

BRAD STRUBLE



“An Exchange Within” by Rita McKeough SEE STORY PAGE 11.



Mother and child

FEATURE

GREAT EXPECTATIONS: Donna Gollan tells the story of her pregnancy, the birth of her son, and now life nine months later. “I had some romantic notions,” says Gollan. Page 8.

NEWS

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NAC IN MOTION: Resolutions at this year’s annual meeting of the National Action Committee on the Status of Women

INSIDE BROADSIDE

engendered debates on regional representation, prostitution, racism; and a spontaneous demonstration at Parliament Hill. Reports from Greta Hofmann Nemiroff, Margaret Buist and Sandra Parker. Page 4.



Tense moment at NAC

COMMENT

BILL C-54, WHERE ARE YOU? The government’s current proposed legislation on pornography pays lip service to feminist concerns, says Mariana Valverde, but in the battle between government and anti-censorship activists, “a distinct feminist voice has yet to be heard.” Page 6.

ARTS

DOMESTIC ARRANGEMENT: Rita McKeough’s installation, “An Exchange Within,” at A Space Gallery in Toronto, challenges the perceptions of the home and woman’s place within it. It is “a gallery of personal icons from a unique imaginative perspective,” says reviewer Ingrid MacDonald. Page 11.

DOMESTIC EXCHANGE: Artist Rita McKeough is interviewed by Shawna Dempsey about “An Exchange Within.” Says McKeough, “I tried to look at the mother’s role as the centre of the home...the rooms are in a circular configuration.” Page 11.

HOME IS A CASTLE: In Howard Barker’s play “The Castle: A Triumph” the hero returns from the Crusades to find the framework of his life—his wife and home—completely changed. In rebuilding his castle, he attempts a return to patriarchy. Reviewed by Margaret Gail Osachoff. Page 12.

GERTRUDE & ALICE: The film “Waiting for the Moon” explores the relationship between Stein and Toklas without catching on thorny issues: it pays minimal attention to historical details, but is captivating nevertheless, says reviewer Helen Lenskyj. Page 13.

REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS: The second issue of the *Canadian Journal of Women and the Law* looks at Women and Reproduction: from surrogacy to historical sexual ideology to abortion law, the volume provides feminists with necessary tools to analyse and strategize in the fight for reproductive freedom. Reviewed by T. Brettel Dawson. Page 13.

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OUTSIDE BROADSIDE: Don’t miss this month’s calendar of Toronto women’s events, for June 1987. Page 15.

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**Moving?**

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Pro-Choice?**Broadside:***Open letter:*

Something has been bothering me for a long time. I've been a mother for 15 years and a lesbian feminist activist for many of those years, and I am bothered by the movement's self-proclaimed "pro-choice" stand. The women's movement is not pro-choice. It is pro-abortion.

I believe, as all feminists do, in free, safe abortion on demand. I believe women should have access to not only the medical procedure but also to the much needed support before, during and after making the choice to terminate a pregnancy. I have no doubt that these things are the right of all women.

My criticism is not for those working to guarantee those rights nor with the women exercising them. I am angered by the hypocrisy in the term pro-choice. The support and caring and ongoing concern for women choosing abortion are important elements in their being able to make the choice that is best for their lives. Support (concrete and emotional) and encouragement should also be available to women choosing to have children and should be available for the 18 to 20 years it takes to carry that choice through to completion.

I must again make clear that I do not begrudge any woman choosing to end a pregnancy and the support she may get for making that difficult decision.

I am referring to what is not available to women raising children rather than what is available to any other woman. (A case in point being the Gay Pride Day Committee's "child-care plan"—no on-site child care.)

At various times in different groups I have been told:

"All we single women could get extra pay because mothers get extra benefits for their kids" (warped collectivism).

"Why should we have to help pay for child-care for the special meeting? You chose to have children?"



"My cats cost as much to raise as your kids and I don't get OHIP paid for them."

"I raised my children without special treatment," or alternately "My grandmother raised 14 kids without any help." (Because it was awful or difficult, should it always be awful or difficult?)

"You are always asking for childcare money and you get a Baby Bonus and tax breaks I don't." (The last estimate I heard on the cost of raising a child to age 20 in Canada was \$250,000. (We can presume StatsCan did not base this on a welfare mom's income.) The Baby Bonus does not go far toward making up the 1/4 of a million. A dollar a day from Ottawa doesn't even buy their milk.)

"I think it is immoral to have children when so many children already born are homeless."

This last statement is my favourite because not only is this woman saying she is not going to support me in my choice to have children but that I am responsible for all those other poor children who are homeless—all the while she takes responsibility for nothing.

I am past the point of asking women's organizations and the women in them for emotional or financial support, childcare time or even superficial interest in my children's lives. Now all I ask is that you not pretend you support both choices—acknowledge what is real and let's start using the term pro-abortion in our fight against the right. Let's not pretend anymore.

If women think I am being unfair in my critique I would be happy to hear what you personally or your group is doing to support women with children, and therefore why you think it's appropriate that you use the term pro-choice.

Laura Rowe
 with the support and endorsement of Mary Ellen Kappler, Mariruth Morton, Stacey Fader, Dini Densmore, Janet Rowe, Boo Watson
 Toronto

Quote of the Month

Conservative backbencher Alan Redway thinks there would be a lot more jobs in Canada if there were fewer abortions. "If there had been no abortions between 1971 and 1981, 14,117 more teachers could have been employed." (*Globe and Mail*, Thursday, May 14, 1987)

Postal Strike

In the event of a national postal strike, the next issue of *Broadside* (July 1987) may be delayed a week or two. If the strike lasts a long time, the July issue may be piggy-backed with the August/September issue. But don't despair, you won't miss a thing; it'll just take longer.

EDITORIAL**Legislative Vengeance**

As the federal government reels from persistent scandal and women petition for better daycare and more opportunity, the Tories have chosen to take up Parliament's time discussing the merits of killing. So far, the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women has not taken a position on capital punishment, maintaining that the issue does not fall within its mandate, but the National Action Committee on the Status of Women has passed a resolution condemning retention of the noose. This last is a good sign because capital punishment is wholly inconsistent with feminist values.

To begin with, the policy is irrational. Threatening to kill murderers is going to increase the number of murders, not decrease them. Yet, studies indicating that capital punishment is not a deterrent to violent crime have not impressed police who are demanding revenge for the slaying of fellow officers. They forget that if a man has killed once, and knows he is going to die when he is caught, then police out to capture him are in more danger, not less, because the criminal has nothing to lose by killing again.

Capital punishment is a financially irresponsible approach and its implementation is going to decrease the funds made available, especially to victims of crime. Imagine that a flick of the switch of the electric chair is easier

and cheaper than housing murderers in jail shows no understanding of how the legal system works. A capital trial in which the defendant's life is at stake voraciously devours public funds as the trial drags on and on. Capital trials always take more time than any other court cases.

Supporters of the noose dream of sweeping up the most heinous criminals and eliminating them. But they are dreamers. A policy of capital punishment will not prosecute the polluters who are killers of the next generation, and it will likely leave the wealthy wife-killers untouched. It will murder the poor, the destitute, those who got where they are because of their poverty and desperation and who can't afford the expensive lawyers who manage to save the lives of wealthy well-placed murderers. The judicial system is hopelessly discriminatory. Our jails are crammed with people who had no chance. With a public policy sanctioning murder, these people will die, while the ones with power and connections hire high-priced lawyers and survive.

We are categorically opposed to capital punishment no matter who is the convicted criminal. We are aware that many women, especially victims, have strong feelings of rage and vengeance against the perpetrators of violence against women. The legislation cur-

rently under debate applies only to those convicted of premeditated murder, or to the killers of police officers. It does not apply to rapists who "lose control" and murder their victims. Even if it did, we would still oppose it categorically because we cannot support the institutionalization of revenge in a policy of death by the state.

In the meantime, feminists continue to study the meaning of violence against women and why it is so pervasive. Most researchers have concluded that women-hating and the desire to control women are the primary causes of the violence. But another important factor has also been recognized, and that is the social perception of violence as the best means of exercising authority or resolving conflict. Many parents and teachers are attempting to transform this value scheme by challenging it and providing alternatives to violence as a way of negotiating through tension. They feel that they can measure some progress. What is going to happen to these initiatives if children look to their elected representatives as role models. They will see killers, they will learn revenge, they will believe that violence is the best form of punishment. And in the end women will lose.

Now that the capital punishment debate has come to Parliament Hill, we are stuck with it and have no choice but to participate. ●

Tools for Nicaragua



NANCY FARMER

Alicia Duarte in Toronto: "No Pasaran!"

by Amanda Hale

Alicia Varel Duarte was a textile worker in a Nicaraguan factory owned by President Somoza. Now, she is the international representative for Centro Sandinista Trabajadores (Sandinista Workers' Centre), and has been touring Canada as part of Nicaragua's ongoing work to counteract media misinformation. She spoke to a large Toronto audience in May. During the Somoza regime, Duarte was active as an underground trade unionist, when unions

were banned and any attempts to improve the appalling labour conditions squashed. After the 1979 triumph of the Sandinista revolution, Duarte became involved in trade union education, and now represents textile workers in Managua, in addition to her international work.

While working conditions have improved radically under the democratically elected Sandinista government, which gave legal recognition to trade unions, the America embargo blocks access to equipment necessary to effect health and safety measures in the workplace.

Workers educated in workplace safety expect to be provided with masks, earplugs, gloves and boots but this equipment is not available in the factories. The low intensity warfare being carried out by the Reagan government against the Nicaraguans in the form of the economic embargo (as well as the illegal funding of the Contras) is wearing away at the country's economy and frustrating attempts to follow through with improvements.

"There are the poor countries and the rich countries," says Duarte. "Nicaragua was made poor by the sacking of our resources by the US." Nicaragua is a small country with a population of 3 million. It is an agricultural country which produces coffee, cotton and sugar. So why is it considered so dangerous by the US? Why is a democratically elected government misperceived as totalitarian, communist, a Soviet satellite? Having followed the French example and effected their own successful Revolution, the Americans set up a colonial tradition throughout Central and South America which allowed American multinational corporations such as the United Fruit Company to exploit the Latin Americans and benefit from the natural resources of their countries. The system is usually held in place by a puppet President backed by a repressive military regime. According to Alicia Duarte, Nicaragua is a danger to the US not as a "communist threat" or as an "exporter of Revolution" but because it is an example to other countries still under US control of the possibility of democratic independence and national autonomy.

Duarte expressed the gratitude of the Nicaraguan people to Canadian solidarity workers, and especially to Tools for Peace and Canadian Action for Nicaragua who provide so much practical and material aid to the struggling country. Tools for Peace runs an annual campaign across Canada to gather high priority goods which are assembled in Vancouver and shipped to Nicaragua. "It is incredible to us," says Duarte. "What you send allows our people to resist the war." Among the priorities chosen for the 1987 Tools for Peace campaign is a project to collect personal protective equipment from Canadian trade unions for their counterparts in Nicaragua. The collection of protective equipment for factory workers will help to advance the health and safety programs which have been developed since the Triumph, and which are now stalled at the level of awareness. "We knew nothing about health and safety under Somoza," Duarte said. "There was no protection from chemicals. People had burns and weals on their hands. The conditions were inhuman. A high percentage of miners developed tuberculosis, and were fired with no pension."

Judging by audience response, Nicaragua is also an example to Canada, on the labour front. A garment industry cutter spoke from the audience about his experience with Dylex Corporation, the largest holding corporation in Canada. Wages were cut by fifty percent, he said, and Canadians need the spirit of struggle which Nicaragua exemplifies in order to organize against these kinds of drastic actions.

A presentation was made to Alicia Varel Duarte by Women in Solidarity with Nicaragua. Sewing machine parts, valued at \$500, were sent for the Women's Sewing Co-operative in Esteli, and another \$500 (US) was sent for the Women's Hospital in Managua. (Women in Solidarity with Nicaragua is the former Simone de Beauvoir Study Tour, sponsored by Canadian Action for Nicaragua, which spent two weeks in Nicaragua in August 1986. Upon their return the group members organized and raised funds at an event featuring Nicaraguan poet Daisy Zamora, and at a benefit performance of The Working People's Picture Show, sponsored by the March 8th Coalition and Canadian Action for Nicaragua. Women in Solidarity with Nicaragua is now seeking new members, and is holding a potluck and information meeting on June 13. (See Calendar, page 15, for details.)

The evening closed with a slide presentation by Nancy Farmer documenting the Augustin Mendoza Coffee Brigade which went to Nicaragua to help with the coffee harvest last December. Canadian Action for Nicaragua is organizing another coffee brigade from mid-December 87 to mid-January 88. The deadline for applicants is mid-June. For information call (416) 534-1766. ●

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NAC: Striving to Survive Sweet Reason

by Greta Hofmann Nemiroff

The National Action Committee on the Status of Women celebrated its fifteenth birthday this year with its annual general meeting, the theme of which was "Coming of Age." In her keynote address, NAC president Louise Dulude observed that we had come a long way in putting women's issues on the government's agenda, although she granted that we still have a stretch to go before women will have gained true equality in Canada.

The first major issue to emerge at NAC this year was that the participants had been spurned by the Tory government's scheduling of the constitutional debate simultaneously to the annual NAC parliamentary Lobby. At the Lobby, each of the three major federal parties accords about 45 minutes to the NAC membership in response to those questions which have been hewn, through a delicate mixture of opportunism and compromise, from the current NAC agenda and resolutions. The women attending this year's AGM were infuriated by this breach of promise; despite recurrent exhortations by members not to succumb to the government's setting our agenda when we had important items to discuss (not the least of which were women of colour, native and immigrant women), a disproportionate amount of time and energy was devoted to responding to this slight. The arguments were divided between the "fuck 'em, let's boycott the Lobby!" and the sweet reason of "It's taken us a long time to get the annual Lobby, let's not sacrifice it." Finally a letter writing campaign to the Prime Minister was organized for the day before the lobby. About 900 women and girls wrote personal letters on NAC stationery, which censured the Prime Minister for breaking the word he had given six months before when the date for the Lobby was set. Despite the difficult logistics of getting the letters into Mulroney's hands, it probably was an effective move since about 10 Ministers and numerous Tory MP's turned up.

In her eloquent keynote address, "The Role of Visible Minority and Immigrant Women Now and in the Future," Glenda Sims objected to the term "visible minority," but she also cautioned that the greatest current challenge to NAC is to "make sure... it can fulfill its mandate for all women in Canadian Society." Canadian feminists must first acknowledge our debt to the Black and Civil Rights movements, because we will never become truly committed to challenging the status quo until white women see racism as their problem and acknowledge their own privilege. She made the matter specific to NAC by suggesting that NAC's Standing Committee for Visible Minority and Immigrant Women be disbanded, that women of colour be fully assimilated into NAC.

This issue resurfaced in the workshops and in a resolution that NAC address the specific areas of common need shared by visible minority and white women. It was suggested that NAC change the name of its committee to The

Committee on Racism and Ethnocentricity. It is difficult to render here the eloquence with which women of colour spoke of how they experience NAC, how excluded they feel from the functioning of the organization and the "mainstream" of Canadian feminism. While appropriate gestures of concern and agreement were made, it is not clear how these problems will or can be resolved within NAC, whose slim resources and atomization of membership militate against dialogue which is a necessary condition for finding solutions.

While there was the expectation of great discord regarding prostitution and pornography, it was clear that much work had been done over the year to refine motions that would pass. The third keynote speaker, Shelagh Day, touched on many issues central to the conference: the dangers to our planet of pollution and imminent nuclear disaster; the many oppressive governments in the world (Chile, South Africa) and the hopeless oppression under which many women throughout the world suffer starvation and the starvation of their children, forming a "global underclass." Day believes that "full equality for women means a gentler, more respectful, more democratic, and less destructive society," and for Canadian women, the "redistribution of wealth must start here." Her message ended by optimistically stating that women could find new ways of being militant, of "breaking silences and crashing through refusal and denial." We must continue analysing, lobbying, teaching and writing, she says, because we have "little language for the joyfulness a political movement creates. There is a spring of love for life and each other, an anger and a joy inseparable as a source of energy and change."

