

TIGER LILY

MAGAZINE BY WOMEN OF COLOUR



MEXICAN WOMEN AS
LITERARY CRITICS

Lorraine Elena Rosas

DR. MERLINDA FREIRE

Marva Jackson

THE WOMEN'S MOVEMENT
IN THE PHILIPPINES

Sister Mary John Manazan

FICTION by

Luisa Valenzuela and Elena Poniatowska

THE UNKNOWN MISTRAL

Monica Riutort

WOMEN INSURGENTS IN PERU:

DE-MYSTIFYING THE SHINING PATH

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- 1 **From the Publisher's Desk**
- 2 **Editorial**
- 3 **SOCIAL ISSUES:**
The Women's Movement in the Philippines
Sister Mary John Manazan
- 5 **ESSAYS:**
The Unknown Gabriela
Monica Riutort
- 9 **Women Insurgents in Peru:**
De-Mystifying the Shining Path
Carol Andreas
- 15 **Mexican Women as Literary Critics**
Lorraine Elena Rosas
- 16 **FICTION:**
The Snow White Guard
Luisa Valenzuela
- 19 **The Streak of Green**
Elena Poniatowska
- 23 **Profile: Dr. Marlinda Freire**
Marva Jackson
- 28 **ESSAY:**
**Nicaraguan Women Before and After
the Revolution**
Alyson E. Feltes and Yola Grant
- 31 **EDUCATION:**
Refugee Families and their Children
Marlinda Freire
- 38 **MUSIC: Sabia**
Marva Jackson
- 40 **BOOK REVIEW:**
Women Struggling and Surviving
Susan Korah

The Unsung Heroines

Welcome to Issue Five! This issue of *Tiger Lily* is devoted entirely to Latin American women. We have attempted to provide a balanced view through a selection of essays, articles, profiles and short stories of modern women in transition.

One of the harshest lessons history has taught women — and in particular, minority women — is our INVISIBILITY. Yet, we know that women have played and continue to play vital roles in the development of our communities and our countries.

Many of the activists and resistance movement organizers of today can look back with pride to the contributions of the courageous women of the past; women such as the legendary and powerful Queen Coroni, whose female warriors defended her empire from all invaders; of Maria Candelaria, an Andean Indian who led a rebellion against her Spanish oppressors; the African Flippa Maria Aranha, chief of the Malali Indians of Brazil, who fought the Portuguese with a soldier's skill and forced them into forming a political alliance with her tribe; of the hundreds of women who died defending their country in the Battle of Paraguay (1864-70); and last but not least, the foremost guerrilla fighter, the Creole patriot, Colombia's Policarpa Salavarrieta (known as Pola), who was executed in 1817 by the Spaniards for her political activities.

With such a rich and varied history, it is little wonder that Latin American poets and writers can be counted as some of the finest in the world. They have been writing for centuries, yet many of their works still remain unknown and some of the more well-established writers still remain untranslated. But with the thirst for excellent literature there has been a resurgence and interest in poets such as the renaissance poet and intellectual, Mexico's Sor Juana Ines de la Cruz; Juana de Ibarbourou of Uruguay, who was given the name 'Juana de America' in recognition of her enormous talent in both Latin America and Spain; Nobel prize winner, Gabriela Mistral of Chile; and contemporary poets such as Alaide Foppa of Guatemala, Nancy Morejon of Cuba and Blanca Varela of Peru who carry on the fine tradition established by their predecessors.

The Latin American woman novelist is not as well known as her male counterpart, yet the work of women writers has made a tremendous impact upon the lives of women — by creating the awareness that change is not only inevitable, but also that it is possible and very dangerous. The Madonna image of

helplessness has been shattered and replaced with images of women that are vibrant, creative and resourceful.

Among some of the earliest articles to be written on feminism was by one of Colombia's foremost novelists, Soledad Ascosta de Samper, who also wrote about the plight of the Indian woman; Cuba's Lydia Cabrera is one of the few Spanish writers who wrote about the customs and culture of Africa; and Clorinda Matto de Turner of Peru was not only a novelist but the founder of two newspapers, *El Recreo* and *El Peru Ilustrado*. The modern novelist, such as Luisa Valenzuela of Argentina and Isabel Allende of Chile, to name a few, reflects the politics and social changes that are taking place in her country.

The activist and the writer share a common bond. In Latin America this bond has brought together women from diverse backgrounds, ethnicity, and class. They have dared to break with tradition and to challenge a sexist society by demanding equality at *all* levels. They are considered dangerous by many governments, yet they refuse to be silenced. They give hope to millions of women, who live lives of quiet despair.

We dedicate this issue of *Tiger Lily* to all the unsung heroines and to the 'disappeared', many of whom were writers, and especially to one of Latin America's best loved poets, Gabriela Mistral. We hope you, our readers, will enjoy this issue as much as we have enjoyed putting it together.

I wish to thank you, our subscribers, for believing in us and for your patience. To the writers and translators, *Tiger Lily's* editorial committee and to my wonderful co-editor, Marjorie Agosin, without whom this issue would not have been possible, and to Gay Allison, for her continued support and editorial advice, a heartfelt thanks.

In the next two issues of *Tiger Lily*, we take a critical look at the catch word 'Multiculturalism' — *The Myth and Reality*; and we pay special tribute to Women of Colour as Writers in *The Voices that Dare*.

"Woman

A being who tries
to find out who she is
and who begins to exist"

Alaide Foppa

Ann Wallace

Joining Hands and Voices

Written while thinking of Gabriela Mistral.

The Suicide

Among the stones,
named among the vestiges
with her mouth half asleep
half open
her arms driven
by lovelessness
she
grows beautiful
as we look on
simple, gone out
like night itself
she
the suicide
there for the world to see
in a vast fulfilment
in a liar's question
why does
she bleed into her coat of scales
why does she smell of death
and unraveled snakes?

Why did she go away?

She looks at us
growing more and more beautiful
because she's elsewhere and
descending in a circle
around
her hands that want nothing
her skin with fragrance and
chrysanthemums
her hair like a story
of never-true caresses.

She the suicide
burning among the stones.
Under the water
making night into
a secret
and life into
nothing
more
than
a woman stretched out among the
stones burning
her sound heard
in our
absence.
I look at her
looking more and more beautiful.

This issue of *Tiger Lily*, dedicated to the contributions of Latin American women, focusses on the creative energy of writers, political activists and teachers, and celebrates the centennial birth of the first Latin American woman to receive the Nobel Prize for Literature, in 1945, Gabriela Mistral. Poignantly written by the Chilean/Canadian Monica Riutort, the article points out that Gabriela Mistral was a generous school teacher from the Elqui Valley in northern Chile. Mistral (like the wind), so clearly exemplified by her last name, brought hope, laughter and poetry to women all over Latin America. *Tiger Lily* now celebrates and nourishes her legacy.

Her contributions to the education and well-being of Latin American women is Mistral's heritage; and it continues to flourish in the works of such writers as the Argentinean Luisa Valenzuela, now residing in the U.S., and the Mexican Elena Poniatowska, as well as in the essays on Mexican women and literary criticism by Lorraine Elena Roses.

With the advent of authoritarian regimes, women in Latin America have participated in the political development of their respective countries and led the way to new democracies, with groups like the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo and the women who make arpilleras in Chile. The role of women's political participation in Peru has not received the wider attention that it has in countries like Chile, Argentina or Guatemala. The article by Carol Andreas on Peruvian women and their political participation is a welcome contribution, as is the article on refugee women by Dr. Merlinda Freire.

This issue represents the women from diverse regions of North and South America joining hands and voices in song, celebrating their diversities as well as their heritage; and remembering the spirit of Gabriela Mistral that continues to prosper in each and every one of us that continues to make poetry and create new journeys.

a la vida

Marjorie Agosin

The Women's Movement in the Philippines

by Sister Mary John Manazan

The women's movement with a truly feminist orientation is still at its infancy in the Philippines. The awakening of the Filipino women however has had its roots in the history of the Philippines.

I. *The Filipino Woman in the Pre-colonial Society*

Spaniards

Documents show that the Filipino woman enjoyed a high status in the pre-colonial society in the economic socio-political and religious areas of life.

The Filipino woman is an economic asset to the family. The dowry which was given by the man's family to the woman is a proof to this fact. He was in some way making up for the loss of the economic contribution of the woman to her family. The woman participated in the economic activities of the family and community and often even performed managerial roles. An economic contract was valid only with the woman's signature.

In the political life, the woman could be a pact-holder, one who assumes responsibility for the security of other members of other tribes who ventured into the territory. She could also succeed her family as chief of the tribe if she were the first child.

In the family, girls are just as welcome as boys or even more so because of the dowry. Boys and girls received the same type of formation and enjoyed the same freedom of mobility. Mothers imparted sex education to their daughters and as missionaries attest, although in a negative tone, there was the same sex-

ual liberty enjoyed by the *mujer indigena* as her male counterpart which scandalized the Spanish missionaries.

In courtship the men not only gave the dowries, they also rendered a month's service to the bride's family. Once married, the wife kept custody of her property, could name her children and had the right to abortion and divorce.

In other words there was an egalitarian society in the pre-colonial days. With the coming of the Spaniards and Western civilization, the patriarchal society was introduced in the Philippines with all the negative consequences in the Filipino woman.

II. *The Women's Movement Before The Seventies*

During the Spanish period in spite of the general success of the missionaries to domesticate the Filipino woman, individual outstanding women broke through the domestication and took active part in the uprisings and finally in the revolution that ended the Spanish rule in the Philippines. Among these were Gabriela Silang, Melchora Aquino, Trinidad Tesson, Gregoria de Jesus, Agueda Kababagan.

The Filipino-American war in 1899 gave birth to the Women's Red Cross Association which engaged in humanitarian work. In 1905 the Feminist Association of the Philippines was founded but in spite of its name, it focussed on reformist programs. In 1906 the Association of Ilonga Feminists raised the issue of women's suffrage.

The National Federation of women's clubs as formalized in 1921 sponsored the First Women's Convention in 1929 where a resolution was passed approving the right of women to vote. In 1935 — by virtue of Act no. 2711, Filipino women were given the right to vote. In 1946 the first women auxiliary to a political party was established.

III. *The Women's Movement in the Seventies*

The organization of women that began in the American period up to the beginning of the 1970s were middle-class organizations of an auxiliary nature promoting reforms and support from the ruling elite and focussing on charity work.

With the rise of militant organizations in the late 60's and early 70's there emerged a militant woman's organization, the *Makibaka*. It sought not only to mobilize women for a nationalist struggle but also to develop women's consciousness. However as a legal organization, it was short lived. The declaration of Martial Law in 1972 drove it to the underground.

It was not until the late 70's and early 80's that women's questions again came up. Four women organized the *Filipina* which had a consciously feminist orientation but also likewise a Third World orientation. It believed that:

1) the feminist movement in the Philippines must be located in the context of the economic, political and socio-cultural transformation of society.

2) that it will not wait for society to be liberated before facing the woman's question, but saw the liberation of women as an essential aspect of societal transformation.

In 1983, women's groups and associations and women's desk of organizations had a conference. Out of this conference was born a national federation of women's organization called GABRIELA. Although there have arisen other women's groups and associations, GABRIELA remains the widest network involving about 100 organizations with about 33,000 members. It counts among its membership grassroots national organizations such as the KMK — an organization of

women workers, the SAMAKANA — an organization of urban poor women and AMIHAN, the peasant women's organization.

One can summarize the activities of GABRIELA into the following main headings:

Organization — GABRIELA has now 3 regions, Manila, Davao and Iloilo. It considers organization on a sectoral as well as regional levels a primary task.

Mobilization — GABRIELA members have initiated and participated in mass actions not only on women's issues such as women's rights in the Constitution, prostitution, mail order brides, etc. but also on issues of national importance such as the U.S. military bases, Nuclear Free Philippines, external debt, militarization, land reform, etc.

Education — Another basic task is the consciousness-raising among women, both in formal and non-formal, institutional and non-institutional education.

Feminist Scholarship — Member organizations focus on specific women studies like feminist theology and history from the perspective of women.

Legal Strategy — This includes the campaign to put women's rights in the Constitution, the abrogation of the civil code provisions documentary to women and the lobbying in Congress for support mechanism for women workers and other legislation favourable to women.

Welfare — This includes livelihood projects among the urban poor women, the establishment of crisis centres for women victims of violence and also the setting up of free legal service.

