

TAPESTRY

A FEMINIST QUARTERLY



See p. 7

WINTER 1989
\$2.00

TAPESTRY is published by the

*Vernon
Women's
Centre*

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The Vernon Women's Centre is primarily a resource centre of information pertinent to issues of concern and interest to women. We are a registered society and are supported by fees, donations, fundraising and government grants.

Our resource library contains non-fiction, governmental and non-governmental reports as well as novels, poetry and prose.

In addition to TAPESTRY we offer workshops, seminars and conferences throughout the year on such topics as:

violence against women
sexual harassment
human rights
sex role stereotyping
childcare
pay equity
homemakers pensions
the physically challenged
visible and invisible minorities
women in conflict with the law
employment standards
reproductive hazards
non-traditional work
pornography
prostitution
world peace
the environment

The Vernon Women's Centre is located at #6 - 3000 - 30th St. in Vernon B.C. Office hours are: Monday-Thursday 9a.m. to 4p.m. Friday 9a.m. to 1p.m.

The mailing address is:

P.O. Box 1242
Vernon B.C. V1T 6N6

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The views expressed in TAPESTRY are those of the authors' and do not necessarily reflect those of the Tapestry collective or The Vernon Women's Centre.



Vernon and District Women's Centre Society

P.O. Box 1242, Vernon, British Columbia V1T 6N6

Ph. 542-7531

Greetings from the Tapestry collective,

This letter is to let you know that your subscription to Tapestry expires with this issue. We would very much appreciate your continued support. Tapestry needs you!

Please take a minute to fill out the subscription form below.

If you have any comments or suggestions, we would like to hear from you.

Yours sincerely,

Marcia Browne
for the Tapestry collective



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CO-ORDINATOR'S REPORT

Christmas and the election have come and gone since the last issue of Tapestry and the wrappings have been taken off our biggest "present" Free Trade.

Thanks to the intense debate over Free Trade, Canadian women have become alerted to many economic issues they may otherwise have ignored. We are concerned about the closure of Canadian branch plants and mergers which will result in job losses, the new sales tax and the latest attacks on our UIC system by big business interests.

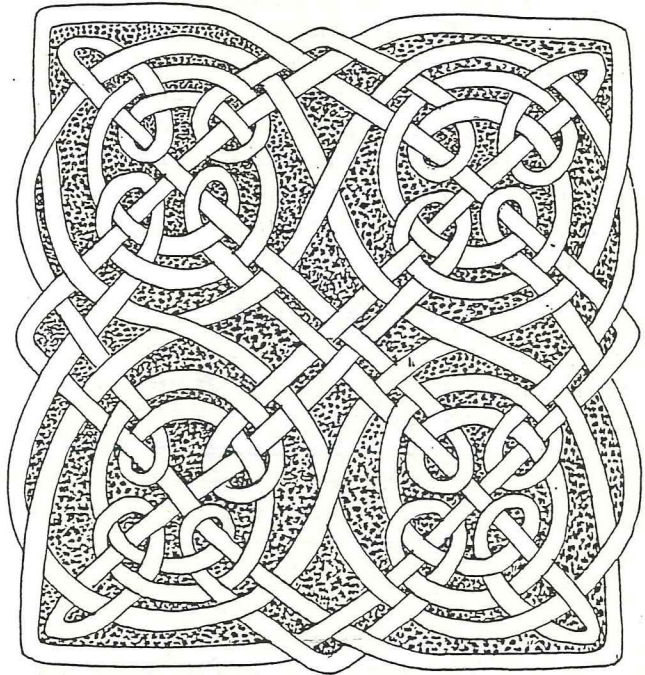
What do these subjects have to do with Sexism - our current Tapestry topic? The exclusion and marginalization of women in our economy are glaring examples of sexism. Women's work is unpaid or underpaid; women in most communities including ours can only hope to get part-time work; and even full-time work rarely pays "a man's wage." Our jobs are the first to go when shut downs and lay offs are threatened. The economic system which perpetuates such injustice is simply sexist.

Economic injustice is only part of the systemic discrimination against women. Physical injustice must also be added to the picture.

In our society, women lose their personal safety and integrity in many ways: as victims of child sexual abuse, as wives of batterers and as victims of sexual assault to name some of the worst. But also as pregnant women, our right to control our own bodies is constantly under attack and as women of all ages, we find our power over our physical bodies constrained, limited, questioned and denied.

It is important that this statement of fact does not get understood as blame of Society in general or Men in particular. Blame is not a useful tool. But identifying our experience, labelling it and validating it can help us to change for the better.

How does a Women's Centre go about challenging sexist social patterns? It starts by empowering women; by challenging internalized sexism. This is not easy. We believe that we are weak, unintelligent, a failure; that we have a limited capacity for success, or that we have to settle for less than what we really want. This belief is our biggest barrier to success. This is the belief that Women's Centres are determined to dispel.



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THE BULL OF HEAVEN

or how the Goddess was Destroyed

by Theodora Jensen

Perhaps the most important part of human history - the change from a woman - and nature - centred world to one where women and nature are dominated by men - has been shrouded in a conspiracy of silence. Here, Theodora Jensen, a writer from Toronto, argues that lifting that shroud is crucial to our future on Earth.

Is it a romantic idea to relate feminism with a concern for the environment? Or is there a rational link between the feminist and environmental movements? I believe history shows there's not merely a link but a common ancestor. You could say the movements are fraternal twins (or sororal twins) - different, but born together.

Their birth occurred during a violent and extended upheaval some 5,000 years ago. The old culture and its basic principles were suppressed and a drastically different culture created. Its basic principles persist today and motivate the behavior of the majority of people.

THE OLD GODDESS CULTURE

The old culture was one of mother-right and the Mother Goddess. It is loosely referred to as 'matriarchy' because we don't have a good general term for the culture about which Joseph Campbell writes,

"...it is now perfectly clear that before the violent entry of the ...Aryan cattle-herders from the north and Semitic sheep-and-goat herders from the south into the old cult sites of the ancient world, there had prevailed in that world an

essentially organic, vegetal, non-heroic view of nature and necessities of life..." (Occidental Mythology, p.21)

Then, people in Eastern Europe and the Middle East lived in relatively wealthy communities where they enjoyed plentiful food, domed buildings, wheeled vehicles, metallurgy, trade over land and water and cuneiform writing. There was no war.

"THE GREAT GODDESS WAS THE FRUITFUL EARTH: THE SEA HER WOMB, THE MOUNTAINS HER BREASTS, THE RIVERS HER LIFE-GIVING MENSTRUAL BLOOD."

The gods were female, a fact which has been known since the last century but which is not taught in schools, despite (or because of) its being a critical part of the history of women. The basic philosophy of this culture was monism - that is, the earth and all life on it was considered to be one and sacred. The Great Goddess was the fruitful earth: the sea her womb, the mountains her breasts, the rivers her life-giving menstrual blood. Sex and the vulva were magic and sacred.

The female deity was no saint. She was god of death and war as well as life and love and many other spheres. And she had a temper. But it was also believed that she had a special quality of grace - karuna - in sanskrit - which combined beauty, kindness, mother-love, tenderness, sensual delight, compassion and care.

The religious expression was often through symbols and metaphor. William Irwin Thompson writes that, "The Great Mother is no simple notion from primitive religion, but an idea in a complex mythology..." (The Time Falling Bodies Take to Light, p.128.)

The basic principles of 'matriarchy', then, are that women and men are part of nature and her cycle, and life-giving is supremely valued, together with woman, the vulva and menstrual blood.

