

10 years of Broadside!

FEATURES

HEALTHWATCH: In *Broadside's* comprehensive health review, Helen Lenskyj explores sex education, Connie Clement assesses progress in women's collective health, and Somer Brodribb warns against the new reproductive technologies. Page 10.

NEW WAVAW: Susan G. Cole, Melanie Randall, Donna MacAuley bring the violence issue to its cutting edge, insisting that sexuality and men as agents must be part of the discourse. Page 12.

NEWS

EQUALITY NOTES: The right wing appropriation of the language of equality threatens to undermine feminist gains, says Susan Crean. Page 5.

NAC'S CONTENT: Marjorie Cohen traces the way the free trade debate has encouraged NAC to widen its idea of women's issues. Page 6.

INSIDE BROADSIDE

NAC'S FORM: Former NAC activists say NAC's fondness for formality is limiting grassroots participation. Page 7.

CHARTING EQUALITY: Brettel Dawson and Lynne Pearlman review the decade's key equality judgements. Page 8.

COMMENT

SATIRIC SWIPE: Feminist Emeritus Dr. Mary Hemlow formulates a vision for future feminist theoretical frameworks. Page 3.

LAST WORD: The women's movement's involvement in the electoral process is central to feminism's future. Eve Zarembo comments. Page 23.

ARTS

WISHFUL THINKING: Joyce Mason sees change in the past decade of feminist filmmaking, but she wants more. Page 16.

BODY TEXTUAL: The body has become the site for intense feminist artistic investigation. Randi Spires reports. Page 18.

REFLECTIONS ON READING: Ruth Pierson describes a literary journey, from Lawrence to Lessing. Page 19.

REVOLUTIONARY STAGES: Kate Lushington charts ten years of feminist theatre. Page 20.

Broadside and Beyond

Editor:

Philinda Masters

Managing Coordinator:

Jackie Edwards

Production Co-ordinator:

Amanda Jane Keenan

Editorial Collective:

Susan G. Cole

Brettel Dawson

Jackie Edwards

Lisa Freedman

Helen Lenskyj

Philinda Masters

Catherine Maunsell

Deena Rasky

This Issue:

Liz Cheung

Joan McFarland

Lynne Pearlman

Susan Power

Barbara Thomson

Address all correspondence to:

Broadside

455 Spadina Ave., #207

Toronto, Ontario, M5S 2G8

Tel. (416) 598-3513

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

Broadside is published by the Broadside Collective, P.O. Box 494, Station P, Toronto, Ontario M5S 2T1. (416) 598-3513. Member: Canadian Periodical Publishers' Association. This issue: August/September, 1989 Vol. 10, no. 5

Typesetting: Walker Communications
Printing: Delta Web Graphics

Second Class mail registration no: 4771
ISSN: 0225-6843

Broadside receives funding support from
The Ontario Arts Council.

The *Broadside* Collective wishes to thank the Ontario Women's Directorate for funds towards producing this issue, and, we hope, the Secretary of State Women's Program (grant application pending).

Broadside is indexed by Canadian Periodical Index, and available in microform from Micromedia.

COLLECTIVE—PAST AND PRESENT

The following women have been members of the *Broadside* collective during the period since its first meeting on February 22, 1978:

Beverley Allinson
Heather Brown
Susan G. Cole
Debra Curties
Brettel Dawson
Jackie Edwards
Lisa Freedman
Jacqueline Frewin
Donna Gollan
Amanda Hale
Jane Hastings
Carroll Klein
Judith Lawrence
Helen Lenskyj
Alex Maas
Ingrid MacDonald
Philinda Masters
Catherine Maunsell
Layne Mellanby
Maureen Phillips
Deena Rasky
Judy Stanleigh
Susan Sturman
Jean Wilson
Eve Zaremba

A few years ago, a friend asked me if I was always going to want to work at such a marginal job as *Broadside*.

Broadside, marginal? I had considered *Broadside* to be central. Not just because it was my job, one I loved doing, and therefore central to my life, but also because, in its function at least, I thought of it as a focal point for feminist activism. I saw it, and other feminist publications, as playing a key role in the reflecting and shaping of our political struggle.

I knew that outside in the "real" world, the main stream, it didn't count for much. Lots of people had never even heard of it; and if they had, they dismissed it as a "little" newspaper, put out by fringe fanatics. This, of course, by perverse feminist logic, merely served to prove how central it really was.

Again a few years ago, an old high school classmate I bumped into asked me what I was doing these days. I told her I was editing a feminist newspaper. "Which one?" she asked (as if she knew of any). When I answered "Broadside," she looked as if she hadn't heard right and said, "Bloodshed?"

How marginal can a project be which stirs up such fears in the woman-in-the-street?

Still, there are grey areas of marginality. If you're really marginal, you can get away with anything: nobody pays any attention. It's when people start taking you seriously that the trouble begins. And that's in part, I think, what happened to *Broadside*.

That's not to say it wasn't taken seriously all along by those of us who contributed to it and produced it, and by its readers and the feminist community at large. It was, very much so—to the extent that *Broadside* was considered, even expected, to have the radical feminist line on anything. It also very quickly was invested with the character of an institution which then, like any symbol of authority, had to be proven wrong.

We got into a lot of trouble (much of it probably deserved). First of all, we called the "Broadside," a pun not popular with everyone. We reprinted an article on discrimination against women poets from an in-house newsletter when we weren't supposed to and caused problems for its author. We ran an anti-Zionist (rather anti-Israeli imperialist) article and were criticized for our anti-Semitism. We printed a letter from a well-known feminist academic about what she considered the disturbing increase of Third World (i.e., not feminist) content in International Women's Day events, and were boycotted by immigrant women's groups. We ran an editorial calling lesbians the "clergy" of the women's movement and lesbianism the "psychic imperative" of feminism, and were called on to explain ourselves. The list goes on.

The generous thing to say is that we took risks, attempting to give space to diverse opinions, not wanting to censor or censure any feminist voice. So, sometimes what we did was deliberate, though usually it wasn't. At any rate, as Doris Anderson—doyenne of mainstream feminist journalism—has said, we printed our own internal controversies all over our pages. In mainstream circles this is something that is clearly not done. But for feminist newspapers, it's the crux of the matter.

Given all this positive energy, and delight in iconoclasm, what happened? Two questions immediately rise to the surface: Why exactly is *Broadside* folding? and what will happen without it? The answer to the first is not simply burnout and financial strain. The closing down of *Broadside* is part of a larger picture. Why did *Pandora*, *La Vie en rose*, *Herizons*, *Hysteria* and *Cayenne* all decide to fold in the past couple of years? We're all part of the same phenomenon, some of it obvious (money and womanpower) and some of it not so obvious.

And what will happen without us all? There are still good feminist publications around—newer ones like *The Womanist*, *Our Lives* and *Tiger Lily*, older ones like *Kinesis*, *Room of One's Own* and the *Northern Woman Journal* (this latter a stellar example of sheer determination to survive) and academic ones like *Canadian Woman Studies*, *Atlantis* and *Resources for Feminist Research*—and there will be others to come.

But with respect to *Broadside*, I think both

its marginality and its centrality have contributed to its demise. We dealt with issues which were central to the lives of women (abortion, lesbianism, violence against women, for example) which are being increasingly marginalized as the result of the Conservative government's right wing agenda. This marginalization also makes it easier for those who are made uncomfortable by many of the implications of a radical feminist analysis to sweep issues under the carpet, to deal with some things and not with others.

Over the years, *Broadside* has been thought by many to be a lesbian feminist newspaper. Because we didn't hesitate to write about lesbianism (we used the L-word quite a lot), it was assumed we had to be lesbian (who else would care, or bother?). In fact, there never was a time when the *Broadside* collective didn't include heterosexual women. So, we were a feminist newspaper which incorporated a pro-lesbian, anti-heterosexist perspective. Others of our readers thought we should just come out, period. Well, we were too lesbian in some quarters, not lesbian enough in others. We ended up realizing we couldn't please everyone, so we might as well just go ahead and do our thing.

Meanwhile, back at the Progressive Conservative ranch house, right wing lobbyists were gaining momentum. Anti-choice backbenchers had the ear of cabinet members and were applying pressure on the abortion issue. With the advent of R.E.A.L. Women and the pro-family agenda, it was a short step to realizing that lesbianism, too, was a threat.

Then things heated up for the Secretary of State's Women's Program, the biggest funder of feminist groups in Canada. Under attack from the right, the program was subjected to a parliamentary review. The resulting report, *Fairness in Funding*, guaranteed the Program's continuation, reaffirmed its commitment to women's equality, and recommended not only that the Program's budget be maintained, but that funds be found to support "doubly disadvantaged" groups.

That's the good news. At about the same time, the Program's funding eligibility criteria were quietly formalized. Now, we were told, applicants whose project promoted a particular lifestyle, or a view on abortion, would be ineligible for funds. Lest you think "a particular lifestyle" might possibly include the hetero variety, keep in mind that R.E.A.L. Women, whose printed objectives include the phrase "to reaffirm that the family (defined as two or more people living together, related by blood, marriage or adoption) is society's most important unit," were considered eligible to receive funds. R.E.A.L. Women are also explicitly anti-abortion.

Does this make sense? Well, yes. The Program's mandate to fund equality-seeking groups is being eroded on a number of fronts, including major budget cuts, which means the financial viability of many women's groups in Canada is at stake. The Program never gave *Broadside* operating funds (though it did fund us for a promotion project in 1984) so its recent history is not a direct contributory cause of our folding, although in applying for funds to produce this last issue we were asked to put in writing that the funds received from Sec State would not be used for the above-mentioned naughty activities.

But although the criteria are now written down, a subtler form of disqualification has always been in operation at the Program and elsewhere. Being considered lesbian, having unabashed lesbian content, obviously is enough to give anyone the heebie-geebies. The question is, how does the government get away with such a misogynist agenda? They get away with it partly because the very groups who could put up a fight have already been effectively destabilized. Feminist publications are a powerful tool in this respect, and the less support we get, the better for the status quo. *Broadside*, like any publication in Canada (given the geographical distances and relatively low population), couldn't possibly survive without some form of subsidy, so lack of substantial support from our biggest potential supporter was always a problem.

There is, however, a larger problem contributing to *Broadside's* demise, one that I don't think has been given much serious considera-

tion. The government's supposed commitment to funding "doubly disadvantaged" groups (Black women, immigrant women, visible minority women—though clearly not lesbian women) is a reflection of a social movement affecting all feminist groups in Canada. The most crucial aspect of feminism in the past few years has been the efforts to incorporate anti-racist perspectives into feminist practice and analysis. White women have been forced to deal with the issues raised, forced to face the fact that it may no longer be the role of White women to frame the debate and direct the struggle. With the growth of global feminism in the past decade, White feminists are no longer the majority (if they ever were).

Not only has the *Broadside* collective until very recently been an all-White one, it was formed in an environment of White feminist perspectives. It's not that women of colour don't share a concern for issues of violence against women, pornography or nuclear arms, it's that *Broadside* couldn't help but operate from a lopsided view of things, even in the latter years when we were more conscious and open to understanding feminism's diversity. I think perhaps it's time for us to let go of our hold, and to pass on the responsibility for reflecting and shaping our political struggle to others.

This is our last issue of *Broadside*. When planning its contents, we started with the idea of a retrospective: ten years in the life of feminism in Canada. But this is a false category, based solely on the fact that *Broadside* published for 10 years and is now folding. Feminism isn't folding. Things just keep happening, things we want to write about now. Things that have happened so recently—like the Dodd and Daigle abortion injunction cases—we'd like more time (or another issue of *Broadside*) to comment on them.

Some of the articles, nevertheless, do look back over the years. Joyce Mason's article on film specifically addresses *Broadside's* coverage of films since our first issue in 1979. Our feature on feminist theatre provides a visual exploration of the changing form and content of the genre in more general terms. Ruth Pierson reflects on changes in her reading tastes from pre- and protofeminist days to the present. Susan G. Cole considers changes in the way we have dealt with the connection between sex and violence in the past decade, and Connie Clement chronicles changes in women's health provision. Marjorie Cohen discusses changes in feminist approaches to the economy, particularly with respect to NAC. Located more in the present, Lorraine Greaves *et al.* give a critique of NAC's "process" and how it affects the participation of its members. Susan Crean describes the appropriation of the language of equality by the right wing, particularly fathers' rights, groups. And Eve Zaremba's "Movement Comment" specifically directs us to look to the future—the women's liberation movement, after all, is here to stay.

As we prepare to close up shop, I would like first of all to say that although it isn't financially feasible for us to refund subscriptions, we are negotiating with the Black Women's Collective for them to honour your sub by sending you their newspaper, *Our Lives*. We hope you will enjoy it, and resubscribe to it at the end of the year.

And finally, on behalf of the *Broadside* collective, I would like to thank all of you, our readers, for your continued support over the years. We couldn't have done any of it without you.

—Philinda Masters

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

"[*Broadside's*] work of the last ten years has been more than an inspiration. It has been the women's railroad connecting us across the country, across our regional, racial, cultural and political spaces."

—A *Broadside* reader

LETTERS

Women's Railroad

Broadside:

What can I say? I feel I can imagine the exhaustion and frustration that led to this conclusion. Like you, I hope it will be a necessary pause for rest, breath, and fresh energy and support.

I received your letter with such regret, such sadness and know that across the country women are taking stock and wondering what we can do to lead to other recharging of our newspapers. Please know that we'll all be thinking, meditating, ranting, and raving about it, hoping like you for a solution. The work of the last ten years has been more than an inspiration. It has been the women's railroad connecting us across the country, across our regional, racial, cultural and political spaces.

Sincerely,

Rina Fraticelli,
Executive Producer,
Studio D,
The National Film Board of Canada
Montreal, Quebec

Fairminded

Broadside:

I'm very sorry to hear that *Broadside* has suspended publication. I think it was wonderfully successful as a source of feminist views, that it was fairminded and conscientious. It will be missed, since there's nothing else like it (that I know of).

With best wishes,

Mary Meigs
Westmount, Quebec

Valuable Girder

Broadside:

I am sorry that *Broadside* will be no more. You have all produced a paper that has been a crucial and valuable girder of the women's movement. It has been hard to imagine the absence of *Broadside*. But I know it's important to take care of yourselves to be able to continue to move on at other times. My one voice of thanks, among many, for all collective members and *Broadside* contributors past and present that have made *Broadside* happen each issue.

In sisterhood,

Nikki Colodny,
Toronto, Ontario

Remarkable Accomplishment

Broadside:

I imagine I am among many women who are very sorry to hear that *Broadside* is suspending publication. I hope it is, ultimately, merely a suspension and not a demise.

I enclose a cheque as a contribution toward the 10th anniversary issue — to use for printing or champagne.

And I do think champagne (or a non-alcoholic equivalent) is in order to celebrate 10 years of toil, commitment, thought, creation, drudgery — 10 years of women's words made tangible. It is indeed a remarkable accomplishment. And I hope, after some time for resting, there will be bursts of energy in various quarters of the women's movement as the revitalized women of *Broadside* disperse to continue their inciteful activities.

Thanks for your work,

Megan Ellis
Vancouver, B.C.

Outside the Mainstream

Broadside:

Congratulations on ten years of successful publication! I'm happy to hear that you are planning an anniversary issue, and I'm sad and thoughtful about the news that you've suspended publication. While living in Santa Cruz

I saw *Matrix* struggle with issues similar to yours, as did *Plexus* in the Bay Area. I personally sympathize with the sense of financial insecurity so often linked to work outside the mainstream. So I'm sending what I can to support your effort and I'll look forward to receiving my copy.

I'd also like to pass on, to those of you who were on staff when I was writing a film column, a compliment that meant a lot to me. Adrienne Rich, with whom I worked while I was a member of New Jewish Agenda in Santa Cruz, said she first knew me as Barbara Halpern Martineau in *Broadside* — she said "No one in the US was writing about the material you were dealing with — it was very important." The words tied my past to my considerably altered present — I was grateful to Adrienne and also to *Broadside* for giving me a forum.

Warm regards,

Sara Halprin
Haleiwa, Hawaii

Mainstay in the Community

Broadside:

To say we were saddened doesn't quite seem to do it. It's devastating news that *Broadside* is at least temporarily ceasing publication.

We certainly share your view that the political climate is a difficult one for us to survive in right now, let alone put up with the "normal" working conditions we've become accustomed to, like high turnover, burnout and lack of adequate resources to publish. I just hope that we haven't all been stricken with the same patriarchally-inspired disease; one that strikes unsuspecting feminist publications just when things appear to be going well.

If you don't agree with the conspiracy theory, there's the more healthy, optimistic outlook that says that a period of retreat can be a period of rejuvenation. After all, it's only normal that we get tired once in a while and take some time out to be introspective, distracted, lazy, indulgent even, or whatever strikes us at the time.

It was very hard for us to separate the stress, anxiety and general negativity that in difficult times pervades our environment, from the product we managed to create in spite of these factors. Now, looking back we have all felt incredibly proud and validated upon looking at our "product"... somehow those feelings are what fall to the wayside when crises in funding and woman power are priorities. We are hopeful that some of the inspiration you provided your readers over the last 10 year will be there now to sustain you, and in the future as well.

As feminist publishers, we continue as best we can and when we can, it seems. *Broadside* has been a real mainstay within this publishing community and we continue to have great respect for the women who have produced *Broadside*.

Wishing you the best of luck in your future efforts. Hopefully we'll both be at it again soon. In the spirit of sisterhood and co-operation.

Penni Mitchell for
Herizons
Winnipeg, Manitoba

Well Earned Rest

Broadside:

We write to tell you how sorry we are that you are no longer able to continue. Believe me, we understand only too well your problems. We also have been looking, for some time, for another group to take over but, alas, with no success.

Congratulations for having done so much for so long. May your publication soon be revived — and may you enjoy a well earned rest.

With sisterly affection,

The Womanspirit Collective
Australia

Cheers

Broadside:

Here's for *Broadside*, and here's to *Broadside*. It has been a great publication and it will be mourned everywhere.

June Callwood
Toronto, Ontario

One of the Best

Broadside:

I was sorry to get this news, but I understand only too well from my own involvement with *Broadside* what you mean by energy drain and financial problems. If there is a group that can pick up the paper, great, but if not you and all of us who have been part of the paper over the years can feel proud of having produced one of the best feminist papers in the country.

Sincerely,

Jean Wilson
British Columbia

Heroic Enterprise

Broadside:

All in the same week these deaths were announced: the artistic director of the Royal Winnipeg Ballet, Abbie Hoffman, the wife of a friend in Warsaw, and *Broadside*. It's too much.

Although it's been years since I contributed as a writer to *Broadside*, I was a faithful subscriber and reader. I loved the paper. I feel awful about its demise, although I can understand the causes. What does it say about our struggle/movement when a feminist newspaper can no longer be sustained in a population of 13 million women/girls, 20 years into a revolutionary liberation movement? If I ever get my head out of eastern Europe, I intend to make my own answer to that.

In the meantime, please accept my donation with heartfelt thanks for a heroic enterprise which kept us all together, coast to coast, with verve, cheek, intelligence and style for so long.

In solidarity,

Myrna Kostash
Edmonton, Alberta

The Doctrine of Confusionism

by Mary Hemlow

If state capitalism is to survive and if it is to continue to embody, as it does now, marxism and feminism, then it follows that feminism will be seen as emerging more clearly to women to provide the experience of confusion. Confusionism has long been a factor in all of the major "isms" and most particularly in the "ism" of feminism. If confusion is lost, or to put it another way, if feminism is lost, then feminism as it relates to capitalism and marxism might well become one of the factors in the "isms" that future generations must regard as a missing factor in the "isms." Since capitalism, or "creeping capitalism," can be said to be the permanent state of North American society, the missing factor of confusion, the only factor which has historically not excluded women, could mean a grievous loss, if not the death blow, to feminism. It should be clear, too, that if confusionism is a missing factor in the "isms", then feminism must be regarded as a missing factor as well.

In this article I will attempt to show how confusionism has threaded its way through all the thoughts and ideologies of personkind throughout the ages and how, if the true history and experience of women were known and recorded, women would be seen as the leaders in the factor of confusion in the development of capitalism, marxism and feminism. My methodology has been simple. Interviews were carried out with 10 people who understand feminist principles and 12 people who do not. As well, approximately 200 workshops on other more attractive or "catchy" subjects, i.e., sexual repression, serial murder, casserole cooking, pet care and the environment, were carried out in order to place the subject among women who may not have had the opportunity to give it much thought before and thus were able to bring a fresh viewpoint to this whole new area of work.

This latter part of my research, the interviews and workshops, was invaluable to my study. For example, to be faced, as many women were, with the question of capitalism, marxism, feminism and confusionism while trying to absorb the details of how to make a more interesting casserole, presented a challenge that could not produce less than fresh and completely unspoiled opinions. I give much credit to these fine women who, as in my experience women always will, all gave some kind of opinion on the subject as they understood it.

It is important to remember that when we as women speak (as we so often do) of capitalism, marxism, feminism and confusionism, we speak as the confusion factor, and if that factor is lost, as it seems now in some danger of being lost, we lose not only our participation as

women in the "isms," but we lose feminism as well. It was a very well known US feminist writer who said, "In which case we might call it grace/But in which case?" This statement says a great deal of direct importance to this paper and compares interestingly, I think, with a statement made by one of the women in the research interviews. "My son Aubrey is a great help to me but my daughter Grace is a case." Was this the poet voicing the words of the ordinary working woman, or was it the working woman reaching out to the poet?

We will never know, but we must ask ourselves if that woman knew that she was in danger of being part of the missing factor in the "isms". Was she somehow aware of the probable loss of feminism? What has this to do with capitalism, marxism, feminism and confusionism? I believe a great deal. I believe, as the Canadian feminist Suzanne Findlay has so often said, that if we start again at the beginning, that is, right back to the womb of history, we will find that confusionism, right up to the present day threat, has always been an important factor for women in the "isms." Ms Findlay bases her belief on her many readings in and dealings with all of the title subjects and it is perhaps this belief that brought Ms Findlay and her colleagues to their important developmental work among women.

Going back to the workshops, when a woman was told that a poet has said, "In which case we might call it grace/But in which case?", her first question was to ask what that statement meant. "What did she mean by that?" she asked. Exactly. I believe that this is perhaps the best example I can give of the possibility of the loss of the confusion factor in the major "isms" of our time. Did the woman who asked for the meaning somehow see the confusion behind what might seem to many to be a rather inane statement?

If confusionism and feminism are lost in the "isms" (and I am taking a rather alarmist view here), at whose door should the blame be laid? Has the loss come through our strong belief in capitalism, or has it somehow been organized by the other "isms" in our society? Is it the fault of the state? There are no easy or immediate answers to these questions, but I hope that this article will serve as a base paper for women's meetings and conferences, and will stimulate serious discussion on this issue before it is too late.

This article is the first of a series of important academic lectures given by the well-known Canadian feminist and lecturer, Dr. Mary Hemlow, President of CWIUA (Concerned Women in Utter Anarchy), July 1989.

Congratulations Broadside on Ten Years!

**Congratulations Broadside
from
The Rexdale Women's Centre**



Canadian Women's Movement Archives
Archives canadiennes du mouvement des femmes

*History:
Making it, Keeping it*

P.O. Box/C.P. 128, Station/Succ. P, Toronto, Ontario M5S 2S7
(416) 597-8865

Congratulations Broadside
from



North York Women's Shelter

P.O. BOX 1038
STATION B
DOWNSVIEW, ONTARIO
M3H 5V5

635-9630



**Bread & Roses
Credit Union**

Banking for Social Change

348 Danforth Avenue, Suite 211
Toronto, Ontario M4K 1N8
Hours: Mon., Tues., Thurs., Fri.—12:30-4:30 p.m. Wed.—12:30-7:30 p.m.



**Salutes
young women**

everywhere

- teenagers
- mothers younger than 19
- and their babies

**Volunteers needed:
Call Eva at (416) 365-1888**

**Centre for Teenagers
154 Bathurst St., Toronto
365-1888**

Congratulations Broadside
from
The Elizabeth Fry Society, Toronto
(416) 924-3708



a non-profit co-op for social change education

This Summer:

**Women and Trade Unions August 10 - 13
Allied Powers; Building Coalitions of Women + Men
Sept. 15 - 17**

202 - 427 Bloor St. W. Toronto M5S 1X7
968-9187

YWCA Young Women's
Christian Association
of Metropolitan
Toronto

Congratulations Broadside

YWCA, 80 Woodlawn Ave. East Toronto M4T 1C1
The YWCA supports and belongs to the United Way.
For more information on our social action committee,
call (416) 961-8100, ext. 318.



FREEDOM OF CHOICE

- Talk to your Member of Parliament
- Oppose any new criminal sanctions for abortion
- Demand equitable access to women's reproductive health services

The Canadian Abortion Rights Action League (CARAL)
344 Bloor Street West, Suite 306
Toronto, Ontario, M5S 3A7
(416) 961-1507

**Congratulations
Broadside**

**Ernestine's
Women's Shelter**

In Sisterhood and Struggle

(416) 746-3701



*Promoting equality
for women through
test case legislation*

WOMEN'S LEGAL EDUCATION
AND ACTION FUND (LEAF)
489 College Street, Suite 403
Toronto, Ontario M6G 1A5
(416) 963-9654

DEC FILM and VIDEO

394 EUCLID AVE.
TORONTO, CANADA M6G 2S9
416-925-9338

¡Celebrate the strength of women!
¡Célébrons la force des femmes!
¡Celebremos el poder y fuerza de
la unidad de las mujeres!



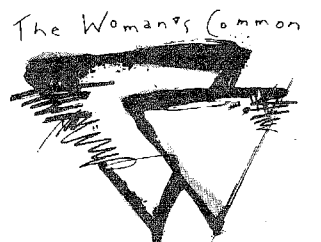
**EDUCATION
WIFE ASSAULT**

427 Bloor Street West
Toronto, Ontario M5S 1X7
(416) 968-3422



Women's Bureau Labour Canada Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0J2	Bureau de la main-d'oeuvre féminine Travail Canada Ottawa (Ontario) K1A 0J2
---	--

Working for Equality 1954-1989 Information: (819) 997-1550	Travaillons pour l'égalité 1954-1989 Renseignements: (819) 997-1550
---	--



580 Parliament Street
Toronto, Ontario M4X 1P8
Club: 975-9079
Restaurant: 975-0745

In the Name of Equality

by Susan Crean

It seemed like a good idea at the time, equality did. Equal pay, equal opportunity, equality before the law; all perfectly self explanatory and obviously legitimate demands for women to make, though naturally easier to claim than to effect. Still, changes there have been, particularly changes in the law. In the past two decades the entire roster of family laws (governing marriage and divorce, matrimonial property law, custody and child welfare laws) have been overhauled, some of them more than once. They have been rendered into gender neutral English and French and rejigged to reflect the modern concept of marriage as an economic partnership rather than a religious union and guardianship as a mutual responsibility. And, lest we forget, reigning over all the laws of the land, is the Charter of Rights and Freedoms which includes our own section 28 guaranteeing women equality with men.

