

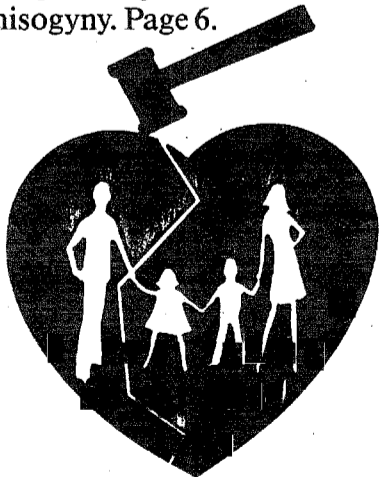
PHOTO BY DONNA MARCHAND

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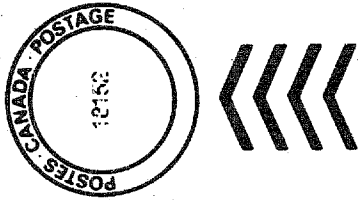
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**LETTERS****In Control****Broadside:**

Congratulations on an excellent article by Vicki Van Wagner ("Take the State out of Gestation," April 1988). Our demand (the feminist and pro-choice movements) has always been to decriminalize, to repeal all laws regarding abortion. We have won that fight after almost two decades of constant struggle. We must not accept anything less now. I'm very grateful for the articulation of this position in relation to the current moves to legislate a time limit on choosing abortions.

I agree wholeheartedly with Wagner when she says that the motivation behind this is control of reproduction and of women. We all know that women have done and continue to do the lion's share of the work of nurturing the human race. No one knows better than us how to take care of ourselves and our children. The problem is we are prevented from doing so—by male violence, poverty, compulsory pregnancy, and unwieldy state bureaucracy which is the cause of late abortions.

There are countless examples of how the state has appropriated our bodies to enact social control. Legislated government involvement in decision-making about our pregnancies *will* be used to control us, as women. In the 60s and 70s in the US and in Canada, hundreds of thousands of women were subjected to forced sterilization. Mostly these women were poor, black or native women—in Puerto Rico 35% of the women were sterilized. In Love, Saskatchewan, in 1980, women were threatened with losing their welfare cheque if they had another child. Native women have been sterilized without consent and frequently without their knowledge. In these situations the state ripped off women's bodies because it cost them less (one of Premier Vander Zalm's arguments for not funding abortions)—this was their solution to poverty rather than addressing its cause.

In West Germany right now feminists have been jailed for fighting against state control of women's reproductivity through advanced genetic engineering technology. These same women have also fought against the sex tours to South East Asian countries and in support of the efforts of "surrogate wives" to get more access to their babies.

The more control we have over our bodies, the more we are a threat to the entrenched male

power structure. The arrests of midwives here in Canada is just one more recent example (millions of midwives, and healers were burned as witches in the Middle Ages).

We have won an important victory in getting the law on abortion off of the books. We have to hold that ground now and not make any concessions.

Nicole Kennedy  
 Vancouver Rape Relief & Women's Shelter  
 Vancouver, BC

**In Support****Broadside:**

*The following is an open letter, dated March 12, 1988, asking for support letters for Wen-Do after a recent complaint of discrimination against men:*

To whom it may concern:

We strongly oppose any move to admit men to women's wen-do classes. We view women-only wen-do as a straightforward affirmative action step in the face of men's violence against women.

The number of sexual assaults against women in communities across Canada continues to increase, and women need every means at their disposal to protect themselves. Wen-do combines the learning of self-defence skills with discussion of defensive strategies on the street and at home. Many of us, along with our daughters, mothers and friends, have benefitted greatly from the course.

Wen-do instruction takes into account that many women will not ordinarily fight back against a male attacker, partly because of lack of confidence in their strength, and partly because women have been taught not to be aggressive. Yet women are victims of the vast majority of sexual assaults at home and on the street.

Therefore, women, unlike men, come to self-defence classes with unique needs and concerns. Classes must be conducted in a safe and secure environment, where women are free to discuss their fears and to talk about personal experiences and strategies. This must be a women-only environment.

You undoubtedly share the concern expressed by women and men across the country to reduce the incidence of violent sexual attacks against women. Therefore we are confident that you will recognize the urgent need to maintain and promote women-only self-defence classes.

Riverdale Women's Action Committee  
 Toronto

**Film Subtext****Broadside:**

In a belated response to Suzanne de Lotbinière-Harwood's letter about "The Politics of Translating" (*Broadside*, May 1987), I felt that your readers might be interested in the whole context of making films in one language, with another language group in mind as an audience.

Suzanne takes issue with two quite distinct questions: the fact that reviewers and audiences often ignore or fail to notice and therefore credit the work of the translator; and the fact that her credit on the film was not separated out from the other collaborators and placed at the head of the film.

Let me respond to the second complaint, as it is the one directed most legitimately at me.

In the case of *Firewords*, I chose the three writers—Louky Bersianik, Jovette Marchessault and Nicole Brossard; and for many months I talked with them and read 27 books, both in their original French and in translation; distilled what I had learned and loved into a proposal for the film, obtained the support of Studio D and my producer, Barbara Janes; put together an all-woman film crew, with Zoe Dirse on camera and Diane Carriere on sound; planned and directed the shoot, during which the writers generously gave of themselves; edited some of it myself; worked with script consultant Marthe Blackburn, artist Francine Gagné, and costume designer Ginette Noiseux in preparing the dramatizations of their works; filmed some of the drama, using a complex front-screen projection system, with actress Pol Pelletier; worked with the intelligent and artistic editor Pascale Laverrière; shot some more drama; found a terrific animation artist, Michèle Pauzé; directed the editing to the finish; drew upon the imaginative sound editing of Jackie Newell, the music of Anne Lauber, colour adjustments by Gudrun Klawe, sound mix by Jean-Pierre Joutel, a complex negative-cutting job by Arlene Sawyer, and sub-titles by Suzanne de Lotbinière-Harwood.

The director's job, aside from conceptualizing the film, is to find and work with the most skilled and talented people in each craft, to make the film a reality, knowing that each excellence adds to the quality of the film, and that the essence of filmmaking is teamwork. Because of my feminist commitment to developing women in all the skills of filmmaking you will find the vast majority of the team was women—several of whom were offered their first chance on this film.

I directed both the French and English versions of the film. From the beginning, *Firewords* was conceived with an English audience in mind. The choice of writers, the choice of

**EDITORIAL****NAC Flak**

The tumultuous events at the recent annual general meeting of the National Action Committee on the Status of Women (NAC) should come as no surprise to those who have been active in NAC over the past few years. Yet, on a cursory glance, one wonders what all the fuss is about.

The purpose of NAC, according to its constitution, is to initiate and work for improvements to the status of women through: actions designed to change legislation, attitudes, customs and practices; evaluating and advocating changes to benefit women; encouraging the formation of, and communication and cooperation among, organizations interested in improving the status of women in Canada; and exchanging information with member organizations and other interested persons or groups. NAC does this by promoting legislative reform at both the federal and provincial levels by developing feminist positions on public policy and presenting these positions through research briefs and lobbying. Its lobbying efforts include sensitizing the public to women's issues through media contact, public meetings and forums and the distribution of publications.

So far no problem.

Even when we look at what NAC's priorities

actually are there is really little disagreement from most member groups, and what disagreement there is has not resulted in mass resignations. NAC wants more women elected to government, full and equal employment, income security, marriage as an equal social and economic partnership, comprehensive maternity benefits, affordable, quality child care, an end to racial discrimination at home and abroad, improved laws to combat violence against women, abortion as a matter of private conscience, freedom of sexual orientation, equal rights of visible minority and immigrant women, equal rights for native women, survival of the planet through peaceful solutions, recognition of the equal rights of disabled women, improved legal and social conditions of prostitutes, and affordable housing for all Canadians.

Why then, given these laudable goals, is NAC continually tearing itself apart with internal discord?

The problem with NAC is that it tries to be everything to every woman. And this it cannot do. NAC cannot operate in a way that will make all of its member groups happy. Their interests are too diverse. NAC cannot incorporate the

views of each of the 3 million women it represents, nor even of the over 550 member groups.

NAC's only bottom line seems to be that it is pro-choice. We all know that when we deal with issues like prostitution, pornography, free trade, etc., there is going to be some disagreement. This is healthy. Disagreements on these issues tend to push the debates and allow for re-thinking. Yet the way that the disagreements get played out is what might actually be the downfall of NAC. It seems that some want to get their policies, their priorities, their personalities and their politics to the forefront to the exclusion of dissenting voices. This is harmful.

NAC cannot reflect one small group nor one small opinion. If it does then can it really say that it speaks for over 3 million women?

On the flip side, NAC must also acknowledge that brilliant, innovative work is being done by its small member groups who are often more in tune with some of the issues as their full energy is able to be devoted to them. NAC must be supportive of this work.

NAC is going through a period of soul searching and hopefully the end result, while not being what everyone wants, won't be what everyone fights.

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# NAC '88: Split Resolve

by Lorraine Greaves

When Thorhildur Thorleifsdottir opened the NAC AGM on May 13, 1988 with a spirited description of Iceland's Women's Alliance Party, and its herstory, vision and process, the pertinence of her message was, at that point, likely underestimated. Her description of the crises, work, and sheer optimism experienced in the building of a truly feminist political party was both inspiring and well received. But the real meaning of her speech was only fully absorbed after the events of one of NAC's most turbulent weekends ever. In the year to come, considerable sifting and sorting, discussion and action will surely take place, in order to determine the nature of a truly feminist vision for NAC.

Thorhildur Thorleifsdottir described the Icelandic party's non-hierarchical structure, its emphasis on sharing leadership and rotating jobs, its grass roots emphasis, its decentralization and its non-traditional distribution of power. She described the Alliance's reluctance to put any one woman in a "Power Tower" all alone, how the media and other parties have been uncertain as to how to respond to the lack of convention, and, not surprisingly, the turbulence within the Alliance itself as it has attempted to create feminist process and structure. All of these messages hold considerable meaning for NAC as we move into a new phase of feminist activism in Canada, and for structure and process in women's organizations in general.

## Diversity, size, and questions

For two years, NAC has been carrying out an organizational review in response to both a rapid growth in membership in the last few years (350 to 576 groups since 1986, and corresponding increase in diversity), and to increasing questions and demands from member groups for various improvements in the structure and process of NAC. After extensive consultations with both members and non-members across the country, it became clear that there is wide support for NAC, and great faith in this arm of the national women's movement. However, there are also serious demands for improvements. Private consultants Lynne Tyler and Joan Riggs were hired to systematically poll the members, and to order and present the information in a report.

Five basic principles to be followed in revising NAC's structure were identified, in order to create some solutions to meet the requests of the member groups. These are: more accessi-



Lorraine Greaves

bility and representativeness of the diversity of the women's movement; democracy; accountability; ownership of NAC by member groups; and empowerment. In other words, the women in NAC want equal opportunity to be heard, want to play the key role in decision-making and policy making, and want NAC to be a place to gain strength and skills to affect their lives.

These principles gave rise to a series of suggestions to be implemented at NAC over the next few years, including setting up more regional meetings, decentralizing committee (policy setting) work, and generally allowing NAC to be more present in the daily lives of women across the country.

These suggestions were brought forward to the AGM '88 in Ottawa in May, as a message from the members, who, by and large, never get to an annual meeting or a lobby day, but still feel attached to NAC. The reception to these suggestions could have been welcoming and accepting, as only a few "motherhood" suggestions were made, but instead, entrenchment in our own traditions and processes at NAC prevented us from dealing very effectively with any request for change. Resolutions that had been available for ten weeks to executive members, and four weeks to member groups, were questioned for the first time in the context of the annual meeting. Our structure and process makes us approach change and each other in a male, conflict oriented style. In short, the treatment of the organizational review at the AGM became a metaphor for all that needs changing at NAC.

