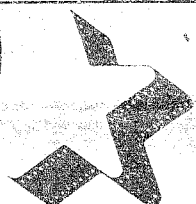


Broadside

A FEMINIST REVIEW



Festival of Festivals: Lois Weaver and Sheila Dabney in *She Must Be Seeing Things*.
SEE STORY PAGE 8.



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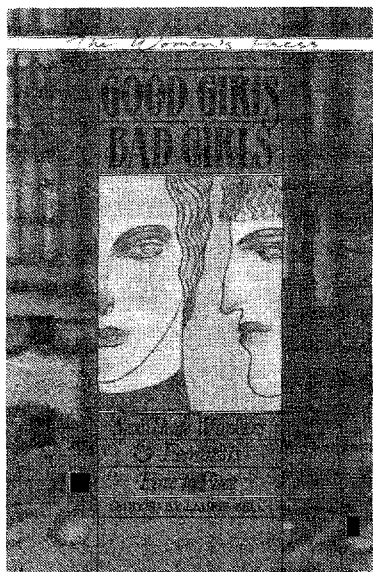
(In)Visible

A new play by Carol Thames



FEATURES

FESTIVAL FORAY. This year's selected film offerings from Toronto's Festival of Festivals are presented by Joyce Mason and Susan G. Cole. Page 8.



GOOD/BAD: *Broadside* presents an excerpt from The Women's Press book *Good Girls/Bad Girls: Sex Trade Workers and Feminists Face to Face* edited by Laurie Bell. Page 3.

NEWS

EQUALITY DELETED? There is a disturbing trend in the fight for women's constitutional equality. Says Margaret Buist: "Men are arguing discrimination to their advantage, often to women's detriment." Page 4.

MASS ACTION: Ontario's Coalition for Abortion Clinics argues that the time is ripe for building a broad-based movement for abortion rights, and asks that all Canadian women march on October 18. Page 5.

MOVEMENT MATTERS: Read about photographic exhibition of Chinese women in North America; about the third annual International Feminist Book Fair in Montréal; about an affirmative action judgment; about a new lesbian mystery novel; and more. Page 6.



COMMENT

CHOICE STRUGGLE: Video producer Nancy Nicol reponds to Lynn Lathrop's criticism of "The Struggle for Choice" in an attempt to clarify her political vision of the abortion movement in Canada. Movement Comment, page 7.

ARTS

SISTER VISION: Betsy Nuse talks to founders of Sister Vision: Black Women and Women of Colour Press, Stephanie Martin and Makeda Silvera. Page 11.

WESTWORD HO! Ann Decter comments on her experience at Women and Words' summer writing retreat, WestWord III: "It was fantastic." Page 11.

SPARKLE AND SOUL: Diana Braithwaite, breathtaking Toronto blues musician, is interviewed by Deena Rasky. Page 12.

VISIBLE DRAMA: Carol Thames' play *(In)Visible*, about a Black lesbian teacher in an all-girls school, is reviewed by Ann M. Headley. Page 12.

BOOKS: Andrea Dworkin's latest book *Intercourse* is reviewed by Diana Majury, page 13; and Janice Raymond's *A Passion for Friends: Towards a Philosophy of Female Affection* is reviewed by Helen Lenskyj, page 14.

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

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**Moving?**

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

Aid to Africa**Broadside:**

Early this year *Broadside* published a letter from the Women's Centre in Eket, Nigeria. It asked for donations to help fund the Centre's campaign against the genital mutilation of women — euphemistically known as "female circumcision" — which the women at the Centre relate to the spread of AIDS.

In response, Judith Lawrence and I sent the group a money order for \$US100, most of it collected during the International Women's Day parade in Toronto in March. Here's part of the letter we subsequently received from them:

Thanks to the little support that we have got from our womenfolk abroad, we have covered about 98,000 sq. km. of our country and have persuaded about 4 million rural women to refrain from female genital mutilation. . . .

We have also reached 1 1/2 million African women by television and radio and another 1/2 million by newspapers and literature. . . .

Unfortunately, our government is not willing to assist our program with funding, saying that we have exposed the shameful practice of our women to the outside world and have portrayed our country in a bad light. Thus we are denied all assistance by the government as a reprisal.

With more help, Hannah Edenmikpong of the Centre says they will be able to cover almost half Nigeria with their campaign by year's end. We would like to send these courageous women another money order. *Broadside* readers can help by forwarding a donation to me

(cheques made out to me). I'll send the lot in one money order and include the names of all donors. Tel. (416) 531-1246

Thea Jensen
Toronto

Weight Loss**Broadside:**

I am writing to you in distress, concern and anger about the weight-loss ad which appeared in the Classified section of the August/September issue.

I would prefer not be writing this letter for a number of reasons. First, because I feel you should have known better. Second, because anger makes my head ache. Third, because I thoroughly disapprove of this adversarial way of resolving differences — I would like it put on record that I tried to sort the issue out by phone and that *Broadside's* editor recommended this way of proceeding.

Having said that, the issue is fat oppression. Concern about the use of women's appearance as a tool of oppression is not new to feminism. For sure, if women would put all their energy (and whatever disposable income they can scrape together) into getting thin, buying make-up, buying fashionable clothes and 'improving' themselves, they wouldn't have time left to work for political change. Better that women spend time worrying about how far they can stretch their income than demanding equal pay. For sure, the most important thing about women should be their looks. Shouldn't it?

But but. I hear it already. We don't want to lose weight to look good, heavens no. We want to lose weight to be fit and to feel better. If you want to be fit, eat well, sleep well and exercise.

You, I am sure, know the figures as well as I do. Weight loss programs don't work. 95% of people losing weight put the weight back on — and then some. So what is this punishment for? You know as well as I do that there is a large commercial industry out there making money out of making women feel bad about their bodies. Where do you think the profits from diet foods and diet drinks go?

Which brings me back to the ad you ran. It is from a California-based international company marketing a meal-replacement product with vitamins and minerals in it (to replace the vitamins and minerals you would have had from a decent meal). This is a direct-sale operation — you know the sort, women make phone

• continued page 6

renew for two

Save money and trouble — renew your sub for two years. Only \$34.

renew for two

EDITORIAL**It's My Party . . .**

The recent Ontario election and subsequent electoral sweep by the Liberals raises a number of questions regarding the relationship between feminists and the political process. On the one hand, women increased their representation by 100%, raising the number of seats from 10 to 20. On the other hand, this only represents 15.4% of the seats in the Legislative Assembly, a far cry from the 50% representation that women are hoping to achieve by 1994. Yet the increasing number of women vying for public office (over 90) may reflect the fact that the three political parties are concentrating on recruiting women and the fact that perhaps politics is becoming more accessible to women.

This election did highlight the ambivalent relationship that feminists have with the electoral process. Voting for one of the three established parties has in the past often been an exercise in choosing the party and or candidate who will do the least damage to women. Voting by process of elimination has become a reality for many feminists. Yet the advent of high profile, talented feminists into the political arena made many a feminist sit up and analyze the relationship between candidates and their chosen party.

Yes, there were feminists running for all three parties. Amongst others, we had Chaviva Hosek running for the Liberals, Judy Rebick for the NDP and Susan Fish for the Conservatives (not to mention defeated NDP Evelyn Gigantes). It is too simplistic to say that because Hosek and Fish ran for parties other than the NDP that they are not feminist. They are feminists. They both have a history of working hard for women and during the election campaign they did not hide their feminist leanings. But is it too simplistic to say that because these feminists ran for parties other than the NDP they should not be supported, nor voted for?

Trying to deal with the dilemma of whether to vote for a feminist running for a party that is not perceived as an ally of women, first necessitates an answer to the question of whether or not there is indeed one party that solely reflects a feminist platform, or indeed any party that can be described as feminist.

The debate between candidates of the three

parties on women's issues sheds some light on this question. This debate came about because of the absence of a focus on women's concerns by all three party leaders during their televised debate. The women's evening, organized by feminist groups at their own expense, highlighted the parties stands on, amongst others, issues such as housing, pay equity, employment equity, abortion, Meech Lake and child-care. Many hoped that this debate would showcase the NDP as the "feminist" party and expose the other two as mere imposters.

Judy Rebick of the NDP was the most forceful candidate on the issues. She had the information at her fingertips and did not have to explain away differences between her personal views and those of her party. Yet one had to wonder if her party's stands were a reflection of the fact that the NDP is not in power and will not be in the foreseeable future. This was pointed out by Ian Scott, Minister Responsible for Women's Issues, who questioned the fact that it is the provincial government in Manitoba which is currently prosecuting Dr. Morgentaler on abortion charges. He also pointed out that Ontario's pay equity law is a more comprehensive piece of legislation than that of Manitoba's. His point: as much as we might hope it were different, the NDP doesn't always practise what it preaches.

It was also food for thought when Scott, in his introductory remarks, listed the accomplishments of the Liberal government during the last two years. His list included pay equity legislation, family law reforms, support and custody enforcement legislation, the inclusion of sexual orientation as a protected ground within the Human Rights Code, the dropping of the "spouse in the house" laws, and better legal protection for domestic workers. Yet it does not take the most cynical amongst us to point out that many of these changes came about more as a result of the Liberal/NDP accord and the minority government situation than as a result of Liberal good will.

When Progressive Conservative Susan Fish's turn came, one also had to sit up and listen. Her answers to questions were not substantially different than those of the other two. What was different, though, is that she did not neces-

sarily equate her views with those of her party and indeed did not mention the name of her party during the entire evening.

The debate clarified a number of things. The NDP talk the best game, the Liberals have done a few things for women and even the Progressive Conservatives have a feminist or two lurking in their shadows. What this debate did *not* show was one party with a monopoly on women's issues.

Feminists are going to run for parties other than the NDP for a variety of reasons. Perhaps they feel that by running for the party with the best chance of being in power, they will have the best chance of being in power. Or, perhaps, because they truly agree with their chosen party's platform.

Criticizing a woman who under the guise of "feminism" actively works against women's issues is one thing, but criticizing women who, under the banner of feminism seek to find new ways of advancing women's concerns is quite another. And before feminists are written off because of their choice of party we should clearly decide if the NDP is indeed a feminist party. Ultimately, though, the decision of who to vote for is between a woman and her ballot.

The election results, though, leave us cause for concern. We worry about what will become of women's issues within a majority government. We worry that feminists within the government will get too caught up in the political game of compromise and end up compromising their feminist ideals. And we worry that the government will, on the one hand, appoint women to the cabinet, while using these women to legitimize moves against feminist concerns.

We invite Mr. Peterson to prove us wrong. We invite him to show us that women's issues will be highlighted in his party platform over the next four years. We invite him to appoint a record number of women to the cabinet, in a wide variety of posts. And we invite him to appoint a strong feminist to the post of Minister Responsible for Women's Issues and to make this a portfolio unto itself, not merely a tag-on to another post. By the time you read this we will know whether the Premier accepted our invitation. ●

Sex Trade Off

The following article and sidebar is excerpted from Laurie Bell's introduction to *Good Girls/Bad Girls: Sex Trade Workers and Feminists Face to Face*, released this month by the Women's Press, Toronto.

"You're all a bunch of fucking madonnas!" That was how Peggy Miller, founder of the Canadian Organization for the Rights of Prostitutes (CORP), described a group of feminists at a dinner in April 1985. A controversy had arisen during the planning by the March 8th Coalition of the 1985 International Women's Day in Toronto, and the dinner had been arranged to continue this important discussion.

It all began when Miller and Chris Bearchell, another CORP member, attended a coalition meeting in February that year to object to the statement, which was to appear in a forthcoming International Women's Day leaflet, that the porn shops along Toronto's Yonge Street were harmful to women. They argued CORP's position — that this statement did not represent the views of women employed in the sex trade industry. After some discussion the coalition decided to delete the statement before the leaflet went to press, but no one could have predicted the long-term implications of CORP's objection. It generated countless meetings, several potluck dinners, many disagreements, a conference, and now this book. All of these constitute the beginning of a long-overdue discussion between sex trade workers and feminists in Canada.

During that April dinner the sex trade workers threw out two questions to the coalition: How could feminists and sex trade workers begin to talk with one another? And what would be the response of feminists to two government reports — the Report of the Committee on Sexual Offences Against Children and Youth (Badgely Committee report, 1984) and the Report of the Special Committee on Pornography and Prostitution (Fraser Committee report, 1985). Thus the idea for the conference, "Challenging Our Images: The Politics of Pornography and Prostitution," was conceived.

The task of organizing the conference brought some feminist and sex trade workers into each other's lives. Differences in organizing styles, priorities, and even schedules were obvious. One woman's working hours were another woman's sleeping hours. But even though our worlds could be like night and day, some of us ventured cautiously into the others' lives. Thus the "image challenging" that the conference meant to facilitate began during the actual organization. Sometimes it grew out of our co-operation with each other; sometimes it was a result of agonizing differences of opinion.

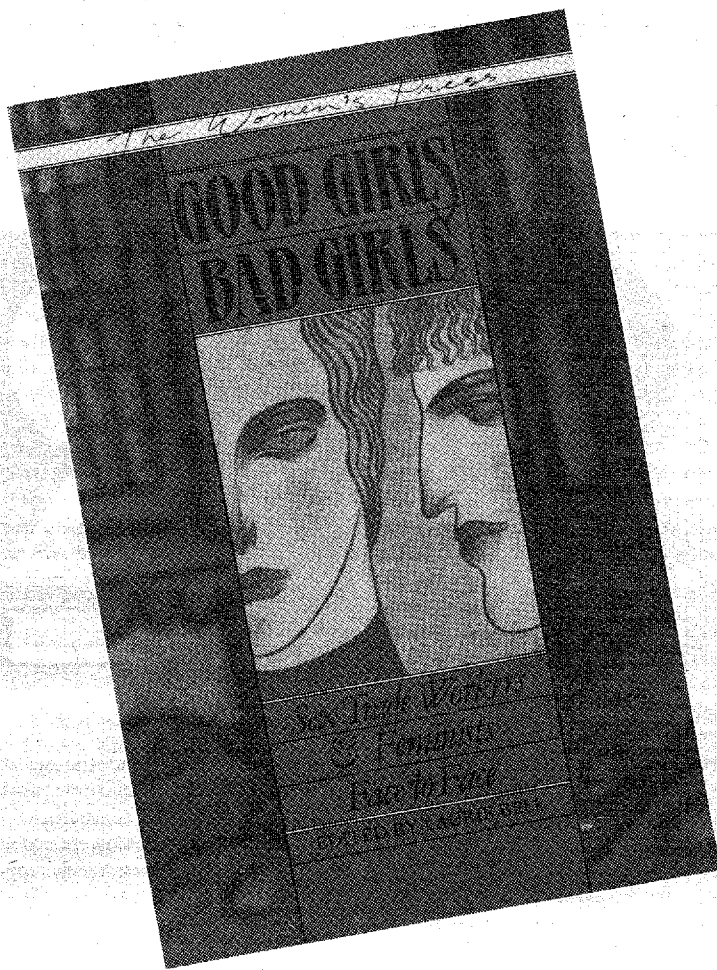
One event demonstrated to me the need for feminists to reconsider the way we relate to women who work in the sex trade industry. The occasion was yet another dinner, a potluck dinner — this time bringing together prostitutes and performers who were preparing pieces for the conference. We had hoped that the performers would benefit from meeting with the prostitutes and hearing some of their opinions and stories.

First, I was struck by how risky it was for the prostitutes to meet with a group of strangers; the threat of being revealed to the police must have loomed large. There was also the fear of being subjected to feminist examination and criticism. But these women arrived — and, to my surprise, with lasagna and cheesecake in hand. My image of a prostitute had not allowed for her to be able to cook. We had assumed our traditional role of "good girls" and prepared too much food.

On the door of the house where the potluck was held is a sign that reads, "Thank you for not smoking." But each and every one of the prostitutes who came was a smoker. Only two of the non-hookers were smokers. As a matter of principle the smoking ban was not lifted for the evening, although a compromise was reached when a back room of the house was designated the smoking room.

After dinner the smokers drifted into the back room for a cigarette, and a good conversation got going. Each time we were about to begin the planned agenda, someone else would go for a smoke, and soon others would follow. As a result most of the conversation that evening took place in the back room between the prostitutes and the smoking performers.

Looking back on that evening, I realize that because of our adherence to the non-smoking rule, the prostitutes were relegated to a back room space, an area to which they were accustomed because of laws and social mores. It also appeared that these women felt more relaxed in a casual, conversational setting, smoking cigarettes and swapping stories.



Sex trade workers are right when they say that feminists have formulated their analyses about pornography and prostitution knowing nothing about the real lives of sex trade workers. We don't know each other. We never talk to one another. We perceive each other's struggles to be different and separate. Sex trade workers, like other women, have been kept silent. In addition, they feel isolated not only from society but also from a women's movement that has, they believe, ignored or disassociated itself from women who work as strippers, hookers, and porn artists. Indeed, they have accused feminists of not wanting to know or support them. Now sex trade workers are asking feminists to re-evaluate this attitude, hoping to prompt some changes in feminist analyses of and strategies regarding pornography and prostitution.

Challenging Our Images: The Politics of Pornography and Prostitution took place in Toronto from November 22 to 24, 1985. It attracted over four hundred participants from various constituencies — the legal profession, social services, the labour movement, academia, and politics — in addition to feminists and sex trade workers. The conference consisted of five forums, which offered a range of panelists, over thirty workshops, a performance night, information booths, and an "Images of Women" display.