The dramatic change away from 'matriarchal' culture began with a series of aggressive invasions (c. 4,500 to 2,500 B.C.E.) by semi-nomadic, uncultured, northern Europeans who introduced war together with an entirely different philosophy of life which was patriarchy. Gerda Lerner in her rigorous history of the subject, The Creation of Patriarchy, describes its advent as "not one 'event' but a process developing over a period of nearly 2,500 years, from approximately 3,100 to 600 B.C.E.," occurring at different times in different societies.

The early patriarchies specialized in warfare using the chariot, in the capture of land and the enslavement of prisoners of war. From this last practice came the idea that men could enslave the women of their own society, an idea these patriarchs carried out through law and through religion.

"...the old cosmology and mythologies of the goddess mother were radically transformed, reinterpreted, and in large measure even suppressed..." (Joseph Campbell, Occidental Mythology, p.7.)

The goddess religion and its

temples and statues were destroyed and replaced by a newly-created father religion. The male god was a warrior god who was fierce and vengeful. The sacred myths of the old religion were rewritten, transferring the powers of divine and human creation to men. The once sacred vulva became polluting and shameful, the property of father and husband, as were the children it produced. Life was no longer cyclical but short, and the earth was there for plundering.



NIRREN SCULLY

The philosophy of early patriarchy was, then, one in which the female was part of nature and the male transcended nature. His humanness was in opposition to nature. Life-taking and the spilling of Men's blood were supremely valued, along with the penis as symbolic sword. While these principles may have been moderated in a few societies, they have not been changed in the 5,000 years between then and now.

'CIVILIZATION': DEBASING NATURE

The oldest story yet recovered which shows this dramatic change of philosophy is from Mesopotamia (from a time and place we're taught is the cradle of "civilization"-meaning patriarchal culture), in what is now southern Iraq. The Epic of Gilgamesh was an oral-tradition story written down sometime after 2,000 B.C.E. Gilgamesh seems to have been a historical ruler of the city Uruk around 2,600 B.C.E.

The story is about the young king's ego, his ambitions and his search for immortality. Enkidu, another character, is a man of nature, reared with the animals, who is seduced from out of the forest to the city, where he meets Gilgamesh. After an initial wrestling match, they become close friends. Enkidu exchanges his animal skins for city clothes and ways.

The two men decide to go on a long journey to the woods to get timber for the city and to kill the giant who is guardian of the cedar forest. They arrive and Enkidu kills the forest guardian. And as Gilgamesh falls trees, Enkidu "cleared their roots as far as the banks of the Euphrates".

"Here are the roots of the ecological crisis of our civilization," says Thompson. The debasing of nature seems to have

been well established some 4,000 years ago.

The story continues as the two men return triumphant to Uruk. Gilgamesh puts on royal robes and a crown. The goddess Ishtar sees him and asks him to be her bridegroom. Gilgamesh says he will gladly give her rich presents but he won't sleep with her. He cites the various misfortunes that have happened to her many previous husbands:

"Your lovers have found you like ...a sandal that trips the wearer. Which of your lovers did you ever love for ever?"

Gilgamesh is refusing to carry out the act necessary to become king: the sacred marriage. The early kings of the Middle East-in fact those from Britain to China-received their authority by mating with the goddess (the land), or her earthly priestess.



Kings couldn't rule if they were no longer virile. And goddesses turfed out kings to be with younger, sexier men -the lot of King Arthur at the hand of the goddess Guinevere and, probably, of Ishtar's ex-lovers.

So Gilgamesh refuses to have his kingship depend on a female god and, instead, crowns himself.

Ishtar is furious and brings the Bull of Heaven- symbolizing a seven year drought -to punish Gilgamesh's arrogant pride. But Enkidu kills the bull and, hearing Ishtar curse Gilgamesh, Enkidu,

"...tore out the Bull's right thigh and tossed it on her face saying, 'If I could lay my hands on you, it is this I should do to you, and lash the entrails to your side.'"

The word "thigh" has long been a euphemism for "phallus" and the horned bull has a rich, symbolic history. Horns signified initially a cow goddess and later the male god in the form of a bull or other horned animals. Moreover, in an era when sex was open and the goddess was particularly horny, the bull was a symbol of male sexuality. It was the virile counterpart to the goddess's sexuality and was widely sacrificed to her.

So when Gilgamesh presents the sun god with the Bull's heart, source of the soul, and Enkidu throws its spent phallus in the Goddess's face, putting down her sexuality in favour of male spirituality, we have a clear signal of the end of the female principle and the advent of patriarchy (and of bad taste:

Gilgamesh has the Bull's horns plated and takes them home to the palace to hang on the wall).

The story ends when the gods declare that one of the two heroes must die for their sins of pride. Enkidu dies and Gilgamesh goes off in search of immortality, which he doesn't find, and he eventually dies. The message of the story is that there is a new Bull in heaven.

THE OLD TESTAMENT versus THE GODDESS AND THE EARTH

The same abasing of the goddess religion found in Gilgamesh was continued with a vengeance by the writers of the Old Testament who recorded their oral -tradition stories roughly 500 years after the Epic of Gilgamesh was written down. They went far beyond Gilgamesh's rape of the forest and the flouting of Ishtar's authority.

THE STORY OF THE FALL IS ABOVE ALL A THREAT AGAINST THOSE WHO PRACTICE THE OLD RELIGION, WITH ALL BLAME RESIDING IN WOMAN."

In the Old Testament, nature and women get put down on pages 2 and 3 respectively. First Jehovah tells his newly-created human couple to "rule over the fish in the sea, the birds of heaven, and every living thing that moves upon the earth." Then Eve listens to the snake, eats the apple, committing the original sin, and brings death in the form of mortality to humankind.

The snake was a common symbol for the goddess, indicating rebirth, for a snake is "reborn" by shedding its skin. The apple was the goddess's sacred fruit. So of course the jealous new god punishes Eve for communing with the old goddess.

con't on p. 16

BOYCOTT NESTLE'S

An international consumer boycott against the Swiss-based Nestle company and the U.S.-based American Home Products (AHP) was announced on October 4, 1988 by Action for Corporate Accountability. The boycott has been called to protest the companies aggressive promotion of infant formula, their violations of the World Health Organization/UNICEF Code regulating infant formula promotion, and the danger to infant health resulting from their practices.

Nestle and AHP promote infant formula by dumping supplies of formula on hospitals and maternity wards, a marketing technique which has been condemned by WHO, UNICEF, and other international medical authorities because it can result in infant malnutrition and disease.

Nestle has broken the agreement it signed in 1984 when it agreed to restrict its supplies promotion. Neither Nestle nor AHP have indicated their intent to end the practice of inducing mothers to bottle feed by supplying hospitals with free or subsidized infant formula. Nestle and AHP continue to dump supplies of formula on hospitals around the world, frequently in huge quantities.

For example, in Singapore, Nestle and AHP each supplied formula to nine out of ten hospitals visited. At these hospitals, almost all newborns were fed on donated milk and mothers left with free samples. In Thailand, AHP provided supplies to 1 of every 13 hospitals and Nestle supplied to 12 out of 13.

Already there is widespread international support for the boycott. "This month we have received statements of support for a boycott against Nestle and AHP from organizations in more than

INFANT FEEDING ACTION COALITION



twenty countries...and we haven't started organizing yet." said Action's Executive Director, Janice Mantell.