Here again was a complex weaving together of the efforts of many people, with the ultimate aim of encouraging the audience to enjoy the women, their writings, ideas and visions, and the film. And perhaps get them in touch with their own creativity, as well.

In her letter, Harwood asks: "Were the subtitles so good they gave reviewers the impression they understood French?" Yes, they were. The goal in translating on film is to make the audience transcend the barrier of language.

Harwood says: "That's my work you're reading on the screen." Yes, and they were skilled and thoughtful adaptations of the words and thoughts and passions of Bersianik, Marchessault and Brossard. But while words are an integral part of the film—and especially important in this particular film—they are not the whole film. They couldn't be, because of the very nature of the film medium.

Harwood says: "My mistake was not insisting from the start that the subtitles be given separate opening credits." The fact is that if she would look at the film again, she would notice that no one gets opening credits in an NFB English Production documentary. All the credits appear at the end of the film, in approximately the order in which the work of the various artists and artisans occur. She has a credit for subtitles, and another for translation. The poster/information sheet gives the same credits. Suzanne's work was excellent—more than satisfying the very challenging demands of this subject and of my own hopes. But singling her out for special acknowledgment would simply be unfair to the many other people who also contributed to the film.

Dorothy Hénaud  
Studio D, NFB  
Montreal

## Roberta, where are you?

For anyone who's a first-timer at a NAC AGM, particularly for those women coming from small, collectively run, perhaps geographically isolated women's groups, the experience of dealing with a packed agenda about very complex issues, in a room of six or seven hundred feminists, limited to communication only through microphones, and only according to Robert's Rules of Order, is a shock. According to the organizational review report, reaction varied from "Robert's Rules are rules for 'civilized war'" to "There is no place for people who are less than powerful at NAC." The AGM, often the only opportunity for women to participate in NAC, becomes disempowering.

For those women adept at using Robert's Rules (who is Robert and what is he doing at a feminist meeting anyway?) amending and discussing resolutions on the floor is not daunting. After years of practice, such women can display amazing skill at working the floor, and organizing responses to motions. To many first-timers, however, the skills of some are disempowering, and look like "grandstanding," to use the word of Klari Kalkman, of Guelph, a first-time delegate at the meeting. The events at the 1988 AGM on the backdrop of the organizational review, identified very clearly the frustration with the confines of the current processes that we use.

## Wanted: A feminist process

The importance of changing gears at NAC, and attending to the development of a feminist process, cannot be overestimated. According to a member group from Ontario, "NAC is a feminist organization that does not have a feminist process." As well as providing information and leadership on federal government issues, NAC is also expected to be a place where we, as women, can participate in governing our own lives. When the policy committees are largely inaccessible (until recently, based in central Canada, with no clear guidelines for operating), the executive positions daunting (overwork, lots of guilt, skills needed in every area), and access to the organization limited (by both lack of resources or other barriers to participation), the net result is an organization increasingly stressed at the centre, and underutilized at the roots.

Why should we worry about cultivating our roots? Some would argue that NAC is increasingly specialized, increasingly sophisticated, and should therefore attract and be run by those women with such needed skills. Others, including myself, argue that our ultimate measure is not necessarily what we do, but rather in how we do it. Women in Canada, much like the example set by the Iceland Women's Alliance, can do political work in a way that is different from the male-defined system, and that is going to constantly contribute to the growth of individual women and their groups, support and even encourage diversity of opinion, resolve conflict and crises in positive ways and remain united on the ultimate feminist vision.

If we truly want changes in the way we are regarded and treated as women, we must make those changes within NAC first. Not only is the current challenge of reorganization important for the operation of NAC, it is also important for developing a model of how women can work differently, to serve as an example to member groups, other nation-wide, umbrella groups, and indeed to the male-dominated government itself.

## Setting the women's agenda

"The complex task of defining issues tends to exclude less educated and less politically involved women, particularly at the point of strategy formulation and/or in the process of attempting to meet the demands of government agendas." (Saskatchewan member group, Organizational Review Report)

The way we work—our process—cannot be divorced from our agenda. In the organizational review, questions were raised about whether our agenda should reflect the federal government's agenda, or whether we should determine our own at the grass roots level, or both. Were we to develop a feminist process at and in NAC, one that gives more women their voices, and attends very directly to the daily experience of women, we could well find that what we want to lobby for, or even talk about,

would change.

Currently, the federal government raises certain issues in the form of legislative initiatives that reflect its assessment of what needs to change. NAC reacts to many of these initiatives. In so doing, we often find that certain fundamental concerns of women, such as fear of violence, or overwork at home, or peace, get very few openings for debate. Ironically, these issues are, even by women, often called "soft," while the top down agenda, often economic, is considered "hard." It is truly a challenge to NAC, or for any aspect of the women's movement, to validate all of women's concerns by getting them placed on the agenda.

## Priority of priorities

The "turbulence" reported by the media about NAC '88 was the sight and sound of grass roots feminism in Canada becoming visible and active (again). This was not accomplished without the shock of both the staff resigning as a block, and my resignation from the presidential ballot. In a very passionate statement, Marylou Murray, NAC's parliamentary liaison officer, spoke of the staff's frustration in working in a feminist organization without a feminist process. My resignation was made to highlight the critical importance of our organizational health, and to make it, in the words of one delegate, "The priority of priorities" for 1988. My withdrawal is also a statement to the members of NAC to force access to the decision-making in our organization, to insist on democracy, to create a feminist process from the grass roots up; in short, to reclaim NAC. Had I had the position of president, I would have been silenced on the importance of this mandate, and NAC would have continued with only the appearance of full participation. The crisis precipitated by the resignations indicate that this mandate for change can no longer be overlooked or ignored, and a public, honest discussion of feminism, feminist process, and the feminist vision can now take place.

Following the AGM, discussions raged on national radio, in the national press, and among women, on the new direction for NAC. Lynn Kaye, the new president of NAC, has spoken of NAC as being committed to two equally important initiatives in the coming year—both the federal election and the reorganization of NAC. Dorothy Inglis, delegate from Newfoundland, on CBC Radio, said, "There is great relief. The problem has been named," and that problem is the way we operate, its narrowness, its outdated structure, its non-feminist process. It sets out the challenge of our movement. Where do we go from here?

## Practical matters

Two challenges that NAC has set for itself for this year involve broadening the base for participation on policy committees through advertising in *Feminist Action Feministe* for members, and in the commitment to the development of a process of setting priorities to be presented at the next annual meeting. These two initiatives both require and invite input. Most members of NAC do not get to the annual meeting. Those in far flung locations, or low on resources, those lacking in stamina or those less articulate, those afraid of Robert's rules and public speaking, those easily intimidated—all of these women make up the feminist movement in Canada, and all are represented in the challenge for change.

No one person can transform NAC. Indeed, to think that possible is an illusion. Nor can a staff, or a whole executive, a consultant's report, or an organizational review committee transform NAC. NAC will be transformed through its members insisting on participation, through members taking responsibility for doing the action that NAC stands for, and for non-members of NAC to join in. Many people care very deeply about NAC, as a symbol of the Canadian women's movement, as well as a vehicle for real change. Silence only contributes to the maintenance of the status quo, whether that's within NAC or elsewhere.

The naming of the problem has taken place. Further denial and silence are now out of order. We must all now take responsibility for our behaviour in NAC, reconsider it, and carefully and deliberately build a feminist process. The means is, in fact, the end.

Lorraine Greaves is a former vice-president of NAC, and the co-chair of the 1987-88 organizational review committee.

## LETTERS, from previous page

texts, the choice of dramatizations, the choice of images, all were made with the intention of transmitting—translating—the ideas and experiences of these three Québec women to an English audience, to plunge an English audience as deeply as possible into their world.

For the English version I decided to subtitle the spoken words of the three writers, so that audiences could listen to the French as well, and perhaps understand a few words, and stretch their sense of the French language, while understanding the whole thing, and hearing the real, vibrant voices of the women. I chose to dramatize some of their works in translation. Given the luxury of the extraordinary actress, Pol Pelletier, who was capable of performing each scene both in French and in English, each audience would see the scene in their own language. I also chose to have the texts from their works that were spoken over imagery, narrated in translation so that the audience could take a break from reading subtitles, and so that a fuller translation could be presented, since subtitling does require, in many cases, abbreviating the statement, rather than offering it fully. This solution also created a clearer delineation between the spoken words of the writers and their written words. I believe nine translators were involved in one text or another, and at least a third of the film is text, as opposed to interview.

I asked Suzanne de Lotbinière-Harwood, who had never done film subtitling before, to do the subtitles for *Firewords*, because I found her translations were excellent. I also asked her to translate some of the French texts which had not yet been published in English, and some I translated myself. In other cases I used already published translations, by Yvonne Klein, Linda Gaboriau, Barbara Godard, Martha O'Brien, Donna Murray, Alison Hewitt and Gerry Denis.

# Kay Armatage: Pioneering Professor

Last month's *Broadside* featured the first part of an interview with Kay Armatage. In it, Armatage talked about her rôle as a filmmaker, and the difficulties of juggling her cinematic career with her life as an academic. Armatage started teaching Women's Studies at U of T the first year it was offered, 1972. She was still a graduate student and teaching assistant, but her thesis was on women writers and she was therefore considered a specialist. Her ensuing interest in women's cinema led to the making of her first film, on New York feminist writer Jill Johnston. Last year, her film *Artist on Fire* on Canadian artist Joyce Wieland was an award winner at the Toronto Festival of Festivals. While making films, and organizing festivals, Armatage still teaches Women's Studies. This month, Armatage talks about the history and future of Women's Studies at U of T and the much-debated issue of the "institutionalization" of feminism.



Kay Armatage

DONNA MARCHAND

## Interview by Hewon Yang

**Hewon Yang:** What were the concerns and interests of the first generation of Women's Studies students in 1972 at U of T?

**Kay Armatage:** I think it's fair to say that our course was concerned with the basic debates around lifestyle — which was really one of the hallmarks of the 60s revolutionary program. To a significant degree it was a lifestyle revolution. It was about the way in which one lived one's life and the relationships and the nature and quality of the relationships that one had.

I think it's also fair to say that the major influence at that point in North American feminism was consciousness-raising and the approach to the world that was generated through the consciousness. Through attitude, from the inside out, where the personal became the political.

So, we went from the internal world to the institutional one: the external, the academic, the historical, empirical. Those were the ways the course was shaped; and the interests of the students and contemporary politics were central in that shaping.

**H.Y.:** How has that developed in the 15-year life-span of the program? Radical feminism seems almost an heretical stance in the framework of these socially, not necessarily feminist, conservative, moderate times.

**K.A.:** To some degree that tradition of radical feminism is still with us. To some degree. There are some parts of the course, for example, that emphasize socialization, and consciousness. The major thrust of the radical feminist analysis, a concern with stereotypes of women, that kind of thing, is still with us in the course. In the course syllabus, there's also a very strong emphasis on a material analysis, which emphasizes work.

The student has changed, there's no question. I think that for many students, the emotional, the personal experience of the course is very, very strong. But I don't think the course has the cataclysmically radical effect it did in 1972. I think that there's an overall change in the student body. The student revolution is over. The kind of attitude that students brought to their education in the late 60s and the early 70s is completely different. At that point, for better or worse, there was an impulse for personal enrichment, personal action that I think is very, very different now. Students, now, seem to approach their education in

university like a job and they're good at it, efficient at it, they organize themselves well and they really have a tough time if they don't. There is a professionalization of undergraduate work all across the board; and that applies to our course as well.