Good Girls/Bad Girls comes out of the vast amount of material presented at the conference. Many different voices were heard that weekend — those of lawyers, politicians, union representatives, church members, social service workers, academics, historians, and artists

— but I want you to hear the voices of those least heard in the past: sex trade workers and feminists speaking to one another. Although many topics were addressed at the conference — from the influence of the church on sexuality to gay and lesbian porn — the most significant accomplishment was the discussion between "good girls" and "bad girls" — feminists and sex trade workers. This book reconstructs that discussion.

Sex trade workers, historically the "bad girls," and feminists, usually considered "good girls" by comparison, are the most affected and least-heard people. Lawyers, social service workers, and politicians have more opportunities to speak their minds, and exert greater influence on the institutions that regulate pornography and prostitution in our society than sex trade workers and feminists.

Margo St. James, unabashed bad girl and founder of Call Off Your Old Tired Ethics, (COYOTE), kicked off the conference by speaking about good girls and bad girls. She claims that the sexual and moral labelling of women is the great divide between the two groups. Without a doubt it was the image of good girl/bad girl that was most severely challenged during the conference. Despite many other differences of opinion, all the sex trade workers agreed that while they proudly claimed their bad girl identity, it was precisely because of it that they have been excluded from the feminist identity.

The sex trade workers who speak in this collection argue that to be feminist still requires women to be good girls. Women working in the sex trade are obviously disqualified from membership in this club. They must either reform or forfeit their right to call themselves feminists. Given this choice, sex trade workers have opted not to identify themselves as feminists. They have chosen instead to highlight their bad girl identity — the one they have control over — and their consequent alienation from the feminist community. They maintain that it is the definition of feminism that must change in order to include both good girls and bad girls, not they who must conform to a good-girl image so as to be considered feminist. Sex trade workers claim, in effect, to be feminists in exile; excluded from a rightful place in the feminist movement, they demand to be recognized as members of the women's community. As one prostitute remarked, "Feminism is incomplete without us." ●

Exchanges

We think that an organization should be set up for actors and actresses who work in porn, similar to ACTRA which is for the "legitimate" actors and actresses so that we could have pensions, disability insurance, dental plans, et cetera. And we would also be able to set a minimum pay scale and standards for working conditions. . . . What we are basically saying is, let us take care of ourselves. We're perfectly capable of doing it. We have been doing it for years under the most distressing conditions.

— Valerie Scott

Because sex is the kind of thing that everybody has or wishes they had, when I start talking about the way in which sex is sometimes used against all of us, people think I'm attacking them personally because, of course, they have sex. For example, some of us have been trying to analyze the way S/M fits into the sexual system. When I do this, people think I'm telling them to stop engaging in these practices. I don't want to tell anybody to stop doing anything. I just want people to understand how all of this works in their lives.

— Susan Cole

There is no doubt that the rest and recreation industry in the Philippines thrives on the dollar. But what is not obvious is the connection between military buildup, both Filipino and American, and the use of women as sex objects. Visit any military camp in the Philippines, and you'll find women serving as mistresses of draftees, regular and reserve officers, and paramilitary combatants; they are referred to as common-law wives. War and guns make men turn to sex to arrest trauma or to escape from fear and guilt. With their pay envelopes soldiers think they are entitled to

liberty, the privilege of using women. With their guns soldiers demand this liberty delivered at their feet.

— Martha O'Campo

Often people ask, "What kind of women turn to prostitution?" Never do we hear the question, "What kind of men buy prostitutes?" Well, I'll tell you. This is one of my favourite themes. The English Collective of Prostitutes did a survey of a thousand prostitutes. It estimated that 80 percent of all men have been, will be, or are tricks. Look around, you guys. Their survey also found that the more education a man had and the higher his position in this society, the kinkier the sex he likes. These are the men that like "golden showers," humiliation, domination, and all the other things that the rest of society freaks out about.

— Marie Arrington

Ti-Grace Atkinson once said that the women's movement wouldn't really make it over the hump until whores evolved as the leaders. Well, here we are!

— Margo St. James

I'll give an example of this. Some feminists have become completely disillusioned with what used to be known as the "sexual revolution" in the wake of revelations about the extent of male sexual violence. This disillusionment does not come from any greater knowledge of the physiology of male sexuality or from sexual passion in general. It comes, rather, from the fact that we have become much more aware of the amazing social power that adult heterosexual men have exerted by virtue of their social privilege. What we've done to some extent is concentrate on the

sexual expression of the power that adult heterosexual men have in this society. It is shortsighted to concentrate so much on the sexual expression of that power when that power is expressed just as much through exploitation on the job, imperialism, or any other expression of the social relations of domination.

— Mariana Valverde

Instead of treating issues of racism as "add-ons" to the analysis of pornography, we should be starting with race because that's where the power of pornography as a method of domination stems from. That's one of the best-kept secrets around. Pornography has a history of being used as a political tool of control. Certainly that has been the case with extreme right wing states. The Nazi regime used pornography as a tool in the racist portrayal of Jews. It was a very, very important factor in the spread of stereotypes among the German population. Racism is not an aside.

— Lesbians of Colour

Look at the evidence and see what the various apparatuses of power are doing with feminist concerns. They are not taking them and implementing them. They can't. If you want to have a judiciary or a censor board that is able to look at material in a particular way, it has to be made up of feminists, lesbians, gay men, transsexuals, prostitutes, and sex workers. Then maybe I would consider a censor board. But then if you could have such a thing, you wouldn't need a censor board because then you would have a state that represents the majority.

— Varda Burstyn

One Foot in the Door

by Margaret Buist

When the equality rights sections of the Charter were entrenched in the Canadian Constitution in 1982, feminists breathed a collective sigh of relief. The battle to have women's equality formally recognized in our supreme law was fought long and hard. When section 15 was proclaimed on April 17, 1985, we anticipated that the way would at last be open to equal benefit and protection from the law. Now, two years later, and five years after the Charter was adopted, our optimism has been transformed into frustration and cynicism. Progress is slow and full of head-banging against rigid obstacles — like politicians and judges. Despite a few qualified successes, women are still on the outside with only one foot in the door to equality.

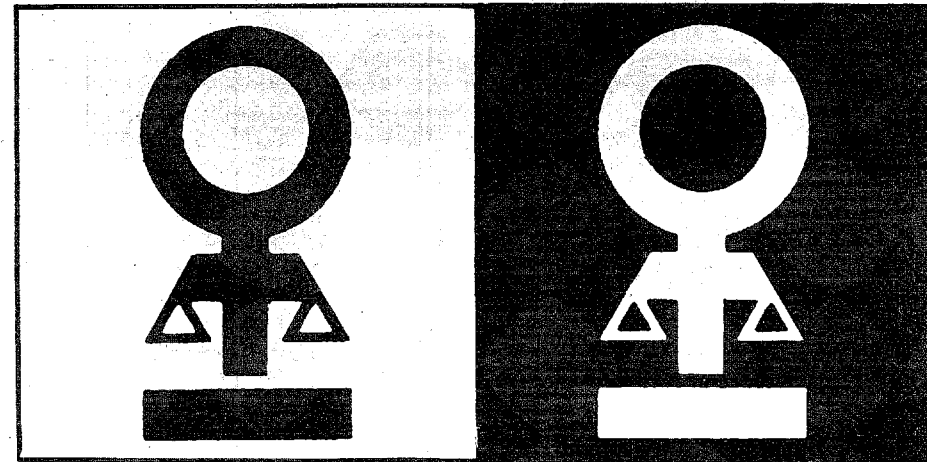
The history of the inclusion of equality rights in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms; the growth of case law on these rights since 1985; and the most recent constitutional development, the Meech Lake Accord, illustrate why the door is still only open a crack.

The first hurdle in enshrining equality rights was to convince the male legislators and their male legal advisers in the Department of Justice that formal guarantees of sex equality in an entrenched Charter were necessary. Feminists knew it because we had seen how ineffectual were the guarantees in the Canadian Bill of Rights. For example, in one case (*Bliss*) it was argued that stricter qualifications for pregnant women seeking U.I.C. benefits, than for other applicants seeking benefits, denied equality before the law on the basis of sex. In disagreeing, the Supreme Court found that any inequalities created by stricter qualifications were based on the fact that applicants were pregnant, not that they were women. Thus, there was no discrimination on the basis of sex. Presumably, pregnant men were also subject to the same stricter qualifications for benefits. (Yes, this occurred in 1972 in Canada.) The problem with the Bill of Rights was that, although it prohibited inequalities based on sex, it could not override other statutes and was merely an interpretive tool.

We also knew we needed formal recognition of equality rights in the Constitution because we had witnessed how easily laws of serious consequence for women could be weakened by male politicians. At the First Ministers' Conference in February 1979, it was unanimously agreed to transfer jurisdiction over divorce from the federal government to the provinces. Feminists, who had not been consulted, were concerned about the potentially adverse impact this transfer could have on support enforcement. Manitoba women's groups, the National Action Committee and the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women successfully staved off the transfer, but in the process feminists realized, once again, the dangers inherent in leaving our rights to the political will of the men in office.

The history of shaping the equality rights in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms has been well-documented by women such as Chaviva Hosek, Mary Eberts and Penny Kome, and is well-known to most of us: the re-scheduled CACSW conference that led to Doris Anderson's resignation as president; the Hays-Joyal Committee public hearings where, after NAC's presentation, Senator Hays made his infamous comments on the necessity of equality for "babies and children" since all the "girls" would now be working; and the express acknowledgment of feminists' contributions to the debate by then Minister of Justice, Jean Chretien. There were memorable events such as the formation of the Ad Hoc Committee of Canadian Women on the Constitution and the unofficial conference in February 1981 of 1,300 women from across the country; and the drafting, re-drafting and continual pressure from women's groups and others which resulted in the final form of sections 15(1) guaranteeing freedom from discrimination on the basis of sex, 15(2) providing for affirmative action programs, and 28 with its general statement of purpose guaranteeing sex equality.

Women's fight for inclusion of sex equality rights in the Charter is a paradigm for our continuing struggle to be recognized as equal by the law. In the process of patriating the Con-



stitution we were on the outside, demanding the keys to get in. Trudeau and the premiers gave us the keys in the form of sections 15 and 28, and we rejoiced for that bit of recognition and the promise of open doors in the future. But the rejoicing has ended in the face of legal decisions that ignore the spirit of equality that formed the Charter.

The cases brought to court under section 15 of the Charter in the past two years demonstrate a disturbing trend: men are arguing discrimination to their advantage, often to women's detriment; and the courts are defining equality rights very narrowly.

In a review of reported case law on section 15, I discovered that 12 cases involved men charged with sexual offences, six cases were brought by men seeking equal benefit from social assistance or family legislation and two promoted women's equality. (This sampling does not include unreported cases, like *Robichaud*, the sexual harassment case, or those that were settled without a trial like the *Beaudette* and *Horvath* "spouse in the house" cases: and they only reflect arguments based on sex equality rather than on age, religion or any of the other grounds.) These cases reflect a disturbing reality — only ten percent of reported cases promoted women's equality. It appears that, so far, men have gained most from our struggle to include equality rights in the Charter.

Not only have men been using section 15 to promote their own "equality," but they have been doing so at the expense of the few legislative protections and benefits that exist for Canadian women. The sex crime cases provide the most vivid example. Most of these cases deal with the statutory rape provision in the Criminal Code, section 146(1), which prohibits sexual intercourse with a female under the age of 14 with or without her consent. The males accused in these cases argue that the crime offends the sex equality provisions in the Charter since there is no corresponding crime for women raping boys. Fortunately, all but two of the judges have disagreed with these arguments and have upheld the statutory rape provision. A Chief Judge from London, Ontario, held that section 146(1) violated the equality rights. In this case a 21-year-old man "had sexual intercourse" with a 13-year-old girl. The judge found that biological differences between males and females did not justify greater protection for young females. The effect of this decision, until it was overturned on appeal on other grounds, was to deny young girls protection from sexual exploitation, other than incest, under the Criminal Code. It is particularly offensive that men in a potentially sexually exploitive situation could avoid conviction by using legal provisions designed to redress power imbalances between the sexes.

Other cases involve men attempting to relieve themselves of legal obligations imposed upon them to ameliorate women's disadvantaged economic position, or men seeking to benefit from social programs designed for women. In *Shewchuk v. Ricard*, a woman sought to prove paternity and gain support for her child. The putative father argued that the *Child Paternity and Support Act* violated section 15 because men were not afforded an opportunity to prove maternity and seek support. The British Columbia Court of Appeal found that any distinctions between fathers and moth-

ers were justified since the Act was designed to afford protection to single mothers and their "children born out of wedlock." The court also found solace in the existence of another BC act which allows fathers to seek support. Although one judge made passing reference to it, the most obvious rationale behind the legislation seemed to escape judicial notice: women rarely, if ever, deny maternity. This would be difficult after a nine-month pregnancy.

A Nova Scotia man challenged that province's *Family Benefits Act* as unconstitutional in 1986. He was seeking Father's Allowance. Under that statute, benefits were only provided to single mothers or disabled men. The court had little trouble in finding that this deprivation based on sex was arbitrary and unreasonable. While feminists might agree in principle that men raising children alone should receive social assistance, the consequences of broadening the scope of benefits to include men could be potentially devastating for women. For example, in the Nova Scotia case, the court found that they did not have the power to change the legislation to add men, so they struck it down leaving a vacuum in which no one could receive assistance. Certainly the Nova Scotia legislature quickly remedied the situation, but it is not inconceivable to foresee a situation where a government, in response to a Charter challenge, would deny a benefit altogether as opposed to funding it for both sexes.

The subject matter of the cases brought by men under section 15 of the Charter provide the most blatant threats to women's legal equality. There is, however, a much more insidious erosion of our equality taking place. Judges are defining the sex equality rights in section 15 of the Charter narrowly and with little regard to the significance of section 28. Long before the Charter, under the *Canadian Bill of Rights*, and during the fight for the inclusion of equality rights in the Charter, the debate raged over the definitions of equality. The traditional insistence on viewing equality between men and women as "sameness" clashed with the concept of equality which recognized power imbalance in order to redress it. Under an equality of opportunity — or sameness — approach, women and men should be treated equally and given the same opportunities unless there is some reasonable justification to do otherwise. ("Reasonable" is always defined in an objective, male mode.) However, under an equality of result approach, the long-standing subordination of women is redressed by allowing for different treatment.

It was hoped by feminists seeking constitutional protection for equality that section 15 would ultimately be defined to include a recognition of the power imbalances necessary to promote women's equality, that discrimination would be interpreted to include systemic as well as intentional discrimination and that the general principles in section 28 would, at the very least, underlie any reasonable limits to sex equality. So far, the definitions arising from the case law under section 15 have fallen far short. The statutory rape cases, for example, pass perfunctorily over the issue of the actual existence of discrimination to the question of reasonableness. The analysis of the courts is essentially this: men can be charged and women cannot; they are not being treated in the same way, therefore there is discrimination; is this discrimination reasonable according to a traditional, male point of view? The same approach applies to the paternity cases where it is assumed that men are discriminated against

because only they can be sued for sowing their seed and then denying it. This is not discrimination, this is begging the question.

The equality of result approach does not seem to be accepted under the Charter, nor is the recognition of systemic discrimination. If the judiciary cannot find unequal treatment on the face of legislation, they are reluctant to dig deeper. The Ontario Court of Appeal decision in 1985 in *Morgentaler* is a fine example. Dr. Morgentaler's counsel argued that the abortion section of the Criminal Code discriminated against women by forcing them to by-pass hospital committees and break the law, and that it discriminated against economically disadvantaged women who could not afford abortions. The court found that there was no discrimination since it did not exist on the face of the law, although it may have existed in its administration.

This unwillingness to expand the legal mind, or for that matter, the traditional, male mind is not new nor is it keeping pace with changes in societal attitudes. Nonetheless, it is still keeping us on the outside of formal equality. The fact that we still only have one foot in the door, highlights the fundamental problem with the constitutional entrenchment of feminist theories of equality. Our radical ideas for change are being implemented by conservative resisters. The sex crime cases are an example. Although most of the judges upheld the statutory rape provision, their reasoning reveals an appalling lack of insight into the sociological and psychological rationale for the crime. Most, in their judgements, harkened back to the unmistakably patriarchal origins of a law designed to protect young girls' virginity and to prevent pregnancies before marriage — the protection of property. In *R. v. Drybones*, a Supreme Court judge found that any discrimination was reasonable because, unlike immature males, young females needed protection. They may become pregnant and may seek abortions and become infertile. As well, they may transmit any venereal diseases to children they bear.

Cases like *Drybones* and the paternity cases demonstrate the frailties of our equality rights. Either we are afforded the protection or benefit of the law for some archaic reason that betrays our image and perpetuates our subordination, or we are flatly denied the protection or benefit by a misguided definition of equality which will never redress power imbalances.

That is not to say we should take our foot out of the door, turn around and go home. There is still hope. The Women's Legal Education and Action Fund was created two years ago as a national defence fund to promote women's equality rights under the Charter. Since its inception, LEAF has been arguing and intervening in cases, not necessarily under section 15, that involve discrimination against women in some way. Their input into the legal process for women has ranged from funding a lawyer who would advocate, with the Crown Attorney, for the position of the co-ordinator of a transition house in Baie Comeau who was murdered by her husband after years of abuse (he received 14 years in jail); to direct involvement with the *Robichaud* case where the Supreme Court of Canada sent a clear message to employers that they are responsible for sexual harassment by their employees.

Section 15 cases in which LEAF is currently involved are *Blainey*, which is before the Ontario Human Rights Commission to decide if Justine Blainey can play hockey with the boys; another spouse-in-the-house case in New Brunswick; a civil suit against the Metropolitan Toronto Police Force for negligence, sex discrimination and failure to protect women's right to security arising from the force's knowledge of a multiple rapist's habits and their failure to inform women in his area of attack of their need for protection; and an application for intervention in the *Borowski* abortion case.

