stimulated so that our energies can be channelled into satisfying men's pleasure (as Dr. Appleton advises). Other times, our desire is exploited for the benefit of the group (when women's hunger is "fed" by instructions on how to cook for their family). Modern sexual liberation theories threaten to undermine the old conceptual framework which reserves all desire for the male. So vast amounts of energy are being mobilized into making sure that women's new-found sexual freedom is orchestrated by and for men. The modern male lover "gives" his woman orgasms. That much is allowed since the superiority of the penis is left unchallenged. What is not allowed is for the woman to speak freely of

MOVEMENT MATTERS

Wave In

TORONTO — Unseasonably warm weather graced an invigorating protest late on the evening of Friday, January 17, in Toronto and in other cities across Canada. Calling the event a Wave In, 60 people—prostitutes, feminists and a number of men—crowded the sidewalks at Church and Carlton to hoot and wink and communicate against C-49, the new law which fines prostitutes and their clients up to \$2000 for the crime of communicating or attempting to communicate for the purposes of prostitution.

While feminists consider the legalities of such an unfair law, activists such as the members of the Alliance for the Safety of Prostitutes are assessing the impact of this law on the lives of women who sell sex on the streets. According to ASP member Boo Watson, the police have been acting undercover, gathering information about individual women whom they suspect to be prostitutes, following them home, or through parking lots or down streets. "What they (the police) will do with this information later is produce it in court, so that a nod or a wink will be enough to pronounce a woman guilty," said Watson.

ASP members are worried that the disruption of prostitution by police arrests will make working conditions more dangerous for the women. "When business gets bad," explains Watson, "women are less likely to turn down

the kind of dates that they might not ordinarily take. If the woman is not in a position to refuse the weird trick, then it becomes an issue of safety."

As of press date, 42 men and 109 women have been arrested by Metro Toronto police morality squad since this bill became law on December 20, 1985.

—Ingrid MacDonald

Depo Provera

A recently formed national coalition is lobbying the government over the imminent legalization of the drug Depo Provera. The drug is an injectable progesterone, used as a contraceptive. Its use is banned in the US and until now restricted in Canada.

The Canadian government, acting on recommendations of an advisory committee to assess the drug, is likely to approve Depo Provera in February or March of this year. The Canadian Coalition on Depo Provera is asking the government not to approve use of the drug until its safety can be better established. "The existing research is too faulty to allow an understanding of the long term health risks," says Coalition spokeswoman Connie Clement. "Canadians don't need another DES."

Although Depo Provera is considered highly effective as a contraceptive, its known side effects include headache, nausea, weight gain, severe depression and, in half the

women taking the drug, amenorrhea (loss of menstruation altogether). Tests have linked the drug to cancer, and the drug's safety has been a matter of debate for years. Current information does not warrant general acceptance. Studies used by the government as a basis for approval include those of Upjohn, the Canadian manufacturer of Depo Provera, studies which an inquiry board has called "uncoordinated and haphazard."

(For more information about Depo Provera, or the Coalition, write the Toronto Women's Health Network, 414 Rushton Rd., Toronto, Ont. M6C 2Y3.)

Announcements

Disabled Women Anthology:

Wanted: Submissions for an anthology about disabled women, by disabled women. Short stories, poems, graphics, herstory, photos, analysis, etc. Non-profit with proceeds to Disabled Women's Network. Topics include affirmative action, sexuality, parenting, violence (battering, rape, incest), accessibility to women's services & the women's movement, and self awareness. For more info write: Joanne Doucette, 122 Galt Ave., Toronto, Ont. M4M 2Z3.

Coming Together Again

Side By Side, a Canadian feminist resource group, is co-ordinating its second annual feminist sexuality conference, "Coming Together Again: A Women's Sexuality Conference" to be held in Toronto, in October 1986. We are currently seeking proposals for workshops that will explore a wide range of issues affecting our sexuality (e.g. sexual preference, sexual ethics, sexual abuse). We are looking for culturally/experientially diverse feminists to facilitate workshops for this gathering of women. Please write to Side By Side, Box 85, 275 King Street East, Toronto, Ontario, M5A 1K2, for workshop guidelines.

TRCC's 12th Birthday:

February 14, 1986 marks the twelfth anniversary of the Toronto Rape Crisis Centre. The TRCC is committed to working in solidarity with other organizations and individuals, and looks forward to further communication and contact with those involved in issues of concern to women. The TRCC would like to thank all of you for your support and encouragement over the past twelve years.

Anti-Racism Group

The Toronto Lesbians of Colour collective and two members of the Toronto Rape Crisis Centre have formed an anti-racism work group. The work group is currently offering anti-racism workshops to women's groups in Toronto.

We feel that these workshops are an excellent resource to continue and improve the working relationships between women of colour and white women. The workshops will begin in mid-January, 1986. A \$25 negotiable fee will be charged.

For more information, and to schedule your workshop, please contact Carol or Michele at (416) 594-2930, or Anna or Stacey at (416) 465-1781.

MOVEMENT COMMENT

Periodical Process

by Eve Zaremba

Those who check the *Broadside* masthead will notice that my name is no longer listed under 'Editorial Collective'. I have been a member of the *Broadside* collective since its beginnings in 1978. February 22, 1986 marks the eighth anniversary of its very first meeting. This seems as good a time as any to leave it, thereby decreasing its average age by some decades.

Broadside has been an important part of my life. I've learned a lot from those years on the collective and taking the rough with the smooth, wouldn't have missed the experience for the world. It's been a gas. So, in parting, I'd like to pass on some thoughts about the whole process.

Being on an editorial collective of a newspaper may be perceived as a position of privilege. If so, then it's not without price. Working on a paper like *Broadside* demands long-term, consistent commitment of nerve, energy and time.

Our collective meets two evenings each and every week with only two short breaks in summer and December. On top of that, there are ten deadlines, ten lay-out weekends, ten productions, ten mail-out days a year. Work on an issue starts before the ink is dry on the previous one. Over and above all that is the constant struggle to find the bucks to pay bills. It takes money and work to get and keep subscribers and advertisers but, since these two sources of funds never cover all expenses anyway, additional fundraising is a perpetual necessity.

Like it or not, a feminist newspaper like *Broadside* is a service which must be subsidized by its community and by the labour of the women who work on it.

Those who imagine that a feminist newspaper collective sits around making crucial editorial decisions, deep in erudite discussion on the content, style and implications of each article; that a lot of time is spent raising fine points of policy or politics, those who believe that is what happens are sadly deluded. The actual number of hours available for meetings of the collective between deadline and publication date each month are insufficient to realise any such ideal. Given a monthly publication, where deadlines are rarely met by contributing writers, and produced by a collective which is part-time and largely unpaid, expectations should be kept realistic.

It should go without saying that *Broadside* does not have an army of researchers, reporters and journalists at its disposal. What

gets covered in its pages, and how well it is covered is mostly a function of whether anyone suitable can be found who is both interested and free to do the job in the time available. Those who are familiar with a given topic or issue are not necessarily writers. Often they lack the time or interest to put their knowledge on paper for publication. Experienced writers/journalists are not in unlimited supply either. Some are too busy to take the lead time necessary for research and then would rather sell their professional work for good money elsewhere. And who can blame them? Inevitably, not everything which deserves coverage gets it. All this is merely a reflection of reality. Putting out a regular publication with no editorial budget, in fact on very little money at all, is a frustrating business.

All this having been said, *Broadside* has appeared, promptly and regularly, for seven years. In spite of the work-load, the collective has been relatively stable: before my resignation four of the nine current members were founding mothers. Contrary to popular belief the collective does not perpetuate itself by recruiting from within the friendship circle of its older members. Quite the contrary, only one of the four latest additions to the collective was known to any of the existing members.

Somehow we are making it work year after year, month after month. In my view, *Broadside's* survival and relative success as a newspaper has been possible because of the

flexibility of its collective process. This process evolved as a pragmatic response to what are, by most standards, impossible odds.

A 'collective' is often understood as a style of organization in which every member must participate in every decision and have absolute veto over every initiative, otherwise all members aren't equal or equally responsible. In this model, the purpose for which individuals came together in the first place, the collective goal, becomes subordinated to a preoccupation with each woman's role in the process and her feelings about it. This is a prescription for frustration and, in many cases, failure. A doctrinaire position on process leads members of a collective into spending more time and energy making sure that nothing and nobody does anything without their agreement, or at least input, than in actually doing anything. As a result, very little is accomplished and what is tends to be repudiated and constantly questioned. Collective solidarity is undermined and eventually the structure collapses, usually amid pain and recrimination.

Broadside exists to this day because over the years enough mutual trust and ego strength has been exhibited by members of the collective to prevent it from self-destructing in this manner. Not that we have been immune from problems from both within and without. Nevertheless, as a group we have somehow managed to put the welfare of *Broadside* above individual egos, reputations and even friendships. In an ideal world this wouldn't be necessary, but in this world it is essential. Feminist newspapers like *Broadside* must have a cadre of strong, secure women, who can delegate. They must understand the necessity for collective solidarity; have the nerve to handle hot issues and to stick out their individual and collective necks for unpopular opinions or in support of contributors with whom they do not necessarily agree, and still get the job done. These are survival characteristics without which there can be no feminist press, certainly no press worthy of that name; no paper worth reading or supporting.

In my view, *Broadside* will continue as long as there are enough women working on it who have what it takes. And as long as there are enough women in the community at large who understand what it takes.

For myself, I want to thank members of the *Broadside* collective, current and past, for teaching me so much and for all the good times we've had together. I hope to be able to get my by-line in the paper now and again.



Eve Zaremba

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Drying Out

by Joanna Fairheart

Alcohol is a depressant drug of addiction with a capacity to produce severe dependence. This drug has become so accepted in our culture that drinking is the norm (in 1984, 79 per cent of Canadians drank) while non-drinking is considered aberrant. The real financial cost of alcohol is less than it was 10 years ago: there are more government-run liquor stores and in some communities it is available in grocery stores.

Hand in hand with increased accessibility is an important name change. It is common to hear the term "alcohol and drugs." This does not make sense when you consider alcohol is a drug. But the split does make alcohol seem something other than what it is, seem less harmful than it is; it does remove alcohol from its reality.

This removal from reality is most evident in alcohol advertising. Not only do advertisements present this harmful drug as a valid consumer item, they link alcohol with people who are healthy, fun, interesting. And highlight cultural acceptance of the drug alcohol. Imagine that in every alcohol advertisement you see, the drug advertised is marijuana. See that culturally attractive group of young people completing their sail and settling by the sea with joints for all. How long would that be allowed? Why is it allowed with alcohol? Who benefits because it's allowed?

Seen through a critical lens, it becomes clear 'drug-pushing' is the correct term to apply to alcohol advertising. And while alcohol companies insist they advertise to persuade people to switch brands, this runs counter to the most basic premise of advertising; it increases consumption. British and American studies conclude alcohol consumption increases by between 10 and 30 per cent because of advertising.

It is also clear this drug is earning a great deal of money for businesses headed by men, and by governments (through excise tax) headed by men. But the bottom line here involves more than profits.