A lot of people take the Women's Studies course out of curiosity, others come already committed—they've done some other women's studies—they're interested in women's issues. There are some very sophisticated feminists in the introductory course, so, you have a smorgasbord of students: there are some that are engaged to be married and proceeding in what seems to be a fairly "normal" lifestyle; and there are others who come with significantly different lifestyles. In 1972, we were really babes in the woods, we were jumping into the river and changing our lives, students and faculty alike.

I did feel nostalgic for 1972 — those early days. Women's Studies as an academic field, as a discipline, is very strongly established now and has a very professional interest for me — it is my academic field. It has an ongoing interest and commitment for me. The very heady emotions of revolution that were extremely exciting have really been replaced by something that's perhaps more intellectually exciting.

**H.Y.:** As a collective body of Women's Studies professors, what are some of the constraints of working within the institution of the University of Toronto and what are the triumphs?

**K.A.:** There are not enough of us; we are under the same kind of constraints as other small departments — except we are not as glamorous as, for example, Cinema Studies. We don't get enough money. We are severely limited in terms of budget. We can barely rent films — I couldn't rent a film for the intro course this year because it cost \$100.

We don't have enough teaching assistants for our courses; we can't teach more courses because we don't have enough staff. I don't think at this point that there are many intellectual constraints. Certainly, when the program was being established, we felt that we had to be very careful and very canny about how we could expect to operate: what we could do, what our needs were, what kind of demands were expected of us. We felt much more embattled.

We still have to be political. The university is

a very political institution; the more politically astute you are, the better off. We have to operate strategically and think strategically; I don't think we are confined by intellectual or academic constraints.

**H.Y.:** Do you see the financial constraints leavening?

**K.A.:** No. It's getting worse. It's dreadful, there are cutbacks all the time. We used to have a separate budget to bring in speakers, we could publish a newsletter, we could host a wine and cheese party for the faculty. We had a budget, apart from the academic one. I've just heard that we may have to publish and pay for our own academic brochure — which every academic department publishes — but we have to pay for it out of a budget that has been already cut back by a third in the last two or three years.

**H.Y.:** A lot of feminists of my generation feel wistful about the fervour and passions which generated feminism in the 60s. We have a lot of knowledge and theory but do not necessarily feel motivated into action. Do you think Women's Studies courses can breed active feminists?

**K.A.:** If we collected the data on past Women's Studies students we'd find that many end up working in the institutional establishments: working in the women's directorates, working in equal opportunity offices, government women's bureaus. Some go into law, criminology, social services — largely working within institutions employing women with these kinds of specialties. There are probably graduates of Women's Studies who are working for small organizations. One of the major assignments is what we call the Practicum — in which we send the students out into those organizations, specifically to keep in touch with the grassroots women's movement in Toronto. We are doing our best to generate action. One of the results of that assignment is taking action in the true sense of the word.

**H.Y.:** There is a current of feminist belief that theorizes that it is almost a contradiction in terms to implant feminist studies in the very institutions (like universities) that promulgate and encourage patriarchal, sexist ideologies.

**K.A.:** There will always be debates about this. While acknowledging the kinds of dangers — theoretical, practical — very real dangers that are involved in the institutionalization of feminism, I would sooner see Women's Studies offered and taught in universities than not. I would sooner see feminists teaching Women's Studies than not.

I think we are making changes in the institution *per se*. We are making changes across the board: for students, for faculty, staff. We are making changes; and it is necessary to make those changes. It may very well be that the kinds of changes that Women's Studies are making are confined to changes within the institutions themselves. But I don't think so. There are women graduating who are going out of the institutions, out of academia, who are able to do valuable work because they're knowledgeable; they have had an entire undergraduate career in which to really consider and generate ideas and accumulate knowledge, their history.

I think we are better with Women's Studies in academia than not. I definitely do.

*Hewon Yang is a Women's Studies student at U of T, doing her practicum at Broadside.*

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# MOVEMENT MATTERS

## DAWN Canada

DisAbled Women's Network Canada is conducting a project to determine the needs and priorities of Canadian women with disabilities. The project is funded by the Department of the Secretary of State. A questionnaire, designed to discover the obstacles facing women with disabilities in parenting and child care, violence against women with disabilities, employment equity, isolation, and recreational needs, is being circulated. Interviews with women in the Atlantic provinces, in Northern BC, Alberta and the Yukon will be conducted. The project will produce three position papers for DAWN Canada; these will help DAWN set priorities and decide on future activities. The studies will add to the limited available information on Canadian women with disabilities.

DAWN Canada began in June, 1985, when 17 women with disabilities from across the country gathered to discuss issues which were not specifically being addressed by either the women's movement or the disabled consumers' movement. Out of this meeting, the DAWN Canada network and its provincial counterparts came into being. DAWN Canada is affiliated with the National Action Committee on the Status of Women, and the Coalition of Provincial Organizations of the Handicapped.

If you would like a copy of the questionnaire, could provide assistance in distributing it, or would like more information on the project, write to: Jillian Ridington, Researcher, DAWN Canada, 3464 W. 27th Ave., Vancouver, BC, V6S 1P6; or to Shirley Masuda, DAWN Canada project coordinator, 10401 Findayson, Richmond, BC, V6X 2A3; or call DAWN Canada at (604) 254-3485 (Voice and TTD).

## Pride Day Volunteers

TORONTO — Lesbian and Gay Pride Day is in need of volunteers to do anything from working the beer garden to doing child care shifts.

To volunteer is easy. Simply phone (416) 242-8943 and leave a message for Grant and you're on your way to helping with an already exciting day. Groups can volunteer together, friends can volunteer en masse.

A special treat goes to those who volunteer for security. They can get a free and fashionable lesbian and gay pride day T-shirt to wear on the day and keep as a memento for the years to come.

It's easy if you try and an even more successful day is only a phone call away. To volunteer for Lesbian and Gay Pride Day, call (416) 242-8943.

## No Going Back

Since the Supreme Court decision, we have witnessed a misinformation campaign from reactionary governments, so-called "experts" and the anti-choice. They have raised the spectre of abortions being done at eight and nine months and of women as irresponsible people who need to be controlled under criminal law. Women are not criminals. To deny women's right to choose is the real crime. Abortion must be a matter of health policy—not criminal law!

Nothing under the old abortion law limited the time period at which a woman could have an abortion. Yet, in the past 15 years, only one half of one percent of abortions were performed after 20 weeks. This small percentage is due to gross fetal deformity, life threatening pregnancy and the drastic inaccessibility of abortion under the old law. A new law will put at risk the women of the first and second categories and do nothing to increase access. The way to prevent late abortions is to ensure access to early abortions—this is where the governments must be acting. Enshrining state interest in the fetus sets a dangerous precedent not only for state intervention in pregnancy and childbirth but for women's autonomy and well-being.

We must not be lulled into thinking a new abortion law will not affect us. Just like the old law, it will deny women the fundamental right to choice. A new law regulating when abortions can be done will especially target and create inequalities of access to this basic health service for working class, young, immigrant, native, rural women and women of colour.

It was the strength of the movement that forced the Supreme Court to strike down the old abortion law. We hold the potential to make choice a reality for all women. It will take this same effort, organizing in our workplaces, communities and in the streets, to push forward for full access to free abortion. (We need to act now. Join the demonstration in front of the P.C. Office, 121 Richmond at 5:30 on Wednesday June 1, 1988.)

—OCAC

## It's a Girl!

Molly Simone Cole (Chudnovsky) came into the world on May 23, 1988 at 5:49 am. Susan and Leslie welcome her with love and joy. Special thanks to midwife Vicki Van Wagner, doctor Howard Kreiger and to all our wonderful friends.

# MOVEMENT COMMENT

## Front of the Bus

*The Women's Press*

### Statement:

The Women's Press is just one of the many organizations in the women's movement which has found it necessary to examine its own racism and its contribution to racism within the women's movement. We believe that this process should not go on behind closed doors and see ourselves as joining other organizations which are working on similar struggles. It is only by going public that we are able to join with other organizations as part of an anti-racist network. We cannot change through closet "anti-racist" discussions.

A series of confrontations made the white women in the Press enter into the process of consciousness raising on the issue of racism in the fall of 1987. A series of meetings with an outside facilitator led to an analysis of how racism is structurally endemic in the Press. We then held a series of meetings of the entire Press to discuss our politics, particularly around issues of racism. These meetings became increasingly unproductive.

As members of the Women's Press we want to acknowledge our divisions on the issue of racism. We have formed a caucus. There was a long period in which we struggled within a consensual process. Very reluctantly and painfully we came to realize that this issue is not one on which a consensus can be reached within the Women's Press as presently constituted.

A year ago a discussion about a particular manuscript precipitated a new level of debate on the question of racism at the Women's Press. Attempts were made to move the Press forward on anti-racist politics. It quickly became apparent that the women of the Press were deeply divided on understandings of, and perspectives on, anti-racism.

Ongoing discussions revealed a general denial of the internalization of racism at the Press and a lack of acknowledgement of what that meant. It was very difficult to identify how racism had been internalized within the Press and within our membership. Resistance to this self-examination was serious. The discussions kicked off an examination of the politics of the Press and a concomitant resistance to that po-

litical examination.

For example, our struggle to have an all Women of Colour Almanac began in the Fall 1986. Women who resisted this project argued that business considerations precluded an almanac by an all women of colour collective. These business concerns worked primarily to mask mistrust, fears of loss of control and an inability to work with an "outside group." We continued to struggle for a consensus on an all women of colour collective writing and producing the 1989 almanac. A professed desire to challenge racism did not move all the dissident women toward overcoming their reluctance to support this proposal. On the condition that the almanac group begin to work a year in advance of the usual starting time, we were able to take the decision by a majority vote. The Press's lack of confidence in working with a group of women of colour was clearly evident.

That an all women of colour collective was necessarily perceived as a group of "outsiders" reflected the isolation of the Press from the women's movement. The Women's Press was really a white women's press. We are working to break out of this ethnocentric isolation.

We realize that our changing politics and dynamics may have led to frustrating and difficult situations for women who have been dealing with us. By making the process public we wish to offer explanation and apology for problems which we, as a divided Press, have created.

We are the Popular Front-of-the-Bus Caucus. We feel that our continuing engagement with women who resist the implementation of anti-racism at the Press is now working to the detriment of the Press and the women's movement. As positions are now polarized and entrenched it is necessary for us, as a majority caucus, to take a leadership role by making our position public. The caucus was formed on May 11, 1988 with the following statement:

"In view of our recognition of endemic racism in the society in which we live, and our acknowledgment of our involvement in those social forces, we declare our intention to form alliances against racist oppression, to take a

public stand regarding our alliances and to fight racism wherever it exists, in ourselves, in our organization and in our publishing."

The Women's Press anti-racism guidelines will be available June 10, 1988 to all interested women. We invite you to join with us.

The Popular Front-of-the-Bus Caucus:  
Larissa Cairncross, Ann Decter, Maureen FitzGerald, Chris Gabriel, Heather Guylar, Rona Moreau, Michele Paulse, Susan Prentice, Katherine Scott, Wendy Waring

### Response:

We are writing in response to the Press Release of May 11, 1988 from the Popular Front-of-the-Bus Caucus.

At the May 11 meeting of the Women's Press, one of a series of meetings held over the past year to chart new anti-racist directions for the Press, some members found themselves excluded from continuing in this process. Charges were made against a number of us; no opportunity for response was allowed. The majority then walked away from the table to set up a separate caucus. Because the situation has reached this state of impasse unique in the history of the Women's Press, we feel we need to clarify our position to concerned members and friends of the Press.

For over a year, the Publishing and Policy Group and other members of the Press have been involved in debate over what explicit forms a more conscious anti-racist policy should take. It is very clear that racism is a deeply systemic problem woven into the fabric of our society and our lives. The debate has never been over *whether* a new policy should be adopted, but rather over *how* this should happen. We as feminists must respond with new initiatives in this area. The Press has struggled to deal with this question, and many of us have been active participants in this process of examination of our practice and politics. The process of education and change is a complex, dialectical and sometimes painful one, but we have struggled in good faith around many difficult and contentious issues.