Christie Jefferson, Executive Director at LEAF expressed her concern to me over the predominance of male-initiated sex equality cases. She said LEAF is involved in a potential landmark case which could turn the tide against male rights cases and expand the definition of sex equality in the Charter. LEAF is intervening in *The Law Society of Upper Can-*

Back to the Street

by Miriam Jones
with the OCAC Co-ordinating Committee

The abortion rights movement is in a curious position right now. We are waiting for the Supreme Court to hand down its decisions as to whether Drs. Morgentaler, Smoling and Scott must face a new trial or whether their acquittals stand, but instead of this being a quiet interim, pro-choice supporters are busier than ever. In British Columbia, activists are gearing up to open a free-standing clinic, despite the Bible belt mentality of Premier Vander Zalm. In Winnipeg, clinic workers have maintained their facility as a referral service after its closure by the provincial NDP government. In Québec, women are fighting cutbacks imposed by the Liberal government on medical funding. In the Atlantic provinces the situation is worsening, with hospital access either threatened or, and in PEI, non-existent. In Ontario, anti-choice picketers continue to harass patients and staff at the Morgentaler Clinic. The Liberal government will not fund abortion procedures in the provinces' two free-standing clinics (free from affiliation with any hospital and from Therapeutic Abortion Committees). It is clear, then, that this is an important time for the pro-choice movement; a time in which to gather momentum and to make our voices heard.

The Ontario Coalition for Abortion Clinics (OCAC) is devoted to visible and vigorous actions. We believe that real change only takes place when many people are persuaded to an idea, and so we try to educate and involve as many people as possible in the struggle. This is what is meant when we talk about broad-based or mass action politics.

OCAC has long worked with the Québec coalition for the right to free abortion on demand. Last autumn they proposed that we organize together and march on Ottawa, but our coalition was unable to participate at that time.

Now they have proposed a bi-national demonstration around the issue of abortion, to take place on October 18. Activists are marching on Québec City and have asked for support from women across the country to build a bi-national movement. In Vancouver, Concerned Citizens for Choice on Abortion is organizing and Canadian Abortion Rights Action League (CARAL) has agreed to encourage its local chapters to participate. There will be an action in Newfoundland, and women in other provinces are in discussion.

We at OCAC think it's very important to respond to the request of the Québec coalition, in order to further the unity of the pro-choice movement in Canada, to forge bi-national links in the women's movement as a whole, and to send a powerful message to the federal government. There is a danger, for us at the Ontario Coalition for Abortion Clinics, of being locked into provincial strategies. By allowing ourselves to be ghettoized we play into the hands of both levels of government. Even if we are successful here in Ontario in maintaining our clinics, we must consider our obligation to women elsewhere in Canada. We ought to have a federal focus in addition to our provincial focus, as the abortion law is a federal law. Québec plays a very important role in the federal scenario, and by presenting a united front with them, the women of Canada will make their interests known to Ottawa.

What we are proposing is a large march and demonstration on October 18 around the theme of "Marching For Women's Lives," with the following demands: that the charges against the doctors be dropped, that free-standing clinics be legalized, that abortion be removed from the criminal code, that abortion procedures be subject to full medical funding, and that harassment of clinic patients and staff be ended. This demonstration will happen simultaneously to the one in Québec as well as to

the other actions across the country. It is being organized by a coalition of individuals and organizations, because it is to be broad-based and representative of the community as a whole, and not just the constituency of one organization. We are hoping to involve as many people as possible.

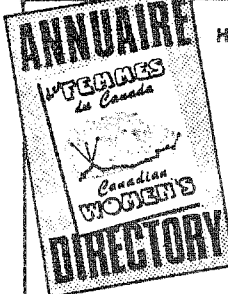
Some may say that this is not the time to rock the boat. The case of Drs. Morgentaler, Smoling and Scott went to the Supreme Court in October 1986. Since then, many individuals have nervously maintained that the abortion rights movement should keep a low profile so as not to antagonize anyone and possibly jeopardize the doctors' chances in court. We believe that this course of action would be the worst thing for women. The state will be as inactive on this issue as we allow them to be. So we must not allow them. We must maintain a high public profile and demonstrate the breadth of support for the pro-choice movement within the women's movement as a whole, the labour movement, and the public. And we must show the new provincial government that the women of Ontario are alive and kicking.

It is possible that the Supreme Court will hand down its decision before October 18. If so, there will be all the more reason to demonstrate the strength of the movement, no matter what the outcome. Even if the ruling is favorable and abortion is stricken from the criminal code, it will not mean the end of our struggle. We have just to look at the United States, where abortion is legal but unfunded and therefore inaccessible to millions of women, and where violent anti-choice activity threatens women in many areas of the country. The fight for full access to abortion may just be beginning in Canada. On the other hand, the case may still be before the Supreme Court on October 18. The women's movement will then have to be ready to respond to the ruling when it finally does come down. OCAC is hoping that work-

ing on this action for October will help to build many strong links that can be called upon when the time comes.

The women's movement as a whole is under attack, and there have been a lot of rollbacks. We must build together and fight together to present a united front, and to build a march representative of the movement as a whole. We are appealing to interested groups and women in the community to join the October 18th Coalition and build this demonstration with us in solidarity with women across the country. Please come out and join us.

Miriam Jones is a member of the Ontario Coalition for Abortion Clinics Co-ordinating Committee.



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• EQUALITY, from previous page

ada v. Andrews, a case brought by a male lawyer in British Columbia who has been denied the right to practise in that province on the basis of citizenship. His argument focuses on adding citizenship as a grounds for discrimination not specifically enumerated under section 15. Christie Jefferson states: "LEAF will be arguing that section 15 was designed to promote equality for groups that have been historically excluded from power. The notion of powerlessness is the key to our argument. We will be suggesting to the courts the test that should be used under section 15." (The case will be heard in the British Columbia Supreme Court on October 5, 1987.) We are still banging at the door. LEAF, despite its ever-present need for private and government funding is hammering away at the traditional analysis of equality that permeates our judicial process.

Nonetheless, just as we seem to be pushing open a larger crack, it appears the door may be slammed in our faces. A mere five years after the historic battle for inclusion in the Charter, we come full circle — back to the politicians. Once again, we have been forced to expend our precious energies, draw together, rally our experts, and fight the Meech Lake Accord. The debate surrounding women's equality rights and the Accord demonstrates how our most fundamental freedoms are mere fodder for politicians' whims.

Certainly, the primary purpose of the Accord is to draw Quebec into the Canadian Constitution. But, in those few hours of bargaining at Meech Lake, it appears that the men did not even consider section 15, or worse, they considered it and rejected its significance.

Some Quebec women are disturbed that some feminists are even worried about the Accord. (Mustn't Mr. Mulroney have been pleased by the public dissension.) Granted, a few of the examples used to demonstrate the potential threat of the Accord to sex equality rights were heavy-handed — such as the example of Québec being permitted under the Accord to keep women out of the workforce so they could stay home and increase the population of Québec; this in a province with the greatest access to free-standing abortion clinics. However, with the greatest respect for the women of Québec

who made a difficult choice to unconditionally support the Accord, I believe all Canadian women do have cause for concern. If there is no potential threat to the supremacy of sex equality rights, then why not amend the Accord to explicitly say that, rather than leaving it to the legislative interpretation of some conservative, male judge from Quebec or any other province who, thirty years from now will have little recollection of the assurances of Mr. Mulroney, Mr. Broadbent, Mr. Turner, Mr. Peterson and the rest of the gang. Let Canadian women keep what we have fought so hard for.

The lawyers, the judges, the politicians, men generally are all on the other side of the door holding it closed and saving what's inside for themselves. They are taking over the case law. They are defining our equality. They are bargaining our freedoms away. But, we still have options. We can kick down the door and take or share their power; or we can change the locks. We can stop defining equality their way. Instead of using the key of "sameness," we can use the key of "power" to define how we wish to reach equality. Catharine MacKinnon in her essay "Difference and Dominance" (*Feminism Unmodified*, Harvard University Press, 1987) writes:

So long as sex equality is limited by sex difference, whether you like it or don't like it, whether you value it or seek to negate it, whether you stake it out as grounds for feminism or occupy it as the terrain of misogyny, women will be born, degraded, and die. We would settle for that equal protection of the laws under which one would be born, live, and die, in a country where protection is not a dirty word and equality is not a special privilege.

So long as we allow "them" to define equality for "us," we will remain on the outside with bruised feet.

Margaret Buist is a lawyer practising in a community clinic in London, Ont.

CULTURE IN CONTENTION

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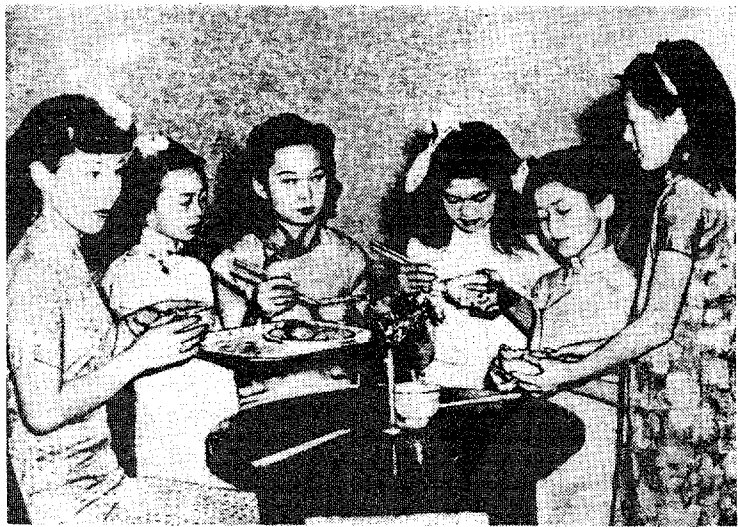
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MOVEMENT MATTERS



Preparing for a bazaar at Bay St. Chinese Mission, December 1943 (York University Archives)

Chinese Women in North America

TORONTO — An exhibition of historical photographs, texts and artifacts portraying 150 years of Chinese women's lives in North America opened at the Metropolitan Toronto Reference Library on September 11 and continues until October 12.

The title of the exhibition, "But Women Did Come," refers to the eventual immigration of Chinese women some time after the early, predominantly male waves of Chinese immigrants — a pattern promoted by discriminatory immigration laws in both the US and Canada.

The texts accompanying each set of photos review the historical context and provide a woman-centred analysis of issues such as traditional family life, prostitution, education, employment and racism. There are both American and Canadian components of the exhibition, and women from Toronto's Chinese community feature in many of the photographs. There is pain as well as joy in the photos and oral histories. "Forced to learn how to survive in a society where both racism

and sexism still prevail, Chinese women's very survival is a credit to immense strength and determination!"

Women in Trades

TORONTO — The Women in Trades Association is a support, information and referral group concerned with gaining women access to good non-traditional blue collar jobs.

It is developing a directory of Tradeswomen in the Toronto area. This Directory will provide concrete evidence of the number of women working and succeeding in the trades, and will be a unique source of skilled tradeswomen and women contractors.

The Association wants to speak to all women working in non-traditional blue collar jobs in the area regarding their inclusion in the Directory. Contact: Women in Trades, (416) 487-1776; or c/o Times Change, 22 Davisville Avenue, Toronto, M4S 1E8.

Feminist Book Fair

MONTREAL — Every two years, since 1984, women involved in feminist publishing meet at an International Feminist Book Fair. The first

fair was held in London in 1984, the second in Oslo in 1986, and the third is being planned for June 14-21, 1988 in Montreal. Bringing together editors of books, magazines and newspapers with writers, translators, distributors and booksellers from around the world, the International Feminist Book Fair provides a unique forum for feminists to network and discover each other's work at the same time as making feminist authors known to a wider audience. The event permits an exchange across continents, languages and disciplines.

The Third Fair remains committed to the international character of the previous fairs, reflecting the plurality of women's experience from various cultural and economic backgrounds. As this is the first time it will be held on the American continent, a special invitation is extended to women from Latin America. The two official languages will be French and English but we hope to hold some events in Spanish. We are committed to facilitating fruitful and thought-provoking exchanges amongst feminists and lesbians through the conferences, readings, and panels that will be held during the week. We wish to provide a forum in which a diversity of voices can be heard, especially those which are so often censored elsewhere.

In order to organize this event, the Fair organizers are urgently in need of funds. Your contribution can help send out press releases, make the necessary international contacts and pay the Xerox and phone bills. Government grants are pending, but private funds will be vital to the success of the Book Fair. Needless to say, the sooner the better! Contributors' names will be published in the official program of the Fair unless requested otherwise. (Send donations to: International Feminist Book Fair, 420 est. rue Rachel, Montreal, Quebec, H2J 2G7; or call (514) 844-3277.)

Affirmative Action

In a unanimous judgment, the Supreme Court of Canada has held that a Tribunal under the Canadian Human Rights Act can impose upon an employer an employment equity program to address the problem of systemic discrimination against women.

A public interest pressure group, known as Action Travail des Femmes, complained that women were under-represented at Canadian National Railway due to systemic discrimination in hiring and promotion practices. Thus, in the early 1970s, women workers comprised one third of the total labour force in Canada, holding 14.3% of managerial positions, 41.2% of professional and technical positions, and 72% of all clerical jobs nationwide. In contrast to the national employment statistics, women constituted approximately 4% of the total CN workforce and held less than half of 1% of the senior management jobs. By 1979 little had changed.

By the end of 1981, there were only 57 women in "blue collar" posts in the St. Lawrence region of CN, being a mere 0.7% of the blue collar labour force in the region. There were 276 women occupying unskilled jobs in all the regions where CN operated, again amounting to only 0.7% of the unskilled work force. By contrast women represented, in 1981, 40.7% of the total Canadian labour force.

The evidence showed that this pattern was no accident. CN actively discouraged women from working in blue collar jobs, made no real effort to inform women of the possibility of filling non-traditional positions, and encouraged women to apply for secretarial work only. Foremen, the testimony disclosed, were typically unresponsive to female candidates. And women who did manage to secure non-traditional jobs were subjected to harassment by male co-workers.

In order to increase the representation of women in blue collar jobs at CN from 1% to the national rate of 13%, the Tribunal ordered CN to hire at least one woman to fill every fourth job opening until the goal of 13% female participation was achieved. A majority of the Federal Court of Appeal set aside the Tribunal's order on the ground that the Tribunal could only direct measures to prevent future acts of discrimination, not to redress past wrongs.

Speaking for the Supreme Court, Chief Justice Dickson concluded that

To render future discrimination pointless, to destroy discrimination stereotyping and to create the required 'critical mass' of target group participation in the workforce, it is essential to combat the effects of past system-

ic discrimination. In so doing, possibilities are created for the continuing amelioration of employment opportunities for the previously excluded group. The dominant purpose of employment equity programmes is always to improve the situation of the target group in the future... Systemic remedies must be built upon the experience of the past so as to prevent discrimination in the future.

The Chief Justice also found nothing objectionable in the imposition of an employment goal, rather than a hiring goal, since systemic discrimination had resulted in a high turnover among women in blue collar jobs, obstruction of promotion, and disproportionately high layoff of female employees.

— From *Women's Employment Law*

Press Bias

An arbitrator has reviewed the right of the *Toronto Star* to issue a warning letter to a general assignment reporter regarding a potential conflict between her image as a reporter and her activities as president of the Organization for Working Women, an organization devoted to promoting the rights of women in the union movement.

The *Star* became aware of the reporter's feminist activity when a photograph of her addressing a group of union demonstrators was included in the union newspaper. Concerned that the reporter's high profile position would create a perception of bias, should she be required to report on labour relations issues, the *Star* issued a warning letter, advising the reporter that she could either resign her position with the women's organization, apply for a leave of absence from her job, or assume another position in the editorial department, which would entail no labour reporting, until her presidency expired. The reporter chose the last option, but grieved the warning letter.

The arbitrator agreed with the *Star* that it was entitled to take reasonable precautions to preserve its public image from an appearance of bias on the part of its reporter. The arbitrator further concluded that the grievor had an actual conflict within the meaning of the *Star's* conflict of interest guidelines, in that her highly visible position impaired her ability to report impartially on labour matters. However, the arbitrator suggested that the *Star* could simply have refrained from assigning her to cover labour matters, rather than removing her from the general assignment position entirely.

The arbitrator concluded that the *Star* was entitled to leave the warning letter on the grievor's file, but held that the grievor should be permitted to return to general assignment reporting with a restriction that she not report about labour matters.

— From *Labour Arbitration News*

• LETTERS, from page 2

calls and work for commission, like those cosmetics set-ups. Not a philanthropic concern, let alone a feminist method of operating.

I don't want to go into great procedural detail about how ads get accepted, but I don't believe you put them in thoughtlessly or simply because they ask to be put in. I believe you have some kind of policy. Now I feel worse than before.

Fat women in this society are oppressed. We are oppressed at work — denied jobs because we are fat and are thought not to "look good" on the front desk or devalued because we are seen as "fat and lazy" or "fat and stupid." We are the objects of demeaning assumptions ("out of control," "eats all time," "lacks will power") and of hostile comments in public. We are the objects of medical hostility, ranging from verbal attacks to mutilating surgery. These are instances of prejudice and oppression.

In exchange we are offered a way out — lose weight and you'll be OK, lose weight and everyone will like you. Go on one of these diets — so what if they have a failure rate of 95%?

But but. Feminist aren't like this, are we? We don't blame the victims. We're fighting for social change and an end to oppression... aren't we?

Christine Donald
Toronto

Gay Rights Included

Broadside:

I am writing on behalf of a newly formed committee of lesbians, gays and supportive straight friends and colleagues. We have come together to work for the implementation of the equivalent of Ontario's Bill 7, here in Nova Scotia.