International Solidarity — GABRIELA has an International Solidarity Desk that keeps a wide network of contacts all over the world. Every year it sponsors the WISAP (Women International Solidarity Affairs in the Philippines) Conference and throughout the year arrangements are made for exposure and internship programs for women from abroad who wish to participate in such programs.

Sister Mary John Manazan is the founder of 'GABRIELA.' She lives in Manila.

The Unknown Gabriela

by Monica Riutort

*El poeta es a su
tierra lo que el
alma es el cuerpo*
Gabriela Mistral

*The poet is to her
land what the
soul is to the body*

When Gabriela Mistral died in 1957, I was eight years old and I had finished grade 4. I knew her already, as did most children in Chile, through her "rondas" and children's poetry. I remember my mother taking my sister and I to see her body laid out at the Salon of Honour in the University of Chile. She had recently died of cancer in Hempstead Hospital in Long Island, New York. We waited for hours with thousands of other Chileans, to be able to see her, my mother raised my little sister and slowly we walked past her casket.

Her face was white and she seemed asleep, part of her white hair covered her forehead. I have never forgotten that day. I have much love and admiration for Gabriela Mistral, the only Hispano American woman to ever win the Nobel prize, for literature.

Gabriela Mistral and I were born in Chile, a long and narrow country in the South part of Latin America, a country that prided itself on its democratic system and a well-developed educational structure. Chile also gave to the world another Nobel prize winner Pablo Neruda. But our country, Chile, has been torn by class struggle and gender inequalities that have fluctuated in intensity over the years. Gabriela lived the contradictions of the country within Chile and in her many travels all over the world.

I have based this article on an autobiography of Gabriela Mistral written by



Matilde Ladron de Guevara, a Chilean-woman writer, a contemporary of Mistral's and a person that knew Gabriela very well. As well as contributing to the knowledge already available on Mistral's life she unveiled a previously undisclosed event in Gabriela's life. It is in this book, that for the first time, the fact that Gabriela was raped at seven years of age by a close family friend, is made public.

I believe that this event, as well as many other painful ones in her life, have significantly marked her work. She was a woman with an extraordinary sensitivity whose work must have been influenced by this intense experience. However, the book written by Ladron de Guevara mentions the rape and never comes back to it with further analysis about the effects on Gabriela's life and writing.

Thirty years after her death Gabriela Mistral has become unknown to the world. Her life is a constant reminder to women of how difficult and painful the struggle is for women writers.

Let me take you now through her life. Lucila Godoy Alcayaga, known as Gabriela Mistral, was born on April 7, 1889, in Vicuña, in the small Elqui Valley of Northern Chile. Her father, Jeronimo Godoy Villanueva, married the widow Petronila Alcayaga de Molina, who had a fifteen year-old daughter, Emelina, by her first marriage. Jeronimo Godoy was a vagabond, poet and former theological student. Her mother and her older sister were teachers and when she was three years old, her father deserted their family and never returned.

Her mother and sister gave her primary instruction and supported the household with what they earned. Her grandmother, from her father's side, used to read passages from the bible to Lucila on Sundays. Later on, her sister Emelina, sent her to study at La Serena, a larger city in the northern part of Chile. One of her teachers accused her of stealing and she was expelled from the school. Her classmates, waiting outside, threw stones at her as she passed. This experience left a lingering, painful imprint on her memory and sensitivity.

Even before she reached puberty Gabriela had suffered a great deal. First, there was her father's desertion which left her mother with little financial support. They were also exposed to the criticism and gossip of people living in a small town. The desertion of her father had multiple effects on Lucila's life, because as we will see later on, she was constantly deserted by the men she loved.

Lucila was brought up by women, and women teachers in a small village that in those years were known by their austerity,

religious beliefs and strict moral principles which were passed on to their students. All these characteristics were passed on to Lucila through her mother, sister and grandmother. Sexuality was never discussed by women in those days. So Lucila did not have anybody to talk to when she was raped and she hid it for many years as a secret and a shame. This aspect of her life is the one that has been most overlooked by her biographies and critics.

Matilde Ladron de Guevara tells about Gabriela's confession to her which follows: "We were both walking at the seashore, in Rapallo, Italy, when the dialogue occurred: *Gabriela*: There are so many things to tell *Matilde*, before I die.

Matilde: You, my dear, are in too good health to be talking about dying.

Gabriela: But, there are secrets that consume, secrets that can kill you. Because I was strong, I did not die then, but I have to tell this secret to someone, of this fatality. Sister, I have been criticized many times by Raul Silva Castro (Chilean literary critic), because my poetry evokes blood and guts and that I am not afraid to expose my passions and bare feelings. But this gentleman should know my life to be able to censor me ... There is a reason, a very powerful reason ... He was a young man that used to visit the house, it seems, he was considered part of the family, and because I was a well-developed child, one day he found me alone in the home, and a bestial instinct erupted in him ... It was horrible, I still see him now ... Did I know what that was? Then, *Matilde*, everything seems finished for me, nothing has meaning anymore. I was seven years old."

There are two specific examples of her writing that reflect some of this experience. One of them is *Letters of Love* written to Manuel Magallanes Moure, where in one of the letters she said:

"Truth is, Manuel, that I have from the physical union, brutal images in my mind that make me hate it ... but I believe you capable of erasing from my spirit, this brutal concept, because you have, Manuel, a marvellous power to exalt beauty where there is little and to create beauty where there is none ... " The second is from *Felling*,

*Parecio Lirio
o pez-espada*

*It seemed a Lily
or sword-fish to me*

<i>subio los aires</i>	<i>it scaled the airs</i>
<i>hondeada,</i>	<i>pulling free</i>
<i>de ciclo abierto</i>	<i>Devoured by open sky</i>
<i>devorada,</i>	<i>hungrily</i>
<i>y en un momento</i>	<i>and in a moment</i>
<i>fui nonada.</i>	<i>a mere speck to see</i>
<i>Quede temblando</i>	<i>I stood trembling</i>
<i>en la quebrada</i>	<i>In the ravine</i>
<i>Albucia mía!</i>	<i>Oh, joy of mine!</i>
<i>arrebataada!</i>	<i>Torn from me!</i>

This poem which has been considered the lyrical peak of her work, has been interpreted as an echo of Saint John of the Cross. If we take into account her experience with rape this poem can also read as her loss of virginity which was suddenly torn from her.

Many other painful events marked her life; the death of her first fiancé, Romelio Ureta, who committed suicide. In 1914, she met a young poet Manuel Magallanes Moure. For him she felt a passion much deeper than her first love. A short while later, however, he married a wealthy young lady of the Capital's high social circles. The most moving and impassioned poems of *Desolation* (*Desolacion*) express with ardent eloquence her heartbreaking disillusion. Gabriela Mistral never married or had children, she adopted her nephew, Juan Miguel Godoy, who she called Yu, and raised him as a son. Juan Manuel committed suicide. She always believed that he was killed by somebody and he appeared to her frequently after his death. From the date of that final desertion her physical health began to fail.

As a single woman without children Gabriela dedicated her life to her work. While living in La Serena. Gabriela began to write for the local newspaper. She published poems and prose articles in which she freely expounded her socialist philosophy. She was rejected at the teacher's school because her ideas might harm the other students. She continued her studies under the supervision of her sister and by 1904, at fifteen years old, she started to work as a teacher-assistant. In 1910 she finally was able to hold a position in high school. As a high school teacher she was constantly transferred from one city to the next all across the country. Gabriela was never able to obtain her teacher's diploma. This

brought her much criticism during all her life.

Her constant travelling across the country allowed her to get to know first-hand the suffering and the struggle of poor people. Opportunities to choose places to reside were not available to her. As a teacher, a profession predominantly held by women, she earned a meagre salary and a refusal on her part to transfer would have jeopardized her job.

By 1912 she was well settled in Santiago. She had then the encouragement of her friends like Fidela Perez and Pedro Aguirre Cerda, who was later to become president of Chile. The culmination of her teaching career was in June 1922, when she was officially invited by Mexico to work on its educational reform. She accepted the post in Mexico also because she wanted to be away from Chile to recover from her broken love for Manuel Magallanes. She retired as a teacher in 1925 after twenty-five years of service. Chile awarded her the title of "Teacher of the Nation".

In Gabriela's work we find a vocabulary that has an extraordinary force and intensity, through the constant use of certain words suggestive of bodily suffering and pain; of burning, of piercing, of cutting, of bleeding. Yet, in spite of all this verbal violence there are few poets more tender than her. This softness and tenderness is expressed through her great love for children and motherhood. One of the most beautiful poem's about poor children is "Little Feet".

LITTLE FEET

*Little feet of children
blue with cold,
how can they see
you and not cover
you
dear God!*

*Little wounded feet
cut by every stone
hurt by snow
and mire.*

*Man, blind, does not
know
that where you pass,
you leave a flower
of living light.*

PIECECITOS

*Piececitos de niño,
azulosos de frío,
! cómo os ven y no
os cubren,
Dios mío!*

*! Piececitos heridos
por los guijarros
todos,
ultrajados de nieves
y lodos!*

*El hombre ciego
ignora
que por donde
pasáis,
una flor de luz viva
dejáis;*

During all these years as a teacher she was constantly writing. In 1914 at the Floral Games of Santiago she won the gold medal for poetry. During these years she adopted her pseudonym which revealed something of her conception of a world and of humanity: "Gabriela" for the Archangel Gabriel, divine messenger of good news; "Mistral" for the strong hot wind of Provence. Both components contained spiritual symbols.

In 1922, the Hispanic Institute of New York published the first edition of *Desolation* (*Desolacion*). After *Desolation* there were long intervals between the publication of her books. The other books published were: *Tenderness* (*Ternura*), 1924; *Felling* (*Tala*), 1938. Her final publication of *Wine Press* (*Lagar*) was published in 1954.

Most of her life Gabriela lived in poverty, depending on her ability to write as a journalist for several Hispano-American newspapers. Her journalistic work, which was her livelihood, lasted until her death in 1957.

She won the Nobel prize for literature which was presented to her in Sweden, on November 15, 1945. She was the first Nobel prize winner after World War II. She was also both the first woman and the first Hispanic-American writer to receive this high universal recognition. It is interesting to note that after the war years with death and destruction the Nobel prize was given to a woman whose entire life talked about justice, peace and the love of children. In 1951, while in Rapallo, Italy, she received the National Award for Chilean literature. She was preparing a "*Song to Chile*" (*Canto a Chile*) when she died. This book remains partially unpublished.

She was given a Chilean consular post in 1922. She was appointed Consul in Naples. She was refused the Exaquatur by Mussolini because of some anti-fascist articles she had written. As a consul she could not reside in Chile and she was given a different post. Again because of her poverty and need to earn her living she had no other option but to live outside her country which she loved and missed greatly.

Gabriela's life was marked by the patriarchal world in which she lived. Abandoned by her father, raped at early age, with little

or no option to choose a career, a place to live and without financial support to do her writing, she was still able to create the most powerful, honest and passionate poetry of Hispanic-America.

Gabriela lived in a time of extraordinary changes throughout the world. She saw and lived the awakening of the feminist movement in Chile. During 1913, while she was a teacher, Chilean women of different social status started fighting for the right to vote.

In Santiago there were several "reading Groups" of professional women at the time she was teaching in this city.

The history of the women's movement in Chile was lost for many years. Only recently feminist organizations in the country have come to request it.

There is no mention of Gabriela's involvement in the women's right to vote organization. Gabriela was a woman who fought for the rights of all individuals so I can infer that she must have committed herself to the cause of women.

Matilde Ladron de Guevara and other of her biographers mention the great importance that she gave to women's work. She wrote about peasant women in Chile, the women teachers, and women labourers. The year 1989 marks the centenary of Gabriela's birth. Today most of her work is still unknown. In Canada we are able to find only a few copies of some of her writing.

It is impossible to write about Gabriela Mistral without mentioning Doris Dana. Doris lived with Gabriela until her death and they loved each other. Gabriela bequeathed all her work to her. Doris Dana donated it to the United States Library of Congress where it remains.

Gabriela lost everything she loved. As many other women artists, recognition to her work came only after many rejections and criticisms. Loneliness accompanied her for most of her life. Others probably would have become paralyzed by the pain; Gabriela did not. She offered to the world her art. The most passionate, honest, realistic, direct and vigorous of the Hispanic-American language.

She deserves to be rescued from the silence and obscurity that covers her work today. Only then can we learn from this extraordinary poet.

Monica Riutort is from Chile and lives in Toronto.