Naturally, many were touched deeply by the words of Sims and Day, both superb speakers, as well as by the testimonies of the many women who supported motions with accounts of their own experiences. However, all too often the microphones were "occupied" through the machinations of specific interest groups; several NAC neophytes complained that they felt out-manoeuvred and left out of the action, unheard and as disempowered as they are at men's events. In my view they were responding to that familiar feminist undercurrent: "the terrorism of the politically correct" which sometimes clouded the proceedings with a toxic effect on NAC regulars as well as novices.

The underlying tension at NAC seems partially to emerge from various personality conflicts, but even more from the conflicting ideologies and methodologies of the reformists and radicals. Neophytes should have taken heart when Doris Anderson, a past-president of NAC, wistfully made a suggestion, commenting that her suggestions are never listened to. While sexual orientation, abortion, pornography, racism and ethnocentricity are often contentious issues even within self-defined homogeneous groups, they are especially difficult to resolve in an organization as diverse in its membership as NAC. Yet, it seems to me

that the most contentious issue always is, "How are we going to respond to the boys—to the real locus of power?"

While most women did not expect the Lobby to provide revelation, they regarded it as an opportunity to muster Canadian women as a "force majeure." When all the resolutions and internecine struggles (some of which seem to relate to getting the "right woman" in as president in 1988) were over, the Lobby preparations were made with a remarkable lack of contention; compromises were made, and those who attended the preparations worked hard, worn out by two days of NAC meetings. My own conclusion is that "feelings" of inclusion and exclusion so clearly indicated during NAC internal debates relate to the struggle for power within the group. The cooperation attending the design of the Lobby relates to women's real powerlessness against the machinery of the state, including its handmaidens who themselves have negligible power.

The Lobby always provides a view of parliamentarians: at their silliest (one thinks of Keith Penner ostentatiously sulking because of the short period allocated for responses); at their most temperamental (Broadbent did flare up surprisingly when chided by Louise Dulude about leaving early. Some of his male colleagues joined in with general flailing and snarling, not content to allow Margaret Mitchell's firm but tactful apologia to stand on its own); and their most vacuous (the many assurances by Epp, MacDougall et al. that the resolution of issues were under advisement). The Lobby shows that although all parties are aware of the problems, their interest in and remedies for them differs. After three hours, it should be clear that this country is governed by a small group of men for the benefit of other men. While the "success" of the Lobby might be variably perceived as too rude (there was hissing and booing) or not militant enough (unplanned interventions were not very powerful), those who stay to the end of the NAC AGM's and Lobby can at least lick their wounds with the moral superiority of having stuck it out.

At a short demonstration in front of the Peace Tower, Kay MacPherson, a woman whose age and history accord her a reverence delightfully nullified by her general irreverence and irony, gave a short speech. This was her fifteenth NAC AGM, she said, and many of the

same issues being discussed now had been discussed then. There is still much work to be done and we should "get on with it," she said.

As I stood there in the small crowd, watching friends hug goodbye with promises of future meetings, I remembered that each of our original keynote speakers had referred to women and power. Louise Dulude had observed that until women get "in there," we could never be sure that our interests would be fully addressed; Glenda Sims had seen the creation of a Feminist Party as the only hope for there ever being a Black woman Prime Minister of Canada; Shelagh Day saw nothing less than our changing the world as essential to its survival. It is true that the males on this planet have all the power of might and that we females have only the power of sweet reason, but it is also true that women are only beginning to understand the complexities of power. Unless we women truly understand the nature of the power we resist as well as the nature of the power we wield over one another through our appropriation of patriarchal structures and discourse, we do not have a hope of changing the world. Perhaps our task is to "feminize" the women's movement through developing processes as nurturant as our ideology. Unless we change our *modus operandi* radically, we are at best in peril of becoming those to be lobbied with sweet reason by future discontented generations.

Greta Hofmann Nemiroff is a longtime feminist activist and writer living in Montréal.

Bye, Bye Brian

(to the tune of Bye, Bye Blackbird)

Pack up all our cares and woes
Here we go, singing low
Bye, bye, Brian

We were there but you weren't there
Now we know that you don't care
Bye, bye, Brian

No one here can love or understand us
Oh, what hard luck stories they all hand us!

We were here to fight the fight
Equality of women is our right!
Brian, bye, bye!



Singing in the bus (top); Jackie Burns reading her letter to the Prime Minister (bottom).

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MAY 10, 1987
Le 10 mai 1987

To the Right Honourable Brian Mulroney, P.C.,
Prime Minister of Canada:

Au très honorable Brian Mulroney, C.P.,
Premier Ministre du Canada:

I am an 11-year old girl and I am already learning that you are not being fair with the women of Canada. I am very surprised, because when you were running for prime-minister you let the people know that you would be equal to women but I see now that you haven't kept your promise. I think that it was very unprofessional of you to cancel one day of the year to hear from the women. If you want to stay in the role you're in then I think you should make some changes.

Signature
Jackie Burns

name/nom
constituency/circonscription

Jackie Burns' letter to Brian Mulroney

Deferred Debate

by Sandra Parker

I am a rape crisis worker with Women Against Violence Against Women/Rape Crisis Centre in Vancouver. I travelled to Ottawa this May to attend my first National Action Committee on the Status of Women annual general meeting. I came in order to add WAVAW's experience to NAC's strength, to explore how NAC can best serve the needs of the women we work with, and to ensure that "polite and reasonable" should not define those experiences and needs. After four long days of listening, debating, questioning and networking with hundreds of feminists from across Canada, I saw that my work has just begun.

NAC too has just begun a process. The National Action Committee is "coming of age," or so claims the title of this year's AGM. As far as I can tell, NAC at 15 years old has hit adolescence. From a small central organization representing 30 groups, NAC has evolved into a national feminist umbrella for over 500 women's groups. That growth has sparked pride in our powerful voice and a passionate scrutiny of our structures and processes. This passage may prove to be a rocky, unruly one, but it is capable at the same time of firing our imagination and energy.

The pride in NAC's extraordinary growth is tempered with the knowledge that numbers are only one element of what it means to be representative. Diversity is another. An organizational review has been underway for the past year in an effort to understand how NAC can genuinely represent Canadian women in all our diversity. Systemic barriers have led to NAC's current under-representation of women of colour, low-income women, differently-abled, immigrant and native women. The re-

view process has NAC identifying its systematic biases of race, class, language, region and sexual orientation. The policy resolution passed at this AGM in support of enforced affirmative action for women of colour, so that each year our executive must reflect in concrete terms our commitment to confronting and ending racism in our organization is a small but important beginning. This work is not empty rhetoric then, and it must continue if NAC is to eventually "come of age."

For me, as a Westerner, I shared my concerns about NAC's regional bias. For women not from central Canada, attending the AGM in Ottawa and being a member of the executive (meeting eight times a year in Toronto) costs more in time and money than it does for our Southern Ontario sisters. Yet NAC is far from demonstrating a real commitment to including women from outside central Canada. A notion to equalize travel costs between all delegates, a sore point which has been raised time and time again, was referred to the executive after some debate during which some speakers expressed concern that this attempt at regional equity would hinder participation of poorer women from Southern Ontario. I wondered why it was that women from the west and the east were being called upon to pay for the poorer women of Ontario, or why the exclusion of poorer women from my own province was seen as acceptable.

I know that in order for NAC to indeed be a voice for all women in Canada we will have to speak up and speak out on behalf of ourselves and our marginalized sisters. An illustration of both my fears and cautious optimism in the organization's commitment to real representation occurred the night before the Monday Lobby. The executive presented the list of the topic areas which they had drafted for our con-

sideration and workshoping. That list included important issues around employment, the economy, survival of the planet. Yet what the list omitted shocked and angered me. For the women I work with the issue of the survival of the planet is all very nice, but their daily reality is a battle for their own survival. Rape, incest, battering, abortion, homophobia: unlike the list designed by the executive, these words would not make polite dinner conversation. I recognize that we all have our own agendas and that mine as a collective member with WAVAW revolves around male violence against women. I also know with sorrow and rage that those issues are still women's experience in this society. Naming the extremes of women's oppression is a radical act that offends society's middle class sensibilities. Not naming them on the NAC lobby agenda offended me.

But then it began. Despite repeated requests not to add to the topics because of the very real time limits of the Lobby, women spoke out. Lesbian women insisted on being heard. Incest workers demanded a voice. Abortion activists and rape crisis workers and workers with bat-

tered women raised their issues and their voices and challenged the priorities. We felt the authentic power of our experiences. And most importantly, we changed the agenda and were heard.

Participation in the NAC AGM was for me an exhausting and exhilarating experience. As a member of a collective I am familiar with the frustration and joy of women's democratic process as we struggle to define policy that truly reflects women's needs. Those feelings were amplified for me as I celebrated the strength of so many women coming together, women whose roots and commitment to feminism are grounded in the work they do with and for women. I learned yet again that what matters is that we speak up, speak out, and speak to each other. Only in that way can we make sure that *all* our voices may be heard.

Sandra Parker has been with WAVAW/RCC since October 1984, and is a member of CCCA and CARAL. She is now at UBC working on a degree in psychology.



Demo at Parliament Hill

MOIRA ARMOUR

Affirmative Accessibility

by Margaret Buist

The title for this year's NAC AGM—*Coming of Age, NAC from Yesterday to Tomorrow* seemed designed to encourage reflection, praise and a future vision. However, one dominant theme of the conference signalled NAC's evolution—accessibility. This year's real focus was on accessibility for more and more women to the major political force for women in Canada today.

Disabled women were present in greater numbers than ever before. These women spoke on issues that directly affect them, such as the abusive administering of the drug Depo Provera on disabled women by the medical establishment. At the Lobby, where women get the opportunity to question Members of Parliament, politicians were admonished by representatives of disabled women for not banning use of the drug.

The entire conference (with a few significant exceptions) was made accessible to non-smokers and women with respiratory disabilities. A letter was circulated at the conference from the Disabled Women's Network stating that for women with environmental illnesses, access means *smoke free* meetings. There was still a smoking area during the banquet, and smoking was allowed at the dance, but, considering it was just one year ago that NAC passed a resolution advocating smoke free environments, we have begun to act.

The strong presence of women of colour was felt most in the reverberations of Glenda Sims' opening speech on Friday night. As a representative of the Congress of Black Women of Canada she spoke passionately on the need for feminists to address the systemic racism in our own organizations as well as in our society. Although some may not have been comfortable with her aggressive approach to NAC, her zeal and her message were applauded. The women of colour made it clear that they no longer wished to be called visible minorities; nor do they wish their issues to necessarily be aligned with those of immigrant women. Indeed, the NAC Executive has been directed to change the name of the Visible Minority and Immigrant women committee.

NAC members elected a 21 year old Executive member this year, in response to her campaign promise to seek greater accessibility for younger women. There was also a workshop on working with younger women. NAC is by no means "agist." In fact, the ages of the current Executive span five decades. Lesbian women were also visible and vocal

at the AGM. Although there were no workshops on lesbian issues there was a meeting of the Lesbian Caucus and an important question at the Lobby concerning the inclusion of sexual orientation in the Canadian Human Rights Code. In response, the Minister of Justice, Ray Hynatyshyn replied that the Code would be amended soon, but would give no definite time frame, despite the urging of the questioners.

Women who, I felt, were under-represented at the Conference were low-income and native women. Although there was one workshop on Aboriginal women's issues and one resolution directly addressing the needs of women on social assistance, there was a definite dearth of discussion on the concerns of these two groups of women. Francophone women were frustrated at times by the poor translation of discussions. There is no doubt that accessibility should remain a flexible and growing phenomenon at NAC.

Another problem in accessibility is the constant location of the AGM in Ottawa. Traditionally, it has been argued that we must meet in Ottawa to lobby the politicians. However this requirement seems to be at the expense of regional support for NAC. It is clear by the number of acclamations in the election for the Regional Representative positions, that NAC is not reaching out to women across the country as well as it could.

What did all of the women at Canada's single, largest gathering of feminists get access to?—primarily to each other. We had the opportunity for invigorating debate on a plethora of issues including civil remedies for pornography, privatization and free trade, child care and the Constitution. We learned from each other at the workshops, discussing topics such as family policy, creative fundraising, equality rights, the Federal budget, and shelter. We also had the best opportunity possible to confront our Members of Parliament and to publicly require them to respond to our concerns.

After fifteen years, NAC is coming of age, primarily by opening itself to all the diverse groups who wish to promote the status of women in this country. By maintaining its flexibility, NAC can continue to be the most powerful feminist voice in Canada. This year's AGM did prove to be a time for reflection, a few congratulations and a vision of future growth in representativeness.

Margaret Buist is a feminist lawyer from London, Ontario working in a Community Legal Clinic, and is Past-President of the London Status of Women Action Group.

Spotlight on NAC

by Lisa Freedman

What follows is a subjective, non-exhaustive list of the highlights and lowlights of the National Action Committee's Annual General Meeting.

HIGHLIGHTS

- The large turnout: 600 women attended the conference
- The increasing numbers of bilingual women
- All regions were represented
- Svend Robinson's all round knowledge of and interest in women's issues
- Smoking was done for the most part outside
- The election of 21 year old Les Tager to the NAC executive and the "Dear Brian" letter by an 11 year old
- Large number of lesbian women
- Disabled women's network, making women confront their prejudice around the issues of disabled women
- Quality of candidates running for the new executive
- Amount of media attention for the various demonstrations held throughout the weekend
- Resolutions opposing Tory immigration proposals criticized the government's policy for its racism
- The singing of "Bye Bye Brian"
- The NDP MP's displayed thorough knowledge and commitment to the issues at the NAC lobby
- Number of committed feminists working for the government
- The NAC parliamentarians—for keeping their heads when all around them were losing theirs
- The fact that we are now debating solutions to the problem of pornography, not whether pornography harms women
- That women are organizing for change

LOWLIGHTS

- The ghastly accommodation at Carleton University where the graffiti included such wisdom as "penis power"
- Unilingual English women not using translation devices when French was being spoken
- The resolution that would have equalized travel costs for all women was not passed
- Joe Clark's defence of cruise missile testing which included the comment that "Weakness breeds weakness, strength breeds negotiation"
- Women are still smoking (myself included)
- Young women are almost invisible at NAC
- Lesbian invisibility
- The dance was inaccessible
- Lack of executive direction at the meeting
- Fact that the scheduling of the constitutional debate made demonstrations necessary
- The size of the women of colour caucus decreased from last year
- The fact that Brian isn't leaving
- The timing of the constitutional debate made it impossible for Ed Broadbent to stay past his introductory remarks
- Lack of feminists leading the government
- That we still don't have a viable feminist alternative to parliamentary procedure
- The fact that the Tory government still doesn't get it
- That we have to

Bill C-54: Moralism over Feminism

by Mariana Valverde

Censorship of pornography has given rise to many heated debates in the Canadian women's movement, but there are indications that these differences are being shelved as opposition to Bill C-54, the federal government's censorship bill, grows. While a few feminists are giving the legislation qualified, grudging support, at the annual meeting of the National Action Committee (NAC) in Ottawa in May an emergency resolution to condemn the bill passed overwhelmingly. Even pro-censorship feminists agreed that there were fundamental flaws in Bill C-54, most notably a focus on sex rather than on violence.