You could argue that these reforms are a great achievement and are profoundly significant and you would be right. However, you would also be right to observe that the real life results have been a lot less than fair, that equality is much more elusive than legislators and feminists surmised, easier to subvert and more susceptible to unjust interpretation. Once again we see intention confounded by the stubborn weed of privilege and patriarchal power.

To take one example, many provinces have converted to a system of dividing property after marriage breakdown according to the principle of a fifty-fifty split of the assets. But what you see in the law is not what women are getting in court. For one thing, the definition of assets varies and often excludes tiny items like business assets and pensions. For another, no definition anywhere includes what is usually the single most lucrative long term resource men have, which is their superior earning power. This means that even if the division of property looks equitable, it will remain so for about 24 hours. The earning capacity of women (typically impaired by marriage and child rearing) will likely require them to use whatever settlement they get as living expenses rather than as an investment for the future. At the same time (and remembering that the vast majority of people have very little by way of assets to divide in the first place), the emphasis on property division has brought with it a corresponding de-emphasis on financial support. Alimony as a word and a concept has gone the way of the dodo; women are now expected by law to become self-supporting and whatever support payment they get from their former husbands will be strictly limited to one or two years.

So it is that we have the increasingly familiar pattern where the standard of living enjoyed by a man rises abruptly following separation, while his former spouse's and children's plummets.

When Manitoba (the first province to introduce a "deferred community property" regime in 1978) took a look at the figures in 1985,

it discovered that maintenance awards were leaving women and their dependent children with fifty per cent of the available income only in the rarest of circumstances and only when there were several children involved. The balance sheet tended to look like this: she — 54% for a family of five, he — 46% for himself; she — 26% for two, he 74% for himself; she 34% for three, he — 66% for himself, and so on. Such statistics, of course, reveal the connection between the feminization of poverty and the failure of the justice system to deliver the equality it advertises.

The simple way to describe what's wrong is to say that the law is only as good as the society applying it, and that in a sexist culture even feminist-inspired reforms will be perverted to discriminatory ends. In a world where women do not have equal social, economic or political status, legal equality is wishful thinking. Or, as feminist lawyer Geraldine Waldman puts it, "You can't make people equal at the end of a marriage by a division of property if they are unequal in all other aspects. You can't give women all the obligations of equality without the rights — to affordable daycare, to equal pay, to good jobs"

Then too, as the Divorce Act was reformed in 1986 and the necessity of proving fault removed, another subtle shift has occurred. As the law now defines how property is to be divided and as the grounds for divorce no longer require assigning blame, the one major thing left to haggle over is the children. As a result, the locus of legal contests and post-marital confrontation has moved from divorce court to custody court.

Along with the rapidly climbing divorce rate, the number of men living apart from their children has increased exponentially and gradually the "absentee father" has become a recognizable problem to mental health professionals. But alongside the men who disappear physically and financially from their children's lives following separation is a small but growing band of fathers who want to continue parenting. Some of them manage to arrange to do so jointly with their former partners — this being the ideal solution, though one which requires tremendous self-assurance, commitment to the children, and as most co-parenting couples will admit, the development of entirely new parenting skills.

And suddenly the cry of fathers' rights is being heard. Not from those who are already involved with their children, but from those who aren't and may wish to be; from those who, apparently, do not know how to effect a reconnection with their children except through the force of a court order; and from those who simply want to exercise control over their former families, or, if they are abusers, to continue to have access to their victims. Suddenly, though not unexpectedly, we are witnessing a surge in the number of fathers wanting to retain a legal link to their children whether or not they are willing or able to assume more than the usual part-time responsibility for childcare. They are demanding mandatory joint custody

to guarantee them continuing authority over their children (and incidentally over their former spouses), but, significantly, without any suggestion that this should be accompanied by a sharing of the work of parenthood.

Once again equality rises to bite the hand that raised it in the first place. When the rights of women as parents and guardians of their children were first recognized in the early years of this century (thanks to the efforts of BC reformer and Canada's first woman judge, Helen Gregory MacGill) it was a significant advance: women previously had had no right to raise or even live with their children except at the pleasure of their husbands. But even the principle that men and women be accorded equal standing in court to claim custody of their children has ended up working against women in the eighties. It has led, albeit by perverse logic, to the claim that because men make up fifty per cent of the parents involved, they should be awarded custody fifty per cent of the time. Such demands tempt one to answer with a set of smart remarks about who takes care of the children eighty per cent of the time now and always have (Statistics Canada reports that the average father with a wife working outside the home puts in 20 minutes a day with the kids; if the mother is at home, he spends 7 minutes with them).

Smart remarks may win a panel debate but will not carry much weight in court. For the logic of equality, as it applies here, means that couples will be treated as individuals who have made decisions about parenting and the division of domestic responsibility freely and unencumbered by any economic restraints whatsoever. And when parents are treated as co-equals this way, the work and commitment the mother has put into primary childcare is rendered invisible. It is discounted and de-emphasized just as the father's past record as a nurturing parent is overemphasized, indeed romanticized. In actuality, the father's role as parent is rarely even investigated by the court. His word and his promises regarding childcare are given more attention and credence than the demonstrated actions and skills of the mother. His record of violence will be given the benefit of the doubt and his physical abusiveness, even if proven in courts, will rarely be taken as a comment on his abilities as a parent. Judges have been known to award custody to fathers who barely know their children and who have shown them scant interest in the past, for fear that otherwise the fathers might disappear. In such a case, both the children and their mothers are asked to sacrifice their welfare to the greater good of keeping Dad around and involved. Or, put another way, they are required to make up for the parenting deficiencies of the father, who is, in essence, being rewarded for his recalcitrance.

So too, in the name of equality, we see judges awarding custody of children, who have been cared for and raised all their lives by their mothers, to their father instead, on the grounds that both parents have full-time jobs and have to hire help to care for the kids. Often no

thought is given to the effect this might have on existing relationships or routines. In making such decisions, moreover, judges will overlook the fact that the father may be claiming custody because it is cheaper than paying more child support (demands for increased support often touch off custody suits), just as they overlook the cruel irony that fathers are sometimes successful in claiming custody because they have a female replacement (new wife, mother, nanny) to take over as surrogate mother.

Of course, what such decisions fail to recognize in the name of equality is the simple and yet very profound reality of motherhood. In this society and in this culture women have babies expecting to care and raise them (alone or possibly with help from the father) to their maturity; and until further notice, in this culture and in this society, men have babies understanding that for them the mothering role is optional. This means it is psychologically and emotionally a very different thing for a mother to lose custody than for a father. A woman who loses custody will generally be giving up an activity which has consumed a major part of her life, and her identity. She will also risk being stigmatized, for the attitudes and expectations around motherhood are still highly judgemental and people will assume she "lost" for good — or rather, bad — reasons. Men who lose custody, on the other hand, are not normally losing a vocation which they have been practising with everyone's approval for years. Rather they are being denied the opportunity to develop a relationship which doesn't yet exist, and the chance to take over from their former spouses as primary care givers.

To confuse the issue even further, fathers' rights advocates have hijacked the issue of equality and made off with the rhetoric. In doing so they have reversed the old trick of blaming the victim, claiming victimship for themselves. They would have us believe they are the ones being discriminated against, and unjustly oppressed. And to add insult to indignity, when the federal Secretary of State Women's Program finally found a way to fund R.E.A.L. Women, it was to hold a conference on equality — implying that equality is now being so broadly defined that it can even be taken to mean the effort to ensure the rights of women to choose not to be equal.

Equality, in other words, is a chimera, and has become a political ruse. Instituted as an abstract legal principle in a justice system which takes no care and pays no heed to the equality of outcome, it has arguably done more harm than good. At the same time it demonstrates how liberal reform is both duplicitous and self-defeating. And it reveals, as if we still needed to know, how the cunning use of language can undermine the rights of women, and misrepresent the situation we are facing, trying to protect our children from male violence.

Susan Crean is a Toronto writer and the author of *In the Name of the Father: The Story Behind Child Custody* (Amanita Enterprises, 1989)

*Congratulations
on your 10th Anniversary!*

The Ministry of Housing is committed to ensuring the availability of non-profit housing province-wide.

It provides housing for battered spouses, low-income families, senior citizens, and physically and developmentally disabled persons.

The Ministry of Housing, helping to meet the housing needs of Ontarians. Today and tomorrow.



Ministry of Housing
Ontario
Chaviva Hosek, Minister

Crossroads

Bed & Breakfast for Women

Between Barrie & Orillia

- Close to cross country & down hill skiing
 - Homemade breads, muffins & jams
 - Dinners on request
 - Open all year
- Your hostesses Mary & Maureen

R.R. #1, Hawkestone
ON. L0L 1T0
705-487-2169

Rose A. Wilson

Real Estate Sales
Representative

Committed to
working with you.



Home Life/Aces
Realty and Ins. Ltd.

Tel. (416) 463-8888
Res. (416) 463-8885

921 Danforth Ave.
Toronto, Ontario, M4J 1L8

NAC: When Women Count

by Marjorie Cohen

The issues of the women's movement in Canada in some respects have not changed over the years. The problems which were highlighted in the 1970s Report of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women are still with us. The report documented women's inequality in Canada under the law and in the workforce. It showed that women were poor because we did not have equal access to jobs, equal pay for the work we performed, adequate public child care; and because we were treated unfairly in property and tax legislation. The most important result of this document was that it enabled women's groups to bring to public consciousness the discrimination women faced, a discrimination that was blatant and widespread. The government was forced to recognize that women had not been sufficiently heard and that something should be done about this.

The government's initial reaction was to attempt to subsume all major action on women's issues at the federal level under the government itself. At the historic "Strategy for Change" conference which inaugurated the National Action Committee on the Status of Women (NAC), one of the major issues was whether this group should support the creation of a government body on women or organize an independent national women's organization. Although a collective voice for the women's movement was certainly not yet strong, the government saw the wisdom of containing it by direct control. Fortunately, women at this conference thought otherwise and NAC became an independent organization. Nevertheless, throughout its history it has been largely funded by the federal government: this fact certainly has been a mixed blessing for the organization and at this point in its history it is presenting particularly alarming consequences.

At the federal level work was immediately begun to eliminate overt sexism in federal legislation. By 1975 Marc Lalonde, the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women, reported in his department's publication celebrating International Women's Year that discrimination against women had been completely eliminated from Canadian legislation. This, of course, was a joke to activists in the women's movement. While the words in the document might have been gender neutral, the effect certainly was not.

The early efforts of the women's movement focused to a considerable extent on economic issues. Most notable were the efforts to highlight the wage gap between men and women who worked for pay, which led to a major campaign for "equal pay for work of equal value." This was a difficult concept to get across to the public and to the government, but partial recognition of the principle was achieved when the words were included in the Federal Human Rights Act of 1977. The issue of property rights for women was another consuming matter of the 1970s when the case of an Alberta farm woman highlighted the unequal treatment of women under the law. Of course most economic issues were not fought at the federal level, but by women within their own community. The most dramatic were specific fights for women at the workplace — at the banks, at Bell Canada, in factories. Women's attempts to organize were fought hard by employers, but the positive results of the 1970s was the increasing involvement of the women's movement in an effort to achieve recognition of women's right for decent wages and working conditions.

For most of the issues of the 1970s there was not a clear distinction between economic issues and other equality issues. The case of Indian Rights for Indian Women is a good example. The women's movement became involved in this issue (supporting the Indian women who had been excluded from their bands because they had married non-status Indians) as an equality rights issue, but it quickly became an economic issue as well and the implications of this could not be ignored.

Deciding which issues to pursue and which to ignore created considerable tension within NAC in the 1970s. While it was clear even from the beginning that almost every problem in the society was a women's issue, there was a feeling that the organization should confine itself to those which could be strictly defined as "women's issues." This became most evident in the debate about wage and price controls in the mid-1970s. Many of us argued that women

would be most damaged by this measure primarily because it would prevent women from trying to close the gap between male and female wages. We wanted a strong statement against this from the women's movement. This did not occur and while the reason may have been because many women in the organization had close ties to the party in power, the argument was won on the grounds that we would lose credibility if we became just one other organization which was speaking on a wide range of issues — we should confine ourselves to what was obviously and directly of concern to women because no one else was doing this. A similar argument was used when attempts were made to link NAC with the peace movement.

The early efforts of the national women's movement on economic issues tended to focus on women's right to make choices. The 1976 publication of Gail Cook's book *Opportunities for Choice: A Goal for Women in Canada*, stressed this theme, and to many at the time this seemed appropriate. We were not to fight the system itself, but how we were treated within it. While there were conflicts with those in power in the federal government, these conflicts were fairly minimal. The over-riding objective was to influence power — to exert influence behind the scenes, while at the same time claiming tremendous support for our position from the women's movement in general. This, in many respects, was a "subdued-feminism." This is not to imply that feminism in Canada was at this time without fire and fight, but that at the federal level we were not much of a threat to the government. (And that is probably why they continued to fund us at an ever increasing level). At other levels, much was going on: Henry Morgentaler went to jail for performing abortions and women's groups were actively defying the government on this issue, Grace Hartman went to jail to defend women's right to strike in hospitals, and women's groups across the country were organizing to provide services for women and were in open conflict with powerful forces in their communities and workplaces.

"The crucial issue is the extent to which women could have access to decision making."

The focus on economic issues has changed perceptibly for the women's movement since the 1970s. By the 1980s government and employers had accepted women's intervention in issues like equal pay, maternity leave, and movement of women out of traditional occupations. They also accepted our right to speak on child care, reproductive choice, pornography — anything which could be seen as a woman's issue. But more and more women realized that the crucial issue would be the extent to which women could have a role in economic decision-making. Women began to make the connection that ultimately all of the issues we were fighting for are related to the way the society is constructed. We recognized that economic decision making by government and business affects how successfully we can be in just about every area of our lives. More and more the realization took hold that although we can fight for years and years for such legislation as equal pay for work of equal value — and ultimately may make some gains in this area — it is a small victory if a government economic policy (such as the current obsession with international competitiveness) means that fewer people will be employed. Equal pay laws do not help much if you do not have a job.

Initially women's attempts to discuss broad economic policy issues were ignored. From the perspective of government and business, women and economics do not mix well. Our demands are seen as "take-aways" — not contributions. What we want is perceived as a drain on the economy: full and equal employment, equality in decision making, economic security, better social services, a safe world. These demands are considered unrealistic in the hard world of economics. What women

have had to say has been treated as a discussion of welfare policy, not economic policy. It is not that our demands are considered totally unreasonable, but they just do not fit with hard-time economics.

When women talk about economics it makes governments and business nervous because we tend to focus on the irrationality of what is going on. We focus on goals and objectives and are critical of choices which have been made, choices which have been damaging to people. Never before in the history of human existence has there been as much food produced in the world as now. Yet people starve to death in some parts of the world while vast quantities of food rot in warehouses in North America and Europe. We see this as irrational.

We know that in Canada there is considerable poverty and that this poverty is increasing, in spite of the fact that Canada is a rich nation with abundant resources. We know there is a need for better social services and a need for people to provide them, yet our unemployment rate is huge. We see this waste of labour as irrational. We are downright hostile to government programs which are directed toward supporting the war industry, rather than toward meeting real human needs. Most important, we are critical of the priorities which have been established and feel they have lost sight of the goal of a more just and equitable society.

When we began to talk about economic issues like the budget, trade policy, privatization, deregulation and the general structure of the Canadian economy we were going too far. These were not women's issues: women were not "experts" and therefore our criticism had little credibility. But one of the very positive results of the massive women's movement in the past twenty years has been the rejection of "credentialism" — the belief that you can't talk about something unless you have a piece of paper which says you can. Women's confidence in challenging the experts had grown as we questioned their wisdom on health care, education, and child care.

In the field of economics our challenge had initially been confined to explanations of why we were paid less than men. We were told it was because we were less productive than men. We didn't choose the right jobs, we didn't get ourselves trained properly, and we had bad work habits — ie, we preferred to work part-time, we regularly dropped out of the labour force, and because of our commitment to home and hearth, we didn't take our work as seriously as men did. Women intuitively rejected these expert pronouncements. What we were told defied common sense. We knew that someone must be profiting from paying women lower wages and confining us to a rather narrow range of occupations. We challenged the experts. We fought the collective subconscious which believed that it was the natural order of things for women's work to be narrowly confined and to be valued less than that done by men. And, although we certainly still have a long way to go in this regard, we have made headway in making people begin to see women's work differently.

"The issues have not changed, but our analysis of what is wrong began to change."

In the 1980s the economic conditions for women are much the same as those we faced in the 1970s, some of which were outlined in the Royal Commission on the Status of Women. Women's work is still occupationally segregated; women's wages are still much less than men's; women still do most of the work in the home; public child care is still woefully insufficient; poverty is still overwhelmingly a women's lot; and native women, immigrant women and women of colour still face particularly gruesome obstacles in their lives — obstacles based on racism which are distinct from those all women face.

The issues have not changed but our analysis of what is wrong began to change. We no longer focused our briefs to government in a way which would show how "rational" a more

just society would be or how it could be in the economic interest of employers to cure discrimination. There is no economic argument which will convince employers that by paying women one-third more than they do now, they will be better off. They know better and so do we. We continue to fight for the kinds of things we have focused on before but we have broadened our scope and have entered the general debate on macro-economic issues. The logic of the situation has demanded this: we could not ignore the larger agenda of economic restructuring and the government's designs for Canada since they would affect virtually every issue on women's agenda for action.

The change in focus in the 1980s, at least at the federal level of the feminist movement's confrontation with the state, is a result of a great many changes. There has been a greater awareness in the women's movement altogether of the structural nature of women's oppression; the recognition that it is not simply the sexist nature of individual employers or legislators which is responsible for women's position in society. The dramatic economic downturn in the early 1980s highlighted the structural problems with the economy itself, something which no groups interested in economic and social change could ignore.

There were also changes which affected the nature of the women's movement at the national level which had an impact on NAC's ability to focus on broad economic issues. The first of these is that the Liberals were no longer in power. This meant that the Liberals on the NAC executive were no longer placed in a defensive position about government economic policy. NAC is an extremely broad-based feminist organization with a membership of about 600 women's groups, including women's groups from political parties as divergent as the Progressive Conservatives and the Communist Party. However, Conservative women were very rarely elected to the executive. With the Conservative party in government no one was protective of their own party interest. The second major change to directly affect NAC was in the composition of its executive body. The 1980s saw the organization expand considerably to include representatives from all regions of the country, but also there was increasing membership on the executive from more left-oriented women, trade unionists, and women from minority groups. The greater representativeness on the executive meant more sympathy for action which was critical of existing structures.

The move toward dealing with broader economic issues initially focused on the tremendous social upheaval which occurred in the depression period of the early 1980s. During this period the Liberal government initiated a Royal Commission on the Economic Union and Development Prospects for Canada. The Commissioners travelled the country eliciting presentations from various community and business groups on the state of the economy. The responses were predictable: the popular sector called for greater government direction in the economy to eliminate what was considered the most pressing problems — high unemployment and poor provision of social services. The business community called for greater reliance on the private market mechanism and government intervention in controlling inflation. The Macdonald Report, which was published in 1985, clearly reflected the views of business. The major recommendations of the report centred on a greater reliance on the market mechanism primarily through a free trade agreement with the US. It also recommended increased privatization of publicly-owned enterprises and drastic changes in social services systems. This report has been the blue-print for government policy since it was produced.

NAC has been alarmed by the previous discussions on free trade which had taken place during the 1984 election, primarily because of the adverse impact free trade was likely to have on the manufacturing industries where immigrant women were concentrated. It held a series of discussions on the impact free trade was likely to have on women, although at this point understanding of the overall implications was fairly sketchy. Since the winning party in the 1984 election, the Progressive Conservatives, had indicated that pursuing a free trade agreement with the US was tantamount

• continued page 15

NAC: Process Problematics

The following article was written in February 1989, before the federal budget came down, and before the 1989 NAC AGM where Barbara McDougall and the Progressive Conservative Caucus refused to meet with NAC members. Nevertheless, it is still relevant as a basis for discussion of feminist process.

by Gillian Mitchell, Lorraine Greaves, and the London Feminist Process Group

For the last year, some feminists in London, Ontario have been meeting to talk about feminist process and how it might help to solve the organizational and process problems which we believe threaten the continued existence of the National Action Committee on the Status of Women (NAC). This article describes the thinking of the London Feminist Process Group¹ and raises some new questions that now seem central to us. Sensing that our fears for NAC may be widely shared, we offer our ideas here in the hope that they may help move us towards a better future for NAC in particular and Canadian feminists in general.

The central problem, as we see it, concerns the suitability of using traditional process in feminist organizations. NAC is certainly not the only feminist organization relying on traditional process; nevertheless, it is the largest and most visible one in Canada. Many — if not most — feminist activists outside NAC also operate tacitly with a traditional process essentially like NAC's. What blew the roof off for NAC was its success. The dramatic increase over the past several years in the number and diversity of NAC's member groups was so unprecedentedly rapid that it was "unmanageable." It was impossible for so many new groups to be socialized gradually into the *hitherto-unquestioned process* followed by NAC. And this non-integration made possible the focusing and expression of a dissatisfaction that had more or less stayed underground in the past. NAC's growth has revealed feminist process to be a crisis in contemporary Canadian feminism.

NAC has been highly successful in coming to be seen as the visible feminist presence in Canada, but its internal process has diverged from feminist values. It is at risk now of becoming a voice that doesn't represent Canadian feminism any more. But with appropriate action, the painful events of recent NAC history, particularly the 1988 AGM, may come to be seen as simply symptoms of rapid growth, symptoms which can serve as a catalyst for change and growth within NAC and result in a NAC which could serve as a model for its member groups. Ignored, the same symptoms may signal the beginning of the end of NAC, which would be very sad — but it might be preferable to a continuation of NAC as it is currently.

Discussion of feminist process is of course not new, so the London Feminist Process Group turned to the literature on feminist process.² This literature is insightful and practical as far as it goes, but reading it in the light of the NAC experience brought a striking oversight to light: it is all built on the fundamental and unquestioned assumption that feminists agree that a different way of working together, a different kind of process, is essential for achieving the feminist enterprise of overturning the patriarchal world. But what if that agreement is missing? Nothing in the literature talks about how to achieve such agreement. Either its existence is assumed, or it is another of those problems we have tacitly decided to ignore.

The truth is, however, that the need for a feminist process is not universally acknowledged, and the problems of NAC arise to an important extent from this lack of agreement. It is clear to any observer of NAC's process that many of the main actors in NAC are quite happy with traditional process as epitomized by the rules of parliamentary procedure familiarly referred to as "Robert's Rules." In fact, the highly skilled use of these rules was what made the AGM a "success" for them, despite the fact that those same rules made the meeting distressing and disempowering for many of the participants. From many accounts the use of those rules continues to prevent meaningful

change in the workings of the NAC Executive since the 1988 annual meeting.

So what leads us to persist with traditional process in NAC? The same reasons that foster its use in most feminist groups: first, it seems, at face value, to get our feminist work done, and, second, it seems also at face value, to be a fair way of operating. Robert's Rules (and alternative versions such as Bourinot's, which are used by Parliament and some Quebec feminist groups and were accepted for use by NAC at the 1989 AGM) operate primarily to organize participation:

- so that no one person can dominate the discussion
- so that discussion stays on topic
- so that discussants treat one another with civility

It doesn't sound bad so far, does it? So what's the problem?

First, the rules of order are very complicated and they use a specialized jargon, so that people who don't know them can in practice be silenced by those who know them and know how to work them. The result is dramatic disparities of power, which undermine egalitarian values and the feminist commitment to empowering all women.

Second, the rules work best when the issues are fairly well structured and clear to everyone in advance. Since the chair can rule out of order any questions that fall outside this assumed structure, the rules can be used to make free flowing, spiralling, thinking-it-through discussion impossible. Which can rule out just the kind of discussion and questioning of the given that has led to the major reorientations in thinking that feminism has produced in the past. Thus, using parliamentary rules threatens the foundation of feminist theory, its grounding in each woman's experience. So Robert's/Bourinot's Rules in practice do part of what they need to do, but they do it at the expense of essential feminist values that have been the strength of the movement.

Hence, as a result of this reactive task orientation, in fact in what seems to be taken as a natural consequence, the adoption of feminist process gives way to the temporal and strategic demands of the task. Underlying acceptance of both task and the use of traditional process is the belief that NAC's input will have no effect on the legislation at hand unless it is swift, and feminist process "takes too much time." Further, because it is believed that, to be effective in dealing with The Boys, we have to play by the Boys' rules, we adopt the Boys' strategies — including the Boys' process.

The crucial assumption of the strategy used by the Boys has also been an important operating assumption in NAC, namely, that effective political action on any issue requires a single, unified, "correct" position on that issue. Strategically such a position offers undeniable advantages. A unified position allows NAC to:

- show the strongest possible face of the women's movement
- display a more understandable, accessible position to the public
- facilitate dealing with government and media
- operate with clarity of focus

All of which are desirable and make the NAC Executive's perceived mandate easier to carry out. But is it worth the cost? Because this cost is considerable:

- the alienation of women or groups who do not share the unified position, or who do not share the perception that that particular issue is a priority
- the necessity that NAC use a process which will either squelch dissent or allow it to be ignored to the extent that the unified position can be ramrodded through
- the obliteration of the record of this dissent in briefs, position papers, and media reports of the women's moment, all of which adds up to . . .
- the stifling of the diversity and development of opinion among women

It is easy to see that the quest for unified positions to support swift, reactive response to government legislation creates a major incentive for NAC participants to abuse or manipulate NAC's process. And the cost appears to out-

weigh the benefits in terms of the feminist enterprise. So one question for NAC to ponder, then, is:

Would NAC serve the goals of Canadian feminism better by abandoning the search for unified positions on the issues?

A larger question is, of course, whether the focus on lobbying activities is in fact the best use of NAC and its executive's energies. NAC old-timers remember that prior to the 1980s there was a much greater focus, at least at the AGM, on the goal of educating and empowering women and women's groups, while lobbying played a less major role.

The advantages of returning to this balance of functions are several:

- the outcome would be the development of skills at the grassroots level, as opposed to the concentration of skill and power in the hands of a few old pros, usually from central Canada and particularly Toronto
- member groups could speak for themselves more often, which would strengthen the regional expression of feminist concerns, make it easier to air a diversity of viewpoints, and lessen the tendency of the media to call upon NAC for a monolithic and sometimes over-simplified response to any issue, which would ultimately result in . . .
- a more powerful grassroots women's movement which could be heard by federal politicians at the local level, instead of just at the national level

The disadvantage is that there would be some loss of power for NAC at the national level, a disadvantage which must be weighed against the overall goals of the organization.

So a second question is:

Should NAC focus less on lobbying and more on educating and empowering women and women's groups?