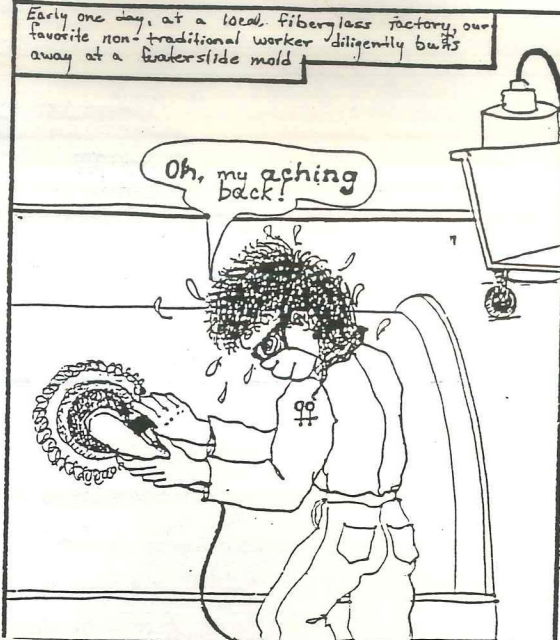
The boycotts will include all consumer products made by both companies and their subsidiaries. The Nestle boycott will focus on Taster's Choice Instant Coffee, and Coffeemate. The AHP boycott will focus on Anacin and Advil.

Other products made by Nestle include Stouffers frozen foods, Beech-nut baby foods, all Carnation products, Nestle chocolate and ice cream, and Beringer wines. AHP products include Dristan, Easy-off cleaners, Pam cooking spray, Chef Boy-ar-dee foods and Today family planning products.

For a complete list and further information contact:
INFACCT CANADA
Vancouver Committee,
4768 Blenheim St.,
Vancouver B.C. V6L 3A6

THE ADVENTURES of N.T.W.

Early one day, at a local fiberglass factory, our favorite non-traditional worker diligently busts away at a waterslide mold.



Oh, my aching back!

Enter Cool Dude meandering about on his first day at work.

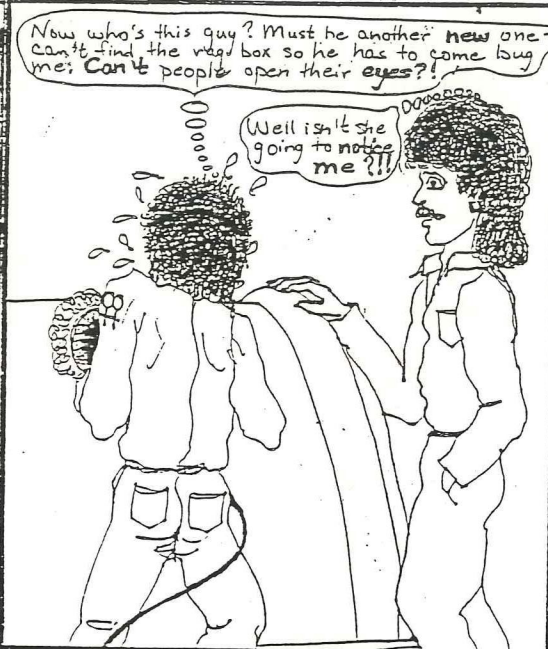


Hey, like, check it out, man!



What time is it? Good Goddess, I'm behind schedule! My foreman must be CRAZY if he expects me to get all this work done today!!

Who's the cute babe?!



Now who's this guy? Must be another new one - can't find the red box so he has to come bug me; Can't people open their eyes?!

Well isn't she going to notice me?!!

In the true spirit of cooperation and promotion of good will among workers (based on strong feminist principle), she interrupts her work flow to offer assistance to him with as much grace and civility as she can muster.



YEH?
WHAT?!

That's a pretty big tool for a little girl like you to be using isn't it!



GRRR

BUT WAIT! THERE IS A LINGERING QUESTION TO BE ASKED!

Several months later, the two actually become friends. Our favorite non-traditional worker finds Cool Dude's incredibly swollen ego just too laughable to be taken seriously. He approaches her one day to have a mad passionate love affair in the back room (all in good fun, of course). She looks him over and says, "Sorry, honey, but it's just not quite there!" He grins and says, "Wrong Sex?" "Yeh, wrong sex," she replies, looking him straight in the eye. "I thought so. But that's ok," allows Cool Dude, "I'll still party with ya anytime!" and walks away.

Well, it's a ~~short~~ folks!!

☺

The Babysitter

Speak the scene that draws
the generic memory
of the first night
alone
with the
babysitter.

Pristine unwillingness
praying and clinging
to the warm scent
of the maternal
leg.

Then the thud of the door-
and terror stalks
on two feet.

That powerful voice
that fills the universe
beguiles
to strip you of
your innocence.

Huddled in bed
beneath the quilt
you hear the tread
of doom
moving down the hall.

The smell of hot chocolate
entices your nostrils,
and you peer warily
above your shield.

Then innocence is lost
forever.
The hot chocolate never tasted
as good as it did
that night.



Chalchiuhtlicue
Goddess of water from springs and seas,
also associated with earth, salt, and maize,

Reconnect

Emotion the metal
Abstainance the fire
Time to solder disparate shards
of myself.

Pain in the new growth
Ache in the rot
That slowly begins
to fall away.

Concrete walkways
leading to nowhere
bruise the feet
of Gaea.

Spunsilk - shine in sunlight
as strong as today.
enshrouds - to shut the door
on concrete.

I walk through crystal
mountains.

Incalzando Espirando

Dartquick see me
Melody plays me
Vibratto susurration
Reason's obfuscation

Trail a wand
in the waters' edge
Feel the ripple

See me sinuous
writhe in the water

Heat to steam
Spray the ground
With Passion's play

YesterEve spoke to me

in muted milky roses
and alabaster blues.

Nature's neon greens
shrieked raucous jibes,
jeered at my communion
with Evening's beauty.

"Gaea grieves"
an understanding leaf -
one amongst an
infinity of hecklers
informed me.

And then I understood.
I opened my eyes -
wider.

Spectator

Decisive
yet indecisive
she stands at the door
unmoving.

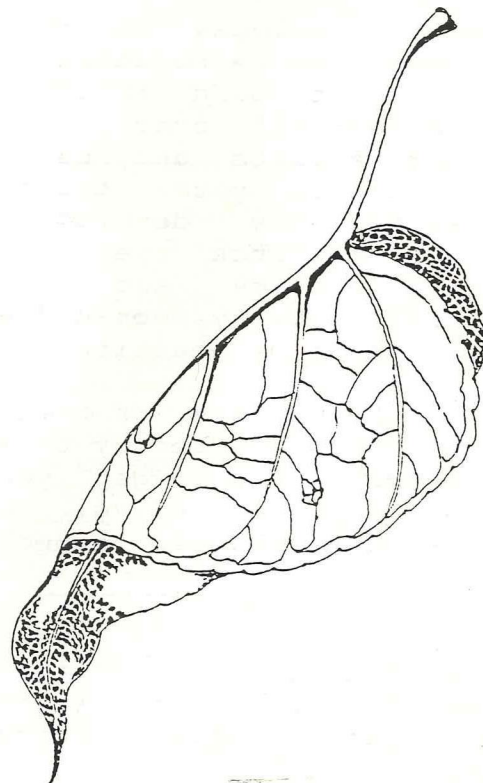
Cast in the mode
of vacillation.

The door behind
slams shut.

Before is a blank
a river bank,
so she sits
to fish awhile.

But she sat
too long-

and the river
dried up.