Women Insurgents in Peru:

De-mystifying the Shining Path

by Carol Andreas

We were sitting in the corner of a small restaurant-delicatessen near the centre of Lima when news of the uprisings in Lurigancho, El Fronton, and Santa Barbara prisons came over the radio. My companion was a local leader of the Communist Party of Peru (known as "Shining Path"), many of whose cadre and sympathizers were inside the prisons. I had made her acquaintance through friends who had become sympathetic to "Shining Path."

As we listened to the voice of the military booming over the radio, reporting that the uprisings were "being dealt with in a summary fashion," we ended our meeting abruptly. However, she offered to put me in touch with another "Shining Path" member who could give me an assessment of the overall national situation.

Because of succeeding events (there were few survivors among the 300-500 political prisoners accused of "terrorism", most of whom had never been formally charged or brought to trial), I did not have the promised second meeting until several days before my departure from Peru in August, 1986. In the meantime, however, I learned that my ex-husband's brother, who had lived with us for eight months as a teenager, was among those killed by the military at Lurigancho. I was invited to participate in cultural events giving support to family members of political prisoners and the disappeared. I renewed contacts in neighbourhoods and villages where I had lived at various times during the 1970s and 1980s — places where "Shining Path" had

gained strength. And I collected documents and other written materials about them.

Returning to the United States, where reports about Peru's political situation invariably referred to the "Shining Path" as "enigmatic", "vicious," and "despotic," I began to feel an urgency to share something of my own developing perspective as a feminist/socialist concerned about political conflict in Peru.

I've come to suspect that "Shining Path's" penchant for "bad press" stems largely from the fact that it is, for the most part, a peasant movement that seeks to extricate the country from the domination and rapaciousness of the international economic system. Its seeming disregard for the good opinion of liberals both within and outside Peru is less intentional than is its allegiance to the interests of the class it represents. This includes, predominantly, women of the poorest social strata, the majority of whom do not speak Spanish, Peru's official language — native women of the Andes mountains, women of the Amazon jungle, and women of peasant extraction who have migrated to the cities in recent years and who live in the vast urban shantytowns. A large majority of "Shining Path" cadre are female, as are many of its leaders and most of its military field commanders.

The south-central Andes geographical region where the "Shining Path" movement began is so poverty-stricken that most young men have abandoned rural communities to seek work elsewhere. Young women who did the same found fewer opportunities for paid

work, partly because of cultural barriers. Therefore, family disintegration, while affecting women more than men, also left them with a stronger base from which to defend community interests. Rather than looking for opportunities for personal advancement for women, in competition with men, they seek the rebirth and development of communalism in the subsistence agricultural sector ("agro-industrial complexes") as a solution to the social and economic problems of both men and women. This is not the solution prescribed for them by Peru's industrial elite, nor by Peru's "friends" in North American business and government circles.

The "Shining Path" leader who talked with me about some of these issues answered matter-of-factly when I asked her about outside impressions that the movement claims Pol Pot as its hero. "The Khmer Rouge has never been affiliated with the Revolutionary International Movement (RIM) we're part of. We're interested in constructing 'New Democracy,' and the petty-bourgeoisie has an important role to play."

I didn't press the point, but rather asked for a description of how New Democracy could be born in the midst of civil war. We discussed the "Peoples' Committees" and "popular fronts" that have been organized in areas where "Shining Path" is strongest. What interested me most was the contrast between Peoples' Committees, many of which are directed by women, with the forms of local government that prevailed before the insurgency, which were almost exclusively male. I learned more about this, however, from my experiences in rural areas and in the *barriadas* or shantytowns than from my interviews with "Shining Path" leaders.

Wherever "Shining Path" cadre are active they are conducting "peoples schools" to educate themselves about their history. Part of this education is an effort by women to "reclaim their historic personalities" as equal partners with men in the administration of community "life". To a large extent, men in Peru have become *mestizos*, assuming the values of their Spanish conquerors, which includes assuming prerogatives over women. They have also assumed a mediating role between quechua communities and the outside world. In times of crisis, however, women have been major protagonists in defending communal interests.

One of the provinces in Apurimac where insurgency is prominent today, was the birthplace of Micaela Bastidas, wife of Tupac Amaru II. While Tupac Amaru is credited with initiating the struggle against Spanish rule of South America in the 18th century, Micaela Bastidas commanded the troops which fought against the Spanish. She sent him a letter shortly before their defeat in Cuzco complaining that he had disobeyed her orders and waited too long for the assault on the city, inviting defeat. These and other historical examples of female power are being resurrected in Peru by intellectuals in order to help people understand the "phenomenon" of "Shining Path."

One male author who wrote about Mama Ocllo — a warrior woman who, together with Manco Capac, founded the Inca empire — tried to quiet the fears of men that women's new-found power may be here to stay, saying that women like Mama Ocllo only appear in times of generalized upheaval. What such writers have not taken into account is that Peru's present battle against foreign domination, exploitation, and destructive lop-sided "development", is happening at a time when women all over the world are organizing themselves to conquer their emancipation.

Feminist publications from the 1970s are among the few widely distributed documents of the "Shining Path" movement — partly, no doubt, because they have been less repressed. At a time when the "left" in Peru was accusing feminists of being traitors to the working class, "Shining Path" was openly declaring itself feminist, working among miners' wives, organizing conferences of working women and students, and discussing love, marriage, and violence against women. They called themselves *Movimiento Femenino Popular* and based their work on the essays of José Carlos Mariátegui, founder of the Peruvian left in the 1920s. Mariátegui had espoused what he called "proletarian feminism," as distinguished from "petty-bourgeois feminism" and "bourgeois feminism."

Today, it's obvious that the kind of feminism expressed in the "Shining Path" movement is very different from that which receives support from business foundations and foreign government programs. U.S. sponsored programs, especially, divide women by giving them token assistance in pursuing careers within the market economy, emphasizing individual rights in a legal framework. Revolutionary feminism emphasizes collective

solutions to women's problems based on actions of the women themselves. Campaigns for legislative reform don't attract women who feel the legal system responds to their needs only if they have money to pay bribes to public officials. Poor women have also found that collaborating with government officials in the hope that some small benefit will come to them only postpones inevitable confrontation.

Although women do not outnumber men in the cities as they do in the countryside, they are also represented among urban guerrillas in the "Shining Path" movement. At a public rally commemorating the first anniversary of the prison massacres of June, 1986, the speakers were all female. Continually government forces makes sweeps of shantytown communities in search of guerrilla leaders, arresting hundreds of women.

Women are a majority of the poorest class in Peru — domestic servants, prostitutes, street vendors, laundresses, pieceworkers, contract or temporary employees in assembly plants, and street sweepers. Recent "economic development," while drawing men to wage work, has not provided them with steady jobs, so men are reluctant to support women's efforts to enter the regular work force in competition with them. Understanding these contradictions, "Shining Path" based itself initially in the shantytowns or *barriadas* more than at workplaces. The struggle for survival in the *barriadas* brings together members of the regular work force (about 20 percent of the population), the unemployed, and those in the "informal sector." It is in the *barriadas* where recent migrants to the city establish new communities, fighting for the right to housing, water, sanitation services, transportation, schools, and medical services.

My own experience living in a Lima shantytown in the mid-1970s is testimony to the systematic and careful way members of "Shining Path" went about developing support for revolutionary struggle. While other "left" organizations were calling people to *comité de lucha* (struggle committee) meetings by going up and down the streets with megaphones, "Shining Path" people went house to house asking each family to send a member to a block meeting at which delegates would be selected for the local committee. Housewives who had never attended meetings were encouraged to participate, and students helped them learn to read and write so they could become leaders in their communities. While "Shining Path" did not have enough cadre to

do this kind of work in every shantytown, wherever they were they seem to have succeeded in developing a permanent grassroots organization.

It is in such shantytowns today where theatre, song, and dance is being developed to help publicize the movement's objectives and overcome people's fears. One popular play ridicules men who strut around, quarrel with their neighbours, drink, and cheat on their wives while women work hard at home cooking and cleaning and take in laundry besides. Women's weaknesses are also satirized, and government officials are mocked. Heroic men come to the aid of women who rebel. And when all is over, the cast chants in unison: "*La rebelión se justifica!*" (rebellion is justified). Such an event is often punctuated by an explosion of gunfire, indicating support for armed struggle. The actors themselves are protected by costumes and wigs, and by their ability to disappear quickly into the crowds.

When other political parties of the left abandoned grassroots organization against the State in order to engage in electoral politics in the 1980s, "Shining Path" expanded its influence, declaring that only a broadly-based popular military force capable of opposing Peru's well-entrenched government bureaucracy and the Armed Forces could succeed in bringing about structural changes in the economy.

In Huancayo (not Ayacucho!), where I taught in the National University in the mid-1970s, a woman who is a leader in the Left Unity electoral coalition told me in the summer of 1986, "Ninety percent of our own people have been corrupted by being in charge of the municipal government" (i.e. since 1983). Another told me resignedly, "They (the *senderistas*, or Shining Path) are passing us up — they're going to win." The Left Unity lost to the APRA, the central government's ruling party, in November elections. Although Huancayo is outside the Emergency Zone, where "Shining Path" holds the balance of power among the people, the region is in extreme convulsion and is likely to be occupied by government troops in the near future.

During the first years of armed struggle, in the early 1980s, "Shining Path" made spectacular advances in the areas where the movement began. However, many of the original cadre lost their lives, including a former high school student leader, Edith Lagos, who had

become the organization's first military commander and a popular heroine throughout Peru. Eventually Ayacucho and surrounding provinces were occupied by government troops. Efforts by the government to establish "strategic hamlets" (USA tactic) in its war against the guerrillas did not succeed, however. Instead, many villages have simply disappeared, but the region is still "Shining Path territory." Members of the Shining Path are also carrying out systematic work in certain parts of the Peruvian jungle which the government has been unable to penetrate, and in the mining region of Cerro de Pasco and the altiplano of Puno (which borders Bolivia). Both areas have been declared in a State of Emergency, as has the capital city of Lima. In the past six months, a number of villages in Cuzco province and in Apurimac have been declared "liberated zones" by the *senderistas*, who also expanded their bases in coastal provinces, Northern Peru, and the South — in fact, in almost every part of the country. Nearly two-thirds of the population of Peru is now officially living under a State of Emergency. Shantytown residents, especially, are feeling the impact of increasing militarization of the country. The *barriadas* are subject to unannounced occupation by troops, who conduct house-to-house searches (rake operation) and make massive arrests.

A pre-dawn raid was carried out on three university campuses in Lima last February 13. Four-thousand troops arrested approximately 800 students and teachers. Those who suffered the most brutal treatment were provincial students who lived in a dormitory at the University of San Marcos, which was declared by the government to be a haven of "Shining Path". Some thirty of the students arrested subsequently "disappeared" and others have been threatened with secret trials. The President called an extraordinary session of Congress in which the establishment of secret trials and the death penalty for those found guilty of terrorism were high on the agenda.

Women prisoners in Cantagrande, where political prisoners are now being held, have conducted hunger strikes to protest the replacement of civilian guards by *sinchis* (counter-insurgency troops trained by the U.S. Green Berets). The government says the civilian guards cannot be trusted. Women have also protested because of a hepatitis epidemic in the prison, withholding of water, harassment of relatives, lack of medical care, and extreme isolation.

Wherever possible, members of the Left Unity separate themselves from "Shining Path" sympathizers within the prisons. This is done partly to protect themselves, but there are important political differences, aside from the question of armed struggle. Some left-wing parties in Peru criticize "Shining Path's" distrust of the Soviet Union and of the present Chinese government (while United States President Ronald Reagan insisted on calling the "Shining Path" a "Soviet-Cuban threat.") Although U.S. military involvement in Peru is covert at present (channelled largely through the anti-drug campaign UMOPAR), the Soviet Union provides open military support to the army and has been interested in retaining good relations with the APRA government. While the United States has backed up the Peruvian military for most of this century, both U.S. and Soviet military aid have been given to Peruvian government regimes since 1968. The United States has maintained especially good relations with the navy.

All reports (including Peruvian government reports) agree that "Shining Path" arms are obtained largely by assaults on military depots and disarming of captured government soldiers; money is obtained by asking "collaboration." Contributions are solicited from street vendors and passengers on buses and trains; intelligence is provided by newspaper vendors, shoeshine boys, household workers, and other sympathizers. According to a retired army general, regular soldiers are defecting in increasing numbers to join guerrillas.