Artists' and writers' groups, art galleries, public libraries and many other groups have condemned the bill's harmful implications for the production of alternative art, book and film distribution and other venues of culture and entertainment. These criticisms are being picked up by the mainstream media: both the *Toronto Star* and the *Globe and Mail* carried lengthy articles outlining the arts community's outrage against the bill. Insofar as feminists are concerned about women artists' and writers' freedom of expression, and about the ability of young women to have access to positive depictions of sexuality, many of us share the arts community's campaign against Bill C-54 and are actively involved in it.

However, in the battle between the government and the arts community a distinctive feminist voice is not yet being heard (though the arts community is certainly more receptive to our views than the government). As we enter into a strategic alliance with other groups to have the legislation drastically changed or withdrawn, we need to articulate our own reasons as feminists—not just as female readers, gallery-owners or artists—to oppose it.

Perhaps the most exasperating thing about Bill C-54 is that while it pays lip service to feminist concerns about the degradation of women in mass-market culture, it has as its core the same old hierarchical classification of sexual acts that has been a feature of patriarchal thought since Thomas Aquinas. Thus, even when the classification system happens to stigmatize sexual activities that feminists object to,

Feminists have repeatedly argued that it is not the sexual act itself but rather the social relation of power involved that ought to be analyzed.

it is for all the wrong reasons. Feminists have repeatedly argued that it is not the sexual act itself but rather the social relation of power involved that ought to be analyzed: if incest, for instance, is ethically wrong it is because it is an abuse of parental authority, not because it breaks some abstract moral rule. But the Criminal Code cannot envision a challenge to the patriarchal authority which it is designed to uphold and legitimize; and so it categorizes sexual acts, and their depictions, according to some yardstick of "essential" moral worth.

The definition of pornography, the core of the bill, is a long list of sexual activities which it is forbidden to depict. How they are depicted and for what purpose is not considered except as an afterthought, in a clause allowing (in some cases, not all) a defence of artistic, educational, or scientific value. The list of activities whose mere portrayal constitutes pornography begins with *any* sexual activity, however benign, "conducted in the presence of a person who is, or is depicted as being or appears to be, under the age of eighteen years." A movie showing a 16-year old girl who walks in on her parents when they are making love, or which shows a child (even if played by an older actor) traumatized by witnessing a rape, would automatically be pornographic.

Depictions of sexually violent behaviour are also *ipso facto* pornographic, which again fails to distinguish between depictions which glorify violence and those that merely show it (eg, the child sexual assault portrayed in the woman-positive movie *Loyalties*). So are depictions of any "degrading act in a sexual context." Sexual acts assumed to be always degrading include consensual bondage, the penetration of an object (eg, a vibrator) into a vagina, and "lactation or menstruation in a sexual context." (Good-bye to those illustrations in Sheila Kitzinger's books showing the sensual enjoyment of nursing mothers!)

The definition of pornography suddenly expands to include "masturbation or ejaculation . . . or vaginal, anal or oral intercourse."

After mentioning the usual Krafft-Ebing categories of bestiality, incest or necrophilia, the definition of pornography suddenly expands to include "masturbation or ejaculation . . . or vaginal, anal or oral intercourse." (Legislators often list these sexual acts right after necrophilia, probably to create a subliminal feeling of disgust). This is the crux of the bill. Even though there are lesser penalties attached to depictions of these five activities, it shows that the Justice ministry thinks that sex is dirty and should as a general rule not be shown. Of course there might be future amendments easing the restrictions on what lawyers are now calling "pedestrian" sex; but even if this clause is taken out, the sex-negativity which is at its basis will continue to pervade the legislation.

Having defined all *visual* depictions of the above activities as pornography, there is another, potentially vast category of non-visual items which is also considered to be pornographic: "any matter or commercial communication that incites, promotes, encourages or advocates any conduct referred to in [the above] subparagraphs" with the exception of "pedestrian" sex. Lawyers have explained that the "commercial communication" is aimed at such items as Yellow-Pages ads for phone sex, while the word "matter" could include anything from sex toys to novels. The books covered by this are not simply the works of the

Marquis de Sade or *The Story of O*; a sex education book which states that it is not a bad thing for teenagers to see sex either live or in the movies would also be "pornographic." My own book on sexuality, which has been accused of being "wishy-washy" on the question of consensual s/m, might be seen by a judge as advocating it.

In the process of critiquing pornography, feminists often rely on the concept of "erotica" to indicate *positive*, non-sexist depictions of sexuality. The exact definition is a matter of controversy, but generally speaking many feminists agree that erotica is the opposite of pornography, being characterized by mutuality rather than domination. The point of this linguistic exercise is to make room for at least some explicit sexual representations even while condemning pornography.

Bill C-54 begins by implicitly acknowledging this feminist critique: its first clause suggests that the term "erotica" be included in the Criminal Code. However, the feminist definition has been completely emptied of its content. There is nothing in it devised to make a cultural space for female desire; the conception of sex implicit in it seems more in accord with R.E.A.L. Women and Jerry Falwell than with Gloria Steinem or Kate Millett. "Erotica" is:

any visual matter a dominant characteristic of which is the depiction, in a sexual context or for the purpose of the sexual stimulation of the viewer, of a human sexual organ, a female breast, or the human anal region.

The first remarkable thing about this is the fetishism of "sexual organs". The body does not have sexual organs; it has reproductive organs. Sexually sensitive areas of course include the clitoris and other "traditional" zones of the body: but why exclude the male nipple? (Not as a loophole for gay porn, one suspects.) Or why exclude the back of the neck, or the mouth? (I can imagine judges pondering whether Luce Irigaray's famous vindication of "our two lips that speak together" is a reference to sexual organs or not.)

The press has taken the definition to refer to "nudity." However, lawyers have pointed out that nudity is not explicitly mentioned, so that the picture of a clothed breast could be considered erotica if it implied "a sexual context." The vast majority of movies would fall under the rubric of "erotica."

The main point, however, is that "erotica" is not defined as an alternative to pornography, as an indicator of positive images, but is rather defined as a category that in many cases exposes the maker and distributor to criminal charges. The main "trigger" making erotica criminal is its being sold, rented or exhibited to people under 18. There is a defence of "educational purpose" that one can use to defend one's erotica (eg, in AIDS leaflets) from being prosecuted, but this is a "reverse onus" clause (ie, one can only use it in court after one has been charged, and many sex educators and teachers would undoubtedly not want to risk prosecution and to court unfavourable publicity). There is, however, no "artistic" defence in this case, which will in effect ban young people from most art galleries even after galleries have removed offending ("pornographic") paintings of nude pre-pubescent kids.

The state's use of the categories of pornography and erotica to validate its Puritan schema and give it a pseudo-feminist flavour ought to teach us a lesson about the powers of cooptation of the Canadian state. To have our language taken up into law only to serve conservative interests is hardly a victory.

People under 18 are to be completely shielded not only from what is defined as pornographic but also from "erotica," as defined above. "Erotica" cannot be shown to people under 18, who may henceforth be confined to a steady diet of *Lassie* movies. Or more likely, the profit motive of film distributors will lead to the proliferation of movies in which racist, not sexual, violence is the main ingredient. The genocide of American Native peoples will be replayed on television and film screens ad

• continued page 14

EFFECTS OF BILL C-54: THUMBNAILED GUIDE

Artists: Visual representations are subject to the greatest amount of regulation and prohibition in this bill. Artists with established reputations would undoubtedly be able to claim, or get their galleries to claim, the artistic exemption for their work. However, younger or alternative artists (especially lesbians and gay men) would be far more exposed to the dangers of prosecution or seizure of their work. The Association of Non-Profit Artists' Centres is an active member of the Coalition Against Bill C-54.

Writers: There are two ways in which writing could become a criminal activity. One is if it involves the encouragement or promotion of any sexual activities other than "pedestrian" sex, keeping in mind that judges would decide on what constitutes "promotion" or "encouragement." Another is the positive or even neutral portrayal of sexual activity of any kind among people under 18. Both ACTRA and the Writers' Union have strenuously condemned the bill for these reasons, and also because writers of alleged pornography are assumed to be guilty until they can prove "artistic merit."

Art Galleries: The Ontario Association of Art Galleries (OAG), which has its own anti-censorship coalition, is mobilizing its members against Bill C-54. They fear getting caught up in expensive legal battles to prove artistic merit; presumably they also oppose being put in the position of having to deny people under 18 access to galleries showing "erotica."

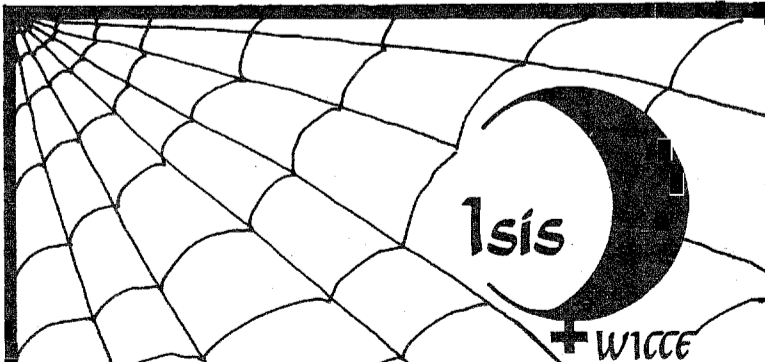
Film Makers and Distributors: People involved in film, especially alternative films, have already been fighting the Ontario Censor Board through bodies such as the Ontario Film and Video Appreciation Society (OFAVAS). Now they are joining other arts groups against the porn legislation. The secretary of the broadcasting workers' union, ACTRA told the *Globe and Mail* that Canadian films such as "The Decline of the American Empire" and "Loyalties" would both be illegal under the new legislation (the first could be con-

strued as encouraging sadomasochism, and the second has a relatively explicit scene of a girl being raped).

Public Libraries: A representative of the Toronto Public Libraries, who attended a meeting of the Anti-Bill C-54 Coalition to report to the library board, was told by a lawyer that libraries might be expected to set up separate under-18 and over-18 stacks, and to police the separation so as not to be accused of exhibiting either erotica or written matter encouraging certain kinds of sex to people under 18. Libraries have been concerned about censorship for some time and may get more formally involved at this time.

Sex Educators: The AIDS Committee of Toronto (ACT) and the Ontario Coalition for Abortion Clinics (OCAC) are both active members of the Anti-Bill C-54 Coalition, partly because of concerns about the effects of the bill on the distribution of sex education materials. It is not clear that sex education materials with pictures would necessarily be illegal, but many organizations might not want to have to prove their educational value in court, especially in the context of a backlash against AIDS education in the schools.

Feminists: Feminists overlap in membership with many of the groups listed above and hence share some of their concerns. In addition, feminists have protested the government's twisting of the categories of "erotica" and "pornography" to further conservative moralistic views of sex, and they point out that violence against women and children will not be addressed by Bill C-54. (An interesting discrepancy is that many rapists get sentences of two years less a day, while for giving sexual materials to a person under 18 one could go to jail for 10 years). Feminists are still debating the alternatives to such censorship, with some feminists being completely anti-censorship and others favouring a different approach to censorship. Among Toronto feminist groups, the only one thus far active in the Coalition against Bill C-54 is the International Women's Day Committee.



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MOVEMENT MATTERS

Discussion Forum

The following discussion papers are available for \$4 each, from the Centre for Women's Studies in Education at OISE (252 Bloor St. West, Toronto, M5S 1V6):

Paper #1: Supervised Private Home Day Care: One Option for Child Care in Canada by Susan Clarke. This paper is a review of the current research pertaining to family day care, the selection process for supervised private home day care and the standards for approval of day care homes. The findings of a small field study are analyzed to determine the quality of care from the perspective of caregivers, the parents, the child and the community addressing policy consequences and planning.

Paper #2: "The Real Cabbage Patch Kids": An Examination of the Canadian Private Adoption System by Evelyn B. Ferguson. The first section of this paper traces the historical development of adoption in Canada and establishes the existence of a private market. The second section examines the Canadian legislation controlling or regulating the private adoption market. The paper concludes with a discussion of the implications of the situation.

Paper #3: The Legislation on Child and Spousal Support at Separation and Divorce: An Analysis of the Principles Behind the Law by Catherine E. Foote. Beginning with a review of the available Canadian research data and the relevant federal and Ontario legislation, this paper analyzes the ineffectiveness of spousal and child support laws at separation and divorce as resulting from problematic concepts, assumptions, principals, and objectives in the content of the legislation.

Paper #4: Families and the Canadian Census: A Brief Critique of Current Methodology and Some Suggested Improvements by Linda S. Williams. This paper critically examines the treatment of families in the Canadian census and suggests ways in which the census may be improved to provide more accurate information on the nature of Canadian family life. Attention is focused on the procreative, residential, and legal dimensions of families.

Paper #5: Reproductive Technologies, Masculine Dominance and the Canadian State by Somer Brodribb. This paper illustrates how masculine dominance in science and law organizes the social relations of reproduction, and suggests what implications this has for social policy and the everyday lives of women. International, but primarily Canadian, government reports and proposed legislation relating to artificial insemination, surrogate motherhood, and in vitro fertilization are examined. An exploration of feminist perspectives and proposals for social policy relating to reproductive technology complements the analysis.

Paper #6: Working Both Sides of the Fence: A Critical Review of Family Therapy Courses in Social Work Education by Patricia A. McGillicuddy. This paper utilizes content analysis to critically review the texts used to teach family therapy courses in social work education in Ontario. Suggestions for revised course content are put forth with reference to the results of the analysis.

Paper #7: Breaking the Circular Hold: Taking on the Patriarchal and Ideological Biases in Traditional Economic Theory by Margaret A. White. This paper critiques the response of traditional economic theory to the changing structure of the family and to issues relating to the economic inequality of women.

Paper #8: Sexism and Social Welfare Policy: The Case of Family Benefits in Ontario by Jane Haddad. This paper examines two significant changes in Family Benefits social welfare policy in Ontario, within a framework that was developed by Margrit Eichler, and analyzes the changes in terms of their underlying ideological assumptions.

Paper #9: Recent Changes in Welfare Policy in Selected Canadian Provinces by Maria Cetnar and Jane Haddad. This paper analyzes some specific aspects of some income security programs in selected Canadian provinces. Trends, implications and consequences for the recipients are analyzed.

Paper #10: A Feminist Perspective on "The Badgley Report," Sexual Offences Against Children by Betty Carter. This paper analyzes "The Badgley Report," *Sexual Offences Against Children*, with a focus on sexism. A specific framework is used to examine six separate elements in the report: language, concepts, questions posed, interpretations made, policy recommendations and overall perspective. The paper also addresses those recommendations put forward by the committee which are beneficial to both sexes.

Paper #11: Native Families in Jeopardy—The Child Welfare System in Canada by Barbara Pimento. This paper begins by discussing the Canadian governmental basis for Native Child Welfare Service delivery. It then describes the present situation and several possible causes. Ontario examples of constructive measures which would move in a more positive direction are outlined.

Paper #12: The Problem of Alcohol Abuse Among the Native Peoples of Labrador as it Relates to Familial Interaction by Glen R. Fudge. In this paper, important dimensions of the family life of the native peoples of Labrador are presented in the context of rapid social and economic change. The origins and consequences of alcohol abuse for families are discussed and proposals to alleviate the problem are considered.

Paper #13: A Future for Women at the University of Toronto: The Report of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Status of Women by D.E. Smith, M. Cohen, P.A. Staton *et al.* The report identifies major problems, comments on issues of concern to individual constituencies, students, faculty and staff and makes 48 recommendations for change.

Spirit of the Spit

TORONTO—The future of Leslie Street Spit is currently under review by the Metropolitan Toronto and Region Conservation Authority. The major interest groups involved, on one side, the boaters seeking private automobile access to their clubs, and, on the other, the cyclists, joggers, walkers, naturalists and environmentalists (alternatively termed by hostile aldermen "the activists" and "the other people"). This group wants to retain the car-free nature of the Spit, along with its unique urban wilderness landscape.