However, we have found that opposition to particular ideas both in these committee meetings and in the Publishing and Policy Group was construed as resistance to the anti-racist project itself. An atmosphere quickly developed in which it became very difficult to propose concerns and differing opinions without incurring severe personal attacks. It became

clear that embracing the correct position overrode any concern for moving the debate forward in a way which respected us as speaking from a position of conscience and as allies. That the ends were considered more important than the means came as a shock to those of us who valued a sense of feminist process.

The Women's Press has always attempted to act as a vehicle for debate in the women's movement. We must allow for the expression of differing opinions both within our own organization and on the part of our authors. In recent months we have seen writers for the Women's Press treated with open disrespect, and heard the books we've published over the years dismissed as being of little value because they are not sufficiently anti-racist. In our current struggle to incorporate personal and political anti-racist practice into our work, how valid is it to treat sixteen years of development in the women's movement dismissively?

The Press is now divided into those who believe they have *the* correct position on combatting racism and the rest of us who stand accused of "resisting" and not "getting it right." This division has resulted in considerable time being spent on an internal process of cleansing, historical blaming and scapegoating, instead of more positive contributions to building an anti-racist women's movement. In this highly charged environment it has been increasingly difficult to separate out a politics of guilt and self-recrimination from the constructive unlearning of racism which is our task.

We are deeply saddened by these events. Over the course of our history since the publication of *Women Unite* in 1972 the Press has been through many difficult periods. It has always struggled to reflect growth and change in the women's movement through its publishing and practice. Many of us have been connected with Women's Press since the mid-seventies. Some have been committed volunteers, others have dedicated much of our working lives to the Press. We believe that our commitment to anti-racist education must include the community of our writers and readers and reflect a range of opinion and strategy. It is through thoughtful debate and struggle that we will build solidarity in a women's movement that is anti-racist, non-heterosexist and anti-capitalist. Differing views will never disappear; there must be a place for them in a Press which continues to reflect a dynamic women's movement.

Judi Coburn, Connie Guberman, Liz Martin, Lois Pike, Graziela Pimentel, Christa Van Daele, Margie Wolfe, Carolyn Wood

# Fathers' Rights Groups: W

by Brett Dawson

Orson Welles once persuaded radio listeners that Martians had invaded Earth. Currently a small but vociferous assortment of men and so-called men's or father's rights groups, are seeking to persuade the media, politicians and each other than men are the victims of discrimination by women. Men, they argue, are harassed by false allegations of child sexual abuse and receive unfair treatment in sexual assault cases. Divorcing men and fathers, they assert, lose custody unfairly, are denied access by callous mothers and are harshly treated by unnecessary support enforcement procedures. Women—especially feminists and mothers in the workforce—are regarded as being responsible for everything from street crime to teenage pregnancy, drug use, suicide and, of course, marriage breakdown. Michele Landsberg is said to write "hate propaganda" against men, who are at risk of becoming the "last minority." The rhetoric of such storytelling is seductive. Feminists have, however, begun to tune into the telling of this current tall tale.

"Feminists have to be skeptical, cautious and analytical when examining the lobbying initiatives of these groups," says Janice Drakich, a sociologist at the University of Windsor and active in the Justice Committee of the National Action Committee on the Status of Women. The groups purport to be "pro-family" and to be concerned with children's rights. By way of example, their newsletter is called *Equality* and in the past 18 months has evolved from being "The Newsletter for Fathers" to being "The National Family Law Reform Newsletter." Similarly, the national umbrella organization is called the Canadian Council for Family Rights. One of the most reactionary of the men's rights groups goes by the name In Search of Justice. One of the central concerns of these groups is to work towards introduction of a presumption of joint custody of children at divorce. This, they assert, is in the best interests of the child(ren) but has not been implemented because politicians

"just haven't had the courage to implement this method of bringing justice to the children. Members of the legal profession and radical feminists have the politicians running scared. It is unfortunate that the feminist movement which has fought so hard for equality in other areas now rejects equality in family law and continues to suppress the right of children to have free and unhindered access to both parents!" (from *Equality*, February 1987)

This use of language has a seductive, albeit insidious, appeal—it appropriates our sense of fairness and equality; but its surface rationality should not disguise the underlying misogyny of these groups. To Drakich, "the problem with talking at such an idealized level is that it doesn't match the reality. To talk of equality in parenting issues doesn't make sense because we are not dealing with equals. Women are the primary caretakers of children." Or, as Martin Dufresne of Montreal Men Against Sexism has put it, "Ejaculation isn't parenting and shouldn't stand for it." Increasingly, feminists are



clarifying that the men's rights lobby are seeking to control, and have access to, children regardless of the child's best interests and to reassert dominance over women. It is a control without responsibility despite the language of children's rights. Women must become alarmed that there is a real risk of their loss of custody, says Mary Lou Fassel, a lawyer with the Barbra Schlifer Commemorative Clinic in Toronto. And, she argues, the implications

are wider than family law. Despite their "family" labels, the groups are essentially men's and father's rights groups and they are feeding off a backlash against gains made by women toward equality. Says Fassel, "Their chilling media and legal propaganda campaign is contributing to a climate of intolerance of claims of abuse made by women." Theirs, then, is a strategy of intimidating women's organizing and silencing women's voices.

One of the early examples of this strategy was their successful lobbying for inclusion of the "friendly parent rule" in the new Divorce Act. According to Louise Lamb of the National Association of Women and the Law, this rule means that the willingness of the spouse who wants custody to facilitate access to the non-custodial parent is now a factor in determining custody. What this means in practice is that it is hard for women to raise the issue of sexual and physical abuse without appearing unfriendly and thus risking custody. Women are in this way increasingly silenced in the protection of their children. Another recent example of the strategy is a complaint made to the Human Rights Commission against a women's self defence organization in Toronto, alleging sex discrimination in offering self defence classes by and for women only (see sidebar). Most of the movement's energy in Ontario, though, is focused on proposals for joint custody, mediation and enforcement of access.

Joint custody is an idea which sounds good. It raises rosy images of both parents taking an equal share of the joys and tasks for raising their children. It is currently the topic of a private members bill in the provincial legislature sponsored by Jim Henderson, a Liberal MPP. While not an initiative of the fathers' rights groups, it has been enthusiastically endorsed by them. Feminists must ensure that this bill or any like it does not become law. The picture painted by Jim Henderson depicts "mothers sharing the burden of child raising with their former spouses and being able to better realize their talents in careers or other endeavours. Fathers get to care for the children they love and are expected to support financially."

Two crucial distinctions should be borne in mind. First, there is a distinction between imposed joint custody and voluntary agreement to joint custody. Men's and fathers' rights groups are lobbying hard for legislation which would impose a *presumption* of joint custody at separation and divorce. What this means is that the joint custody would be seen as the standard agreement, that a parent who doesn't want joint custody would have to establish a case against it *and* that it would be extremely hard to do so. According to Jim Henderson, "The wording of the bill is such that in practice it would be *extraordinarily difficult* to overturn the presumption of joint custody, unless the parent were *grossly* unfit to parent..." (my emphasis). The attitude of the parents towards joint custody would not be relevant. Joint custody is to be the only rationality. Should the court decide sole custody would be best for the child, the twist in the tail again is a preference for the "friendly parent." In their stinging indictment of women getting custody of children, these fathers' rights organizations ignore an important point: the vast majority of custody cases are not contested and the parents agree that the mother should have custody. Most importantly, where custody is contested fathers appear to be awarded custody in roughly half of the cases.

## Men's Rights Complaint

Recently a women's self-defence organization in Toronto discovered that a man turned away from one of their basic classes has filed a complaint of sex discrimination against them with the Ontario Human Rights Commission. His claim is supported by a men's rights group. He alleges that he was discriminated against in being denied the opportunity to participate in the women-only class. He also claims that he was denied employment on the basis of sex through being unable to become an instructor with the women-only organization.

Once a complaint is received, the Human Rights Commission investigates the complaint and seeks to reach a settlement by conciliation. The Commission sometimes decides not to deal with a complaint if the subject matter is trivial, frivolous, vexacious or made in bad faith. But if a decision is made to deal with the complaint and settlement cannot be affected, the matter proceeds to a public hearing. This complaint is still in the early stages but it appears that the normal process will be followed.

The man's complaint seems to be one of the "Let's reinvent the wheel" variety that leave women shaking their heads with incredulity: How can this man not understand violence against women, and women organizing to protect and empower themselves against it? Given the themes of the men's rights movement, it seems more likely that the complaint is based on denial of that violence and a desire to harass and silence women's organizing.

So, let's be clear.

Women's self-defence organizations are an effective response to the pervasive violence against women in our society. Of 44 murders between January and September last year, 10 were women killed by their husbands. Seventy-six percent of family violence cases involve violence against women and 23% involve violence against children—perpetrated by the male spouse. Men's violence is not restricted to each other. Women's self-defence organizations deal with attacks on women and train women to be able to respond and protect themselves. As such, they promote or help create women's equality in our society.

It makes sense that the classes should be women-only. Women need to create a safe, secure and supportive environment in which to learn how to respond to this violence. The presence of men in such an environment would silence and threaten women. Third, the instructors need to be women too, as role models to women and facilitators of the environment in which the objectives of the class can be met. Women's self defence helps women become self-confident, assertive, and self-assured. It teaches women to be better prepared to deal with male violence and to be better able to fight back.

So why wouldn't a man wish to be supportive of this? Perhaps the answer is as clear as it is unacceptable.

If you're a member of or supportive of women's self-defence in Ontario, contact your organization and give them your support in standing firm against this reversal of reason and threat to women's equality.

—B.D.



# Men's Rights Wrong Women

Feminists agree that joint custody can work but only if both parents are committed to co-parenting and have mutual respect for each other. They need to be cooperative, to be able to communicate with each other and separate their parenting from any remaining hostility toward each other. Both feminists and statistics agree that this is the atypical family arrangement. "In the traditional nuclear family, the division of labour sees women as primary caretakers. Men don't co-parent. How can a law make them acquire skills they didn't have in marriage?" asks NAWL's Louise Lamb.

Social science research has never supported involuntary joint custody and its message that the practice can harm children is becoming clearer. One researcher recently commented that, "to place children in an involuntary joint custody situation is to place them in a battlefield." Further, studies show that joint custody does not result in greater compliance with support orders and often results in lower support orders and financial settlements. Joint physical custody is expensive and limits parental mobility. Where the former husband continues to dominate and control, joint decision-making may be impossible.



It must be noted that the Divorce Act already allows parents to choose joint custody. So, why is a presumption for joint custody even an issue? Perhaps the key is in the second distinction between *legal* joint custody and *physical* joint custody. Legal joint custody gives an equal say in all matters related to a child's upbringing without requiring responsible caretaking of the child. In Henderson's bill, joint physical custody is marginal: only "where

practicable" might the child reside with each parent for an equal period of time. In the US, fathers rights' organizations have consistently sought assurances from legislators that joint custody statutes should refer only to joint legal custody, as has been pointed out by Mary Lou Fassel and Toronto lawyer Diana Majury in an issues paper prepared for NAC. This doesn't tie into the rosy rhetoric. It does give power to the father with no added responsibilities. Maybe it isn't too far from the model of the nuclear family after all.