Village massacres attributed to the "Shining Path" are now known to have been perpetrated by the *sinchis* or counter-insurgency forces, and paramilitary forces organized by them. Common delinquency and police corruption accounts for many other activities attributed initially to "subversives," especially kidnappings that have occurred in Lima. However, "Shining Path" does carry out threats made against certain police or military officials, leaders of the APRA, and others who are considered to be traitors or spies. In certain parts of the country where systematic attacks on provincial governors have been carried out, massive resignations by government officials have occurred. In other regions where government troops occupy villages, parallel government by Peoples' Committees continues to provide a challenge to official rule.

Zones under guerrilla control in the Alto

Huallaga region of the jungle have parallel government by equal numbers of women and men elected by the people. Wherever "Shining Path" control has been instituted, villagers who have forsaken their reciprocal obligations in the community in order to accumulate wealth at the expense of others may be expelled and their possessions redistributed.

"Shining Path" seems to place much more importance on symbolic communication with its own bases through public displays of power than on efforts to dispel the fears of outsiders about its methods and goals. The slogan "Without power all is illusion!" dominates every message directed to its constituents. While President García, defending the government's actions against teachers, journalists, lawyers, and other intellectuals, says that those who make psychological or anthropological explanations for "criminal activities" are guilty of the "subversion of democracy." The threat of a military coup is also used each time support for armed struggle is manifested publicly after government escalation of military attacks such as the university invasion or the prison massacres.

Many of "Shining Path's" members first became politically active through involvement with Christian "base communities." Nuns and priests who are in daily contact with the poor are more likely to appreciate the need for a people's militia and other popular defense organizations than are those who work out of mission headquarters, church offices, or convents. Despite the Pope's admonitions to church leaders to shun cooperation with political parties while working with the poor, many church workers effectively do so. At the same time, they are giving more recognition to native's religious beliefs, centred on respect for mother earth (*mama pacha*) and other natural entities such as *mama quilla* (the moon) and *mama cocha* (the sea).

"Shining Path" members have been active in most unions while declining to seek official positions in them. During times of overt conflict between workers and management, "Shining Path" leadership often becomes predominant. The government employees union and the teachers union have been inclined toward "Shining Path" ideological positions during times of maximum participation, as have workers in strategic industries such as mining. Repression against strikers and others engaged in legal protest activities has intensified rather than subsided under "demo-

cratic" government, and is a major contributing factor in the growth of the "Shining Path". Temporary Work Programs (PAIT) that have been established by the García government are aimed at pacifying the unemployed, but they create antagonisms with the regular workforce which was previously less inclined toward revolutionary politics.

"Disinformation" campaigns against "Shining Path" have backfired as government crimes have been uncovered. In 1986, eleven military personnel were jailed for village massacres committed in 1982, but sentences were light. At least 36 investigations are still pending, many having been transferred to military courts. Soldiers who were arrested for participation in the prison massacres are nowhere to be found in the jails, according to opposition newspaper reports.

Trial proceedings in the death of eight journalists who dared to defy government officials trying to prevent outsiders from entering areas under government siege have dragged on for more than three years. A government commission headed by novelist Mário Vargas Llosa, personal friend of then-President Fernando Belaúnde Terry, claimed that Indian peasants hated the guerrillas and mistakenly killed the journalists thinking they were members of "Shining Path". This story found credibility in the United States, where Vargas' account was widely publicized, but not in Peru, where eight mostly middle-aged urban *mestizo* and white men carrying cameras and wearing eyeglasses and leather shoes could hardly be mistaken for guerrillas known to be largely young peasant women of local descent, clad in rubber sandals and wearing skirts and braids. The military commander most implicated in the assassination of the journalists, Clemente Noel Moral, has finally been indicted in the case (for "abuse of authority"), but he has been residing in the United States, where he is reportedly a member of the Inter-American Defense Board. The village where the massacre took place is among the "disappeared."

A recent rank and file police strike which occurred simultaneously with a national strike by Peru's labour unions (and supported by "Shining Path") included a demand "that the government cease involving us in political crimes, dirty war, disappearances, torture, extra-judicial executions, and other aberrations."

tions. The families of policemen feel shame to have a son, husband or father whose hands are dirtied with the blood of Peruvian people.

The police strike helped to lend credibility to "Shining Path" claims against the government. Since so many statements and actions are attributed to the "Shining Path" by those who are intent on defaming its members, the organization usually declines to issue immediate public denials or explanations regarding its activities. However, magazines in Peru have begun to publish sections of the "Shining Path" booklet which gives the organization's official information of events of the past six years of armed struggle.

Before the prison massacres of June, 1986, "Shining Path" prisoners led a communal life within the prisons and were able to establish frequent contact with outsiders. Since then, political prisoners are confined in individual cells and their contact with relatives, reporters, and other visitors is extremely restricted. Nevertheless, members of the committee of family members of political prisoners and the disappeared have increased their activity in defense of human rights and have gained an important place among popular organizations of the opposition in Peru.

"Shining Path" cadre minimize the effect of repression on their organization. The displacement of rural supporters from their communities because of war, and the death of approximately 16,000 ("Shining Path's" own estimate as of a year ago), has not diminished their strength. They do not predict an easy victory, nor do they attempt to keep up a steady offensive, even in areas where they are powerful. The woman I interviewed most recently told me they were more interested at that time in gaining ideological commitment than control of territory.

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Mexican Women as Literary Critics

by Lorraine Elena Roses

The phrase "Mexican women" is likely to conjure up a picture of fruit sellers in a marketplace or perhaps a "soldadera" fighting alongside her man in the Revolution of 1910. Along with those images belongs that of the contemporary woman aspiring to equality with the male in all endeavours.

In modern Mexico a tiny but steadily growing number of women authors have come to prominence since the 1950s, when Rosario Castellanos (1925-1974), who never proclaimed herself a feminist, began to publish her path-blazing feminist poetry, fiction, and drama. Women writers in Mexico "are very few and very good," according to *Fem* editor Elena Urrutia. They are dedicated to the traditional genres of the novel and the short story (for example, Josefina Vicens, Amparo Dávila, Inés Arredondo, Beatriz Espejo, Maria Luisa Puga), to drama (Luisa Josefina Hernández, Elena Garro, Maruxa Vilalta) and to poetry (Margarita Michelena, Guadalupe Amor, Rosario Castellanos, Isabel Fraire, Thelma Nava, Nellie Campobello).

They often cross genre boundaries in search of new forms. One name, that of Elena Poniatowska, stands out as a writer who initiated the testimonial novel, that blend of documentary with fiction that brings to world consciousness the obscure lives of powerless people, especially women, who shaped history. In such books as *Hasta no verte, Jesús mío* and *Gaby Brimmer*, now a motion picture, Poniatowska recreates collective history and personal experience, acting as a conduit for the words of the people she interviews. These women writers and others not mentioned

deserve far more international notice than they have received.

A minority of women writers take the external stance of ivory tower observers, reflecting on the meaning of literary creation and assessing the trends of Mexican literature. It is no simple task for a woman to establish herself in the patriarchal preserve of literary criticism, that land of "experts" and "authorities." Those who have done so are women critics but not feminist critics — that is, they do not dedicate themselves to "rescuing" women authors of the past, nor do they examine the treatment of women in literature. Since Latin American women writers began to define themselves as women and writers, we can predict that critical feminism, too, will arrive as a late wave.

María del Carmen Millán (1914-1980?), the first woman to be accepted by the Mexican Academy of Letters, furnishes an example of a woman scholar, literary historian, and professional critic who has done so, in books that review the history of Mexican literature in its entirety. Julieta Campos (b. 1932) is a novelist (*Muerte por agua* (1965), *Tiene los cabellos rojizos y se llama Sabina* (1974) and *El miedo de perder a Eurídice* (1979) and short story writer who has analyzed trends in the current fiction as well as the work of her literary peers in Mexico. Margo Glantz (b. 1930), who started out as a specialist in contemporary theatre with a book on Tennessee Williams, has ranged in her subsequent books from family memoir (*Genealogías*, 1981) to a collection of micro-stories and witticisms (*No pronunciarás*, 1980); lately she has been recognized for her

Continued on page 26

The Snow White Guard

by Luisa Valenzuela

translated by Sharon Magnarelli

Way in the back, behind the glass, the plants are in something of an enormous case. And here in front, also in a glass case (armoured) is the guard. He has something in common with the plants, a special secret that comes to him from the earth. And between one glass cage and the other, already beginning to look old, yet so tidy in their impeccable suits and their exact smiles, the young assistant managers work painstakingly. It is true that they are less dignified than the guard, but as young assistant managers of a financial firm, they are not trained to kill and that redeems them a little. Not too much. Just the little bit necessary to be able to bestow upon them the favor of imagining them — as our guard usually imagined them — making love on the carpet. In unison, oh yes, to the syn-copated rhythm of the electronic calculators. Beneath them, the secretaries are also sadly pretty, almost always with light coloured eyes, and the guard contemplates them, not without a certain degree of lust, and thinks that the blonde assistant managers — almost all of them also have aqueous eyes — are in a better position than he to seduce the young secretaries. Nevertheless, he has the Parabellum, and he also has — hidden in his executive briefcase — a telescopic sight and one of the best foreign-made silencers. In an inner pocket of his jacket he carries his gun permit, the card

that vouches for him as a guardian of the law. In the other pocket, heaven only knows what he has, even he doesn't usually bother to check: once he found a lipstick and smeared his hands with the red as if it were blood, another time he found unidentified seeds; on one occasion he lost his way in the fuzz of the pocket, among tobacco strands and other things, and now he doesn't even want to think about that pocket while he watches over the clients who enter and exit from the vast offices. He knows that the assistant managers may have light coloured eyes, but his glass enclosure has three round eyes (one on each open side, the fourth side is up against the wall), and they are more exotic eyes, not to mention more practical and eventually more lethal. Through them one can shoot at anyone who deserves it, and from there one can feel safe and secure: that enclosure is his mother and contains him.

From his glass enclosure he sees the most absurd beings file by, some with dwarfs' faces, for example, or women whose shapes defy all rules of esthetics and little girls with hair dyed the colour of egg yolk. At moments our guard thinks that the firm hires them in order to show off the physical beauty of its own employees, but he quickly discards that crazy idea: this is a financial firm, designed to make money not to spend it on absurd projects.

And him? Why is he there? He is there to protect the money, and he would water the plants too, if only they would let him.

It would do him good from time to time to be able to go over to the other glass enclosure, the one in the back; it is quite a bit larger than his although it is not armoured, it is airier, and the distance from plant (*planta*) to money (*plata*) is only one letter. A distance that he would happily cross, above all because the money belongs to other people, it will never be his, and in contrast the plants don't belong to anyone. They have their own life; he could water them, cherish them, even talk to them softly as if they were a friendly dog, like that fellow who spent his days taking tender care of his loved ones — a bulldog and a carnivorous plant. He doesn't need to love so much in order to kill others, he doesn't even need to feel any attachment to the people in that office although he is there to defend them, to risk his life for them. It's just that nothing ever happens there: no one comes in with a threatening look or attempts a robbery. Sometimes a suspicious package left on a seat draws his attention, but the person who had left it there soon comes back and goes off again, looking self-satisfied, with the package in question under his arm. Therefore, even supposing that there had been a bomb in the package, it would explode far from the sacrosanct offices. And his duty involves protecting only the firm, not the entire city, much less the universe. His duty is simply that: to act in defense, not to take the offensive, even though if he had half a brain he would know that the potential assailant could very well be one of their own (a man like himself, just to mention one) and not some outsider as might be the case with the safe. But my life is going to cost them dearly, he says to himself often, repeating the phrase so often heard during training, without realizing that each mortal being thinks the same thing, with or without the law's permission (a life isn't some little thing that one hands over just like that, much less one's own life, but he has a license to kill and feels calm). For that reason, he sleeps serenely at night when he isn't on guard and sometimes dreams of the little plants in the back. That is, of course, when he isn't lucky enough to dream about the pretty secretaries, naked, somewhat flat and unidimensional, but always exciting. Dreams that are more like being on guard (being awake), day dreams in which the beautiful men and women of the financial firm tumble around naked on the

carpet which silences their movements. The carpet as a silencer. He, there in his crystal enclosure — Snow White, damn it — also has a pistol with a silencer, and besides he remains silent as a plant. Almost vegetable. He is silent in his glass cage, caressing his silencer as he imagines those outside his enclosure in positions completely out of keeping with polite society.