Another question about process has to do with size. Is there a limit on the size of groups which can function with feminist process and allow room for diversity and differences? Certainly, an Annual General Meeting which adopts a process allowing for every one of the hundreds of participants who wants to express her views about any resolution and be listened to is hard to imagine. It is hard to imagine it working even with the executive, which is made up of roughly 20 members. Guidelines about group process usually draw the line at about 20 people, if everyone is to be able to participate in a meaningful way. Are there any ways to get around this problem? An obvious simple strategy long used by group facilitators³ is to break any large group down into groups small enough to allow for real discussion. The views of each small group can be reflected by group representatives who meet in turn in other small groups, and so on, so that any action that develops arises from a multi-faceted base expressive of the full range of individual experience, rather than from one imposed by strong-arm tactics in a disempowering AGM that exploits parliamentary rules. A strengthened regional structure could result from the operation of the same process. Probably Robert's Rules and the like could be dispensed with altogether, particularly if NAC's lobbying function becomes less important and the perceived need for unified positions disappears.

In sum the question here is:

Can the use of a different process allow NAC to benefit from its size and diversity?

(Ed note: At the 1989 AGM a process of breaking plenary sessions into four smaller groups for preliminary discussion of resolutions was adopted).

Finally, there is the question of the AGM and what its function should be. From an earlier form, when it functioned primarily as an educating and empowering experience for representatives of NAC member groups from across the country, it has evolved into a hid-

eous marathon, the goal of which is to hammer out resolutions and unified positions, frequently in reaction to government agendas. The focus on gaining media attention brings even greater pressure to stifle real discussion.

The need to achieve these goals has made the meeting into an experience which most women find disappointing at best and painfully alienating at worst. First-time attendees — 50% of all participants — arrive with high expectations at what should be an energizing and transforming feminist experience and instead, disenfranchised by a set of mysterious and dehumanizing rules that preclude their meaningful participation, often leave angry and disappointed. The opportunity to get a sense of the breadth and diversity of Canadian feminism is lost. In fact the membership has no real role in setting the next year's agenda, since it is in the hands of those who can play by the rules. It is a sad pretense to claim that NAC's annual meeting is in any way a feminist meeting.

Why not dispense with the "business" at the AGM which focuses feminist energies on winning and losing, power-mongering, voting, resolutions, and all the trappings of power? Why not focus instead on ways of empowering those who attend, on ways of recognizing the strength and knowledge and experience that each woman brings as the amazing resource it is, as a resource which in the right setting can give each of us new or revitalized ideas and understanding and energy to go home with?

Can we use NAC's annual meeting to expand our understanding of feminism and women's experience and thoughts, not to narrow it?

Since we tend to accept that it is time pressures that most often justify our abandoning feminist process, perhaps it is also time to reconsider the assumption that feminist political action will have no impact unless it takes place at the very moment when the issue catches media or political attention. We need to appraise whether in acting swiftly and ignoring feminist process we have accomplished so very much.

We might have to move on to quantifying instead what we have lost by ignoring feminist process. It is hard to find a committed feminist these days who is not at least a little dismayed by the prevalence of burnout, by the refusal to engage or stay engaged in the feminist enterprise, and, perhaps most distressing of all, by our failure to attract young women to the movement in significant numbers.

Something we might consider is abandoning the task orientation of the feminist movement altogether, in favour of a process orientation. The feminist revolution is in the way each of us lives her life, and that revolution is now. What are we doing following a patriarchally-dictated agenda and using the patriarchy's process? Nothing could be more revolutionary than doing all our feminist work using feminist process. If we choose our agenda in terms of what we can do using that process, rather than having it chosen for us by the patriarchy, who's to say we wouldn't be further ahead in twenty years?

So our last question is:

Why not make feminist process into the focus of the feminist revolution?

□

Notes:

1. The London Feminist Process Group has included at one point or another Connie Backhouse, Margaret Buist, Marene Cope, Kathy Dance, Lorraine Greaves, Gail Hutchinson, Sandi Kirby, Julie Lee, Diana Majury, Gillian Mitchell, Janet Money, Candice Schachter, Eleanor Schnall, Barbe Slavko and Barbara Todd. The diversity of their views is not necessarily captured by this paper.
2. Some examples of the literature on feminist process are Ginny Crow, Dorothy Riddle and Caroline Sparks, "Critique and Commentary: The Process/Product Debate," *Quest: A Feminist Quarterly* 4, iv (1978), pp. 15-36; Charlene Eldridge Wheeler and Peggy L. Chin, *Peace and Power: A Handbook of Feminist Process* (Buffalo: Margarettaughters, 1984); Hogue Wykoff, *Solving Women's Problems — Through Awareness, Action and Contact* (New York: Grove Press, 1977)

The Shaping of Equality

by Lynne Pearlman
and Brett Dawson

The past decade did not have an auspicious opening in the courts. Just over ten years ago, the Supreme Court of Canada decided against Stella Bliss. At issue was the Unemployment Insurance Act which restricted the eligibility of pregnant women to unemployment insurance benefits. Mr. Justice Ritchie rejected Stella Bliss' argument that this was sex discrimination. He acknowledged that the Act imposed conditions on women which did not apply to men but, he explained, "any inequality between the sexes in this area is not created by legislation but by nature." This improbable logic also persuaded him that if legislation "treated unemployed pregnant women differently from other unemployed persons, be they male or female it is . . . because they are pregnant and not because they are women." Pregnant men must have felt similarly bereft. The Bliss decision formed part of the context for a decade of activism for legal change promoting women's equality.

An organizing focus over the period was the potential offered by a Charter of Rights and Freedoms, despite sound and continuing reservations about whether a legal document would produce real changes of benefit to women and other disadvantaged groups in Canada. Feminists are ambivalent about the use of the law — it is an institution which has traditionally excluded or permitted oppression of women's interests and it has been formed in a male supremacist society of gender inequality. There is very strong motivation for those in power to resist any challenge to the status quo. Even though more women have been appointed to senior judicial offices in recent years — including three women to the nine-member Supreme Court of Canada — the judiciary remains overwhelmingly white, upper-middle class and male. For all this, feminists have come to recognize that law is an arena of struggle and should definitely not be left to masculinist lawyers and politicians. In any case, a strong Charter would be better than the ineffectual Bill of Rights which guaranteed "equality before the law," interpreted to mean only equal application of laws whatever their substance: discrimination in legislation or government practice could not be challenged in the courts.

Women's groups across the country mounted a strong lobby to ensure that the Charter contained a clear commitment to sex equality and have continued to pursue remedies in the courts based on that commitment. Two sections in the Charter owe their strength to this lobbying effort. The first is section 15 which declares that everyone is "equal before and under the law and has the right to the equal protection and equal benefit of the law," without discrimination. Feminists were successful in having "sex" specifically listed as a prohibited ground of discrimination, a success which was not shared by our American sisters who suffered the defeat of their Equal Rights

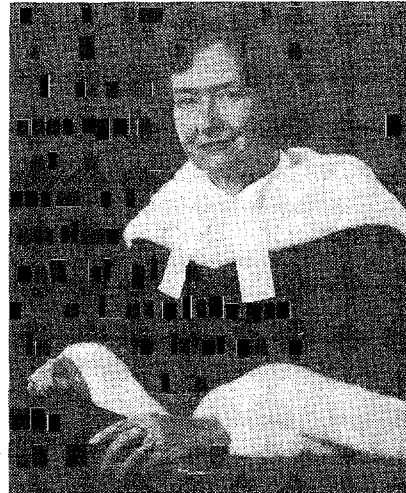
Amendment. The second is section 28 which guarantees the rights and freedoms in the Charter, "equally to male and female persons." As detailed in Penney Kome's book, *The Taking of Twenty-Eight*, the inclusion of Section 28 in our Charter and its exemption from the Section 33 override were major victories which were clearly attributable to women's coordinated organizing efforts across Canada. Section 28 has puzzled several male commentators who consider it to be superfluous and stating the obvious. But as women's legal inclusion has seemed far from obvious to other male commentators and judges earlier in the century, Section 28 offers concrete assurance that this will not occur again.

The equality rights contained in section 15 were subject to a three year moratorium, allegedly to allow governments time to take inventory of their legislation and bring it into compliance with the section. Dubious of the proposed review of discriminatory legislation, a group of feminist lawyers decided to conduct their own statute audit. The group, the Charter of Rights Education Fund (CREF), published its report in 1985. It was apparent to the group that the term "equality" was capable of varied meanings. It could mean formal equality evidenced in gender neutral language; it could mean substantive equality of outcome; it could mean treating women the same as similarly situated men; or it could mean recognizing the specificity of women's experience and redefining the standards of social participation and extending equal concern and respect to all people. CREF adopted an expansive range of meaning directed at ensuring women's actual equality in Canadian society. Ultimately, the group found that much work needed to be done to remove provisions which discriminated against women either as they were written or in their effect.

On April 17, 1985, the equality guarantees came into force. On the same day, the Women's Legal Education and Action Fund (LEAF) was formed, with the objective of bringing cases to the courts raising women's equality issues. Soon after, in October 1985, Ontario Attorney-General Ian Scott (at that time also Minister Responsible for Women's Issues) announced the creation of a \$1 million fund to support Ontario litigation brought by LEAF. "I stress this government's commitment and willingness to modify laws by legislation rather than by litigation," Mr. Scott told the legislature, "We will amend any law that requires change. However, it is in recognition of the fact that litigation cannot always be avoided that we have made available the fund to LEAF." Those and similar words have been put to the test in emerging equality litigation and judicial decisions and it is a good time for feminists to assess whether hard won equality protections promise to be effective.

Some lower court judges have used the Charter with gusto to protect the interests of men claiming to have been discriminated against. Of particular current concern are decisions in-

validating provisions designed to shield women who have laid charges of rape from questions about their sexual activities with persons other than the accused rapist. Accused men have also used the Charter to evade charges of sexual assault where the offence has extended to men only. Social welfare benefits to women have been taken away. In a case currently before the Ontario Human Rights Commission, a man is claiming that women-only Wen-do self defence courses discriminate against men. Equally significant for women, judges in Manitoba have expressed amazement that sexual harassment might be considered to be sex discrimination and in another case, followed the reasoning in the *Bliss* pregnancy case. What is, of course, missing from such decisions is any analysis of gender power or of the objectives of the equality provisions.



One of three in the Supreme Court of Canada: Madam Justice Bertha Wilson

There have been some remarkable successes for women in the courts, however, most noticeably in major decisions of the Supreme Court of Canada. The court has accepted that Section 15 of the Charter is "designed to protect those groups who suffer social, political and legal disadvantage in our society." Thus interpreted, the section cannot be utilized by privileged groups seeking to entrench their advantaged positions, nor should it be used to challenge remedial legislation. Unequals are not to be treated equally. Supreme Court judgments under both the Charter and human rights legislation suggest that the Supreme Court of Canada, the most authoritative court in the country, is developing a more sophisticated understanding of the meaning of equality than we have ever seen before.

Several key decisions concerning women's equality have been issued in the past two years. In the celebrated *Morgentaler* decision in January 1988, the judges invalidated Criminal Code provisions criminalizing abortions. Soon after, in the *Canadian Newspapers Case*, the judges upheld a statutory ban on the publication of identifying information when such protection was requested by the victim of a sexual assault. *Broadside* was a member of the co-

alition which argued in favour of keeping such protection. In both cases, the judges listened to feminist arguments that sexuality and reproduction issues are vitally related to women's equality. But in neither case did they utilize equality arguments. In the Canadian Newspapers case, the judges affirmed the importance of freedom of the press but held that a publication ban was the only way to achieve the supportable objective of encouraging complaints of sexual assault. The judges appeared to accept that the publication ban was a breach of the Charter, and not that it was required to support and promote women's equality. As LEAF clearly argued, "Sexual violation of women by men is both an indication and a practice of inequality between the sexes, specifically of the low status of women relative to men." In the *Morgentaler* case, the Chief Justice urged that procedural difficulties and unequal access to abortion across Canada constituted a fatal flaw in the legislation and prevented a woman making a choice consistent with her own aspirations and priorities protected by section 7 (life, liberty and security of the person). Madam Justice Wilson agreed, but in a remarkable and challenging judgement returned to the basic issue that women should be able to make fundamental personal decisions like abortion and that only women could make such decisions. This nascent and eminently sensible recognition of women's perspective and experience in framing a legal decision was a major jurisprudential development.

Madam Justice Wilson's approach augured well for an approach to equality which would recognize the reality of women's lives. The three decisions issued in 1989 which at last address the equality guarantees directly are very encouraging indeed. In the *Law Society of British Columbia v. Andrews*, a challenge was made to legislation which allowed only Canadian citizens to practice law. LEAF intervened



Madam Justice Claire L'Heureux-Dubé

in the case to assist the judges in grappling with the appropriate approach to equality in the Canadian Charter. Ultimately, the judges rejected an argument that the meaning of the concept of equal protection and benefit before and under the law is that persons who are "similarly situated be similarly treated" and conversely, that persons who are "differently situated be differently treated." Mr. Justice McIntyre considered this test to be "seriously deficient in that it excludes any consideration of the nature of the law. If it were to be applied literally, it could be used to justify the Nuremberg laws of Adolf Hitler. Similar treatment was contemplated for all Jews." It certainly had justified discriminatory treatment against Stella Bliss insofar as the judge had regarded pregnant women as being differently situated to non-pregnant men and, as all pregnant women were treated alike there was no discrimination. In the *Andrews* case, the judge emphasized that a "bad law will not be saved merely because it operates equally upon those to whom it has application." Instead, he advocated an approach which considers "the content of the law, its purpose, and its impact upon those to whom it applies, and also upon those whom it excludes from its application." The judge considered that for the "accommodation of differences, which is the essence of true equality, it will frequently be necessary to make distinctions."

The systemic nature of discrimination against women and the gender specific nature

LEAFlines

by Brett Dawson

On April 17, 1985 a small group of women who had been involved in lobbying around equality provisions to be included in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, formed the Women's Legal Education and Action Fund (LEAF). They recognized that it was one thing to have equality on paper and quite another to have it as a reality. LEAF was established with a board of directors from each province and territory in Canada and with the objective of promoting women's equality in the courts. LEAF has come to play a central role as an innovative feminist organization initiating and coordinating women's legal advocacy in Canada. The cases it is, or has been, involved in encompass issues affecting older women, aboriginal and immigrant women, lesbians and women's concerns with welfare benefits, reproduction and policing. And, with women's advocacy established in Canada, LEAF has begun a process of changes in structure and approach to ensure that the organization is

owned by the women's community and to develop its community base.

One of the most exciting developments in LEAF has been its approach to selection of cases and development of arguments. Christie Jefferson, LEAF's Executive Director, has emphasized that "we are now approaching litigation as involving working in partnership with other organizations." The objective is to bring together resources and feminist analysis with the group that knows the issue first hand. It is these women who identify and define the issues for their own community and work on formulating the most appropriate set of remedies.

The turning point for LEAF in this approach came in 1987 with community response to an intervention by LEAF in two cases involving a threat to "rape shield" provision in the Criminal Code (which protects rape victims from questions about their sexual history). Many women were not happy with LEAF's position which advocated limited exceptions to the provisions, because it did not repre-

sent women and no consultation had occurred prior to the arguments being made. LEAF's response was to remedy this. The two cases continue on appeal, LEAF has changed its position and has joined in forming a coalition of groups including the Women's College Hospital Sexual Assault Team and the Metro Special Committee on Child Abuse which has held consultations with women across the country. As Christie Jefferson has put it, this experience "changed LEAF and there has been no looking back since."

This approach ties into an equality theory which emphasises the reality of women's lives and the importance of looking at the impact of legislation, policy and government action on women. LEAF has developed a way of analyzing equality which defines the way women are oppressed in Canadian society as a sex discrimination issue. And LEAF has been careful not to advance equality for women at the expense of other oppressed groups — the goal is equality for all disadvantaged groups. ■

of experience formed the basis of the decision of *Janzen v. Platy Enterprises*, dealing with sexual harassment. In this case two waitresses were repeatedly the objects of sexual advances and touching by the cook who, though a fellow employee, was held out as having supervisory authority. Despite the women's persistent objections that his behaviour was unwanted, unwelcome and intrusive, he persisted. The employer minimized the incidents and largely ignored the women's requests that he intervene to stop the harassment. When the physical harassment ended, it was replaced by retaliatory verbal abuse and criticism in front of other staff and the employer. One of the women left her job and the other was fired. Both women experienced harms which included insomnia, vomiting, inability to concentrate and economic disruption. They complained to the Manitoba Human Rights Commission. The Human Rights Code in that province at that time did not have a specific prohibition against sexual harassment, but proscribed sex discrimination in the workplace. The women, then, needed to establish that sexual harassment was gendered conduct amounting to discrimination on the basis of sex.



Madam Justice Beverley M. McLachlin

This should not have been difficult. An overwhelming body of earlier cases had accepted the proposition and the women won before a human rights adjudicator and a Queen's Bench judge. However the employer appealed these decisions to the Court of Appeal. At this level, the women lost. The judges decided that sexual harassment could not be sex discrimination because it did not happen to all women. Instead it arose from personal characteristics, such as being attractive. Mr. Justice Huband expressed amazement "that sexual harassment has been equated with discrimination on the basis of sex. I think they are entirely different concepts." Nor should an employer be held responsible when sexual harassment was clearly not part of the "course of employment." Mr. Justice Twaddle expressed the view that only "if the woman was chosen on a categorical basis, without regard to individual characteristics, could the harassment be a manifestation of discrimination?" The decision itself was "amazing," and appalling to feminists. The Human Rights Commission appealed and LEAF intervened to raise equality arguments.

The Supreme Court of Canada unanimously overturned the decision of the Court of Appeal. In the view of the Chief Justice, "clearly a person who is disadvantaged because of her sex is being discriminated against in her employment when employer conduct denies her financial rewards because of her sex, or exacts some form of sexual compliance to improve or maintain her existing benefits. The evil to be remedied is the utilization of economic power or authority so as to restrict a woman's guaranteed and equal access to the workplace, and all of its benefits, free from extraneous pressures having to do with the mere fact that she is a woman. Where a woman's equal access is denied or when terms or conditions differ when compared to male employees, the woman is being discriminated against." He emphasized that discrimination does not require uniform treatment of all members of a particular group. Further, sexual harassment is "an abuse of power. When sexual harassment occurs in the workplace, it is an abuse of both economic and sexual power." The judges were clear about the overwhelming reality of "who does what to whom" in sexual harassment: "In the present sex stratified labour market, those with the power to harass sexually will predominantly be male and those facing the greatest risk of sexual harassment will tend to be female."

This decision is extremely positive for women. Together with the earlier *Robichaud* decision, which established that intention to harass was irrelevant and that an employer is liable for sexual harassment in the workplace, sexual harassment has been recognized as both a workplace hazard for women and an instance of sexual inequality. The focus on the impact on the victim should help other judges and policy makers assess the merit of any claims of sexual harassment by men. Feminist legal scholars, such as Catharine MacKinnon, Constance Backhouse and Leah Cohen, were quoted, as was Judge Rosalie Abella's employment equity report. LEAF can also be credited with influencing the framework and approach adopted by the judges. Such decisions can make a difference to women's lives and to the conduct of lower court judges and the advocates before them. Of course, the judgement does leave some issues unresolved. In the *Janzen* case, much was made of the cook's supervisory authority — but what if he had had no such authority? Would the court have recognized the relations of gender power inherent in the harassment? As feminists, we know that gender power makes it possible for a hierarchically subordinate male to harass his female boss. That the judge accepted "perceived" as opposed to "real" authority will nevertheless be helpful. But there is a heterosexist bias in the decision insofar as it constructed the problem solely as harassment of women by heterosexual males. The issue of heterosexual harassment of gays or lesbians is not tackled in the

judgement.

Finally, to bring the decade to a close on a satisfying note for women is the decision in *Brooks v. Canada Safeway Ltd.* In a re-run of the *Bliss* case, three women who had become pregnant while employed by the grocery chain challenged a provision in the company benefit plan which excluded women from all coverage for work interruption during a 17 week period before, during and after confinement. Was this sex discrimination, and incompatible with equality guarantees, or was it an inequality created by nature? The words of the Chief Justice are almost a treat to the feminist ear. He regarded the discrimination as being created, not by nature but by legislation or regulations — that is, by the law. He accepted that women should not be economically or socially disadvantaged by reason of becoming pregnant and that it is unfair to impose all of the costs of pregnancy on women alone. "It is difficult to conceive that distinctions or discriminations based upon pregnancy could ever be regarded as other than discrimination based upon sex, or that restrictive statutory conditions applicable only to pregnant women did not discriminate against them as women . . . The capacity to become pregnant is unique to the female gender. A distinction based on pregnancy is not merely a distinction between those who are and are not pregnant, but also between the gender that has the capacity for pregnancy and the gender which does not." The *Bliss* decision was overturned, the Safeway employees won their right to equal benefits, and

women across Canada became more visible on the terms of their own lives.

Women's struggle over the past ten years to ensure they have strong equality protections in the Charter has been well worth it. The Supreme Court of Canada is demonstrating an increasingly sophisticated understanding of equality issues. But, while we laud recent decisions, feminists should not implicitly trust the Court to protect our interests. Several contentious cases will soon come before the judges, including the legal status of a fetus (the midwives' case from BC) and the constitutionality of Criminal Code provisions designed to shield women who have laid charges of rape from questions about their sexual activities with persons other than the accused rapist. The finest and clearest arguments must be made to the judges by feminists in these cases. Equally, legal struggle is but one area of resistance to masculinist supremacy in Canadian society. Political lobbying for legislative and policy changes must take place simultaneously with litigation. We need to remind Ontario's Ian Scott of his words in October 1985. In light of the failure of the Meech Lake Accord to renew or protect the Charter's sex equality commitments, feminist lobbying on constitutional issues remains crucial. We must also work in coalitions, and consult with each other to ensure the women affected by inequality can set priorities, define issues and formulate remedies which will be advance our interests — which are the interests of an equal and just society. ■

A Convincing Radical Analysis of Pornography

Susan G. Cole cuts through righteous moralism and liberal abstractions to show us what pornography really is and the harms it does. *Pornography and the Sex Crisis* suggests a legal remedy in which women matter.

Can we do something about PORNOGRAPHY without using CENSORSHIP? YES!

ISBN 0-921299-06-0

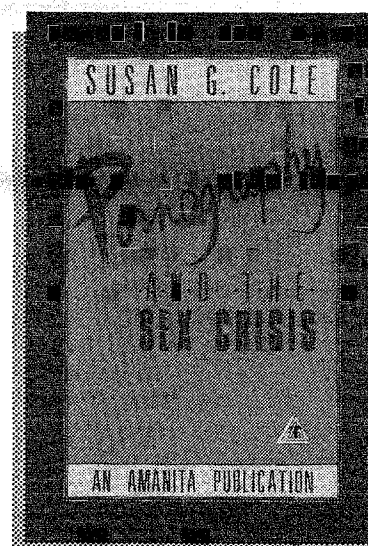
\$10.95

At your bookstore or direct from:



Amanita Enterprises

P.O. Box 784, Station P, Toronto, Ontario, M5S 2Z1



14TH

Michigan Women's Music Festival

9 10 11 12 13
AUGUST 1989

Altazor
Jennifer Berezan
BETTY
Blazing Redheads
Blue Rose
Casselberry & DuPree
Dance Brigade
Dianne Davidson
Disappear Fear
Ferron
Robin Flower & Libby McLaren
Mimi Fox
Kay Gardner & Sunwomyn Ensemble
Julie Homi
Jane's Aire
Katari Taiko
Klez—meydlekh
Ladygourd Sangoma
Libana
Margaret Sloan-Hunter

Jude Narita
Laura Nyro
Ova
Over Our Heads
Pat Parker
Ruth Pelham
Vicki Randle
Toshi Reagon
Carolyn Ritt Trio
Lorraine Segato
Stafford Street Sisters
Mahinaarangi Tocker
Teresa Trull
Edwina Lee Tyler
Cris Williamson

W.W.T.M.C. Box 22 Walhalla, MI 49458

Sex Education: Beyond Plumbing and Prevention

by Helen Lenskyj

In September 1988, Lesbian and Gay Youth Ottawa-Hull prepared *A Report on High Schools for the Coalition for Lesbian and Gay Rights in Ontario*. In the introduction, they state: "Thousands of lesbian and gay youth across Ontario are being silenced by a society that is hostile and homophobic. By raising our voices, we hope to lessen the oppression and provide hope for our lonely friends."

Sex education classes are an obvious place to begin the process of combatting homophobia in high schools. Yet only about half the schools in Canada offer sex education, and those that do tend to focus on plumbing (male and female anatomy and physiology) and prevention (how to avoid pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases and AIDS). What are the possibilities for a more progressive sex education curriculum in the schools, one that takes a feminist, gay/lesbian-positive perspective.

We can safely assume that from 10 to 15 per cent of the students and teachers in Ontario schools are lesbian or gay, and that the vast majority do not find the school a safe place to be open about their sexuality. High schools, and even junior high schools, are showcases for rampant heterosexuality: football heroes, cheerleaders, dancing, dating, parties, proms, fashion, (hetero)sex. Neither the classroom nor the staffroom is a likely locale for tolerance of sexual difference, although a few courageous lesbians and gays have come out in these settings.

Conservative parents and trustees — and they seem to be in the majority — believe that gay and lesbian teachers provide inappropriate role models for young people, or that these teachers will indoctrinate, seduce or molest children. Of course, when heterosexuals indoctrinate children, it's called sex education, and when straight male teachers seduce female students, it's called romance.

Anti-discrimination statutes in the human rights codes of Ontario, Quebec and Manitoba now protect lesbians and gays in the workplace, but, given parental and community attitudes, few teachers are willing to put the codes to the test. Separate school teachers have few illusions about human rights legislation in the face of the Roman Catholic church's stand on homosexuality — and with good reason. In a number of US civil rights cases, lesbians and gay men unsuccessfully protested their firing from jobs in church-affiliated organizations. Some legal opinion holds that the provincial codes, as well as the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, will provide protection for Catholic teachers, but there have been no precedent-setting cases to date.

As for lesbian and gay youth, the Ontario Human Rights Code now protects them from being expelled from school, but offers no protection on the job since employees under 18 are not covered. Again, the situation for Catholic students is particularly risky. In Toronto in 1985, three female students from Loretto High School were expelled because of "inappropriate" behaviour; namely, one girl put her arm around the other's shoulders.

In 1986, a Catholic high school principal in Malton, Ontario, banned the publication of an editorial supporting Bill 7 which was to appear in the school paper, on the grounds that it undermined Catholic doctrine. (Bill 7 introduced sexual orientation into the Ontario Human Rights Code as a prohibited ground for discrimination.) Yet, some nine months later, in an AIDS education publication of the Institute for Catholic Education, Toronto, one of the contributors, the Bishop of Chicago, called for Catholics to treat people with AIDS (including gays) with compassion, and to support their right to decent housing, health care, etc. As one Catholic vice principal observed, the AIDS crisis has dragged the church in the 1980s.