Some clues about the bottom line appear in written information by the medical research community. That group is concerned about the disease of alcoholism, pointing out that alcohol is Canada's Number 1 health problem, exceeding heart disease and cancer (Addictions Research Foundation). Physical problems for the alcoholic may be any or all of the following: damaged central nervous system and heart, damage to every organ system in the body, cirrhosis of the liver, malnutrition. Twenty-five per cent of the Canadian health dollar is spent on known alcohol-related disease. Three thousand people are killed by drunk drivers each year.

Researchers note these facts and others in their writings. They also discuss case studies of alcoholics, which often run something like this: X had a good job as an executive. He had a lovely family, a nice home. He drank. Too much. He would give it up, sometimes for a year, and then it would lure him back again. During some drinking bouts, he battered his wife.

It is true that many rich white men suffer from alcoholism, and this suffering is extended to families. Their pain should not be ignored. But neither should the fact that there are errors in this scenario. The glaringly obvious error is using alcohol as an excuse for wife-battering. While alcohol may be a factor in battering, it is not the reason for abuse. Suggesting that it is simply allows men to avoid taking responsibility for their vio-

lent actions—one more time.

The error *not* glaringly obvious in such case studies is the absence of women alcoholics. This is certainly not because there are no women alcoholics. There are thousands, although statistics are unclear. That's to be expected; in a culture where women are often invisible, the invisibility extends to our drinking patterns. And to literature about drinking patterns in society.

The one subject researchers have taken seriously in relation to women and alcohol is Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS). If pregnant women drink, they may deliver brain-damaged babies. This is certainly an area of concern, but heavy emphasis on FAS placed side by side with a dearth of information about women alcoholics make a clear statement: Concern about women arises only when our capacity to reproduce is in danger. Women are not important enough in our own right to rate concern about the harm of excessive drinking.

If the research community—with a few notable exceptions—tell us that, women who drink tell us more. We all know women with drinking problems, although we may not know who they are. Women often hide their drinking, because in this culture it's not ladylike to publicly consume too much liquor. On the other hand, it is more than acceptable to use this drug to blot the pain of female existence in a misogynist culture. This was a conclusion I could not avoid making after listening to women talk. One woman hated sexual—I use the term loosely—activity with her then-husband and drank so she wouldn't know if he had climbed on top of her during the night and raped her one more time. One woman drank so she wouldn't feel the punches, slaps and kicks from her brutal husband. (A recent study from Yale-New Haven hospital suggests 40 per cent of women alcoholics are battered wives.)

Here are two more stories about women and alcohol:

X didn't know at the time why she drank at such an early age. She was only 13. Surely the time for basketball, music and girlfriends. Not the age for blackouts, hangovers and malnutrition. It was years later when she realized only alcohol could drown the overwhelming painful memories of incestuous childhood years.

Z was at home caring for her immature 65-year-old husband, and supporting a brother through his bouts with the bottle. Everyone was so concerned about him they didn't notice her drinking patterns, which were covert rather than overt. They involved daily trips into the bathroom to drink behind a closed door, they involved putting water in the wine bottles—not in hopes of another miracle although, yes, she did believe in Jesus—but so her husband wouldn't notice how much was gone. She was silent about the harassment, exploitation and degradation she had suffered during her 65 years of life. Alcohol was one of the forces that kept her that way.

Stories like that make me believe the patriarchy is interested in more than simple economic profit from alcohol. It realizes women need help in dealing with our extraordinary oppression, and alcohol is an effective help from the patriarchal viewpoint; it not only dulls the pain, it stops us from naming it and taking action.

It is also clear that the patriarchally imposed acceptability of alcohol has made its way into the women's community. There has been little discussion of the issue between alcoholics, problem drinkers, recovered alcoholics, moderate users and abstainers, although there are several questions pertaining to alcohol that offer themselves for examination. These include:

Is alcohol an appropriate substance at women's events? Is it an appropriate item from which to make money?

Why is the bar one of the few places lesbians can be safely 'out'? Who benefits from this ghettoizing of the



lesbian community?

How appropriate is a 'dry' women's community? Many women choose to boycott South African products as a sign of solidarity with oppressed black people. Could abstention from alcohol be seen in a similar vein? There are at least two good reasons for non-use: first, the likelihood that one or more women present are problem drinkers/alcoholics desperately struggling to say No to this drug; second, since it seems the patriarchy is using alcohol to help keep us down, we will have nothing to do with it.

It's interesting to note the women's community has been much more forceful in its condemnation of prescription drugs like Valium and the role they play in women's oppression than it has about a drug that is self-administered.

A book that does an excellent job of combining political questions about alcohol with personal stories is *Out From Under: Sober Dykes and Our Friends*, edited by Jean Swallow and published by Spinsters, Ink. The book examines lesbians and alcoholism, a subject that sorely needs examining. There is virtually no information available about lesbians and alcoholism. The small pieces of information on women alcoholics are monumental compared to information about lesbians and alcoholism. Swallow points to a study done concerning lesbians, which concluded that within the lesbian community, 38 per cent are alcoholic, and 30 per cent are problem drinkers. "For a lesbian," writes Swallow, "those statistics mean you either are one, or you love one."

She is adamant that the women's community must shake this dalliance with a harmful drug: "What we must recognize is that substance abuse is part of the patriarchy; that is it not a way out, or even a resting place." She says that substance abuse and abusive behaviour have the same effects on women: low self-esteem, anger, depression, hopelessness, and loss of purpose. There is a major difference though. Sexism, racism and the rest are done to us; we do the substance abuse to ourselves. And we can stop. "I can promise you, any revolution we make will not start in a bar."

Out From Under combines stories of personal recovery

Addictions



ILLUSTRATION BY INGRID MACDONALD

which are very moving, with political analysis. In the latter category, Nina Jo Smith writes about alcoholism and violence against lesbians, noting, "Women and violence are rising. Alcohol is a depressant drug." She points out that alcohol has been used to colonize and control the people on this continent, and that alcohol has also been used to undermine organizing in poor, black, gay and women's communities.

A theme running through *Out From Under* is that it is not enough to see alcoholism as a personal problem which a person must seek her own solution; there must be an understanding of social structures which are responsible for drinking. Some women drink because of sexual abuse and battery, unemployment and poverty, racism, homophobia, despair over the possibility of planetary annihilation through pollution and/or nuclear holocaust. But a current with understanding of such structures must be maintained so that while drinking may temporarily avert the pain caused by such violence, it doesn't solve it, and it doesn't fall into patriarchy's hands by keeping us dull, listless and unable to revolt.

There is a clear need for woman-centered communities to work on this issue. One role is discussing and arriving at a consensus about the place of alcohol in the community. Another is wholeheartedly supporting women in giving up this viciously addictive drug, an especially important task given the lack of recovery programs centered around women's needs. And the women's community could act prophetically, as it has done before, this time critically assessing alcohol in our culture, railing at yet another male business that profits from women's pain.

There is a further issue concerning alcohol and the women's community, and this is fun and play. Alcohol is so much a part of our fun and play, whether at dances, parties or parties. It is common to hear women talk about their inability to let loose unless they have had one or two drinks.

There is a vision: a women's community taking seriously and laughingly the deep, intense need we have for fun and play without any chemical substances. Who would have thought of laughing all the way to the revolution?

Butting Out

by Cellan Jay

What a dreary prospect being a non-smoker used to seem to me, even as I smoked my way through bronchitis, flu and hangovers; smoked myself into chronic shortness of breath and a permanent band of pain around my chest, burned holes in my clothes, and suffered colds that hung on for weeks. If I quit, who would keep me company when I woke up in the night? How would I calm myself when I was anxious or angry? Would there be any point in having sex if I couldn't smoke afterwards, or in having a meal in a restaurant if I couldn't sit back luxuriantly with my coffee and cigarette while someone else did the dishes? How would I open my mail, talk on the telephone, wait for the bus?

You see the problem. Smoking was my constant companion, my reassurance and my reward. I smoked when I celebrated and when I sorrowed. And I wanted to quit.

I knew I could not face the prospect of just waking up one day and not smoking. I have the same amount of backbone as an old running shoe and self-discipline was not likely to carry me through more than a half hour without a cigarette. I shied away from the more exotic methods some of my friends had tried: acupuncture, aversion therapy (a particularly nasty sounding treatment) and hypnosis. Nobody I knew could claim lasting success with these methods. I finally settled on *Smokefree* (a program designed and taught by Phyllis Jensen) partly because it is run by a feminist and the groups are for women only, but mostly because Phyllis Jensen impressed me with the magic words I wanted to hear: "easy" and "you won't need will power."

Instead of will-power, the program employs state-of-the-art psychology and a strong element of feminist analysis to help women learn to quit smoking. The eight-week course consists of two basic components. The first is the delay time. In the first week, we were not allowed to smoke for ten minutes after a meal, the theory being that the cigarette smoked after meals is the most difficult one to give up (and therefore the first to tackle) because it completes a pleasure cycle. It was hard to give it up. Everyone in my group reported watching the clock and diving for their cigarette package when the time was up. But the ten minute delay time was also short enough not to be intimidating and a little effort guaranteed each of us our first taste of success. It gave us the confidence we would build on later in the program, when the delay times increased to half an hour and included prohibitions on smoking in public places, outside, after waking up and before going to bed. Outside of delay times we continued to smoke as much as we wanted to.

What we were doing during delay time was getting practice at being non-smokers. We used our weekly meetings to support and encourage one another, and to confront the sleazy tactics of the "Smoking Monster." The Monster tried to undermine our sincere desire to be free of a health-destroying habit with apocryphal visions of what it would be like to live as non-smokers: "You won't have anymore fun, ever," it would whisper, "Life will hardly be worth living" and of course the favourite old standby, "Come on, just one..."

We were also told to use a strong mouthwash after eating. Part of the cigarette habit is a habitual desire to have something in the mouth. The strong taste of the

mouthwash reduces the greed for constant stimulation by over-satisfying it. Also, as we became accustomed to the taste of a clean mouth, smoking lost some of its appeal.

The other component of the program involved changing to a brand of cigarettes lower in tar and nicotine than the one smoked the previous week. This prepared us for our Quit Day by gradually reducing the amount of tar and nicotine in our systems so that quitting wasn't an extreme physiological shock. It also breaks the emotional attachment smokers tend to feel towards "their" brand.

It was easy for me to quit smoking, as I was promised. My Quit Day was a day of celebration, not of fear and loss. And in the process of learning to be a non-smoker I had many insights into the ways smoking is oppressive to women.

In my formerly addicted state, smoking was a panacea for literally everything. I responded to every feeling of discomfort, every fleeting moment of loneliness, boredom, or ambivalence by scurrying for my cigarette package. Actually, I rarely had to scurry because it didn't usually stray more than a foot or two from my side. Sit down, light up, take a deep draw, exhale, *there, that's better*. In a mistaken and misplaced way, I was making an attempt to care for myself, to deal with whatever bit of external or internal reality—whether it was conflict over a sexual desire, or exhaustion after working all day—had made me feel uncomfortable. The problem was, after smoking the cigarette, I still felt exhausted (and probably more intensely), still felt conflict, still felt bored, or whatever. Smoking leaves the status quo intact. So the process of learning to be a non-smoker has been one of learning to respond appropriately to my needs. In an unhealthy society which works strenuously to keep women in ignorance about themselves, this can only mean learning to become less and less a victim—of my own internal tensions and conflicts and of external realities.