And here he is, engrossed in his day dreams, wholeheartedly defending that which doesn't belong to him in the very least. Not even remotely. A perfectly imbecilic life. Defending what?: the strong box, the honour of the secretaries, the self-confidence of the managers, assistant managers, and the rest of the employees (their tidy appearance). Defending the clients. Defending the dough that belongs to others.

That idea occurred to him one fine day, the next day he forgot it, he remembered it a week later, and then little by little the idea began to establish itself in his head permanently. A touch of humanness after all, the spark of an idea. Something was growing within him, piping hot like his affection for the plants in the back. Something called a bone of contention.

He began to go to work dragging his feet, now he didn't feel like such a big deal. He didn't dream in front of the mirror any more that his was a job for heroes.

What a revelation the day that he discovered (way inside of himself, in that part of himself whose existence he hadn't even suspected) that his purported hero's position was a jackass's job! Anybody with any balls doesn't have to use them defending others. It was as if someone had given him the famous kiss on the sleeping forehead, as if someone had shaken him awake. Enlightened.

All these things were impossible for him to communicate to his bosses. Of course, he was used to keeping his mouth closed, to guarding within himself, like a treasure, those few emotions that had been blossoming in him over the course of his life. Not many emotions, scarcely the notion that something was happening in him in spite of himself. And without uttering a word, he had endured that long course, as well as the torture to his own body, called training: therefore it wasn't a question of sitting down to talk — sit down, since when in front of his superiors? — to discuss doubts or present complaints. Thus, he began little by little to nurture his overly enlightening

disgruntlement, and he could spend the afternoons standing inside his glass cage focussing his thoughts on something more concrete than the erotic day dreams. He stopped imagining the young assistant managers tumbling around with the secretaries on the soft, fluffy carpet and began to see them exactly as they were, carrying out their specific duties. Coming and going in silent respect, astutely managing money, stocks, bonds, drafts, foreign currency. And all of them so offensively young, attractive.

It was good for a few months to strip those bodies of all illusions and to see them only in their purely work-related functions. Our guard became realistic, systematic. He took to coming out of the cage and strolling his flexible countenance through the rooms scattered with desks, he began to exchange a few words with the most accessible employees, he smiled at the secretaries, he chatted a long while with one of the stock brokers. He became friends with the doorman. To some people he even mentioned his attraction to plants, and once, when he noticed that they were withered, he asked permission to water them on his own time. As they closed up the offices, they began to leave him taking care of the plants, spraying them, cleaning them with lampblack so they could breathe easy.

One afternoon he carried his passion to the extreme of staying behind two hours, serenely drinking his *mate* among the plants. The night watchman couldn't help but mention it to his superiors, and all feared that the guard might be turning into a poet, something much too dangerous in a job like his. But there was no reason to fear further deterioration: he executed his duties conscientiously and proved himself excessively alert in his hours of watch duty, not allowing any detail to escape him. He even managed to thwart a dangerous attack thanks to his fast reflexes and to a nose which won the praise of his bosses. He accepted his reward with supreme dignity, conscious of the fact that he hadn't done anything but protect his own interests. His immediate superiors as well as the directors of the firm, all present in the simple ceremony, perceived the humility of the guard as a noble sentiment, as a sincere pleasure in a duty well performed. Thus they doubled the amount of the reward and retired tranquilly to their respective homes knowing that the financial

firm would be protected by unexcelled vigilance.

Thanks to the double bonus, the guard was able to equip himself as he wished and only needed to put into practice the patience learned from the plants. When he finally considered the moment appropriate, he struck with such skill that it was impossible to follow his trail and discover his whereabouts. That is to say, in the eyes of the others, he managed to realize his old dream. That is to say, he disappeared from the face of the earth (the earth swallowed him).

Luisa Valenzuela is an Argentine novelist.

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The Streak of Green

by Elena Poniatowska

translated by Amy Kaminsky

Looking back now, I find myself reliving so many things that shook me, that unhinged me, without getting me anywhere. Like the streak of green.

"When you go on vacation look carefully and maybe you'll see it."

If I couldn't even see her, if she always slipped through my fingers, if I could never seize hold of her or breathe calmly in her presence, how could I hope to trap the streak of green.

"Don't take your eyes off the horizon."

I think about all this now that I'm an old woman and I've become sour, peevish, ill-humoured; but before, her words launched me into a state of feverishness that was hard to control. Then I was a wire, tense, eager, running to catch — what? — She excited me even more:

"If I'm beside you, I can point it out to you, but you have to pay close attention."

I centred all my attention on her, my superior talent for attention. I didn't miss a single one of her gestures, her words were branded bright red on my spirit as if it were a steer's haunch. I was her steer, her little baby calf.

"If you see it you will be happy."

For how long? All my life? A little while?

"It only lasts an instant, so you mustn't get distracted."

How long is an instant? A fraction of a

second? A second? I know now that even a second can be long; there are clocks in which they nest for many years. The second hand is sometimes intolerable.

"Wait for it at sunset."

Her handsome red mouth spoke; the wind blew over her white teeth, her hair flying, warm hair, warm chestnut like her eyes, brown-sugar hair, a sugarloaf that could melt over you; I know now that she was all sugar inside, only covered by skin, hopeful skin that scarcely contained her; sugar whipping against her skin, barely held in by that fine membrane, like a grape's.

Some afternoons, in the sea, to feel more comfortable, she took off her clothes. She said she liked the water to flow beneath her arms, against her chest, between her breasts. When someone came near, she put her clothes back on slowly, without any hurry, her slow gestures silhouetted in the air, held by the light that made her limbs more vivid. A burning orange contour outlined her, a halo, as if all of her were covered with a soft golden down.

Did she even notice how my temples beat, how my chest pounded, my pain-filled eyes fixed on the horizon?

"Wait for it here."

The burning spikes of sun on my skin began to weaken. It was going down. I had to be happy; I would wait for the streak my whole life long. The sand also stopped bur-

ning; I could dig my feet into it, feel it spill warmly over my legs, over my stomach. It was comforting. The streak of green must impart that same sensation of well-being, of belonging. Wasn't that happiness?

She laughed at my question. All the men turned to look at her as they passed, absolutely all of them; many many pairs of eyes fell on her, but when she felt surrounded she retreated until she was lost in the warmth of the beach; a vapour that seemed to rise from the sand thickened around her, almost turning into haze to hide her. Only I could hear her laugh:

"Don't blink, it can get away from you in the blink of an eye."

Like she could? In a moment I won't see her any more. She is volatile, evanescent, she never lets me touch her, hug her. What will I do without her, in the middle of this terrifying solitude? No, it isn't terrifying. I see in the distance how the last swimmers pick up their towels, their beach gear; a child kicks a coconut shell, ouch! now he hurt his foot, a mother, using her hand as a sunvisor, calls to her children that it's late, come out of the water, but only a band of seagulls answer. This doesn't seem to bother the mother, she ties a cord to their legs and hauls them off; they offer not the least resistance. The beach vendors on the other hand strain to lift their fat, fat baskets, stuffed with coconut candies, coconut brittle, coconut balls, coconut bars, coconut oil with iodine for sunbathing, coconut oil soap; white marble streaked with rose; now the water laps the sand, once and again rising, a small breeze keeps it company, cracks its silvery skin, whips up whitecaps, twists them around; and it gives me goosebumps too. The cold of the ocean is sad. I look for her with my eyes, I don't see her anymore; she's left me alone on the beach waiting for the streak of green; I hear the katydids, good, they've always made me feel safe, must be because of the cricket on the hearth. I listen to them and I grown calm, though from the same place, from the golden haze into which she disappeared, a warm jukebox stirs the air with a sleazy tropical tune:

"I'm leaving for Venice
goodbye Lucrecia
I'll write to you."

Will she write to me? I don't even know

where she's gone. That's why she talked so much about the streak of green, she knew she was going to leave me. That's why. She didn't even hint which among all the houses of palm leaves would be mine. I can't move from here, even if the streak comes late. She warned me: "It can happen in the blink of an eye; you can miss it by just lowering your eyelids." Then she disappeared. I feel as though my heart has gone; I feel the hollowness, it rises in my throat but I can't be distracted; after all, before she went away, she left me the formula for happiness.

The waves are growing bigger, taller, they seem to be sucking up the sand, gulping down the beach, carrying it away. The sand around me has gotten cold. An immense wave is coming down the beach and I draw my feet back; it sucks me in, I try to defend myself as best I can, I dig in my elbows, my toes; if I can get up, I think, I'll run. On the horizon, the sky stays red, about to burst into flames. The sky beats in my temples. I remain paralyzed in my crypt of water, now it's become tame, it burbles, it bubbles around my arms and all of a sudden it bursts, tac, tac, tac, tac, it almost tries to caress me, at least I think so. It doesn't go away, it becomes still, the sand rocks it, and without soaking it up embraces it, greedily. All of a sudden everything is sweet, peace seems to cradle my heart, hold it softly. Even the water has gotten warm. On the horizon the seven colours of the rainbow begin to emerge, one after the other but I can't distinguish them because the red of the sun is too intense. I can only sense them, and I recite them out aloud, to hear myself, to keep myself company: red-orange, yellow, green, blue, violet, like in my crayon box. The sun settles on the very edge of the water, it's going to drown, no, it still peers out from behind the horizon, there where the sea ends, where the land ends and I feel it underneath the water, there behind, and I think: "That's why the earth is round. The sun kept going down." My back hurts, my young, flexible back: "Why didn't I think to lean up against something, a rock, a log, anything?" My tense back keeps me from concentrating. I count my blinks, The blood is leaving the horizon, I make myself believe I see a green-coloured halo, it is barely a glimmer that stings my eyes. I keep my eyes nailed to the horizon. Was that the streak of green? No, that was an arc, a semi-circle over the sea. The waves

grow calm, they hit the beach, I like their crashing sounds; a blue softness bathes the horizon, a gray fringe rests sweetly over the porous sand; in the distance the fire has gone out, now I do not even see the edge of the water, the sun has gone down.

Three distant seagulls cross the vastness of the sky.

Because there was no other way, I have looked for it in books. I read Gamow, Giorgio Alberti and I learned about sun spots; I saw gaseous eruptions like giant columns of fire, I learned of magnetic perturbations and the Aurora Borealis. I asked about the relationship of the swallows to the sun and the wise men laughed, but I know it has to do with their migrations. I even learned something about the youth and age of the stars and I declared that I wanted to die of thermic death, the same time as the sun. "Can the sun explode?" I never studied seriously, I never went beyond the Flammarion, popular astronomy. Men enveloped me with their flat, stony voices, their routines and their orders; I soon realized that for every woman on earth there was a man giving her an order. Going out at night made up for it, with a grandchild by the hand to show him the fixed stars and the Orion Nebulosa, but nothing ever thrilled me as much as seeing the solar corona one day when the Sacramento Peak Observatory opened its doors to the public.

In the meantime I have had sixty years of sunlight; never again have I had access to a Schmidt camera and I make do with my eyes, accustomed to domestic gases doled out house to house by a tank-truck. I go to the beach with a hat, I cut off the sun's access to my head; I no longer bend my knees with ease nor bury my hands in the sand. Before, I walked for hours with my feet in the water, I'd warn some grandchild not to dally, not to go out deep by himself; like Cuauhtemoc, I was a young grandmother. But now, the sun bores into me; it weighs on my back. I look for my glasses. I used to go near-naked to the beach, nowadays I carry my bag of precautions. I enclose my shadow so that it doesn't escape, I fold it in two and I lay it out like a towel on the sand. Sometimes it goes off to hide itself under other little shadows and I have

to yell to it that it is still mine. It doesn't like to reflect my bent shoulders, my defeated legs. It stretches out wanting to be a heron, while I sit like coffee in a cup; I bend my neck. It, too, wants to abandon me, as she abandoned me, after telling me about the streak of green ...

How she made me search for it! On the beaches of the east at dawn, on those of the west at sunset. During the fifteen consecutive days of August vacation I got up at dawn, at four in the morning; I dressed with my heart in my throat, as quickly as I could, just to meet the mist covering the globular sand (so round that I thought it was land). I grew accustomed to waking early, and my family protested: "It's not a vacation for you if you're going to get up even earlier than in the city." After a time they chose not to pay any attention to me. They also got used to my long walks at dusk, my hands in the pockets of my trenchcoat, my hair in the wind, the water in my eyes, the water soaking my feet, drenching my pants, my feet going splash splash splash in the surf. One time I heard the sharp voice of my youngest grandchild explain, "It's just that, since my grandmother has never been happy with grandfather, she likes to walk alone a lot." Was he parroting the judgment of some adult or did my walk have to do with unhappiness? They couldn't understand that I was open to everything, that I had opened all the windows of my mind, all the doors in my brain, all my pores, and that I walked open, open to a new man, a new love, and that only the waves entered. Are there many women who walk like that, alone on the beach at sunset? It is not that I try to isolate myself, many times I urged one of the children to come along with me, but at that hour there were no people left on the beach, no one to play with, you couldn't see the snails anymore, an infinity of small crabs ran over the sand seeking refuge in their holes, or perhaps they were leaving them, and I didn't allow the children to stop and frighten them.