Kimberly Kardash

SEXISM - A TELEVISION EVIL

Before the days of television, it didn't matter whether a woman was beautiful when a man chose her for his wife. The priorities were different then. Strength was a major asset: strength to bear children, a dozen or more; strength to clean floors and walls and clothing, dishes, dirty faces, and dirty bums; strength to cook and to shop and to sew; to stretch pennies, bolster egos, and give comfort and love. I know that all these things were expected and usually done, because my mother did them all. She did them with a serious physical handicap too.

But oh, the changes today. The gadgets. T.V. as a babysitter, clothes ready made. Washers, driers, no ironing and fewer children. Daycare and a career if you choose.

And beauty. Today it is a woman's duty to be beautiful - if you weren't born that way just make yourself over. Enlarge your breasts and use a rolling pin on your thighs. Whole shops are devoted to cosmetics - two inch eyelashes, kissproof lipstick and hair sculpturing. Every woman owes it to her man to be beautiful.

Check out the models on television. You are judged by them. Be sexy, and don't forget your Maxi-thins. Be alive, be charming, and be what is expected of you.

Never mind you inside there, trying to get out, and yearning to be who you really are, fighting off that incipient nervous breakdown.

And fear, always there, lurking in the back of your mind. If you're not attractive enough, maybe you'll end up on the discard pile. Your self esteem

will be a thing of the past, your best years gone by the time you are thirty. No wonder we live such feverish lives - drug and alcohol abuse has never been higher, among women. The high keeps you going, to the point of self destruct.

So - where do we go from here? Don't look at the television or the glamour magazine for the answer. The answer doesn't sell well so there are no commercial sponsors.

As long as advertising is the main source of revenue for television, and the majority of movies are filled with violence toward women, our children will be influenced to a dangerous degree, by what they conceive as glamour, excitement, the modern way of life.



Fast cars, the use of violence to solve problems and the tough male image, are creating the future of our society. The dishonesty of politicians and the unequal division of the wealth of the world are not incentives for honesty in the rest of our population.

Have we any choices, any possible answers to these problems? If feminists had equal power in the communications industries I am sure we could find answers.

But we have to get there first, and today as I write this article, I am discouraged. I urge every woman to do her part. Don't accept the status quo. Appreciate your strength, power and beauty as you are. Don't let the television or anyone else make you think less of yourself than the full rich human being you are.

by Muriel Hurry



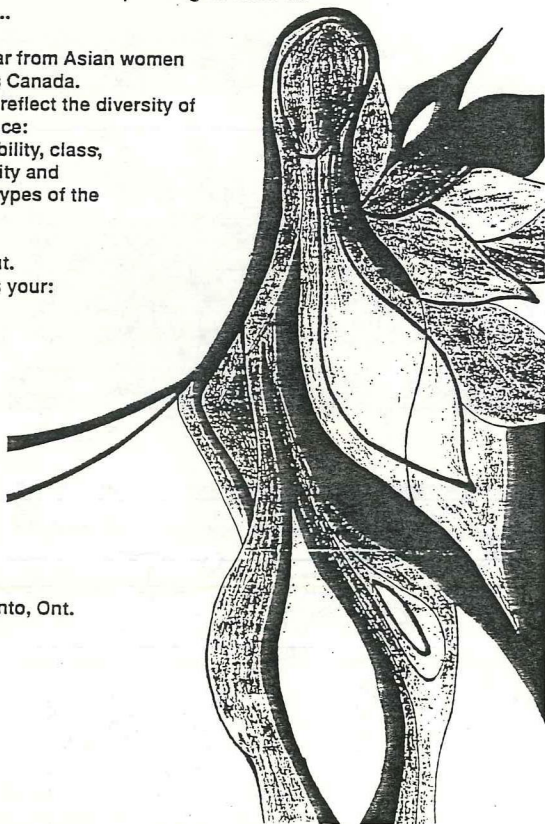
CALLING ALL ASIAN WOMEN FOR SUBMISSIONS

Fireweed guest collective is planning an issue on Asian women....

We want to hear from Asian women from all across Canada. This issue will reflect the diversity of Asian experience: race, age, disability, class, culture, sexuality and defy all stereotypes of the Asian women.

Don't be left out. Please send us your:
poetry
short stories
essays
visual arts
reviews
interviews
oral histories
biographies
photographs
theory.

Fireweed
P O Box 279
Station B, Toronto, Ont.
M5T 2W2



WRITE NOW SUBMISSIONS DUE APRIL 10, 1989



Representing over 400,000 students across Canada

WOMEN

Much of the increase in university and college enrollment in the last 20 years is due to an increase in the amount of women now participating. While women now represent half of undergraduate full-time enrollment, this proportion drops off at the graduate level, quite dramatically in some traditionally male dominated departments. Women represent 60% of part-time undergraduate students. The high rate of female enrollment in part-time studies and the relatively low participation of women at the graduate level can be attributed to some important barriers:

Daycare—Check how long the waiting list is on your campus.

Student Aid—In many provinces, the amount of assistance to help single parents is often unrealistically low.

Role Models—The lack of women in teaching positions at universities and colleges denies women students role models in an educational setting. Women only represent about 20% of university faculty and most of these are concentrated at lower academic ranks and in certain disciplines. Women make up only 2% of the faculty in engineering and the applied sciences and 5% in mathematics and the physical sciences. No wonder female enrolment falls off at the graduate level!

The Federation brought accessibility issues to the National Forum on Post-Secondary Education in the Fall of 1987. The Federation believes that post-secondary education should be accessible to all Canadians without discrimination on socio-economic, linguistic or cultural grounds. It has brought these views to government bodies involved in funding and student assistance and has supported groups seeking broader accessibility for their constituents.

The Federation will make accessibility a high profile issue in the upcoming federal election campaign.

For more information on what the Federation is doing on the issue of accessibility contact your local student association.

TACKLING SEXISM IN RURAL CANADA

Most men get a bit defensive when the topic of sexism comes up. They shuffle their feet and look away or get huffy and glare. "What's that new show about?" asked one male volunteer at our local T.V. station when we brought in our props for our women's series. "Oh they're going to line men up and shoot them on that show." muttered his companion and he wasn't joking.

What most men don't realize is that a good many women are uncomfortable with the concept too. In any community it's easy to find women who are vehement anti-feminists vigorously denying that sexism exists at all.

Unfortunately the topic doesn't come up often, even in our women's centre, although we are confronted daily with the results of a sexist society. I get the feeling that we're walking on eggshells, almost cringing. If we avoid talking about sexism or feminism we might avoid the labels: "man-hating", "radical", "bra-burning" "bunch of-----" (fill in the blank with any homophobic slur.)

In a small community, where we have to be tactful to survive, there is a constant pressure to abandon the words sexism and feminism. I don't think we can afford to do this. On the other hand, I do believe there must be a way to present information on sexism without compromise and without alienating the listener, even if the listener is male or a non-feminist woman.

To do this I propose two tactical approaches to the topic which could be useful to feminists in the effort to eliminate sexism from our communities.

If the listener is male it can be useful to find out how he has been hurt by the arbitrary sex-role stereotype society has offered him. This approach encourages the discovery that the elimination of sexism will benefit men too. It's pleasant to hear men commenting on the joys of active parenting or the pleasure of not being the sole breadwinner. Such men become our allies in the elimination of sexism.

If the listener is a non-feminist woman the task is slightly harder. This is because as feminists we have found it hard to recognize and validate the customary and genuine (though certainly limited) exercise of power which the traditional female role did give to women.