The other aspect of my addicted psyche was its fixation on the idea of a "solution." As a smoker, I would automatically reach for a cigarette when I felt frustrated, in an effort to, well, what? Avoid the frustration, make it go away? But cigarettes don't have the power to do this. Not only that, but the state of mind assumes it is not desirable to feel frustration, that it must immediately be made to go away.

Since I quit smoking I have discovered that frustration and anxiety and many other feelings I used to try to avoid are tolerable, and they have their useful functions too. Frustration can spur me on to greater efforts to solve a problem. Anxiety is the inevitable accompaniment to creativity. And the frustration and anxiety that result in a society which perpetuates ugly and inaccurate images of women cannot be simply made to go away. In giving up smoking, I gave up the longing for an inert state that seems to be embedded in the addicted state, and instead accepted conflict and discomfort in my life as an opportunity to grow and change.

It's been almost a year since I quit smoking, me with the backbone of an old running shoe, me who thought I'd never be able to do it. I haven't stopped talking on the telephone or going to bars or writing or eating in restaurants or having sex. Not only have I learned to enjoy the freedom of not smoking, but quitting has come to represent a new commitment to live out my own complexity and to treat myself right.

Joanna Fairheart and Cellan Jay are Toronto feminists.

ARTS

Strike While the Camera's Hot

by Donna Gollan

Ruth Bishop, Marusia Bociurkiw and Harriet Hume, the three young women who make up *Emma Productions*, have very definite ideas on what they hope to accomplish as video producers. Following in the footsteps of such independent filmmakers as Montreal-based Sophie Bissonnette, they work closely and collaboratively with their subjects to produce tapes on such feminist and labour issues as organizing and educational tools. *No Small Change*, a tape that documents the recent Eaton's strike across Ontario, is their most technically competent and exciting tape to date. Like Bissonnette, they are primarily interested in the point of view of the women workers, and so manage to create a tape which is simultaneously critical of a union run solely by men who tend to neglect the interests of their large, female base, and still pro-union in the strongest sense of the term.

The tape begins gently, introducing us to some of the women strikers before they become politicized: "It was kind of a shock. One day I was signing a union card, and the next I was out on strike!" As the tape progresses we get to know these women; we are given a glimpse of activists in the making. It is an exciting process to watch — but no more so than the genuine excitement the strikers feel at the support they received from the women's movement. The 1985 International Women's Day rally and march which continued right through the hallowed doors of Toronto's Eaton Centre, offers us a pleasurable image of women working together, our concerns united, on this front at least.

The tape builds in energy, paralleling the growing tensions the strikers had to face and their building strength and determination in the face of a seemingly endless strike. What begins on November 30, 1984 as a walkout of 1800 Eaton's workers across Ontario, becomes a Christmas picket line that seriously hurts Eaton's usual volume of Christmas sales. In addition, 3000 consumers send Eaton's their charge cards, cut in half, and *We Don't Shop At Eaton's* signs spring up in household windows like early spring flowers.

The women are taking calls in their kitchens and holding meetings in each other's homes. They come to appreciate the support of their own family members as well as the cups of coffee bought for them by strangers as they do their duty on the picket lines. They have come to a definite understanding of why they are out there, and re-



JUDE JOHNSTON

count various horror stories about job promotions which never come or pensions like \$9 per month after 65, even after 18 years with the company. The visuals remain varied and interesting, including some wonderful footage of strikers dancing in the snow to keep warm and singing funny anti-Eaton's Christmas carols.

Emma Productions has managed to maintain a warm rapport with their subjects which enables us to feel their defeat when their very first contract is ratified in May. It is a lousy contract which merely puts in writing the poor practices Eaton's has always carried out. Still, it is a victory to have anything in writing at all and it does provide hope for future improvement. As we follow the women back to work we know that they will have the courage to fight another day. Sue Ardino, a young cosmetics worker who went from merely "liking her job" to stubborn determination in the space of a six month strike and a 50-minute videotape, sums it all up nicely: "I realize you can't live off self-respect and pride but it sure does a lot more for you than a \$200 pay cheque." What do you call that in the history of the women's movement? *No Small Change!* ●

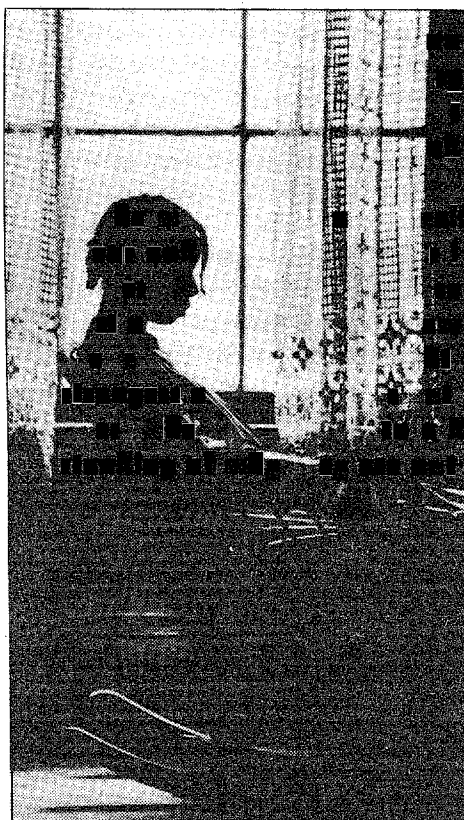


MAUREEN MCCREARY

Emma Productions: (top) Strikers at the Eaton Centre; (bottom) the filmmakers Marusia Bociurkiw, Ruth Bishop and Harriet Hume.

Paler Shade of Purple

by Susan G. Cole



Whoopi Goldberg as Celie

When it was announced that Alice Walker had sold the rights for *The Color Purple* to Stephen Spielberg, who had not yet shown a facility for making movies for anyone over the age of ten, admirers of the Pulitzer Prize winning novel were a little taken aback. Later, when the film's star, Whoopi Goldberg, remarked in an interview that the movie isn't really a woman's movie, or even a movie about blacks, it's a universal movie about *people*, feminists went into a serious panic. The signs, to put it mildly, were definitely ominous.

The Color Purple is about life for Celie in an extended black family in Georgia. Celie grows from incest survivor, to assaulted wife and mother, to independent business woman, all the time looking for a way to reunite with her sister Nettie. The book is also about language, its structures, sounds and resonances. Celie tells her story in letters to God. The letters practically vanish in Spielberg's film version and its literary qualities give way to the director's main cinematic purpose—to provoke a major seige on the heartstrings.

Spielberg does paint beautiful pictures. Like all of his movies, the first ten minutes are riveting, and get the adrenalin pumping immediately. Throughout, there is a great deal of pleasure watching the female characters interact. Whoopi Goldberg has a wonder-

ful presence as Celie, and Margaret Avery as Shug, the singer who disrupts and enhances family life in Celie's home, mixes fearless flamboyance with just a hint that she knows she may have made a few mistakes in her life.

Even if there were no book to compare it to, the film would have trouble standing on its own. The movie is episodic and loosely scripted so that the tension never really builds. And so Mister, Celie's husband, does a very quick and unbelievable turnaround, and Celie's daughter-in-law Sophia goes from torpor to holy terror in one seating at dinner. Occasionally Spielberg forgets that this isn't a movie for ten-year-olds. The slapstick sequences have no context, and he makes an outright cinematic gaffe when he renders too literally the razing of Nettie's new village in Africa. It would have been just as effective to have Celie read her sister's letter while showing the contrasting life in Georgia. Ah, but not according to Spielberg, who lapses into his *Raiders of the Lost Ark* style, as if he simply *had* to give us an exotic location in order to prove that he could make a serious epic.

Perhaps feminists should be relieved that the movie sheds a bit of the right light on women's experience. The dilemma reminds me a bit of the differing reactions to the film *Personal Best*, which many rigorous lesbian-feminists hated and which less demanding activists thought was not bad for Holly-

wood, since lesbianism wasn't presented as a pathetic perversion. Here in *The Color Purple*, Spielberg and screenwriter Menno Meyjes convey the trauma of incest and battery, the devastation of parts of Africa by the forces of "development," the fact that sisterhood can be a true passion and so can the love between two women. Most of this is probably new to whomever studio moguls imagine is a random viewer.

The problem is that Spielberg is so busy dishing it up, with twenty minutes between compulsory sob sessions, that he detracts from whatever consciousness he might have raised. I went to the film with a friend who swore she wasn't going to cry and then bugged me for Kleenex—every twenty minutes. Both of us were struggling to win a war with Spielberg the master manipulator, and it got to the point where I was so aware of being diddled by the director that I lost track of the content. I was exhausted when I left the theatre, but I felt that I had heaved one big superficial sigh because I couldn't remember what I had been so upset about.

Feminists, readers, and any one who has not read *The Color Purple*, should do themselves a favour. Read the book before you see the movie. Alice Walker's novel is an inspiring work with real staying power. The movie, in spite of the early danger signals, winds up being the cinematic equivalent of junk food: it gets the body fluids going, only to be forgotten two hours later. ●

Afterthoughts on 4-Play

by Amanda Hale

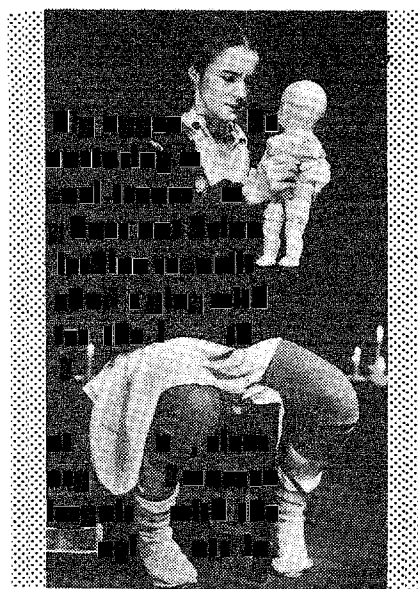
In November 1985, the first Toronto lesbian and gay theatre festival was presented at Theatre Passe Muraille, sponsored by Buddies in Bad Times Theatre. The festival was the brainchild of Sky Gilbert, artistic director of Buddies, and known for his boundless energy and enthusiasm. A prolific playwright himself, Gilbert felt it was time for Buddies to give profile to other up and coming playwrights, and to expand from exclusively gay work into the lesbian sector.

Four plays were presented in repertory: *Home Hazards* by Jim Bartley, *Friendships* by Byron Ayanoglu, *Claposis* by Audrey Butler, and *If Betty Should Rise* by David Demchuk. The latter two were presented as lesbian plays. The fact that one was written by a man and the other was a commissioned work, written specifically for the festival by Audrey Butler as her first lesbian play, has of course raised some criticism in the lesbian theatre community from women who have been writing and performing lesbian material for some time. Furthermore, Demchuk himself has reservations about calling *If Betty Should Rise* a lesbian play, and rightly so. It is a fine piece of work and was superbly performed by Martha Cronyn, but it is primarily about childhood sexual abuse, and Betty's

subsequent lesbian relationship appears to be a retreat into the arms of a nurturing woman in reaction against early sexual trauma with her father. As such, this play does not belong in a festival which celebrates lesbian sexuality. In fact the inclusion of Demchuk's play within such a context perpetuates the idea that women turn to women out of hatred and fear of men.

Butler's *Claposis*, on the other hand, clearly celebrates that raunchier aspects of women loving women as a primal impulse, with the complications and comic entanglements inherent in any relationship.