"It's their time, it's their home; we are the intruders."

Walking for the walking's sake, scrutinizing the horizon and stopping in silence, didn't do anything for the children. Little by little they left me alone. One night my daughter-in-law, Lorena, the sweetest of all of them, advised, "Let her be; it's her way to calm down." I was, then, an eccentric.

I belonged to a generation of women who had no careers, frustrated, martyred — Lorena alleged in my favour — my inability to adapt was understandable.

One morning there was no mist, on the contrary, the sky was tinted pink. I saw it from my window; I had resolved not to go out, my arthritis was giving me a bad time and if I sat down on the sand I could get up again only with great effort. But when I saw the clear dawn I was sure: "It's today." I dressed hurriedly, in my haste I forgot my trenchcoat, my pants were still damp around the ankles from last night's drenching, I pulled them on anyway and went out; the sky was growing more and more rosy, a tender, thrilling pink. I felt protected, I was in the bowels of the earth, safe in its pink veins, in its belly. I looked for a place to lean back, saw none, thought: "I have to glue my eyes to the horizon, I cannot unfix them, in which exact spot will the sun come up?" The waves seemed to be playing; they came in a mass towards the beach, little mischievous baby-waves, they invited me to their dance, I heard them laugh, but I remained bound to the horizon, they laughed, they laughed at me, she also laughed like the waves, she played with me, her smile pure seafoam, her laugh a green spark that comes with the sun.

I pray for the miracle. I left in such a rush that I even forgot my watch. It must be a quarter to five, ten to five; a dazzling red point surges on the horizon, like the point of a needle in tender blushing flesh, a single point of blood; more intense by the instant, I cannot wrench my gaze from it; now it is a clot, yes, that's it, it has the colour of fresh blood, more and more intense by the instant, it bursts into flame; the horizon is on fire, now the sky is orange, a dust of gold covers the water; I cannot bear the brilliance of the blaze; I must close my eyes, squeeze them together one second, squeeze them hard to make them rest; the streak should appear in the centre of the resplendence and I cannot sustain my gaze. My God do not abandon me! Give me strength, let me face the flames, let me see amid them the streak of green, though it be the last act of my life!

And all of a sudden, there it is, I look at it, I do not imagine it, it bursts open like a bubble, I look at it despite my blinking, despite the feeling that strangles me, it is a green never before seen, not in the leaves of the trees, nor in the jungle, nor in the

newborn moss, nor in the vegetation of the tropics, nor in any cornfield, nor in the new shoots, nor in the green of the sea of Cozumel, nor in the depths of the most transparent waters, nor in the palette of any painter, but I recognize it, it is the liquid jade of her laugh, an instant, a second, a fraction of a second. An enormous bonfire has invaded the sky, I cannot see the line of the totally reddened horizon but I divine the contour of the new-rising sun. Now, yes, the blood has returned to its place, the earth as well, the sun has come out, some seagulls caw and I can hear them, a fisherman puts out to sea and I can see him, the waves break against the rocks, a pelican, I think, dives into the water and comes out again with something in its beak. Life is very short. I hear the water but above all I hear her, her voice of prodigious green. I cannot move, she will not let me; I am sitting, I must have fallen down at the moment the streak broke forth, I do not know. Her voice tells me that this is paradise. I hear the great sound of the sea. The streak against my skin left the colour of a bud; this renascence ascends through my legs; I feel as though the rhythm of my belly is receding to my childhood, my arthritis slips away through my pores like the last vestige of the wave over the sand, the same sap that gathers up my breasts cleans my face and gives me back my adolescent hair, my fleshy mouth, my hard nails, my furrowless, ungnarled hands. She would never believe that I have been so faithful that I saw the streak of green. But if for some reason she should turn toward the place where she left me waiting so many years, she would find, as one image more of the many that her memory holds, the little girl she immobilized in the sand with the promise of happiness.

(from *De noche vienes*,
translated by Amy Kaminsky)

Elena Poniatowska is one of Mexico's leading writers and journalists. Born in 1933 to an aristocratic Polish family she has re-rooted herself to contemporary Mexican speech and the oral expression of Mexico's popular classes. This piece is from De noches vienes. Her better-known works are Hasta no verte Jesus mío. Masacre en Mexico (translated as Massacre in Mexico and Querido Diego te abraza Quiea. Published by permission of the author.

Dr. Marlinda Freire

by Marva Jackson

Dr. Marlinda Freire is Chief of Psychiatric Services at the Toronto Board of Education. While it is important to remember that she is only one of many Latin Americans who have escaped repressive regimes, it is difficult to listen to Marlinda without exceptionalizing her as an individual. She first arrived in Canada with her husband and three children following Chile's military coup in 1973 which preceded the Pinochet government's rise to power. Marlinda now helps refugees and victims of torture adjust to life in a new country and to deal with the trauma that accompanies such tremendous upheaval. She is also dedicated to raising the consciousness of administrators and educators about problems associated with poverty. By developing their insights into the needs of refugees and children of poverty, Marlinda aims to help other professionals achieve effective action which will benefit the whole school population. Marlinda's enthusiasm for her work stems from insights developed during her childhood.

Born January 19, 1944 to Isidro Lizama and Anna Lecaros, Marlinda spent her early years in Valparaiso, a small mining town in northern Chile.

"I'm the fifth in seven children...two older siblings died. My father was a miner in the nitrate mines. He was a bright, caring and loving man. He was very knowledgeable even though he didn't go to school. He was a self-made man."

In the late 1940s Isidro moved his family from the mountains to a small fishing village. The change meant more stable work for him and further education possibilities for his children.



Dr. Marlinda Freire

"I got a strong sense of responsibility about work from him. Also he felt that men and women weren't that different and that we should take advantage of every opportunity. He had internalized the importance of an education. It was something you had to have."

Anna Lecaros shared this point of view and encouraged her children to educate themselves, believing that this would make it easier for them to maintain their independence as individuals. Marlinda describes her mother as a woman born out of her time.

"My mom was Chinese-Peruvian-Bolivian. She married my dad when she was 13...He was 23. She had a strong magical perception of things which gave me a tremendous perception of reality and I am proud of that...She had all of the insights of someone taking feminist studies."

Another powerful spiritual force in Marlinda's early life was Luisa Groja, her father's mother. All of Luisa's children worked in the nitrate mines where Chile's labour movement started. She was involved at a time when women usually were not. Marlinda was often with her at underground meetings distributing pamphlets or watching for the police.

When she turned 13 Marlinda met the person who helped her focus her personal agenda. Severiano Rios was an exceptional biology and chemistry teacher.

"She connected content with reality. She made it relevant to our reality. For example, she taught us about nutrition... While teaching us about nitrate, she gave us the socio-political history of the mines... Frequently I think that if I hadn't met her that I would have been a lawyer."

Instead, Marlinda enrolled in the Faculty of Biochemistry and Pharmacology at Chile's University of Concepcion in 1961, throwing herself wholeheartedly into a hectic schedule. She began work as a tutorial assistant for the university and married Carlos Freire, a law student who Marlinda had met in a home for university students. Accepted into the Faculty of Medicine in 1963, Marlinda was one of eight women out of two hundred students. She gave birth to her children while still in training.

"I didn't receive any special treatment and I kind of appreciated that... Being a medical student was one more thing among many other things. I was involved with the birth control program at the university and with pediatrics and government programs for the underprivileged. But I didn't do it on my own. I had a very supportive community. I was the doctor of the community and many people helped. I was not only doctor, but I was nurse and therapist. My husband, being an illustrator, worked at home and made it possible for me to take my training and to be on call. Everyone shares the work."

In 1973, shortly after her graduation, the military coup which deposed socialist leader Salvador Allende also dashed plans for Marlinda's post-graduate studies. Fleeing via

the Honduras, she and her family arrived at Canadian Immigration the following year. Travelling with their children gave Marlinda Lizama and Carlos Freire "some sense of continuity with life, with task. It made us able to arrive with our own agenda." At this time, during processing of legal documents by immigration officials, Marlinda's last name was accidentally changed to Freire. After years of exposure to strong feminist role models she suddenly found herself surrounded by more traditional male and female stereotyping than she had been. She had to fight for her right to contribute to this new society on her own terms and to study English as a second language.

"I remember the counsellor suggesting work in hotels... It is not that I would denigrate those jobs but that I felt I had other things to offer... certain skills that I could use."

Realizing that more Latin American people would follow, Marlinda saw that there would be a need for services that she could provide. It was a difficult road requiring more medical studies, but Marlinda completed her post-graduate training in Psychiatry at the University of Toronto. By 1980 Marlinda Freire was a licensed physician in Canada. Her private practice is currently limited to Spanish speaking people.

"I don't want to discriminate but there aren't enough facilities... There isn't enough manpower to cover the (Spanish-speaking) community."

Marlinda feels that current psychiatric testing is too limited in terms of experiences where eradication of cultural bias could be achieved through education. Marlinda gives examples where more training in psychiatry — geared towards the realities of refugees and victims of torture — is necessary.

"I remember working with a number of psychiatrists, all of them middle and upper class (people) who had no idea what it means to be poor. One of the psychiatrist's evaluation of a woman who came in with a dental problem yet wouldn't see a dentist herself was that she was sadistic. I told someone that perhaps she didn't have enough money (as it turned out). Too often the evaluation doesn't have anything to do with the reality of the individ-

ual...Another woman, a pregnant woman was in detention in Latin America. She was tortured. This woman learned how oppressors used their children against the mothers so she made a conscious decision not to be attached to the child. Someone not knowing her history would say that she hated her child...A woman in Chile worked in a hospital during the coup. There was a curfew and one of her co-workers was shot in her presence. The woman was single and lived with her mother who had heart problems. One night she (the mother) started having chest pains. Because of the curfew — where they would be shot on sight — she was afraid to go out for help and her mother died. She couldn't get through to her psychiatrist, who was using the Freudian approach (not that I am against the Freudian approach but there are so many different possibilities), and she made a serious suicide attempt."

Marlinda does most of her work within the family structure stressing the necessity for flexibility when looking at alternative solutions. In 1983, Marlinda took a position as a child psychiatrist with the Toronto Board of Education. The position gave her an opportunity to expand another of her areas of expertise. Committed to establishing an effective support network for impoverished children within the school system, Marlinda readily shares her knowledge speaking at seminars, workshops and conferences on topics ranging from suicide prevention to violence against women and children, to the refugee experience. Whether dealing with the education of children or the socialization of people in general, Dr. Marlinda Freire is concerned about the politics of living. She is a skilled and articulate woman who does not presume to represent other Latin Americans when discussing issues of race and gender. She rarely declines a chance to share perspectives as evidenced most recently in her article, *Latin American Refugees — Adjustment and Adaptation*.

"The crises experienced at an individual level expands to the family, the community and the country as a whole. We have to remember that the

ultimate manifestation of the patriarchal system is the military structure, the armed forces. The manifestation of political violence has been different for women than for men. Men have been more frequently the victims of direct repression, whereas women have been the ones left to retain a sense of continuity and normalcy within the context of this very anomalous situation...However, when women have been the objects of direct repression, they have been victims in a very special way...politically and socially committed and thinking women are even more at risk. These women have dared to break away from the very traditional and passive roles assigned to them. Not only are they joining the men in the struggle for freedom, but they are furthering the cause of women's emancipation as well. The statement well-known in some Latin American circles that 'to be a woman is bad enough, to be a political woman is intolerable,' makes this point clearly."¹

A woman in the strongest political sense, Marlinda views herself as simply 'a very lucky person' and credits her immediate family as her main source of inspiration. After 24 years of marriage, both she and Carlos, today one of Canada's most successful illustrators specializing in children's books, are busy with ongoing cross-cultural activities. Echoing familiar sentiments, Marlinda proudly informs the listener that both daughters, Loreto, 23, and Tatiana, 21, are married and have completed university. 18 year-old son Alejo is just completing high school with plans to attend university as well.