While teachers and parents have reluctantly accepted the fact that a significant proportion of adolescents are heterosexually active, there is enormous community reaction to the realization that gay and lesbian adolescents are also sexually active. Over the past ten years or so, the print media have reported a number of incidents in the US where same-sex couples have attempted, with varying degrees of success, to attend high school proms together. Some have been openly gay or lesbian, others have not, but all were treated as "deviant" by students and teachers alike. When girls attended dances "alone" (i.e., with each other, rather than with a male date), students expressed the fear that

they would take the other girls' (male) dates. Presumably nothing was further from their minds!

Schools are not a safe place for any so-called non-conforming behaviour on the part of students. Rigid sex-role stereotyping produces a stultifying sameness in attitudes, values, dress and behaviour within the various subgroups that make up the school population: the brains, the preppies, the druggies, the punks, the heavy metals, etc. Each has its own code, but, with the exception of some of the less structured alternative schools, support for minorities, sex-



Konnie Reich

ual or otherwise, is rarely a high priority.

Conformity to sex roles is the cornerstone of heterosexuality, and provides a reassuring answer to adolescent confusion about personal and sexual identity, especially for young males. A boy might not know exactly who he is, but he knows who he ain't: he ain't a girl, and he ain't queer. This reasoning, with its sexist and homophobic elements, nevertheless provides some security and direction for straight teenagers, but leaves a void for gay and lesbian youth.

Teenage conservatism was recently brought home to me in a conversation overheard on the subway. Two girls aged about fifteen were arguing about the relative merits of boys they knew. "I would die for John," asserted one. "No, he's not that good-looking. You wouldn't die for him," said her friend. "Yes, I would die for him," repeated the first. Then the conversation switched to lesbianism, and they lowered their voices. Words like "gross" were sprinkled throughout the exchange, always with great vehemence, and then one said, "and men, too. But that's not as gross." "Oh yes, it is," was the unequivocal response. When girls, in all seriousness, discuss "dying for" a boy they scarcely know, and when they label love between women (or between men) as "gross," we may wonder what's happening with the women's movement.

Male sexual violence is a fact of life in our schools. Female students and teachers are the frequent targets of sexual harassment and sexual assault. There have been two sexual assaults in recent history at Castle Frank High School in Toronto, and there was an attempted rape at an elementary school in a separate school board north of Toronto, with both the boy and the girl under twelve years of age. Cheerleaders at one North York high school can no longer travel in safety in the same bus as the football team. Female students experience harassment and assault at the hands of male teachers and caretaking staff. And finally, girlfriend rape, and physical and verbal abuse, are daily realities for increasing numbers of adolescent girls in heterosexual relationships.

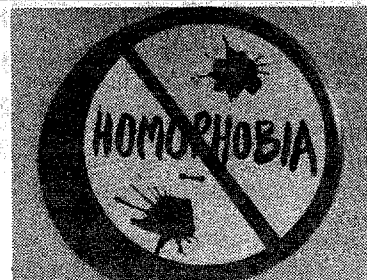
In a recent survey of the National Gay Task Force (US), approximately 20 per cent of lesbians and 50 per cent of gay men reported that they had been harassed, threatened or physically abused. Although we might prefer to see Canada as a less violent society, we know that the right-wing backlash is just as virulent here as it is south of the border. While teachers will often confront instances of racist or sexist name-calling, many are paralyzed when they hear homophobic comments, either unwilling or unable to deal with them. Toronto students have reported that teachers observed verbal or physical harassment and did nothing to intervene on behalf of gay or lesbian students; a male physical education teacher was one of the worst offenders. A former student at Western Technical School reported that homosexuality was dismissed in the sex education class as "just lust."

There is a sad irony in the proposed strategies

for confronting homophobia in the school that we read in the sex education literature — suggestions that teachers explain why homophobic jokes are not funny, support the victims of homophobic teasing, and encourage discussion of homophobia and its links with other kinds of discrimination such as racism and sexism. Such responses stand in stark contrast to the behaviour typically cultivated by closeted teachers, who may choose to ignore homophobic jokes in the classroom and staffroom, to withdraw from discussions of sexuality issues and to avoid showing solidarity with lesbians and gays, be-



Konnie Reich



Courtesy Kai Visionworks

cause to do so would be to risk disclosure and the loss of their jobs.

It is the invisibility of gays and lesbians that complicates the analogy with racism and sexism. A white teacher who confronts students' racism will not be labelled black, and to be labelled a "women's libber" because of one's anti-sexist stand is almost commonplace; but any teacher, gay or straight, who confronts homophobia will almost certainly be suspected of being gay. And in this situation it is obviously counterproductive — not to mention a copout — to make a public assertion of one's heterosexuality. Hence the paralysis around the homophobia issue.

There is considerable confusion, as well, about the legality of talking about gay or lesbian sex to young people. Counselling an underage person to engage in "illegal" same-sex activity is fraught with difficulty. Teachers and counsellors do, of course, engage in this kind of counselling, which is legal as long as actual sexual behaviour is not discussed. In other words, young people can only get information and advice about gay and lesbian matters in the abstract; they may inadvertently make it difficult for the teacher or counsellor if they disclose that they are currently sexually active with same-sex partners. Clients at the Toronto Centre for Counselling Lesbians and Gays require parents' permission if they are between 18 and 21 years of age, and the centre does not provide counselling on sexual orientation issues for youth under 18.

Pressure and hostility faced by young gays and lesbians is responsible for problem behaviour that often comes to the attention of teachers and counsellors: drug and alcohol abuse, delinquency, heterosexual promiscuity and pregnancy — behaviour that, for some, offers escape from a bleak future as social outcasts. One-third of the young people interviewed in the Ottawa-Hull survey admitted that they had dated members of the opposite sex in order to conceal their lesbian/gay identities. They all reported that they knew more about heterosexual sex than lesbian/gay sex, and that media images of "effeminate" gay men and "macho" lesbians shaped their perceptions of what it meant to be gay or lesbian.

Parental hostility exacerbates the problem. Some young people are grounded, physically abused, kicked out of the home or threatened with psychiatric treatment for their "sickness." Because of the stigma attached to a lesbian or gay identity, many young people make last-ditch efforts to prove that they are straight, and for girls, pregnancy is often one of the outcomes. We are probably familiar with lesbians

and gay men in their thirties and forties who, as adolescents in a more conservative era, were persuaded that marriage would "straighten them out." And it is perhaps a sign of the conservative backlash that young people are still being directed into this disastrous path. Needless to say, it is unlikely that the average straight teacher or counsellor would interpret this kind of indiscriminate heterosexual activity accurately without specific training about sexual orientation.

Toronto Board of Education may well be one of the most progressive in this area. Its current work in curriculum development and inservice training around sexual orientation was sparked by a tragic event in June 1985 when Ken Zeller, a gay teacher with the Toronto Board, was murdered by four adolescent males who attended Toronto schools.

In December 1985, the president of the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation wrote to the Director of Education urging him to take steps to deal with intolerance and homophobia in the schools. Early in 1986, Ward 6 trustee Olivia Chow, working with gay and lesbian students and groups, began to investigate sex education programs. She reported the virtual nonexistence of curriculum material on sexual orientation, noting that, since board policy required that the topic be discussed only by physical education teachers, human rights and tolerance aspects of the issue were ignored in the curriculum. Furthermore, approximately one professional development day every two years provided training for PE teachers, and only 40 out of about 200 PE teachers had attended the last session — in other words, 40 teachers distributed among about 7,000 lesbian and gay students in Toronto schools. An occasional gay or lesbian speaker could be brought into the school with the principal's approval.

Not only were curriculum materials silent on the issue of sexual orientation, they were deafening in their prescription of heterosexual activity. A survey of five family studies texts approved for use in Ontario schools confirms this trend. For example, in a section of *This is the Life* that uses the question and answer format, two girls complain that their boyfriends never leave them alone to have a day to themselves. The response begins with the gratuitous aside that "lots of girls would like to have your problem." Another question comes from three boys who prefer to spend time together working on their cars rather than dating girls. The response: "Give the girls a break" and start dating.

Given the dismal selection of family studies texts, a few progressive teachers are now developing their own materials and using the opportunities for consciousness raising provided by the mandatory AIDS education unit. In fact, the Ministry of Education 1987 guidelines state: "Education around AIDS requires that attention be given to values and to the discussion of sex roles, equity, violence, the ethics of choice and tolerance of individual and group differences in behaviour and belief."

In subsequent developments at the Toronto Board in 1986, deputations of gay and lesbian students and parents reported that the climate in Toronto schools was violently homophobic. Psychiatrist Robert Langevin provided an overview of the professional literature, stressing the fact that gay and lesbian students, as targets of homophobic discrimination in the schools and in the community, experienced stress-related mental and physical ill-health which the board had an ethical responsibility to alleviate. His presentation also included an explanation of sexual orientation, and he stressed that sexual preferences are not changeable, but are fixed by adolescence.

This psychiatric explanation was apparently more palatable to many straight people than the notion of choice proposed by lesbians like Marilyn Frye and others. Parents, in particular, are more likely to agree to the inclusion of sexual orientation topics in sex education if they know that their child's sexual preference is already fixed, and that her/his exposure to information on this subject will not serve to tip the scales in the "wrong" direction. Of course, the global opponents of sex education will not be reassured; they believe that sex education is a parental responsibility, and that too much information "puts ideas into teenagers' heads" — presumably the kinds of ideas they never would have thought of, if left to their own devices.

continued page 15

Women and Health: Coming of Age

by Connie Clement

Women's health is a growth industry. Women are the new market for companies and institutions who sell health. Hospitals in Ontario are racing to set up women's health centres. All levels of government mention women's issues in new documents, usually as one of a long list of identified disadvantaged groups. Pharmaceutical companies have designed special products for out various ailments. Advertisements for fitness clothing, videos and books, equipment and clubs bombard us.

If coming of age can be measured by mention in a throne speech, we came of age this year. Prime Minister Mulroney used the throne speech to announce his government's intention to establish a royal commission about reproductive technologies. Even the Ontario Medical Association, that bastion of medical privilege, has a women's issues committee.

Has this respectability, and the influx of funds that accompanies such initiatives, improved women's health status? Has it increased the control that women exert over their own health? The short answer, of course, is yes and no. Health isn't something that can be sold or pronounced from on high.

Certainly women's overall health status has improved dramatically in keeping with the better health experienced by most North Americans. Most of this improvement results from better nutrition, affordable to most, but not all, Canadians. The US Surgeon General's office estimates that only ten per cent of mortality improvements can be traced to medicine, and nearly all of that ten percent results from antibiotic use.

For women specifically, reduced family size has changed our health and our lives. This was vividly brought home to me at a recent celebration of the twentieth anniversary of the legalization of contraception. Marion Powell, a

well known gynaecologist and birth control activist, remembered a pregnant client she treated in Sudbury. When she asked the woman how long it had been since the beginning of her last period, the woman replied, "When I was fourteen." It was her 28th pregnancy in as many years. The only hospital in Sudbury was Catholic — it refused to approve a sterilization.

The situations and specifics have changed, but if I compare my shopping list of key issues for the 1990s with my list from the early 1970s, there is disappointingly little substantial difference. Will my friends' teenaged daughters and the babysitters of my friends' younger children fight the same struggles about quality of health care that we are now?

Unfortunately, today's teenager isn't likely to be much better informed about her body than my friends were as kids. Very likely, she'll think she's overweight, no matter what her actual weight is. One recent Ottawa-based study found that girls as young as five years of age express dissatisfaction with their bodies and fear of getting fat. If she's lucky, she'll have a class about puberty issues in public school or be taught something about AIDS, but chances are she'll get through school with minimal sex education. She'll learn more about reproductive plumbing and less about sexual pleasuring.

She'll believe all the romantic myths that we do, but these myths will put her in greater jeopardy because she's likely to have more boyfriends. According to the recent Canada Youth & AIDS Study about sexual behaviour, 21 per cent of grade 7 girls have experienced intercourse at least once; by grade 11, 46 per cent have had intercourse. Only a third use birth control at first intercourse and even less use condoms at every act of intercourse.

Young sexually active teenaged women are far more likely to have sex with people they've

just met and to have several partners a year than are older teens or adults. Not surprisingly, rates for chlamydia and gonorrhoea are skyrocketing among teenaged girls. Fifteen to 24 year olds now account for nearly half of all pelvic inflammatory disease hospitalizations in Canada. It's estimated that in the US thousands of teenagers will be infertile from sexually transmitted disease and pelvic inflammatory disease before they reach their twenties.

The good news is that a teenager's chances of becoming pregnant while still a teenager are significantly less than 15 years ago. If she lives in a large, urban centre in Canada and becomes pregnant, she can probably find access to an abortion and good abortion counselling — even so, she, more than an older woman, might delay seeking help until she's far enough into her pregnancy to need a saline abortion. If she lives outside our urban centres, getting any kind of abortion at all may prove exceedingly difficult. If she carries to term and gives birth, she'll probably keep her child. Less than ten per cent of teens nationally gave up for adoption five years ago, when data was last collected. Staff at Jessie's, a Toronto centre for pregnant teenagers and teenaged mothers, estimates that maybe "one half of one per cent of the women who use Jessie's give up for adoption."

Her chances of being sexually threatened or assaulted sometime in her life are one in two. If she's disabled, her chances of being assaulted as a child are exceedingly high. Joanne Doucette, who last year surveyed disabled and non-disabled women about battering and assault experiences, says "abuse is a significant disabler of children and women." In her sample, disabled women were more likely, prior to age 16, to have been battered (67 per cent compared to 34 per cent) and sexually abused (44 per cent, compared to 34 per cent) than non-

disabled women.

The teenager's mental health prognosis isn't great either. Suicide among females aged 10-19 is up 2.5 times from 1965 (this may result in part from improved reporting). Girls are more likely to attempt suicide without success — most often with aspirin or tranquilizer — than their male counterparts. For teenaged women, suicide attempts are most often related to alcohol problems and family or boyfriend conflict. If she is a Native Canadian, she's more likely to attempt suicide or suffer depression, and less likely to receive care from culturally sensitive services.

Lung cancer is fast gaining on breast cancer as the leading cause of death for women. Luckily, the recent indicators that teenaged women were taking up smoking more rapidly than any other age group have changed. A teenaged girl is likely to be exposed to anti-smoking teaching and to refrain from smoking. Alcohol, however, is another matter (it's the most commonly used drug among teens) At least she's far less likely to drink — frequently or heavily — than her male friends. As an adult she may stick with alcohol or move onto other drugs. She's a bit less likely to be over-prescribed tranquilizers as she ages than if she had grown into adulthood in the last decade and a half, but some preliminary data indicates that prescriptions for anti-depressants are filling that gap.

And we already know something about her adult life. It will be a lot like the lives of many *Broadside* readers. She can anticipate a widening wage gap and, especially if she has children, a double day. Child care waiting lists are lengthening and the likelihood of living in poverty at some point in her life is on the rise again, especially if she heads a single-parent family or lives to be elderly, especially if she is a woman of colour or disabled.

• continued page 15

ReproTech: Script for a New Generation

by Somer Brodribb

I really like Sigourney Weaver. I don't understand how she can star in movies like *Ghostbusters* with Dan Ackroyd and Bill Murray. But what really confuses me is why, in *Alien* and *Alien II*, she is so against that creature from outer space who, as far as I can tell, is essentially an egg-layer. Or why she keeps getting into a sperm-like space craft to do battle with this . . . Alien mother. But, some of us may get to play Sigourney Weaver! *Alien III*, The Royal Commission on Reproductive Technologies, is coming soon to a lobby near you!

The Canadian Coalition on New Reproductive Technologies has lobbied successfully for the establishment of a Royal Commission on the New Reproductive Technologies. This has been criticized by numerous feminist and women's health collectives as strategically unsound. But heterosexist, racist and sexist reports such as the Warnock and Waller Commissions of England and Australia may now be repeated in Canada. In March, Barbara McDougall, Minister Responsible for the Status of Women, announced that there would be no Royal Commission, no "travelling road show" for the right wing (*Globe and Mail*, March 15 1989). Then, in April, it seemed McDougall was overruled by Brian Mulroney when a Royal Commission was included in a throne speech with other conservative strategies on unemployment and nuclear power. This budget also made sever cutbacks to "special interest groups" such as women, threatening many feminist groups, although R.E.A.L. Women and the Royal Commission were funded. Funding for *Broadside* would have enhanced women's lives, and certainly not cost the millions that will be used up in a conservative enquiry into new reproductive technologies.

The Coalition itself believes that "the best way to achieve public education, debate and resolution of these issues is through a Royal Commission." The Canadian Coalition fundamentally endorses the principle that liberal or neo-conservative democracy is beneficial to women, if we can only achieve the goals of the bourgeois revolution. Its steering committee members are: Margrit Eichler, Maureen McFeer, Margaret Buist, Barbara Crow, Kit Holmwood, Linda Ivan, Susan Joanis, Sandra Kerr, Shirin Perston, Ceta Ramkhalawansingh and Mary Margaret Steckle. The conservative strategy of the Canadian Coalition for a Royal Commission contrasts with the radical approach of the West German feminist, for example, who have organized conferences attended by thousands of women, opposed the government, criticized the Green Party, and made links with Third World women. The Canadian Coalition's focus on the government as the non-sexist agent of social change is strangely

naive, given the knowledge feminists have of state practices and male scientific enquiry. Given the context of the current abortion struggle, the call for a Royal Commission was positively aberrant, and its success is not something that is likely to benefit women, even though it may mean some supporting research jobs. Montreal feminists once identified as a species "l'homme rose," the "pink man" or Tootsie type, the better-feminist-than-any-woman man. Now we have "la femme bleue," a particularly Canadian version of coalition politics.

It is already argued that only the very open-minded should be appointed to the Royal Commission: people without preconceived prejudices, able to consider all aspects of the issues, able to seek the middle ground. In other words, no strong feminists! Bernard Dickens, consultant to the Ontario Law Reform Commission report on reproductive technology, is fearful that the commission may "become a platform for opposing, set-in-concrete philosophies," as reported by Lynda Hurst in the *Toronto Star* (June 11 1989).

The current bio-ethic hospital committees and the growing number of new-look right-wing experts in these areas are the most likely "middle ground" members of a government enquiry. These issues are important for "society" and shouldn't be prejudiced with hysterical feminist analysis! And even Sigourney wants to appear scientific.

The question of "surrogacy" is likely to be a key issue. Abortion rights will be open to attack: one federal government commission has just produced the report, "Crimes Against the Fetus." The Ontario Law Reform Commission report portrayed the pregnant woman as a freely contracting and entrepreneurial but altruistic individual and opened up the notion of the fetus as the property of another party, which has implications for abortion. What are the consequences for women if current legal controls over female procreativity, such as the abortion laws, extend to "surrogacy" and embryo transfer? Bernard Dickens has admonished women: "Women have come of age. If you enter into a contract, don't be surprised that you will be kept to it" (*Globe and Mail*, April 2 1987). In the liberal imagination, the enforcement of contracts in "surrogacy" arrangements is part of the package deal for reproductive rights. As Phyllis Chesler asks in a *Ms* magazine article (May 1988), "Must women give up the right to keep our children — a right we don't yet have — for the right not to bear children?" Judge Harvey Sorkow's decision on the Baby M case, and Dickens' admonition, obliterate women's reproductive consciousness with an approach that silences women's experiences, desires and relationships to maternity. Their idea of fatherhood contests the experience of motherhood.

All previous technologies have been related to processes of production or destruction. The new reproductive technologies open up for the first time in human history the possibilities of manipulating the process of reproduction, and the characteristics of the human being. For the first time, a technology created in the relations of the marketplace and production is being applied to the relations of reproduction and the material of human reproduction itself. Values, rhythms, goals, ethics and conflicts of the marketplace and the work world inform the science which is now engineering the world of reproduction. The creation of human life and the entire birth process are becoming areas of scientific experiment and commercialization. Patents have already been taken out on methods of human fertilization, and the creation of species of animal life.

Maternity and paternity are being redefined, but not by women. Birth by biomedicine is a technological event, children become commodities and women are environments hostile to the fetus and the law. Women are the alien bodies that must be controlled, probed by Dead Ringers, the on-location-in-Toronto movie where twin actively psychotic infertility specialists play out their narcissism over the bodies of women. The twins in our case are the medical and legal professions, now provided with the operating table of a Royal Commission. The mother is the monster, the alien, the egg-layer who terrifies the masculine imagination. These creations of culture, science and policy are taking place at a point in the feminist movement when we are still fearful that any reference to the female body, especially its reproductive aspects, means our condemnation as "biological determinists," "dangerous essentialists" — veritable dinosaurs (more egg-layers) outstripped by a post modernism so androgynous there are no longer any identities or differences at all. Just male identical twins and narcissistic brotherhood. What would a feminist interest be in working for an "okay" androgynous policy on birth?

Reproductive technology has made maternity the challenge of the century to feminists. Mary O'Brien, whose work makes visible a feminist theory of birth, took up the challenge in *The Politics of Reproduction* (1981). Without a philosophy of birth, we will be constrained to imagine and perform maternal desires, processes, experiences and relationships to children with masculine language and tools. Women are being offered a surrogate reproductive consciousness, a masculine one. Our challenge is to resist childbirth as alienated waged labour, and the exchange of children as contract commodities.

Even Simone de Beauvoir and Shulamith Firestone found maternity monstrous, and promoted androgyny

continued page 14

The Sex Factor in Violence

by Susan G. Cole

For the past ten years, the issue of violence against women has given radical feminism its spark. By naming what was happening to women, by using terms that had not made their way into public consciousness, let alone public policy, feminists tugged away at public awareness until the unspoken came out of its closet. We talked about rape, wife assault and more recently, about incest. As activists and sociologists tried to make sense of the crisis, feminist research, the kind that listened to women, uncovered the truth that sexual abuse was epidemic, not occasional, more normal than marginal.

The violence issues became the bedrock of radical feminism in part because they gave feminists the inspiration to develop a particular method and process. Speak-outs, in which women shared their experiences became an important part of ending the isolation experienced by abuse survivors and of helping to identify the specificity of women's experience of male domination. The abuse crossed class lines, race and ethnic lines in a way that charged a radical analysis of women's oppression.

But the discussions never remained wholly abstract. There was real experience, pain and trauma to confront. To do so, a second wave of feminist institutions was founded (the first wave, I think, ushered in the consciousness-raising groups of the early 70s): shelters and rape crisis centres in which feminist activists and counselors guided survivors through what was usually a hostile legal system and helped them get on with their lives. It is a little known fact that Toronto's Interval House was the world's first women's shelter to open its doors to assaulted women. These centres took on what seemed like the overwhelming task of educating the public and smashing the ancient and very resilient myths about violence against women.

Looking at this history, it is easy to see why feminists have become territorial about the violence issues. While the mainstream media boast of bringing it all out into the open, we know that everything we learned about sexual abuse arose out of someone's pain and our then radical notion that women ought to be believed when they spoke about their experience. Being politically active, respecting women and women-centred perspectives became a more important criteria for workers in shelters and in sexual assault centres than any professional degree tacked onto the end of a woman's name. As we churn into the 1990s, the demands of government funders are beginning to erode these criteria. Professionals, many with no sense of history or respect for feminist values, are beginning to make their move into the now established areas of violence against women. This trend has to be resisted and to that end, territorial attitudes might come in handy.

But territorialism is one thing, complacency is another. We may have staked it out, we may have defined the terms that are now part of the discourse whether inside or outside feminism, but that does not mean that we have to stop moving and thinking. What I mean to say is that the original analyses we forged about the violence issues may have missed some important ambiguities and complexities. Those analyses were important, radical usually, but sometimes only half right and in one or two cases, if not wrong, then at least a bit too simplistic. New information is forcing us to reject some of our more rigid formulations. Accepting the fact that the violence issues need some re-examination is, in my view, central to feminism's future.

When feminists first took on the issue of rape and engaged in public education about the subject, we insisted that rape was an act of violence, not sex. I have heard this intoned with religious conviction almost everywhere I've travelled and spoken. This, I think, attests to the success of our own education initiatives, so we can be a little self-congratulatory about it. But something is not ringing true here.

If rape is about violence and not sex, why don't attackers just hit women? If rape is about violence why do attackers — even if they use coke bottles or broom sticks, instead of their penises — assault women's sexuality? Why, when rapists talk about why they rape, do they say they were out for sex? They don't talk about a deep hatred of women, and if they do, they find the whole subject highly sexually arousing. The fact is that misogyny is very sexy to many men.

I have the feeling that saying rape had nothing to do with sex had everything to do with feminists not wanting to be perceived as anti-sex. It was as if sex had to remain abstract, an ideal, or it couldn't be talked about and analyzed. This insistence on isolating sexuality and imagining it untrammelled by patriarchal forces has baffled me. I've often wondered why, when we understand how

the forces of male domination have appropriated the legal system, the economy, even something as ineffable as spirituality, we would fantasize that they would have left sexuality out? I think it's important for us to stop worrying about being anti-sex. Let's call ourselves sex-critical and explore the ways sexuality and violence have become such close partners.

Pornography is one of the forces in culture that promote this partnership. Rape myths — that is, scenarios that show women getting sexual pleasure from rape — are among the favourite fictions of pornographers. When they are presented to men in clinical settings, they have been shown to have an enormous influence on male attitudes towards sexuality. The more they see the more likely they are to believe that women really enjoy rape and prefer force in sex.

But then again, many feminists have insisted that it is not the sex in pornography that bothers them, it's the violence. Here we see another desperate attempt to wish away the patriarchal grip on sexuality. It's as if just by saying sex is not a problem, everything will be just fine. Setting aside the fact that most "just-sex" pornography is made through the brutal subordination of women (the coercion goes on off camera), violent pornography, the kind in which the brutality is readily apparent, is made to arouse consumers. And the profits from the industry suggest that pornographers know what products will "work." Rather than making the bogus distinction between sex and violence when we discuss pornography, we should take into account the extent to which pornography and its imitators in mass media have helped to institute the collapsing of sex with violence, gendering sexual practice so that it follows the strict scripts for male dominance and female submission.

These issues of sexuality are in the process of transforming our original assumptions about wife assault as well. Our early analyses focused on the economic issues and the way they influence women's inability to leave an assaultive relationship. We said that economic dependence on a violent spouse kept women living in situations that were dangerous; propaganda for the nuclear family kept women chained to the role of homemaker, leaving them ill-equipped to go out into the work force to fend for themselves; expensive housing made moving out impossible.

We included an analysis of male power that explained how men are permitted to beat up their wives. Aggression, we said, was promoted as part of maleness. Wanting to push women around was an accepted aspect of male behaviour. This began to explain why high schoolers living with their parents and not as vulnerable to the economics of the situation were already in violent relationships. Boys were being boys.

So it was with the woman, Francine Hughes, who killed her batterer and, in a complex court case, claimed temporary insanity against a murder charge (her life later was made famous in the book and movie *The Burning Bed*). Hughes's first boyfriend had pushed her around from the start, leading her to believe that violence was part of a relationship's package deal. Pregnancy eventually pushed her into a marriage with her abuser, from whom she could not escape until she set her house on fire while he was in it.

Although Hughes's story became a media sensation, a true tale that became emblematic of the will of assaulted women to survive, her story did not encompass the full range of battery experiences. Francine never loved her husband. Thus her story does not help us resolve the painful question of why women who leave violent spouses return to them, or why a woman would leave one violent spouse only to find another one.