The following is part of a presentation made by Helen Lenskyj at the City of Toronto Land use Committee on May 6, 1987 where she presented petitions signed by seventy-five women from the Cycling Women Conference '87 and the Canadian Association for the Advancement of Women and Sport:

"The women at the Cycling Women Conference '87, and the women of Canadian Association for the Advancement of Women and Sport (Toronto Chapter) come from a wide

range of physical activity backgrounds. Some of us are weekend joggers and cyclists, while other are training for marathons and triathlons. Some of us are young and active; some of us are seniors just discovering the benefits and the fun of walking, jogging or cycling.

"What we share is a deep concern over the future of Leslie Spit. We believe that pedestrians and cyclists can successfully coexist with the natural wildlife on Leslie Spit. But we believe that cars, pedestrians and cyclists are a dangerous combination. The entry of private automobile traffic is a threat to the safety and enjoyment of individuals on foot and on bicycles.

"As physically active women, we know from experience that our concerns are justified. We know that the roads are not a safe place for cyclists, although of course we use them out of necessity. We know that deserted trails and rural routes are not safe places for women, on foot or on bicycle. We know that narrow urban paths shared by cyclists and pedestrians, and often interrupted by highway access lanes, are hazardous for everyone. We know that low-cost, safe and accessible forms of physical activity are a priority for women of all ages. (The federal government's 1986 policy on women in sport and fitness supports this as a priority, and provincial government ministries are now beginning to work on policy in this area.)

"The accessibility, the safety and the natural wilderness of Leslie Spit are unique and irreplaceable features of urban parkland. We urge this committee to ensure that private automobile traffic is *not* permitted to jeopardize these features or to destroy the benefits enjoyed by the women, men and children who walk, run or cycle on the Spit."

Ts'eku Anthology

VANCOUVER—Ts'eku Collective is a native Indian women's group that is compiling an anthology of indigenous women's writings in North America. The theme is Native Women Celebrating Our Survival.

We are inviting submissions from indigenous women that celebrate, in a political way, our survival. We must tell these stories of our resistance, not only contemporary, but the histories of our mothers and grandmothers. Help break the silence by sharing stories of your lives, poetry that capture your feelings and so on. We will accept short stories, poetry, short essays, oral narratives, graphics, and b/w photographs.

Submission deadline is September 30, 1987. For writer's guidelines, please write: Ts'eku Collective, 603 Powell St., Vancouver, B.C., V6A 1H2.

Strategy Sessions

TORONTO—The Ontario Coalition for Abortion Clinics (OCAC) is holding three strategy discussions during upcoming meetings, to which we would like to invite all pro-choice supporters. Through these discussions, we would hope to get ideas and input from the wider community and from activists in other areas of struggle.

Tuesday, June 23, 7:30 pm: "What Happens After the Supreme Court Decision?" What will the impact be of the Supreme Court ruling on the abortion rights struggle? Some hope that the judges will settle the issue once and for all. But won't the fight have to continue no matter what the decision will be?

Tuesday, July 21, 7:30 pm: "Why Don't We Have Abortion Rights?" This discussion will focus on the state and anti-choice opposition to women's reproductive freedom. Why are they so determined to limit and/or prohibit legal abortion?

September (date to be announced): "RU486: Another Miracle Drug?" Will this abortion pill, recently developed in France, be the solution for women? Is technology the answer to the abortion debate?

All meetings will take place at Trinity-St. Paul's Centre, 427 Bloor St. W. (Spadina station). For information, call OCAC at (416) 532-8193.

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“I Was a Pregnant

by Donna Gollan

Womb With A View

I knew I was in trouble the morning I threw up my first coffee of the day. I had always had a tough time maintaining my full schedule without recourse to caffeine. Luckily it had become entirely fashionable in certain feminist circles to drink only herbal teas. Bringing the little packets with me to meetings and assuming the demeanor of a newly converted health food fanatic enabled me to put off my interesting announcement for several weeks. Then, quite suddenly, my stomach burst out of my faded jeans and my breasts became so tender I had to go out and buy my first bra in ten years. I was, at this time, a mere two months into my pregnancy. The fun had just begun.

What on earth does a pregnant feminist wear? The question seems trivial until you venture into a maternity clothing store, only to be confronted by rows and rows of lace, gathers, bows, pink, white and powder blue. Is it really necessary to infantilize the bearer of the infant? Must I look ridiculous in oversize pajamas? No, I can choose to look hideous in polyester “business” dresses or poly-mix pants with stretchy front panels made from guaranteed-to-itch-unbearably nylon. Or, I can choose to ignore the maternity route entirely and go for the oversized cotton T-shirts and sweats which eventually hitch up in front and sag miserably behind—just what a pregnant woman needs to boost her morale.

Ever the capable and resourceful type, I solved my dilemma by purchasing a maternity jumpsuit pattern and some vibrant red material, complete with slashes of blue, green and yellow primary colours. After staring helplessly at these purchases for several weeks, I ran home to my mother-in-law who guided me good-naturedly through the sewing process. The result had me proudly peacocking through the streets of Toronto, only slightly daunted by the little boy who pointed me out to his mother as a real live clown!

On a practical level, slowing life down and eating sensibly were not as difficult as I had anticipated. My body craved green, leafy vegetables—I would go wild at those twenty-four hour vegetable stores on the Danforth. For the first time in my life, the veggies in my fridge were all eaten before they went slimy. Coffee, tea and alcohol made me throw up. Skipping meals made me throw up. Trying to fit three meetings in one day made me throw up. In fact, throwing up became the first thing to get out of the way in the morning, and my closing anthem at night. I have heard that there *are* women who can take this kind of betrayal from their bodies in stride; however, one never meets these women when one is actually pregnant. Equally difficult to meet are those women one “hears about” who gain only 20 pounds, work right up until their due dates and give birth without experiencing pain. Instead, one forms a kinship with dozens of nauseous, exhausted women who become infuriated when no one will give them a seat on the bus and who are prone to wringing their hands and wondering aloud how they will ever cope with motherhood when the mere state of pregnancy has so disrupted their lives.

To combat the inevitable mood swings, I tried to snack often on cheese, fruit and nuts. Unfortunately, I had spent my entire life to date skipping breakfast, exercising through lunch and subsisting wholly on coffee until a large dinner. Drinking a quart of milk a day and following a sensible diet resulted in a rapid weight gain of 40 pounds. Now I looked like the Goodyear Blimp in a clown suit! My doctor and dietician banded together in an attempt to persuade me to cut down on cakes, pies and cookies. And so began my second major disappointing discovery: nobody believes a damn thing you say when you are pregnant.

I proclaimed loudly and clearly that I was delighted to be having a child, but no, I was throwing up so often that I had to be “ambivalent” about it. I explained to several groups that in order to snatch afternoon naps, I was going to have to cut back my involvement somewhat. Naturally this was another clear indication that I was unhappy with my pregnancy. Every excitement worked against me. Even a weekend of shooting my latest



Donna, six months pregnant

video project had me throwing up continuously. From that moment on, I resolved to limit all exciting activities, only to discover that having the doorbell chime and the telephone ring at the same time was enough to send me charging to the bathroom. I actually felt a twinge of regret that I do not own foundation or face powder the morning I had a grant application meeting with a government official and my face was riddled with burst blood vessels from the force with which I had lost my breakfast. Of course, the nausea did end. Our new game was a lot more interactive: bladder trampoline. The rules are few and simple enough for a zygote to follow: three times an hour jump up and down on the nearest bladder. For my part, I would waddle frantically to the bathroom every time, only to pee for four fifths of a second. As a method of early communication, I can't help but think it lacked charm.

Although there are hormone highs as well as lows during pregnancy, nothing quite makes up for the wretched feeling of having lost all control of your body and consequently your life. Hard won independence slips away as your Olympic swimmer keeps you awake for eighteen hours straight, causing you to burst into tears during your next angry confrontation so that people may nod wisely at your expense and say, “It's only hormones.” Worse yet is the ceaseless advice from complete strangers who comment on everything from the size of your belly to disciplining your future child. My shaggy hair, shadowy mustache and hairy legs, once an overt statement of my feminist lack of interest in such trivial matters, became grounds for advice from the hospital's pre-natal instructor “not to let yourself go, dear.” Finally, I was outraged to discover that there is actually a reason why women are willing to trade in their usual image for one of lace, bows, pink and vulnerability. Those are the lucky few who are offered seats on the bus.

Eventually I decided that only blatant rudeness was going to combat the worst of my pregnancy blahs. I began to develop stock answers to the most frequently asked questions by complete strangers: “Is this your first?” “No, but my other three are invisible and I thought it would be nice to have one everybody could see.” “That outfit makes you look very big.” “Well I'm pregnant, what's your excuse?” “Oh my gosh you're big. Is it



Teddy at 3 days

twins?” “No,” smile sweetly, “Quints.” “Are you hoping for a boy or a girl?” “Oh, anything at all as long as it doesn't grow up to ask stupid questions of complete strangers on the street.”

Other good humour building strategies include standing naked in front of a mirror all day, if possible, admiring the baby's movements under a grand, taut, belly. I installed a shiny new toilet seat—since I spent so much time either sitting on it or looking at it. I joined a fitness class with other pregnant women which gave me a sense of belonging to a vital, larger species instead of being an invalid amongst my co-workers and slender friends. Finally, I refused to talk pregnancy with anyone who hadn't experienced one—I know, I know, how will non-pregnant persons ever learn?

Did my perspective on feminism change? My body changed. My energy level changed. My moods changed. My life came to an abrupt corner and sped around it on two wheels. Yes, I suppose you could say my perspective on feminism changed. I realized the commitment I felt to certain ideals and causes was shifting: I wanted a natural birth experience, to breastfeed as long as possible, to raise a feminist child in an as equal as possible household. Of course, at this point I was still clinging to the belief that motherhood would not interfere with work or my participation on three collectives, and I'd be able to continue writing a film piece every month for *Broadside*.

I sailed through the final weeks of my pregnancy energetically defending my right to dream. Much to my surprise, a regular check up with my doctor resulted in emergency admittance to hospital with all the symptoms of toxemia. To make matters worse, the doctor with whom I had painstakingly built up a trusting relationship informed me that due to OHIP extra-billing disputes there was a good chance that she would not be present at the birth. This did little to bring my blood pressure down. After four of the longest days of my life, I was almost pleased that they decided to induce my labour. Several hours later, of course, I changed my mind.



Teddy at 1 month

A Perfectly Revolting Development

2 am: I think back to what I have read, what they have told me. Do not use your breathing in the beginning. Joke or laugh through the first contractions. Save the breathing. You could be doing this for hours, even days. You'll get sick of the breathing.

The contraction steals my breath. I choke, I gasp, I run to the bathroom. Tears stream from my eyes. No jokes immediately occur to me. I start my breathing.

The nurse thinks I am a suck. She talks me out of calling my husband. “You'll be in labour tomorrow,” she insists. “Once you will need to be well rested.”

Kevin. My Kevin. We were going to be at home. The labour would start in the middle of the night. I would kick you awake and demand a cup of tea. We would joke and laugh through the first few hours of contractions. I would demand endless cups of tea. I had plans to be very ornery.

Here I am on a cranked up bed. Alone. The nurse comes to crank it down. “Go to sleep,” she says. She looks at me as though I were a whining teenager. I look at her as though she had cracked. Somehow this is not the togetherness I had imagined.

3 am: I decide the nurse must be right. What do I know? Maybe this is not true labour. Every five minutes I feel a wave of rolling up my conscious self, threatening to suck me back into an endless sea. Using the breathing rhythm I have learned, I just barely able to keep my feet on the sand. I am not going to be able to sleep through this. I ask for a hot shower phrasing my request as if I am certain they are right and a hot shower will get me back to sleep. This is the first bright idea I have had. A shower is soothing. I am able to grab the bar for support through the waves. I stay as long as I can. I try to concentrate on the lovely smell of the special soap my mother has given me. Regretfully I return to my room. Of course I will not sleep. At least it is now 4 am.

5 am: Is it possible I am having contractions every five minutes? I no sooner slow my breathing down, prepared to rest out the rest period, trying not to let the dread build enough to blow it for me this next time, when the crest of a tidal wave crashes over me, a complete surprise. Frantically I call the nurse. By now they are tired of me. No one comes.

I grab my Sheila Kitzinger book and begin to read. Aha! Induced labour can often start more quickly with no labour and the contractions may have double peaks. You would think I had never read this before. I have forgotten almost all preparation, except my breathing. No, there's one other thing I remember. Labour is supposed to be like orgasm. I would hate to have your sex life.

6 am: I cannot believe I have made it to 6 am. I stand by the window and try to remember where I am. Downtown Toronto. I watch the restaurant across the way begin its breakfast service. I watch the parking lot on the corner gradually fill with cars. It suddenly occurs to me that Kevin is awake by now. I run out into the hall and demand a phone. The nurse is surprised I haven't been to sleep. “Oh,” she says, wincing at my efforts to breathe through a contraction, “it must be labour after all.”

7 am: Kevin and the doctor arrive at the same time. Kevin drinks coffee while the doctor pops out the catheter which has been “irritating” my cervix all night. I am 4 cm dilated. I am surprised and pleased. “You must have been working pretty hard last night!” I gasp my agreement, truly grateful for the acknowledgment. He then uses a huge crochet hook to burrow through my waters. I hardly feel it. Pain is a relative concept. But my

at Feminist. . .

scious mind is struggling through the contractions wondering why he did that. Would it not have happened soon anyway? "This is just the first step," he explains. "If labour doesn't continue to progress well, we will start the drip." He leaves.

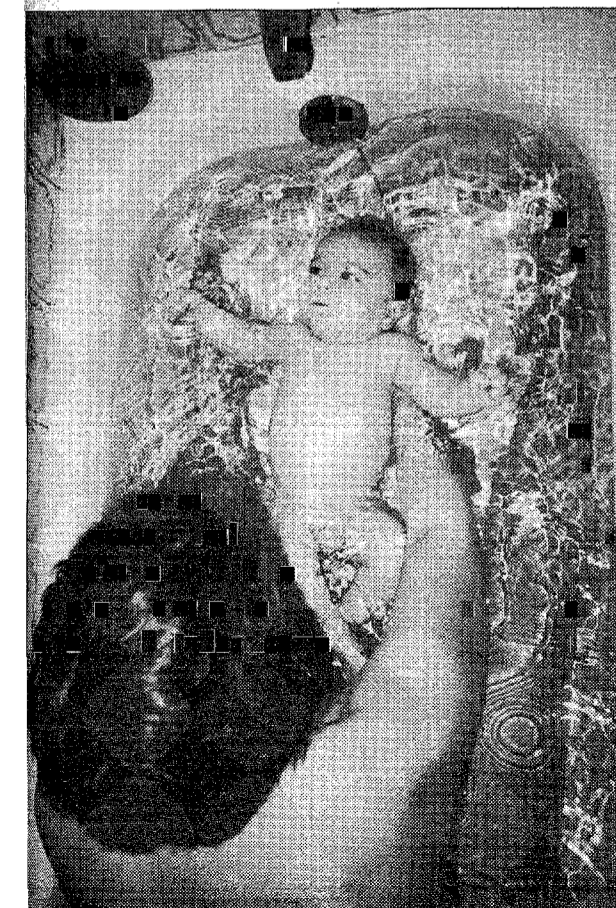
Now it really starts. There are no longer any gaps between the pains that we can time. One ends and the next builds, like the dissolves in a time lapse movie. Kevin helps to keep me calm. He is there for me. He is concentrating as hard as I am. A nurse walks in and tries to put breakfast, a tray of liquids, on my lap during a horrendous contraction. Kevin, annoyed, takes it from her and puts it on the floor. In the split second that his attention is diverted from me I lose control of my breathing. I scream with pain. I am rolled up and thrown head first on the beach, choking with the water that has been forced through my lungs and out my nose. Gradually I realize that there is no beach, no water, no wave. Kevin rubs my legs and talks me through the next one. I am back in control but with a new realization of how thin the line is between control and instant death. It is at this point that I forget I am having a baby. Now I begin the battle to stay alive.