Her children call her 'a humanist', which is probably the most accurate label for Dr. Marlinda Freire, but after talking with her one is left with the impression that this unassuming individual is not much different from the young Marlinda Lizama who spent her childhood in rural Chile.

Marva Jackson is a Toronto writer who contributes frequently to Fuse and Tiger Lily.

¹ *Canadian Woman Studies/les cahiers de la femme*. Spring 1989. *Refugee Women* (Volume 10, Number 1). A York University Publication.

post-structuralist interpretations of contemporary currents vis a vis popular culture.

As for the new wave of the Mexican novel since the 1960s, Campos praises writers like Gustavo Sainz and José Agustín for having opened an untried route for younger authors to follow, free from the impediments of tradition. She divides the young generation into two classes, those who seriously treat the restlessness of their group and those who have simply created new stereotypes out of their confusion, their irrational violence and their obscenities. Many of them, she regrets, have failed to live up to their earlier promise.

It is also Campos' contention that the novelist writes primarily for him/herself although inventing a world for an unidentified reader to explore. She is acutely sensitive to the objectives of the novelist and particularly to the turnabout in attitude that distinguishes the multiplicity of present day fiction from the orthodoxy of its antecedents.

Margo Glantz has concentrated her focus on the Mexican literature of the past twenty years. Like Campos, she is multinational, having received her Master of Arts from the National University of Mexico (UNAM) and then earned her doctorate at the University of Paris. She studied Italian in Italy, English in London and Art at the Louvre. Finally she received a fellowship from the French government to continue her studies in Mexico. She has taught at University of Mexico, at Montclair State College in New Jersey, and recently has been a diplomat for her country in England.

Glantz sees Mexican literature still in a state of mobility due to both internal and external fluctuations. She finds that Mexicans, like other Latin American writers, stand between two poles; tied to Europe in one way, yet still rooted in their pre-Colombian past, and powerfully attracted by the United States.

In her books and essays Glantz analyzes some of the recent categories of Latin American literature whose terms might mystify the uninitiated. She places the "Boom" of the height of Latin American novel between 1963 and 1973, following the Cuban revolution when almost all novelists declared themselves politically committed. Refugees from the Spanish Civil War contributed powerfully to writing in Mexico and elsewhere and Latin American writers started to defy cultural colonialism. Major new

publishing houses were founded in Mexico and literary journals developed a healthy circulation. Foremost among the Mexican novelists of this time period were Agustín Yáñez, Juan Rulfo, José Revueltas and Carlos Fuentes.

Glantz sees "Magical Realism," a movement confluent with the "boom" with its further withdrawal from photographic realism, as a presentation of reality as if it were a mystery. She quotes from sources who differentiate only slightly between "el realismo mágico" and "lo real maravilloso" although the distinction between the two continues to plague many academicians, some of whom label "lo real maravilloso" simply as the use of the fantastic. She cites Alejo Carpentier's definition of "lo real maravilloso" as a search for indigenous myths and notes his belated acknowledgement of his debt to German surrealism.

In *Repeticiones*, Glantz is more definitive in her descriptions of the changes wrought by "la onda" (the new wave) and "la escritura" ("writing" as in the French nouveau roman) where she relies on her personal reading of the young generation whose irreverence set it apart and created a new chapter in the history of Mexican literature. "La onda," she says, represents a period of extremes. The young revolted against their circumstances and against their antecedents. Their literature disparages the social order and emphasizes the imperialism of the ego. Today's adolescents, says Glantz, have no individual identity. Influenced by U.S. pop culture, they have changed their dress, become politically aware, "tripped" on drugs, and escaped into a world of pure sound. "Spanglish" or "HispanGLISH" from Tijuana, Mexico's melting pot, have become part of youth culture and part of Mexico's latest literature.

If "la onda" is replete with social derision, "la escritura" represents the birth of a new vocabulary and the adolescents' argot of the streets. "Escritura" also advocates the destruction of the conventional forms of narrative as each novelist writes from a strictly personal point of view. Glantz hears the language of "la onda" and "la escritura" having the rhythm of rock and roll music punctuated with percussion like sounds. She compares the "jipi" generation of the 1960s to the "pachucos" or the perpetual adolescents of Octavio Paz with their vain protests against a system they do not try to improve. They were rebels without a resolution.

These three astute critics approach Mexican literature from totally different angles yet they all share an awareness that Mexican literature is in a state of flux, perpetually in search of new forms, new visions, and a new language; and they have all worked vigorously to win the notice and the respect of the male establishment.

Millán views Mexican literature as an expression as unique as the country's history, rooted in a rich pre-Hispanic civilization of heroic narratives, religious poetry and belief in magic. While she acknowledges the importance of foreign influences, she insists that the changes in Mexican literature are associated more closely with national events than any outer trends.

While Millán strongly links Mexican literature to its national condition, she still insists that it does not exist in isolation but is linked to an international literary web. Her criticism is instructive, never pedantic, and her style is lucid as becomes her subject covering the entire span of Mexican literature. In her lifelong work as a literary historian, Millán raised many thought provoking topics which she covered with equal penetration in numerous articles and essays. Her work was done always with a view to her students at the Preparatoria School in Mexico City, that is, to the training and education of the next generation of men and women of her country.

Whereas Cuban-born Julieta Campos is extremely poetic in her fiction, for example the short stories of *Celina o los gatos* (1969), she is crisp and disciplined when she turns to literary criticism. Being a novelist, Campos is naturally interested in contemporary novels whether they are written in English, French or Spanish. She has had an unusual trilingual education, having learned English when she was very young and living in Cuba. She then earned her doctorate at the University of Havana and was later granted a fellowship to study at the Sorbonne in Paris. Married to a Mexican, she teaches comparative and contemporary literature at the National University of Mexico (UNAM) and does translations.

La imagen en el espejo ("The Mirror Image") focusses on the changes in the twentieth-century novel of the United States, France and Latin America. Since Proust, Campos notices, there has been a completely different view of the novel. It no longer narrates a story of external events but it is also concerned with the inner person. The newer novel, accordingly,

deals with the conflicts occasioned by man's inner and outer dualism. She designates Latin America as the common meeting ground of reality and illusion, naming the Cuban novelist Alejo Carpentier as its chief exponent.

Campos emphasizes the fact that the best modern Mexican writers, following Carpentier, disregard the chronology of time and have turned away from traditional realism. She differentiates between the "realism of essentials" in Agustín Yáñez, the "magic realism" of Juan Rulfo and the "critical realism" of Carlos Fuentes. She then pointedly refers to the theme of solitude as a characteristic common to all major contemporary Mexican writers.

As Mexican literature searches for a place of its own, on the top story of the tower of Babel, at least one of the rooms will be occupied by the women critics. Though these women have not turned their attention to female authors and have not yet examined the inter-connections of literature, politics, and sex, their very presence in the male preserves makes a strong statement. Building on their achievement, the women critics of the future are likely to be more feminist in their views, but their feminism, following the admonition of Castellanos, will not follow imported European or North American feminisms that do not correspond to Mexico's situation.

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This article is partially based on interviews with Maria del Carmen Millan, Julieta Campos, and Margo Glantz, done by the late Grace Bearse.

SELECTED WORKS OF CRITICISM BY WOMEN IN MEXICO

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Nicaraguan Women Before and After the Revolution

by Alyson E. Feltes and Yola A. Grant

Until the triumph of the Sandinista-led revolution in July 1979, Nicaraguan women faced the double oppression of class and gender. Women born into the middle and upper classes were expected to devote themselves to administering a household and being an adornment for an overprotective spouse. Poor women, on the other hand, faced a 30 percent chance of never attending school and an even greater chance of being functionally illiterate. To be poor also meant a high likelihood of ending childhood abruptly with an early pregnancy, usually out of wedlock. On average, Nicaraguan women experience ten pregnancies in a lifetime — in a country where abortion remains illegal.

Independence from men and relief from poverty were virtually impossible under Somoza's regime. As Nicaraguan peasants lost their small subsistence plots to large landholders (transnational agro-businesses and 'latifundistas'), more and more rural women were forced to become farm labourers so that they could buy the food they once grew for themselves. Somoza's emphasis on developing agro-business had another detrimental effect on rural women: many became single heads of households as men migrated to cities to find work and often did not return; others migrated seasonally to other parts of the country to harvest crops and often sired children in those places. (Today, a full sixty percent of families are headed by women — no doubt, the war against Somoza and the Contras have added to this toll.)

The life of urban women was no less bleak. In Managua, over eighty percent of working women functioned as domestic servants, washerwomen, 'penny-capitalists' (street vendors) and prostitutes.

Employment laws and practices during the Somoza period painted a bleak picture of the status of women: the law of equal pay for equal work was rarely followed; domestic workers, the largest sector of working women, were excluded from social security provisions; women who worked with their spouses in a harvest were paid through their husbands — and only the husbands received social security benefits. Family laws were even more oppressive: one act of adultery by the wife entitled a husband to a divorce while his continued infidelity was overlooked unless his mistress was kept in the family home or maintained 'publicly and scandalously'. In an unusual twist, inheritance laws in this Catholic nation seemed to favour mistresses over wives: if a man died without a will, his mistress in a 'free union' could inherit half of his estate while a wife could inherit only one-quarter! Also, while a mistress could inherit from her lover, a wife could not inherit from hers. These laws clearly subjugated women within the institution of marriage.

From the litany of subjugations above, one can see that Nicaraguan women had much to gain by throwing in their lot to establish a new social order.

In our many conversations with many middle-aged women, we learnt that they had joined the revolutionary struggle for decidedly unpolitical reasons. One peasant woman, a member of a support group "Mothers of Martyrs" told of the many atrocities committed by the National Guard against her family: she was forced to watch as they beheaded her husband and burnt her home; she was raped and two of her sons, student activists, were murdered. Another woman, born into the upper class, told us that although she was somewhat protected by her class, she too feared the cruelty and brutality of the National Guards. These women became connected to the struggle through their children's resolve to take up arms against Somoza.

In September 1977, the first national organization of women sympathetic to the Sandinistas was formed. They called themselves "Women Concerned with the National Problem" (AMPRONAC) and initially focussed on human rights abuses by the Somoza regime. In their protests, these women were tear-gassed (some suffered miscarriages from those incidents) and, as the repressive backlash grew, they were fired on by the National Guard. In preparation for the Sandinista's final offensive, women gathered intelligence, built barricades, stockpiled food, developed communications networks and learnt first aid. Young women without children joined the fighting forces in large numbers so that by the time of liberation, between one-quarter and one-third of the combatants were women. This involvement in the national liberation struggle brought Nicaraguan women new self esteem and prepared them for the struggle of self-liberation.

The post-triumph gains of Nicaraguan women are many: the commercial exploitation of women's bodies (in advertising, for example) is prohibited; women can now initiate divorce proceedings and can be awarded custody of their children; the state enforces maintenance orders and garnishes wages as required; children born out of wedlock are now entitled to paternal support; women receive psychological and legal counselling on marriage break-down; married women can now own property and single women are legally recognized as heads of families. For working women, equal pay is now a reality; maternity leave

with pay and job security is now assured; all workers, including domestic workers, are now entitled to social security; and, most importantly, childcare in the workplace, or nearby, is becoming a reality for many Nicaraguan mothers.

Nicaraguan women are the most advanced of Latin American women (and in some instances, more advanced than those of 'developed' countries) in terms of social rights. Nonetheless, the task of liberating women in a 'machisto' culture is an ongoing one. After the victory, many women combatants were relegated to administrative tasks and traditionally female jobs such as cooking and sewing. Many urban middle-class women, whose husbands tolerated and were perhaps amused by their activities in AMPRONAC, were pressured to return to their pre-revolutionary role in the home. Eight years after national liberation, the domestic division of labour remains largely unchanged. To address these on-going concerns, a new women's organization AMNLAE was formed in 1981. This national association replaced AMPRONAC and was named after the first woman combatant who fell in battle with the National Guard. Since its formation, AMNLAE has conducted a "campaign of consciousness" to promote women's political and ideological consciousness; to educate men and women about gender discrimination and to raise the level of women's participation in the political organs of the country.