These groups are also pushing for mandatory mediation in separation and divorce. They argue that it is, "the only way that justice can be done. . . mediation works, reduces case loads, encourages cooperation and forces the parties to 'cool down.' Its purpose is to recognize the needs of children [to have unhindered access to both parents]." Friendly spouse provisions should be enacted to ensure this. Again, the basic aspiration is one shared by feminists—to have equality in relationships and to be able to settle things in the least destructive manner. Again, what is missing in the father's rights analysis is the realities of power imbalances and also of the incredibly coercive effect of abuse in many relationships. The way in which these groups tend to deal with the issue of abuse is sheer denial. It either doesn't exist or has been blown way out of proportion, they claim.

False claims of child sexual abuse, they say, are vindictively made by women seeking custody. Women batter men in relationships. A US men's rights activist who has redefined incest as "family sex" and prefers to refer to incest victims as "incest participants" is praised in a book review, for answering a lot of questions women ask about men "in a loving and compassionate way in an attempt to bridge the gender gap." Mediation may be a good idea sometimes, but I, for one, would not let a men's rights organization define when.

A third major concern of the men's or fathers' rights groups is access enforcement. This too is now the subject of proposed legislation amending the Children's Law Reform Act. *Equality* trumpeted in November 1986 that, "a huge number of fathers have access orders, but their ex-spouses are always blocking these rights. . . We need immediate action regarding enforcement of these rights. Political pressure is our best bet. . . Justice is on our side; unfortunately this justice still needs teeth. Mandatory mediation and joint custody are our long-term goals—access enforcement should be an immediate goal." Feminists disagree with the basic claim. According to Fassel, who has extensive family law experience, there is no substantial problem to justify the proposed access enforcement bill. "Fathers are denied access by mothers

for three main reasons in practice. The father may exercise access inconsistently or the children may be at an age where they may want to do their own thing rather than go with dad. The mother may also have ongoing concern about abuse of the child." Fassel also points out that most access disputes can be sorted out through communication between the parents' lawyers.

The bill is also a mixed bag, containing both good and bad features. The basic design of the bill is to make it possible for parents having an access dispute to apply to the court for an order of make-up time, reimbursement of expenses or supervised access. Of concern to Fassel is the duty it would place on each parent to "encourage and support the child's continuing parent-child relationship with the other." This appears to be a disguised "friendly parent" provision. It presumes that continuing contact is in the best interests of the child and makes it difficult for women to raise concerns about abuse. However, for the first time there is explicit reference to violence against the child, spouse or other member of the child's household as a factor in assessing parenting ability. Denial of access would also be justified where the custodial parent believed on reasonable grounds that the child might suffer physical or emotional harm. Fassel has been active in discussing this bill and her message is that the process must be slowed down to allow consultation of women in family law matters.

It should be apparent that the men's and fathers' rights groups are insidious and wrong-headed, but they cannot be dismissed by women. They seem to be having an effect far beyond their numbers. They have access to financial resources to maintain lobbying pressure. Their media and legal harassment of women and women's organizations is vexacious and ignorant. And, their double-speak reversal of principles of equality and the best interests of children threatens to distort public debate and have negative repercussions for women and for children.

But remember, the Martians *didn't* invade Earth. ●

## In their own words

- Child support to these fathers [who are denied custody] sounds like a kidnapper's demand: 'I want money. It's not ransom, because I don't intend to return your child. But still, I'm running low on cash, so start sending me a third of every pay check from now on.' My hunch is that most parents would reply: 'You have some nerve asking me to subsidize your torture of me. If you can't afford my child, return him.' A father who refuses this extortion, however, is just another dead-beat dad. —*Equality* (January 1987).

- Women's groups say rape is rape. Rape is not rape. We know the difference between a 90 year old Sunday school teacher and the woman who's screwed every guy in Toronto. —Ross Virgin, of In Search of Justice. Quoted in *The Globe and Mail*, March 11, 1988.

- The guy may beat the living daylights out of his wife but could be the greatest father in the world to his children. A man who beats his wife has a problem with adult women, not necessarily with children. —Ms Bailey, of Canadian Council for Family Rights. Quoted in *The Globe and Mail*, March 11, 1988.

- There was a time when man went about his business "making a living." A woman went about her business, tending the home and children, while "making life worth living." Now man goes about his business and woman goes about "his" business too.

- With mothers trying to find themselves; marriages falling apart; abortion becoming an accepted norm—how do we protect our children? Fathers want their rights protected, so do mothers—what about a child's rights? The right to have two parents; to finish school and come home to a warm embrace. —from *Equilibrium*, a bi-monthly supplement to *Equality* (February 1987).

- "The Canada Council handsomely funds dozens of whiny little local feminist magazines which have found 'the enemy' responsible for everything from the average wage of a woman being 63 cents for every dollar made by a man (a complete statistical lie) to the one about men forcing women to wear high heels." —*Equality* (June 1986).

- Warren Farrell on why women are not discriminated against: "Women are the only minority to be born into the upper class as frequently as men. The only minority group whose 'unpaid labour' enables them to buy fifty billion dollars of cosmetics each year; whose members have more time to read romance novels and watch more television than men during every time category; whose members earn one third of what white men earn and outspent them for all personal items combined. Women are the only minority group to systematically grow up having a class of workers (called fathers) in the field working for them; they are the only minority group which is a majority." —from *Why Men Are The Way They Are*.

- "Farrell discusses how some articles and books in women's magazines and pop-psychology books for women have 'objectified' men, placing them into sub-human categories. Farrell traces this back to the fact that as women become more successful in the business world, it becomes increasingly harder to meet her primary fantasy (ie, meeting a man who is more successful than herself). Therefore women's anger at men manifests itself via sexist cartoons and articles in women's magazines such as *Ms*, *Modern Woman*, and *Cosmo*." —from a review of *Why Men Are The Way They Are*. *Equality* (January 1987).

- A men's rights cartoon reads:  
Q: "What's the difference between an egalitarian and a feminist?"  
A: "An egalitarian believes in two way equality."

## Men's Rights Groups

**Canadian Council for Family Rights:** a national coalition of individuals associated with men's and fathers' rights groups. Some women's groups are associated with the coalition, including the Second Wives Association of North America. They have also associated themselves with Mothers Without Custody. The Council was formed at the first National Parents' and Children's Rights Convention held in Ottawa in February 1987. The Convention was billed as "the founding convention of the emerging divorced parents' rights movement in Canada."

**Canadian Council on Co-Parenting and Canadians Organized for Parental Equality:** Richard Haney, an Ottawa area mediator, has been active in these groups.

**Fathers for Justice:** An Ontario fathers' rights group, led by Ron Sauve, most concerned with family law reform.

**In Search of Justice:** An Ontario men's rights group led by Ross Virgin. The mandate of this group ranges across the criminal justice process to family law and general harassment of women's groups. It holds to the right wing moralist position against prostitution, pornography, etc., with the added twist of holding women responsible for this "immorality."

**Free Men:** formed in late 1986 to "reach out beyond the rights of fathers. . . to focus on all issues of concern to men. Political and social equality for men—these are the issues for the 80s and 90s. . . We must all push for joint custody and mandatory mediation."

**Anti-Male Media Committee:** Steve Schertzer has been active as chair of this committee and has stated that he has promised himself never to allow anyone to insult or offend him or men as a group. He has identified "challenging any feminist who dares to insult you by putting down men" as an "important issue facing men today."

**Organization for the Protection of Children's Rights and Association des hommes séparés ou divorcés:** both Montreal-based fathers' rights groups.

**Fathers and Children, Their Society (F.A.C.T.S.):** BC

**Fathers' Association to Have Equal Rights (F.A.T.H.E.R.S.):** Manitoba

# ARTS

## Women's Cinéma Réalité

by Louise Forsyth

The 10th International Women's Film Festival took place in March in the Paris suburb of Créteil. It is a huge festival which manages through superb organization to create the feeling that it is a casual meeting of good friends, the cold concrete structures of this Parisian bedroom community being transformed into an autonomous women's space, a place of warm welcome, shared enthusiasm and relaxation. For 10 days I saw the world richly, in the ways women have seen it in the past and in their varied perceptions and experiences of it today. My strong impression was of participating in an event which is both boldly creative and profoundly subversive.

A few figures will give an idea of the size of the Festival: over 30,000 paid admissions (with many turned away during the final weekend) to see more than 120 films from 30 countries shown in 7 large movie theatre halls during about 500 sessions. For a majority of the films, directors and others involved in their production were present. The active participation of many other film professionals and members of the press, with strong representation from France along with countries on every continent, created an atmosphere of lively discussion and debate.

Jackie Buet and Elisabeth Tréhard, founders of the Festival in 1979, continue their passionate involvement in it. They believe that women see and give representational form to the world in ways which bring hidden faces of reality to light, and so which promise change. "The Festival was created with the idea than in men's films, women have difficulty identifying with female characters. With films made by women they suddenly feel at home and that helps them give shape to their identity and their personality in a positive manner, not negative as is often the case in men's films." Buet and Tréhard were excited back in 1978 at the Forum for Young Cinema in Berlin to see that 45% of the films in the Forum were made by women, women with a new vision now recognized internationally: Helma Sanders, Jutta Brückner, Margarethe von Trotta, Ula Stockl. Buet and Tréhard, through their involvement with film during the 70s, also knew that women had played an important but forgotten role internationally in the history of cinema. There were many pioneers, apparently forgotten by male historians, whose accomplishments were usually attributed erroneously to men (for example, Alice Guy, a film director, producer and writer who made hundreds of films in France and the United States, and the first person in the world to make a fiction film). From the beginning, the Créteil Festival (which began in another Paris suburb, Sceaux) has featured the work of pioneer women filmmakers, each year discovering new names and new films in more countries, building a fresh corpus which demands that new histories be written and still more research and restoration be undertaken.

At the centre of the Festival program this year were the films in competition: feature length fiction films, feature length non-fiction films, and short subjects. This was a selection of 16 and 35 mm films, less than 2 years old, which have not had commercial distribution in France, and where the director is one or more women. The films were chosen for their innovative qualities, and for their interest in exploring relationships and in tracing internationally the evolution of women's social, political and cultural status. The program, offering a balance that reflects recent thematic and technical tendencies, continued the particular attention paid at the Festival to women, and to filmmakers generally in the Third World. According to Buet and Tréhard, "Women pay attention to all that is related to minorities: all that is exploited, oppressed; and not only women—all situations where the human is in the minority?"

Opening and closing sessions of the Festival featured two films made in 1987 by French director Agnès Varda with actor Jane Birkin, both of whom were present. These two new controversial works by a pioneer of experimental cinema, whose fiction and documentary films extend over more than 30 years, along with the frank discussion they generated, gave a taste right from the beginning of what would happen during the Festival. Other sessions, scheduled simultaneously with the films in competition, presented a retrospective of the works of Russian filmmaker Kira Mouratova, a thematic program of 16 films from seven countries illustrating the complex and multi-faceted image of women in Arab cinema, a self-portrait



Jackie Burroughs as Maryse Holder in *A Winter Tan*: a woman making her own choices

of actor Dominique Sanda as seen in nine of her films, a panorama of women's feature films currently distributed in France, and "Enthusiasms and Discoveries" of little known or newly discovered/restored works from the 20s and later. A system of sub-titling specifically developed for the Women's Film Festival, since women's films are rarely subtitled for commercial distribution, worked so well that international works could be appreciated easily without having to go through an artificial language barrier.

The place was filled as well with activity outside the theatre halls. At the centre of the main building is a large forum, the "piscine," with comfortable benches and lots of black leather cushions. Discussions with the filmmakers and others took place following almost every film, either specifically on the film and conditions surrounding its production, or else in a more formal discussion on a chosen theme: women in the Arab world—progression or regression?, reproduction technology—women machines?, the pistol (instruments of violence) in films by women and men, modern sexuality—20 years after 1968. Reflecting the high level of excitement generated by the films, the discussions were lively and animated, and very easy to be part of. Informal discussions and encounters were equally easy with other spectators, filmmakers, Festival organizers, journalists. The grey concrete walls seemed to shimmer with the images in brazen primary colors flowing from a base of white in Colette Deble's paintings. Videos from Québec's "Video femmes" and from Belgium's "Centre video" were shown and discussed throughout the Festival, offering a lively counterpoint to the movies. Book and magazine displays and other information stands confirmed the exhilarating impression of seeing the complex diversity of human experience through women's eyes and of sharing the revelation of such vision across a field of shared culture.