Hedda Nusbaum's story, on the other hand, gets right to this point. Her devotion to her coked-out child-killing husband Joel Steinberg has compelled feminists to reconsider the easy economic answers and to harden the heretofore soft analysis of sex roles. Middle class, with a job in publishing, the Greenwich Village denizen Nusbaum did not fit the mold of the poor, isolated woman, trapped by the ideology that props up the traditional nuclear family. And when she took the stand at Steinberg's trial, she did not break down and recount how she had been victimized and brutalized by a crazed controlling man. She still loved him, period.

It seems that some feminists (I call them liberal wishful thinkers) want victimization to be clear cut; they want bad guys and good women, and when real life shows something else they panic. Instead of trying to understand the phenomena of revictimization and romance under patriarchy, some feminists have just dumped all over Hedda. Susan Brownmiller, an influential American feminist and the author of *Waverly Place*, a fiction-



Toronto Women Take Back the Night

al account of the Nusbaum/Steinberg relationship even gone so far as to say that Nusbaum ought to be in jail for letting her six-year old adopted daughter be raped. This is the ultimate in feminist resistance to the continuity of violence and how women are victimized by it.

Again the resistance is rooted in the refusal to take seriously as a feminist issue. Hedda was locked in classic dominant/submissive pattern. For her, it was not what sex, love and romance was. She construed her husband's jealousy and his desire to keep an iron grip on her life as the clearest evidence that he loved her. Many survivors of similar situations describe the same dynamic. They know that what they are experiencing is violence. They do not like it. But they do not consider it abuse. Instead, they interpret it as love gone wrong. Then, the assaulters feel contrite after the violence and tears, and yes, sexual desire, appear, the belief that is behind it all intensifies.

And nurturance, that essential element of the feminist package, then gets distorted in its own way as women commit themselves to easing what they believe is their spouses' pain. They confuse the controlling behaviours behind raging jealousy as love. They wonder if the violence goes on when they have done everything they can to make it better. And they do respond sexually to being dominated. All of this should not be that surprising given the accepted vocabulary for love and romance. Men conquer, women surrender. The language of equality is profoundly hostile. Men put, pork and women while the word fuck has almost completely lost its sexual resonance, meaning something more like a game instead.

What all this means is that the experiences of abused women are not likely to fit into our convenient packages. Shelter workers have ached while they watched women return to their assaultive partners while less experienced observers lean toward outrage. The latter assume that a heavy dose of women-centred support ought to make a difference, when many assaulted women aren't looking for validation from women. It's acceptance from men that counts to them. And to turn their backs on their abusive partners is to turn their backs on love.

Brownmiller, who should know better, wanted Hedda to hear a few feminist words and convert. She underestimated the ways in which women are forced into values that propel them into abuse situations. The roles foisted onto women and men make violence between them seem almost inevitable. But concrete experience can be a socializing factor as well. Many women have been victimized sexually or physically as children with the result that an abusive spouse will make the universe unfold as it always has. Many women know no other way to be with men.

The startling and frightening data on revictimization has come to light in almost all areas of sexual abuse. Diana Russell's book on incest *The Secret Trauma* contains revelatory material on the phenomenon. "I have found," says Russell, "an extraordinarily strong connection between childhood incest and later experiential

Sexual Terrorism/Male Terrorists

some experience of sexual abuse in childhood?? Or to suggest that as many as one in four women has been physically abused in the context of a heterosexual marital relationship?³ Or to reveal that in Diana Russell's large-scale random survey research, only 7 per cent of women did *not* disclose any experiences of sexual aggression against them — the other 93 per cent of women respondents in the study all reported some kind of sexual abuse or violence.

These statistics give us an important indication of the dimensions and prevalence of rape, sexual assault, child sexual abuse, wife assault, in our society and give us a picture of the total scale of men's sexual abuse of women. But they do not give us the images of what the abuse really looks like, what it really feels like, what it really does to a woman's sense of herself and the world around her. They cannot reveal or convey the impact and trauma of the brutalization — sexual, physical and emotional — which so many women endure at the hands of men.

Statistics do not bring home the immediacy and presence (however invisible it is deliberately kept) of this violence and its impact in all of our lives. They cannot provide us with the images of sexual brutalization, of men's terrifying and utter disregard for the "other." Nor can they force us to feel the often acute intimidation, the fear, the humiliation, the numbness, or to experience the elaborate forms of accommodation, as well as resistance, which women employ to cope with and negotiate the many forms of men's sexual intrusion.

The figures cannot graphically remind us that whenever we are with other women — at work, in our families, walking on the street, or riding a bus — we should think about that fact that nearly all of us are survivors of some kind of sexual abuse. Or that in our daily lives we are often brought into contact with and must relate to men, many of whom are perpetrators of some form of sexual aggression, coercion or violence against women or children. What would it really mean for us if we had to know about and confront all those men with whom we are acquainted who are sexual abusers, rapists, wife beaters or sexual harassers.

Some feminists speak of women living under conditions of sexual terrorism in our society. This way of expressing it perhaps comes closest to capturing women's social situation. Yet the bluntness of these words — *sexual terrorism* — affronts the many levels of denial and distancing which most of us use as a coping strategy in our everyday lives. The expression can appear to be too strong, too strident, too exaggerated to those who work to keep their denial intact. It is a term which blasts through the taken-for-granted and unseen nature of most expressions of sexual coercion, domination and intimidation, and is jarring in its forceful exposure of the sexual abuses and violations of women which remain largely unseen even though they surround all of us.

It is precisely because the problem is one of *men's* sexual violence against women that the issues have been so difficult for feminists to address, both theoretically and strategically. We are, for example, up against what is a concerted effort on the part of mainstream social institutions, and particularly the state, to reframe and obscure the issues in gender-neutral and ideological terms like "family" or "domestic" violence, "spousal assault" and "victims of violence." Feminists, of course, use terms like "violence against women" in order to name both the crime and the gender of those who are routinely victimized. But even feminists are sometimes reluctant to identify and draw attention to the *agents* of the violence, that is, to make quite explicit that what we are really talking about is *men's* violence against women and children.

This reluctance arises because a radically feminist critique extends into the core of gender relations, opens for scrutiny our daily interactions and touches nerves for a great many people. The consciousness-raising process, which remains the vital core of feminism, always demands that we make difficult and significant personal change in both our thinking and practices. The resistance so many people have to radical feminism is in large part because it problematizes the most sacred and secret sphere of our "private" worlds, including the family, the nature of love, the nature of sexual relations, the nature of gender, and sexuality itself.

We need to know much more about the construction, experience and content of sexuality as it is lived and practised in our society. It used to be common for feminists to argue that rape was not about sex, it was about violence, domination and control.⁴ But this analysis attempts to salvage a notion of "healthy" sexuality de-contextualized from gender relations as they are constructed and lived by us. And in severing "the sex" from "the vio-

lence" in rape or child sexual abuse, for example, we miss understanding what it is about the practice of domination, intrusion and control that is sexually exciting for so many men. What passes as "normal" and "good" heterosexual sex itself needs to be scrutinized, as do the myriad other physical and emotional practices which make up heterosexual relations.

A very great deal of what feminists identify as sexual violence, intrusion or coercion is, in fact, the stuff of "everyday" and "normal" heterosexual relations. This means that we cannot possibly hope to challenge and eradicate the massive problem of sexual and physical violence against women without also confronting sexuality, and particularly heterosexuality — both its ideology and its practice. Furthermore, the sense of male entitlement and power expressed in the various forms of men's sexual aggression against women is also expressed in a great many typical interactions between men and women, as these take place in the context of family, in other relationships, in the work place, on the streets and everywhere else. And so addressing the problem and causes of men's violence against women always involves intruding into what is typically viewed as the intensely "personal" stuff of "private" life.

In analyzing and exposing the problem, feminists over the years have done an exceptional job of documenting women's experiences — both of men's violence, control and intrusion in our lives, sexual and otherwise. While this work is far from complete, it is also now imperative that we begin more systematically to examine the other side of the picture, that we move from examining effect to examining cause. That is, we need to shift some of our focus away from simply documenting and emphasizing the damaging and traumatizing effect of violence on women's lives as our primary strategy of raising awareness about the issues, towards insistently raising fundamental and far-reaching questions about what it is about men, masculinity, and the social, economic and political conditions in which we live which creates and allows for the massive scale of men's many forms of sexual abuse of women and children. We need persistency to pose, and begin answering, these questions in our own lives, in our writing, in our activism and in our community education efforts.

Why, in fact, *do* men rape? Why do men physically and sexually assault their wives and girlfriends? What is going on when a man is sexually aroused by (or in spite of) a woman's resistance, fear or ambivalence? How, to take a graphic example, can a two hundred pound, six foot tall adult man force his erect penis into the small mouth of a terrified four-year-old girl? How do we account for a man's ability even to get an erection in the face of a little girl's terror and vulnerability. How can we explain men's enjoyment and sexual titillation at images of women bound, gagged, hung from trees, or raped, as these are presented in pornography and popular culture? Why do men feel so entitled to access to women's bodies? Why do men assume that they are free to pass comment on women's "attractiveness" or sexual desirability to them? What is it about masculine sexuality in our society which so often inextricably fuses men's sexual desire with conquering, aggression, domination, control and violence.

These are not popular questions. In fact, in our radically liberal social climate, it has become entirely taboo to be critical of men at all. It is much easier to address abstractions like "society," "the system," "alienation," or capitalist patriarchy," for example, than it is to raise questions about what men — as individuals, as well as men as a group — actually *do* in everyday life, about how they behave, what they think, how they express male entitlement, take up space, are overbearing in conversations, and generally wield power, dominate and assert their presence in and control over women in their immediate and everyday worlds.

It is vitally important that we re-radicalize feminism, especially because we are struggling in the context of a right wing ideological, political and economic backlash. We cannot allow this new conservatism to modify our agenda, limit out demands or confine the scope of our analysis and critique. Feminists have long recognized the male dominant nature of the institution of marriage, for example, as well as its role in institutionalizing heterosexual relations while subordinating or denying all others, mainly lesbian and gay. Yet in the 1980s there appears to be no serious feminist organizing around the issue of heterosexual marriage. And women who identify themselves as feminists are still getting married (even if they do



Photo by Gail Kenney

by Melanie Randall

As activists in the women's movement have long pointed out, we live in a world where men's acts of violence against women and children, both real and symbolic, are epidemic. In fact, the very scale of the problem continues to stagger the imagination. Even though most feminists acknowledge violence against women to be a problem of sexual oppression, and in spite of what appears to be increasing public awareness, most of us cannot adequately grasp the extent, nature and impact of the fact that virtually every woman in our society has confronted some experience of sexual coercion, harassment, abuse, assault or violence in her lifetime. Moreover, almost all women are aware of living with some kind of fear and caution about this violence.

What does it really mean, for example, to point out that roughly one out of every two women (44 per cent) has been the victim of rape or attempted rape?¹ Or to point out that 54 per cent of all adult women have had

sexual assault." According to Russell's data, 66 per cent of incest victims were the victims of rape or attempted rape by a non-relative at some time in their lives, compared with 38 per cent of women who were raped as adults but never sexually abused as children. Close to three times as many incest victims as women who were not incest victims reported having been raped in marriage. And in anecdotal evidence from sexual assault centres, counsellors report that they have encountered "too many" women who have been raped more than once. (See the accompanying article by Melanie Randall for more of Russell's findings).

Many activists have been uneasy about this data. They want to make sure that people remain aware that any woman, no matter her age or background can be victimized. They are worried that identifying a population that may be more vulnerable misses the extent to which sexual abuse is something that affects the female gender as a whole. But Russell's data takes both things into account. Thirty eight per cent of women, she says, will experience sexual assault. That is a phenomenal number. But Russell also insists that the statistics on revictimization remain too compelling to ignore.

Nevertheless, longtime crisis workers worry that misogynists will interpret these statistics in all the worst ways: any woman who gets it more than once must be stupid; or worse, any woman who gets it more than once must want it. This is, after all, how many woman-haters interpret women's patterns of returning to abusive spouses or of finding new assaultive partners.

This kind of misogynist thinking is real, but it would be a disaster if this kind of bigotry became an excuse for avoiding hard issues, especially when so much work is beginning to surface that deals with victimization in feminist terms. Russell's work has led the way, and a groundbreaking study of teen-aged prostitution by Mimi Silbert and Ayella Pines also sheds some bright light on how revictimization works.

continued page 14

continued page 22

Coming Out About Violence

by Donna MacAuley, Laurie Chesley and Janice Ristock

Feminist research and writings on violence against women has continued to grow over the last two decades, yet very little attention has been given to the problem of violence within lesbian relationships. Recently, however, lesbians have begun to speak out about their experiences within abusive relationships. This is the same process that occurred when abuse in heterosexual relationships began to be explored. From the boldness of a few women speaking out about their own victimization, many more were able to come forward and define problems that were hidden for a long time. So, too, it has been with lesbians. Many lesbians are beginning to divulge some of the grimmer aspects within their relationships. This process of "coming out" about the violence in our relationships brings with it the similar fears we carry when "coming out" as lesbians.

As lesbians we have often been unable to speak about our lives and relationships. We have been silenced by a homophobic society which labels us sick, rejects us and imposes other forms of sanctions against us. Thus as lesbians we often view our relationships ideally — as loving and protective, based in equality, a place where we can find shelter from the homophobic world. In our ideal view, abuse between women simply cannot happen. However comforting our ideal may be, it remains a myth. In fact, many myths operate about violence in lesbian relationships as it begins to be acknowledged.

Myths About Abuse

One of the most prevalent assumptions about violence in lesbian relationships is that it occurs in "butch and femme" relationships. The "butch" is also assumed to be the batterer. Beyond the fact that many lesbians do not assume explicitly butch-femme roles, the roles themselves do not automatically dictate who has more power or the desire to exercise more control in the relationship.

Another myth is the view that abuse between lesbians takes the form of "mutual battering" where both partners contribute equally to the violence. This view stems from the belief that lesbian relationships are equal partnerships. As well, often lesbian partners are equal in physical size, contributing to this myth of mutuality. The inherent problem with this thinking is that fighting back in order to defend oneself may get construed as instigating the abuse. Trying to protect oneself is of little consequence when lesbians have been harmed or violated by their partners.

Another myth is that lesbian abusive relationships occur between apolitical lesbians who are part of the lesbian bar culture. This myth denies the fact that violence in lesbian relationships is not limited to any "types" of

lesbians. Abuse cuts across race, class, age and political orientation.

We are at the beginning stages of understanding violence in lesbian relationships which will serve to dispel these myths.

What is known about Lesbian Battering?

Barbara Hart, in her article "Lesbian Battering: An Examination," defines lesbian battering as a "pattern of violent or coercive behaviours whereby a lesbian seeks to control the thoughts, beliefs or conduct of her intimate partner, or to punish the intimate for resisting the perpetrator's control". Thus many forms of abuse are involved, including physical violence, sexual assault, psychological abuse, various forms of threats, destruction of property, economic control and threats linked to the disclosure of the partner's sexual orientation. The research that has been done is scarce and much remains unpublished. Most of it is based on the experience of lesbians who have self-selected to complete questionnaires, which has provided much valuable information. Of course most of the respondents are women who have experienced violence while the women who perpetrate the abuse have chosen to remain virtually silent.

Studies have attempted to identify the incidence of lesbian battering, but there has been little consistency in these results. In our own research we conducted a survey of women attending a lecture by a well-known lesbian in Toronto. We distributed 550 questionnaires and have received to date 184 responses. Based on our preliminary analysis, 20 per cent of the 184 lesbians who responded perceive themselves as survivors of violence in their lesbian relationships. Thus in our view it is most certainly a prevalent issue facing our community.

Other research, notably by Claire Renzetti, has been concerned with the relationship between the batterer and victim; third party responses to lesbian battering, and documenting the stories of lesbians who have experienced violence. Overall, there have been some important attempts to formulate an understanding of lesbian battering. Yet it is still a "new" area that needs greater investigation for a more comprehensive understanding of this issue.

Debates about this Issue

There are many problems and debates in identifying and responding to violence in lesbian relationships. The issue has been mainly addressed through sharing personal experiences. Yet, as with battering in heterosexual relationships, lesbians often feel that the violence must be their fault and then minimize their experiences. Further, there has been very little acknowledgement and response by the service community. Often there is simply nowhere

for lesbians to go. Shelters for battered women are often heterosexist in that their service mandate is only for women who are victims of male violence. Other shelters accept both the lesbian perpetrators and victims of violence because they are both women. Yet this makes the shelter an unsafe place for the woman who has been victimized.

In grappling with this issue, then, we are furthering our understanding of violence against women in our society and the efforts to eradicate it. Violence between lesbians supports the analysis that misogyny is at the root of violence against and between women. The desire to control and dominate another woman is rooted in the patriarchal model where women have remained oppressed members of society. An added dimension to this analysis is that the hatred of lesbians — that is, homophobia — is what comes between us in our struggles to love as lesbians.

The Work Ahead

Counsellors, shelters, groups, feminist services and friends of victims need to acknowledge violence in lesbian relationships as part of the continuum of violence against women. Survivors of violence have manifested many of the symptoms of "post traumatic stress syndrome" that rape victims and survivors of natural disasters suffer. Comprehensive services must be developed for them. Batterers need to be accountable to the community in the way that batterers in heterosexual relationships should be. Services for those who wish to change need development.

In developing a community response we will provide lesbians with reassurance that:

- no one has the right to batter or abuse you
- you can tell someone what is happening to you
- you are not alone in your experience

One final point concerns the dilemma about making this issue public. As we struggle to change society's image of lesbians as sick individuals, will public exposure about violence in our relationships set us back? Of course if we hide any negative features about our lives we remain tied to the power of patriarchy. Audre Lorde has written about taking the first step for genuine change: "Eventually if we speak the truth to each other, it will become unavoidable to us."

Laurie Chesley, Donna MacAuley, and Janice Ristock initiated groups for survivors of abuse in lesbian relationships at the Toronto Counselling Centre for Lesbians and Gays. They have received funding from the Ontario Women's Directorate to research the area, and have been granted funds from the Toronto Lesbian and Gay Appeal to develop a manual.

• RepröTech, from page 11

instead. Currently, the legal-medical Dead Ringers are trying to create the conditions for androgynous birth: Mr. Mom's repetitive dream of control of nature and creation of woman. The alchemist's dream becomes the fantasy of famous reproductive scientists like Jacques Testart, speaking in an interview in *Types, Paroles d'hommes* (May 1982): "I gave the little eggs names. There was this whole fantasy relationship. In fact, I invested myself in a role that was not . . . paternal. I simply looked on the eggs as potential lovers." Jacques Testart was invited as an expert to the 1987 Quebec Status of Women conference in Montreal, as was Edward Shorter, who has been much criticized for his sexist historical work on women's bodies.

In *Alien*, Sigourney is given all the space technology imaginable to confront the slimy, sticky, devilish, shark-jawed thing that lays eggs and uses humans as raw material for alien reproduction. Yet it is the Dead Ringers who are putting things in other people's bodies, using women as the cocoons for their experiments. Perhaps in her next movie, which I hope comes out before the Royal Commission report does, Sigourney will realize that. I'd like to see them confront Dead Ringers.

Somer Brodribb is a member of FINNRAGE, an international feminist coalition active in reprotch politics, and author of the report which prompted Barbara McDougall's original scepticism about the efficacy of a Royal Commission.

Comments by Somer Brodribb and Louise Vandelac at the March 1987 CRIAW round-table discussion, in *feminist Ethics* vol. 2, no. 2 (Winter 1987-1988), pp. 60-68; Connie Clement and Diana Majury, "Visions for Women's Reproductive Care," *Healthsharing* (Spring, 1988) pp 18-22. Noreen Shanahan, "Reproductive Technology, No Agreement on Strategy," *Kinesis* (May 1988), p. 3, 10 also outlines opposition to the idea of a Royal Commission.

• Sex Factor, from page 13

Of the juvenile prostitutes surveyed by ex-prostitutes at Delancey House in California, 66 per cent reported that they had been victims of incest. Through a lengthy interview process, Pines and Silbert were able to uncover how the experience may have constructed the futures of these young women. Having endured what is usually long term and relentless abuse in their first sexual encounters, these survivors develop a pattern of tolerating abusive relationships, such as with pimps and customers. They have difficulty recognizing dangerous situations when they are in them. Their ability to make sense of what has happened to them makes them retreat into passivity, self-blame and paralysis.

Incest survivors constitute the extreme, though frequent, cases. Child battery, too, can operate as a training ground — as it may have for Hedda Nusbaum, whose past suggests a loveless childhood, a woman who hated herself enough to think she was useless and that Steinberg was a god. Steinberg's were the first long term sexual ministrations she had encountered and she may have assumed that his sexual demands were typical of a loving relationship. The point is that he made her feel sexual, which in the patriarchal system that had defined her desires, spells victim.

Ordeal, Linda (Lovelage) Marchiano's account of her nightmare as a pornography "star", recalls a profoundly depressing scene in which Marchiano watches a tough young woman walk away from Chuck Traynor, the man who kept Marchiano a sexual slave. Marchiano marvels at how the woman could walk away without Traynor dragging her back. Marchiano wonders why she didn't follow. The fact is that she couldn't. Traynor had known she wouldn't from the start.

Victimizers know how to find these kind of women. Traynor could tell from the moment he first met Marchiano, laid up after a car accident that he was going to be able to control her. Wife beaters know which women

suffer more from immobility and low self-esteem. They can tell by how they carry themselves, how they walk, how they lower their eyes, sometimes even from their tone of voice. They know who will walk out the door at the first sign of violence and who will be too paralyzed.

They know because many of them were themselves victims as kids. Yes, boys are victimized too. But they don't get revictimized, they become victimizers instead (some might say this is also revictimization, but I don't think it's useful to say so in a way that makes it seem that perpetrating and being victimized are the same thing — it's something like saying men are oppressed too). The fact that abusers have often experienced their sexual initiation as sexual abuse victims has often been overlooked.

Only during childhood do males experience the same sexual vulnerability as females. The fact that girl victims become revictimized while boys grow to victimize is strong testimony to the influence of the ideology of male dominance and female submission. It seems to transform the lived meaning of the same experience. Coupled with this ideology, early victimization sets up expectations of more violence and abuse that create experience in a way that is not likely to be vulnerable to a quick fix. They certainly will not be undermined by sermonizing a la Susan Brownmiller or even by the caring and commitment these women may encounter in a visit to the most sensitized of women's shelters.

This does not mean that the work going on in shelters and rape crises centres isn't essential to women's survival. It only ought to keep us aware that we have to resist simple formulations and put experience before theories, no matter how useful these theories may have been in the past. ■

Susan G. Cole is the author of *Pornography and the Sex Crisis* (Amanita, 1989) and a co-founder of *Broadside*.

• Sex Ed, from page 10

The policy that was eventually approved by the Toronto Board in April 1986 focused on the areas of curriculum and professional development, and included the following recommendations: that "discrimination, harassment and violence will not be tolerated" in school environments; that steps will be taken, in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, to develop programs to "sensitize students to the basic human rights of all students and staff of the Board, including those who are homosexual"; and that inservice training programs be provided for all teachers (not just physical education teachers). A motion to include sexual orientation in Board policy as a prohibited ground for discrimination was defeated.

The debate was, of course, heated, and some trustees' grasp of the issue appears to have been tenuous. Ward 1 trustee Alex Chumak proposed a motion that the Board prepare "appropriate guidelines to deal with the lifestyles (sic) of young people." In the preamble, he lumped together homosexuality, teenage prostitution and the "single unwed mother" as examples of the "unfortunate" lifestyles that young people need to be warned about.

At the time of the Board's policy changes, Central Toronto Youth Services had been operating its Sexual Orientation and Youth Program for three years. Their work included training workshops for Children's Aid personnel and social workers, and in 1986 they began training board of education personnel. Two staff members, Marg Schneider and Bob Tremble, had been holding workshops for physical education teachers, board social workers and board psychologists. These workshops have continued after the 1986 board decision; five sessions were held, but attendance was generally low. As Olivia Chow pointed out, it had seemed sufficient to specify *all* teachers in the motion concerning inservice training. Hindsight shows that it might have been wiser to make such training *mandatory* for all teachers.

The Board committee formed in 1986 had the task of developing a curriculum unit on sexual orientation; they were to deal with questions of content and implementation, including age-appropriate guidelines, which have now been completed. An advisory committee was also formed, comprising board staff and representatives from the Toronto Counselling Centre for

Lesbians and Gays and Central Toronto Youth Services. One step towards implementing the policy was the recent appointment of a sexuality counsellor to deal with issues ranging from child sexual abuse to homosexuality. While it is certainly a progressive move to provide gay-positive counselling for Toronto Board students, this one man alone can hardly be expected to be an expert on every sexuality issue, gay and straight, let alone on lesbian issues.

With the new policy in Toronto schools, it is possible that lesbian and gay speakers will receive a warmer welcome than they have in the past. However, there are problems with the idea that the occasional guest speaker can serve as a role model for students. Sexual identity is the speaker's salient feature; students see a lesbian, not a journalist, or a mother, or an accountant. One is reminded of a story about a six-year-old who asked his elderly grandmother what gay people did. "Well, they buy groceries..." she began, and continued in that vein, concluding, "and they love someone who is the same sex."

The Ottawa-Hull brief addresses this problem by proposing that speakers be invited with a "dual intention": a gay politician would discuss human rights issues, or a lesbian doctor would discuss lesbian health issues, so that students would see a multi-dimensional person. But the most effective role models are teachers themselves. Students need to see openly gay and lesbian teachers doing what teachers routinely do: marking homework, teaching violin, coaching softball, taking the class to a play. And of course it is virtually impossible in the current climate for any teacher to do so safely and comfortably.

We have seen the barriers and risks to lesbian and gay teachers in dealing with homophobia. Therefore there is an urgent need to educate straight teachers in appropriate ways of confronting homophobic name-calling, at least as a first step in the long process of developing a gay- and lesbian-positive climate in the schools.

Teachers repeatedly state that many young children don't know the meanings of the words they use as insults: gay, queer, lezzie, fag, homo. They are simply looking for an insulting name, and words like "gay" are seen as synonymous with "stupid". But such name-calling is certainly not harmless and will not disappear by itself.

This in an appropriate time to educate young children about the potential damage caused by name-calling. This kind of lesson necessarily involves defining the words, and this is where teachers, regardless of sexual orientation, may run into those ubiquitous "community standards" that dictate what is acceptable moral behaviour on the part of the teacher.

Educators in the area of morals and values have developed guidelines for classroom discussion of sexist, racist or homophobic slurs, along with the slang words for human anatomy that are also used as insults. Such words have been termed "power words." In one proposed lesson plan, the teacher encourages the class to develop a list of these words, then the children close their eyes and pretend they are members of that group while the teacher shouts out the pejorative name. First the children write down how they felt as target of the name-calling, then as the person doing the name-calling. Finally the words are defined and there is a general discussion of the exercise. Teachers have reported heightened understanding of homophobia and racism even among elementary school children.