Jewels Graphics

Women have indeed been excluded from public power, but to conclude that we have been powerless, is to seriously underestimate ourselves. Worse, it prevents us from understanding why R.E.A.L. women and other non-feminists don't want to be "liberated". These women feel that the power they could gain from becoming liberated would not compensate for the power they might have to relinquish, over the home, family and emotional lives of mate and children. Under the present economic system there is more than a little truth to these fears.

By listening to them rather than rejecting them, feminist theory could become far more flexible and complete than it is now.

These two tactics have in common the assumption that the elimination of sexism is an inevitable, irreversible and natural process, not a battle which could be lost at any moment to the whim of fate. Such an assumption provides us the necessary safety to be able to take some responsibility for changing the world rather than simply blaming men and expecting them to change. More importantly it allows us to incorporate the most diverse thinking of every woman into the feminist perspective, while giving it the recognition and validation it deserves.

Robin LeDrew



SEX-ROLE STEREOTYPING IS:

- Failure to represent women in their full variety of ages, shapes, sizes & colours.
- Failure to reflect the increasing diversity of women's lives.
- Failure to portray a representative range of the occupations that women hold.
- Invisibility of women in discussions of many issues.

- Portrayal of women as sexual lures and decorative objects.
- Invisibility of female experts and decision makers.
- Language which assumes that everyone is male unless identified otherwise.

Sex-role stereotyping is harmful to women because it dehumanizes, misrepresents and degrades them. The extreme form of this distortion is pornography.

Interested in MediaWatch?



National Watch on Images of Women in the Media Inc. (Media Watch) is a national women's organization concerned with the status of women in the mass media. Individuals and organizations who become supporting members receive the MediaWatch Bulletin and other target-action bulletins. They also participate in the selection process for the annual MediaWatch awards for positive portrayals of women and wish to be known as supporters of MediaWatch.

Supporting members will receive a complimentary copy of *Adjusting the Image*:

Women and Canadian Broadcasting, an 80-page summary of the key events and issues concerning women and broadcasting from 1979 to the present. Includes bibliographies of relevant briefs, reports and legislation.

Please direct all enquiries, membership applications, subscription requests and change-of-address information to the MediaWatch National Office in Vancouver.

FEE SCHEDULE:

Supporting membership (you pay what you can afford within the fee range):
 Individuals: \$15-\$50/per year
 Organizations: \$25-\$75/per year

Bulletin subscription only:
 \$20/per year, for three issues

Adjusting the Image Report:
 Regular price: \$15
 Institutional rate: \$25
 FREE TO NEW MEMBERS

GREEN MASCARA

To me sexism can be summed up in one small story-

When my son was eight months old, I was babysitting another little girl of the same age. I took the babies over to the local grocery store to pick up a few items. I put both children in shopping carts. A woman in her mid-thirties came up and smiled at the little girl saying "Isn't she just a little sweetheart." Then she turned to my healthy breast-fed son and said in a deep voice "and aren't you a big bruiser."

It was like a light bulb going off in my head! This is where it all starts. Even before we begin to walk we are put in boxes and seen as "sweet little things," or "big bruisers." How do we have any choice but to buy the package, from those pink booties at birth to armpit waxing, feminine hygiene spray and silicone in adulthood.

Both sexes suffer in our obsessively fashion-conscious society. Because of my own gender I'm more familiar with how women are affected. Ads, magazines, rock videos and movies blatantly shove down our throats what we should look like and be like. Yet, sadly enough, we buy it. Not all the time but still... Last week I purchased green mascara. It cost me \$7, and I felt embarrassed buying it, especially since I harp to my daughter about "women's natural beauty" and how we don't need that "stuff". Yet I was looking in the mirror feeling old and unattractive and I am only 29. I bought mascara to counteract the feelings. It didn't work. I feel old because all I've ever heard

is, "Just wait until you're thirty, It's down hill all the way" and part of me believes it.

I've grown up believing that women are emotional, the ones who cry, the timid ones, the ones that don't sweat, swear or fight with their fists. They're the ones who are raped, battered physically and sexually harassed on the job.

TWENTY YEARS LATER MY BOSS STILL THINKS HE CAN SMACK MY ASS, AND I STILL FEEL THE SAME HELPLESSNESS IN MY FEEBLE "DON'T".

I grew up feeling afraid of men. They were bigger, louder, more aggressive. I remember walking down the street when I was a young teenager cringing from the cat calls and rude comments I received from passing cars. I didn't know I had the right to feel angry and violated by that, or by the way the man whose children I baby sat, looked at me. Or the way he smacked my buttocks "in fun". "All you young girls are hot to trot," he would say as I cringed inside but pretended not to hear.

Twenty years later my boss still thinks he can smack my ass, and I still feel the same helplessness in my feeble "don't".

As little girls we are told - "don't talk back, don't get dirty, don't hit, don't be angry, don't, don't, don't..." and after awhile we DON'T. We become polite, eager to please, nice, sweet, pretty, tidy and helpful.

Iv'e 'heard' things are changing and women are equal, but I don't believe it. Women are still objects. Check out any news-stand or rock video. You'll see beautiful, red pouty lipped women hanging on to men's tattered jeans begging for recognition. When my nine year old daughter sees those magazines or videos she is imprinted with that mes-

sage no matter what I could say. She practices pouting, arching her eyebrows and tossing her hair trying to perfect the Madonna image.

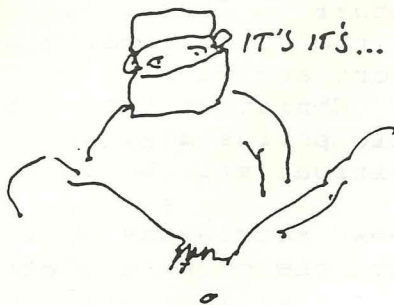
Women must look good, or they are not valued. They must be young. They must be slender. No matter how intelligent a woman, if she does not have the above credentials she will have a more difficult time succeeding and receiving recognition for what she accomplishes.

Thumbing through a magazine I came across an article about Florence Griffith Joyner the gold medal runner at the Olympic Games. She is the fastest woman in the world. Yet the magazine spent half the article talking about her long nails and good looks. Now that's what really makes her a winner, Right?

Sexism is in every nook and cranny of our society. It hurts women, It hurts men. It has us seeing each other as babes or hunks, the perfect 10's. It has brilliant women starving their way through university and men taking steroids to "beefup". It has my daughter squeezing into mini-skirts at nine years old and my four year old son thinking he's He-man. Sadly enough it even has me buying green mascara that itches and makes me look permanently wide-eyed and surprised.

I don't want to play a role any more. And I'm not really sure exactly what a woman is, or a man for that matter. I just want to be a human. Someone with feelings, dreams, hopes, power and strength. It's what I want for us all.

Lana Maree



con't from p. 5

The story of the Fall is above all a threat against those who practice the old religion, with all blame residing in woman. Beyond Genesis, the "Old Testament" rails repeatedly against the goddess, commanding the destruction of its sites or worship and its followers:

"You shall demolish all the sanctuaries where the nations whose place you are taking worship their gods, on mountaintops and hills and under every spreading tree. You shall pull down their altars and break their sacred pillars, burn their sacred poles and hack down the idols of their gods..."
(Deuteronomy 12: 2,3.)

THE OLD TESTAMENT DOES AVOID MENTIONING THE WORD "GODDESS" HOWEVER, AND THE FACT THAT THE PROHIBITED IDOLS HAD BREASTS.

Jehovah tells Ezekiel to kill the worshippers of the goddess and her consort,

"'Kill and destroy them all... Defile the temple,' he said, 'and fill the courts with dead bodies; then go out into the city and kill.'" (Ezekiel 9: 6-7.)