In the same spirit of openness and sharing experience, the organizers arranged a 2-day conference for film professionals after the Festival, the second meeting of "KINO Women International" (KIWI). This organization, whose membership is already large and representative of many countries, including Canada/Québec, was created last year in Moscow in response to an obvious practical need. The President of KIWI, Russian filmmaker Lana Gogoberidze, was accompanied to Créteil by an extraordinarily large delegation of 14 Russian women filmmakers, many of whose films were seen during the Festival.

Along with major media coverage and options taken on films in the Festival, one of its important and immediate results has been to give mainstream distribution to many of the

participating films in Paris and at least 15 other French cities. It is still true today, as it has been for decades, that few women are able to build a life-time career as film directors. In the past they have made one or two films and then have had to stop because of material difficulties. The initiatives taken by the Créteil Festival to encourage contacts among filmmakers, the public, the press and distributors are an excellent step to enhance knowledge, appreciation and demand for the fine professional films women are making throughout the world. These films and the unique vision behind them never have a chance to make themselves known, since, even in those cases when they are commercially distributed, they are usually shown for a few days only, certainly not long enough for their relevance and unique qualities to be adequately recognized—it takes a while to get rid of old habits and the effects of social conditioning.

one of them is specifically feminist in an overt political way. Still, with the exception of Anne Hui's *The romance of book and sword* (Hong Kong), which could easily rival with *The Last Emperor* for its beauty and technical virtuosity but where the perspective on history does not depart from patriarchal traditions, all these films represent an approach which seems to typify this moment in time: a feminist perspective as lived in one's personal life rather than discussed in the abstract. Original and imaginative fiction explores the ramifications of women's ways of feeling, seeing and living. Female characters start from a situation of solitude and proceed to work out, or at least to look for ways to work out, what autonomy means in their personal lives and for the roles they might play in society. By their situation they recognize that old relationships no longer work, while finding the basis for love and new relationships is not easy (relations among girls/women and relations with men make urgently differing demands); social conventions impose unacceptable handicaps; personal goals and choices remain elusive and difficult to define; events of the past make the present untenable. Like Marysa in *A Winter Tan*, most of the characters in these films, viewed with compassion but without indulgence, begin with acceptance of themselves as women who dare to challenge openly the taboos which would keep them in their place, who know they may make mistakes but insist on their right to do so, who feel the need for sexual fulfilment although they may not be "attractive" according to social norms, who know they are growing older. These characters express the need to know and understand themselves and to share their experiences with other women. Filled with contradictions, they feel fear, doubt and loneliness. Yet they are strong, complex in their fullness, dependent for their survival, or at least for their sense of integrity, on their courageous lucidity, the irony they dare turn on themselves, their sense of humour.

The feature length non-fiction films in competition explored in depth a range of social problems and injustice, always with the goal of establishing a fresh basis for dialogue and human solidarity; girls and women robbed of joy, childhood and opportunity; incest and other forms of sexual abuse and violence; women in prison; tenacious but fragile human values opposed to war and institutionalized hatred in racist South Africa and in the shredding social fabric of the countries of the Middle East; the horrifying ramifications of genetic engineering and reproduction technology (the ultimate tool placed in the hands of those who have demonstrated for centuries that their primary motivation is greed and the will to power). As such they made resonant statements. Reso-

Feature length fiction films in competition came from 10 different countries:

Australia	<i>High tide</i> Gillian Armstrong <sup>1</sup> .
Austria	<i>Marlene: der amerikanische traum</i> (The American dream) Käthe Kratz
Canada	<i>A winter tan</i> Jackie Burroughs, Louise Clark, John Frizzell, John Walker, Aerlyn Weissman <sup>2</sup> .
Canada/Québec	<i>Eva guerrillera</i> Jacqueline Levitin
Great Britain	<i>Business as usual</i> Lezli-An Barrett <sup>3</sup> .
Holland	<i>Bygones</i> Ine Schenckan
Hong Kong	<i>An autumn's tale</i> Mabel Cheung
Hong Kong	<i>The romance of book and sword</i> Ann Hui <sup>4</sup> .
South Africa	<i>Quest for love</i> Helena Nogueira
USSR	<i>Krougovorot</i> (The whirlwind) Lana Gogoberidze
USA	<i>Desert Hearts</i> Donna Deitch
West Germany	<i>Komplizinnen</i> (Complicity) Margit Czenki
West Germany	<i>Paradies</i> (Paradise) Doris Dorrie

1. Best feature film—awarded by the public.

2. Jackie Burroughs declared best actor—awarded by an international jury of movie professionals, including Québécoise Paule Baillargeon.

3. Best film—awarded by jury.

4. Special mention—awarded by jury.

The range of social questions raised by the feature length fiction films is wide, although not



nant as well were the films of celebration, celebrating particularly the courage of artists who have made their art despite great personal pain and discouragement.

The documentaries came from 6 countries:

Australia	<i>Snakes and Ladders</i> Mitzi Goldnian & Trish Fitzsimons
Canada	<i>Artist on fire</i> Kay Armatage
Canada	<i>To a safer place</i> Beverly Shaffer
Canada/ Québec	<i>Les Bleus au coeur</i> Suzanne Guy
France	<i>Classified people</i> Yolande Zauberman <sup>5</sup> .
Great Britain	<i>Mama I'm crying</i> Betty Wolpert
Great Britain	<i>Talking to the enemy: voices of sorrow and rage</i> <sup>6</sup> . Mira Hamermesh
Great Britain	<i>The soft cell</i> Noémie Mendelle
Switzerland	<i>Erzählung für Sandra</i> (Relating to Sandra) Anne Spoerri
USA	<i>Beirut: the last home movie</i> Jennifer Fox
USA	<i>Girl Talk</i> Kate Davis

<sup>5</sup>. Best feature length non-fiction film—awarded by l'Association des femmes journalistes.

<sup>6</sup>. Best feature length non-fiction film—awarded by the public, with special mention by l'Association des femmes journalistes.

Space is the underlying problem in all the documentaries in the sense that the world offers women and minorities no "safer place," all cultural and geographical territories being occupied, structured and manipulated for purposes of exploitation, power and control. Aware of the complexity of this situation, women are producing a new style of documentary, where they explore the concentric and eccentric circles

of interlocking space: psychic, family and domestic, immediate society, national, universal. Themes of travel and return recur frequently in response to the need to get out of the charged situation or at least to get to the bottom of it, but a simple change of place does not bring the release sought by the characters, who are left with their questions, anguish, deeper understanding and the possibility of further exploration, dialogue, imagination.

As a reminder that each person lives even the most earth-shaking event first of all on an individual level, with those who are closest to her, and as part of a whole range of personal sensations, women making non-fiction films investigate the fabric of internal tensions, where conflict is lived as a daily experience, rather than going into the streets to watch the bombs explode. Instead of using standard reporting techniques in which isolated incidents are torn out of the fabric of a total situation and featured to offer thrills to voyeuristic spectators who think they are thereby being informed, women filmmakers reproduce the quality of what is really lived, frequently in its indescribable pain, by listening to the quiet voices of the people who are there.

Buet and Tréhard have succeeded in showing the way women explore with honesty and compassion the illusions and blind spots behind the normal reporting of events: "The subject matter shows what women have in common, whatever culture they belong to: they often have another point of view on the world; they like to show the lines of force and domination running through societies, in order to denounce, never to justify them. Women are never on the side of power . . . the view from beneath, from what is not dominant."

It was the themes and techniques of the short subject films that most forced the exploration of where frontiers and boundaries actually are. Shown in the same programs as the feature length films, they were a constant and exciting challenge, often humorous new ways of seeing and thinking. There were 36 short subjects, eight from Canada/Québec, with 26 di-

rectors present from 12 different countries. The winning French film *Zot Ka Fé Zouzou* by Véronique Mucret presented the anguish of debilitating racism lived between a woman and her mother. Most moving of the short subjects were those which came from the Third World, where women filmmakers are still rare due to particularly difficult circumstances in their troubled countries. The winning international short subject, *La mirada de Myriam* by Clara Riascos from Colombia, shows the child Myriam observing injustice and squalor from the perspective of her Bogota slum. Although

dark in outlook, the strength, lucidity and courage of Myriam and her mother are deeply moving.

The films in the "Panorama" series were chosen among prize-winners of previous years and other recent women's films. They are outstanding films which show clearly that it is distribution and not quality or availability which represents the barrier to women's films being seen in mainstream movie houses.

In addition to all the film series of the Festival which I have already discussed, the program which I probably enjoyed most was the variegated "Enthusiasms and Discoveries." More than anything else it reconfirmed my conviction that women filmmakers have always been there making wonderful films and that, despite incredible obstacles, it has always been and will always be impossible to stifle their imagination and creative voice.

The "Panorama" films came from nine countries:

Argentine	<i>Miss Mary</i> Maria Luisa Bemberg
Belgique	<i>Les noces barbares</i> Marion Hänsel
Brésil	<i>L'heure de l'étoile</i> Suzana Amaral
Canada	<i>I've heard the mermaids singing</i> Patricia Rozema
Canada/ Québec	<i>Anne Trister</i> Léa Pool
France	<i>Coeurs croisés</i> Stéphanie de Mareuil
France	<i>Jeux d'artifices</i> Virginie Thévenet
France	<i>Le jupon rouge</i> Geneviève Lefèvre
France	<i>Un homme amoureux</i> Diane Kurys
France	<i>Avril brisé</i> Liria Begeja
Suède	<i>Les frères Mozart</i> Suzanne Osten
Turquie	<i>La Chambre de mariage</i> Bilge Ogiac
USA	<i>Home of the brave</i> Laurie Anderson
West Germany	<i>Rosa Luxembourg</i> Margarethe von Trotta
West Germany	<i>Laputa</i> Helma Sanders-Brahms

"Enthusiasms and Discoveries":

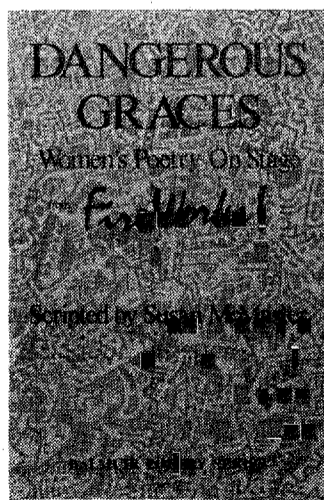
France	<i>Le Sang des Finiels</i> Rose Lacau-Pansini & Georges Monca, 1922
France	<i>Hara Kiri</i> Marie-Louise Iribe, 1928
France	<i>Vivre ensemble</i> Anna Karina, 1973
Poland	<i>La femme seule</i> Agnieszka Holland, 1981
Sri-Lanka	<i>Les ami(e)s</i> Sumitra Peries, 1983
USSR	<i>Les Commères de Riazan, ou le village du péché</i> Olga Preobrajenskaia, 1927
USSR	<i>Les Souliers perés ou la botte déchiré</i> Margarita A. Barskaia, 1933
USSR	<i>Les ailes</i> Larissa Chepitko, 1966

Louise Forsyth is a Canadian feminist, a professor of French literature, currently living in Nice, France.

## Life Cycles

The second section of the book includes a good variety of shorter poems, largely about relationships with lovers, imagined or real. But there are also poems about friends and a performance on stage. The section — and the book, appropriately — end with another poem about birth, this one a poignant piece about the second childhood of old age and the "birth" of dying.