One Toronto teacher who used these methods with grade 5 children to raise their awareness of the harm caused by sexist, racist and homophobic name-calling found herself suspended without pay for one day. She allegedly failed to uphold "the principles of Judeo-Christian morality" held by members of the school community by permitting children to write these words in their notebooks. As she explained, she hesitated when the children asked whether they should copy the words from the blackboard into their books, but she believed that to say "No" at this crucial point would weaken the impact of the lesson.

It appears from the subsequent furor that the hatred expressed in the children's name-calling was closer to this North Toronto community's standards of acceptability than the tolerance of difference that this teacher was promoting. The incident vividly illustrates the need for education policies, programs and resources that promote tolerance and understanding of difference. The Toronto Board may be a leader in this area, but it still has a long way to go. ■

This research was made possible by a grant from the Lesbian and Gay Community Appeal of Toronto.

Connie Clement continued

One distressing note that doesn't show up in available data is that today's teenager isn't likely to join Canada's feminist health movement while she's young. She's likely to have an after-school job. Social change goals rank far below career and financial goals among surveyors of today's college students. In fact, she may believe that feminism is old hat, believing that women are no longer discriminated against. It may take her well into her adulthood to change her mind.

Canada's women's health movement has traditionally been made up of small collectives working with women locally. The Vancouver Women's Health Collective, the Women's Health Education Network in Nova Scotia, the Immigrant Women's Health Centre in Toronto, Centre de santé des femmes in Montreal and the nationally-oriented *Healthsharing magazine* are examples of very different feminist health organizations. Our movement has been several movements, all linked by common health concerns — a reproductive movement, with a large emphasis on the abortion struggle, a mental health movement, anti-violence groups and the feminist health aspects of growing movements of disabled women, visible minority women, welfare activists and older women.

As *Broadside* completes 10 years of publishing and we move out of the 1980s, the struggle ahead of us in the 1990s remains. The abortion issue is one of many where major successes have been won, but where no end of the road is yet in sight. New coalitions must be formed; pan-Canadian as well as local vision and action must be taken. Our society's world view of health must move to a practice which encompasses well being in its broadest sense and recognizes that health cannot be bought and is too valuable to be wasted. Perhaps then the health problems confronting our teenaged women will diminish. More likely, new issues will keep replacing old ones.

Connie Clement is currently the family planning program coordinator for the City of Toronto, Department of Public Health. She was a co-founder of Women Health-sharing/Healthsharing Magazine and of the second Committee for a Canadian Women's Health Network.

• NAC, from page 6

to economic and political suicide for Canada, it appeared that the issue would be dropped. However, very strong pressure from international business interests was successful in gaining Tory support for pursuing this initiative.

NAC had gained considerable attention for its economic positions by the time the Macdonald Report was published, primarily through the economic statement which was prepared by the NAC executive and read by its President at the Economic Summit sponsored by the government in early 1985. It was a hard-hitting analysis which was widely broadcast. Earlier efforts of NAC during the election of 1984 to obtain a debate between the contestants for Prime Minister was successful and added to the public credibility of the organization. Also, NAC had received considerable attention for its criticism of federal budgets. Altogether, the organization had established itself as credible on economic issues with other popular sector groups.

The NAC response to the Macdonald Report was swift. In its publication "The Macdonald Report and its Implications for Women" it strongly criticized the recommendations to enter a free trade agreement with the US and recommendations related to changes in social programs, arguing that women would be most adversely affected by these changes. This launched a major campaign against the free trade agreement which was taken up by women's groups across the country. Free trade was perceived as a major policy shift on the part of the Canadian government to rely much more strongly on international market forces to shape the economic and political direction of the country. It was viewed as being closely related to other government initiatives to privatize crown corporations and aspects of social services and to deregulate transportation and communication systems.

Throughout the period from 1985 to 1988, NAC and other women's groups researched the impact these initiatives would have on women and pursued extensive public education campaigns to get this information to women throughout the country. The first issue to receive attention concerned the attempts by

the government to deregulate the telecommunications industry, an attempt which was successfully thwarted for a time. Then the issue of privatization grabbed public attention as the discussion over the privatization of Air Canada and Canada Post raged. But as the negotiations with the US began on a free trade agreement, this issue became paramount.

Free Trade was an issue which could not be ignored by the women's movement because it was so threatening to everything we had worked for in the past. One of the major contributions which the women's movement made to an understanding of the implications of this initiative was not simply what it would mean for women (although this was certainly important), but what it would mean for the service sectors altogether. The effect on services had simply not been a feature in the discussion on free trade until the feminist analysis introduced it. Actually, many issues in the free trade debate were ignored until women took up this issue: the impact on militarization; the impact on social services; the impact on manufacturing industries where women worked; the impact on consumers.

As women's groups became more familiar with trade issues they quickly applied this knowledge to their own area of expertise. Nurses, teachers, public health workers, social workers, farmers, environmentalists, immigrant women's groups, child care advocates, and women in the peace movement analyzed the impact of free trade in these areas.

Women also organized for action. They published pamphlets, presented briefs to provincial, local, and the federal governments. They organized rallies, conferences, and demonstrations. They wrote articles for local and national newspapers and were frequently on the airwaves condemning the move toward free trade. They became conversant with obscure international trade law and its language: words like "countervail duty" became a normal part of their language. They also participated in coalitions with other groups to an extent which was unprecedented.

NAC was instrumental in organizing many of these coalitions on the national and provin-

cial level. The first coalition of over 30 groups was convened in Toronto by NAC in November 1985 and NAC was a prominent participant in the national coalition, the Pro-Canada Network, which began in March 1987. While the coalition work was not without difficulties, particularly in the early stages when male-oriented groups attempted to dominate the coalitions, feminist assertiveness prevailed and in most (although not all) cases the coalitions functioned well.

One of the most interesting documents to come out of this whole period of action was the declaration on social and economic policy directions for Canada, "A Time for Social Solidarity". This was a statement produced jointly by NAC, the Canadian Labour Congress, the Confederation of Canadian Unions, the Confederation des syndicats nationaux, the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, and the United Church of Canada, the first time any such joint statement had been attempted. It began a process of analyzing the causes of the present socio-economic crisis and identifying alternative economic and social policy directions.

While initially the government ignored the whole issue of women and free trade, ultimately it became alarmed by the polls which showed that women's opposition to the agreement was enormous and had grown steadily. The "gender gap" on free trade was not a minor issue. By the time of the 1988 election, the government issued pamphlets explaining why free trade would be good for women and Barbara McDougall, the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women, went to the airwaves with the same message. Economists working for the government went to great lengths in public debates to explain why the women's movement was very narrow in its understanding of economic issues and that they knew what was really good for us. Women were not convinced.

The 1988 election was fought on the free trade issue and the anti-free trade forces lost. There were many reasons why we lost, not least of which was the massive spending on the part of business to promote free trade during the last two weeks of the election. The implica-

tions of free trade began to be felt immediately as we saw a series of plant closures, mergers, and the granting of bank status to American Express. But Finance Minister Michael Wilson's first free trade budget last April is probably the most important indication of changes in the economic and social systems in Canada. Almost all government cutbacks and regressive initiatives have now been presented as a necessity in light of our need to make Canadian business competitive in international markets. The budget is an attack on the universality of social programs, the cultural community, regional development programs, public ownership, unemployment insurance, foreign aid, and advocacy groups (including NAC, which is having its funding cut by 50% over the next three years).

However, there have been positive results from the women's movement's attempt to combat macho-economics. We did not win, but we scared them. Probably the most flattering evidence of this has been the drastic reduction in our funding. We are becoming effective and are a serious threat to the way government and business want to run this country. We gained strength through this time by expanding our collective analytical abilities to encompass areas usually the preserve of specialized economists.

The efforts of the women's movement in general, and NAC in particular, to influence the Canadian economy have raised issues in a new way. But what is especially clear is that the women's movement will have to continue to develop its analysis and action of broad economic issues. We will continue to develop our understanding of why one of the intrinsically richest nations in the world has such deep-seated structural problems and find ways in which these can be solved.

*Marjorie Cohen is a former vice-president of NAC, and the author of *Free Trade and the Future of Women's Work*. This article is based on a paper presented at the "Contemporary Women's Movement in Canada and the US" conference at the University of Western Ontario in May 1989.*

Feminist Film:

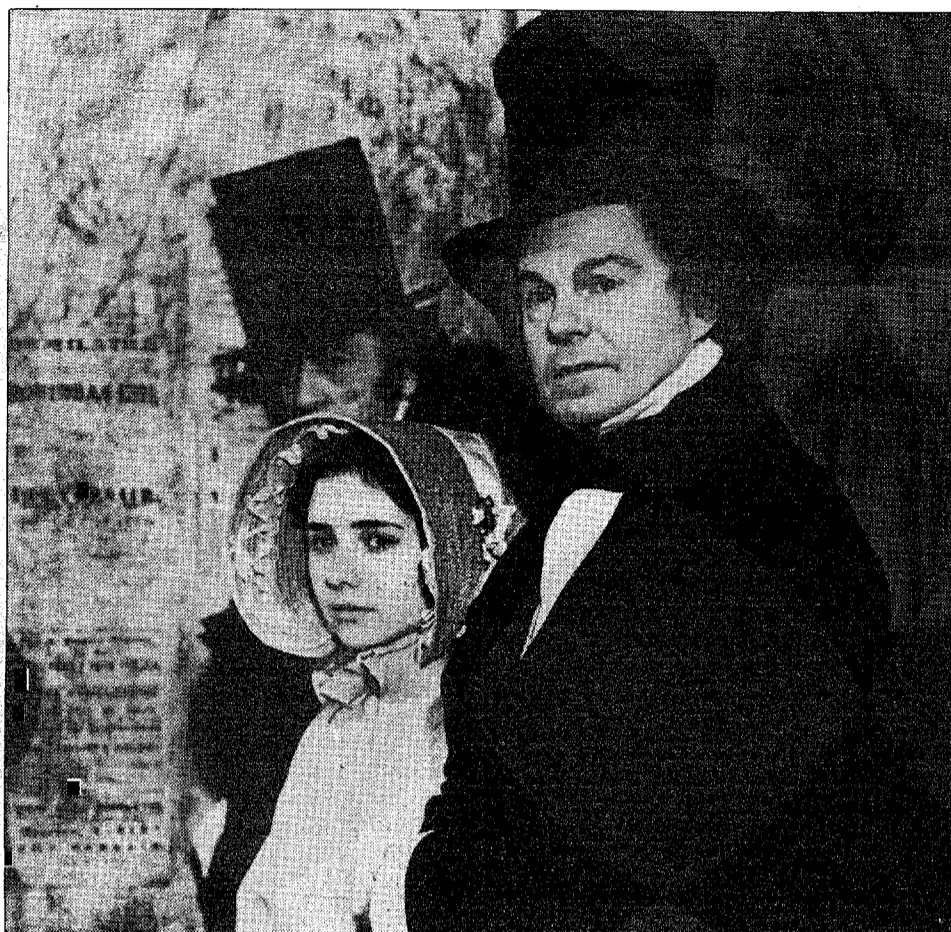
What Do Women Want?

by Joyce Mason

In preparation for this piece, *Broadside's* final look at film, I reviewed its reviews of the past ten years. I was looking for a reflection of changes I feel have taken place over the ten years, in filmmaking and in critical approaches. I know that I was looking for changes, because, as I read, I had the impression of a shift over the years from critiques of mainstream films made by men, to reviews of films — often more marginal, in the commercial sense — made by women. And yet, when reviewing notations made while sifting through those newsprint pages, I found that no such pattern emerged.

A fantasy. Like all fantasies, it reveals a desire. I have a growing sense of diversity in films by women. Twenty, fifteen, ten years ago, there were not so many. My impression that works by women filmmakers are more frequent may reflect a marginal increase in the exceptions. I do not have access to (or the time to formulate) the statistical data that would prove or disprove the impression or provide a base for an analysis of its relationship to reality.

I also like to think that new films will be more challenging, engaging, delightful; more intellectually rigorous; more culturally, socially and politically nuanced. But, if subjected to a categorized survey of films I've seen over the past twenty years, I might find a similar discrepancy concerning my impression on this matter of quality, as pertains to my above impression regarding quantity.

Sarah Pickering and Derek Jacobi: Two points of view in *Little Dorrit*.

What becomes clear is that I *want* more and fresh films by women, and this metaphor of increase may hold its most direct parallel in my increasing expectations, in my willingness to believe increase possible and to demand it.

I grow more demanding.

Each year I do see new films by women. Titles accumulate beside the names of directors we have seen before; new names are added to the list. And although she remains the exception, the woman director is no longer peculiar. Phenomenal, now, only in the sense that an electrical storm may be: not a daily occurrence, exciting, and (in our region of the globe) to be expected. My impression is cumulative: an impression of expansion and of expanded possibilities.

All along, *Broadside* has provided a combination of critiques (positive, disapproving, and mixed) of the mainstream, celebrations of the margins and assessments of the blending of movement issues and their formal presentation.

I am struck by the peculiarity of our readings of films. A reviewer can champion a film, the description of which makes *me* suspicious that I will not like it, or dislike another and dismiss it, while intriguing me with some peculiarity in the plotline. We are aware of how this works in relation to mainstream critics. It is, for this reason, enlightening to recognize its occurrence within the lines of reviews that one expects to be written from a common ground. It raises the questions of values and of desires. Why we go to movies. Our reasons are various. And reading reviews, like going to the films, is a way of glimpsing another perspective.

In serious feminist writing about film, approaches have shifted in the years since *Broadside* began, increasingly drawing from structural, psychoanalytic (Freudian), and political theorizing. For me, it was during the political struggles around censorship and arguments regarding representation that many of the distinctions first began to come into focus. It was then that I first heard the term "cultural feminist" applied to those who took positions that feminists I knew (most of whom were and are cultural producers) found repellent or misguided. I was informed that "cultural feminists" were those who analyzed culture as having particular casual and valorizing effects within society and who were, therefore, prescribing the censorship of negative, abusive images of women. The term "cultural feminist" is now as ubiquitous as it is confusing, misapplied and misunderstood. The arguments around representation, even among so-called "cultural feminists," were of course more varied and nuanced than most labels indicate. *Broadside* participated in and reflected these shifts.

In early *Broadside* articles, Barbara Halpern Martineau's writing often had a desiring and personal tone, as one might expect from one who took up the medium herself. As often as Martineau might review a particular film, she would muse on the films' effects, her search for the films she would want for her son, her own search for filmic heroes, or on the roles of documentary, versus fiction, in challenging of stereotypes.

A particular theme was a search for heroines, the breaking of stereotypes and a mistrust of what she referred to as the "extraordinary woman portrait" genre of documentary filmmaking. Recently, after hours of sifting through back issues and perusing miscellaneous videotapes, I tuned into CITY-TV half-way through a broadcast of *Supergirl*. The following night they showed *Silkwood*. I wanted to track Barbara down and say: Here it is. Decent (even good), fantastic, and solid, mainstream heroes on TV. What do you think? What problems do these address? What solutions do they offer? Do they satisfy? Do they make a difference?

Criticism that centres on the desire for heroes, role models, or "positive images of women" dominated early and popular writing about women and film. It remains a strong aspect of film criticism. It focuses mainly on the way in which women were represented in film. It expresses outrage and frustration at the limitations of women's roles as presented to us

What's to See? Where to Look

Currently among the first-run films of Toronto, there is barely a woman director in sight. Among the first-run male directors' offerings are a few that provide reasonably honest or eccentric renderings of the texture of lives: *Accidental Tourist*, *Little Vera*; those with titles that promise transgression of the bounds of "redeeming social or artistic value": *Honey I Shrank the Kids and Earth Girls are Easy*; the art (read European or Australian) films: *Femmes de Personne* and *Warm Nights on a Slow Moving Train*; and the ubiquitous Hollywood remakes, serials, star vehicles, and "bullets and buddies" films. (Cameron Bailey, as far as I know, coined this term in *NOW* magazine, to categorize the film *Renegades*.)

But in the mini German film festival at the Carlton Theatre in Toronto, two of the three directors are women and the third has adopted a woman's name. All three films are distributed by Cinephile, which has packaged the "festival". These films no doubt qualify as first-run, except that their lower price tag (\$5) and "German New Wave Festival" grouping casts them in the light of specialty programs. It may be an indication of continued programming possibilities. Certainly Cinephile is taking on some of Europe's significant and esoteric women directors. For example, they will be distributing Chantal Akerman's new film, *Histories d'Amerique*.

The three films in this series reflect the twin German New Wave stereotypes of filmic style: angst and "perversity," though not necessarily uniformly or simultaneously. Discomfort, it was once proposed to me, may be our only leverage for change. But it alone cannot effect change. There are other solutions to discomfort: anaesthesia, distraction, denial among them. Unfortunately, these seem the ones offered, lauded in the German films under scrutiny here. I often wonder what it is that appeals about angst and alienation flicks. With *Virgin Machine* (Monika Treut) and *Anita: Dances of Vice* (Rosa Von Praunheim, a man) the appeal is in part, I think, the pleasure of transgression: bad girls break out! Uwe Schrader, on the other hand, plays a flip side to Von

Praunheim's bad-girl movie, showing us that a woman director can make what I had thought of, until now, as the European-male-angst movie.

At the Bloor Cinema, and later the same week at the Revue, Christine Edzard's *Little Dorrit, Parts I and II* was being screened. Here is a film offering a relentlessly clear view of the position of hero and heroine in British cultural tradition; first from the point of view of the hero and then, the heroine (Miss Dorrit). Part II, from Miss Dorrit's point of view, seems curiously flat and disappointing in its narrative, even though we are held fast throughout by our hopes for its resolution. But when we note the circumscribed and passive role that her personality and circumstances would necessitate, the disengaging narrative is hardly curious. Things happen to her and around her, but (until the very end) she expresses no wish for herself. As mentioned in the main article of this feature, far from providing the disruption of stereotypes or the depiction of alternatives to traditional "femininity," *Little Dorrit* presents us with its soothing, seductive limitations and its sweet, frightening logic.

And at the newly opened Euclid Theatre in Toronto a slew of films by women directors were on screen in mixed programs of shorts. It seems likely that the Euclid will provide a forum of some commitment to programming films by women — of documentary, experimental and perhaps even the occasional feature. Their community-based mandate and availability for rental should also make it a likely venue for sponsored events within the women's and progressive communities.

Women and Filmmaking in Canada: See the Movies, Then Read the Book

By 1983 the frustration of covering the Festival of Festivals, where representation of women directors is strong (if not equal), was due to *too much* to see. There, once a year, *Broadside* film reviewer Donna Gollan, Susan Cole and I have all expressed frustration at choosing between competing women's films — the festival provides the rare intense ground for an abundance of promise, while its dearth during the balance of the year stretches forward in our imaginations.

This year in addition to features by Agnes Varda, Chantal Akerman, Anne Wheeler, Ulrike Ottinger, Claire Denis and other women as yet to be announced, the Toronto Film Festival will present a retrospective program of films, entitled "Surfacing: Canadian Women's Cinema." This will provide a unique opportunity for a glimpse at the history and range of work produced by women in this country. The program, selected by Kay Armatage, will include approximately 20 programming slots covering a range of filmmaking genres, subjects and years. Programs will include women film pioneers (Nell Shipman and Donna King Conway, from the twenties) and significant features (dramatic and documentary) including: *Femme de L'Hotel*, *P4W*, *La Vie Revée*, *La Cuisine Rouge*, *Handmaidens of God*, *Mourir à Tue Tête*, *Sonatine*. Other program slots will feature experimental, animated and independent documentary films; works from Studio D and by filmmakers such as Jane Marsh Beveridge, Alanis Obomsawin, Gail Singer and Beryl Fox. The program has, of course, not been finalized at the time of this writing, but I invite *Broadside's* readers to plan ahead and to take advantage of this unique opportunity to see an introductory survey of our indigenous filmmaking.

Linked to this film program by a common genesis is a book of critical and historical essays currently in development that I am editing, which will include selected filmographies and other information listings. The book will take another year to complete, but the program of films is around the corner, in September 1989. Both the book and the "Surfacing" program pay tribute to the considerable body of work by and contributions of Canadian women filmmakers. Writers contributing articles to the book include Kay Armatage, Kass Banning, Colette Beauchamp, Varda Burstyn, Louise Carrière, Josette Déleas-Matthews, Brigitte Fillion, Brenda Longfellow, Mary Jane Miller, Connie Tadros, Denise Therrien, Dot Tuer and Zainub Verjee. — J. M.

If you would like to be informed of the publication's release please send your name and address to: "Contemporary Filmmaking by Women in Canada," 984 Queen St. West, 2nd floor, Toronto, Canada M6J 1H1.



Virgin Machine

in the culture. The roles, their stereotyped and clichéd qualities, are exposed as reflections of male fantasies about women (or "male-identified" fantasies). Directors are called upon to right the balance by: (1) showing how women really are; and (2) providing models for how we might take (exert) power. The twin mandate provides both a noble purpose for the film and the inevitable terms of its critique. Films are celebrated and denigrated in terms of their ability to achieve the proper balance between these two goals; in the event that they achieve a balance at all (depicting the ordinary, oppressed, woman who succeeds in the framework of the film in taking some control of her life); and even when the film takes these goals as its own, it may still be dismissed as trivializing the impediments to power in the lives of ordinary women, of providing simplistic solutions, neat resolutions and so on. The twin mandate is a double-edged sword.

Here — and I would argue, as always — the critique is based in the desires of the viewer and, by extension, the ability of the film to satisfy these desires and expectations. Its effects are prescriptive. The critique reflects our demands that the filmmaker reflect our desires — the ways in which we wish to see ourselves, our fantasies of how we might be, our metaphorical solutions to the dilemmas of life.

In thinking of this, I am struck by the reduction and limitation that such a critical project, if successful, would achieve. For although, on the one hand, we argue for direct representations by women in our culture and for the opportunity to present and explore our own stories, our critiques of films by women remain tied to personal desires. Our demands are adamant and well-argued; we will root them in the rhetoric (metaphors) of a shared politic or goal. If the filmmaker is a woman, the critique may be neither more nor less severe than if she were a man; but the inflection of betrayal will more likely be evident.

What comes to mind is the idea of the "phallic mother." The mother — all-powerful and benign — who, we fantasize, will know, reflect and fulfill our desires perfectly. We look to our filmmakers to be this, to carry us into and suspend us in a world of playful, engaged, delightful, exciting, blissful unity — a unity of fantasies. Our disappointment when the illusion drops, when discomfort (those moments in a film when we say, "Oh, no. Why did she have to do that?") intervenes, is fundamental. Also linked to this, in my mind, is the old adage about critics being frustrated artists. For, if in the infantile fantasy the mother is an extension of the self, the film experience provides for the identification with the artist (mother). It also predicts that disappointments in the experience offered by the artist will be double disappointments: disillusionment regarding her supposed perfection; and disappointment (sometimes despair) at the resulting circumscribed reality.

If she is a woman (or another with whom we share some cause/position), we seldom simply argue or disagree; we repudiate. Thus, ironically, we contribute (admittedly from another direction) to the prescriptive cycle so easily recognized in our analyses of male demands of women: overvalorization, desire to see oneself reflected in grand proportions and denigration.

In noting this apparent contradiction in the feminist critical project, I am pointing to something in the nature of all criticism, its prescriptive imperatives, and what this tells us of why we watch movies and why we talk-write-read about them. What do we want from the movies? The standard responses: entertainment, insight, a reflection of our values. These are standard because they are basic, fundamental. But there are other, more particular, demands that we can and do make of films: a different perspective, insights, presentation of possible meaning, articulation of values or purpose capable of informing action. These are ideological desires. It is the desire for meaning. Whether a consolation for the feeling of isolation or a reaffirmation of the possibility of activity, purpose and community, we want meaning. We want to believe that our activity can have results, and we want films to propose possibilities of action and of outcome.

Since feminism is about change, imagination is essential to it. Film for most in our culture remains a strong metaphor for the imagination. But the relationship between reality, its transformation and imagination is more complex than either "cultural feminists," focusing primarily on characterization or stereotypes, or New Age visualisation techniques would have us believe. Since feminism is also about justice, it requires an examination of values; since it is personal/political, it requires honesty, self-knowledge, engagement and compassion; since it is social, it requires an articulation of difference, definition of position and negotiation of the terms of power in diversity.

In much critical writing from the perspective of those self-identified as disempowered, denigrated or silenced — nationalists within the colonized context, women within patriarchy, Blacks, gays, Palestinians, Jews, Asians, lesbians, the working class and "others" within a wasp, heterosexist, racist, middle-class-dominated cultures — the primary cultural demand is for direct representation. A chance to produce images of oneself. Mention is frequently made of the need to see oneself reflected. In response, I have come to think of it as the "mirror phase" of cultural life. I note that the popular notion of narcissism as specific to the narcissist — that is, self-centred, isolated, immature — will cause many readers to leap forward to defend against my appellation as insult.

But, I am quite aware of the need for mirrors and for narcissism. I believe them both to be fundamental. I think that the defensiveness arises partly out of the inadequacy of the term "phase," and more specifically in our understanding of the "narcissistic phase" as an infantile one and "phases" as something we are intended to outgrow. (As in "It's just a phase.") Freud's schema of various phases in the formation of personality/sexuality/identity are often interpreted as stages, steps along the ladder to maturity, normalcy, adjustment, whatever. In this way, deviations are perceived as cases of "arrested" development or as "regressions;" that is, as not good. The degree to which Freud's writings have contributed to this prescriptive reading of phases is arguable (and has been well argued — in Freud's defence — in Juliet Mitchell's *Psychoanalysis and Feminism*).



Anne Wheeler's *Bye Bye Blues*



Chantal Akerman's *Histoires d'Amerique*

I subscribe to an understanding of this and other phases as overlapping, continuative bases for our lives and our desires. Certainly, the concept of mirroring is a persistent and basic metaphor of our cultural life. And though

our critical perceptions and interests may widen to include (even to demand) other and varied representations, the process of identification, our enjoyment of fantasies of supernatural powers (witches, goddesses, Supergirl), our desire for "positive role models" will persist.

And here is the strength and the hope of a cinema by women, that it pursue the question of "What do women want?" Not as defence against the ignobility of the question, but as foray into the discovery of the roots of our desires and the multiplicity of their derivatives. My wish here is not to prescribe a particular hierarchy of styles of feminist filmmaking or of feminist film criticism, but to point to the necessity of its variety. As an example, I would refer to *Little Dorrit*, whose heroine — meek, submissive, deferential and loyal — is a model which few feminists could take to heart. Far from providing the disruption of stereotype or the depiction of alternatives to traditional "femininity," this film presents us with its soothing, seductive limitations and its sweet, frightening logic. Certainly, the renunciation of stereotypes will blind us to possibly new insights available from their re-presentation.

I am, at times, an optimist. I see hope in the smallest of signs of shifts in the mainstream. I recognize that I am also a populist. I've rarely subscribed to notions that the general film-going public is as gullible or as unsophisticated about standard and stereotyped representations, as many "progressive" critics fear. And yet, I am nit-picky-particular about the nuances and unexamined assumptions of "progressive" and women filmmakers.