It is perhaps unfair to criticize Gilbert for being out of touch with lesbian writers. His milieu is gay male theatre, and he sent director Robert Scott out to find a lesbian script, with the assurance that if he could find one he could direct it. Gilbert deserves credit for his initiative in establishing a lesbian and gay theatre festival which he hopes will become an annual event. The fact is that lesbian theatre has been slower in gaining profile than gay male theatre, consonant with the historical social tendency to render women, particularly lesbians, invisible all along the line. But the situation is changing. Although there have been a number of independent productions of lesbian plays, such as Gay Bell's *Danger/Anger*, and lesbian performance art, such as



DONNA MARCHAND

Martha Cronyn in
If Betty Should Rise

Janine Fuller's piece on non-monogamy performed at the Women's Sexuality Conference, there has not been a festival *per se* backed by a theatre group with the ability to promote and validate.

It is easy to criticize a new venture which is

by its nature wrought with imperfections. And the priority here is visibility rather than artistic excellence. The same debate ran through the Women in Theatre conference in Montreal last spring. When it is a question of doing something imperfectly or not at all, we must surely opt for visible imperfection.

Jim Bartley's *Home Hazards*, although flawed, had some hilarious moments, and was an honest attempt to dramatize the tensions and difficulties of communal living. Two gay men, a lesbian and her psychologically disturbed sister form a bizarre non-nuclear family, and the comings and goings of three external characters are skilfully manoeuvred to evoke wit and comedy in this kitchen-sink farce.

Byron Ayanoglu's *Friendships* created an exclusively male world in which a five-year relationship between Bob and Wolf moves from a web of lies and fantasies into the hard light of truth. Ed, a past lover of Bob, personifies the dramatic conflict, entering like a symbol of romantic suicidal youth. He has been five years in the wilderness of Saskatchewan. He is an isolated soul and a Christ-like figure who opens the play by driving a nail into his palm. His appearance, and the subsequent conflicts, explode the romantic myth which Bob has created around him. Ed finally disappears forever through the first-story window, after catalyzing an emotional crisis which allows Bob and Wolf to find the truth of their relationship and come to terms with their love for each other. Charlie, a transvestite friend, provides comic relief throughout the sometimes histrionic interactions.

Audrey Butler's *Claposis*, tightened and improved since its workshop production last summer, was lively and energetic. Like Harold Pinter's *Betrayal*, it moved backwards through a triangular relationship, highlighting the predictability of the pattern of disintegration. Butler tackled the issue of non-monogamy with its jealousies, insecurities and possessiveness. The play was light and humorous with an underlying potential to delve more deeply into these emotionally charged issues.

David Demchuk's *If Betty Should Rise*, is a powerful piece of theatre — a one-woman show. If anything, I would criticize Demchuk for emotionally overpowering his audience. There is a point at which an audience withdraws in the face of relentlessly painful material. Betty's life is indeed tragic, but Demchuk draws her as a character who refuses to be a victim. She is finally triumphant, but it is a terrible journey to travel with her.

Sky Gilbert has commented on the absence of a lesbian theatre group in Toronto. In initiating the festival he has created a venue for lesbian writers and theatre artists to come forward and present their work next year. Another such opportunity for theatre artists is the annual Rhubarb Festival, originally organized by Nightwood Theatre and Buddies, now sponsored solely by Buddies since 1985.

The festival is a positive sign of integration within the gay and lesbian theatre community. And it is to be hoped that this festival will spark further work and collaboration within the community. ●

Poetic Presence

Women Poets of the World, Joanna Bankier and Deidre Lashgari, editors. New York: Macmillan, 1983. \$24.95

Personal Luggage, Marlene Cookshaw.

Toronto: Coach House Press, 1984.

Feeling the World / New Poems, Dorothy Livesay. Fredericton N.B.: Fiddlehead Poetry Books & Goose Lane Editions, n.d.

Domestic Fuel, Erin Mouré. Toronto: Anansi, 1985.

Jonestown & Other Madness, Pat Parker. Ithaca, N.Y.: Firebrand Books, 1985.

Reviewed by Leslie Sanders

Confronted with an anthology called *Women Poets of the World*, it is hard to know where to begin. The task undertaken by Johanna Bankier and Dierdre Lashgari was of mammoth proportions, setting out as they did to construct an anthology that would represent women of all cultures and all ages, choosing the "best" of what they unearthed or, when dealing with poets who wrote in languages other than English, at least those amenable to precise and elegant translation. Browsing through the volume, one learns that women in every culture and in every age have had their poets. Some wrote with relative freedom and even, in Japan, produced the first poetry in the vernacular, shaping the form that later male poets used for their own purposes. By its nature, this anthology is not a book of silences, but rather of voices, voices which speak of everything in life: on being a woman, a lover, a mother, of war and of peace, of joys and the richness of life as well as of sorrow, poverty, pain, oppression.

The anthology is organized by country or geographical area, beginning with China and Japan and moving westward to India, Iran, the Arab world, Greece, Europe from the middle ages to the present, Africa, Latin America, and then North America. The North American section includes Afro-American, Asian/Pacific and Chicana poets. Native American (including Eskimo) poets comprise the final section. Prefacing each major section and subsection is an introduction which provides both an historical and a cultural overview of women poets in the country or period and some indication of the conditions under which women lived and wrote.

An anthology of this sort is valuable not only for the wonderful poetry but also for the imaginative possibilities it provides: presence where there was absence, because we did not know of these women, or had no access to their work. Reading through the anthology, we learn that while women by and large have been silenced, in some cultures, notably Native American, African and Japanese, women have a long tradition of speaking for and of the lives of their people. We come to recognize both the common concerns and the tremendous disparity in women's experience. And finally, the anthology offers each reader the delight of finding in a culture or a period remote in place or time, a particular voice or poem that articulates in ways one might never have expected her own deepest experience and longings.

Those knowledgeable about each tradition may carp a bit at the selection or quarrel with prefatory descriptions or judgements, especially because the authors claim they selected "the best," leaving that troublesome idea undefined. Canadian readers, for example will be annoyed that while three Canadian poets, Aní Hébert, Marya Fiamengo and Margaret Atwood are included in a section called "Euro-American: Canada," the introduction "Cultural Influences: Euro-American" makes no mention of Canada at all, presumable assuming the American story covers women poets here. But the purpose of any anthology is to invite the reader to look farther and deeper into the world it attempts to represent. *Women Poets of the World* does so marvellously.

The anthology of women poets spans the ages and the world. Dorothy Livesay's new poems in *Feeling The World*, published for her 75th birthday, span a life. Livesay remains clear-sighted and uncompromising, but there is a tenderness and often a humour in her simple and direct voice, in her gentle lessons, which contrast sharply with the torments, however voiced, of the younger poets to which we shall turn. On reading this volume one is comforted: not because the battles are over but because Livesay shows us one can resolve life's dilemmas without becoming resigned to them, decide some things are simply true and still write, "Poets are traffic lights / always flashing green." And without being sombre, include an "Epitaph":

"I am all mauve now
and purple
(not that I'd call myself
Royal)
... Tread soft on my moss
step easy on my cushion of grass
for beneath
is time's granite
the warranty of death."

Sharon Berg's second volume of poetry, *The Body Labyrinth* moves gracefully from marriage and its ending to "Personal Myths," an animal kingdom of toad, rat, piggy, cat and rooster, where, with sly humour and sad wisdom, she re-examines the directly addressed sorrows of the first section. The last section, "Love Poems" speaks of love with a sober longing and compassion ("There are not enough love poems, / I've forgotten how to write them. / The globe goes on, spinning and cooling, / though I'm not easily fooled into trust now. / Too many others left packing suitcases of dreams."), of loneliness ("Celibates": "This is a choice I make..."), of children born and loved and of one miscarried. While Berg's imagery depicts relationships with passionate intensity, her voice is remote, as though her task is to examine that intensity and create distance from it. "The brick path" on which she finally finds herself ("The Story") has a man walking on it as well, but she is following him only by virtue of being on the same road ("Leagues between us"). Examining the land-

scape and her dreams as well, later she sees "a man / with a campfire under his coat / and the story, the story, the story," final words which return us to the book's beginning.

What one retains from a reading of Marlene Cookshaw's *Personal Luggage* is details, a scrap of material, a pot of tea, motions made moving between rooms, a lover who wears a flannel shirt, colour, food cooked, a bird flying past. Each is recorded with a deliberateness to which eloquence accrues, so that when a wolf attacks the speaker's sister, while her mother sits by the Maytag, watching, we are prepared to understand the bestial lurking in ordinary things. Nor are we surprised to find in minor collisions all one might say about daily loving, viewed in "a mirror, which they use / each morning to follow / the bruise in its modulation / from blue to plum-yellow" ("Impact"). There are many relationships thus recorded, observed, recovered from, between lovers and friends, men and women, women and women. Each thought and emotion is inscribed in a particularity that is highly visual and sensual and always rewarding.

While Berg and Cookshaw attend to the personal, leaving social resonances to the reader, Erin Mouré and Pat Parker attend/extend the personal into political and social life. In *Domestic Fuel*, Erin Mouré's most recent volume of poetry, setting, particularly urban setting, frames the personal anguish and anger the poems record. Women, and men too, scream their fear and pain into a world which appears at times cold, almost inanimate. Most of the poems, even those concerning self or one other, seem to imply an audience whose silence reinforces the speaker's pain and alienation. There is little gentleness here, but much to learn.

The black American poet Pat Parker, a political activist and a lesbian, is the most explicit of these poets in her concern with how the world in which we live out the personal seeks to destroy us. The title poem of *Jonestown & Other Madness* is a long meditation on Jonestown, where over 900 black people drank poisoned Kool-Aid and were found rotting in the hot Guyana sun. "Black folks do not commit suicide" is the refrain for her meditation and her speculation extends the tragedy of Jonestown to racial oppression and the gay oppression which shapes and defines our world. There is much anger here, some despair and a commitment that insists, in her opening poem to her love, "if I stop / caring about (the world) / it would be only / a matter of time / before I stop / loving / (you)." Most of Parker's poems in this collection have the impact of blows, precisely guided and unsparing. As she says in the final section, entitled "Legacy": "Each generation improves the world / for the next / My grandparents willed me strength / My parents willed me pride. / I will to you rage. / I give you a world incomplete... / but I give you / a legacy / of doers / of people who take risks / to chisel the crack wider." All these poets widen the crack as well.

Leslie Sanders is a Toronto writer.

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Soviet Women: Gender Dissidence

Reviewed by Lorna Weir

Women and Russia, Tatyana Mamonova, ed. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1984. \$14.95.

Autonomous political movements have not fared well in the Soviet Union, whether they have represented workers, women or peace. It was no accident that the Zhenotdel, the Women's Department of the Central Committee, and the Evseksiia, the Jewish Section of the Communist Party, were both formally abolished in 1930; each was concerned with the mobilization and maintenance of non-class political identities. Official political movements under state and Party control have been substituted for movements independent of the Soviet ruling apparatus. Attempts by political dissidents to set up 'unofficial' movements have been dealt with harshly, from harassment by the KGB, forced psychiatric internment and internal exile, to confinement in labour camps and expulsion from the Soviet Union. Support for Soviet dissidents and the unofficial movements should, I think, be a matter of principle for Western radicals, and as feminists we have a special duty to ally with persecuted Soviet feminists.