As I am sure you are aware, our province has a particularly homophobic government in power at the moment. You may recall our ex-Attorney General Ron Giffin challenging the right of homosexuals to work on our provincial police forces. Whatever one thinks of the

police force as a desirable source of employment, the remarks of Mr. Giffin, largely supported by the Premier and his majority government, sent a shock wave through our community.

Unfortunately, our community does not have a particularly strong history of activism. However, there are some among us who have been working as individuals and in small groups over the years. Also, we did gain the support of many respected activists in other arenas after the "Giffin" attack.

We are now ready to put our collective shoulders behind this issue. We are very anxious to learn as much from the Ontario Coalition's experience as possible. We are sure from what we have read about your struggle in the media that you can provide us information and insights that will better enable us to map out an effective strategy for this province with its particular brand of homophobia, both in and out of the Government.

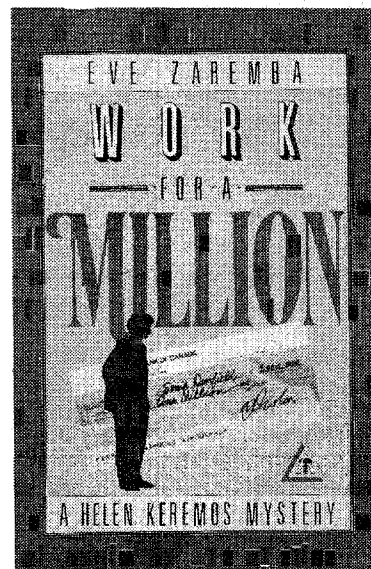
It would therefore be most appreciated if someone from the Coalition, which we realize may no longer be active, or your readers, would take the time to gather and send us whatever information might be available, which would describe the strategies and work of the Coalition: who you approached to endorse Bill 7, how you analyzed the political landscape in Ontario (could you have succeeded at this time without the Liberal/NDP coalition?), how you dealt with the right-wing, etc. We would of course welcome copies of actual briefs/submissions to the government and responses to the right.

We realize this is a lot to ask! We are more than willing to reimburse all printing and mailing costs.

In closing, thank you for taking the time to read and consider this request.

Last but not least, CONGRATULATIONS on Bill 7!!

Maureen Shebib
2432 Robie Street
Halifax B3K 4M6



Mystery Million

TORONTO — Eve Zarembo's new mystery novel *Work for a Million*, launched October 1, brings us back lesbian sleuth Helen Keremos, heroine of Zarembo's earlier mystery *A Reason to Kill*.

Work for a Million is published by Amanita Enterprises, a new publishing venture on the feminist scene. Copies can be ordered direct from the publisher (\$9.95 plus \$1.00 handling, from Amanita Enterprises, Box 784, Stn. P, Toronto, Ontario, M5S 2Z1) or picked up at bookstores across the country.

MOVEMENT COMMENT

The Struggle Continues

by Nancy Nicol

Lynn Lathrop of the Ontario Coalition for Abortion Clinics (OCAC) contends in her Movement Comment (July 1987) that my videotape *The Struggle for Choice* is damaging to the pro-choice campaign! that it distorts OCAC's position through a process of selective editing to fit my narrow political views! that it ignores the contributions of the women's movement! These accusations distort both the intent and the content of the production.

The video is a five-part series which attempts to draw together experiences from across the country spanning the past 15 years. In doing so, it exposes the crisis of access to family planning, abortion, daycare, etc.; the gains and the defeats of the struggle for reproductive freedom; and the relationship of this issue to the general level of working class militancy.

The resultant documentary has been drawn from over 150 hours of audio and videotape interviews gathered over the past 3 years. To a large extent it represents the collective energies of hundreds of individuals. That is the spirit in which the tape was made. It is very much a document of the women's movement in Canada. It is also a document of struggle.

The work does not separate what are work place issues, fights against unemployment, cutbacks, or attacks on unions from issues of women's oppression, but rather attempts to expose both the relationship between oppression and attacks on workers, and the relationship between working class militancy and the fight against oppression. As a historical work it covers a period in which the working class has been through a period of a high level of militancy, peaking in such events as the Common Front strikes in Québec in the early to mid seventies, and a period of defeats exemplified in the work by the defeat of Operation Solidarity in 1983, and the attacks on the Common Front Unions beginning in 1979. Fundamental to this perspective is an understanding that the balance of class forces in society is not fixed, that it shifts historically in relationship to class struggle and the needs of capital.

As well, struggles against oppression are also affected by that dynamic; which is not to say that in a period of a decline of working class militancy that struggle does not go on, and at times make gains, rather that it is important that struggle continues, although building active solidarity is more difficult to-day for the nurses in the community health-care clinics to defend the abortion services when they are being faced with overall cutbacks and layoffs.

As well, it documents a number of important abortion rights struggles from across the country, through interviews with those involved, from the Abortion Caravan in 1970 to groups like the Chilliwack Pro-Choice Alliance who are fighting for access to abortion at the Chilliwack hospital.

Let's be clear, in specifically addressing part

five of the production, which Lynn Lathrop feels unjustly attacks OCAC, that the attacks on the pro-choice campaign do not come from a pro-choice video, no matter how much you disagree with the perspective of the production. The attacks on the pro-choice campaign today are the police raids on the clinic, the prosecutions of the doctors, the picketing and lobbying by the 'pro-life' forces, the treachery of the NDP in prosecuting Dr. Morgentaler in Manitoba, and the lengthy and expensive court cases.

The most controversial point in Lathrop's letter is that she feels that part five of the tape distorts OCAC's position by saying that OCAC has a legal strategy. That part of the tape is about the campaign in Ontario launched with the opening of the Morgentaler clinic, and the attempts to extend the 'clinic' strategy across the country. The chronology of that campaign depicted in the tape is in fact precisely the same as that portrayed by OCAC itself in its theatre piece at a rally last June.

The fact is that to the extent that OCAC has been involved in the defence of the Morgentaler clinic, it has been involved in a legal battle. And, to the extent that OCAC has been involved in a legal battle, it has been faced with difficulties and contradictions as OCAC members are well aware. If I am guilty of distortion by omission, OCAC must also face the fact that I have omitted from the video some of the worst contradictions of the campaign — such as the fact that the clinic is not free, and such as the fact that the defence lawyer for Dr. Morgentaler has been defending union busting on the basis of "individual choice."

The video attempts to show the limitations of the 'clinic' strategy by tracing the campaign and assessing the strategy. It says, "The abortion campaign in Canada has largely come to be symbolised by Dr. Morgentaler's legal battle;" and, "At the centre of Dr. Morgentaler's campaign is a tremendous faith that the state will yield a reform of the abortion law, despite years of prosecution at the hands of the state and its courts." Please note that it doesn't say that, "OCAC is pursuing a legal strategy because it has faith in the state and the courts," as Lynn says in *Broadside*. Of course I am aware that some members of OCAC have wanted this campaign to mobilize mass support.

What is at issue here is the extent to which OCAC has become mired in an extremely long and potentially demobilizing legal battle, and to what extent the campaign has been successful in mobilizing support.

I feel that what support has been gained through the unions has been largely at the level of the union leadership and passive in nature. Unfortunately, the campaign has not built, and does not represent, a strong mass-based women's movement, as OCAC seems to feel. If it did then I have to ask why was the escort service disbanded because, to quote Lathrop, "It was burning out our volunteer coordinators?"



At the Centre de Santé in Montréal: (from left) Lucie Fabien, Caroline Larue, Louise Bouchard, Nancy Nicol.

Further, if the movement is strong then why is it that access to abortion is worse than it was in the mid 70s? These are the hard questions which a serious campaign for women's rights must face. The assessment of any campaign has to be made on the basis of what has been done, not on the basis of what people say are their intentions or what ideas they may have in their heads.

Whatever criticism which I have put forward on the strategies of the campaign has always been put forward from the standpoint of full support for the pro-choice campaign, and a desire to build it. Over the past three years, and in part as a participating member of OCAC, I have argued within the coalition a number of things which were intended to build the coalition and broaden the campaign:

- 1) to retain the escort service, as a means of bringing people into an activist relationship with the coalition;
- 2) to mount active pro-choice picketing at the clinic, both to remove the vociferous harassment of the 'pro-life' presence, as well as a means of involving people in the campaign;
- 3) to relate the struggle to people working in the hospitals and services, by broadening the defence of the clinic to a defence against the erosion of hospital and social services through cutbacks, etc.;
- 4) to defend a position of "Free abortion on demand" in order to relate to the reality of working class women's lives; and

5) to continue building mass demonstrations.

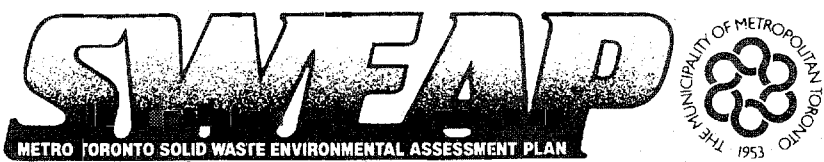
I am raising these points because I am tired of being accused of being some sort of sideline critic with no knowledge of the 'reality' and its difficulties.

It is extremely dangerous for a group of activists not to be open to criticism, and it is no support to the struggle at all if those who are concerned about the outcome of this campaign simply stand by the sidelines and cheerlead, refusing to come to terms with the difficulties we face.

Lathrop accuses me of a 'sectarian' attack on OCAC. That is simply not true. Nowhere in any of the tapes do I say, "Do not build the pro-choice campaign," or "Do not support the clinic — support this or that other group," which would constitute a sectarian statement. The tapes represent a call to support the struggle for women's reproductive freedom.

I do argue that the strategy to win gains in the struggle for women's reproductive freedom must be built through an orientation to the working class as opposed to a legal strategy. That is not a sectarian argument. It is the defence of a set of principles which are, in my opinion, fundamental to building an effective campaign. I have been accused of a 'sectarian' attack because I am a member of the International Socialists. It is quite simply red-baiting.

Nancy Nicol is the director of The Struggle for Choice.



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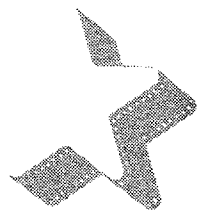
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Please send resume by Friday, October 9, 1987 to: THE HIRING COMMITTEE, JANE-FINCH CONCERNED CITIZENS ORGANIZATION, P.O. BOX 2448, STATION "C," DOWNSVIEW, ONTARIO, M3N 2S1.



Positive View

by Joyce Mason

The 12th Festival of Festivals has just ended in Toronto. I have watched films 19 of the last 21 days (press screenings began on August 31); and have undoubtedly seen in excess of 40 films (though I shall not pause now to count). And yet, as I gathered together my notes, press releases and press kits, in preparation for this review/overview of the Festival, I was haunted by a little voice chanting, "Damn, I meant to see that one!" And so, I begin with a disclaimer to my conscience, to you the readers, and to the films not noted here: I saw as many of the over 240 films (from 37 countries) as personally possible. To make my prejudices known: I prioritized films programmed by Kay Armatage, films by women, and Canadian fiction features when making choices about which films to see at any given moment. Experience has taught me that I am more likely to find these films interesting. I did not see as many of the New Asian Cinema program as I would have liked. Taking these viewing limitations into consideration and my own particular tastes: I tend to like quietly personal narratives, sensuously intellectual documentaries, cinematic witticisms and densely intelligent and/or lively scripts. I like films that are politically sophisticated, which exhibit a strong love of the medium and a conscious manipulation of it, as well as filmmakers who can expose to me their love for their characters. I provide these predispositions as the grains of salt with which you may read the following commentaries:

Overall, my experience of this year's festival was overwhelmingly positive. I walked out of only one film: *Sierra Leone*, by Uwe Schrader (West Germany) — a film which I experienced as tenaciously and ploddingly ugly for the 30 to 40 minutes that I watched it. I hated only one other (though I managed to stay to the end of its 13 minutes), *Brief Childhood, Long Goodbye* — great title for a predictable, badly shot and ugly film by Dieter Schidor. The experience of that short further confirmed my distaste for David Overbey's West German programming tastes.

Schrader (*Sierra Leone*) followed the relationships of two (I believe there was to be a third in the last part of the film) women with an emotionally hostile, repressed and violent man. But for reasons which remain mysterious to me, she did so from the point of view of the man, who was so relentlessly despicable that I finally and happily chose to leave.

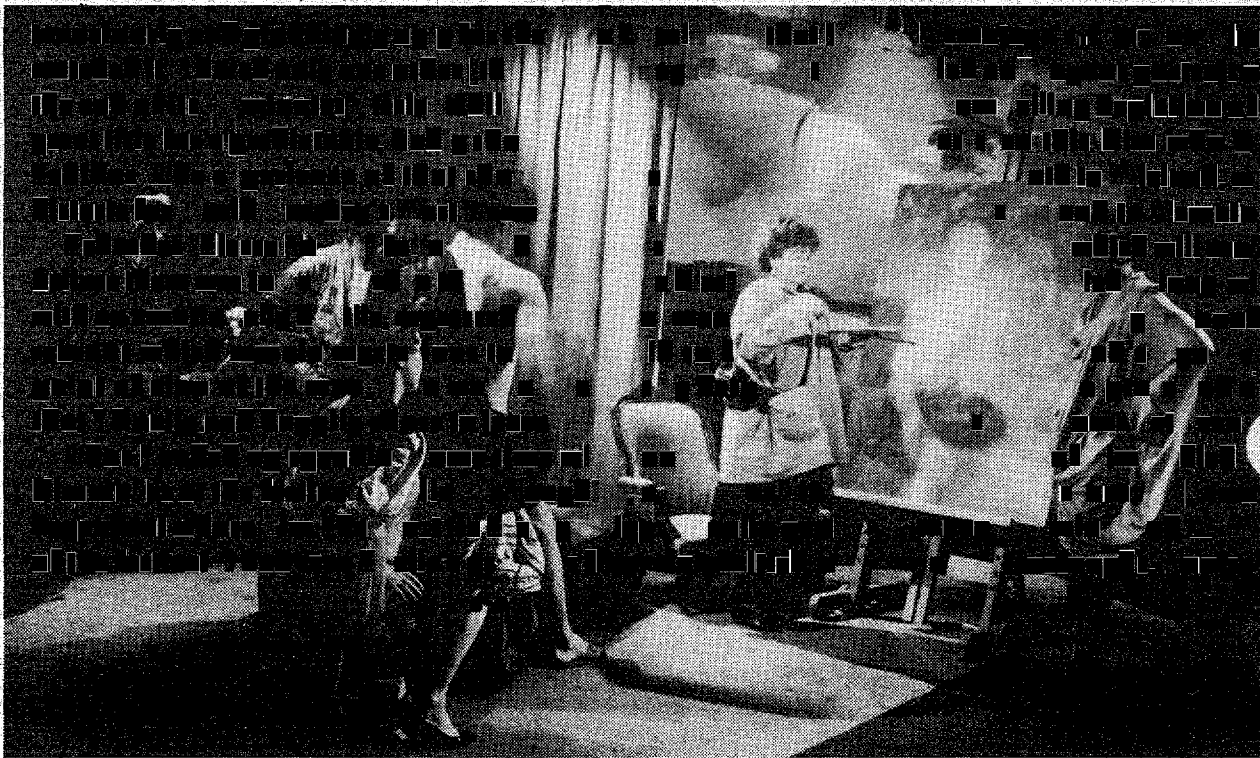
Thus I ended up spending some time with another woman filmmaker at the festival: Sheila McLaughlin, a New York independent whose film *She Must Be Seeing Things* was also part of the festival. I had seen Sheila's previous film, *Committed*, a

later. She keeps her options (and herself) open — seemingly incapable of not responding, of feeling/saying "No," she only defers: "Call me when you're in New York!" In her film within the film, the convent novice who escapes and disguises herself as a man in order to move freely through her 16th century world, provides metaphor and an indication of her own tentative exploration of her need for role-playing in order to move comfortably through society, and the coupled fear of exposing (and, even, of knowing) one's true self. It is perhaps the "separateness" of these two women and their respective struggles to know and keep the other and to hide the self that lent the film its quiet poignancy.

Among the documentaries that I was able to see during the festival, the two which I will note here were both outstanding: *Landslides* (75 min.), a feature experimental documentary by two Australian women filmmakers, Sara Gibson and Susan Lambert. The film is about "the body" and the title gives some indication of its sensibility and aesthetic. The body is seen and heard in all its metaphoric, symbolic and metaphysical implications and the film is constructed in slippery, associative and contrapuntal rhythms. The soundtrack and image are only rarely and momentarily synched as what is observed and what is heard operate on simultaneous levels to mirror the imaginative scope of the filmmakers' subject. Questions of the self, the other, the female subject (viewer/author/spectator), apparent through culturally specific dichotomies (inside/outside, scientific/personal experience) are intellectually exposed and emotionally revealed in beautiful and unsettling ways. This was an immensely intelligent and awesome film on a subject of immense and far reaching implications in (I believe) every aspect of feminist theory and practice. It was, for me, the most significant film of the festival.

The second documentary that I must mention here was Kay Armatage's *Artist on Fire* (54 min.). Armatage's playful, studied and joyous portrait of the artist as an inspired feminist is a compelling depiction of Joyce Wieland. I know no one who has seen this film who has not felt inspired — and this is a tribute both to Wieland, whose humour and playful persona fill the screen and to Armatage, who has so skillfully chosen environments which will evoke Joyce's charm, vitality and conviction and which, along with an intertwining of richly varied voiceovers and sync soundtracks, provides many routes of access to Wieland's significant body of work (paintings, films, drawings, sculpture and objects).