Of course, it has never been within the ability of any medium (print reviews included) to reverse our likes and dislikes so much as it is to reaffirm them, examine them and, occasionally, to disrupt them — and then, only when we have been made ripe for the rupture for reasons of our own. The possibility of fresh or new perceptions is in the willingness — or perhaps, the need — of the perceiver to see.

Joyce Mason is a freelance writer and editor. Portions of this article are from an essay-in-progress she is writing for a book about filmmaking by women in Canada. See accompanying box.

From the National Film Board of Canada

WORTH EVERY MINUTE



A half-hour documentary about Pat Schulz, a working class feminist committed to women's struggles for

- unionization
- equal pay
- child care

Produced by the National Film Board of Canada, Studio D
Directed by
Catherine Macleod
Canadian Auto Workers
Lorraine Segato
The Parachute Club



HOW TO OBTAIN THIS NFB VIDEO AND FILM

Rental
Video: \$2/day
Film: \$4 for 5 days, excluding time in transit
Available in person or by mail from all NFB offices in Canada. Call, phone or write to reserve your copy of *Worth Every Minute* (C 0187 110)

Purchase
I wish to buy *Worth Every Minute* (C 0187 110)

	NEW LOW PRICES	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1/2" VHS	\$89.00*	\$39.95*
<input type="checkbox"/> 1/2" Beta	\$89.00*	\$39.95*
<input type="checkbox"/> 3/4" U-Matic	\$122.00	\$100.00
<input type="checkbox"/> 16 mm	\$599.00	\$530.00

Add 12% Fed. Sales Tax if applicable
Add Prov. Sales Tax
Tax exempt organizations, please include exemption number: _____

Total _____

My purchase order/check is enclosed (payable to the Receiver General for Canada)

Bill me

Master Card # _____ Expiry Date _____

Visa # _____ Expiry Date _____

Name _____

Position _____

Institution _____

Street _____

City _____ Prov. _____ Postal Code _____

Telephone _____ Signature _____

Please return to: National Film Board of Canada
Customer Services, D-10
P.O. Box 6100, Montreal, Quebec
H3C 3H5

* \$29.95 + P.S.T. Special home video price.

Our Bodies, Our Art

by Randi Spires

In the end it all comes down to the body: the body that births and bleeds versus the body which does neither; the body which appropriates for itself cultural and political power in the name of the phallus (even though the appendage it actually possesses, the penis, is a rather more fragile organ) versus the body which is denied this privilege because of what it supposedly lacks; the body which is object versus the body which is subject; and on it goes.

The sight of the female body has been the site of much feminist analysis. English critic Laura Mulvey's groundbreaking 1975 essay "Visual Pleasure In Narrative Cinema" is an early example of the kind of work around issues of sexual representation which goes on today. Closer to home, researchers such as York University professor Judith Posner continue to explore the ways advertising and other mass media represent the feminine.

Faced with the knowledge that all culture, high and low, visual and verbal, was predicated on male desire, feminist artists developed a number of strategies to counteract this hegemony. These included works of documentation in which the female voice and vision were given primacy, and historical research meant to rediscover great women long excluded from the malestream canon. Other artists looked even further back into the mists of patriarchy, digging up earth goddesses and other long suppressed evidence of pre-patriarchal female power. Still others found inspiration and discarded aspects of mass culture such as the lesbian pulp novels of the fifties.

The celebration of the female body for its own sake, rather than for its ability to arouse and satisfy heterosexual male desire was another approach taken up by feminist artists. These ranged from the vagina-shaped crockery at Judy Chicago's Dinner Party to the complex, sensuous exploration in Joyce Weiland's film, *Watersark*. Some artists thought it was important for women to push for legitimacy in the male sphere; others, of a more separatist bent, preferred alternate, woman-centred spaces. Powerhouse Gallery in Montreal and Women in Focus in Vancouver are just two of these.

Similarly some artists asserted the necessity for women to work in bold, monumental media while others sought to demonstrate that traditional female crafts such as china painting, needlepoint and quilting could be as technically demanding and artistically expressive as oil paint or iron. Again in terms of space, some artists took to more obviously public issues such as nuclear disarmament or the environment while others focused on the domestic realm of personal concerns.

The collaborative process became an important part of feminist artistic praxis. Another tactic was the appropriation of certain negative aspects of the dominant culture with a view to turning them around. For instance, the once-hated term dyke now has happy connotations when used within a lesbian-positive context. Some of the artists whose work was displayed in the lesbian erotic photography show (held during last spring's Queer Culture Festival) attempted to turn the imagings of heterosexual porn around for their own use. Other pictures in the exhibition were valuable documents of lesbian experience.

Inspired by the writings of French feminists such as Luce Irigaray and Hélène Cixious, who revised Freud without reviling him, some artists tried to develop forms which included rather than excluded female desire. In literature, writers such as Daphne Marlatt and Monique Wittig have been thus engaged.

Simultaneous with this task is the ongoing work of deconstruction. This endeavour often involves hard-nosed intellectual analysis but can also be approached through irony and humour, as in the work of the Clichettes. And while some feminist artists have been content with gallery shows, others have attempted to reach beyond the art world to that spurious collectivity known as the general public.

One of these is American artist Jenny Holzer, some of whose work is on display at the Ydessa Hendeles Foundation in Toronto until April 1990. Holzer began as an abstract painter, then became fascinated with the diagram as an art

form. She began working exclusively with text after discovering that the captions under the diagrams were more fascinating to her than the visual forms. But she also wanted to do something socially useful so she began putting her pointed, urban aphorisms on posters, T-shirts, buttons and, eventually Light Emitting Diode (LED) displays. Her one-liners are eye-catching and provocative, meant to grab the attention of urban passers-by within the 3-4 seconds they might be within sighting distance and to encourage them in some small way to rethink their lives.



Birgit Hein's *Kalli Film*: B movie images; and Holzer in pixel

"Abuse of Power Comes As No Surprise," "Private Property Created Crime," "If You Had Behaved Nicely The Communists Wouldn't Exist," "Money Creates Taste," and "Some Fathers Use Too Much Force" are some of her slogans.

A common deconstructive strategy is the use of text and image with the words either reinforcing or contradicting the ideas being conveyed visually. By eschewing pictures and by aiming her darts from across the political spectrum, Holzer is not so much exposing a particular ideology as she is drawing attention to the fact that the mainstream is replete with ideologies. This is something which we have been taught not to acknowledge. Holzer is not so much interested in telling people what to think as in directing them to the act of thinking.

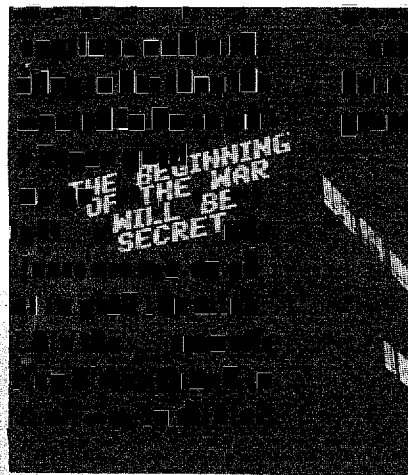
Holzer calls herself a feminist, but she does not consider her work to be specifically feminist art. The voice behind the aphorism is meant to be neutral, authoritative. But the voice of authority in our culture is male and as Holzer herself admits, some of the statements, such as "Fat On Your Hips Comes As You Sit Or Lie," could only have been written by a woman.

Holzer's work assumes an audience able to read and willing — with the longer pieces such as those containing lists of 25 or more sayings — to spend considerable time. To Holzer's delight the posters she placed all over Manhattan were insightfully scrawled on by thoughtful graffiti artists of all kinds.

Holzer's other guerilla strategies include pasting messages on pay phones and parking meters. These notes, such as the one saying "Put food out in the same place everyday and talk to the people who come to eat and organize them," are not necessarily recognized by their readers as art pieces. Lacking the sometimes intimidating aura of art, they allow the astounded public the possibility of interacting directly with the message.

In contrast to the ephemerality of the pixel boards and the posters are her marble benches, granite sarcophagi and bronze plaques. These mimic the pretensions of official formats while carrying subversive messages. One plaque, hung in New York City in 1982, reads "It takes a while before you step over inert bodies and go ahead with what you were wanting to do." This speaks to the way in which we accommodate ourselves to cruelty and injustice. Doing so is an act of will. Learning to accept such conditions in the name of nature, science, anti-communism, the patriarchal family or the essential corruptness of politics makes one com-

PLICIT with their endurance. The plaque at the Hendeles Foundation reads, "Sometimes you have no other choice than to watch something gruesome occur. You don't have the option of



Courtesy Art Gallery of Ontario

closing your eyes because it happens fast and enters your memory." This message is a continuation of the previously mentioned plaque. It suggests that horror can inadvertently enter consciousness like the surfacing of a repressed memory. Each time either of these screening mechanisms (repression, non-perception) fails, the individual must choose whether or not they will deal with this information or reassign it to the unconscious.

The three carved benches also at the Hendeles Foundation carry dense, violent poetic mini-narratives. Benches are usually resting places, frequently positioned in idyllic settings, but the text here is disturbing. To read, one must either squirm about the furniture or hover shiftily above it. Seated amidst the text one is positioned within the violence that engulfs the world. There is no true sanctuary remaining for anybody; there are no sacred spaces (art, religious or natural) that cannot be violated.

The voice behind the text engraved on the two sarcophagi feels like a decidedly male stream of consciousness, an irritable meditation on anger and destruction. These slabs are displayed in a darkened room before two brightly coloured LEDs which continually flash the same texts line by line. On the tombs the paragraphs feel like the epitaph of a disturbed individual but on the LEDs with their glitzy surfaces they become fragmented, disconnected, decontextualized and part of mass consciousness. Violence has been transformed into a form of play, anxiety into entertainment.

Holzer's penchant for collaboration (she's worked with such notables as Barbara Kruger and with the graffiti artist Lady Pink, among others), her commitment to public outreach and her engaging but tough-minded proddings of dominant culture place her as a feminist artist in heart if not in name.

For Birgit Hein, "The worst form of oppression which women have to suffer is their sexuality. The repression goes so deep that many women even relinquish sexuality. To win back desire, to show it in its total diversity and to break existing taboos is for me the most important task for contemporary women artists."

Hein is a filmmaker and curator whose work was presented at the International Experimental Film Congress held recently in Toronto. She bases her analysis on Freudian principles which link sexuality and aggression.

In patriarchal cultures men get angry, women get depressed; men desire, women are desired.

For Hein, women must learn to express aggressivity before they can celebrate their autonomous sexual desires.

This is not the place to debate Freudian theory but I suspect that by sticking with the old master and not looking at current research as well, Hein has missed two important points: that our interpretation of various arousal states can be culturally determined and that far from being liberating or cathartic, aggression feeds itself. Women have plenty to be angry and frustrated about but instead of encouraging a mindless explosion of these emotions we should be exploring ways to channel these energies productively.

Birgit Hein's *Kalli Film* is an assemblage of images of women fighting. Mostly they attack other women but occasionally they turn their efforts toward men, with much more deadly results. These images have all been taken from various B movies (biker and reform school girl variety, for the most part) and heterosexual porn. As such they are the product of the male, not the female imagination, and thereby feed into Everyman's terror of the feminine. As role models for female liberation they are highly suspect.

The images are accompanied by a soundtrack of pleasant symphonic music. Such music is a respectable example of high culture, its precise, orderly and controlled qualities highly valued in a patriarchy. In the film this music symbolizes the way in which patriarchal culture suppresses vital, chaotic, female energy.

Mano Destra by Cleo Uebelmann was another of the films presented by Hein in her series on women and the body. It's a long, curiously staid lesbian bondage film. A splendidly (and expensively) attired dominatrix poses about her terrain occasionally fiddling with the bonds or the positioning of her charges. Instead of being triumphant, her expression is close to being flat; in fact she's the picture of repression.

During these sequences we frequently hear a song the only lyric of which is "The sky is full of scratches," which sounds not aggressive but desperate or depressed. Intercut with these scenes are long tracking shots along the cold industrial quarters where the film is set. The sound of jackboots further chills that atmosphere.

The slaves are bound, gagged, placed in lockers, atop gurneys or within body bags, all of which are numbered. No sex takes place, only the manipulation of inanimate objects and of people treated as if they were such things. Rather than being liberating, the film adheres closely to mainstream patriarchal values, criticizing cruelty and control.

Although the dominatrix's face is constantly seen, the faces of her slaves are always obscured. This suggests that she could just as easily be in their place as in hers, that the roles of victim and victimizer are interchangeable. Whether one agrees with that thesis or not, the fact remains that the film is suffused with an overwhelming sadness, unmediated by any hint of jouissance.

Vel by Regine Steenbock documents a complete surgical makeover of a middle-aged woman. As we watch the patient undergo eye lifts, breast implantations and liposuction we are forced to consider just how brutal plastic surgery is. Watching it at times felt like watching a rape. Indeed, as the surgeon made an incision into the woman's breast a large number of female spectators hurriedly left the screening room. What we have here is a woman despite the great pain and expense involved, asking a male surgeon to sculpt her body into the image of male desire. The phallic knife about to plunge into the exposed flesh and the anonymously gloved hand poised to clasp that same poor breast are in a sense consummate images of the violence and power of patriarchal desire.

In the end it comes down to this: if we are going to recover our bodies and reclaim our bawdiness, we are going to have to re-image the world, make over language and unbind our psyches. Whether one agrees with their points of view or not, the struggles of Holzer and Hein, Uebelmann and Steenbock are all part of the process.

Randi Spires is a Toronto feminist.

Literary Reflections of a Protofeminist

by Ruth Roach Pierson

The button I brought back from this year's annual general meeting of the National Action Committee on the Status of women reads, "Post Feminism: the New Age breakfast cereal." I bought it because I dislike the concept of "post-feminism." It implies either that the feminist movement is over or that we've gone beyond it. I don't believe the latter and I don't want to believe the former. The expressions "pre-feminism" and "proto-feminism," in contrast, seem perfectly acceptable to me, capable of describing, in the case of the first term, the period in which I grew up and, in the second, my state of mind during that period. I also have no difficulty with the notion that there are different phases as well as kinds of feminism. Feminists of my generation, for instance, who can remember a pre-feminist period have a different relationship to feminism from that of a younger generation who grew up with feminism in the air.

For those of us in our late forties and early fifties, there was a time, and I can still remember it clearly, when feminism was not only *not* in the air, it was not a word in our vocabularies. In that time before feminism, I like to think that I was a "proto-feminist." I mean by that that I walked around with a vague sense that existing relations between the sexes were somehow not right, somehow unjust, out of kilter, imbalanced. I also harboured a less vague perception of not quite fitting in, of needing to go against the grain, step out of line, break the rules. As I had been brought up to be a "good girl" and had pretty much been a "good girl" until adhering to the rules for being good seemed to spell death to what I believed to be my "real" or "aspirant" self, I found the defiance of convention both difficult and necessary. Yet I had no language for any of this, not for the sense of grievance or the sense of not belonging, nor for the sense of being out of place and beyond the protection of societal approval. *That is, not any positive language.* For there were words for what I was and what I was doing, words like divorcée, adultery, cohabitation, but they stung with censure and the threat of opprobrium.

And the novels I was reading at the time weren't any help, for this was when I, like everyone I knew, was reading D.H. Lawrence, William Styron, Norman Mailer, Hermann Hesse, Kafka, Faulkner, Hemingway, F. Scott Fitzgerald, James Baldwin, C.P. Snow, Saul Bellow. And Henry Miller, but I really couldn't stomach him. How, I wonder now, did I survive in that unremittingly male-centred, if not to say misogynist, world? Oh, yes, there was the occasional female character with whom I could identify, at least in part, like Ursula Brangwen in *The Rainbow*, but then how disappointing to find her cut back, as she was in *Women in Love*, to the status of a planet revolving in orbit around a male sun.

Looking over the books from that period remaining in my library I have found one I'd forgotten about, J.P. Donleavy's *The Ginger Man*. Opening it, I've found that I'd also forgotten that a male friend had given me the paperback copy I still own, with the following typewritten note attached by scotch tape to the inside cover:

Ruth, I am disappointed in you.

I fear that you lack the courage to enter the whirlpool.

Safe havens merely hide the majesty of the storm.

I hesitate to give you this book, because it may reinforce certain suspicions you have. But then, Ruth, if life is an elaborate game its rewards are unbounded for those who play it to the hilt.

For every ginger man there should be a ginger woman.

Apparently I was less of a proto-feminist than I like to recall. For I did enter into a "love affair" with the author of that piece of "sexual-revolution"-on-male-terms seductive blackmail, despite the fact that I read the novel and

therefore must have learned that the protagonist is a lazy, womanizing, hard-drinking, and despicable rogue whose alleged outrageousness is little more than a series of sophomoric puerilities. Contemptuous of his wife, he treats her and their child as nothing more than encroachments on his freedom. Lying with one of his many sexual conquests, he dreamily reflects: "A down on the back of her neck. A slim neck. I could easily choke her to death." The woman he runs away with after leaving his wife and child he ends up slapping around.

I do remember feeling a vague uneasiness at my friend's enthusiasm for Sebastian Dangerfield and a certain dismay some years later when I learned that my one-time lover, now married, had, presumably with his new wife's agreement, given the name Sebastian to their first child. But throughout that time I was unable to put my finger on the falseness of the wish (or demand) that there be a female counterpart to the ginger man for I could not have articulated the notion that the Sebastian Dangerfields of that world relied for their very existence not on free, independent and self-determining women, but on dependent, subordinate, men-worshipping "skirts" and "birds" to be picked up, banged about and dropped like so much excess ballast.

The book that eventually acted as a catalyst for my mute, pent-up anger over the sexual politics advocated in the literature I had been reading for the previous twelve or more years was Kate Millet's *Sexual Politics*, a copy of which I picked up and devoured in September 1970. I will be forever grateful to Millet for giving me the concept of "patriarchy" and the conceptualization of sexual relations as power relations and hence political. But the book that had already started the feminist transformation of my consciousness was Doris Lessing's *The Golden Notebook*.

It was Lessing's novel that effected for me the Copernican revolution of stopping women's endless orbiting around a central male character and of moving female consciousness to the centre of the literary universe. In the pages of *The Golden Notebook*, I found not just one female protagonist, but another as well within the creative imagination of the first, both of whom were reflective, articulate, politically active, questing, self- and socially critical, and capable of strong friendships with other women. As I now flick through the yellowing pages of my 1968 paperback copy, I realize that not much of the detail has stayed with me. What has, and a number of friends with whom I have recently discussed what it was like to read *The Golden Notebook* years ago all agree, is a general impression of the novel's power to evoke a woman's everyday reality.


The novel conveyed a concrete sense of the unrelenting burden, borne by women, of responsibility for children from infancy through early adulthood, as it also captured the feel of the crisis-ridden messiness of inter-personal relations which women are forever negotiating. What stands out most vividly in some current friends' memories is the novel's account of Anna's dealing with the onset of menstruation while trying to prepare a meal. What stands out most vividly in my memory is the depiction of two women having tea and intimate conversation together across a kitchen table and the sense that that depiction effected an affirmation of, conferred an enhanced significance on, such moments in my own life.

Reading *The Golden Notebook* was for me a turning point. It launched me on a quest, which continues to this day, for novels written by women. Fortunately for me, but certainly not fortuitously, my quest has coincided with that of millions of other women in the English-speaking world and with the founding of fem-

inist presses. These have not only published an ever proliferating number of new works by women writers but, with the aid of a new breed of feminist literary critic, rediscovered and re-issued a treasure trove of novels by women from bygone decades and centuries. The productivity of this multifaceted endeavour has been staggering, as has been the diversity of viewpoints revealed. For our collective search has been not for a single universal or universalizable woman's perspective but for the experience in literature of looking out at the world through women's eyes, be those black or brown or blue and be they in the faces of young, middle-aged or old women. If my pursuit started from the need for confirmation of an experiential reality familiar to me, it has been enlarged to include the exploration of different women's realities from which mine can be put into a clearer, more critical perspective. I think, for example, of the world as seen and remembered through the dimming but stubborn eyes of Margaret Laurence's Hagar in *The Stone Angel*. I think also of the vision of a brutal and painfully self-recriminating past that returns to haunt Toni Morrison's escaped slave Sethe in *Beloved*. Beyond this diversity, however, there remains the transformative empowerment that come from encountering in literature a female subject at the centre of the universe. It is that shift that has freed me, I trust to the end of my days, from any pre-feminist need to keep company in literature or life with ginger men and their fantasied female foils.

Ruth Roach Pierson teaches women's studies and history at OISE in Toronto. She is the author of "They're Still Women After All": *The Second World War and Canadian Womanhood*, and editor of *Women and Peace: Theoretical, Historical and Practical Perspectives*.

Canadian
Advisory Council
on the Status of Women



Conseil
consultatif canadien
sur la situation de la femme

The Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women (CACSW) releases:

Stress in Women's Work/Lives: New Directions for Research

This background paper examines one of today's leading health problems for women — stress. Using a feminist approach, stress is put in the context of the larger problem of inequality between men and women in society. The stresses of women's family and household work are examined, as well as differences in the stress experiences of men and women. The paper calls for more research on stress resulting from the complex interplay of all forms of women's work, both in the household and in the labour force.

The Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women, established in 1973, is an independent organization, funded by the federal government to advise the government and inform the public on matters of interest and concern to women. The Council produces original research on social, economic, and legal issues affecting women and publishes these findings as books, background papers, briefs, and fact sheets.

For free copies of the *Stress in Women's Work/Lives* paper, or any other CACSW publication, contact:

Sigrid Vila
Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women
P.O. Box 1541
Station "B"
Ottawa, Ontario
K1P 5R5
(613) 992-4976



TORONTO
WOMEN'S BOOKSTORE

Virginia Woolf: The Impact of Childhood Sexual Abuse on her Life and Work

by Louise DeSalvo \$37.95

You Can't Take It With You, So Eat It Now: Everyday Strategies from Sylvia

by Nicole Hollander \$9.95

Blaze of Fire: Significant Contributions by Caribbean Women

by Nesha Z. Haniff \$12.95

73 HARBOR STREET, TORONTO, ONT. M5S 1G4 (416) 922-8744.
NEW HOURS: MONDAY, TUESDAY AND SATURDAY 10:30 to 6:00 WEDNESDAY, THURSDAY, AND FRIDAY 10:30 TO 9:00. WHEELCHAIR ACCESSIBLE

Feminist Theatre:

The Changing Body of Women's Work

by Kate Lushington

"The Theatre may be a place where a woman can work, but it's certainly not a place where a feminist can work; unless she runs the shop." Rina Fraticelli, then Artistic Director of Playwright's Workshop Montreal, 1985.

"Feminists are Everywhere!" Promotional poster for International Women's Day 1978

"An article on the impact of feminist theatre over the last ten years?" I said. "Well at least it's bound to be short." Unknowingly I was falling into the great divide and conquer trap, straight through like Alice in the Land of False Dualities: art vs. politics, popular vs. professional, feminists vs. women. Or women vs. feminists:

"The danger (in labelling women's work feminist) is that the work will either be rejected as propaganda, or worse, it will become more important that the work be done by women, than whether or not it is any good." Janet Amos, then Artistic Director of Theatre New Brunswick, 1985.

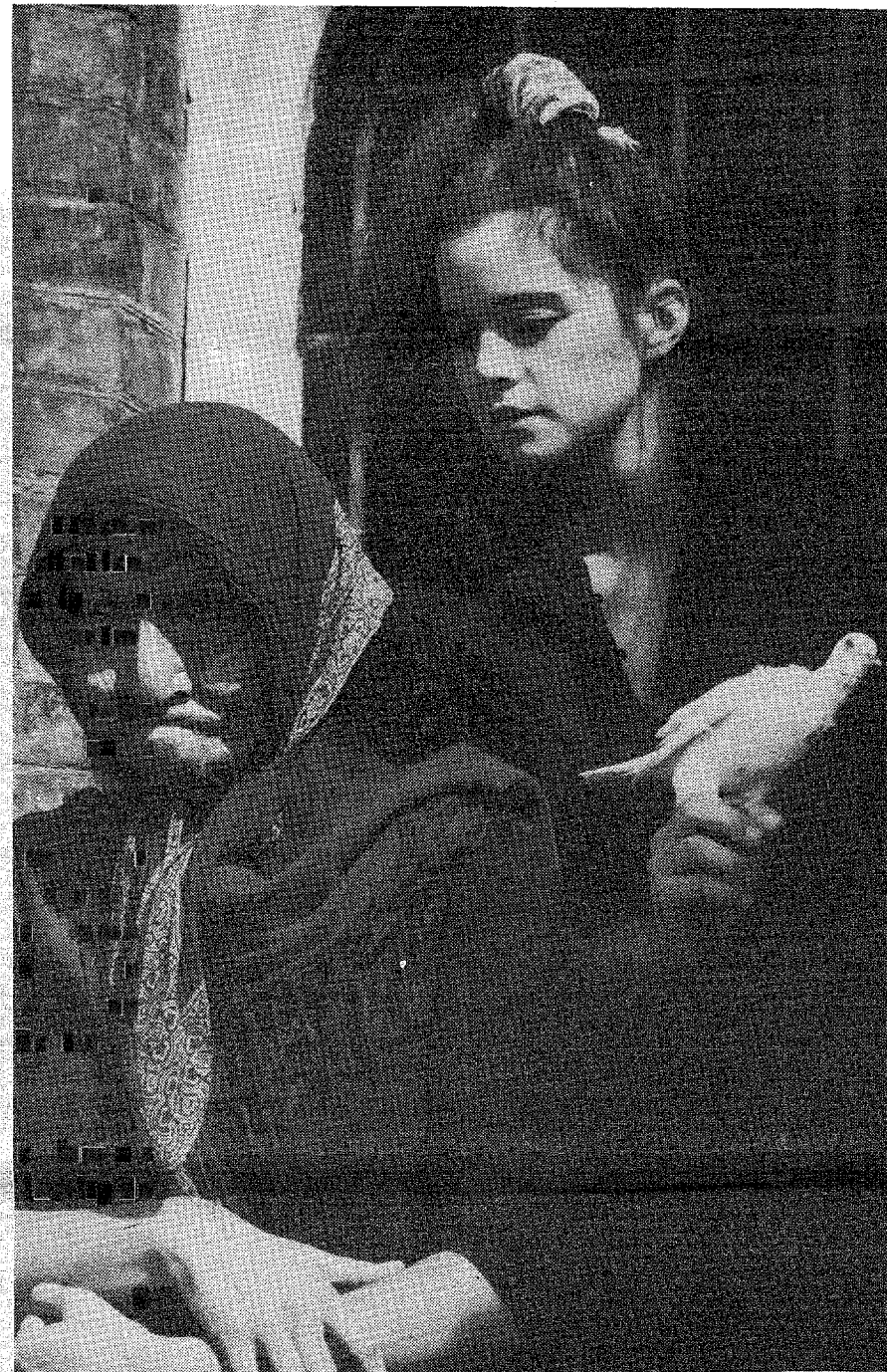
To paraphrase a good old fashioned feminist slogan: "Why the hell not?" Mediocrity has rarely stopped a man from gaining access to the means of theatre production. And I contend that all women theatre practitioners by their very nature are marginalized, disenfranchised, from prestigious 1988 Toronto Arts Award Winner Judith Thompson, to the community theatre workers from coast to coast who labour to give voice to the silenced. The success of a gifted individual like Ms Thompson is to be applauded, but it is not to be misunderstood, nor allowed to distract us, like a pretty bauble, from the naked truth: that there is systematic discrimination against women in the Canadian Theatre, that feminists are aware of this and often choose to work outside established theatre systems, and that statistically almost nothing has changed in the last ten years. Oh, there's a couple more female artistic directors across the country, but figures released by the Playwrights' Union of Canada in 1988 show that of all new plays produced in the 87/88 season, still only 17 per cent were by women. Even fewer were directed by women, and the Women's Committee at Canadian Actors' Equity Association can show how few roles there were for women actors that same season. This is "The Invisibility Factor" as termed by Rina Fraticelli in her landmark report on the Status of Women in the Canadian Theatre in 1982, which made about as much impression on the powers that be as snow on the water. Don't worry, Ms Ainos, we are in no imminent danger of affirmative action.