The Soviet Union officially announced a few years ago that women's equality had at last been achieved within its borders. This is of course as untrue of the Soviet Union as it is of Canada. Soviet women, by way of example, earn on average 65-70% of what Soviet men earn, and the more politically or administratively powerful a job, the less likely is a woman to occupy it. In some areas, the Soviet Union is far more advanced than Canada; its daycare system is more extensive than ours, and its record in desegregating jobs better. These achievements are especially impressive when one considers the position of women in the Soviet Union at the time of the Revolution, and the relative poverty of the country compared with the West. Nonetheless, gender inequality does manifestly exist in the Soviet Union, and a strong, autonomous women's movement critical of state and Party is in the interest of Soviet women. The Soviet ruling apparatus has historically quite consistently tried to 'disappear' the existence of women's oppression; hence the necessity of autonomy for the Soviet women's movement.

The Soviet ruling class did not greet with joy the publication in 1979 of the first feminist *samizdat* (self-published, underground literature), *Woman and Russia: An Almanac of*

Women and about Women. Its editor, Tatyana Mamonova, was called in for questioning by the KGB immediately after the first issue appeared with its print run of 10 subversive copies. The KGB could see there was an issue of political principle here. The *Almanac's* contributors were also searched and arrested. When publication continued, four of its chief organizers were expelled from the Soviet Union, among them Mamonova. Since her exile, Mamonova has done speaking tours in the West, and edited the collection of women's *samizdat*, *Women and Russia*.

Mamonova justifies the choice of 'Russia' in the title on the grounds that she did not want the *Almanac* confused with the official journal, *Soviet Woman*, and also because "... for most people there is no essential difference between the names America and the United States or between the names Russia and the Soviet Union." There is certainly a difference for most Canadians between the names America and the United States. And there is nothing guaranteed to drive a Scot wilder than subsuming Scotland under the name England rather than Britain. Given that the Soviet Union has a history of Russian dominance and Russian oppression of national minorities, Mamonova's choice of title was quite unfortunate.

Mamonova's collection consists for the most part of first-person narratives, by women, of their lives on a variety of fronts — as workers, prisoners, mothers, lesbians, dissidents. It reads very much like the early Second Wave collections which set out and politicized a broad terrain for later feminist investigation and action. One of the characteristics of Second Wave feminism was the use of first-person narrative ("experience") to begin the political process of locating women's gender oppression. *Women and Russia* continues this tradition of feminist political formation.

Support for dissident Soviet feminists does not mean that we have to endorse their politics uncritically. I found it disturbing that the collection printed Leftinova's article which calls for the destruction of medicare in the Soviet Union, to be replaced by an individual fee-for-service scheme. The United States has a privatized system of medical care, and one would have to be daft or profoundly ignorant to characterize it as being in the interest of women. Americans spend a greater percentage of their GNP on medical care than do Canadians, and with much less to show for it in terms of public health. Not to mention the endemic class bias of all

privatized medical systems.

The book as a whole does not distinguish between generalized poverty and gender oppression. The absence of washing machines does intensify Soviet women's domestic labour, and the housing crisis does make for difficult and stressful living, but should these facts be construed as evidence for women's gender oppression in a country which in many ways is quite poor? The net effect is to sound elitist and lacking in social solidarity, an effect which would only confirm Soviet preconceptions about 'bourgeois' feminism. (The decision to identify the *Almanac's* place of publication as Saint Petersburg instead of Leningrad was a political miscalculation which was also guaranteed to feed Soviet misgivings about feminism as counter-revolutionary.) Feminist critiques of present Soviet state budgetary priorities could be advanced to argue for increased spending on women's needs, for instance in the production of birth control technology, but *Women and Russia* nowhere makes such arguments.

To read *Women and Russia* one would think that state authoritarianism is specifically a gender issue. It is not. State-party fusion, bureaucratic rule and human rights violations affect the lives of both genders. It should be possible to examine the differential impact state authoritarianism has on women, but this project is never taken up by the contributors to *Women and Russia*. The analytical result is a kind of gender reductionism in which all the frustrations and failures of Soviet society are boiled down to a basis in women's oppression. Simple-minded to say the least, for not even women's oppression is exclusively organized around gender inequality. (This is one of the reasons why it is so damnably difficult to put together a multi-racial, multi-ethnic, bi-national, class-conscious Canadian women's movement.)

In her foreword to the book, Robin Morgan equates the United States and the Soviet Union as "Big Brothers" in the nuclear arms race. The assumption that the Soviet Union and the United States are equally culpable in escalating the possibility of nuclear war is found as well in the two articles on peace by Alexandrova and Mamonova with which the volume concludes. Without wishing to exonerate the Soviet state for its role in nuclear escalation, one may say that the United States has clearly been the chief culprit in this regard. We have seen this in the current cruise missile crisis and the 'Star Wars' initiative, which occur at a time of complete US nuclear superiority, given their nuclear-armed

submarine fleet, against which the Soviet union is virtually defenceless. A better knowledge of the nuclear arms race would considerably complicate the arguments of Morgan, Alexandrova and Mamonova for a unity of women suffering under identical masculine yokes East and West, since the yokes would no longer be the same, and the unity of women much harder to win, theoretically and practically. The concept of "Big Brothers" doesn't admit some critical and political distinctions; the theory is a night in which all cats are grey.

Exiled dissidents from the USSR and Eastern Europe frequently have little understanding of their assigned ideological place in the Western media. The mainstream media are relentlessly hostile to the USSR, employing dissidents to discredit socialism, shore up faith in capitalism and downgrade any form of class struggle or anti-imperialist consciousness. The uniformity of this propaganda is truly remarkable. Only the most politically acute of dissidents have been able to resist playing into these preassigned, regressive roles. Sergei Botrovin, an activist in the unofficial peace movement who was subjected to psychiatric internment and later exiled, has been able to avoid the trap of becoming an inadvertent apologist for capitalism through his relentless attacks on American military policy, coupled with critiques of the Soviet Union's nuclear role. In *Women and Russia* Mamonova has not demonstrated Botrovin's political sophistication. The book contains only perfunctory snipes at the systems of Western gender oppression. Without sustained critiques of the West/capitalism, Mamonova's position as dissident leaves her open to media manipulation as yet another confirmation of the Wisdom of the (capitalist) West. This interpretation would violate Mamonova's intent, which is to construct a unity of women's oppression in the First and Second Worlds.

Women and Russia is very much a first effort. Above all, the book and the earlier *Almanac* represented the possibility of an independent Soviet women's movement, one which might have developed and gained in political maturity over time. Whatever the political failings of *Women and Russia* may be, the suppression of the *Almanac* was a blow to international feminism and to Soviet women.

Lorna Weir is on the collective of the Canadian Women's Movement Archives. She has long been interested in the history of the tensions between popular movements and socialism.

Trauma of the Time

The House of the Spirits, by Isabel Allende, Random House of Canada, \$25.50.

Reviewed by Patricia Bishop

Isabel Allende is a masterful storyteller. In *The House of the Spirits*, her first novel, she explores contemporary Chile by penetrating the heritage, culture, and prevailing myths of that troubled nation. It should be noted at the outset that Isabel Allende is a journalist by profession and the niece of the late Salvadore Allende, and that the climax of the novel is about his fall from power and the trauma of that time, which is not yet over.

The panorama she creates sweeps away mere temporal and literal concerns. She captures the large picture through meticulous attention to every detail, to precise descriptions, and the unique nuance of every phrase.

Like a rich, complex tapestry yielding secrets one by one, this novel first palpably affects the reader as a mélange of singular vignettes. The power of narration depends upon individual characters united in a compelling sequence of disparate events. At first glance, characters and happenings seem isolated from one another, and the tone of alienation increases even as Allende tightens up the plot. In this context one thinks also of the work of Lygia Fagundes Telles, particularly *The Girl in the Photograph*. Women exist at the core of isolation and alienation. Their initiative is necessary yet insufficient because they are inescapably mired within the confines of patriarchy.

Indeed, most of the admirable characters in *The House of the Spirits*, are women, and they, young and old, rich and poor, must constantly fight against the dark vein of male

power. The delineation of this wholesale oppression presents a reality which is simultaneously horrendous and incontrovertible. Allende treats the misery of women in a matter-of-fact way, for it is simply a condition of life. It seems that to rebel explicitly against patriarchy is pointless, tantamount to challenging a law of physics. Among many other areas, this is one of strong difference between Allende and contemporary Canadian women novelists. Allende's women operate in as separate a sphere as possible from their lovers, husbands, fathers, brothers, and sons.

The church and the state unite in the concerted oppression of women and the working class. From the pulpit, the crazed Father Restrepo circles out Nivea del Valle "to illustrate a point about the Pharisees, who had tried to legalize bastards and civil marriage, thereby dismembering the family, the fatherland, private property, and the Church, and putting women on an equal footing with men — this in open defiance of the law of God, which was most explicit on the issue Clara was seated beside her mother Clara was extremely precocious and had inherited the runaway imagination of all the women in her family on her mother's side."

Interjecting into the deadening silence between the priest's rhetoric, little Clara calls out, "Psst! Father Restrepo! If that story about hell is a lie, we're all fucked, aren't we...."

This is the first of many such breaches of convention in the life of Clara del Valle, whose character and fate are the central concerns of the novel. Clara, the youngest child in the del Valle family, adores her older sister Rosa, an otherworldly creature with green hair and yellow eyes. In her description of Rosa, Allende suggests the tone of magic realism which pervades the novel even as it becomes most explicitly political toward the end: "At

birth Rosa was ... the most beautiful creature to be born on earth since the days of original sin, as the midwife put it, making the sign of the cross rumours quickly spread that Nivea had borne an angel. Nivea hoped that the successive and unpleasant stages of growth would bring her daughter a few imperfections, but nothing of the sort occurred."

Rosa is engaged to Esteban Trueba, scion of a poor but aristocratic clan. He is away working at the mines in order to save enough money for the alliance with Rosa. However, Rosa dies a sudden death by poisoning, and her autopsy reveals the perfectly formed, scaled body of a mermaid.

Clara is clairvoyant. She can move salt cellars across the table and rearrange furniture without moving a hand. She predicts her sister's death and is able to foretell most events in her own life. Through such traits one encounters the fabulism of Isabel Allende. The web of fantasy threads its way so deeply through this story — and it is a source of delight — that to reject it is to jettison not only the means but much of the message. Inevitably readers will think of Gabriel Garcia Marquez and *One Hundred Years of Solitude*. Both are works with a strong central matriarch as well as the appendages of magic, the occult, and the preternatural. Allende is not so much scrapping verisimilitude as she is embellishing it with an additional layer of meaning. The narration also demands much of the reader, interposing as it does at least two fundamental and conflicting points of view, that of Clara and that of Esteban, as well as a cast of thousands.

Esteban exists as a source of evil and pain, to himself and to many others, but he is far from a one-dimensional caricature. Nearly a decade after Rosa's death, Esteban returns home to seek the hand of whichever del Valle

sister remains available. Clara "had already made up her mind to marry without love." She'll marry Esteban but will always live in a mental realm apart.

For his part, "Esteban swore that sooner or later she would come to love him as he needed to be loved, even if it meant he had to resort to extreme measures. He realized that Clara did not belong to him and that if she continued living in a world of apparitions, three-legged tables that moved of their own volition, and cards that spelled out the future, she probably never would. Clara's impudent and nonchalant sensuality was also not enough for him. He wanted far more than her body; he wanted control over that undefined and luminous material that lay within her and that escaped him even in those moments when she appeared to be dying of pleasure."