Crossing over between documentary and dramatic were another pair of films which I personally found both breathtaking and wild. *Francesca* (Verena Rudolph, Federal Republic of Germany, 93 min.) and *A Winter Tan* (collectively directed by Jackie Burroughs, Louise Clark, John Frizzell, John Walker,

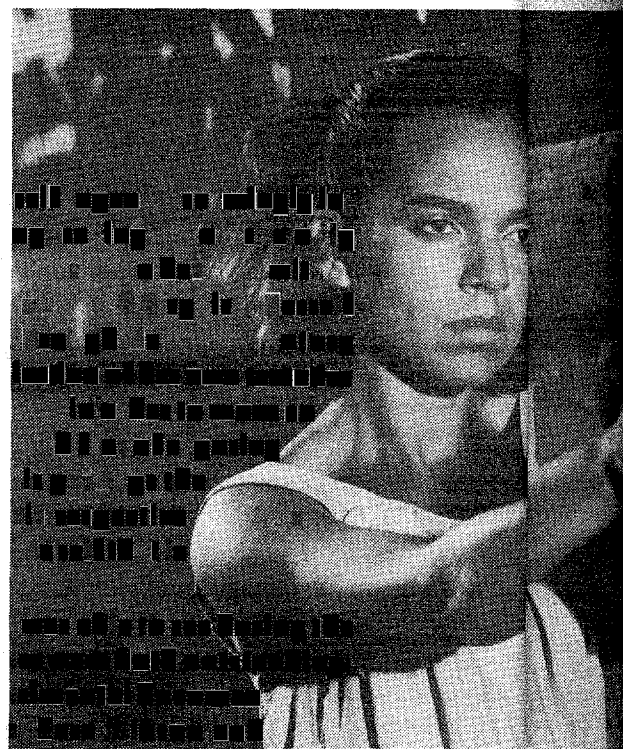


Wieland at work in Kay Armatage's award-winning *Artist on Fire*

coolly compelling and formal depiction of the Frances Farmer story, in which she had played the lead as well as co-directed with Lynne Tillman: and was therefore intrigued to see what this film would be. *She Must Be Seeing Things* was a film about a quite ordinary, if idiosyncratic, relationship between two women (a filmmaker and a lawyer) and the emotional obsessions and confusions which both disrupt and determine its dynamic. The film depicted and explored each woman's desire for and fear of honesty, compulsion to play roles which might please the other and/or obscure the vulnerability beneath the surface. At one point in the narrative the lawyer says, referring to her paranoid jealous fantasies after having read an old journal of the filmmaker recounting various sexual liaisons with men: "I wanted to possess her, and I have ended up being possessed." Possessed by her own projected fantasies and fears; while the filmmaker pursues her own obsession with gender role playing, she continuously responds to the desires of others. Both in relation to the man from her upstate screening and her love, she remains responsive, available — if not now, maybe

Aerlyn Weissman, Canada 91 min.). *Francesca* is a fictional documentary tracing the life of Francesca Aramonte, also known as Francesca degli Angeli. Francesca is a completely fictitious character and yet the film, shot completely in documentary style, reveals her life through on-camera interviews with those who knew her. The film is a delightfully playful and yet serious commentary on the creation of cultural mythologies and the character pursued by the interviewees (the wondrous, much envied, much beloved Francesca) is in the end less interesting than the world through which she passes — as the filmmaker's obvious sensual delight in the richness of her "created" interviewees takes over the substance of the film. The cinematography is lush, the settings varied and absurd, the characters eccentric and vital. One sequence, a party/reunion of Cine-Cite extras is justifiably noted by programmers and reviewers alike as a tour-de-force and would by itself justify the film; but the film manages to maintain its delightful absurd realism throughout, providing an overall effect on this viewer of absolute delight.

Festival of Festivals



Angela Roa as Eva Guerillera

A Winter Tan also transgresses the bounds of both documentary and drama, albeit in a completely different direction. heroine of the story, Maryse Holder, speaks directly to camera and the narrative which unfolds from the first person kind of documentary travelogue is hilariously and painfully real; but the film itself is a dramatic re-creation/rendition based on Maryse's letters to her friend Edith (published as *Sorrow Words*, Grove Press). Burroughs playing Maryse, gives a tour-de-force performance full of manic despair raw sexual energy. Maryse is not an admirable character — alcoholic, emotionally and sexually desperate, often sink into self-pitying and self-deprecating behaviour, she has nevertheless a strangely compelling and aggressively precise desire for self-expression and an extraordinary degree of insight into sometimes desperate, sometimes compulsive forays into depravity. She careens between a childlike delight in her own being in her right to be as bad as possible while yet to be loved; and adopted self-destructive romanticism (she even refers to the exploration and her writing project in terms of the female polymath Lowry) and ultimate disbelief that she will be loved in state (her obsessive anticipation/fear of abandonment). *Winter Tan* is filled with all of the cultural contradictions of quality, the economic imperialism of vacationing northern racism, masochism, sexism, mutual exploitation and love, one unusually gritty and literate woman's attempt to get through them. Hers is not a pretty life story; but it has produced an unusually significant, rich and powerful film.

While my main assignment vis-à-vis *Broadside* were women filmmakers, there were a number of films by men (in addition to *A Winter Tan*, which had two men among its five-person directorial collective) included in this year's program which deserve, in my opinion, particular attention and encouragement. Three of these, *Family Viewing* (Atom Egoyan, Canada 86 min.), *The Colour of Destiny* (Jorge Duran, Brazil, 86 min.), and *The Critical Years* (Gerald L'Ecuyer, Canada 86 min.) explored individual male psyches in relation to their respective cultural and psychoanalytic symbolologies. Personal expression, family relationships, struggles toward self-understanding/self-revelation and the meaning of relationship responsibility were thematic concerns shared in each of the strong, nuanced and personally committed films.

In *Life Classes*, his third feature dramatic film, Bill MacLivrays succeeded in drawing a fully-realized and complex character as the focus for his narrative. The story explores various levels and layerings of cultural life in Nova Scotia, from pirated American television, to the Gaelic language and so on of Cape Breton as well as the presence of the international world as represented by N.S.C.A.D. and its New York and European invited lecturers/performers. The film also addresses quite literally the role of woman as object of the gaze (Nancy Cameron, played by Jacinta Cormier, works as an art model) and as subject (she abandons her paint-by-numbers hobby and gradually explores her own vision and ability to express it through large figure drawings). This film provides a sensitive affirmation of a woman learning to take control and confidence in her own life and an intriguing understanding of her relationships to her own father and to the father of her child — relationships both loving and independent which refuse to succumb to cliché.

Taking Care (Canada, 90 min.) is the long awaited second feature by Clarke Mackey, who gave up filmmaking for many years after his first youthful and acclaimed venture in 1971, *The Only Thing You Know*. Finally, 16 years later, he returned like a prodigal son, providing a sensitively executed fiction with an all-too-real-life scenario of looking for a nun to blame for unusually high mortality rate in one ward of a Toronto hospital. The film provides an accessibly human and thoughtful take on the idea of institutional irresponsibility and sexist/hierarchical condescension within the medical profession and so

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Is: Buried Treasures



boyfriend of the Montréal journalist, whose brief presence in the script and film appears to serve no useful function, and a somewhat grating performance by Carmen Ferland as Louise, the journalist; marking Levitin as a capable and committed filmmaker to watch!

Finally and briefly, three of the many other films that I feel glad to praise and recommend:

Diary of My Loves (Márta Mészáros, Hungary, 144 min.) is the second in a trilogy of autobiographic films. The story traces Juli's determination and education as filmmaker in a Hungary whose history, like her own, is inextricably intertwined with that of the U.S.S.R. This film renders a personal emotional reality in a clear political historical context with refinement, tenderness and honesty.

The last two films which I will look at here are *Rachel River* (Sandy Smolan, U.S.A., 90 min.) and *Prefab Story* (or "Panel Story," Vera Chytilová, Czechoslovakia, 100 min.). Two very different cultures and sensibilities, yet both trace the stories not so much of individuals as of relationships within a community. The American film, holds a much more conventional structure using the character of the community radio reporter as the thread by which to weave a tale of relationship and community, filled with nostalgia for an idealized and romanticized past. But the characters are so warmly drawn that its conventionality is forgivable (for those of us with a need to forgive the conventional!). *Prefab Story* on the other hand is wildly innovative, both structurally and aesthetically. The film, suppressed since it was made in 1979 and just now released, is a hilarious and giddy depiction of a disjointed and fabricated community of

Mixed Blessings

by Susan G. Cole

Toronto's Festival of Festivals can usually be counted on to provide filmgoers with a clear sense of the status of women's filmmaking worldwide. Thanks in large measure to Kay Armatage's careful programming, almost everything of interest that women have written, produced and directed in the past year lights up the festival screen at some point during the festival binge. The barometer reading this year was, unfortunately, not especially high. There were some wonderful signs to be sure, but there were disappointments too: Doris Dorrie's *Paradise* follows up *Men*, last year's situation comedy with a situation tragedy that breastbeats for too long. Dorrie is unquestionably talented and there is a great film in here somewhere but such perceptions only intensify the letdown of *Paradise*. Sheila McLaughlin on the other hand, shows no sign of similar talent, and her lesbian filmmaker's inside joke *She Must Be Seeing Things* was mad-deningly inconsequential. *Manuela's Loves*, by Genevieve Lefebvre, a film that promised some insight into passionate friendship, was, alas, never screened.

But *I've Heard the Mermaids Singing*, the hit of Cannes and the subject of countless critical raves, is a delight. The story is of Polly (played by Sheila McCarthy), an office temp worker assigned to a downtown Toronto art gallery. The curator is the fascinating Gabrielle (Paule Baillargeon) to whom Polly becomes attached. This is a movie written and directed by a very smart woman who in this small gem manages to comment on competition in the art world, the frustrations of people who long to create something beautiful and how a small crush can get out of hand. Patricia Rozema's previous short film *Passion: A Letter in 16 mm* contained similar themes but with *Mermaids*, Rozema has lightened up considerably (Polly's first visit to a Japanese restaurant is especially memorable). Don't be put off by the title. Although it is meant to evoke Eliot's literary loser, the mermaids do sing for Polly, beautifully.

This is a movie with explicit lesbian content, which is astonishing considering that it won the Young Directors Award at the film festival at Cannes, has received more ink in the press than any other Canadian movie this year and yet not one critic has mentioned the L-word. It is also a product of Canada, which is not exactly the most likely place for a sympathetic, let alone funny, cinematic reading of lesbianism. But there it is. See it.

More good news. Suzanne Schiffman, the former protégé of François Truffaut, has brought us *The Sorceress*, a feminist take on the ancient legend of Saint Guinefort. The film's story is based on three slim paragraphs in the writing of Etienne de Bourbon, a Dominican friar who was sent out by the Pope in the 13th century to ferret out heretics in the small villages of France. In one remote spot, he encounters the mysterious Elda, who reaps the forest's healing secrets and who maintains the shrine of St. Guinefort, a dog known to protect small children. According to Etienne's value system, worshipping animals (invariably inhabited by the devil) as a source of spiritual anything is definitely heresy. Etienne orders Elda to be executed.

The film, co-written by Schiffman with art historian Pamela Berger, is meticulous in detail, but quietly so. The movie never gets bogged down by the weight of its historical accuracy. On the contrary, it crackles with the tension between the male-dominated church and the women-centred arts that had remarkable stamina in the face of the Church's onslaught. Also embedded in the scenario is sharp comment on the Church monopoly of literacy and its hypocritical lack of interest in the sleazy exploits of the feudal lords. Though flawed by a fairy tale ending, this is a remarkably assured first feature, a wonderful movie made with the kind of passionate feminist commitment that never gets in the way of the story-telling.

Diametrically opposed in sensibility is *Kamikaze Hearts*, Juliet Bashore's ultra-contemporary documentary of a slice of the lives of two pornography performers, Sharon Mitchell and Tigre Mennett. Tigre and Mitch are lovers, but Mitch is hard to pin down because outside of the frame of the camera she has no identity. Just as film cannot exist without light, Mitch can't exist without the camera. The movie traces Tigre's attempt to connect with Mitch and tracks her inevitable realization that everything Mitch does is a performance; their relationship is just a scripted scenario.

Bashore insists that this is not a movie about pornography, it is a movie about people, but the comment only recalls Donna Deitch's similarly ingenuous assertion that her film *Desert Hearts* was about people, not lesbians. *Kamikaze Hearts* is definitely a film about the pornography business — who controls it and who profits from it — and frankly speaking, Tigre and Mitch cannot be counted among those in control here. In one extraordinary sequence an aspiring model who wants to keep her clothes on is coaxed to undress by a pornographer. She insists she won't take off her clothes and that her boyfriend told her not to trust anyone who wanted to take her picture. As the pornographer fidgets with her dress to expose some part of her breast, he asks what she thinks now. Her words are painfully evocative: "When I'm with him I trust him," she says, "and when I'm with you I trust you." The film is not easy to watch.

Drugs are featured prominently and this is another unsettling aspect of the film. The drug issue is especially unnerving because Bashore allegedly made this movie with the assistance of its two stars Tigre and Mitch, whose last scene together portrays

• continued next page



A fantasy from *I've Heard the Mermaids Singing*. Paule Baillargeon (left) and Sheila McCarthy

at large. This is a straightforward film, in which a story is well told, characters well drawn. The underlying political analysis manages to be simultaneously progressive, sophisticated and accessible. No small achievement!

Among this long-awaited crop of encouragingly interesting and good Canadian features, were four directed by women (including the collectively directed *A Winter Tan*). Mireille Dancsereau's *Le Sourd dans la ville* (*Deaf to the City*), based on the novel by Marie-Claire Blais, I unfortunately missed and therefore cannot review here. Susan Cole pays tribute to the delights of *Mermaids*, elsewhere in this "festival feature"; and so here I will note *Mermaids* only by way of counterpoint to *Eva: Guerrillera*.

Where *Mermaids* is a quiet and personal story filled with delight, fantasy and the gentle exploration of creativity and the human heart; *Eva: Guerrillera* is a politically expansive and internationally engaged narrative, exploring the human face of revolutionary determination in varied historical and social contexts (from San Salvador to Montréal). The story of Eva, in a beautifully contained performance by Angela Roa, unfolds with sympathy and engaged intelligence in an extremely well-crafted film. For me, the only weak links in this first fiction feature by Montréal filmmaker Jackie Levitin were the piggish

apartment buildings (in various stages of development) and the various eccentric connections made between those who live there. The camera careens and reels, as residents scramble over the muddy furrows left by the heavy machinery through a community under construction. Filled with cutting digs at the housing crisis, corruption and various individual attempts at survival, security, love, pleasure and community in the midst of mayhem, this film is a delightful interweaving of narratives while exhibiting a wild, varied and controlled command of the medium.

Neither my viewing capacity, time, nor the space allocated here allow me to mention all the films worthy of it (either negatively or positively) and so my apologies to those I have ignored. My congratulations to Atom Egoyan who won the \$25,000 Toronto City Award for excellence in filmmaking, to Kay Armatage, whose film was named as best documentary in the festival, and to the Canadian film community at large, whose showing at this year's festival was definitely the most exciting yet!

Joyce Mason is a Toronto freelance writer/editor, currently working on both short and feature fiction filmscripts.

Sharon Mitchell appears as herself in *Kamikaze Hearts*

their descent into hell via sex and mainlined cocaine. Mitch points to her syringe and says in her stoned deadpan: "I fucked her with my dick!" At that point, and it is a crucial one, we lose sense of whether we are witnessing a collaboration between filmmaker and subject or exploitation of the subject at the hands of the filmmaker. Bashore herself may not know the difference. She is curiously apolitical and apparently unaware of the political and ethical issues behind documentary filmmaking. She is so accustomed to being behind the camera that she hasn't dealt with the power of that particular position.

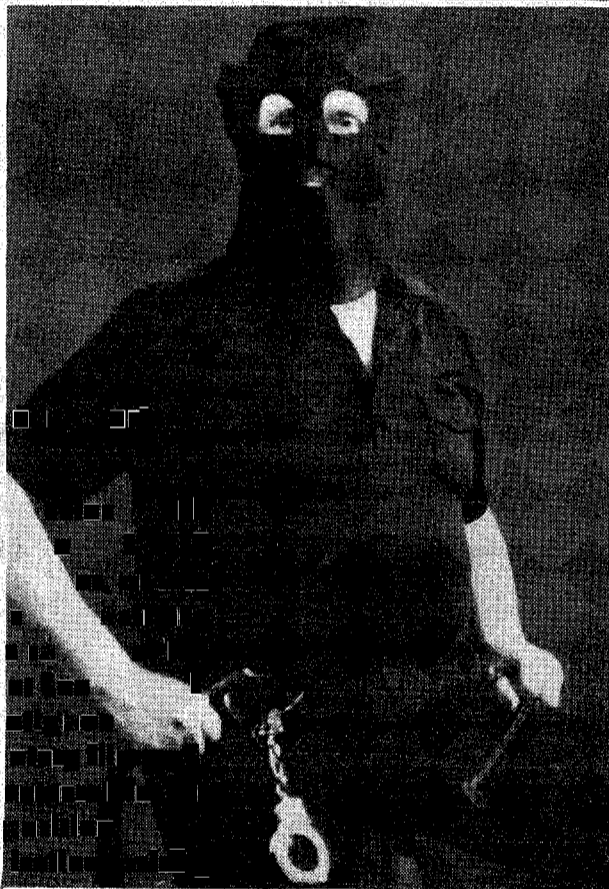
She is also, if the question period was any indication, weirdly ignorant of the deep division the pornography issue has wrought in the women's movement. While that may colour someone's view of the film, it also means that her view of pornography was utterly uncoloured as she went into the project. She shows us what she saw and the result is one of the strongest anti-pornography films ever made. It will undoubtedly be lambasted, for being tawdry, for failing Tigre and Mitch, for showing no possibilities for empowerment, for keeping a distance, for being decidedly unerotic. But somewhere in *Kamikaze Hearts* there is a truth we have to face.