9:30 am: Blood and water gush from my vagina, diarrhea from behind and vomit and tears from above. My body is forcing itself to empty, empty, empty. Clutching the sink for support, I keep trying to clean it up. Why?

9:45 am: I leap from the bed and settle into a chair. Finally I feel comfortable. This will do for the next several contractions, I think. I relax because Kevin shows me where I have tensed up and explains quietly, constantly, what to do about it. One contraction later I leap up and clamber aboard the bed. Packed in with pillows I know that I am finally comfortable. Now this will do for several contractions. Kevin helps me to relax. One contraction later I rush to the windowsill. Kevin holds my shoulders. This is better. This will do for several contractions. One contraction later I am clinging to Kevin, arms around his neck, as he supports all my weight and breathes in my ear so that I can follow the rhythm. I glance at the clock. This has taken six minutes and four positions.

Now I am crying. I don't want to do this anymore. I can tell I am going to die. I cannot tell how Kevin feels. I must have an epidural. All desire for a "natural" childbirth has deserted me. Kevin is convinced I am already in transition. He urges me to try for one more half hour. Reluctant to disappoint him, I agree. Five minutes and two contractions later the nurse enters and asks me if I'd like the epidural now. "Yes," I say. I am off like a shot. She says I must lie down. I have not attempted that since 2 am. I stare blankly at her. "I can't." "You must." She looks like Margaret Thatcher. In despair I mutter to Kevin that I won't be able to stay in control without his help. "He cannot come," Thatcher insists. Kevin bends and whispers in my ear, "Scream blue murder and make them earn their money." Amazingly, it is the permission I needed. Lying on my side being wheeled down the hall I can feel the urge to push. I am now so desperate for the painkiller that I do not mention this new sensation. I simply scream and push and gush and whimper and scream some more. Dimly I am aware that I feel foolish.

The man with the needle is kind. He says the pain will all be gone in five minutes. This gentleness makes me want to weep openly. Thatcher frowns him down and says it takes fifteen



Donna and Teddy in the bath

minutes to take effect. You shouldn't lie to children, her frown seems to be saying. I am vividly aware of this interchange even though I have forgotten that I am having a baby and I am only trying to stay alive. Selective attention.

9:30 am: As the pain subsides, I am wheeled back to my room. I attempt to apologize to the nurse for the craven behaviour of just moments ago. At last she smiles, albeit grimly, and admits that I am not doing too badly. She nods her head towards a door which we are just passing. "You're doing a lot better than she is," she sneers. Sure enough, I hear screams so vibrant with pain and terror that my suppressed whimpers pale in significance. I wonder briefly if she too went through childbirth classes which spoke only of "discomfort" and "pain which can be controlled." They are afraid to scare us and so we tackle childbirth with ill prepared naiveté. Naturally the pain we cannot control is our own fault. I resolve not to feel guilty about this epidural. Ever.

9:45 am: I am back with Kevin. Now I feel as I did at four this morning. My breathing will control the pain again. It's a good thing too, because I am now stuck flat on my back with a needle in my spine. No more dancing around the room. And it seems, I am stuck with Thatcher, whose name is Pat. She is going to iron will my baby into the world. I have remembered about the baby. As the pain increases, I forget again.

10 am: Kevin holds my hand and chants my breathing. Keep above it he says, and it makes perfect sense to me. I pant high up above the pain, trying to keep my body in the clouds and out of the dreaded sea. "That's funny," says Pat. "You should not be feeling anything. The epidural should have taken effect by now." "It did," I gasp, "but it's getting bad again." Kevin suggests that someone check my dilation. Pat agrees and goes for a doctor. A new doctor, Eva, comes on the scene. "When were you last checked?" she asks. "Not since seven this morning." "Oh well then, why not wait an hour longer for some real results?" I do not think that I will live another hour, but what the hell. Kevin is angry. "A lot has happened. Please check." Pat adds her two cents worth. "She is feeling discomfort despite the epidural." Understatements are common amongst the iron ladies of the world. Eva stays to watch me battle the next contraction and agrees to check. In comes the rest of the goon show. They cannot find a thing they need. First no gloves. Then no disinfectant. Four people are buzzing around me like flies, annoying and unswatatable. Finally they are all four positioned between my knees. "Fully dilated!" They are all surprised and pleased. "When did she get the epidural?" Evidently I am no longer considered capable of speaking for myself. "Half an hour ago." "Oh well, you'd better pant through the next few, you'll never be able to push the baby out now." I consider this a direct challenge. Just watch me. The goons all leave. Pat and Kevin and I have work to do.

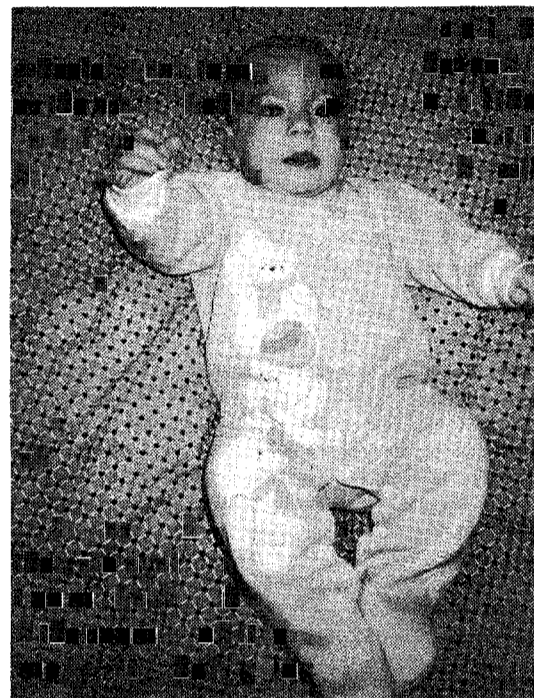
10:15 am: Pat and Kevin are holding my legs. I am holding my breath and pushing with the hardest contractions, willfully ignoring the weaker ones. Miracle of miracles, it doesn't hurt when you push. I resolve not to pant through another one of those suckers, no matter what they say. In comes the doctor who broke my waters. "I've ordered an epidural for you, if the pain gets to be too much." I point out the apparatus in my arm and in my back. He bows himself out. Pat goes down to the recently vacated space between my legs. She sees the baby's head. For the first time she shows a spark of interest. Evidently I am working satisfactorily. We are once again wheeling off to the delivery room.

10:30 am: I glance at the clock in the delivery room. Kevin is changing into his surgical greens. I decide to push this baby out by eleven. With the next push I feel everything shift.

10:45 am: The cheering section consists of the entire goon show plus Pat and Kevin. Everyone is chanting push push push. Eva attempts to stretch the perineum, then does a quick episiotomy. Edward bursts into the world. His head is perfectly shaped. I am torn extensively in three directions. Everyone is surprised and pleased. It seems you get points in hospital for being quick. There are five masked faces between my knees, all with glasses perched above their masks, completing the disguise. One of them keeps saying: "My, he's small!" Pat enters the fray. "Nonsense," she states brusquely, "He's a fine fellow." I begin to understand for the first time why the iron lady is in obstetrics. She handles him beautifully; gently and competently cleaning and wrapping him. He doesn't cry at all. He is put across the room under a warm light. Kevin and I can only stare across at him. My blood pressure has dropped immediately back to normal, as if my body is relieved to get the little parasite out of my system. That voice keeps repeating: "My, he's small!" "So what if he is?" Kevin beams, "we're not throwing him back. He was too much trouble to land!" One doctor laughs. The rest stare as if they have never before come across parents with a sense of humour. I am feeling enormously happy. Can they not see the glow that emanates from us?

Suddenly a rag soaked in blood is slapped up on the gown between my knees. I am not particularly squeamish, but this seems rather insensitive, even to me. I tell them that one day I am going to shoot a film and do a point of view shot up between my knees with their five faces all peering down at me. They take this as a cue to begin moving off to other things. The phone rings.

I hear a frantic voice coming through in tinny hysteria. "Doctor, we need you here to deliver a baby!" Eva responds, "Well, I'm just going to do a few stitches and then I will come." "Doctor, come now or I will have to catch this baby myself!" I wonder briefly how the mother-to-be feels about this conversation at her end. Eva agrees to go. She comes over to the student whom, of all the goons, I trust the least and says, "Do you know how to do stitches?" "No, not really." "Well, start with the easy ones and I will be back to sew up the ones near the rectum." I cannot believe they are saying this in front of me. How did I get from the goon show into a Marx Brothers movie? What if she sews me shut?



Teddy at 3 months

11:30 am: I am still being stitched. We are now holding our baby and crooning to him. He is staring up at me and at Kevin with wide blue eyes, completely alert and yet calmly quiet. We had to fight to hold him. They wanted Eva to check him out first. We insisted that it might be an hour before Eva returned. You get what you want if you insist.

In walks the doctor who broke my waters. He is delighted that everything happened so quickly. Since this is the one thing that bothers me above all else, I am very short with him. He does not appear to notice and continues to bluster about how I am "born to makes babies." Kevin tells him ruefully that I have no plans to get pregnant again. He is incredulous and raves about what an easy birth I had. I am shocked that he equates speed with ease and seems to be cancelling out, not only the pain I felt, but also the work I did. "I'll see you in about a year and a half," he laughs. "Even if I did get pregnant again," I tell him, "you would not see me here." He leaves in a huff and I am thoroughly pleased with myself.

12 noon: The stitching is finally over. My son has been taken to the nursery. Kevin has gone to remove his surgical greens and meet me in my room. I am beginning to vibrate with volcanic aftershocks. I am being washed end to end. I feel more completely passive than I can ever remember feeling in my life. My body barely responds as Pat picks it up, piece by piece, swabbing down an arm, then a leg. Finally she covers me with a warm flannel blanket. The shaking gradually subsides.

Am I overwhelmed with the wonder of it all? No, but I am mildly impressed that I am still alive. I am lying here with my hands crossed over my large, flabby belly. I am terribly lonely. I want to feel his lightning quick moves under my fingers. Failing this, I want him in my arms. I am aware of two equally strong desires. I want my baby back. And I want lunch.

Memo from the Diapering Table

I have shoved aside the jars of vaseline and Penaten cream, the baby wipes and the diapering pad, so that I might sit down, once again, at the surface which B.C. (Before Child) was once my desk. My son Teddy is now nine months old and napping, which makes this a doubly appropriate time to look back and review what we have been through together, nine months in and nine months out.

I may not have been much of a pregnant person, nor was my performance at the birth much to brag about but, for the record, I am a Great Mom. Oh sure, I've had my terrified moments, my brain dead days, my suicidal hours and my desertion fantasies. Nine months into the job, however, I barely get beyond weepy before something amazingly cute or clever bails me out. Besides, after you've put nine months into any new job, you've pretty well got the hang of it. Provided, of course, that you realize you're not the boss and you never will be.

I will admit that from the first I was extraordinarily lucky.

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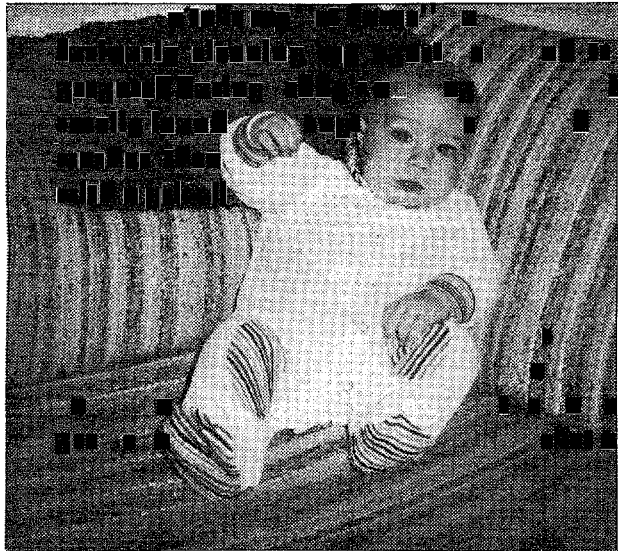
• **Pregnant Feminist**, from previous page

Teddy and I had a long honeymoon. For two and a half months I was entranced. Fresh from a three week stint with my newborn nephew, the mysteries of diaper changing, peculiar looking poop, slippery bathing and fussy gassiness were nothing new to me—and I was fully prepared for the sheer exhaustion which comes with the territory. I knew I had no reason to fear for my sanity just because I inevitably woke with the words: "It's okay baby. Don't cry. Mommy's here," rolling off my tongue.

Then, too, while my dozens of stitches were healing, my husband did all the housework and either prepared or ordered in all the meals. Together we were high on our newest accomplishment and trekked all over the city with Snuglie and diaper bag in tow to show him off to anyone we thought might be interested. When we ran out of friends, co-workers and ex-co-workers, we began making out of town trips to show him off to relatives. I was just congratulating myself on having skipped the post partum blues when it happened. Crash. For the right price I would have sold my blue-eyed beauty into slavery.

In retrospect, I believe it was Great Expectations which sank my ship. I began to want to get my life "back on track." I tried to write during his naps, a time I still needed for sleep even though I refused to admit this to myself. Of course, my literary efforts failed miserably. After all, a woman who has survived two and a half months on—at best—two three-hour catnaps a night has trouble putting a sentence together, let alone committing anything to paper. Desperate to feel successful in any arena, I began to take my "at home" duties more seriously. Now I was furiously cleaning my apartment and trying to get dinner prepared during Teddy's one nap per day. Add to this each day's smelly laundry, a lengthy process which requires loading the washer, then the dryer, and then folding and putting away, all with a grizzling baby slung on one hip, and you can see why I began to feel like a miserable domestic drudge.

In an attempt to look like Supermom, as well as play the part, I began to take Teddy along to a post-partum fitness class, complete with babysitters, three mornings a week. Unfortunately, since this time slot was my baby's favoured nap time and he could not possibly sleep through the noise made by six to ten pre-schoolers, he began to set up a racket of his own. I discov-

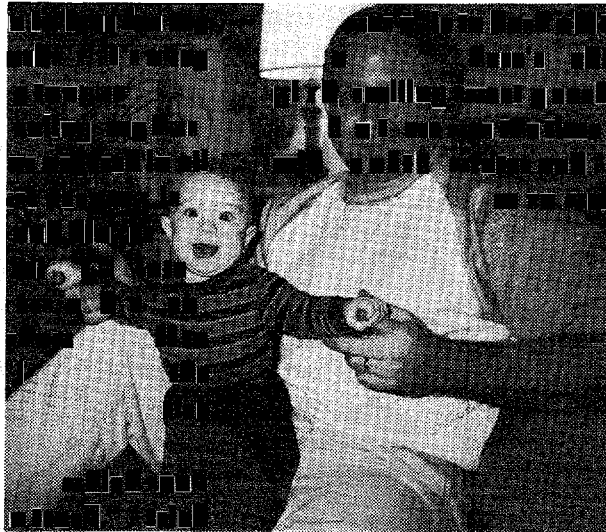


Teddy at 5 months

ered that he could, indeed, scream for a whole hour and I was soon reduced to a quivering mass of guilt.

I dealt with this depressing time as best I could. My ghoulish sense of humour once again came to the fore. One Wednesday morning, my husband unexpectedly stayed home from work and I was able to dash off to fitness class, unencumbered by The Screamer. "Where's Teddy?" everyone asked. "Dead." I replied, smiling sweetly each time. No one even seemed surprised.

Then there was the time Teddy was cutting his first tooth in the middle of the winter and I had to get outside to save my sanity. I would bundle him so well in his snowsuit and scarf that you



Kevin and Teddy, 6 months

often could not see him at all. Inevitably an old friend or acquaintance would stop on the street and say: "This must be the baby I've heard so much about?" "No," I would reply, "This is a snowsuit stuffed with newspapers to fool the neighbours. Actually I strangled my son at four this morning when he woke me up for the sixth time." I was too far gone to realize that few found this as amusing as I.