Esteban develops a farm in the agricultural community of Tres Marias, and for this purpose he needs the energies of the local peasants, who come to fear, resent, and loathe him. Clara joins Esteban after the birth of their daughter Blanca, and the child grows up belonging to the rural landscape. Clara becomes a supporter of the farmhands' rights and tries daily to counter the excesses of Esteban's authoritarian wrath. Allende demonstrates Tolstoy's maxim that "all happy families are alike, but an unhappy family is unhappy after its own fashion."

Because part of the narration belongs to Esteban and is rendered in the first person, Allende manages to prevent the reader from entirely dismissing the vindictive patriarch. Much of Esteban's discourse to the reader is an apologia and most will have a hard time listening to this distasteful voice. Nevertheless, Esteban provides Allende with an easy vehicle

• continued next page

ALLENDE, from previous page

for interjecting dramatic tension into the concluding part of the story. Clara has died and her whole household is much poorer for this loss. Blanca has long since been raising Alba, her daughter from a love affair with the activist Pedro Tercero Garcia. Alba reaches adulthood imbued with the socialist tendencies of her grandmother, mother, and father, in direct opposition to the politics of the now Senator Esteban Trueba, who adores Alba and indeed would make any sacrifice for her.

This set piece, predictable as it is, could easily deteriorate into tedium and cliché. Allende doesn't let it happen. Alba is another strong del Valle woman, and she, like her uncles, mother, and grandmother, uses the del Valle surname as a direct assault on the symbols of patriarchy and reaction. She embraces socialism, and joins the throngs of Chilean students who demonstrate against the right-wing government. Finally the left is victorious and comes to power.

The novel reaches a climax as the government of the unnamed Marxist leader is overthrown in a bloody *coup d'état*. Alba's uncle is murdered and she herself is among the disappeared. She is tortured, racked upon a wheel of fire. Her grandfather finally is able to win her release. He dies, and Alba inherits the future alone, comforted by the notebooks of Clara and a resolution of love: "It would be very difficult for me to avenge all those who should be avenged, because my revenge would be just another part of the same inexorable rite. I have to break that terrible chain. I want to think that my task is life."

Allende commits herself to art and to life, to the memory of the past, to love and the hope of the future. Readers may perhaps expect more rage within this novel, because the horrors are so very great. Allende's achievement, however, is to see beyond rage and violence and to remain steadfast in her vision of concord and social justice.

Patricia Bishop is a freelance writer who commutes between London, Ontario, and Toronto. She works fulltime for a voluntary health agency.

BUNCH, from page 5

from the United Nations, what the treaties and possibilities are. So rather than going in like a missionary, it's much more a collaborative effort. As a North American that's a legitimate way for me to participate, rather being Lady Bountiful. I wouldn't contemplate doing work locally without contacting Asian immigrant women, like the group in New York, Asian Women Against Sexual Exploitation, or a battered women's shelter which has a sensitivity to the problem. The way to get around paternalism and racism is to figure out what is our job in our communities, what is our relationship to the power structures we have access to, what are our governments or corporations already doing that we can tackle in collaboration with women who are looking at this issue somewhere else.

A good model is the relationship between the Japanese women and the Filipino women. The Japanese women started to expose the Japanese sex tourist business. Like North Americans in the west, the Japanese have a history of imperialism and racism in Southeast Asian countries. So they worked with Thai and Filipino women to expose the sexual slavery in Japan. They wrote articles in Japanese newspapers (asking, "Do you know where your husband goes when he goes on a business trip?"), educating Japanese women about what the sex tours were so that the Japanese would question their husbands. They aimed at shaming the Japanese government, demonstrating at the airport when the tours were leaving, demonstrating against the Japanese tourist agencies and against the Japanese government for allowing it. At an international tourism conference in Manila, the Filipino, Japanese and Thai women had an international demonstration against the tourist industries' involvement in sex tourism. The focus has to stay on what is the responsibility of your own people, your businesses, your governments. There's plenty of work for North Americans in that regard without becoming patronizing, ready to rescue somebody.

Broadside: Let me ask you about the Forum in Nairobi last July. You seem to have

a positive view of the event, and this is not one shared by all participants, many of whom were overwhelmed by the scope of the conference. Did it help that you were so strongly focussed? And how did the event make you feel about the future of global feminism?

Bunch: I thought it was a wonderful event. It's true that I've been doing international work for five or six years now, so I knew people and I had a focus, not just on this issue but in other areas. That helps when you have a conference of 14,000 women and 2,000 workshops. Certainly any feminist who went there had the opportunity to experience the incredible presence of 14,000 women, all of whom were there because they had some interest in women. With the exception of a very well organized but strong right wing group, most of the women there were women you could identify with, even if they didn't call themselves feminist, because they did share some of your concerns. They were trying to define what it means for women to take control of our own lives. It was really exhilarating. What made it particularly interesting for me was the amount of work and thinking about feminism that has been going on in the Third World. I went to workshops that were about Third World feminism, various forums of women who do identify as feminists organizing in the Third World. The word feminism was debated in terms of what it really means, whereas at the 1980 NGO forum (in Copenhagen) it was debated in terms of whether it meant *anything* to us. That was an important step, this claiming the word for ourselves. We disagree about what it means and about what we think is the western definition, the media definition, not the grass roots local definitions. That kind of debate was really productive.

There was a workshop on Third World feminist publishing; there was a workshop on all the new varieties of feminist publishing; workshops on Third World health projects, on reproductive rights, on violence against women, on economic issues. For any of the issues feminists have been dealing with here, there were comparable groups of women dealing with them in the Third World. Any western feminists had the chance to grasp new dimensions of the work they were already doing.

That's what I did. ●

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ONTARIO
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ON WOMEN'S ISSUES

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NOTICE

Forum on Pay Equity

The Ontario Advisory Council on Women's Issues will hold an independent consultation with Ontario women regarding the Ontario Government's Green Paper on Pay Equity, Friday, March 7, 1986, 9 am to 5 pm in Toronto.

The Council was established to advise the Ontario Government on programs and policies regarding women's issues.

A draft of Council's response to the Government will be available in early February, 1986 and will be circulated around the province in preparation for our day-long consultation.

Our final response to the Government on the issue of pay equity will depend on the input received from Ontario women.

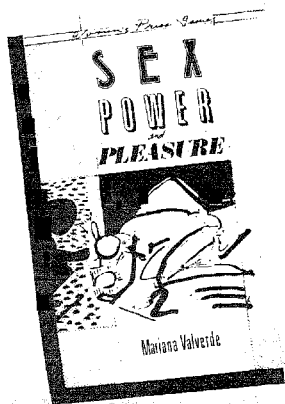
If you would like to receive a copy of the draft response, make a presentation or just attend the consultation on March 7, please contact our office at (416) 965-5824 or write us at 880 Bay Street, 5th Floor, Toronto, Ontario M7A 1N3.

Ontario Advisory Council on Women's Issues

VALVERDE, from page 6

There is a lot of truth in this argument. Analysis of the "system of looks" governing both painting and film conventions reveals that the male gaze is always the authoritative one, while the female gaze only responds or answers. (In Hollywood films, the points of view of the main male character, camera, and spectator tend to be collapsed into one. We don't just look at a man looking at a woman, we *are* the man looking at the woman.) Yet it is not clear whether the very pleasure of looking is hopelessly mired in masculine power, or whether it could be rescued, so to speak, and used to affirm women's desire and pleasure. This cannot be done by simple inversion of the system of looks: a man being stared at by a woman would seem and feel himself to be ridiculous, not erotic at all. We would tend to avert our eyes and not identify with that female gaze. Similarly, a painting depicting a standing, fully clothed woman looking down at a reclining, male nude would also provoke giggles, not aesthetic admiration. The reasons for this are complex, but they have to do with the fact that inversions of gender roles are at the heart of what we consider to be comic or ridiculous, and the comic is incompatible with the erotic.

So we cannot just trade places in the pictures, for how we experience those pictures is necessarily determined by the social reality in which we live. In a world where women were powerful, the female gaze would connote authority, active desire, and truth. But in our world this is not so, and we cannot arbitrarily change the meaning of well-established symbols.



Even in today's world however men do not always make use of the stereotypically male gaze to look at women. For instance, when I am at the gym there are plenty of semi-nude female bodies to be seen. But because they are not on display but are rather actively sweating, and because the men are also occupied in strenuous activity hardly suitable for a voyeur, the men's looks are rarely objectifying or degrading. They probably know that any woman there could easily fix them with a good long stare at their all-too visible sexual equipment. They thus steal surreptitious admiring looks but do not engage in an unambiguous voyeurism that could so easily be turned back on them. And I for one (heretical as this might sound) do not equate their surreptitious admiring looks with sexist objectification, especially when the woman who is the object of the look is in the midst of an activity demonstrating her strength and endurance. Such a look may be partially objectifying; but it also acknowledges the power and desire of the Other.

Nevertheless, masculine eroticism tends to be marked by ownership, aggressiveness, and a lack of acknowledgment of the other person's desires. As stated at the beginning of this section, masculinity may limit men and prevent them from certain kinds of emotional growth, but these constraints are there for men's own good, so to speak. Thus, feminists should not expect that men will be as keen to divorce themselves from masculinity as we are to shed the humiliating aspects of femininity.

Indeed, I know no instances of heterosexual men willingly relinquishing their masculine habits and privileges, except when this process was pushed along by either a female partner of independent ideas or by the collective weight of the women's movement (and usually a combination of both). Although men and women can be described as equally handicapped in their erotic life, women's handicaps, based on the subordination of their desires, are more clearly problematic. Men's handicaps, while they may result in impoverished emotional lives, are associated with a great deal of social and sexual power. To recognize the limits of masculine eroticism is to challenge the very real privileges men have in the actualization of their desire. The *Cathy* cartoon strip summarized the situation: "Men say they are oppressed because they can't cry—but they never had anything to cry about."

It would thus be naive to expect men to spontaneously give up their masculine dominance. Such a move might, in the long run, result in more fulfilling lives, but in the short run a lot of losses and insecurities are involved. Besides, men get a lot of peer pressure not to be, or appear to be, "hen-pecked." Heterosexual women will thus have to continue to push the men they love, despite the problems these struggles entail. It is possible, though, that there may be more men willing to enter into such a struggle, not just for the love of a particular woman, but out of a sense of justice and long-term change.

Aggressiveness and passivity

It is important for women to name and claim desire in all its complexity, without making a priori judgements about which, if any, aspects of desire are fundamentally male or female. We can decide this only once we have had access to all facets of desire.

This is why I want to undertake an analysis of erotic aggressiveness and passivity that does not involve naturalistic assumptions about gender roles, such as assuming that men are by nature erotically aggressive. We must also steer clear of the assumption that aggressiveness necessarily leads to sadism or that consensual sadomasochistic sex necessarily leads to violence. To assume this would be tantamount to accepting the police view of "perversion" ("They start with rock videos and move on to kiddie porn," "They start with pot and soon they're hooked on heroin"). Rather than rely on these images of perverted passion running amok, we would do well to listen to the contradictions within passion, and to the experiences that do not fit our preconceived models.