Nina Menkes' film *Magdalena Viraga* also deals with the abuses in systems of prostitution, but with a completely different energy. Menkes' approach is much more stylized, and where Bashore's treatment is kinetic, her camera careening through the sex industry's outposts, Menkes' form is mercilessly static. The story is of the prostitute Ida (played by the director's sister Tinka) who has been accused of murdering one of her clients and has been thrown into prison where nuns and crucifixes hover everywhere. But the prison she has left behind, the one in the East LA hotel room where she relentlessly plies her trade, is much more oppressive. Using the poetry of Anne Sexton, Mary Daly and Gertrude Stein, and using the camera more as a recorder of tableau than action, *Magdalena Viraga* is an unforgiving portrait of abuse. As Menkes' camera trains on Ida's expressionless face, yet another John rocks back and forth on top of her. No other film has conveyed the sheer monotony of sex work so convincingly. *Magdalena Viraga* will never find a niche in your neighbourhood theatre, but it is a strangely beautiful film with a great deal of power.

Germany's ZDF TV provided seven internationally known women filmmakers with a chance to produce a 20-minute film on one of the seven deadly sins. The result is *Seven Women, Seven Sins*, a cinephile's smorgasbord and an interesting, though uneven, survey of women's cinema.

Helke Sander's *Gluttony* casts Adam and Eve as the first casualties of excess and the last shot of a modern-day Eve recalls God's curse and centuries of sexual oppression. By contrast, Bette Gordon's *Greed* seems a bit off the mark. Gordon may have needed an excuse to deal with prostitution, but she chose the wrong context here. Valie Export (aptly identified in the film as Value Export) shows what happens when you put a price tag on Lust. *Envy*, by Laurence Gavron, is about the wishful thinking of a man who, unfortunately for him, gets his wish. The piece is an oddity in this survey because it is not a "women's film" per se. It contains no allusions to the formal issues, nor does it explore themes we would expect women to take on. It is merely a piece about envy that happens to be by a woman and intriguing if only for that reason. Ulrike Ottinger's *Pride*, the closing segment of the film, is an elliptical commentary on militarism.

Easily the most controversial of the segments is Chantal Ackerman's. Her critics must have been dismayed to discover that her topic was sloth, for no one's style is more static and no one can make 20-minutes of film seem quite so empty. This segment, featuring Ackerman herself trying to figure out whether it is worth it to get out of bed, triggered a stampede for the exits, a typical reaction to Ackerman, who prefers statements about film to statements about life. But she deserves a place in this particular catalogue, and at least you can discover her work via 20-minutes of film instead of 90.

The sadist in Maxie Cohen's "Anger," a segment from *Seven Women, Seven Sins*

The centrepiece for *Seven Women, Seven Sins* is Maxie Cohen's devastating *Anger*. Cohen advertised in the Village Voice for angry people who wanted to tell their stories on film. Face to face with the camera, a sadist, a rape victim, a policeman wrongly accused of corruption, punksters, two improbable painters, and more unlikely characters spew, confess and rage in film footage that is rivetting. There is a feature film in Cohen's idea, and happily Cohen is working on a screenplay for

Tinka Menkes in *Magdalena Viraga*

a film about the making of *Anger*. Although Cohen does not like to hear it (she was in Toronto to promote the film as a whole), *Anger* by itself makes *Seven Women, Seven Sins* worth seeing.

Marta Meszaros' *Diary for My Loves* is the second in a trilogy of autobiographical films tracing the creative and political growth of a young filmmaker in post-war Hungary. The film, episodic in structure, is as ambitious as the filmmaker whose story it tells, recounting the political shift from Stalinism to the Hungarian revolution of 1956. The politics may be unfamiliar to many of us who are better informed on events this side of the Iron Curtain, but the situation of Juli, who wants to make films at a time when women did not do such things and who knows that success comes only to those with a deft political touch is completely recognizable. This is the kind of movie that prints the name of the director indelibly in the viewer's consciousness.

This was a festival in which a number of filmmakers made startling feature film debuts and the fact that *Mermaids* was Rozema's first feature and *Sorceress*, Schiffman's first as well, augurs for a surge in women's cinema. Add to the list of surprisingly strong first features Heidi Ulmke's *Lock and Seal*, the story of Babsie (Christine Carstens) and Michael (Karl-Heinz Maslo). He's in the prison for men, she's in the prison for women. They've connected via letters and photographs smuggled through the prison laundry and sustain a pen friendship that blossoms into a love affair, albeit epistolary. Inevitably, they want to meet each other, and the film traces their attempts to arrange permission for a visit. *Lock and Seal* is a low key study of the way prison conditions distort emotions and expectations, for after virtually brawling through the prison bureaucracy, where rules are rules, the encounter Babsie and Michael took such pains to arrange turns out to be a bitter letdown.

But the real strength of the film lies in Ulmke's authentic portrait of prison life, especially conditions in the women's prison. Not since *P4W* has a film portrayed women in prison with such care and with so little exploitation. There are no lesbian viragos out for blood, though there are lesbian undertones; no sadistic screws, but instead guards who can't decide whether to be sympathetic or to go by the book; no drugs, but a hilarious distilling process that does convey the desperation of inmates looking to get high. This is not a deep meditation on the criminal justice system. *Lock and Seal* is a slim movie but it promises future wonders from Ulmke, who plainly knows what she's doing and just needs something a little more substantial to sink her teeth into.

As usual, the festival featured a number of superb experimental films rich in ideas and stunning imagery. Brenda Longfellow's *Our Marilyn*, a study of how the person and iconography of *our* Marilyn (Bell) compares with the person and iconography of *their* Marilyn (Monroe), is an example of the kind of filmmaking to emerge from Toronto's art community — intelligent and affectionate. Longfellow has dug up splendid archival footage and combined it with shadowy images of Bell as she completes her historic swim across Lake Ontario. The success of the film can be measured by the ease with which Monroe's image fades by comparison to that of the heroic Bell. In Longfellow's hands, experimental is by no means a synonym for unwatchable.

Usually, when we are considering the grand subject Women and Film, we tend to refer to films by directors who provide us with some insight into women's experience and history or who give us new ideas about how to define a women's film aesthetic. The films reviewed here fall into either category: *I've Heard the Mermaids Singing*, *Lock and Seal*, *The Sorceress*, *Diary for My Loves* and *Kamikaze Hearts* have feminist content, while *Magdalena Viraga* and *Our Marilyn* pursue the formal issues that feminists have spelled out over the past ten years. For future (and basically apolitical) reference though, watch for the films of American Penelope Spheeris, whose punk rock *Dudes*, geared for the teenaged market, may have no feminism, but has enormous entertainment value. If Spheeris grows up for her next movie, it will be a knockout. And pay special attention to a film called *Rachel River*, an elegant foray into small town midwestern America, written by Judith Guest and based on the short stories of Carol Bly. Humanist maybe, but extremely affecting, adding warmth and integrity to the women's content at the Festival of Festivals. ●

ARTS

A Living Language

by Betsy Nuse

One of Canada's newest feminist presses, Sister Vision: Black Women and Women of Colour Press based here in Toronto, recently published *Lionheart Gal: Life Stories of Jamaican Women*. This substantial and attractive book is a collection of narratives by the members of Jamaica's Sistren Theatre Collective collected and edited by Honor Ford Smith, the group's artistic director. In separate chapters, 15 women each talk about their lives: children, families and lovers, work and relationships, the specific influences of public social programs and politics on "ordinary" lives.

Here is a wealth of raw material for feminist analysis of any of these topics. Each story was shaped from taped interviews, group discussion, editing, drafting and reworking collectively. These respectful techniques give each piece a unique voice that combines the vitality of speech with the focus of carefully edited writing. Most of the stories are told in Patwah (what academics call "creole"), the living language Jamaican people created for themselves apart from colonizers' "Standard English." According to Honor Ford Smith in the book's introduction, "Patwah is still regarded as 'not respectable' or at best 'inappropriate in certain circles'... Yet we all know that Jamaican people reflect all the time in their heads or in conversation in Patwah... we hope *Lionheart Gal* makes a case for prose writing in Patwah."

It does, as eloquently as it makes a case for the publication of more work by Black women and women of colour in Canada. For me, a white North American woman, the language was unfamiliar. But the book's good glossary helped immensely, and soon I was absorbed in the thoughtfulness, determination and courage expressed so directly in these stories. These women's experiences have expanded my understanding of women, race and class beyond white, middle-class ways more familiar to me.

But before the publication of *Lionheart Gal*, women living in the Caribbean and Caribbean women living in Canada have had few published records of their own lives, struggles and achievements. The work of Black women and women of colour has remained on the

margin of Canada's small and larger commercial publications.

To begin to remedy this situation, Makeda Silvera and Stephanie Martin founded Sister Vision Press in 1984. Makeda is a writer and editor with years of experience with Black community publications in Toronto and

Stephanie is an artist/photographer: the perfect combination of talents to start a publishing house. They were subsequently joined by Sharon Fernandez who is presently on a leave of absence from the collective.

As the Sister Vision collective states: "Publishing is a powerful medium and the written word influences and conditions the way people think and what they know. By the absence of our voices in Canadian feminist literature, the publishing industry reflects and perpetuates the racism, classism and sexism in our society. We believe that it is important to encourage more Black women to write and record their life experiences, providing an understanding and knowledge of our lives and history.

"In naming ourselves, we made a conscious political decision to distinguish between Black women and women of colour. This is an important distinction because Black women have had a particular historical experience in the world: the experience of slavery and its aftermath. While needing to focus on the conse-

quences of that history we will not be limited by it, and will continue to recognize our commonalities and share the writings of our Native Sisters, our Asian Sisters and others who define themselves as women of colour."

Sister Vision Press has been in contact with similar publishing groups in other countries. Kitchen Table Press in the United States offered advice and early encouragement. They have also been in touch with Sheba Press in England and Kali Press in India.

"We are actively working with women writing in the Caribbean. We want to continue to make those links strong. *Lionheart Gal* is the result of our efforts to publish those voices of our sisters, and the first in our Caribbean women series.

"The response to *Lionheart Gal* and to our other books by Canadian writers such as Himani Bannerji, Audri Zhina Mandiela and Afua Cooper has been positive."

But in return for the support they lend their authors and communities, Sister Vision needs the support of the wider feminist community in Canada. First, the press needs volunteers willing to learn and practise some of the less glamorous tasks of publishing like pasteup and proofreading, to help with fundraising, booktables and events. Second, the press needs money. Book publishing is costly. At the moment, there are various interesting manuscripts — among them poetry and stories for children and a lesbians of colour anthology — that can be manufactured and distributed more quickly once cash is in the bank to pay the printer's bills. The press welcomes supporting members (\$15/year employed, \$10/year unemployed) as well as donations in any amount.

Women of colour have been asking white Canadian feminists for a while to recognize their strong and different voices. With *Lionheart Gal*, Sister Vision Press has set for us all — Black women, women of colour and white women — a wonderful example. Those whose lives mirror closely the women of Sistren can feel pride and excitement that their faces, hearts and words have been immortalized in ink. Those from other cultural communities can discover common concerns and different details that can disarm racism by painting "strangers" as full human beings. We should all read, study and enjoy books like *Lionheart Gal*, and we should all support efforts like Sister Vision's to get these words in print.

(Copies of *Lionheart Gal* and other Sister Vision publications are available for sale in Toronto at Third World Books and Crafts, the Toronto Women's Bookstore, D.E.C. Bookroom, the York University and University of Toronto bookstores. To contact Sister Vision, volunteer, send a membership or contribution, write Sister Vision Press, P.O. Box 217, Station E, Toronto, Ontario, M6H 4E2.)

Betsy Nuse is a Toronto bibliophile.

Westword III: Retreating Forward

by Ann Decter

While flying into Vancouver, I was reading *In the Feminine*, the proceedings of the 1983 Women and Words Conference. On the small screen, Michael J. Fox revealed that the secret of his success was to co-opt two women, one with brains and one with money. The woman sitting next to me spoke about how she had restructured her life since the death of her husband. And I wondered what WestWord III, Women and Words' third annual summer writing retreat, would be like.

In a word, it was fantastic. Thirty-six women writers gathered from across the country to write in a feminist environment for two weeks. This year was the third year that BC Women and Words has run WestWord. Four courses were offered, Fiction/Theory with Nicole Brossard, Playwriting with Margaret Hollingsworth, Poetry with Betsy Warland and Creative Documentary with Myrna Kostash. Classes were held in the mornings, instructor and student readings in the evenings, and afternoons were free for writing and one-to-one sessions with instructors.

From the opening barbecue to the closing party, WestWord built in intensity and unity. Superb organization provided typewriter rentals and on-hand photocopying, and kept a flow of students' writing appearing under my door from the second morning until the last day. Where else would I be able to take a break

for coffee, watch five minutes of *Firewords* in the lounge, chat with Nicole Brossard in the hall and come back to my room to find another five pages of innovative feminist writing slipped under the door? The sound of women typing into the future was music to my ears.

Yet, as a Torontonion, I felt a certain embarrassment. Feminist publishing thrives in Ontario. But while feminist writers in BC are running WestWord and putting out (f.)lip, and feminist writers in Montréal are organizing the Third International Feminist Book Fair for next June, feminist writers in Toronto have not been able to form a coherent community. Can we do more for ourselves together? Is it time to try again?

WestWord was not just about writing. It was about feminist writers across the country knowing we are not working alone, although many of us are working in isolation. It was about accomplished writers taking time to pass on skills and vision to writers who wanted to learn. About collaboration, communication, verification and strength in numbers. And it was about living, for two invaluable weeks, in a world guided by feminist consciousness.

WestWord will happen again. Check it out. Support it. It's a world of women who will support you.

Ann Decter works at the Women's Press in Toronto.

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Diana Braithwaite: Blues Magician

by Deena Rasky

Diana Braithwaite has a great voice — filled with sparkle, soul, laughter and great beauty. Whether she's singing or acting, her voice leaves a deep, lasting impression on her audience. Even though she has performed in Amsterdam, Paris, Chicago and elsewhere, Diana Braithwaite has yet to become a household name. It hasn't been easy, but she keeps plugging away, recently making a tape of her music, working as artistic director of the Imani Theatre Ensemble (originally the Pelican Players), and numerous other ventures.

A third-generation Canadian, Braithwaite was born in Toronto into a household of five brothers and sisters, grandparents, other relatives and visiting friends from Montréal and elsewhere. The family piano was very much a part of the household with sing-along sessions every Sunday with the home "community." Diana's grandmother in particular encouraged her to play the piano and sing. Being one of the younger members in the family, Diana would listen to her older brother's Nancy Wilson, David Clayton Thomas and jazz records. She loved watching her sisters dance to the Supremes with their friends in a row, in front of the living room mirror, inventing steps to such hits as "Baby, Baby, Where Did Our Love Go?" Lots of happy, musical times as a child with the family.

It wasn't as much fun in school, when she and her siblings were the only Black pupils. "I remember there would be Tarzan movies, movies about Africa shown at school. It was so embarrassing to a child when they would show women with no tops on. Everyone in class would laugh or say, 'Ha, ha, is that your mother?'" she recalled. The family was taught to wave whenever they saw another Black person on the street, because chances were you knew them or would get to know them at a Black Church or other community function.

In public school, Diana and two of her brothers formed a trio, singing at weddings, variety shows, hospitals, wherever there was a call. Soon, their reputation spread and during her high school years, Diana found herself musically in demand both inside and outside of school. "I remember in high school I put on a show representing the four stages of Black music, starting from Africa, then the 40s, then jazz, then contemporary. The four of us would do dances from these different times, then we'd all come together in a circle."

Diana's parents gave their children a healthy amount of freedom as they grew up. At age 14,



Diana Braithwaite

Diana stayed at her sister's downtown apartment while working for Black Theatre Canada. "One of my sisters went to Africa when she was 18 or 19. My parents were supportive of all of us, whether we were women or men," she explained.

With the help of an American cousin, Diana started university at San José at age 15, skipping grades along the way. She majored in Black History, African Dance, Swahili, "everything I was dying to learn." Things were going smoothly until she got involved with a man, married young and had three children, "From 17 to 24, those years were really chaotic, and I'm making up for them now," she reluctantly confessed.

Making up she has . . . After performing at International Women's Day 1986 and commercially at clubs around town, she vowed to make a tape of her music. Together with her sister Valerie she formed 'Sister Productions.' "That tape was made on a low, low budget, but I got the money together and went to the overnight studio and got the overnight rates. I rewrote some songs, used songs from old demo tapes and made some new songs with a percussionist and a piano player. If I had more money

I would have put in more up-tempo songs with some more musicians and have a fuller sound."

Self-criticism aside, Diana Braithwaite's "African Harvest" is a pleasure to the eardrums. Mainly blues with splashes of calypso, soca, gospel, balladeering and politicized, this tape has a lot to offer to a variety of listeners.

The best cut is the title song "African Harvest." Exuberant, joyous, energetic, Braithwaite plays with her words to great effect. By getting the sound straight from her gut, Braithwaite evokes the image of African ritual chanters and dancers just by a single word, "Home!" A great piece of music from beginning to end, "African Harvest" would be well worth putting out on a 45, as she has contemplated.