Even if I had admitted to myself that I would never be a good cook, and that terrific housekeepers are not made of the stuff that lives happily with spiders, dustballs and clothes stiff with spit up milk, I doubt that I could have relaxed without the help of the fates. The building that housed my fitness program burned to the ground. One frantic, emotionally exhausted afternoon, I quit all my collectives and organizations. My idealistic family doctor went on maternity leave and was replaced by a delightful woman with two young children of her own. When I approached her in despair with the tale of my five month old baby who still refused to settle down for his paltry five hour night until eleven or even midnight, she smiled and said: "Ah yes, my first one was like that. Oddly enough my second child didn't get away with it at all." Well, I was always one to rise to a challenge. Within a week my son was eager to go down at seven o'clock after his Pablum supper, warm bath and last breastfeed of the day.

Finally, at eight months of age Teddy quit breastfeeding. I mean quit cold turkey. Now I could tell you about how painful that is, or about how three weeks later I was still perfectly capable of starting up again, full time. But in truth, the bursting pain was nicely counterbalanced by my new freedom. How

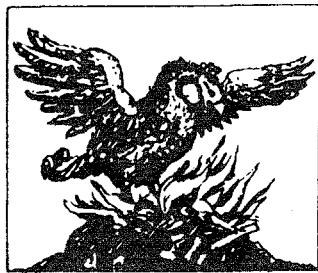
breastfeeding ever got to be the feminist thing to do, I will never comprehend. How can you expect a man to get up three times in the night to help when he cannot feed the baby? Oh sure, you say, you can always express a feeding. It takes about two weeks of consistently emptying your breasts after each feeding to fill a four ounce bottle. In all my travels, I met only one woman who had no difficulty expressing. Not only was she utilizing a \$350 machine, but the stimulation she was giving her breasts made her milk leak through her clothes night and day. Thanks but no thanks. Even if I did manage to express a feeding or, let's be honest, left a bottle of formula for the babysitter, I was always full to bursting the whole time I was away. Try sitting through a long meeting or a movie with milk soaking through your clothes. Then too, I had an amazing number of friends who would say, "Take the baby along." Well, there are few places in this world that welcome a baby who screams on and off while he eats.

You see, I had some romantic notions about breastfeeding my baby discreetly while sipping tea in an elegant, sunlit café. I'd gaze into his eyes and there would be a communion of spirits, a confirmation of love and warmth. Teddy knew only greed. He would latch on, suck hard, then pop off to scream and spit up for awhile—having always eaten too much, too quickly. Weighing in at a mere five pounds, seven ounces by the time we escaped from the hospital, he had doubled his birthweight by three months and tripled it by six. He didn't even look up at me until he was five months old and by then it didn't seem to matter anymore. I had come to realize that breastfeeding was only a method of feeding him, after all, and my last romantic notion bit the dust. Anxious to find remedies for my painfully swollen breasts when he finally did quit, I found only advice on how to keep up the supply until he decided to resume. You can take that advice and stick it where the milk never flows.

So here I am at nine months with a baby who speed crawls and laughs himself into hiccups, pulls himself slowly up to standing and lets himself rapidly down. A boy with six teeth and two more on the way who daily challenges my imagination by refusing to eat any food that he cannot pick up in his fingers and "chew." He needs to be harnessed into his pram and is just weeks away from climbing right out of his crib. Teddy thinks that he can walk unassisted because he has spent so many months speeding around in his walker, playing bumper cars with the furniture. He naps when we used to exercise and I use the time to drink coffee, read or nap myself. I am almost a human being again, with my evenings free for writing, reading or exercise. If only I could get him to sleep past five thirty in the morning, I would have it made!

So, why am I a Great Mom? It's all in the timing. I know when to rough-house with him and when to cuddle him, when he needs to sleep and when he needs to eat. I know when he wants to race around and when he wants to sit quietly with me and eat a book. I know what to pack for trips short and long and how to make a new toy from an interesting piece of garbage. I try to treat him as though he is my second child, as calmly and firmly as possible. When all else fails, I spoil him. It works at nine months. I can't speak for ten.

Donna Gollan is an ex-collective member, an ex-film critic and an ex video artist. Currently she bills herself solely as Teddy's mom. Once this article goes to print she hopes to resume working on the Breast Video during nap time. She is looking forward to seeing you all at the premiere, whatever year that turns out to be.



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ARTS

Futuristic Fun House

by Ingrid MacDonald

The haunted vision of artist Rita McKeough took root last month in a tremendous carpentry undertaking that transformed the floor space of an art gallery into a "domestic environment" of no less than twelve rooms.

As if *An Exchange Within*, an installation at A Space Gallery in Toronto, were the set for a bizarre modern opera, this house (for lack of a better word) is the arrangement of furniture, symbols, objects, and sound within a much distorted architecture.

The primary element is the inescapable soundtrack. Screams and laughter repeated in a tape loop establish an ambiance of strange discomfort. It is as though viewers are suddenly propelled into a futuristic novel where we overhear the trauma of invisible women beyond the walls. The tape holds the clues to some of the content and uses texts by McKeough, Toronto poet Anna de Silva, and French theorist Luce Irigaray. Texts I have read of Irigaray never struck me as so forlorn before: "As I touch your body, she moves in your memory," gains a new dimension when placed within the culminative babble of *An Exchange Within*.

The tapes create a bellow of great sadness as only dislocated sounds do. Sound, like soundtracks in movies, set the pace of the viewer's emotional response: the next time you weep at the movies, give a listen to the music playing—it is telling you how to feel. Sound is a basin into which we pour our emotions, and consequently, sound is a realm of widespread conventionality. Unlike eyes which crave stimulation and seek out visual images of the widest variety, sounds that are strange produce anxiety. Like hearing things go bump in the night, sound has the potential for evoking profound fear and danger. We want sound to be a predictable thing, to know and/or control its source, its volume and its meaning.

McKeough's soundtrack is so disturbing that it becomes philosophical. All that eerie repetitive laughter, ticking, dripping, pulsing, talking and screaming creates a din from a distance. Close listening allows one to dig out the content, obscure as it is: "Is your heart too cold from fear?/Are you cold from your anger?/Are you cold from your heart's death?" is a



An Exchange Within

clue to the meaning of a room decorated with a wall of painted eyes.

The howling of the soundtrack inhabits the home environment, working against the parts of the house typical of most houses, like some of the furniture, while complementing the parts that come from McKeough's imagination, like the thresholds and the walls. Each door, cut to strange shapes, is a threshold bearing different meanings. One must pass through a volcano, a dark figure, a flame, an ear, a colon, a target, and my favourite—a fun fur leopard skin hand—to enter the rooms.

The symbology is complex and idiosyncratic: meanings remain ambiguous, though I think it is more interesting this way, like figuring a puzzle. McKeough has divined a gallery of personal icons from a unique imaginative perspective. The show has its comic moments though, like the time bomb room that ticks and the corridor of green blades that gash through the walls and come quite close to one's body. There

are pleasurable moments, like the hearth in the centre of the house that must be crossed to enter all the rooms. Out of the hearth comes the sound of flames thundering or a heart beating.

The thing McKeough's installation most resembles is a Fun House, the kind found in amusement parks where a mechanized cart jitters titillated riders past ghosts and ghouls. The thrills and chills that McKeough's house offers are the psychoanalytic kind, so there aren't any skeletons jumping out of closet doors.

Incidentally I found myself taking home a message other than the one the artist intended. *An Exchange Within* is described in a deliberately feminist manner: "... the house will assume a part of the traditional role of women in the home, that of nurturer. Assigning this role to the house frees the woman from this role, thus allowing her the opportunity to be nurtured by the home." I gather that McKeough and I have differing understandings on the idea of nurturing: mine banal and cozy, hers

nightmarish, deeply politicized. The "opportunity to be nurtured" that women have here is a dizzying experience of a love on the brink of martyrdom, or of a house inhabited by fear. This haunting contradiction might be a definition of nurturing: "Protect me from this rain/ But let me be your coat?"

The message I took home from McKeough's house was, instead, about desire and repression. I felt the house was a battle zone between profound raw impulse and the denial of that impulse for the sake of civilization. Ticking, volcanoes, the tree on the dinner table, the clay floor under the fire, were like contents under pressure. The plaid Lay-Z-Boy chairs, the neatly made beds, the voices repeating sentences in all the rooms, the walls and doors were like a house that was losing the battle to keep terrible nature under control. *An Exchange Within* is a house unlike any real house because it does not do what houses must: protect us from the strange and terrible realm of the unknown. ●

Domestic Creativity

An interview with Rita McKeough

by Shawna Dempsey

1. One doesn't stir without the other.
 2. In one another we will never be lacking.
- 1 & 2. Burst in a thousand places
(excerpt from an audio track)

Shawna Dempsey: In *An Exchange Within* you created a new kind of family dwelling.

Rita McKeough: Yes. I wanted to look at what I found problematic in domestic architecture. I wanted to build a domestic environment that attempted to see what it is to change that traditional configuration of space, and also to give people a different kind of privacy.

SD: But your home was not only structurally unique. You filled it with sound: laughter, mumbings, music, women's voices. . . .

RM: I tried to look at what the mother's role becomes in the traditional family. I began to focus on her: the incredible complexity and responsibility of her traditional job as nurturer. In the development of the family as an isolated unit, the woman really does the job of manager of psychological relations, in the family and for each member of the family in their dealings with the outside world. I've taken that aspect of the mother and given it to the house so that the house now has a voice. If you think of what the mother in a home often will do throughout a day or throughout a week, and the issues she might have to deal with, and the situations she might have to handle—well using sound, I had them all happen at once.

SD: And the use of physical space in the house? Does it also reflect that aspect of mother's role?

RM: The rooms are in a circular configuration—in a very literal way taking the women's role as centre of the home. This also represents the cyclical nature of learned domesticity, where the mother passes information to the daughter. To me it's an important thing that the house says to the mother: "Break the circle." That's why in the little girl's room, she's broken the circle. She has a wall that's off-centre in her room. She's not necessarily going to continue the cycle.

But the rooms are reflective of the family members (the mother, father, daughter and son) who live there. Each of them can cover their room walls and decorate and define their space in a way that is most appropriate to them, which signifies certain aspects of the things that they are going through—their self-development. I really believe that ability to affect and express is a very important legitimization of self image.

SD: As well as each having two private rooms, these family members also have some common spaces that are usual (a bathroom, the kitchen) and a central area that was quite unusual.

RM: The central hearth area is a public courtroom, and everybody, in order to get anywhere, has to come into it; so it's a public space that's used for action, activity. Because it is an area where everyone is constantly interacting and coming through, it acts as a reminder of the necessity to relate to what's happening in the outside world. The isolation of each family can become problematic in terms of greater

community action, and awareness of the larger environment. So, as the courtyard traditionally is a place of meetings and political rallies, my house's centre is a reminder of political action. As well, in the centre of the hearth is a soundtape: the sound of a house falling in an earthquake. This again is the breaking up of traditional domestic architecture. And the rumbling is another reminder of the outside world, of the political issues and concerns that are rumbling outside.

SD: The earthquake and the laughter were probably the two most striking sounds for me. They were quite unsettling.

RM: Well, there was strength in the laughter, like the revolutionary power of the laughter. When you're laughing you can be criticizing, you can be saying, "It can be changed." So the strength of the laughter is breaking the house apart, breaking apart traditional domestic architecture. And it's also a reminder of explosive possibilities that is the potential of the residents of the house for change.

SD: Maybe it was that breaking apart that made the piece somewhat frightening for me. I was both drawn through it and disquieted enough to want to retreat to the safety of A Space's lobby.

RM: I think there's a certain anxiety created from the unknown. You're going from room to room, in a space that's different than you're used to and you don't know what to expect so it's frightening. What was very important to me was that the house was speaking specifically to its residents, as represented by objects in their rooms. So the viewer that entered the

piece was not someone who lived there but a newcomer or a stranger to the house. Part of the anxiety came from being in a place that wasn't yours. I also think that the level of sound was quite alarming, although each individual voice was what I would call nurturing: inspiring, supportive and critical in a constructive way. I found that when people had gone through the piece and returned to the central hearth area, they found it less alarming because they understood the sounds. It was no longer an unknown.

SD: Has working on this space affected the way you view your own living space?

RM: There's an appropriate parallel between my living situation as an artist in a warehouse space and the piece. Warehouse space demands you change it to your needs so it becomes very specific to the individual, which is exactly what I wanted my house to become: to be very specific to the needs of the family that's building it.

SD: And your concern with domestic environment, what will it lead you to next?

RM: I want to look again at another traditional role of women in the home, that is the victim of domestic violence. So I want the house to assume that role. I'm going to create the house out of material that simulates human flesh, having evidence of physical abuse, and evidence also of the residents trying to heal or stitch or hide that damage. The house will also speak as a victim, but a victim that becomes empowered. It will be at Eye Level Gallery in Halifax.

Shawna Dempsey is a Toronto performance artist.

The Castle: Crusading Spirit



Tanja Jacobs (left) and Tedde Moore in *The Castle*

by Margaret Gail Osachoff

After I saw *The Castle: A Triumph*, a co-production of Toronto Free Theatre and Necessary Angel, in mid-April and was asked for my response, I offhandedly said, "It's better than Shakespeare." Now a month later the reasons for my remark are clearer to me. Iconoclasm is not necessarily a virtue, but neither should one be apologetic for preferring a modern play to one by Shakespeare. I had just seen the Actors Equity showcase production of *Troilus and Cressida* and, while approving of its general anti-war stance, I thought that it was a pity that Shakespeare went along with the old story of the fickleness of a woman in time of war. So much more could be done with that idea, and Howard Barker has done it.

Perhaps Odon von Horvath's *Don Juan comes back from the War*, which was presented earlier this year by Masterclass Theatre, is the play that more appropriately springs to mind as a comparison to *The Castle* because in each the war in question is over and the hero comes home to find everything totally changed. Stucley, the knight or lord of the castle, however, is no Don Juan. He has remained sexually faithful to his wife during his seven years in the Crusades, but when he returns with his one remaining servant, he finds that Ann has several more children than when he left. Unlike those men who locked their wives into chastity belts before they left for the Crusades, Stucley idealistically thought that Ann's love for him and his love for her would be chastity belt enough.

The Castle, however, is ostensibly a play about politics rather than love. The epigraph that Barker provides for the play is, "What is Politics but the absence of Desire?" But the question mark puts the surface meaning in doubt, of course. What (or whom) one desires (or already has) makes evident one's politics whether that desire is for 85 pairs of shoes in one's closet or a chicken for every pot. And desire is not immutable. Stucley finds Ann a "Changed Woman." That change would be labelled "fickleness" by some, but the play encourages feminists to see the change as progress. From being the Lord's bedmate and the bearer of his children, Ann has changed into a stronger woman with a mind of her own. Not that she denies her love for her husband, but in his absence she has found a better way to live.

That better way has meant tearing down Stucley's castle and living outdoors closer to nature. It has meant throwing out the old patriarchal, hierarchical religion and developing one that is more in tune with women's needs. It has also meant living in a lesbian relationship with Skinner, the Witch, even while having children (with the help of a man who is too old and crippled to go to war) so that their community will have a next generation. While Skinner's lesbianism is the core of her self, Ann is more an "intellectual" lesbian and feels the pull of her former life and love for Stucley once he returns and rebuilds his castle.