We can still leave open the possibility that biting your lover's nipple is the polite expression of hidden violence. Perhaps there is an inherent sadism in active desire, and a corresponding masochism in passive desire. But this is not necessarily true. If we want to argue that it is, we have to offer concrete proof, not just theories.

Let us now move on to an analysis of sadistic and masochistic desires. The first thing to do is clarify the different meanings which these much-mystified terms can have. Taking masochism as our main focus, since it has been traditionally associated with women, we can distinguish at least five different meanings for the concept or the word "masochism."

(1) Masochism can mean a desire to be erotically conquered or overwhelmed, to let someone else "have their way" with us: a particularly strong form of passive eroticism. This first meaning of masochism is not masochistic at all, in the sense that it does not imply inferiority or self-contempt. It can be a *happy* feeling of wanting/expecting to receive the powerful erotic force of a lover.

(2) Some people would also include under masochism the erotic desire for sex that includes a certain degree of roughness (bites, sudden penetration, anal sex, etc.). Again, this is not necessarily a desire for pain itself. When sexually aroused one's sensitivity to pain greatly decreases, and "rough" sex, within certain limits, is experienced not as painful but as fulfilling. Acts that would in non-sexual circumstances or in coercive sexual experiences be certainly felt as painful are not always felt as such during willing sex. However, some people do seek out actual pain in the course of obtaining sexual pleasure. This might take place at the same time but is a distinct form of desire.

(3) What most people call masochism is the obtaining of sexual pleasure through the infliction of physical pain. I suspect this is not a major constituent element in many women's desire, but that it might at times be an element in the desires described in (1) and (2).

(4) Another meaning of the term masochism refers to the mostly non-sexual desire for humiliation and degradation. This is often linked to self-loathing and/or a generalized contempt for sex and the body. According to some psychologists, people with strict religious upbringings sometimes feel they have to be "punished" for their lust. By receiving sexual pleasure and degradation at the same time they can assuage both their sensual wants and the claims of their moralistic super-ego.

(5) Finally, some people practice a largely ritualistic, symbolic version of s/m that involves "props" (leather, garters and lace, uniforms of various sorts) and "scripts" (e.g. master/slave, teacher/pupil, cop/criminal). A substantial minority within both the gay male and the lesbian community practice this consensual s/m, and according to the participants, the "bottom" is always in control of the limits of the game. Sometimes the game involves

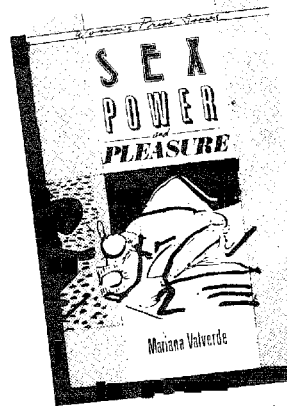
rough sex; sometimes it involves a certain amount of controlled violence, e.g. the person playing the cop putting handcuffs on the person playing the criminal and proceeding to rough up the "suspect." However, neither one of these is necessary. Sometimes sex never actually takes place because the partners become absorbed in role-playing. According to some lesbians who both practice and preach this form of s/m, the main appeal of the game is not so much the physical acts but rather the "exchange of power" that takes place. Although the "top" has apparently absolute power over the other person's pain and pleasure, she/he has this power only insofar as the "bottom" confers trust on the top. Thus, the power is more equal and reciprocal than a casual observer would think.

I might add that much of the theory produced to justify ritual s/m has been produced by gay people, and it is difficult to see to what extent these justifications could apply to a heterosexual situation in which the woman is relegated to the position of slave/pupil/bottom. Given patriarchal prescriptions, it is hard to see how a woman could *freely* desire to totally give up her power to a man, when he already has so much power over her by virtue of being male. It might be possible, however, to disentangle personal desire from social compulsion enough to allow for such a possibility.

These five meanings of masochism which have five correlate meanings of sadism must be kept distinct if we are going to understand the dialectic of aggressive/passive desire. I would tend to confine the term "masochism" to meanings (3) and (4), while reserving the term 's/m' for (5) and finding some other term for the desires described in (1) and (2).

Thus, rather than seeing the desire described in (1) as a form of "masochism"—a term which inevitably suggests something pathological, regardless of how neutral one tries to be—it is more accurate to see it in the context of reciprocal erotic power. Passive eroticism is but a moment, a facet, of eroticism, and even though women are socialized to stay frozen in that role I think most women would admit to harbouring the opposite, aggressive aspect of desire.

By describing aggressive and passive desires as two moments of a dialectic, I am not saying that all we need to do to overcome and transcend rigid roles and their gender connotations is merely to exchange places back and forth, "Now I'm active, you be passive, then we'll trade." The trade is of course important, since it gives the lie to the notion that some of us, primarily women, are essentially passive, while others, notably men, are essentially aggressive. But there is more to dialectics than simple exchange. What "dialectics" means is that each opposite contains the other. The interplay of the two opposites is found not only in the middle, in the air between two solid entities, but also in each of the two extremes.



A concrete example will help to illustrate this. If I am in the active role at one particular moment, for example seducing someone, an integral part of this active seduction is a strong, incredibly sweet feeling of giving in, giving up, willingly submitting to my lover's growing desire. I may be doing all the visible work, unbuttoning shirts and kissing and creating arousal; but my lover is not a mere object, and the response I see is not mechanical. My lover's response is desire itself, a desire which may express itself in primarily passive eroticism for a while, but which always has the potential to engulf me, throw me backwards, to overwhelm me. What I see and feel in the body of the lover is not weakness, but strength. This strength expresses itself in a primarily passive manner but is undoubtedly as powerful and potentially active as my own active strength. And when I go from seduction to lovemaking, even if I'm the one who is still superficially "doing the work" (not in any case an adequate description) I am not all aggressiveness while the other is all passivity. When I stimulate my lover I am fulfilling my own desire to be sexually aggressive. At the same time, I am *identifying* with her pleasure, both her physical response and her yearning to receive my erotic force. I do not just see her

yearning out there but also feel it within myself. When making love to a man, a woman can't identify quite as thoroughly with the physical process he is engaged in; but she can still identify completely with his emotional arousal, his desire, pleasure and fulfilment.

Clearly, this interplay of complementary desires that define themselves both by opposition and identification cannot be adequately described by the rather mechanistic phrase of "exchanging roles." It is not as if at one point I run backstage, shed one costume and put on another. Active and passive desire always contain each other, or at least the germ of each other. Even when only one role is played desire does not remain static and unambiguous. Erotic interchange is not a tennis game in which desire is a thing that gets thrown back and forth between two distinct participants. The movement *within* each player is the ground for the interchange that we observe *between* them.

Once we understand how active and passive desire constantly create each other as opposites and at the same time constantly merge into one another, we will be in a better position to make choices and decide if we indeed want to make changes in our eroticism. Perhaps we are reluctant to admit aggressiveness as being truly "ours," and so need to create safe situations in which to explore that aspect of ourselves. Perhaps we will find we are happy in limiting ourselves most of the time to one of the two roles. There is no law anywhere saying that lovers have to be active 50 percent of the time and passive the other 50 percent.

But even if we are primarily drawn to one of the two poles, we need to recognize that the other is also within us. If we fully identify with the desire of our lover, then that means we have the potential to feel and act on that desire too. We may choose to be unconventional, to use sex toys or play games involving roles and scripts. But the toys and the games are not much fun if used to disguise the movement of desire and fix people in certain roles like figures in a wax museum. The accoutrements of sexuality are best used to reveal the movement and the dialectic of desire, not to conceal or freeze it at a particular moment. And these accoutrements include both conventional rituals—romantic dinners and candlelight—and less conventional rituals like sex toys. I do not believe there are any inherently moral or immoral, better or worse, sexual rituals.

Some rituals, however, tend to reinforce the myth of "essential" roles for lovers of different genders, races, and social status. Some common s/m scenarios come to mind, like the cop/criminal or macho man/woman in high heels and lace. The advocates of s/m often claim they are not necessarily "buying into" the social roles used in their sexual games, and that the roles are only fantasy or, as some have argued, that they actually ridicule those who live by them in real life. There is a grain of truth to these arguments, but on the whole I think they overestimate the power of individuals to determine at will the social meaning of certain signifiers and roles. The reason s/m relies so heavily on highly unequal and stereotyped roles is precisely because these roles have a tremendous power which can be used to fuel erotic exchanges. This power is not present in other possible erotic scripts such as two androgynous people seducing each other. Whether their intent is to use erotic scripts to reinforce social relations of domination, or whether they simply see them as fantasies without much connection to real life, the fact remains that they are using forms of power which a sexist and exploitative society has produced. It may be possible to use these forms in order to defuse or undermine their social meaning, but one would have to be constantly struggling to prevent oneself from sinking comfortably into the "usual" dynamics of power and the "normal" meanings of the roles and images being used.

However, I grant the advocates of consensual s/m their point that at least they are aware of the role-playing involved. Two people involved in an erotic game in which one of them gets dressed up as a cop know that nobody is born with the power of a policeman, and that this power is conferred on individuals by certain social forces embodied in certain symbols.

By contrast, "normal" couples who are permanently stuck in unequal roles see them not as socially constructed, but as natural forms of behaviour. They might firmly believe Nature decrees that the man should be on top of the woman during sex, or that women should let their male lovers and friends pay for their dinners. These roles are thus more nefarious because they are unconsciously assumed, even if the behaviour involved in fairly innocuous and less remarkable than the exotic antics of those who enjoy making love wearing black leather jackets and studded collars. ●

OUTSIDE BROADSIDE

TORONTO WOMEN'S EVENTS CALENDAR FEBRUARY 1986

Compiled by Catherine Maunsell

● **Thursday, January 30:** Imagine: Global Rock Reggae Band, a highly political ensemble presents original music with a feminist perspective. The Rivoli, 334 Queen St. West. 9 pm (show starts at 10 pm.) \$3. Info: Nancy Chater, 597-8442.

● **Thursday, January 30:** Special Film Premiere of "Small Happiness: Women in a Chinese Village." DEC Films is pleased to present the Toronto premiere of a remarkable new documentary focussing on rural Chinese women. 229 College Street. 8 pm. Info: 597-0328.

● **Friday, January 31:** "In a Different Voice, Ethnicity and the Immigrant Self in Films by Women," a series of experimental and documentary films curated by Judith Doyle. Funnel Theatre, 507 King St. East. 8 pm. \$4/\$3 students and unemployed. Info: 364-7003.

● **Saturday, February 1:** The Breasts Video Party, hosted by filmmakers Donna Gollan, Alexandra Horsky and Kevin Speicher. Refreshments while you're taped talking about your breasts! Bring along breast art to be taped too. A second party to follow for screening of this video. 169 Broadview Ave., Apt. 1. Info: 461-6489.

● **Saturday, February 1:** DEC Opening Party: Come help us celebrate our new location—and 15th Year. 229 College St. 9 pm. Info: 597-0328.

● **Saturday, February 1:** An exhibit of colour photographs by Viv Carson: "What Colour is the Sky?" Zero Restaurant, 69 Yorkville Ave. Opening 3-5 pm. Info: 926-1099. To Friday, February 28.