*Re Creation* is an accessible, good-humoured book expectant mothers might especially enjoy. But I can also imagine a circle or reading group of grandmothers or mothers of teenagers reading these pieces with enjoyment, allowing the poems to evoke their own reminiscences, laughter and pride.



Although the texts of *Dangerous Graces* are poems, this book should appeal particularly to theatre buffs. It is a script formed of poems by different authors for a performance by three actresses representing archetypal phases of a woman's life: Maid, Matron and Dame. The work was created when Ottawa's Great Canadian Theatre Company put out a call in the fall of 1986 for new work by women writers, and poetry, as well as scripts, arrived in abundance. Ottawa poet Susan McMaster undertook the task of organizing the pieces within a thematic framework, and this book was the result.

Some of the poems are by more widely-published poets like McMaster herself and Bronwen Wallace, but many are by writers whose work has appeared largely in anthologies and magazines. Some poems play with archetypes like Pandora and Eve. Others describe contemporary life situations and experiences, and in this the reader or woman in the audience will of course have her own favourites. Mine include a poem about a teenager learning a young friend is pregnant ("When I Was Fifteen" by Holly Kritsch), complaints about an older sister who is good at math ("Blueprint" by Nadine McInnis), and the story of a sister's late night phone call to say she has been beaten by her husband ("Dreams of Rescue" by Bronwen Wallace). There are also interesting "mood pieces"; one of my favourites is an old woman's short and haunting reverie, "Hanging from Tomorrow's Sky" by Nancy Hall.

As one would expect of a theatre piece, these poems are quite readable and sound well aloud. *Dangerous Graces* could be fun for a group of friends to read aloud or useful for a troupe of feminist actresses to use as a script or script inspiration.

Betsy Nuse is a Toronto feminist and bibliophile.

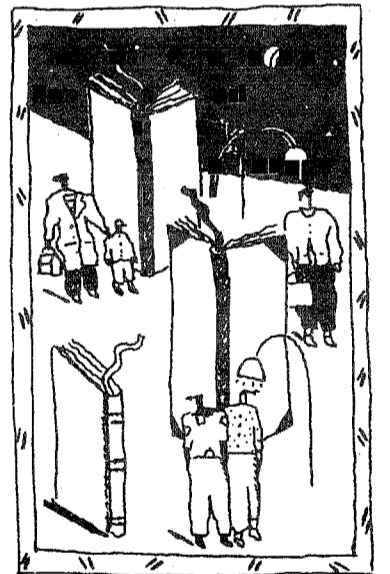
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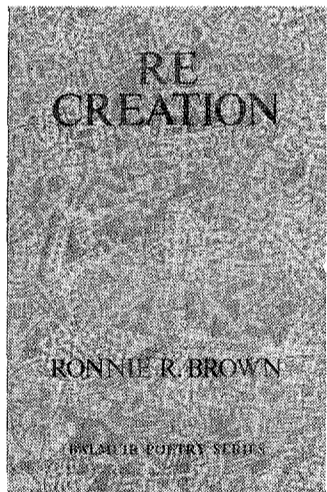
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*Re Creation* by Ronnie R. Brown. Ottawa: Balmuir, 1987; and *Dangerous Graces: Women's Poetry On Stage* scripted by Susan McMaster. Ottawa: Balmuir, 1987.

Reviewed by Betsy Nuse

More than half of *Re Creation* by Ronnie R. Brown is a narrative poem in twelve sections. It describes conceiving a baby after a miscarriage and being pregnant, right through a traditional (anesthesia and forceps) childbirth. Brown writes with good humour about her appearance when pregnant: "ankles swollen, knees skinned, complexion a mess . . . No, I do not walk but waddle from place to place." But the prevailing moods of this poem are the speaker's confidence and pleasure in her own body and its achievement. At the moment of conception (subsequently doubted by everyone else until there is "scientific" corroboration) she says

And  
it is done. I  
know. I know  
that it is  
done.

As soon as she sees her new baby, she exclaims proudly

You  
a person, real new, entering my world  
through  
me!

# Imagine My Surprise

by Susan G. Cole

The movement of feminists towards artistic cultural offensives has taken many of us into increasingly intense discussions about strategies for empowerment. Expression, according to many cultural workers, is the first step away from female victimization and toward the creation of a strong voice for social change. For women who have experienced sexual violence, speaking out against the abuse is that monumental moment of transformation that makes survivors aware that they are not alone and that their survival is their strength. For writers, "finding one's own voice" is considered a key in the process of talking truth. When these things happen, women grow and feminism makes its imprint on the world.

Many feminists have insisted that women's presence in the media has to be constant and women-positive if the media are going to offer any possibilities for empowerment. Others are not so sure. They think that the media power brokers in New York and Los Angeles can give us all the images they want, they only disguise the truth, never changing the reality and giving us a false sense of certainty about the possibilities for change. But actually, research says the opposite. One survey of advertising by Alice Courtney and Thomas W. Whipple discovered that, in fact, the world of mass marketing lags



Melanie Mayron (l.) and Helen Slater as buddies in *Sticky Fingers*

far behind the real world, stereotyping the sexes more than they are in real life. If anything, feminists ought to be depressed by media presentations of gender not encouraged by them.

So imagine my shock when I tuned into "Heartbeat," a prime time TV drama that presents the lives of women doctors working in a women's health clinic. Now admittedly, this TV medical model is not exactly a grassroots-type facility. All the doctors drive Mercedes and hang out in beach houses that hug the Pacific. And you can forget about collectives. This clinic is hierarchical to the core. But the doctors face ethical dilemmas with aplomb, they take the odd medical risks and seem to have a beat on progressive practices. After an insemination procedure, one doctor tells her patient that orgasm helps move the sperm along and pointedly offers to leave her alone in the room for a while.

But it was the subplot that offered the most surprises. Adrienne, one of the doctors, returns home and begins arguing with a woman seated at a desk. Before long, it becomes plain that they are lovers working through a problem in the extended family. Adrienne probably has a terminal disease, I thought gloomily, and she'll be dead before the end of the episode. But no, she carries right on with the question of whether she can take her lover to her daughter's wedding. And guess what? She is a regular and cannot be written out of the script at the whim of the next story editor. Lesbians on prime time. What does this mean? "Heartbeat" ran only twice, as one of those typical floaters the networks throw in while trying to decide what to screen during the summer. But look for it to sneak onto the schedule some time in July.

Speaking of sneaking onto the scene, a very funny new movie may quietly move into your local movie theatre and I suggest you run to see it before it quietly moves out again. "Sticky Fingers" is the story of two women—friends and roommates—who unwittingly become solely responsible for a suitcase containing close to one million dollars in cash. Hopelessly broke and facing eviction, Hattie (Helen Slater) and Loll (Melanie Mayron) dip into the cash for the rent, then for a few clothing items, then for some state-of-the-art sound equipment and then on and on until they've frittered away close to \$250,000. The shop-till-you-drop comedy becomes shop-and-you-die suspense when the owner of the valise comes back for the cash and mobsters follow closely behind.

The two writers, Melanie Mayron and Catlin Adams, have a lengthy history of collaboration. Both are actors—Mayron, the better known for appearances in Claudia Weill's "Girlfriends" and recently on TV in "Thirty-something"—and so know how to write for actors. The fact that Mayron stars in the film only enriches what is obviously already a very fertile collaboration. Together the filmmakers have created a lesson in women-positive filmmaking.

First, load the screen with women. I hope that there will come a time when it is no longer the case, but seeing so many women working

together is almost overwhelming. Without trying, it increases viewer awareness of how often movies have no women in them at all, even though we sometimes do not notice the absence at the time. This is a movie male critics will not love; their eyes are accustomed to seeing boy buddy films and it doubtless will stretch their imaginations to clap eyes on a group of women who have boyfriends but who like to be around members of their own sex.

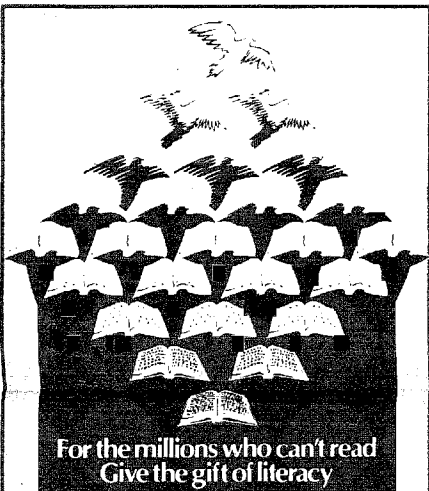
Second, cast the film with an eye for intriguing characters. Eileen Brennan is hilarious as Stella, the unsympathetic landlord and it is heartening to see one of Hollywood's best known character actors in this ultra-independent production. Carole Kane also appears as a lovesick visiting tenant, and has bloomed as a comedic actor. Evanston (Danitra Vance), Loll and Hattie's best friend, get them a gig playing for a wild performance piece called Tanya Blue (all the musicians wear purple back-lit tutus). She thinks they're crazy for letting their sticky fingers get the best of them, but she hangs in with them until the bitter end. In all, the film illustrates how women can support each other through desperate situations.

But the key is the relationship between Loll and Hattie. They are buddies whose connection actually resembles female friendship. It helps that they are interesting women. When they're in trouble they mutter, "Oh my Goddess." They are both musicians and good at it, even if they play for spare change in the park and cannot even hang on to the pittance they make there. While on their shopping spree they fight furiously over who has dibs on the groovy item both of them want. Their boyfriends and ex-boyfriends are so unreliable—though not stereotypically so—that their need for each other makes sense. They like each other. They touch each other. This is one of those films that has a feminist imprint and still manages to look hip.

There are some problems, especially with the drug dealers and mobsters, and a plot which has to take some unlikely turns to resolve itself. But *Sticky Fingers* is big on brazen attitude and is definitely a sign that women are finding a way to use film as a medium for women-positive—and funny—scenarios.

One last note about empowerment. That prime time favourite "Cagney and Lacey" may survive the axe for one more year. The producers had actually shot the final episode in which one of the police partners is (allegedly) killed. This wholly unnecessary fictional assassination (what's wrong with letting them live even if we can't see them?) was postponed and replaced by a ridiculous cloak-and-dagger suspense episode that took our favourite persons in blue away from the social issues that used to provide the powerful substance for the show.

There have been other indications that bode ill for "Cagney and Lacey." Ever since Lacey had her baby Alice we rarely see the little tyke. She never cries, never talks, has absolutely no presence in the Lacey household. She wins the award for most absent baby of the year, something of a contradiction for a program that boasts of realism on the woman front. Bring back Alice, I say, give Cagney a hair cut (Ever notice how terrific she looks in wet hair?) and get back to the tough probing that distinguished "Cagney and Lacey" from the self-indulgent baby booting whining that is going on everywhere else on the television screen. Then maybe "Cagney and Lacey" can reclaim its status as the most female-empowering program in prime time. ●



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10 am - 6 pm

at

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Toronto

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## WEEK OF JUNE 1

• **Wednesday, June 1:** "No Way! Not Me!" NFB film on the feminization of poverty. Fundraiser for Common Ground Women's Centre. 7 pm and 8:30 pm. NFB Theatre, 1 Lombard Street. Complimentary beer and popcorn. Wheelchair accessible. Recommended donation \$10. Info: 973-9606.

• **Wednesday, June 1:** Women's College Hospital and the Disabled Women's Network presents New Reproductive Technologies: Brave New World. Info: WCH, 323-6111 or DAWN, 755-606 (voice or TDD).

• **Wednesday, June 1:** Rally to Stop the New Abortion Law. Progressive Conservative Headquarters, 121 Richmond Street West, 5:30 pm. Info: OCAC, 532-8193.