The Old Testament does avoid mentioning the word "goddess", however, and the fact that the prohibited idols had breasts.

A basic principle seen in the "Old Testament" is opposition to the monistic, earth religion of the female deity. This opposition is extended to the point where the taking of life of those who worship other deities is esteemed and women in general are vilified.

THE GREEK PATRIARCHY: SERVED BY WOMEN AND NATURE

By the time we get to classical Greek culture, the debasing of women and nature no longer resembles a B-horror movie. It has been institutionalized and intellectualized. For the latter we can thank, more than anyone, Plato's student, Aristotle (384-324 B.C.), who, the "Encyclopedia Britannica" says,

"...has characterized the orientation and content of all that is termed Western Civilization: Aristotle was the author of an intellectual system that, through the centuries, became the support and vehicle for both medieval Christian and Islamic scholastic philosophy."
(15th edition, vol. 1, p. 1162.)

The Greek patriarchy gradually took over the goddess religion, rather than killing it off as did the Jews and, later, Christians. The Greeks added male gods to the religion so that, over time, there was a pantheon of deities. Male gods, however, had usurped the major powers of the goddess. Zeus, for example gives birth to the goddess Athena - an historically older deity than Zeus - from his head.

Aristotle dealt not with the gods but with men and women, plants and animals and intellectual concerns. He set men and humanness against women and nature. He defined society as cleaved in two classes: 'polis,' or the state and political activities on the one hand, and 'oikos,' the private household, comprising production and reproduction, on the other. Those who made up the state were defined as living above the sphere of nature and necessity. The rest - women, slaves, barbarians (foreigners) and free, but working, men - were in the

RECONCILING HISTORY - FOR THE FUTURE OF THE EARTH

sphere of "unfreedom" and were "by nature" meant to serve the men of the state.

Since woman was a "mutilated" and "impotent" man, and had only an "inconclusive" soul, her degree of moral goodness was stunted and she, like others in the sphere of necessity, was "naturally ruled." Since man had the soul of a ruler, he, "accordingly, must possess moral goodness in its full and perfect form..." So woman is made to serve this paragon of virtue. And so is nature.

"Plants exist to give subsistence to animals, and animals to give it to men...as nature makes nothing purposeless or in vain, all animals must have been made by nature for the sake of men." (The Politics, p. 21.)

He says it is natural for man to acquire that which has been provided for his use - be it through farming, raising livestock, lumbering or mining. While Aristotle abhors the acquisition of property beyond need, he justifies war:

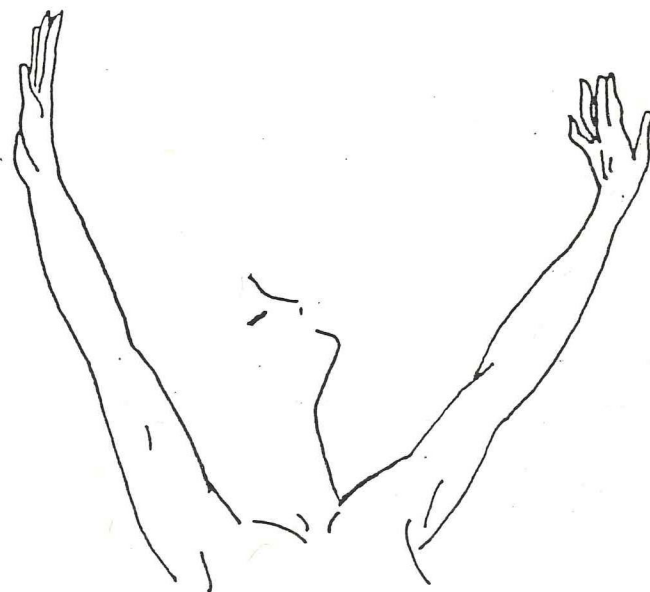
"....hunting ought to be practiced - not only against wild animals, but also against human beings who are intended by nature to be ruled by others and refuse to obey that intention - because war of this order is naturally just." (The Politics, p.2.)

So Aristotle's basic principle regarding women and nature is that they are both base and should serve the transcending soul of man as well as his parasitic body and all its needs. And war was good.

Reading some of the major philosophic/religious texts of western 'civilization' and observing the principles of today's culture, I have three conclusions.

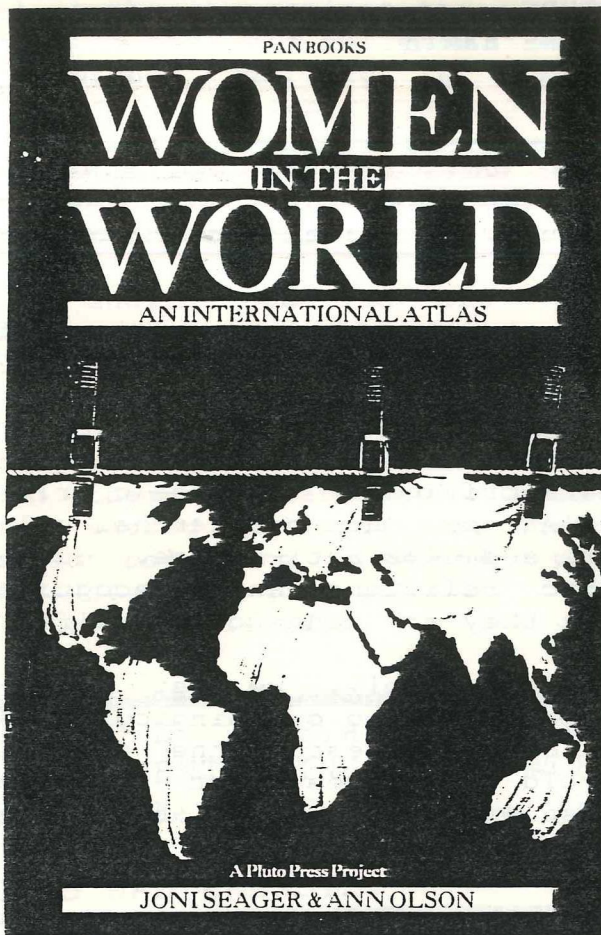
We must stop the suppression of information on the 'matriarchy' and its nature-based monistic religion so that we can study and learn from it. We must examine critically the basic principles of our patriarchal culture and its anti-nature, dualistic religions and recognize that they are dangerous to life.

And, inevitably, we must reconcile these two opposing cultures in order to escape the various morbid scenarios that trouble those of us who worry about the future of the earth.



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BOOK REVIEW



**WOMEN IN THE WORLD:
AN INTERNATIONAL ATLAS**
Seager, Joni and Olson, Ann.
London: Pan Books, 1986

Statistical information on the world's women is usually difficult and often impossible to obtain. Statistics that ought to be compiled as a matter of course, that we take for granted are being compiled through census surveys or government information services are simply unavailable. Important national data such as the average age of women at marriage, the number of women engaged in certain occupations and the number of women suffering certain illnesses, are frequently either nowhere to be found or based on assumption, estimation, or wildly inaccurate guesses.

Why information on the world's women is not being compiled is open to interpretation. But according to Joni Seager and Ann Olson, in all likelihood it has to do with official policies and priorities which discount the value of collecting data on women. Worldwide, what women do is viewed as being less important than what men do.

Women In The World: An International Atlas is the first reference source that comprehensively addresses the statistical invisibility of women. Only 128 pages, it overflows with information that documents the positions of women, in relation to men and in relation to women, across an international spectrum. Through the use of countless colourful and easy to understand maps, tables, charts and graphs, it explores the similarities and differences, contrasts and continuities of women, while providing detailed evidence about who has the authority, the power and the wealth in the world.