WEEK OF FEBRUARY 3

● **Monday, February 3:** The Women's Group, an open lesbian discussion group, meets at 519 Church St. Community Centre. 8 pm. Info: 923-2778. Also, **Mondays, February 10, 17 and 24.**

● **Tuesday, February 4:** Lesbian and Gay Youth Toronto are looking for more young women (under 25) to join their support group. 519 Church St. Community Centre. 7:30 pm. Info: 923-2778. Also **Tuesdays, February 11, 18 and 25.**

● **Tuesday, February 4:** Gallery 940 opens their show for Black History Month. 940 Queen St. East. 8 pm. Info: 466-2030.

● **Tuesday, February 4:** The Women's Information Line has new hours, 7-9 pm. Messages may be left at any time. (416) 598-3714. Also **Tuesdays, February 11, 18 and 25.**

● **Wednesday, February 5:** Help build International Women's Day, 1986. Come to March 8 Coalition meetings. Metro Central Library, 789 Yonge St. 7:30 pm. Info: 789-4541. Also **Wednesdays, February 12, 19 and 26.**

● **Thursday, February 6:** The Women's Information Line has new hours, 7-9 pm. Messages may be left at any time. (416) 598-3714. Also **Tuesdays, February 13, 20 and 27.**

● **Thursday, February 6:** Lesbian Phone Line open tonight for calls from women. 7:30-10:30 pm. 533-6120. Also **Thursdays, February 13, 20 and 27.**

● **Friday, February 7:** The Funnel Theatre series "In a Different Voice" presents "Regards" by Anna Gronau, "Augusta" by Anne Wheeler and "I'm Talking from My Time," a performance by Rhea Tregebov. 507 King St. East. 8 pm. \$4/\$3 students and unemployed. Info: 364-7003. (See listing for January 31.)

● **Saturday, February 8:** "Get Well, Stay Well," seminar on taking charge of your health through sound knowledge, living foods, alternative therapies and stress management techniques. \$40 (includes lunch). 10 am-5 pm. Janice Canning and Michelle Meyer. Info and registration: 656-8760.

WEEK OF FEBRUARY 10

● **Tuesday, February 11:** Media People for Social Responsibility present "Peace and Conflict: The Case of the Nobel Prize," with Beth Haddon and Geoff Dworkin. 7:30 pm. 519 Church St. Community Centre. Info: 463-4576.

● **Wednesday, February 12:** The Department of Liberal Arts, OCA, presents "Art and Politics '86" with Judith Posner speaking on The Politics of Advertising. Room 120, 100 McCaul St. 4:15 pm. Free. Info: 977-5311, ext. 221.

● **Friday, February 14:** The Funnel Theatre series "In a Different Voice" presents "Burning Bridges" by Premika Ratman, "Colonnade" by Jean Young and "Mothers in a Foreign Fatherland" by Ingrid Ostrup Jensen. 507 King St. East. 8 pm. \$4/\$3 students and unemployed. Info: 364-7003. (See listing for January 31.)

● **Sunday, February 16:** Free Times Cafe presents Ann Ireland and Penny Kemp in their poetry/drama performance "Celebration of the Goddess." 320 College St. 8 pm. \$3. Info: 967-1078.

● **Sunday, February 16:** Benefit for striking Visa and Graham Cable workers presents "No Small Change," the story of the Eaton strike by Emma Productions. Strikers will give updates on respective strikes. 3 pm. A Space, 204 Spadina Ave. Refreshments. \$4/2. Info: 531-6608.

WEEK OF FEBRUARY 17

● **Tuesday, February 18:** 6 of 1001 Nights of Performance. Works by Lillian Allen, Rhonda Abrams, Marcia Cannon, Makka Kleist, Krisantha Sri Bhaggayidatta, John Greyson. \$5. 8:30 pm. Joseph Workman Auditorium, 1001 Queen St. West. Info: A Space, 364-3227. To Saturday, February 22.

● **Wednesday, February 19:** The Department of Liberal Arts, OCA, presents "Art and Politics '86" with Joanne Todd, artist, speaking on The Artist's Dilemma: Personal Expression and Politics. Room 120, 100 McCaul St. 4:15 pm. Free. Info: 977-5311, ext. 221.

● **Thursday, February 20:** Free Times Cafe presents Marie-Lynn Hammond and Marilyn Lerner. 320 College St. \$4. 9 pm. Info: 967-1078.

● **Friday, February 21:** The Funnel Theatre series, "In a Different Voice," presents "Displaced View" by Midi Onodera, "Little Women" (from the Metis women's series) by Norma Bailey, "Scene One, Two and Three" by Carolyn White, and "Journal Inachevé" by Marilu Mallet. 507 King St. East. 8 pm. \$4/\$3 students and unemployed. Info: 364-7003. (See listing for January 31.)

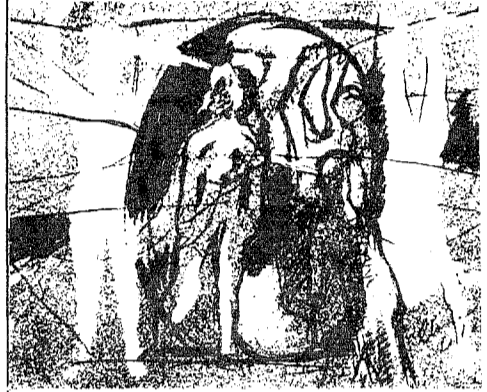
● **Sunday, February 23:** "Skyhawk," a course in feminist spirituality, including meditation, visualization, Tarot, crystals and spiritual healing. Info and registration: Janice Canning, 656-8760, 626-5465.

WEEK OF FEBRUARY 24

● **Tuesday, February 25:** Free Times Cafe presents Julia Fear and Tom Phillips, a program of country-influenced songs. 320 College St. 9 pm. \$4. Info: 967-1078. Also **Wednesday, February 26.**

● **Wednesday, February 26:** Films entered in a Cross Canada Call for Submissions will be screened, giving a comprehensive view of independent filmmaking in Canada. The Funnel Theatre, 507 King St. East. 8 pm. \$4/\$3 students and unemployed. Info: 364-7003. To **Thursday, February 27.**

● **Thursday, February 27:** "Cat's Cradle," an installation by Elaine Cohen, linking the ancient game of cat's cradle to the modern theme of communication between individuals. 8 pm. Eye Revue, Toronto Union Station. To **Tuesday, March 25.**



● **Friday, February 28:** Lesbian and gay seniors group, lecture and discussion: "Coping with loss, grieving and beyond." 8 pm. 519 Church St. Community Centre. Free. Info: 463-0277.

● **Friday, February 28:** Women's Independent Thoughtz (WITZ). A discussion/seminar group for the exchange of ideas and creative endeavours in art, literature, philosophy and political thought. Topic: "Lesbian Issues—how do we feel at the end of the day?" Info: 481-9874 (before 11 pm) or 536-3162.

'Outside Broadside' is a monthly feature of the paper. To help make it as comprehensive as possible, let us know when you are planning an event.

In explaining your event (see coupon), keep it short — max. 25 words. Copy that is too long, or with incomplete information will not be printed.

We need to know well in advance: two weeks before the month your event's happening.

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Broadside CLASSIFIEDS

Mariruth Morton and Anna Willats are proud to announce the birth of Brendan Paul Morton on January 10, at 8:41 am. Jill Tarren, Stacey Michener and big brother Jesse also welcome him with joy. Brendan was born at home with lots of help from a great labour team. 8 lbs, 14 oz.

It's a baby! Rosemary Barnes, Nancy Webb and Richard Roberts welcome Laurissa Rose born November 30, weighing 9lb, 11oz. Many thanks to midwives Vicki Van Wagner and Elizabeth Allemang and to Drs. Howard Krieger and Cathy Chou.

Chris Lawrence and Marty Crowder are pleased to announce the birth of Gabriel (Riel) Peter Gilbert Lawrence at their home on January 17, 1986. Weight 6lb 4oz (3kg). Ottie Lockey assisted. In attendance were midwives Vicki Van Wagner, Elizabeth Allemang and Colleen Crosbie. Also present were Brooke (age 6) and Estaire (age 7). Chris and Riel are doing fine.

Toronto Area Caucus of Women and the Law: meeting of the steering committee at 7:30 p.m. on Monday, February 17, at Trinity United Church, 427 Bloor Street West. All those interested in organizing and/or participating in committees are invited.

Have you or your friends ever experienced anti-lesbian or anti-gay discrimination? It's not fair, but it is legal to discriminate on the grounds of sexual orientation in Ontario. Help us change that. The Coalition for Gay Rights in Ontario needs your stories to help pressure the province to make anti-gay discrimination illegal. Write CGRO at Box 822, Station A, Toronto, M5W 1G3. Or call (416) 533-6824.

Over 30 and coming out? Interested in an evening(s) of discussion/support for information, call Lisa (416) 531-2668.

Group process workshop: Facilitation skills, problem solving, consensus building. Sliding scale. February 15. Taylor/Susanne (Kai Visionworks). (416) 964-1278 mornings.

VISITING VANCOUVER? Gables Guest House Ltd. is now open for business. Bed and Breakfast. Reasonable rates. Central West End location. Walk to English Bay, Granville Island ferry, Expo '86, Stanley Park. 1101 Thurlow Street, Vancouver, V6E 1W9. Reservations recommended. (604) 684-4141. Prior arrangements for children. Sorry no pets. Hosts: Linda Corrigan ("Corrie") and Nancy Duff.

In search of feminist mysteries. Penny Goldsmith, editor of "Women and Words" and "CommonGround," and Margie Wolfe of "Still Ain't Satisfied" and "No Safe Place" compiling mystery anthology (short stories and/or novellas). Submit by June 30 to Mystery Anthology, 229 College Street, No. 204, Toronto, M5T 1R4, or Box 2269, VMPO, Vancouver, V6B 3W2.

Dyke Diaries. Anthology of lesbian personal writings—diaries, journals, letters, thoughts—requests submissions of up to 20 pages. Pieces used may be published anonymously if the writer wishes; confidentiality will be strictly observed. Please include year of writing and age of writer at the time. Deadline: May 1st, 1986. Send material to Frances Rooney, PO Box 868, Station P, Toronto, Ontario M5S 2Z2.

Used book store for sale: Stock, fixtures and lease cheap. U of T area. Call Eve at Pelican Books, (416) 925-2793.

Tell your friends! Three women needed for new gay/lesbian singing group. Must sing and move well. Everyone welcome to audition. Rehearse two nights/week, no pay. Phone Peter, (416) 368-6971.

Groups for Lesbians and Gays, and their families and friends, offered by two experienced lesbian and gay therapists. For more information call Jean Duncan-Day, (416) 463-0277, or Don Munro (416) 368-0177.

Smokefree teaches women to quit smoking without pain. Why struggle with cold turkey when there is a tried, true and easy way to succeed. For more information, call Dr. Jensen, (416) 465-1323.

Woman wanted for peer support group. This is a co-operative problem-solving group. This is not a therapy group. Interested women need to be lesbian, over 35, and have had some personal experience of therapy. Please contact Linda (416) 466-0966.

Feminist Annex Home seeks third woman to share communal space and garden. Private study and bedroom; close to subway; laundry. Light or non-smoker preferred. (416) 967-7118.

LINK — An introduction service (at last!) for lesbians! Meet new women, make new friends, expand your network. For more information, send S.A.S.E. to Box 207, 253 College St., Toronto M5T 1R1. Run by lesbians.

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