• **Thursday, June 2:** Seminar on Gender Issues in Research on Exercise, Fitness and Health, part of the International Conference on Exercise, Fitness and Health. \$15. 7 pm. Metro Convention Centre.

• **Thursday, June 2:** Conversations with Authors: Erin Moure, Marlene Nourbese Philip, Libby Scheier and Frances (Sandy) Duncan; moderator Eleanor Wachtel. 7:30 pm. SCM Book Room, 333 Bloor Street West. Info: 979-9624.

• **Thursday, June 2:** Aftermath presents Child Sexual Abuse: Who Tells Lies? Panel discussion with Lisa Woods, Michael Raynham and Helen Penfold. 8 pm. Ontario Hydro Building, 2nd floor auditorium, 700 University Avenue. Wheelchair accessible, signing for hearing impaired. Info: 461-4709.

• **Friday, June 3:** Xtra presents a benefit evening to celebrate the 15th anniversary of Canadian Gay Archives, with Vito Russo: The New Celluloid Closet. \$10. Bloor Cinema, 506 Bloor St. West.

• **Saturday, June 4:** The Coalition For Lesbian and Gay Rights (CLGRO) is holding a meeting to finalize a list of names of Lesbian and Gay men interested in working with the Ontario Human Rights Commission or as members of The Lesbian and Gay Advisory Board. Info: 533-6824.

• **Saturday, June 4:** A multiple monitor video installation, "As A Wife Has A Cow," opens at A Space, 183 Bathurst Street, 2-4 pm. Info: 364-3227. **To Saturday, July 9.**

• **Sunday, June 5:** Lesbian Mothers' Defence Fund monthly potluck. 1-4 pm at 519 Church Street.

## WEEK OF JUNE 6

• **Tuesday, June 7:** Hiring interviews for Woman's Common: cooks, service staff, bar staff, kitchen staff. 4-7 pm. 580 Parliament Street. Info: 975-9079. **Also Wednesday, June 8.**

• **Wednesday, June 8:** A benefit for Nellie's: Michel Tremblay's play, "The Real People." Tarragon Theatre, 30 Bridgman Avenue. Info: 531-1827.

• **Wednesday, June 8:** Canadian Stage Company presents Athol Fugard's drama, The Road to Mecca, starring Patricia Connelly and Seana McKenna. \$12-14. Sundays, pwyc. 8:30 pm. 26 Berkeley Street. Reservations: 368-2856. **To Sunday, July 31.**

• **Thursday, June 9:** Ontario Advisory Council on Women's Issues presents a three-day conference to discuss Motherhood in the 80s. Free child care, wheelchair accessible, signed for hearing impaired, simultaneous French translation. Free admission, light lunch provided, limited travel subsidies. 7:30-10 pm. Info and child care pre-registration: 965-5824 (collect). **Also Friday, June 10 and Saturday, June 11,** 9 am-4:30 pm.

# OUTSIDE

## BROADSIDE

### JUNE 1988

• **Thursday, June 9:** Monthly meeting of Riverdale Women's Action Committee. All women welcome. Frankland Community Centre, 816 Logan Avenue. 7:30 pm.

• **Friday, June 10:** Feminist bisexual women's support group. 6-8 pm. Room 23, 519 Church Street.

• **Sunday, June 12:** Ragweed Press presents Elly Danica reading from her new book *Don't, A Woman's Word*, a novel about violence, incest and survival. 7 pm. SCM Bookroom, 333 Bloor St. West. Info: 979-9624.

• **Sunday, June 12:** Playworkshop in goddess empowerment through dance, with Audrey Rose. 2 pm. 29 Beverley Street. Info: 977-8559.

## WEEK OF JUNE 13

• **Tuesday, June 14:** The Justina M. Barnicke Gallery, Hart House, presents an exhibition of Annette Francoise, "Quilts." West Gallery. Info: 978-3453. **To Saturday, July 16.**

• **Tuesday, June 14:** The Justina M. Barnicke Gallery, Hart House presents an exhibition of Lori Goldbert paintings, "Out of the Blue." East Gallery. Info: 978-2453. **To Saturday, July 16.**

• **Friday, June 17:** Gays and Lesbians Aging (GALA) meeting, 7:30 pm. 519 Church Street.

• **Friday, June 17:** The Summit Citizen's Conference, public forums and workshops at Ryerson Institute. Info: 971-5015. **To Tuesday, June 21.**

• **Saturday, June 18:** Annual memberships go on sale for The Woman's Common at 580 Parliament St., from 10 am-6 pm. Lifetime membership cards will also be available. Memberships will be sold at the premises after opening June 24, 1988. **Also Sunday, June 19.**

• **Saturday, June 18:** Health Education Resources Pre-Conception workshop. 9:30 to 4. Women's College Hospital, Barton Hall, 60 Grosvenor St., 2nd floor classroom A. \$55/lunch included. Info: 323-6030.

## WEEK OF JUNE 20



• **Sunday, June 19:** DisAbleD Women's Network presents a panel discussion on how to prevent sexual assault. Info: 775-6060 (voice or TDD).

• **Monday, June 20:** Women's Writing Across Borders, a cross-cultural forum on feminist theory presented in conjunction with the Third Annual International Feminist Bookfair. Featuring Gisela Ecker, Silvia Lago and Cathie Dunsford. Admission \$3 or sliding scale. 7:30-9:30 pm. Room 3-311, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, 252 Bloor Street West. Wheelchair accessible. Info: 923-6641, ext. 2204.

• **Monday, June 20:** Lesbian and Gay Community Appeal holds its monthly board meeting, 6:30 pm at 519 Church Street.

• **Tuesday, June 21:** Feminist Writers' Night at Harbourfront. Readings by Flora Nwapa, Miriam Tlali, Bharati Mukherjee and Jeannette Winterson. 8 pm. Brigantine Room, Queen's Quay. Info: 598-0082.

• **Tuesday, June 21:** Barriers to Women's Writing, a panel discussion focussing on women of colour and women in poverty. 5:30 pm. For location, call 598-0082.

• **Tuesday, June 21:** Feminist Writers' Colloquium/Colloque des écrivains féministes, "Women Writing Around the World," with Louky Bersianik, Lakshmi Kannan, Aïcha Lemsine, Dorothy Livesay, Flora Nwapa, Makeda Silvera, Miriam Tlali and Regine Yaou. \$20. Wilson Hall Lounge, New College, 40 Willcocks Street (U of T). Info and registration: 978-2639 or 978-3167. **To Wednesday, June 22.**

• **Wednesday, June 22:** Screening of NFB film, "Firewords/Les Terribles Vivantes," in both the English and French versions, as part of the Feminist Writers' Colloquium. New College, 40 Willcocks Street. Info: 978-2639 or 978-3167.

• **Friday, June 24:** Grand Opening of The Woman's Common at 580 Parliament Street. Come and purchase your annual membership and enjoy a meal in a women's club, purchased, renovated, and operated by women.

## WEEKLY

• **Sunday:** New Women in Sobriety (NEWS), support group for lesbians and lesbian-positive women recovering from alcohol or drug addiction. 3:30-5:30. Info: Mary, 653-8614 or Shirley, 920-0582.

• **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. 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. Interviews, reviews, commentary and chat. Tune in! Info: 595-0909.

• **Monday:** Women-only night at the Rose Café, with films and discussion. \$2 admission includes buffet. 8 pm. 547 Parliament St. Info: 928-1495.

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

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

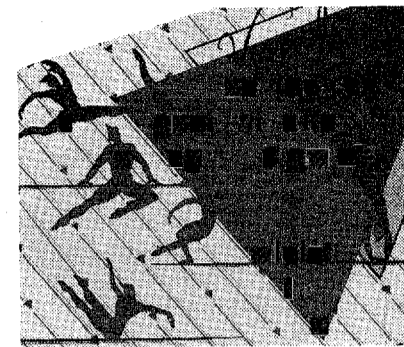
• **Tuesday:** Lesbian fuck-the-discussion group meets for informal basketball, movie nights and other events. 7 pm, U of T Women's Centre, 49 St. George. Info: 978-8201.

• **Tuesday:** Running Wilde, gay and lesbian running club meets for a run at University Settlement House, 23 Grange (off McCaul), 6 pm sharp. Facilities available.

• **Tuesday:** Ontario Coalition of Abortion Clinics planning meeting 7 pm at Trinity-St. Pauls, 427 Bloor Street West. Every second Tuesday. Info: 532-8193.

• **Friday, June 24:** Women's Independent Thoughtz (WITZ), a feminist seminar/discussion group. Topic: E.M. Forster. Location and info: 234-5281.

• **Saturday, June 25:** Gay Dance Committee presents "Vive la Similité," a lesbian and gay dance. 9 pm-5 am. \$8 advance, \$9 at door. Tickets at Glad Day, This Ain't the Rosedale Library, Altered States. Concert Hall, 888 Yonge Street.



• **Sunday, June 26:** Lesbian and Gay Pride Day, Cawthra Square, 519 Church Street. 1 pm.

## WEEK OF JUNE 27

• **Wednesday, June 29:** Launching of Eve Zaremba's new thriller *Beyond Hope*. 5 to 8 pm. Zaremba's Bookstore, 120 Harbord St. Info: 925-2793.

• **Wednesday, June 29:** Conversations with Authors: Lenore Keeshig-Tobias, Susan Musgrave and Rosemary Sullivan. 7:30 pm. SCM Book Room, 333 Bloor Street West. Info: 979-9624.

• **Thursday, June 30:** Lesbian Mothering/Co-mothering: contradictions of creating our own families. 7 pm, 21 Baldwin Street. Free, pre-registration required. Wheelchair accessible except washroom. Info: 597-1171.

• **Tuesday:** Lesbian and Gay youth Toronto meets at 519 Church Street Community Centre, 7-10 pm.

• **Tuesday and Thursday:** The Lesbian Phone Line is open for calls from women. 7:30-9:30 pm. 533-6120.

• **Wednesday:** Womyn's Alternative Rhythms (WAR) at Show Biz, 3 Gould Street.

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

• **Thursday:** Gaywire, a weekly radio show on gay and lesbian issues. 6:15-7 pm on CIUT 89.5 FM.

• **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.

• **Thursday:** Lesbian and Gay Alliance at York. 5-7 pm. 107 Stedman. Info: 736-5324.

• **Thursday:** Zami, support and discussion group for Black and West Indian lesbians and gays. 8 pm. 519 Church Street.

• **Thursday:** Gaycare Toronto, counselling group for lesbians and gay men. 8-10 pm. 519 Church Street.

• **Saturday:** Running Wilde, gay and lesbian running club, meets for fitness and fun at 9 am at 519 Church Street. Come dressed to run.

• **Saturday:** Alternatives, drop-in for youth 26 and under, sponsored by Lesbian and Gay Youth Toronto. 1-4 pm at 519 Church Street.

Compiled by  
Helen Lenskyj

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**FEMINIST (40+)** moving with job to Toronto in August, wishes to sublet or share with one or more downtown. Phone collect (704) 674-8393 or leave message (416) 977-2432 (Toronto).

**FEMINIST AND LESBIAN BOOKS** by mail. English and French. New book bulletins published 3 times/year. Free. L'Androgyne Bookstore, 3636 St. Laurent, Montreal, QC, H2X 2V4.

**GOLDEN THREADS**, a contact publication for lesbians over 50 and women who love older women. Canada and US. Confidential, warm, reliable. Sample copy mailed discreetly, \$5 (US), or send a self-addressed envelope for information. Golden Threads, P.O. Box 2416, Quincy, MA, 02269, USA.

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### Broadside Classifieds

**Deadline:** The 20th of the preceding month.  
**Cost:** 30¢ per word with a \$5 minimum. All classifieds must be prepaid.  
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