Braithwaite asked me what I thought would be the most suitable piece to put on the other side of her 45. To be honest, it's a hard choice; they're all very good. "Don't Waste My Time" is very contemporary in beat, with lyrics a few more women in this world should well consider using. "Miss Blues" is a lively, finger-snapping number. "Never Give Up" is a real cure for depressed procrastinators, great optimistic blues with a hint of gospel. A serious con-tender is "How Can I Be Free?" which over-

whelms the listener with its powerful simplicity as it relates to the South African situation. It's a clearly-viewed spine tingler, marred only by its first few lines being clumsily versed.

Her absolute winner is her soulful, yelp-inspiring, "Blame It on the Bourbon." It's terrific the way she belts out this hit. Braithwaite is really the Bessie Smith of the 80s; musically presenting a sassy woman, hands on her hips, a no-nonsense type, certainly someone you don't underestimate or take for granted. Blues at its best here. Braithwaite's musicians deserve credit too. In some other bands, the backup musicians seem to clash with the lead singer, but in this case, there is fine ensemble playing. The mood is well captured by pianist Brigham Philips and sustained by the saxophonist known only as Wimpy. I can only hope the 45 will help get an album or another cassette out soon.

In hindsight, it's not too surprising to find that Braithwaite is a self-taught singer. She instinctively knows when to keep singing to a minimum. Why sing a word when it can be succinctly expressed by just speaking it? It is a sign of a mature artist to use this economy. Her skills are tapped from her theatre background. Besides acting and directing, Braithwaite is also a playwright and author. One piece written expressly for Hallelujah Ontario, a celebration for Blacks combined with Ontario's bicentennial, was "Martha and Elvira." The story concerns two women who came up from the underground railway together and raised corn. One woman discovers her daughter has been found in the south and has to make a difficult decision to leave her friend and return to her daughter. The play was a critical success and went to Scotland and Amsterdam. Her most current project is the "Lost Picture Show" which she produced with the Imani Ensemble — Imani meaning faith. Ironically, the way she got involved with the Pelican Players (Imani) was by singing a blues song for her audition.

There's no doubt Diana Braithwaite is headed in the right direction. With her music she gets to sing, write, act, create, produce and maintain her political identity. She agrees, with characteristic humility: "I like to sing music with a message. This is how I live my life and hopefully there will be a crowd that my music will appeal to."

("African Harvest" may be obtained at the Toronto Women's Bookstore or by writing to Sister Productions, P.O. Box 969, Station A, Scarborough, Ont., M1K 5E4.)

(In)Visible: Double B(I)ind

by Ann M. Headley

(In)Visible is a play about a black female teacher, in a private all-girls' school, who encounters racism and homophobia and how she deals with it. Carol Thames sets out to show us that even the most liberal thinkers can harbour some degree of racism. She illustrates how detrimental these attitudes can be, especially if they continue to go unrecognized.

On the homosexual issue, she demonstrates how black lesbians have more of a fight to face than do white lesbians. Many predominantly white lesbian groups try to promote a "we are one fighting for the same cause" attitude, but in reality it is not so. Ethnic lesbians face a double bind — being of colour and being gay.

In the play, the school is presented as liberal minded and striving for a multicultural climate. As the play progresses the audience begins to get the idea that this is not the case. The ethnic students are housed separately from the white students. One also sees Nancy Walker, the black lesbian teacher (effectively played by Faye DeAbreu) sold out by the school's principal, who apparently likes the idea of a multi-racial school but bows to the threat of having one of the school's board members, Mrs. Ellis — a racist white woman — withdraw her financial contributions.

In the end Walker wins her fight to teach at the school but, in a letter written to the school, declares that, "After ultimately winning the war, I do not care to return to the battlefield." This is definitely one of the more poignant lines of the play.

The double bind becomes obvious when it is Walker who is singled out for persecution as a

lesbian — it is common knowledge to the school that there are other lesbian teachers who are white.

On the whole, the issues brought out in Carol Thames' play are necessary to be dealt with, yet I feel that they would have been more effective if the play was not so drawn out. Due to the length of the play (two hours), there are a few moments when the audience becomes restless and the actors appear bored. In one scene we have a succession of visitors to Walker's apartment. The visitors each arrive to inform her of their support — we soon have Walker repeating herself so often in the five minutes it takes for the scene that one has visions of the play falling apart because someone must have forgotten to say something original and important.

Carol Thames herself plays Mrs. Smith, the school's cleaning lady — the only other character in the play besides Walker who demonstrates intelligence. Her role is brief and sweet. Mrs. Smith speaks in a light West Indian accent. She shows wit, guts, sensitivity and, importantly, an IQ above 100. She overlooks Walker's lesbianism — something not often done by heterosexuals in the black community.

Mrs. Ellis, played by Catherine Glen and Mrs. Brown, played by Gay Bell, gave outstanding performances. I was convinced by the sincerity of their characters. These actors were well cast in their roles.

The student characters were not convincing; they lacked the emotional intensity of the politically aware lesbians they claimed to be. Mrs. Ellis' lesbian daughter, played by Dare, was not convincing in her effort to show that she opposed her mother's racist, homophobic views.

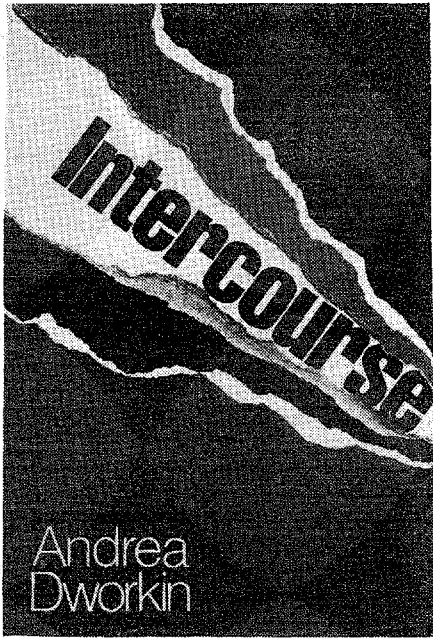


(In)Visible: (from left) Nila Gupta, Faye DeAbreu, Gay Bell, Catherine Glen, Dare.

As a first major production of her own written work and direction I was impressed by Thames' dedication and intensity in effort to make this play a success. Though there are some abrupt moments and a few loose ends, all in all *(In)Visible* is an impressive effort from a

young playwright and director now coming into her own space, and an enjoyable social conscience-raising play.

Ann Headley is a black feminist working in nursing.



Intercourse, by Andrea Dworkin. New York: Free Press, 1987.

Reviewed by Diana Majury

I went to a conference once and I heard a woman speak on violence against women — incest, rape and battering. Her speech was difficult to follow. It seemed like random thoughts and ideas thrown together, and I was confused and frustrated. What is she saying? Why doesn't she say it more clearly? Why doesn't she make the connections for me and take me with her? Why does she only give me pieces instead of the whole picture? I thought it was a crummy speech and the woman a crummy speaker.

That was six years ago. I still think about that speech and the speaker. I'm still putting together some of the pieces she gave me. I'm still making the connection, within what she said, to what other women say, to what I say and think, and to what I experience. I'm still learning from that speech. Mostly I have learned that life and the things in it, including male violence, is not some containable, theorizable, knowable "thing." I thought I knew this before the speech but the speaker helped me to understand it at a deeper level, through my own experience of it. This is a more difficult way of learning (and of teaching) than the linear, pre-packaged method we are all so used to. This organic, participatory method is more confusing and more easily dismissed, but it is also more challenging, more open-ended, more worthwhile.

The lesson is still only a partial one for me. I still frequently find myself wanting to know the "answer" or the theory, the thing that makes everything fit so that I (observer) can understand. I struggle with myself over this —

Discourse on Intercourse

to explore and to participate with honesty and integrity, and not to settle for the simple "answer." But it's not easy in a world in which not having the answer is taken to mean that you don't know anything.

Andrea Dworkin's new book *Intercourse* reminds me a lot of the speech I heard six years ago, not in content but in the method of presentation. (The speaker of six years ago was not Andrea Dworkin, by the way.) *Intercourse* is a collection of related pieces. Dworkin does not explain why she chose the particular pieces, nor does she tie them all together into a neat digestible package. In Part One, "Intercourse in a Man-made World," she examines intercourse as revealed by five male authors under chapter headings that capture that author's perspective on intercourse; Leo Tolstoy — repulsion; Kobo Abe — skinlessness; Tennessee Williams — stigma; James Baldwin — communion; and Isaac Bashevis Singer — possession. She provides no explanation of why she chose to look at intercourse almost exclusively through male authors. Except for Part Two, "The Female Condition," this is not a book about how women see and experience intercourse. I was initially disconcerted to find that so much in this book was about men and there was so much discussion of male authors. But this is a book about intercourse. Under male domination, it is the male law makers (and there is one chapter on them) and the male creators of culture (among them, authors) who determine what intercourse is. In the chapter on law, Dworkin refers to law and law makers not only in terms of statutory law, but in terms of metaphysical and divine law as well. I would have liked a separate chapter on each of these groups of law makers.

Dworkin does not tell us why she chose the particular authors she did. This I find only a mildly interesting question, although I am sure it will drive some people to distraction. I am satisfied with my understanding that the men whom she discusses are significant shapers of the culture in which we live and that, even for women who may never have heard of them, these men reflect and create what intercourse is.

The pieces which are the book are not random; they are clearly interrelated. Dworkin does give the reader guidance and input, but it is up to the reader to put the pieces together for herself. There is no "answer." There is no explanatory introduction to the book; there is no conclusion. What there is is an exploration — a complex, painful, uncompromising, thought-provoking inquiry — into the institution and practice of intercourse under male domination.

Some of the pieces spoke very powerfully to me, as I read them and as I continue to think about them. In the chapter "Virginity," An-

drea brings my long time heroine, Joan of Arc, to life as a revolutionary resister for whom virginity was "one aspect of her rebellion." Hers was not the passive and innocent virginity that men fantasize.

Instead for Joan... virginity was an active element of self-determined integrity, an existential independence, affirmed in choice and faith from minute to minute; not a retreat from life but an active engagement with it; dangerous and confrontational because it repudiated rather than endorsed male power over women... As rebellion, virginity amounted to a capital crime. (p. 96)

The "Virginity" chapter that begins with the strength and independence, and then the killing, of the virgin Joan of Arc, ends with the bloody, sexualized killing of virgins by Dracula. For Dracula's victims, virginity is neither an act of rebellion nor a protection. It is an invitation, over which they have no control, to their own death.

In the chapter "Communion," Dworkin discusses the work of James Baldwin and explores his vision of fucking as an act of hatred, revenge, destruction and suffering, but also as an act with the possibility of intimacy and anguish, the hope — or is it fantasy — of the possibility of communion, of "an experience in the flesh of love." This is the most positive (or should I say least negative) examination of intercourse in the book. For that reason, I found it the most ambiguous and complex chapter, one that has provided me with much to think about.

Other parts of the book spoke less powerfully to me, or only in fragments. For example, I have never read anything by Kobo Abe, so I found the chapter in which his work is discussed more remote than most of the others.

I had expected *Intercourse* to be an unremitting and wholesale damnation of intercourse and male sexuality. And some of the chapters do come close to that, particularly the last three chapters — Occupation/Collaboration, Law, and Dirt/Death. I liked these chapters. Many people will see the whole book as an un-

qualified diatribe against intercourse and heterosexuality. But I think that the book is both much more and much less than a blanket condemnation. Dworkin is too complex and honest in her discussion of intercourse than simply to denounce it. One of the fundamental, but largely implicit, questions of the book is whether intercourse will always and can only be negative for women, whether the penetration of intercourse is necessarily an act of invasion and occupation. I wanted her to answer emphatically and unequivocally, Yes, intercourse is unredeemable. But she didn't. Not because she was afraid to say it. *Intercourse* would never have been written if she were afraid to say things other people don't like to hear. She didn't say it, I think, because it is too simple and simplistic to say that intercourse is, and can only be, oppressive to women. But neither did she deny it. The question remains unanswered and unanswerable in the context of the bleak reality of intercourse under male domination. Because she does not opt for simple "answers," her exploration of intercourse is, in many ways, more devastating and an even stronger indictment than an unqualified denunciation could be.

Intercourse will be accused of biological determinism, essentialism and reductionism. Such labels provide readers with an easy way to avoid the difficult questions presented by intercourse in an almost perfectly closed system of male sexual domination. Dworkin does not succumb to the ease of simple answers and it is a disservice to her and to the importance of *Intercourse* for her readers to hide behind simplistic labels that imply the enunciation of "answers" where there has been none.

Intercourse is a book that will be greeted with fear and hate because it exposes fear and hate. It is a difficult book to read, an impossible book to "understand." *Intercourse* is a book that will long be with me and from which I will continue to learn. It is a book of courage, honesty and integrity, and I thank the woman who wrote it.

Diana Majury is a Toronto feminist, active on issues of violence against women.

FULL CIRCLE

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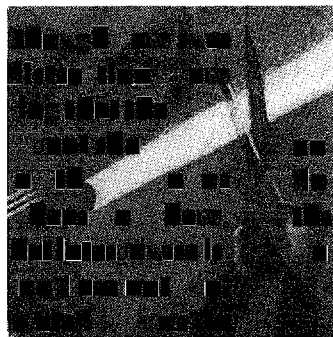


Illustration: Tony Hamilton

In the Spring '87 issue

PORN AGAIN

Feeling the Heat of Censorship by Varda Burstyn

LESBIANS ON THE LOOSE

Sight Specific at A Space review by Colin Campbell

SOCIAL BARBARISM AND THE SPOILS OF MODERNISM

by Marlene Nourbese Philip

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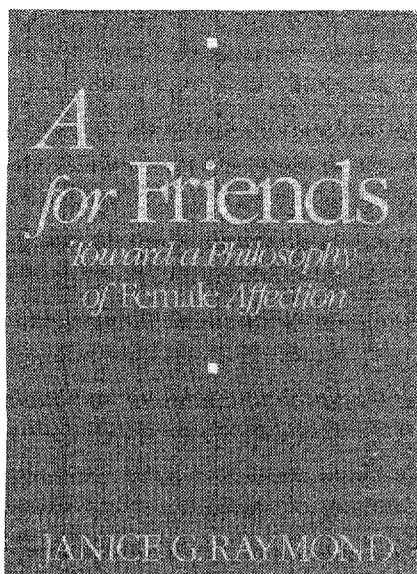
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Challenging Hetero-reality



A Passion for Friends: Toward a Philosophy of Female Affection, by Janice Raymond. Boston: Beacon Press, 1986.

Reviewed by Helen Lenskyj

Janice Raymond's book, *A Passion for Friends*, focuses on ideas of women's friendship in historical and contemporary contexts. The concept of "loose women" — women whose primary personal and public ties were to other women — is central to her analysis. This "loose" condition, a source of concern for moralists from Martin Luther to Sigmund Freud, characterised "unnatural" women who were independent and unattached to men. Male fears were justified: this "looseness" probably indicated active resistance to compulsory heterosexuality.

Bonds between women developed in historically and culturally specific ways, as Raymond

clearly documents. Resistance did not necessarily imply lesbianism, although of course many "loose women" were lesbian. As Lillian Faderman and others have shown, there were intense friendships between some 19th century American women that were not sexual, but still posed a challenge to patriarchal and heterosexual hegemony. In the post-Freud era, such relationships were quickly labelled deviant, as the ideal of "companionate marriage" required that a woman's female friends be pre-empted by her new "best friend" — her husband. Yet, throughout history, there have always been women whose primary allegiance has been to other women. These friendships have rarely been recognized in malestream history or philosophy.

Raymond selected three major examples from a period spanning several centuries and cultures: nuns in the Middle Ages, who chose convent life as an alternative to marriage and an opportunity to complete their education; women of the Béguine movement in 12th century Europe, whose friendships brought them economic self-sufficiency and living arrangements that were independent of men; and the silk workers of 19th and 20th century China who resisted marriage or refused to live with their husbands, living independently and cooperatively with their "sworn sisters." While much of this material is historical and has not appeared in print before, the book is essentially a philosophical work, concerned with lived ideas about women's friendships rather than simply with documentation. Raymond's analysis of the ideas about women's friendships and her search for new terms and new meanings are central to this remarkable book.

In the preliminary theoretical discussion, Raymond replaces the overused and depoliticized word "friendship" and the "logically incorrect" term "lesbian continuum" with the new term "gyn/affection," which denotes "the personal and political movement of women

towards each other." In contrast to "gyn/affection," she introduces the concept of "hetero-relations" which she defines as the "affective, social, political and economic relations that are ordained between men and women by men." With these terms established, she proceeds to tackle the inevitable question: is gyn/affection to be equated with lesbianism? No, states Raymond; for reasons that she (like many lesbian feminists) finds hard to understand, gyn/affection does not necessarily translate into lesbian love for all women. Conversely, lesbian "sexual preference" does not necessarily translate into a social and political reality that challenges hetero-relations. Raymond identifies lesbian S&M and lesbian objectification of other women as examples of hetero-relations at work in lesbian "lifestyles." As well, she points out how hetero-relations may dictate the behaviour of closeted lesbians in their work lives or in their social lives outside of lesbian circles.

We have in this preliminary discussion a taste of the compelling logic and fearless critique of lesbianism, feminism and lesbian feminism that Raymond develops in full in the fourth chapter, "Obstacles to Female Friendship." This chapter was, for me, the most valuable and challenging of the entire book. Although some feminist researchers have studied the dynamics of lesbian feminist communities, they have generally maintained an objective, scholarly stance even on controversial issues. And in grassroots feminist writing, too, critical and comprehensive examinations of "the community" are rare, even though the term evokes very palpable emotions in its constituents. For these reasons, Raymond's critique breaks new ground and will, I hope, fuel new debates and insights.