So that's the bad news. Is there any good news? Astoundingly, looking back over the past ten years, there is ample cause for celebration.

"Women are finally emerging as voices to contend with in the theatre, and whatever they write, the more women who create plays, the more voices and life experiences that are heard, the better the world, and the theatre will be." Wendy Wasserstein, Pulitzer Prize and Tony Award winning U.S. playwright, front page New York Sunday Times Arts and Leisure Section, May 1989.

Women may be marginalized, but the margins are getting broader and broader, encompassing a multitudinous diversity of theatrical endeavour which all adds up to a swelling body of work. I deliberately mix financial and gestational metaphors since, like the song says, you can't have one without the other, and the burgeoning of women's work must be seen against the harsh light of budgetary cutbacks and a funding climate hostile to risky innovative undertakings. This makes the accomplishments of Canadian women theatre artists all the more impressive. Hard pressed, scattered, compartmentalized, women—and feminists—are nonetheless active, ambitious, committed, inventive and courageous in building a theatre of their own.

There have been festivals: Fireworks! 1980, The Women's Cultural Building and Women's Perspective 1983, Alter Eros 1984; con-



ferences: The Next Stage: Women in the Theatre of the Americas in Montreal in 1985, the Women's Conference of the FIA in Vancouver. There are ongoing performance events and workshops: Nightwood's Groundswell, the Five Minute Feminist Cabaret and The Company of Sirens' Soirees in Toronto, Le Festival de créations de femmes in Montreal, and VIEW in Vancouver. In Toronto independent artists like The Clichettes, Lillian Allen, Sandra Shamas and Itah Sadu are turning their hands to theatre, Hysterical Women take feminist performance/improv to the bars, and actresses who have spent years mouthing the words of men seize the opportunity to speak for themselves. The rigid borders in this Land of the False Dualities are getting blurred.

In 1979 there were plays to talk about: *Stars in the Sky Morning* by Rhonda Payne in Newfoundland, *Rites of Passage* by Cam Hubert in

Ottawa, and *Sarah and Gabriel* by Sharon Stearns in Edmonton. Redlight had been Toronto's first women's theatre, and attention was drawn to the iconoclastic British director Pam Brighton and her production of *Dusta Fish Stas and Vi* by British author Pam Gems at Toronto Workshop Productions. Nightwood Theatre was formed that year with a collective theatrical adaptation of *The True Story of Ida Johnson* by Sharon Riis, using slides and non-linear text to illuminate the relationship between two women and their worlds, and a new style of feminist theatre was born.

In 1989, British feminists are no longer a programming choice for mainstream theatres; some Canadian playwrights are proving to be as hot. Sally Clark and Joan McLeod are produced by established male-run companies, as well as taking the FemCab stage this year. Jan Kudelka, whose play *American Demon* suf-

fered from role reversal in 1984 when its female director was replaced by the male artistic director, is reviving it this summer in Sackville, New Brunswick. Lesbian content comes into focus with two works in progress: *Medusa Rising* by Audrey Butler, and *A Fertile Imagination* by Susan G. Cole, in workshop at Theatre Passe Muraille and Nightwood Theatre respectively. These two theatres are also co-producing *Princess Pocahontas and the Blue Spot* by Native performer Monique Mojica. Svetlana Zylina, who directed both *Sara and Gabriel* and *Rites of Passage* in 1979, and barely directed again for years, is now Artistic Director of Playwright's Workshop Montreal. Barbara Lynes is a dedicated director, dramaturge and feminist who works as an Associate Artist at the Great Canadian Theatre Company in Ottawa, where Djanet Sears recently culled rave reviews for her play *Africa Solo*, in which she also per-



Left page: Top left, Anne Marie MacDonald and Maureen White in *Smoke Damage*. Right, Djanet Sears. Bottom, Lina Chartrand and Rita Koli. Right page: Top left, Baquta Rubess in *This Is For You*, Anna. Top right, Cynthia Grant, Amanda Hale, Patricia Wynter, Vivine Scarlett in *Mother Tongues*. Bottom left, Patricia Wynter and Lina Chartrand in *Mother Tongues*. Bottom right, Rita Kohli and Cynthia Grant. All Siren photos by Donna Marchand.

formed. Since *Djanet is Black*, it is important to mention the strong interface between sexism and racism in the Canadian Theatre. To our knowledge not one single play by a Black woman had previously been produced by a regional theatre in this country: the *Invisibility Factor* increases exponentially when the woman in question is not white.

Of course, plays by Black women have been and continue to be produced at smaller theatres, even touring the country and overseas. Community theatre Pelican Players provided a haven for writer Diana Braithwaite, who on the departure of white founder Robin Endres reformed the company as Imani Theatre Ensemble, which group includes Jamaican-trained director Ahdri Zhina Mandiela and actor Alison Sealy-Smith. Braithwaite's *Do Not Adjust Your Sets* directed by Ahdri Zhina returned from a tour

to play at the Theatre Centre last Fall. Meanwhile The Company of Sirens, co-founded in 1985 by Cynthia Grant, Lina Chartrand and Amanda Hale, continues to work collectively with racially mixed groups who find a common bond as women and as workers. *The Working People's Picture Show* toured all last season to a wide variety of venues, reaching a phenomenal number of people, and *Sex Réalité* continued its life as *Mother Tongues* at the Theatre Centre in November.

"Women's voices can no longer be silenced or trivialized in public spaces. Ultimately it is not the particular public space and audience that tests the validity of each group's work, but rather their ability to be heard beyond their own parlours." Meredith Levine, *Theatrum*, Issue #6, 1987.

Among others, *Fires of Transformation*, a play on wife assault created by the VOICE

troupe, and *Goodnight Desdemona*, (*Good Morning, Juliet*) by Baquta Rubess and produced by Nightwood Theatre, are going on the road next season, just two representatives of the incredible diversity of women's work. Margaret Hollingsworth is busy organizing the Second International Women's Playwriting Conference to be held in Montreal in 1991. Clearly the article on feminist theatre is not short, for to adequately portray this living, growing, changing body of work is an enormous undertaking. Having just scratched the surface, in this almost random survey, I don't feel so invisible anymore, and I do feel quite astonishingly heartened. Seen for once as a whole, instead of with my usual tunnel vision, the sweet wild zone of the margin is a heady place to be, offering to fresh young women and tired old feminists alike the inspiration and fertile groundwork for the future.

Further Reading

Fireweed: A Feminist Quarterly Issue #2, Spring 1979, Issue #7, Summer 1980 *Women in Performance*, *The Status of Women in the Canadian Theatre*, A Report prepared for the Status of Women Canada by Rina Fraticelli, June 1982, Reprinted in extract as *The Invisibility Factor*, *Fuse Magazine*, September 1982, *Rites Magazine*, June 1984
Canadian Theatre Review, #43, Summer 1985: *Feminism and The Canadian Theatre*
Fuse Magazine, Fall 1985: Theatre Special
Fuse Magazine, Summer 1986, Tenth Anniversary Issue
Canadian Theatre Review, #47, Summer 1986, *Issues in Performance*
Conference of Women in the Performing Arts under the auspices of the F.I.A. in Vancouver, September 1986: Report and Resolutions, *Herizons*, December 1986 Company of Sirens, Rhea Tregobov
Theatrum Issue, #6, Spring 1987: *Feminist Theatre*: Meredith Levine
Canadian Actors Equity Association Newsletters, October 1987, February 1988
Canadian Theatre Review, #56, Fall 1988, *Theatre and Ethnicity* CanPlay, Playwrights' Union of Canada newsletter, Fall and Winter 1988
Queen's Quarterly, 96/1, Spring 89,
The Womanist, May/June, 1989,

This piece was intended as an introduction to a collage of programs, reviews and extracts of women's playwriting. This context has unfortunately disappeared due to an overwhelming quantity of relevant material for the space available. We hope to publish it in book form some day. Special thanks are due to Cynthia Grant for the original idea, Lina Chartrand, Johanna Householder, Djanet Sears and Ahdri Zhina Mandiela for access to their files.

Kate Lushington is a feminist director and playwright. Currently she is Artistic Co-ordinator for Nightwood Theatre.

• **Violence, from page 13**

not always capitulate to practices like taking the last name of the man as their own), and thereby continue — personally, politically and socially to support, legitimize and perpetuate one of the most powerful institutions of a male dominated, heterosexist and homophobic society.

In envisioning and politically organizing for feminist goals, we are looking for something more than "equality" between men and women, although this in itself appears to be an overwhelming goal in terms of the scope of change it would require. We are also demanding a radical dismantling and reconstruction of what we currently recognize as "masculinity," "femininity," the "family" (ie., the heterosexual nuclear family), sexuality and heterosexuality, as well as of all the other structures which construct and maintain the social relations of gender.

Feminists are also learning that in neither our analysis nor our politics can we abstract the social and sexual relations of gender from other relations of domination and oppression in our society, namely, those of class and race. While it is imperative that we keep the struggle to end women's oppression central in all progressive social movements, we cannot assume homogeneity in women's experiences of sexual inequality, for our location in class or race structures of inequality in our society also profoundly determines our experience of ourselves and the world around us. This means that in our struggle to achieve women's liberation we must be vigilant in paying attention to cultural and class issues, as well as work to eliminate racism and class divisions.

The implications of this kind of analysis for feminist organizing — particularly but not only around the issue of sexual violence — are always significant but are not always immediately clear. How do we organize effectively, for example, for an end to compulsory heterosexuality? How do we attack the ideology and practices of gender and sexuality when our lives, our consciousness and our unconsciousness, are profoundly shaped by these? How do we act to end men's violence against women and the state's complicity in it without being consumed entirely by the struggle for moderate and limited short-term reforms?

While efforts like the "Safe City" campaign in Toronto, to take a current and local example, are extremely important, we must recognize that they hardly begin to address the core issues of men's violence against women.

This campaign is the work of a committee made up of various local government departments and community groups and is intended to make the city "safe" for women through such measures as improved public transit, better lighting, increased "community participation" in "crime prevention," urban design and planning which addresses women's safety needs, and greater access to parking for women, among other things.

It is not a coincidence that it has been possible to mobilize some state support (at the municipal level, in this case) for this kind of work because as long as we are concerned only with making women safe from attack from "strangers" — through more lighting and more adequate public transportation systems — we are not addressing the vastly higher prevalence of attacks perpetrated by men on women with whom they are in some kind of relationship. Moreover, strategies such as these cannot only unwittingly serve to reinforce many of the most popular misconceptions about the threat of sexual assault from "strange" men, they also provide the state with the opportunity to put resources into the safest and most limited approach to the problem of men's violence against women, ignoring the more fundamental and complex issues, and consuming the time and energy of community groups while deflecting criticism about government inaction.

And this really is the heart of the problem. The fact that women are subjected to random sexual and physical attacks perpetrated by men who are unknown to them pales in comparison to the sexual aggression, coercion, intrusion, intimidation which makes up much of what we recognize as "normal" relations between men and women. This is also where the greatest complexities and difficulties lie for feminist strategies to end sexual violence and, ultimately, sexual oppression.

Violence against women has been the focus of much feminist organizing and analysis over the past ten or fifteen years. We have developed a network of support and advocacy services for women who've suffered men's abuse and sexual violence, have organized and lobbied for legislative change, have attacked the criminal justice system for its complete inability to respond to crimes of violence against women and to hold men accountable for them, have exposed the socio-economic conditions and ideology which allow for it, have undertaken community edu-

cation, and have worked to develop our understanding and analysis of women's experiences of men's violence.

In spite of these concerted efforts, the problems which continue to confront us in working to eradicate men's sexual violence and abuse of women and children remain huge and complex. It is important, then, that we take the time to pool our collective energy and experience to re-evaluate both our strategies of political organizing to end violence against women, as well as to develop our theoretical understanding of the issues and the interconnections between them. Without such a critical reappraisal we run the risk of failing to learn from both our successes and failures over the past two decades of feminist thinking and practice and we deprive ourselves of the opportunity of engaging critically with each other on questions that are urgent for the goals of feminist politics and social change.

Notes:

1. These figures are drawn from the most comprehensive and reliable research on the subject to date, conducted by Dr. Diana Russell. Employing a sophisticated methodological approach which drew out highly important findings, including the highest rates of disclosure to date, and ensured their validity and generalizability, Russell interviewed 930 women in random face-to-face interviews on their experiences of sexual abuse and violence over the course of their lifetimes. Her research approach and findings are published in her books, *Sexual Exploitation* and *The Secret Trauma: Incest in the Lives of Girls and Women*. The 44 per cent figure is taken from her book *Sexual Exploitation*, p. 47, and refers only to incidents of sexual assault that fit a narrow legal definition and is based on California State law in the late 1970s.
2. Diana Russell, *The Secret Trauma: Incest in the Lives of Girls and Women*, New York: Basic Books, 1986.
3. Michael Smith, "Prevalence of Woman Abuse in Toronto," 1988.
4. Susan Brownmiller was an important proponent of this view, especially in her groundbreaking 1975 book, *Against Our Will*. This understanding of rape is still widely circulated by activists in the women's movement.

Melanie Randall is currently conducting Canadian research based on Diana Russell's major findings. She is also a co-editor of Resources for Feminist Research.

Who cares about Carol?

Carol is a 30-year-old woman and mother of two who is trying to recover from repeated physical abuse over the last four years. She has now left her common-law husband, and even though her broken jaw has healed, she and her children are still trying to cope with the emotional and psychological wounds.

The Assaulted Women's and Children's Counsellor/Advocate Program

trains you to provide the financial, shelter, emotional and supportive counselling needed by women and children in crisis.

Of course, this kind of work is not for everyone. It requires maturity, commitment, hard work, specialized knowledge, assertiveness, and sensitivity to the needs of women and children.

But for the right people, it can be a very satisfying career.

Is it for you?

Call 867-2310.

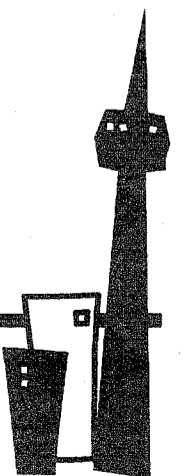
George Brown



The City College

As the City College, George Brown offers a unique opportunity for community services students to work and learn in Canada's largest multicultural community.

CAREERS IN CARING



In for the Long Haul

by Eve Zaremba

Anniversaries and new decades provide opportunities for the assessment of the period just past, whatever that might be. Naturally we view the past from the perspective of the current moment. There is much to be said for 20/20 hindsight if it helps us to establish what we did right and what we did wrong and why. We only learn from experience.

Well, what did we do right in the last decade? What did we do wrong? (Right/wrong implies no moral judgement, just what worked to our advantage and what did not). This is not the same as a mere description of what happened; the issue is what did we cause to happen. What was our contribution to Canadian women's history during the past ten years? That's the first question with which we must try to grapple, as individuals and as a movement. Having done so, let's look at the future — the next four to ten years — and think about how we should proceed. I recommend this exercise to us all. What follows is my personal, subjective stab at "looking forward," based on lessons from the past.

The Women's Liberation Movement is here to stay. I believe that our single most important attribute is that we are in it for the long haul. That is our strength. Our movement will change, we will change, the government will change, the world will change. It is a given that there will be ups and downs; straightaways and detours. There are no final victories or ultimate defeats. Once this is accepted as a fact of life we can get way from that "woe is us" defeatism which does us more harm than an army of patriarchal, sexist, racist chauvinists. "The sky is falling" is undoubtedly often a cop out for individuals who just want an excuse to quit. It seems acceptable because negativity and pessimism tend to be mistaken for political sophistication. They aren't: quite the reverse.

The long view puts bad news as well as good news in perspective; true political sophistication is a great dispeller of illusions. For instance, whatever made anyone think that the

P.C. government would continue to provide financial support to feminism and feminists? Why should they? Out of the goodness of their hearts? It is virtually unheard of in any other country in the world for governments to give money to any lobby, interest or advocacy group (the reverse is usually the case), never mind those which are dedicated to their defeat. Financial support for advocacy groups, NAC among others, was instituted under the Liberals. At the time it was a tactic aimed at containment of various pressures considered dangerous. Overall, this tactic worked as intended. It taught a whole generation of progressive activists (not just feminists) to rely on governments for grants, etc., instead of building their own systems of financial support. Naturally, this dependence has made us vulnerable to changes in political climate and government tactics. It has undermined our independence of action. By giving us the semblance of a place in the system, it has affected what we do and how we do it. Most crucially it continues to distort our perception of the powers-that-be and of our potential vis-à-vis these powers.

It won't be easy to wean ourselves from the government buck but it will be worth it in the end. Breaking this addiction has to be our priority for the next period. And if we do it right, the government might yet wish it had kept us on the dollar leash.

We need a hard-nosed lobby-cum-pressure group in Ottawa and in the provincial capitals. Never mind that we rightly object to women being considered a "special interest group," any more than men. We have to learn to play the cards the way they are dealt, which is the political necessity in the real world in which we all live. The job of a lobby is to deal with governments, politicians, cabinet ministers as they are, to learn the ropes and not be distracted or put off. Lobbyists are professionals who have a watching brief on behalf of all women; we need them to stay on the case. I don't think lobbies can take the high road, that is not their role. Let's start distinguishing that role from that of determining policy and "leadership"

or even representation in the broad sense.

What are the best organizational structures for effective work in the nineties? Let's look around and see what works for other movements and causes, such as the environment and peace movements, which are compatible and which have had undoubtable successes. The striking thing about them is the multiplicity of goals, issues, methods and organizational models they employ to gain their ends. (Pollution Probe and Greenpeace, for example, are very different organizations.) We need a new nineties model of NAC for media representation, for high visibility, for communication between groups and regions. Perhaps it should expand its base to include individual dues-paying members with full voting powers along with institutions and groups. I assume that an organizational assessment is well underway at NAC. New blood and new long-range thinking would not come amiss.

Although it's hard for many old politicians like me to admit, we have been most successful when we worked the system issue by issue. It's not surprising. There is nothing like a clear, limited goal to focus energy, money, time — i.e. resources. LEAF is a good example of this and much could be learned from their example.

Organizational confusion seems often to be both the cause and the result of a lack of goal definition. It's hard for us sometimes to distinguish between slogans like "Stop Violence Against Women" and "No New Abortion Law". The latter lends itself to a systematic effort since it expresses a specific, limited and attainable goal. As it stands the former does not. We can actually "win" the latter but we can never expect to fully attain the former. In trying to evaluate our progress, it's vital to distinguish between the two.

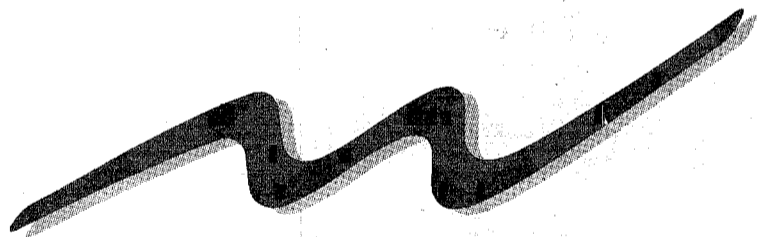
We should never fool ourselves into thinking that any one of the parties can be "ours". My own strongly held opinion is that we must not be identified with any existing party. None of them can represent women's interests or can be trusted. That most certainly includes the NDP which supports Meech Lake, the public finan-

cing of religious schools in Ontario (which I for one have not forgotten or forgiven) and which, when in office in Manitoba, used police and legal power against abortion clinics — to mention just a few glaring examples. The other parties might be even worse on many issues but that does not make the NDP a feminist party in any sense. Additionally, since we have to deal with governments, whichever party is in power, tying ourselves to any one is counterproductive.

This does not mean that we should keep out of the political process or electoral politics. Let's start planning for the next election. For instance, we should give thought to the two leadership races now underway. In the present era of image politics, leaders are as important as policies; maybe more. Liberal leadership will largely determine whether the Progressive Conservatives can be defeated in the next four years or not. Who that Liberal leader is could be important. Then let's consider our options if we are struck with the present bunch for eight or ten years. Whoever is in power will need a hotfoot. Perhaps it's time for a new Royal Commission on the Status of Women to energize the next 10 years of our movement.

There are a lot of resources and smart women out there in academe, in women's services, in media, in unions, in law, in business — all over, including at home. I don't think we can expect masses of these women to become full-fledged feminist activists, but a great many could/would contribute their skills and financial support given the right opportunity. The question is *not*, "How can we organize these women out there?" but, "How do we organize *us*, the women right here?" to make the most of the skills and clout of the women out there. It isn't "women out there" who must understand and support activist and service workers, but the other way round. That's the only way to break down the *we* (smart, dedicated, politically wary, etc.) versus *they* (uncaring, deluded, etc.) Think about it.

Eve Zaremba is an ex-collective member of Broadside, and the author of three Helen Keremos mysteries.



THE ONTARIO WOMEN'S DIRECTORATE CONGRATULATES BROADSIDE ON ITS 10TH ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

We are an advocacy agency working within the provincial government. Since 1983, we have been giving voice to issues of vital importance to Ontario women. Our goal is the achievement of legal, social and economic equality for all Ontario women.

You can use the directorate by:

Requesting help in starting employment equity programs in your workplace.

Sharing with us the issues facing women in your community.

Requesting copies of studies, brochures, posters and other directorate-produced materials on topics such as wife assault and sexual assault, employment equity, sex-role stereotyping and career options.

Making use of our Resource Centre (reference library) and audio-visual lending services.

Ontario Women's Directorate
489 University Ave.
2nd Floor
Toronto, Ontario
M5G 1V1
(416) 597-4500

Ontario Women's Directorate
107C Johnson Ave.
Thunder Bay, Ontario
P7B 2V9

(807) 345-6084

Collect calls accepted.

Honourable Gregory Sorbara
Minister Responsible for Women's Issues



Ontario
Women's
Directorate

CONGRATULATIONS

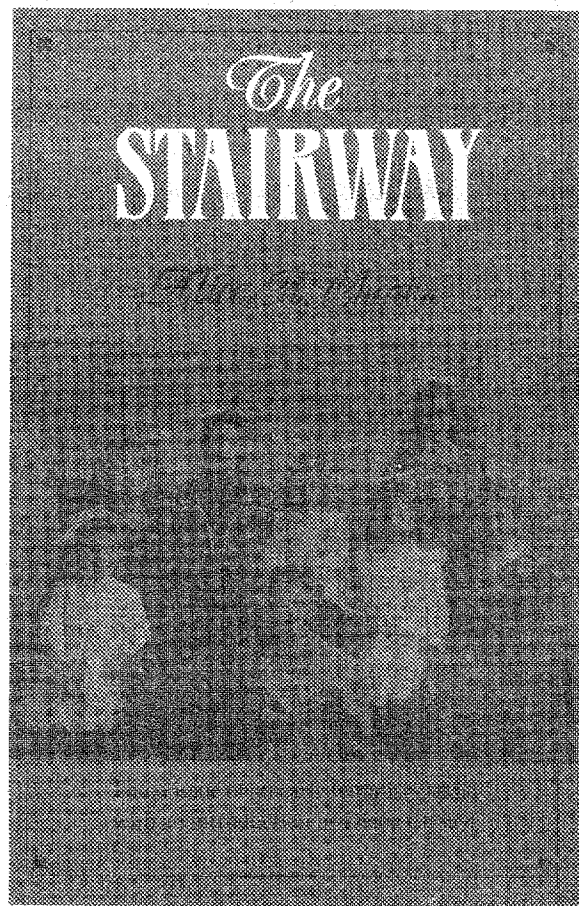
BROADSIDE —

YOU MADE HISTORY

FOR WOMEN.

WE PUBLISH

SOME TOO.



The
STAIRWAY

AVAILABLE AT

YOUR FAVOURITE BOOKSTORE

THE STAIRWAY

ALICE A. CHOWN

INTRODUCTION BY DIANA CHOWN

An early Canadian feminist classic is at last available again. Based on the diaries of Alice Chown, *The Stairway* reveals a radical feminist and pacifist who was in some ways a woman of her time, in others very much ahead of it.

Cloth \$30.00, paper \$12.95

UNIVERSITY
OF TORONTO
PRESS

Broadside gratefully acknowledges the contributions of the following groups and individuals:

Darleen Lawson
Sherrill Cheda
Daphne Reid
Myra Lefkowitz
Joanne Kates
Nikki Colodny
Myrna Kostash
Constance Backhouse
Mary Meigs
Thelma McCormick
Liza Parkinson
Moirra Armour
Marion Meredith
Diana Majury
Megan Ellis

Gillian Walker
Fran Klodawsky
Jill Vickers
Marion Meredith
Lorna Weir
Alison Prentice
Jeri Wine
Anneke Steembeek
Gail Geltner
Sylvia Fraser
Bev Allinson
Merle Hudson
Susan Marcus
Joanne Liutkus
Vera Tarman

June Callwood
Betsy Nuse
Margaret Atwood
Marion Lydbrooke
Sylvia Spring
Susan Crean
Susan Boyd
Kay MacPherson
Sara Halprin
Betty Bresko
Libby Schier
Ann Rochon Ford
Hellie Wilson
Ann Innis Dagg
Barbara Godard

Mary O'Brien
Cath McNaughton
Donna Sharon
Nancy Jackman
Mary Louise Noble
Dorothy Zaborzsky
Maryon Kantaroff
Gabriela Goliger
Women's Studies,
Carleton University

... and the energy and talent of the writers, production artists, administrators, editors and volunteers who helped ensure that *Broadside* was published for the past ten years.

Broadside

P.O. BOX 494, STATION P.
TORONTO - ONTARIO - CANADA - M5S 2T1

Second Class Mail Registration No.: 4771

ISSN: 0225-6843

Is

Call 867

New College Ivey Library
University of Toronto
20 Willcocks Street
Toronto, Ontario

M5S 1A1

Nov 89