WOMEN IN THE WORLD is organized by 40 topics under 10 categories. For example, the category MARRIAGE covers the 4 topics, Young Brides, Domestic Disorders, Social Security and Single States. These 4 topics are highlighted by a world map and 7 tables and charts. Each topic is comprehensively described in detail in a "Notes" section, and each note is supported by no less than 10 references to multiple sources. Where "official" data was inadequate or nonexistent, the sources for this labourious research include those of feminist publications including books, reports, newsletters and alternative journals.

BOOK REVIEW

WOMEN IN THE WORLD ought to be required reading for every government official who has ever stated or inferred that worldwide, women are not that much worse off than men. It ought to be read by every person who has ever wondered if women's lives are as bad as feminist groups claim. And it ought to be on every woman's bookshelf who has ever found herself in the position of needing information to "prove it" when she is disbelieved by men. As for trivia buffs, they will no doubt gleefully embrace this book for its often shocking and bizarre obscurities.

For example, who would guess that the most common age for a woman to marry in India, is 9 years? Or that 27.6% of children in India die before their first birthday? Or that the death rate per 1,000 live births in South Africa is 12 for white children and 300 for "Homelands" black children? Or that women do 95% of domestic work, 85% of crop processing and 60% of harvesting? Or that Canada lags far behind Italy, (the country of the Pope) in access to abortion. In Italy it's ordained. In Canada, it's legal only where the woman's health is in permanent danger.

If you have ever needed confirmation that jobs defined as women's work carry low pay, low status, and little security, this book will detail how in North America bank tellers are among the lowest paid, while in Nepal it is road builders, in the USSR it is medical doctors, and in West Africa, it is market traders. And if you have ever wondered if there is a correlation between beauty contests, sex for sale (international traffic in women) and rape, this book details it all in 5 maps and 8 charts and graphs

WOMEN IN THE WORLD is a meticulously researched, well presented compilation of statistics on almost every facet of women's lives, written by two intensely committed women who understand the need for women to be included in the information mainstream.

reviewed by Teresa Murphy

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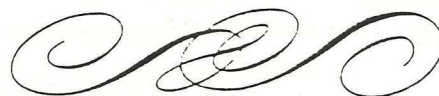
SELF HELP

Esther Kuyper, the poverty advocate at the Vernon Women's Centre, has received a grant from PLURA, an interchurch funding agency, to operate the advocacy group SELF HELP. SELF HELP hopes to provide low income people with information and a network of volunteer advocates who can act in a supporting role.

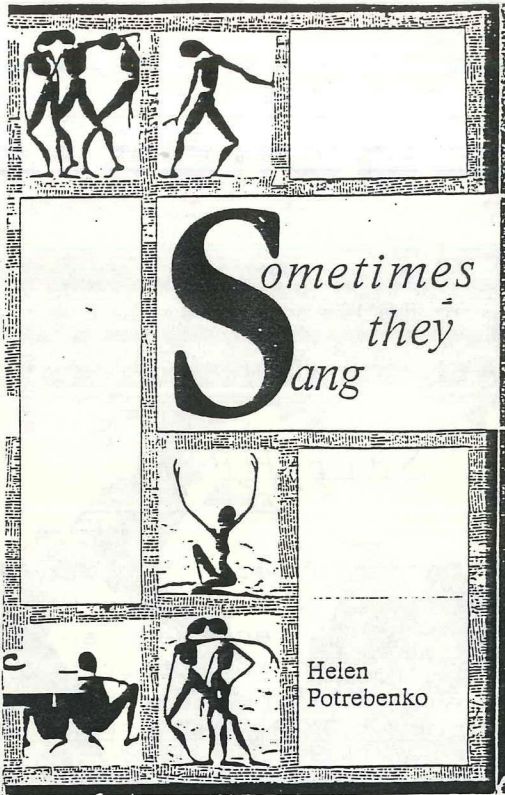
"Our goal is to empower clients to solve their own problems through a process of education (both public and private) and encouragement." says Esther.

"SELF HELP services will be available to the working poor as well as to those on Social Assistance. If you are unsure about your rights or if you are having difficulty with various government agencies, give us a call."

Esther will co-ordinate SELF HELP out of the Vernon Women's Centre, 3000, 30th st. upstairs. The phone number is 545-6406.



BOOK REVIEW



SOMETIMES THEY SANG

by Helen Potrebenco
Press Gang Publishers 1986

This book is a cry of anger and love, hung on an almost non-existent plot. Odessa Greeneaway is 35 and decides to have a baby. She is alone; her 585th job application has brought her a six month job at one of our society's nothing jobs. She has nowhere to live. She is a gut-response feminist, indifferent to the social and historical roots of the movement but with a visceral response to the injustices women face. Potrebenco is not, however, unaware and uses her hero's dilemmas to give the reader an understanding of the basis for Odessa's oppression.

To "prevent herself from sliding into despair" Odessa volunteers

to work at the Women's Bookstore. To please the women, she offers to walk a picket line for an issue she hardly understands.

Potrebenco both loves and is exasperated by Odessa, by her apparent weakness and indecisiveness but, from her indomitable Ukrainian mother, Yevgenia, she has inherited secret strengths. Her mother, she believes will never die.

Odessa's search for the women's movement begins with rap groups, where the emphasis is exclusively on sex and sexuality.

Like many women growing up in the 50's, Odessa believed that if she could not follow or even understand the rules about women's sexuality, there must be something wrong with her. It never occurred to her that the rules made no sense. p.23

Potrebenco puts Odessa through all the classic women's hoops; abortion, homelessness, confusion over sexuality, and attacks, both physical and psychological by men. Her deepest anger is reserved for society in general, which disregards and disempowers Odessa, and in particular for the men she encounters who reduce her metaphorically to a collection of body parts. It is only the courage she has inherited from her mother which saves her, and the book ends as it began, with the hero embarking on further adventures, no baby, no job, and no home.

But for all the pain and despair, she grew and prospered and gained in strength. The women treated her badly; it made no difference. They gave her a

framework to see that the pain and despair were just incidents that came from poverty, from too many guaranteed failures from looking into each other's eyes and seeing therein the hopelessness of a speedy victory. p.102

Potrebenko, a Vancouver writer, has had five books published, the best known of which is Taxi. Her work concentrates on and celebrates the struggles of women.

reviewed by Jane Evans

Available in our library

CALENDAR

FEBRUARY

- 7 Women for Sobriety meets every Tuesday from 11:45 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at the Vernon Women's Centre.
- 6 Talking It Out - a support group for women leaving abusive relationships. Every Monday at the Women's Centre at 7:00 p.m.
- 13 SHOCKING PINK - Tune in to Cable 10 at 9:30 p.m. for programming presented by the Women's Centre.

MARCH

- 7 Women for Sobriety Meets every Tuesday 11:45 to 1:00 at the Vernon Women's Centre.
- 6 Talking It Out - a support group for women leaving abusive relationships. Every Monday at the Women's Centre at 7:00 p.m.
- 8 International Women's Day Join us for refreshments, guest speakers and entertainment at the Village Green Inn in Vernon at 7:00 p.m. \$7.50 p/person

13 SHOCKING PINK - tune in to Cable 10 at 9:30 p.m. for programming by the Vernon Women's Centre.

* Susan Cole is coming to Okanagan College (Vernon campus) to speak on the topic of Sexual Harrassment. For further information contact the college at 545-7291 or the Women's Centre at 543-7531.