Raymond sets the stage for the concluding analysis in the second and third chapters, which deal with nuns, women of the Béguines and Chinese marriage resisters. Having read the lost histories of women who defied patriarchal convention in these creative ways, we might look to the next chapter for a celebration of gyn/affection in the feminist movement today. But Raymond warns us at the start that

she does not intend to glorify or romanticize female friendship and she keeps her promise. In the last two chapters she proceeds to subject contemporary feminism to a well-deserved and timely critique. Amongst her particular targets are the phenomena of "relationism" and "therapism" that threaten to sink feminism, especially lesbian feminism, in a bog of navel-gazing, self-disclosure and psychological hypochondria. (This is how I feel... this is how I feel about how I'm feeling... Do you hear what I'm saying? My therapists says...)

Equally important for the feminist community, Raymond claims that the "tyranny of tolerance" and the pervasiveness of liberal dogma threaten to erode the moral and ethical foundations of feminism. Raymond refers to Andrea Dworkin's terms "moral intelligence" and "moral activity" (the exercise of moral discernment), as distinct from the "moralism" that is customarily attributed to women (by men) as a means of keeping women under control. On the same issue, Raymond uses Alice Walker's term "the rigors of discernment" to refer to the reflective and discriminatory powers that are needed for moral intelligence.

In rejecting the moralism that has trapped women for centuries, contemporary feminism has sometimes rejected moral intelligence as well. A male-defined version of "sexual liberation," for example, is called upon by proponents of so-called lesbian S&M and so-called lesbian pornography to justify treating women as objects and sex as commodity. More commonly, as Raymond explains, women are discouraged, in the name of sisterhood, from making any moral or ethical judgments, disagreeing with other women or taking responsibility for leadership or action. (There are no right answers... we all have different values... we're all oppressed... we're all sisters.)

This atmosphere of tolerance and so-called value-freedom leads women into the mistaken belief that feminism makes all the women our friends. We are labelled "elitist" (a word that Raymond correctly identifies as probably the most abused word in the women's movement) if we make thoughtful, discerning choices in our friendships, or even distinguish between friends and lovers. Thus, non-monogamy is conveniently legitimized while the entire notion of friendship becomes meaningless. Meanwhile, in this hotbed of self-disclosure, self-indulgence and sisterly sex, the pressing political work of the feminist movement is neglected.

This is not to suggest that Raymond sees a feminist's life as simply joyless hard work. On the contrary, evoking Audre Lorde's concepts of the erotic, she celebrates the idea of thoughtful, passionate friendships between women and an expanded sense of eroticism, perhaps similar to the intense non-sexual affection between nuns that she experienced during her years in the convent. The rifts between work life, political life and personal life are a constant concern to feminists, and *A Passion for Friends* addresses these issues. Integration is the implied solution: to find work where we love, to find love where we work, and to love our work. In the concluding discussion of a vision of female friendship, she further describes this idea in terms of striving for the full use of one's powers and living one's life with purposeful energy — a state of being "life-glad" that is enhanced by passionate female friendships. This may sound more inspirational than practical, but Raymond's writing never deteriorates into empty exhortations. Consider *A Passion for Friends* required reading — it's worth it. ●

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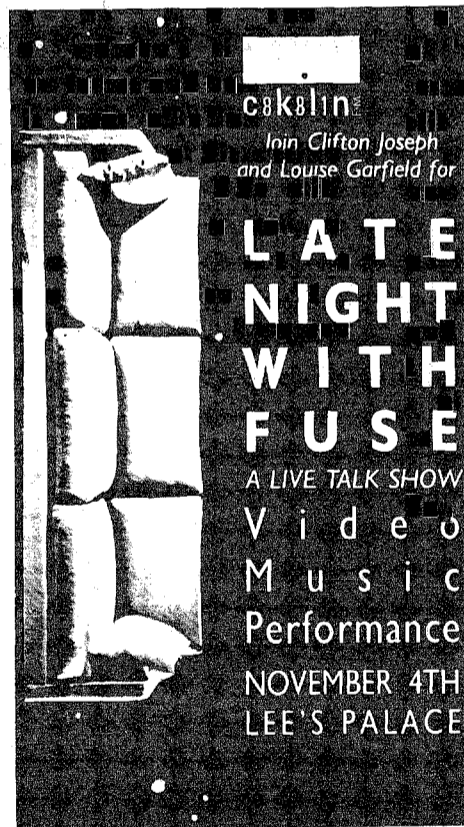
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OUTSIDE BROADSIDE

OCTOBER 1987

Compiled by Helen Lenskyj

• **Thursday, October 1:** Wen-do course starts at Scarborough Women's Centre, Markham and Lawrence. Info and registration: 431-1138. Thursdays, to November 5.

• **Thursday, October 1:** Exhibition by Ann Hansen at Partisan Gallery, 1140 Queen Street West. To Sunday, October 18.

• **Thursday, October 1:** Black Women's Collective Discussion Series: Black Women's Sexuality and Reproductive Rights and Freedoms. Facilitator: Erica Mercer. 7 pm. Immigrant Women's Centre, 750 Dundas St. West at Bathurst, Suite 301. Info: 531-8539.

• **Thursday, October 1:** Sinister Book Bash, launching Eve Zaremba's new thriller *Work for a Million*. 5-8 pm at Sylvester's Cafe, U of T, Bancroft St. at Spadina Circle.

• **Thursday, October 1:** "But Women Did Come," 150 years — Chinese Women in North America. Exhibition of historical photographs, texts and artifacts. Metropolitan Toronto Reference Library, 789 Yonge St. Info: 393-7196. **To Monday, October 12.**

• **Thursday, October 1:** Exhibition of Women's Work; Susan Kealy, Carol Laing, Carol Lamecha and Lisa Laftolin. 76 Gallery, 76 McCaul. **To Saturday, October 3.**

• **Friday, October 2:** Fruit Cocktail '87 "Gaze in Wonder." Song, dance and comedy presented by the Lesbian and Gay Community Appeal. 8 pm. Ryerson Theatre, 43 Gerrard St. East. \$15/\$18 and sliding scale. Info: 887-3036. Also **Saturday, October 3** at 8 pm; **Sunday, October 4** at 2 pm and 8 pm.

• **Saturday, October 3:** Cuartos del Corazon: Exhibition and events in solidarity with Nicaragua and Guatemala. A Space, 183 Bathurst St. For info on other events, October 3-17, call 364-3227.

WEEK OF OCTOBER 5

• **Monday, October 5:** Popular Feminism Series presents Kathryn Morgan: "As Hypatia's daughters come of age: a feminist philosopher is made not born." Discussion groups following. 8 pm, OISE Boardroom, 12th floor, 252 Bloor West. Info: 923-6641, ext. 2204.

• **Monday, October 5:** Conference on Women and Meech Lake sponsored by the Ontario Advisory Committee on the Status of Women. OISE, 252 Bloor St. West. 8:30 am.

• **Thursday, October 8:** Black Women's Collective Discussion Series: Black Women and Work. Facilitators: Beatrice Bailey and Cecelia St. Louis. 7 pm. Immigrant Women's Centre, 750 Dundas St. West at Bathurst, Suite 301. Info: 531-8539.

• **Friday, October 9:** Bisexual women's discussion group. 6-8 pm. 519 Church St. Community Centre.

• **Saturday, October 10:** Record launching party for Faith Nolan's second album, *Sistership*. \$8 (\$15 with record or tape). Trinity-St. Paul's, 427 Bloor St. West. 8 pm. Wheelchair access, hearing interpretation, free childcare. Info: 535-4309.

WEEK OF OCTOBER 12

• **Tuesday, October 13:** Speaking Out for Choice — meeting of the Ontario Coalition for Abortion Clinics. 7:30 pm. Trinity-St. Paul's, 427 Bloor St. West. Info: 532-8193. Also **Tuesday, October 20.**

• **Tuesday, October 13:** CBC Radio Ideas Series presents "The AIDS Campaigns" 9:05-10 pm. Also **Tuesday, October 20.**

• **Tuesday, October 13:** Lesbian and Gay Pride organization meeting. 7:30 pm. 519 Church St. Info: Grant, 862-0470.

• **Thursday, October 15:** Black Women's Collective Discussion Series: Feminism and Black Women. Facilitator: Angela Robertson. 7 pm. Immigrant Women's Centre, 750 Dundas St. West at Bathurst, Suite 301. Info: 531-8539.

• **Friday, October 16:** Sabiá and Nancy White in a benefit concert of Nicaraguan Union of Agricultural Workers and Canadian Action for Nicaragua. Tickets \$8.50 at door, \$7 at Women's Bookstore, DEC, SCM, DRUM Travel, Big Carrot, Pages. Central Technical School Auditorium, 725 Bathurst at Harbord. Info: DEC, 597-8695.

• **Friday, October 16:** WITZ (Women's Independent Thoughtz) organizational meeting to discuss future directions for WITZ. Info on time and location: 234-5281.

• **Friday, October 16:** Becky Birtha will be reading from her new book, *Lover's Choice*. Toronto Women's Bookstore, 73 Harbord. Info: 922-8744.



Sabiá, in concert October 16

• **Friday, October 16:** Ryerson Women's Centre invites past collective members and friends to a reunion in the Thomas Lounge, Oakham House. Info: 598-9838.

• **Sunday, October 18:** Marching for Women's Lives. Rally for abortion rights meets at the District Court, 361 University Ave., 1 pm. Info: 532-8193.

WEEK OF OCTOBER 19

• **Monday, October 19:** Coach House launches *Serpent(w)rite*, a new book by Betsy Warland. 7 pm. Sylvester's Cafe, Bancroft at Spadina Circle. Info: 979-2217.

• **Thursday, October 22:** Black Women's Collective Discussion Series: Women Loving Women. Facilitator: Donna Perker. 7 pm. 24 Bartlett Ave. (at Bloor near Dufferin). Info: 531-8539.

• **Friday, October 23:** Martha Honey, journalist from Costa Rica, will speak about the criminal activities of the CIA in Nicaragua, at the Law Union Annual Conference, Steelworkers' Hall, 25 Cecil St. Info: 964-8126. Conference continues on Saturday, October 24.

• **Friday, October 23:** Toronto Area Women's Research Colloquium presents a panel discussion on women and spirituality, with Sue Mabey, Maureen Muldoon, Doris Dyke, Johanna Stuckey and Randi Warne. OISE Boardroom, 12th floor, 252 Bloor St. West. 3:30 pm.

• **Saturday, October 24:** Book Sale for the Canadian Women's Movement Archives. 9:30 am-4 pm. Trinity-St. Paul's, 427 Bloor West. \$2 admission during first hour. Donations and info: 597-8865.

• **Saturday, October 24:** Broomstick Ball, sponsored by the Lesbian Dance Committee. 9 pm. Concert Hall, 888 Yonge St. Wheelchair accessible, washroom attendant, childcare money available. \$6/\$7 and sliding scale tickets at SCM, Women's Bookstore, Glad Day.

• **Saturday, October 24:** "Our Community, Our Needs," discussion sponsored by the Beach Women's Workshop. 1 pm. Kew Beach United Church, 140 Wineva.

• **Sunday, October 25:** Connie Kaldor in concert with Don Fried. 7:30 pm, Premier Dance Theatre, 207 Queen's Quay West. \$10. Info: 364-5665.

WEEK OF OCTOBER 26

• **Tuesday, October 27:** "Sex trade workers and feminists in a continuing dialogue." A panel discussion to launch *Good Girls/Bad Girls: Sex Trade Workers and Feminists Face to Face*. Book signing and refreshments following. 7:30-9:30 pm. 140 St. George (at Sussex). Wheelchair accessible. Info: U of T Women's Centre, 978-8201.

• **Wednesday, October 28:** Panel discussion on Women in Limbo with Jacqueline Hoffman Fitz, Judith Ryan, Ruth Mechanicus, Doris Anderson. 7 pm, OISE, 252 Bloor Street West.

• **Friday, October 30:** WITZ (Women's Independent Thoughtz) presents a discussion on Women and Spirituality. 7 pm. For location and info: 234-5281.

• **Thursday, October 29:** Meeting Challenges: Shelagh Conroy, author of *A Woman and Catholicism*, discusses her struggles as a feminist in the church. Gladys Taylor, author of *Alone in the Boardroom*, discusses her experiences in newspaper publishing. \$4 (Canadian Authors' Association members free). 7:30-10:30 pm, OISE, 252 Bloor West, Room 211. Info: 658-1532.

• **Thursday, October 29:** "Shelter for Women: More Than Just a Roof," conference on housing for women sponsored by the YWCA of Metropolitan Toronto. 6:30 p.m. 80 Woodlawn Ave. East. Info: 961-8100. Also **Friday, October 30**, 8:30 am-5 pm.

• **Thursday, October 29:** Black Women's Collective Discussion Series: Black Women and Creativity. Facilitators: Grace Channer and Beatrice Bailey. 7 pm. Immigrant Women's Centre, 750 Dundas St. West at Bathurst, Suite 301. Info: 531-8539.

• **Saturday, October 31:** Fall Peace March sponsored by Toronto Disarmament Network. Queen's Park, 11 am. Info: 535-8005.

• **Saturday, October 31:** Fly by Night Reunion and Halloween Dance. Co-hosted by the Woman's Common. \$6/\$7. 8 pm-1 am, 519 Church St. Community Centre. Info: 469-4859.

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 chit 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: 392-8874.

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

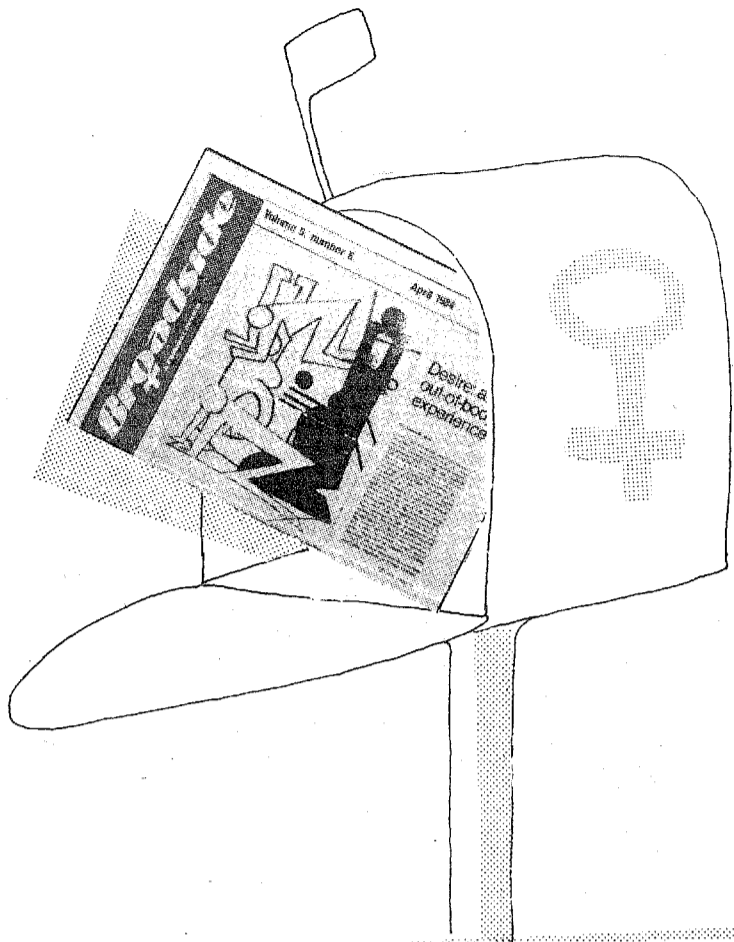
Tuesday: International Women's Day Committee (IWDC), a socialist feminist activist group, meets on alternate Tuesdays. Info: Nancy, 531-6608.

Tuesday: Lesbian fuck-the-discussion group meets for informal basketball, movie nights and other events. 7 pm. U of T Women's Centre, 49 St. George. Info: 978-8201.

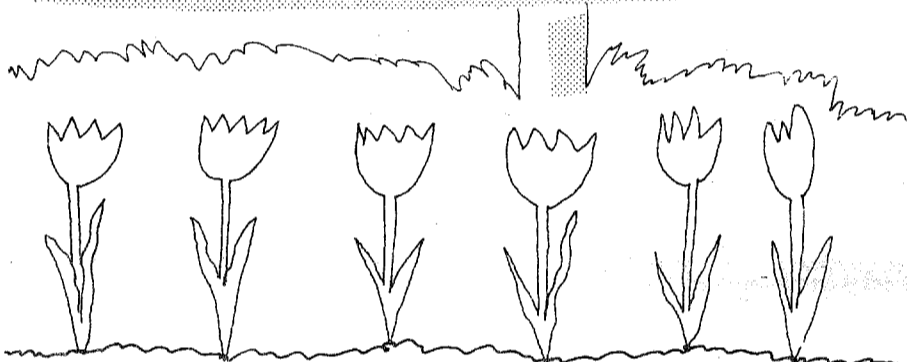
Tuesday and Thursday: The Lesbian Phone Line is open for calls from women. 7:30-10:30 pm. 533-6120.

Thursday: Feminist self-help discussion group. Women and men welcome. 7-9 pm. U of T Women's Centre, 49 St. George. Info: 978-8201.

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"BYKES," a bi-sexual women's group, meets on the second Friday of each month, 6 to 8 pm, at 519 Church Street Community Centre, Toronto. Further questions: (416) 961-1335.

FEMINIST AND LESBIAN BOOKS by mail, English and French. New Book Bulletins published 3 times/year, free. L'Androgyne Bookstore, 3636 St-Laurent, Montreal, Quebec, H2X 2V4.

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