And that castle is rebuilt as if by magic, right before the eyes of the audience (we even hear the sounds of construction) and serves as the key image in the play. Although constructed out of burlap (and very effectively designed by Graeme Thomson), there is nothing flimsy about the castle. It is obsessively desired by Stucley, and that desire propels Krak, the Engineer; Holiday, the Builder; and the other men who work on the project. Anything desired so intensely by the men must come into being no matter how much the powerless women rail against it. Male technology brings back the old order quickly. In a gesture that proves to be futile, Skinner kills the Builder, but clearly she would also have to kill the Engineer, the Lord, and many more men (in fact, she would have to kill their desire) in order to stop the slide into the patriarchal past.

Although the playwright makes clear what side we are to support in this struggle, he does not make the men into unmitigated villains. Stucley, as played by Stuart Hughes, is not evil; nor is his desire for his world to remain unchanged pathological. He is wrong, but he is not totally unsympathetic as he rages in frustration. We can understand Holiday's pride in a job well done even if we wish that the job were something that we could favour, and we don't cheer when he is killed. His brown face serious and inscrutable, David Gardner's Krak undermines with irony the engineering project that he is made to head. A Turk captured by Stucley, he follows orders and designs ever higher and thicker walls and more of them in an attempt to assuage the Lord's insecurity and his fear of his enemy.

Even though he knows that he lives on the sufferance of his Lord and Master, Krak also

knows his value as architect and engineer. As an outsider he sees and dares to speak the truth: the erection of a castle creates a fitting enemy who builds a larger, stronger fortress a few miles away, with even vaster fortifications than those constructed for Stucley. Krak tells the Lord that he can never catch up with, never mind overtake, such an enemy, thus ensuring his own survival and the prolongation of his job into the future as Stucley attempts the impossible: perfect physical and psychological safety. And when at the end of the play we hear the sound of a jet plane, we know that Barker wants us to think of bombers, missiles, nuclear deterrents, Star Wars technology. The real "triumph" of the castle is not what it at first appears to be; it is equivalent to failure and disintegration, and Stucley's enemy is really himself.

The other (related) truth that Krak speaks is that, "A castle is not a house," and both nouns should be understood in their widest sense because clearly *The Castle* is a modern morality play. Stucley and the other men desire "castle" while the women desire "house" or even "home." The playwright tells us that, "The action of the play takes place during an imagined historical time period." The female values that house or home imply are shown to be in conflict with the male values of castle, whether the historical period is the 13th century or the 20th.

Barker could be accused of being simplistic and unsubtle in setting up such a dichotomy or of being overly pessimistic in presenting yet another work that shows men victimizing women, yet another hopeless situation. If that is all he is saying, maybe the play is redundant; although if even these ideas get out to a new audience, the effort involved in the writing and in this excellent production is far from pointless.

For me, however, there are two images that counteract the image of the castle. The first is one of the indomitable Skinner, who is magnificently acted by Tanja Jacobs, living with the rotting corpse of the man whom she killed locked around her neck and waist. Having the body of the Builder as her own albatross is no holiday for Skinner. It stands for the guilt, the sense of sin, the punishment that is doled out when women transgress against men. Even if she had not killed a man, Skinner's mere existence as a lesbian is transgression enough. The ultimate horror for her is that she discovers that she can get used to anything. Physically tortured and punished in this grotesque way as she is, she longs for death, but actually the greater sorrow is her feeling of abandonment by the ever-pregnant Ann, the woman whom she loves. Her body's vitality and will to live, however, are stronger than her wish to escape her suffering, and amazingly she continues to live, her mind sharp and her spirit unbroken.

The second subversive image is of the pregnant woman jumping to their deaths from the impregnable castle walls. It speaks of the power that powerless people have to say NO. It reminds me of the people who, soaked in gasoline, set themselves on fire to protest the horrors of the Vietnam War. When the values of house and home, the truly human (rather than strictly female) values, are sacrificed in order to build endless walls and invent ever more deadly and expensive weapons, what action could be more potent than this gesture that no one could possibly misunderstand, this threat that no more babies are to be born into such a life-denying world? Such a gesture goes one step beyond the sex-boycott advocated in Aristophanes' anti-war play, *Lysistrata*. As the misnamed Cant says as she gathers up the bodies, why should women undergo the processes of giving birth and then providing nurturance to babies who grow up to be young men whose fate is to kill and be killed in war.

The Castle, however, does not end with this image of women's heroic sacrifice. It ends with something even more surprising and memorable: the responses of the two main male characters. Krak, who provided the truth that starts to crack the wall of the castle becomes "cracked" himself; he gives up drafting plans for more walls and stronger castles and takes to doodling women's private parts. Lord Stucley orders that the height of his walls be lowered so that the women will not hurt themselves when they jump. Of course, this means that any enemy could invade without even raising a sweat. This realization so "unmans" the previously angry and aggressive Stucley that he becomes "unstuck" and has to be carried away to expire offstage leaving the doodler centre stage and leaving the audience to wonder where, then, is the triumph of man-made castles.

Margaret Gail Osachoff teaches Canadian literature and drama in Saskatoon.

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Deflected Dynamics

by Helen Lenskyj

Contemporary commentators have described Gertrude Stein as a second-generation New Woman and an early lesbian-feminist—both alien concepts, it seems to the makers of *Waiting for the Moon*. But the film's captivating exploration of the relationship between Gertrude Stein and Alice B. Toklas more than compensates for its avoidance of feminist politics and other thorny issues.

The film does not have an identifiable story line. Rather, it is composed of a series of random, chronologically mixed episodes, with Toklas and Stein appearing together in almost every scene. Other characters wander in and out; some are identified, some are not. But it is often through the other characters that Stein and Toklas break down some of the emotional walls between them, particularly the ones of Stein's construction. In many instances, the messages intended for each other are projected onto a third character and only reach their target through this circuitous route. Today, their friends would be telling them to find a good feminist therapist, or else they would have gone their separate ways to "find themselves." As it was, they stayed together for over thirty years, leaving a personal and literary legacy for generations of women.

While the dynamics between Stein and Toklas are central to the film, Stein's inimitable literary style shapes it in subtle ways. The cuts between episodes are deliberately abrupt, but, within episodes, many scenes are played out languidly, repetitively, whimsically—a visual enactment of Stein's poetic and prose styles. And Stein's written word comes to life as Toklas transcribes, reads, rereads and revises it in a process that is clearly depicted as collaborative. (Toklas' support, of course, extends beyond editing: we also see her cooking, cleaning and running the household.)

The collaborative work relationship between Stein and Toklas is a central theme of film. For audiences familiar with Stein's lesbian love poems (albeit in code), this might come as a disappointment. Although the emotional di-

mensions of the relationship are explored in considerable detail, the film almost leads us to believe that theirs was a 19th century-type romantic friendship, a merging of minds alone, or an unconsummated "Boston marriage" like the one so disastrously depicted, and distorted, in the film version of *The Bostonians*.

Part of the problem lies in the minimal attention that the film pays to details of historical context, so we tend to forget that this was neither a chaste Victorian friendship nor a sexually charged contemporary relationship. Admittedly, this is a fictitious reconstruction of their lives, depending heavily on poetic licence. Some historical clues are provided—the Spanish Civil War, a young Ernest Hemingway, a Model T Ford—but we need to be reminded that Stein and Toklas first met eighty years ago, in 1907, and that any intimate relationship between women reflects the social and cultural conditions of the day. We see almost nothing of the Parisian artistic circles in which they moved, their famous salons, the stream of prominent male artists and their wives whom they entertained. The relationship did not flower in a social and cultural vacuum, as the film seems to imply.

For those who remember Linda Hunt playing a male photographer of Indonesian origin in *The Year of Living Dangerously*, her casting as Alice B. Toklas appears at first glance a little strange. Hunt's diminutive size and general appearance do not exactly fit the image of Toklas as a tall, so-called masculine woman.

Without some historical and visual clues, we are apt to forget that these women lived and loved before California, before creative conflict resolution and peer support groups. Linda Hunt as Toklas has an aura of androgyny and timelessness, while Linda Bassett as Stein bears an undeniable resemblance to a 1980s dyke. In terms of fashion, neither wears styles that are clearly identifiable as Twenties or Thirties, neither do they seem to be making any personal statements through clothing or hairstyles. (In reality, Stein wore her hair long for many years, then cropped it very short, "like a monk.")



Linda Hunt (left) as Alice and Linda Bassett as Gertrude

But such concerns are quickly dispelled when we see Hunt in action. She gives Toklas a multi-dimensional character, alternatively assertive and vulnerable, defiant and yielding, confident and insecure.

Given the temptation to see Toklas only as Stein's shadow—after all, even her autobiography was written by Stein—this perspective on Toklas is refreshing. However, there is no doubt that she is patient, long-suffering and conscientious, "a saint," according to Stein. (For her part, Toklas considers Stein "a genius.") Happily, Toklas also has human failings—anger, frustration, hurt feelings—that are more endearing than a display of unremitting saintliness.

Bassett as Stein is not such a well-rounded character. She is almost uniformly self-contained and self-controlled, carefully measuring public displays of emotion like so many

teaspoons of sugar. In personality, she comes uncomfortably close to the "mannish lesbian" stereotype of the early 1900s, and it is only the more complete characterization of Toklas that rescues the film's image of the couple from becoming a homophobe's cliché.

Given Stein's strong, silent tendencies the chinks in her armour are all the more captivating: the playful show of chivalry as she leaves Toklas to the serious business of transcribing while she recovers from a late night; the tranquil concluding scene in the garden waiting for the moon, when she comes closest to expressing how much she values Alice's companionship. As she begins to ask Alice to wait with her—to stay with her—Alice's quick response is both startling and reassuring. For Alice says "yes" before Gertrude has asked the question. Companions, yes; soulmates, too.

Double-Edged Technologies

Women and Reproduction, special issue of *Canadian Journal of Women and the Law*, (1986) Volume 1, Number 2, 305 pages.

Reviewed by T. Brett Dawson

The second issue of the *Canadian Journal of Women and the Law* develops the theme of "Women and Reproduction," and contains discussion and analysis of the legal, medical and ethical issues raised by reproductive practice and technology. Women's reproductive rights include access to and choice with respect to abortion and a woman's right to determine her own reproduction. Reproductive technology both assists women and presents a threat to our sexual and reproductive autonomy and equality. Thus, women need to develop knowledge, analyses and strategies in relation to reproductive practice and technology.

Somer Brodribb's article, "Off the Pedestal and Onto the Block? Motherhood, Reproductive Technology, and the Canadian State" is an excellent analysis of the process by which female sexuality is constructed to reinforce patriarchal ideologies. She discusses women controlled self-insemination and notes its potential to revolutionize the social relations of procreation and to "threaten the patriarchal family, the community and men." Government and church reports have reflected this in their concern to reinforce marital status, compulsory heterosexuality and medical control of reproduction. The Ontario Law Reform Commission *Report on Human Artificial Reproduction* (1985) fits this model and is effectively critiqued by Brodribb. In relation to "surrogacy" contracts, she notes that the very phrase reflects patriarchal interests and not female motherhood, and that the contracts appear to be most enthusiastically advanced by male commentators. A compelling argument is built that such arrangements are little more than reproductive prostitution.

She argues that legal proposals, amount to "husbands, the scientific rationalists of the medical profession, state paternalists and the conservative religious sperm freaks (being) engaged in a process of renegotiating the patriarchal alliance and respecifying the rights that

individual men have to paternity." Brodribb offers a feminist approach to reproductive ethics and exemplifies the possibilities suggested in Christine Overall's introductory article which defines and summarizes feminist and non-feminist approaches in the area.

To place some of the crystal-edged analysis of Brodribb into a detailed historical construct, Christine Ball's article, "Female Sexual Ideologies in Mid to Late Nineteenth Century Canada" is ideal. Her research into medical journal articles and popular medical sources, such as almanacs and medical home advisors, uncovered a defining male perspective of female sexuality. This was reflected in statements by physicians that "the majority of women (happily for them) are not very much troubled with sexual feelings of any kind." Ball makes the point that female sexuality was never viewed as existing separately from male sexuality, and was part of "joyous heterosexuality." Contemporary literature maintained that such joy was to be limited as "masturbation, cunnilingus and 'intense venereal orgasms' exhausted wives." Menstruation, on the other hand, while not considered to be exhausting, needed such "substantial energies that overwork, higher education, excitable reading, etc" were not possible for women. Housework, however, was considered vital for the maintenance of a woman's health and happiness. The article is engaging, informative and effectively develops its theoretical position of the social construction of female sexuality.

While useful sources of information, the remaining three articles in the first section of the *Journal* are not nearly so effective. My dissatisfaction stems from a sense that the authors have not grappled with the context or meaning of their work nor analysed it in a thorough, critical and theoretically developed manner. A survey by Joan Bercovitch of the regulation of reproductive technology and related legal provisions in Quebec devotes attention to potential legal liability of 'negligent' physicians, but neglects to comment on the controlling role of the medical profession or on the contingency of the legal rules themselves, and her discussion of the policy issues referred to in her article is limited. Two other articles also fail to meet their potential. Each proceeds on the basis that patriarchal ideologies of sexuality

shape what is considered to be appropriate access to reproduction and parenting. Both do so through analysis of state response to lesbian reproduction and parenting. While this perspective can be powerful, each author founders on structure, style and incomplete arguments. The first, by Mary Ann Coffey, suffers from too little law and the second, by Wendy Gross, from too much.

Shelley Gavigan's article in the second section, "On 'Bringing on the Menses': The Criminal Liability of Women and the Therapeutic Exception in Canadian Abortion Law," is one of the very best in the *Journal* and it is a pleasure to read. She clearly outlines the history of women's resistance to external control over our fertility and develops a clear analysis of women as active agents even within patriarchy: The law may be definitive of our sexuality and fertility but it is not determinative of it. The article is a lucid and rich discussion of the attitudes of women, medicine and law to abortion. The idea of fertility as sociologically determined is further developed by Jane Lewis in a succinct and informative book review in which she concludes: "The analysis of the way in which modern scientific ideas are used in the service of particular interest groups and imposed on the population at large, not infrequently through the law, is a valuable one."

The basic techniques of prenatal diagnosis of fetal development are outlined by Abby Lippman in her article, "Access to Prenatal Screening Services: Who Decides?" She discusses the purposes of these techniques as a combination of a "public health model" with the goal of reducing the frequency of selected birth defects and a "reproductive autonomy and choice" model. She notes that access can be arbitrarily limited or imposed, that the procedures raise risks for the fetus and can be used to limit as well as increase reproductive choices.

Some of the implications of the use of technology to create specific reproductive choice is challenged by Janice Tait who explores issues of feminism and disability. She argues that the selective elimination of "defective" fetuses reflects a hierarchy of ability and a devaluing of differently-abled women. Issues which she considers need to be addressed by feminists include whether defective fetuses should be eliminated and whether physically and mental-

ly handicapped children should be prevented from exercising reproductive rights. In this context some references to the work of Martha Minow in the US would have been very helpful but is not made. The ethical interface with abortion issues is clearly unavoidable and difficult. While her article is provocative and deserves to be debated, I am concerned that Tait could be according personhood to the fetus and may somehow be advocating a right to be born disabled or to become disabled. In addition, Tait does not develop a framework within which we can constructively discuss the issues raised.

A final section of the *Journal* specifically addresses the current abortion debate in Canada. Sheila Martin, in a competent and useful article, outlines the arguments of both the anti-abortion lobby and feminist pro-choice groups in relation to the constitutionality of the abortion legislation. Apart from a hesitation I have for arguing the 'other side's case' even in the name of academic objectivity, it is a thorough overview of access, process, privacy and personhood arguments. The *Journal* also contains a separate case comment by Martin on the *Morgentaler* decision of the Ontario Court of Appeal. In it she laments the reluctance of the judges to balance the rights of the woman and her fetus. In so doing she assumes that such balancing would require recognition of a paramount right of women to terminate their pregnancies. However, I think the assumption is a little too easily made in a patriarchal state. The approach also seems to overlook the possibility that the entire rights discourse used by judges in the abortion context may not conform to women's experience. Something of this carries over into Sanda Rodgers' consideration of whether fetal and maternal rights conflict. However, the patriarchal context is well-discussed by her and the article has real value in its exploration of a trend toward recognition of legal rights in the unborn fetus. This trend has been exacerbated by technological advances. Ultimately she argues that maternal entitlement and choices should remain paramount in the abortion context. Her work is current, thoughtful and well-referenced.