APRIL

- 4 Women for Sobriety meets every Tuesday 11:45 to 1:00 at the Vernon Women's Centre.
- 3 Talking It Out - a support group for women leaving abusive relationships. Every Monday at the Women's Centre at 7:00 p.m.
- 10 SHOCKING PINK - Tune in to Cable 10 at 9:30 p.m. for programming presented by the Women's Centre.



BEYOND SURVIVAL: WOMEN ADDICTION AND IDENTITY

March 31, April 1,2,3, 1989
Toronto, Ontario, Canada

This national conference will explore the intersecting dimensions of early childhood trauma, violence against women and addictive coping mechanisms. Conference presenters include dynamic therapists, researchers and community organizers such as: Sandra Butler, Ellen Bass and Connie Coniglio.

For registration information, contact Ani Arnott, Registration Co-ordinator, Community Resources and Initiatives, 150A Winona Drive, Toronto, Ontario, M5G 3S9, (416) 658-1752

NEW RESOURCES

Flawline - Frontline Advocacy Workers' Newsletter Vol.1 #1

This is the first issue of this newsletter whose purpose is to help advocates around the province network with each other. It is funded by a grant from Ox-fam and co-ordinated by End Legislated Poverty in Vancouver.

The Womanist - A new national newspaper on women's issues. It's goal is to provide up-to-date information on what goes on in the political sphere, news events in Canada and around the world, personal stories of women and critical analysis of what is happening in the women's movement today. #'s 1 and 2. Published by Catalyst Research & Communications.

THRIVING - Newsletter of Disabled Women's Network (DAWN) Canada Vol.1 No.1 In this issue, \$22 M for Transition Houses-But Can We Use Them. Reports from various DAWN groups.

Education Wife Assault Newsletter - Vol.2 Issue 1. This issue contains information about Education Wife Assault and the services they provide as well as a resource list including video and audio tapes.

Diversity - The Lesbian Rag - is by, for and about lesbians. This issue contains an interesting piece on what Diversity should try to represent in terms of Lesbian lifestyles and limitations on sexually explicit material.

Women and Drugs Newsletter - by Health and Welfare Canada.

"Few people ever plan to use benzodiazepines for a long time. It just sneaks up on them."

If this has happened to you or someone you know, then maybe this newsletter will have some helpful information for you.

Ombudsman 1987 Annual Report -

The Ombudsman is a person who listens to complaints people have about their treatment by Provincial Government agencies. Individual members of the public brought 12,712 concerns to the Ombudsman's office in 1987. The report contains case summaries and statistics.

Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women. Second Report of Canada. January 1988.

This report was submitted to the United Nations. It is the main international legal instrument which sets minimum standards of equality between the sexes.

Just Give Us The Money - A Discussion of Wage Discrimination and Pay Equity. by the Women's Research Centre 1988. No one can deny the fact that women simply do not get as much money as men do. This book looks at the history of strategies to address wage discrimination, including legislated pay equity.

From the Grass Roots - A critical consciousness approach to social justice in Prince Edward Island. This book contains case studies of six popular education groups engaged in struggles for social and economic justice. Through this project, working people are empowered to both analyse and transform their own social reality.

Equity at Work - A change agent project by the Ontario Women's Directorate. This is a series of reports by companies making efforts to implement employment equity.

*Refineries: The Future Workforce.

*Women in Road Paving.

*Physical Demands Testing.

*Union/Management Collaboration.

NEW LIBRARY TITLES

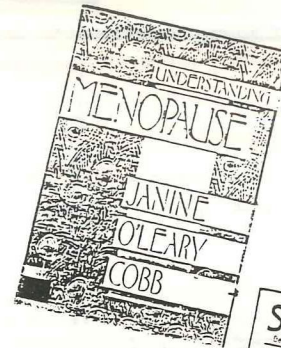
- *Women of the New Right
by Rebecca Klatch
- *There's a Good Girl
by Marianne Grabrucker
- *Push Me, Pull Me
by Sandra Chick
- *Hard Hatted Women
by Molly Martin

- *Back to Work
by Schuman & Lewis
- *A Young Women's Guide to Sex
by Voss & Gale
- *Free Trade and the Future of
Women's Work
by Marjorie Cohen
- *Perfect Women
by Colette Dowling

- *Mothers of Invention
by Vare & Ptacek
- *Small Businesses - That Grow &
Grow & Grow
by Patricia Woy
- *Street Woman
by Eleanor Miller
- *Women in the World
by Seager & Olsen

- *The Best is Yet to Come
by Betty Wylie
- *We are Everywhere
by Harriet Alpert
- *In Search of April Raintree
by Beatrice Culleton
- *Not Either an Experimental Doll
by Shula Marks

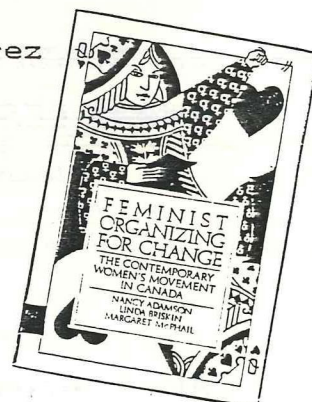
- *Lynda Madaras Talks to
Teenagers About AIDS
by Lynda Madaras
- *Alive and Well
by Hepburn & Gutierrez
- *Bingo
by Rita Mae Brown
- *Six of One
by Rita Mae Brown



- *My Father's House
by Sylvia Fraser
- *Changing Patterns
by Burt, Dorney & Code
- *I Never Called it Rape
by Robin Warshaw
- *Women Activists
by Anne Garland
- *Honour the Sun
by Ruby Slipperjack

- *Hunger Strike - The Anorectic's
Struggle as a Metaphor for Our
Age
by Susie Orbach
- *The Hungry Self - Women, Eating
and Identity
by Kim Chernin
- *Are You Too Fat Ginny?
by Karin Jasper

- *Understanding Menopause
by Janine O'Leary Cobb
- *Women's Reality - An Emerging
Female System in a White Male
Society
by Anne Wilson Schaff
- *Not an Easy Choice - A Feminist
Re-examines Abortion
Kathleen McDonnell



- *Feminist Organizing for Change
- The Contemporary Women's
Movement in Canada
by Nancy Adamson, Linda
Briskin, Margaret McPhail

Good Work Jan!

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In the Fall 1988 issue of Tapestry, a Vancouver clerical worker, Jan Nicol, provided us with an article, "A HEAVY LOAD AT HALF THE PRICE: OFFICE WORKERS SPEAK OUT ON THEIR WORKING CONDITIONS." This article summarized the findings of a survey Jan did on the salaries and working conditions of clerical workers in Vancouver. The survey was funded by by Labour Canada.

Since this article appeared, Jan has been contacted by CALM (Canadian Association of Labour Media) and was interviewed by Alison Applebe of the Vancouver Courier newspaper. That interview resulted in a front page article, "WAGE RAGE UP" in the Dec. 11, 1988 issue.

Jan has also been contacted by women's groups from as far away as New York City and Chicago who want more information on the study.

Good work Jan. Our magazine does make a difference!

Jan Nicol can be contacted at the B.C. Teachers Federation. (604) 731-8121



Any women wishing to contact the
RURAL LESBIAN ASSOCIATION

Please write to us at:

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V1T 6N6
or
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All enquiries will receive a reply



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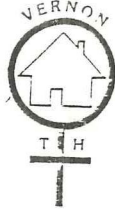


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