Brett Dawson is a professor of law in Ottawa.

• **Bill C-54**, from page 6

nauseam, to replace formerly legal products such as Zeffirelli's *Romeo and Juliet*. How teenagers of colour may feel about this "protection," which extends only to sexual but not to racist violence, is obviously not something that "public opinion" is supposed to worry about.

The restrictions on erotica will also hamper the work of sex educators. Experience has shown that anatomical "educational" diagrams do not work because they seem alien and removed from sexual experience; *positive* depictions are an integral part of sex education. I find it hard to believe that depriving 16-year old girls from seeing the pictures in Sheila Kitzinger's *Women's Experience of Sex* will do anything to lower rates of VD and unwanted pregnancies.

Lawyer Peter Maloney has pointed out that it is completely inconsistent for the government to allow sexual activity at 16 and sanction it by marrying young people, while depriving them access to any and all representations of the acts they are engaging in. That very harsh penalties are attached not only to "kiddie porn" but to novels or movies for teenagers indicates that the spectre of "kiddie porn" is a red herring. Very little kiddie porn can be found in Canada, as the Badgley and Fraser Committees both admitted. As writer Pierre Berton stated in a press conference, the main concern of the bill is *teenager* sexuality, which, contrary to all psychological science, is held by our Minister of Justice to suddenly emerge at age 18. It is not impossible that empowerment for girls might be found illegal. After all, some feminist material goes as far as to admit that *some* forms of sexuality might be acceptable or even pleasurable (eg, masturbation).

At the turn of the century Canada witnessed great campaigns by evangelicals and conservative feminists to "protect" women from the evils of white slavery and lewdness in general. It is now admitted that these campaigns often resulted in the harassment of "deviant" women and the continued subjection of all women to the yoke of sexual ignorance and dependence. Today, no government could speak about "protecting" women too loudly, since feminist voices would quickly be raised demanding empowerment, not protection. I believe it is crucial that we do not prescribe for our children what we reject for ourselves as women. Even if young children do indeed need some legal protection against violence and possibly against being exposed to some cultural products, the attempt to shield all children and teenagers from sexual representations of practically any sort will only further the aims of those who want to "save the children" for the nuclear family and for patriarchy. Most of us were raised in homes where sex was a "bad" word, and many of us were victimized precisely through our ignorance and sense of shame. I cannot imagine that we want the same thing for our kids—even if it were possible to turn back the clock.

Other members of the Coalition, and the lawyers in particular, contributed much legal and political advice towards this article, although I am alone responsible for potential mistakes.

Mariana Valverde is the author of Sex, Power and Pleasure and represents the International Women's Day Committee on the Coalition Against Bill C-54.

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er & Solicitor, an office for the practice of law at 1583 Queen Street East beside New Gardens. (416) 694-9360. Monday to Friday, 9 am to 5 pm; Saturday 10 am to 1 pm. evenings by appointment. Initial one-half hour consultation, \$20.

ANDREA SWANSON will speak on "Pornography and Civil Rights" at the University of Manitoba, on October 31, 1984, at 7:30 pm. Call U of M Womyn's Centre for details at (204) 261-9191.

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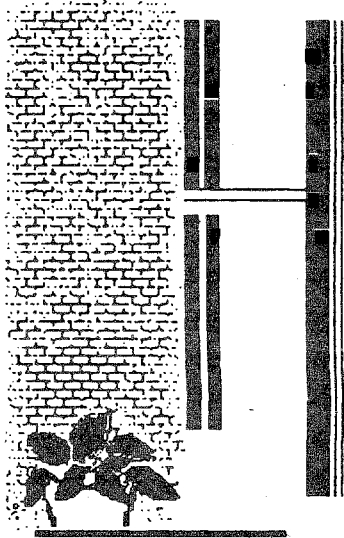
The Government in Ottawa is now threatening to treat Canada's magazines as if they were so many widgets. It's threatening to eliminate the postal, tariff and tax-related incentives and supportive measures...to dismantle the very structure that past governments have worked so hard to build and maintain.

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WEEK OF JUNE 1

• **Tuesday, June 2:** Nightwood Theatre and the Humbert Humbert Project present *The Last Will and Testament of Lolita: A Vile Pink Comedy*. Four bad girls revise and reconstruct the Lolita myth, starring Louise Garfield, Peggy Thompson, Banuta Rubess and Maureen White. Theatre Passe Muraille, 16 Ryerson Ave., 8 pm. Reservations: 363-2416. To **Sunday, June 21.**

• **Tuesday, June 2:** Public Forum on Child Sexual Abuse, "The Impact on the Victim, the Family and the Community." Panel discussion sponsored by Aftermath. Ontario Hydro Building, 2nd floor auditorium, 700 University Ave., 8-10 pm. Info: 535-0537.

• **Saturday, June 6:** Canadian Women's Movement Archives Yard Sale. Spadina and Washington (one block south of Bloor), 9 am-4 pm.

WEEK OF JUNE 8

• **Tuesday, June 9:** Ontario Coalition of Abortion Clinics (OCAC) meets alternate Tuesdays, Trinity-St. Paul's, 427 Bloor W., 7:30 pm. Info: 532-8193.

• **Tuesday, June 9:** Benefit for the March Eighth Women's School, Ethiopia: *Other Voices, The Women Speak*, writings by women of all ages and races on war, performed by women from the English Shakespeare Theatre Company. Theatre Passe Muraille, 16 Ryerson Ave., midnight. Reservations: 363-2416. Also **Tuesdays, June 16, June 23.**

• **Wednesday, June 10:** Sister Vision Press invites you to the Canadian book launching of *A Lion Heart Gal*. Reading by Sistren Theatre Collective with Honor Ford-Smith. Free. 229 College St., 7:30 pm. Info: 532-9868.

• **Thursday, June 11:** "Getting the Women's Movement Moving: A Methodology for Anti-Racist Feminism." Open discussion group sponsored by the University of Toronto Women's Centre. On lawn in front of Hart House, U of T; if raining, 49 St. George, at noon. Info: 978-8201.

• **Friday, June 12:** Colloquium on the Semiotics of Eroticism with presentations on "Beyond Eros: The Ideology of Desire," "Erotic Icons: Still and Moving" and "Sex/Language/Culture/Desire" with Luce Irigaray speaking on "The Sexual Order of Culture." Northrop Frye Hall, Victoria College, U of T. Info: Paul Bouissac, 585-4456. To **Sunday, June 14.**

OUTSIDE BROADSIDE

June 1987

Compiled by Helen Lenskyj

• **Saturday, June 13:** Women in Solidarity with Nicaragua are having a potluck and invite all interested women to attend. 149 Barton (east of Christie) at 5 pm. Info: Ellen, 533-3173.



• **Sunday, June 14:** Toronto Disarmament Network's "Move-athon for Peace." Walk, run, roller-skate, wheelchair or bike through downtown Toronto to raise money for TDN, and the participating group of your choice. City Hall, 11 am. Info: TDN, 535-8005.

WEEK OF JUNE 15

• **Monday, June 15:** Celebrate the 4th anniversary of the opening of the Morgentaler Clinic. Rally to demand the dropping of charges and the legalization of the clinic. Queen's Park. 6 pm. Info: OCAC, 532-8193.

• **Thursday, June 18:** Rebel Girl Reels, a women's film festival organized by the IWD Committee and DEC, features "Bound to Strike Back"—a comprehensive introduction and update on the political situation in South Africa today. Discussion on the role of women with Kitty Molefe, ANC. OISE, 252 Bloor St. West. Room 2-213. 7:30 pm. Donations at door. Info: 789-4541.

• **Friday, June 19:** Summer Solstice Soirées. Evenings of women's culture: performance, music, dance and poetry. Feminist fun and refreshments! OHM Place, 187 Harbord, 9 pm. \$4 in advance at Toronto Women's Bookstore, \$5 at door. Info: 461-6101 or 465-6088. Also **Saturday, June 20** at 9pm and **Sunday, June 21** PWYC at 7 pm.

• **Saturday, June 20:** SCM Bookroom Sale including a large number of feminist and lesbian titles. 333 Bloor St. West. 9-5 pm. Info: 979-9624.

WEEK OF JUNE 22

• **Monday, June 22:** Fruit Cocktail '87 Information Night for all actors, singers, dancers, technical and backstage people. 519 Church St., 7 pm. Info: GCA, 869-3036 or 966-5242.

• **Tuesday, June 23:** "What happens after the Supreme Court Decision?" A discussion of the impact of the Supreme Court ruling on the abortion struggle, sponsored by the Ontario Coalition for Abortion Clinics. Trinity-St. Paul's, 427 Bloor W., 7:30 pm. Info: OCAC, 532-8193.

• **Thursday, June 25:** "Sex roles: what are we teaching our children?" Open discussion sponsored by University of Toronto Women's Centre. On lawn in front of Hart House, U of T; if raining, 49 St. George, at noon. Info: 978-8201.

• **Thursday, June 25:** Rebel Girl Reels, a women's film festival organized by IWD Committee and DEC, features "Global Assembly Line"—a vivid portrayal of women in the "free trade zones" of the third world and how they are organizing against multinationals. Discussion with Carmencita Hernandez of the National Organization of Immigrant and Visible Minority Women. OISE, 252 Bloor St. West. Room 2-213. 7:30 pm. Donation at the door. Info: 789-4541.

• **Friday, June 26:** "Showing Our Face: A Lesbian and Gay Portrait Show." Works by local lesbian and gay artists celebrate and make visible members of the Toronto Gay Community. The show is assisted by the Gay Community Appeal. Sparkes Gallery, 693A Queen St. West. 8 pm. Info: 862-0470.

• **Friday, June 26:** 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: Video showing of Firewords. 7 pm. Info: 536-3162.

• **Sunday, June 28:** Lesbian and Gay Pride Day. Parade, entertainment, information tables, refreshments. 519 Church St., 1 pm.

• **Sunday, June 28:** "Free Trade is No Picnic" picnic at Queen's Park, sponsored by the Coalition Against Free Trade. Info on time and location: 534-3523.

WEEK OF JUNE 29

• **Monday, June 29:** The Coalition Against Free Trade sponsors a National Debate on Free Trade with Bob White, Margaret Atwood, Wayne Easter debating Donald Macdonald, Peter Loughheed and others. Info on time and location: 534-3523.

WEEKLY

Sunday: Lesbians of Colour (LOC), a social and support group for Native, Asian, South Asian, Black and Latin lesbians regardless of age meets every 1st and 3rd Sunday of the month. 519 Church St. Community Centre. 3:45-5:30 pm. Info: Michele, 588-2930. (Out of town lesbians of colour can write for information: LOC, PO-Box 6597, Station A, Toronto, M5W 1K4.)

Monday to Friday: "By All Means," a noon-time Women's radio magazine show. Every day at 12:15 on CIUT-FM, 89.5. Interview, reviews, commentary and chat. Tune in! Info: (416) 595-0909.

Monday: The Women's Group, an open lesbian discussion group, meets at 519 Church St. 8 pm. Info: 392-6874.

Tuesday: International Women's Day Committee (IWDC), a socialist feminist activist group, meets on alternate Tuesdays. Info: Nancy, 531-6608.

Tuesday and Thursday: The Lesbian Phone Line is open for calls from women. 7:30-10:30 pm. 533-6120.

Tuesday and Thursday: The Women's Information Line is open from 7-9 pm. Messages may be left any time, at 598-3714.

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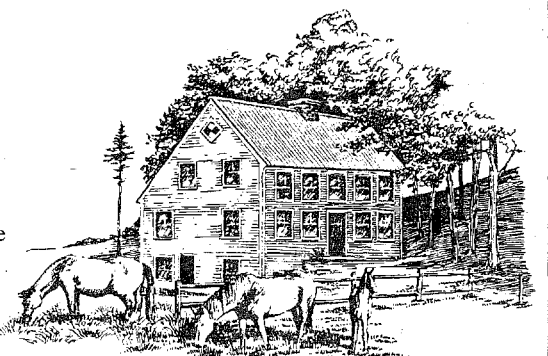
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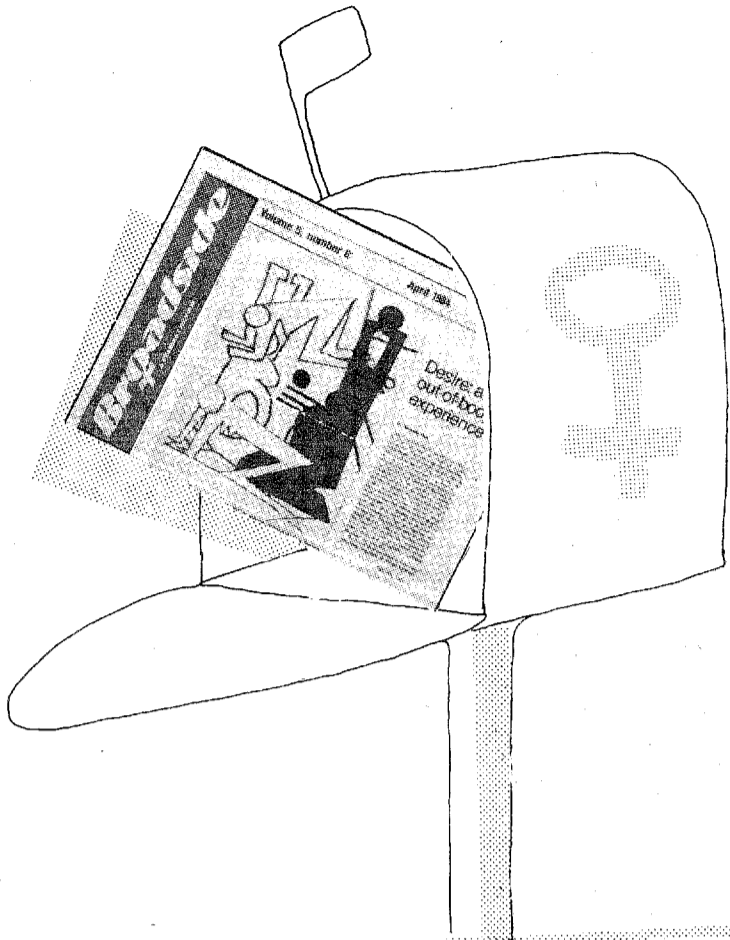
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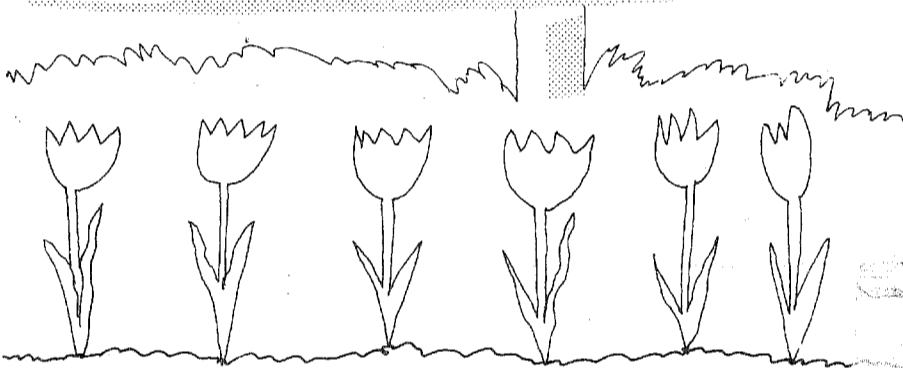
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