Issues such as abortion, wife-assault, birth control and rape require much 'conscientization'. According to Christiane Santos of AMNLAE, many Nicaraguan women continue to oppose the legalization of abortion, and, to a lesser degree, birth control because of the strong influence of the Catholic church. Further work is required to change the laws and social perception of rape and wife assault. Santos made it clear that women's efforts to transfer rape and wife assault from the private to the public realm requires a full-scale rethinking of power relations between men and women. That process is quite slow and, today, only rape committed by a member of the Sandinista army is punished consistently and severely. Wife assault is not recognized as a criminal offence unless the injuries are still apparent after a certain number of days.

As noted earlier, women have made

many important gains in the work-place. One major hurdle remains however: women's 'double-day'. Many Nicaraguan women begin their days at 4 a.m. to prepare their family for school and work. They themselves then perform at an eight or twelve hour job and spend one or two hours travelling to and from work. When they return at night, they are expected to cook and do laundry without the benefit of appliances that are accessible to homemakers in developed countries. Needless to say, this routine is exhausting and leaves many women without the energy or time to undertake educational opportunities to improve their job skills. Through women's demands in their unions (over 90 percent of the workforce is now unionized) and the efforts of AMNLAE, many women are now granted time-off with pay during the daytime to upgrade their skills. AMNLAE also conducts educational retreats of two or three days duration to 'conscientize' women — away from the stress of overwork.

Although women have not relinquished their role as primary care-givers in the home, they have taken on new demanding

ones to further the goals of the revolution. Many women have volunteered to work in the national literacy campaign, in the army and in neighbourhood vigilance teams (to protect their homes and workplaces from Contra attacks). Many others still have assumed leadership roles in their unions, churches and community organizations. With many men mobilized in the war effort, women have taken on traditional 'male' jobs and now comprise the majority of students in the universities.

Christiane Santos was adamant when she stated: "Women are prepared to die before they surrender their new attitude. When the men come back from the war we will not be going back to the houses — we are very clear about that."

And, according to one slogan we heard on Mother's Day — *i Sin las mujeres, no haya revolución!* Without the women, there would be no revolution!

Alyson E. Feltes is entering her final year at Osgoode Hall Law School. Yola A. Grant is a recent graduate of Osgoode Hall. Both women share a keen interest in gender discrimination in law.



Photograph by L. Towell

Refugee Families and Their Children

by Marlinda Freire

This report is an overview of the experiences and difficulties of refugee families and their children. It reflects the Latin American experience, but, in my opinion, most findings and observations are applicable to other refugee groups as well.

This report outlines a summary of the work done by professionals in the field of migration, refugees and exile, as processes. It also includes my own clinical and research work experience, introspection and observation of personal experiences as well as those of relatives and friends.

Migration is a universal phenomenon. After World War II a very conservative estimate indicated that about 40 million people all over the world had been forced from their homes (Rees 1960). Canada has traditionally received a large number of migrants, "voluntary ones" and "forced ones". With the socio-economic and political turmoil prevailing in the world, especially in underdeveloped countries, the magnitude of the problem remains unchanged. In 1981, it was estimated that 5.4 million people were displaced, living in camps with many millions more living in "limbo" and facing problems of forced adjustment to new environments. (Stoller, 1981).

In the 70's and 80's, the main group of forced migrants coming to Canada had been the Latin American and the Indo-Chinese.

From 1985 to 1986 the total number of Convention Refugees and Designated Class Immigrants accepted by Canada (government programs, private sponsors, humanitarian grounds) was 21,551 refugees. Central America was identified as the primary area producing refugees who required resettlement for protection purposes (Refugee Perspectives, Refugee Affair Division, Immigration Canada, November 1987). For example, El Salvador, with a population of 4.5 million has 600,000 displaced, 50,000 dead, 6,000 disappeared and 1 million refugees (Canadian Jesuit Refugee Programme 1986). Most of the literature on migration and immigrants has dealt with voluntary immigrants rather than with people forced into refugee status, and exile experiences. Attempts have been made to provide a better understanding of processes involved in migration based on "Stress

Theory", "General Hazard Theory", "Life Events", "Bereavement Process", etc. From whatever perspective this subject has been explored, migration, from a mental health and sociological point of view has been identified as objectively pathological and pathogenic. (Appendix A).

Migration as a process, even under the most ideal conditions, exacerbates difficulties that the migrant may have had prior to migrating and will create new ones (Odegaard, 1932; Malzberg, and Lee 1956, Murphy, 1977). Who the person was (in psychological terms) prior to coming to a new country, his/her experiences prior to departure, expectations in coming to the new country, and the degree of cultural translocation (how different the cultures of the countries involved are) are some factors which will determine the accommodation (Appendix B), adjustment, adaptation and finally the degree of assimilation that the newcomer will have into the culture (ways of life) of the new country.

In the case of refugees, these are people who, most often, did not plan nor choose to leave their country of origin. The composite of the Latin American political refugee is a person who left, in most instances, when life itself was in danger. Leaving the country was preceded by clandestine living, detention, torture, death or disappearance of relatives and friends. Separations and losses were all violent and they involved what was most meaningful in the individual's life. The status of refugee and exile was the result of circumstances beyond the individual's control and he/she went to whatever country would agree to admit him/her. Most people accepted temporary asylum in two or three different countries before they finally settled in one, with anxieties and losses involved in each move. The refugee did not have expectations or an agenda at the time of arrival. As a group, the political refugees did not speak English, but had a middle or upper class background, higher formal education, technical and/or professional and verbal and social skills or a more universal adaptive value when compared with the Latin American population that had come to Canada seeking socio-economic betterment. (Freire, Berdichevsky, 1982).

In the case of Latin American refugees, many of them had been subjected to, prior to their departure, to what has been termed "extreme situations" leading to a "Survivor

Syndrome". Other terms coined (diagnosis) in working with people exposed to extreme situations are: "Concentration Camp Syndrome", "Torture Syndrome", "Catastrophe Survivors", "Refugee Syndrome", "Traumatic Neurosis of War", "Post Traumatic Neurosis", "Gross Stress Reaction" and "Post Traumatic Stress Disorders".

A profile of an "extreme situation" is as follows (Kijak and Funtowicz, 1982).

1. Completely unknown experiences, without precedent in the history of the individual up to that moment.
2. The victimizers are other human beings as compared to the trauma due to natural causes.
3. The aggression is pervasive and generally protected by institutional backing.
4. The physical and psychological sufferings which these victims are subjected to (physical and psychological torture) are always on the margins of their endurance.
5. In many cases, the person has witnessed torture and deliberate killing.
6. In many cases, captivity has meant separation from their loved ones, complete isolation, and no knowledge of the fate of loved ones by the imprisoned person.
7. Total change with regard to their normal and habitual environment.
8. The extreme situation has no temporal limit.
9. The loss of legal and human rights and individual and family belongings, is total.
10. No chance exists to react against the aggressors.
11. The victims are obliged, in order to survive, to show humiliating forms of behaviour which do not appear at normal times or in other critical but not extreme situations.

The traumatic experiences preceding the refugee and exile status can be understood as ranging within a spectrum of possibilities from the most "extreme situations" where the individual is the personal target of repression and torture, to a more

generalized form of persecution and psychological forms of torture affecting a much broader segment of the population. In the Latin American experience, the population at large has been subjected to: (1) "economic violence" (indirect repression) with extreme levels of unemployment, extreme inflation, extreme discrepancy between earning power and cost of living, leading towards the problems associated with extreme poverty, (2) "ideological violence" (indirect repression) with censorship of news media, banning of political parties, imprisonment and execution of (political, community and religious) leaders, closing of educational institutions and burning of books. Another form of ideological violence is created by extreme tensions within the family, work and school situations as people are encouraged by "security forces" to spy on one another and denounce people, (3) "direct violence" (direct repression) with kidnappings, killings, executions by death squads, rape, torture, home and community search and surveillance, ransacking and the like. The way repression is exercised is extremely effective and it has a contaminating effect. Once someone has been identified as a threat and becomes a target of persecution, the immediate family, the extended family, friends, co-workers and neighbours, become secondary targets, thus creating an extreme sense of chaos with disintegration of the supportive network leading to stigmatization and isolation of the victims. People and their children are left to their own resources to survive their experiences.

In the case of the Central American population, their experiences have been of an even more catastrophic nature. The few people with leadership characteristics have been systematically eliminated and the rest of the population subjected to an extreme form of state terrorism. Massacres of large segments of the population occur, killing, execution and torture take place in the open, in broad daylight for people to see, mass graves are sometimes open and quite visible and there are continual air raids as a very effective form of controlling the population. Central American people are the victims of a situation of civil war in which, most of them, do not play any active role or even understand what is happening.

The profile of the refugee coming from Central America, in general, is a young person, married, with 3-5 children, from a rural area, with limited formal education, with employment, verbal and social skills which may have little adaptive value to a highly industrialized society like Canada. A recent research done on 36 women, victims of torture, living in Toronto who were seen with the 1984-1986 period, included a larger number of Guatemalan and Salvadorean women than previous studies. Epidemiological data, in this study, shows that these women have 1 to 5 children (72.2%) and a working class background (55.5%). (Fornazari, X. & Freire, M., 1987).

Latin American refugees, in general, are extremely resourceful people (personal resources developed through difficult life experiences and survival tasks.) In the case of refugees coming from Central America, it is my impression, due to the degree of trauma involved, the nature of the resources they bring with them, and the characteristics of Canadian society that they will have more difficulties in adjustment than the refugees who have arrived from South America.

Refugees arriving in the new country face a number of demands in the receiving society. Problems shared by refugees when they arrive in the new country can be separated into two broad groups: "losses" and "cultural shock" (Lin et al, 1982). Losses are massive and involve the whole life of the refugee: (1) significant personal relationships, (2) language, cultural and socio-economic milieu, social status, work, career, (3) belongings, geography, climate, food, etc. Cultural shock refers to the complex of socio-cultural and psychological factors triggered by the encounter with the receiving society. For regular immigrants cultural shock has been described as presenting with three definable elements (Graza-Guerrero, 1974): (1) cultural shock is a stressful, anxiety-provoking situation, a violent encounter, one which puts the newcomer's personality functioning to a test, thus challenging the stability of his psychic organization, (2) cultural shock is accompanied by a process of mourning brought about by the individual's gigantic losses in their abandoned culture, (3) the co-existence of the two previous elements causes a serious threat to the newcomer's identity.

For the average or regular immigrants there is a description of "an uncomplicated cultural shock". It means that the cultural shock is a result of a more-or-less voluntary decision by a newcomer to leave his country for diverse reasons (professional training, economic problems, etc.). Furthermore, at the time that the newcomer left his country, he was still in interaction with a normal environment. This is in contradiction with "complicated cultural shock" which is the one presented by the newcomer who left his country for the very reason that his average "expectable environment" was no longer "average" for the person. An example of complicated culture shock is the one experienced by refugees. The first initial acute cultural encounter will be followed by a state of reorganization and finally establishment of a new identity.

A study done on a sample of 46 political refugees from Latin America (R. Berdichevsky, M. Freire, 1982), (Appendix E) identified a period of shock (Pre-Relocation, Relocation, Post-Relocation) followed by a Period of Resolution. During the initial relocation period, refugees are, on the most part, preoccupied with survival tasks (learning new language, covering basic needs, search for employment). The "psychological arrival" (realization and acceptance that one is in the new country to stay) takes months (if not years). In our study, the acute state of disorganization (shock), before some psychological and emotional reorganization began to occur, lasted, in most cases, anywhere between six months to two years. In the second stage of adaptation (post-relocation) the main survival task has been more or less mastered and the refugee moves towards finding resolution to his/her acute distress. This resolution appears to the individual, his socio-cultural group of reference and the receiving society as a more stable and consistent overall restructuring of all aspects of oneself. Resolution is achieved or appears to be achieved through an equilibrium of two processes. One is acculturation by which there seems to be a movement to accommodate and integrate the elements of the new culture. The other process is what we have termed "personal exile", which could be described as a personal reinforcement and restitution of those aspects of the old culture and per-

sonality which can be retained. The theoretical possibility of "full assimilation" is discarded on the grounds of the self-protective need to retain and enhance a sense of continuity in one's self-identity. Actually, in our experience, "too complete an assimilation" into the new culture would have a negative adaptive value and would indicate an incomplete process of adaptation. Refugees did not come to exist at the time of arriving in the new country, and in order to have a present and future, the refugee needs to keep a past. (Appendix E).

In the case of the Latin American population, children are very much involved in the daily life of their parents and the community at large. They participate, along with the adult world, in household chores, child rearing (younger siblings) work and social activities, besides all the other tasks in the lives of children. In situations of repression, children suffer along with their parents.

Excerpts taken from a study of Chilean refugee children in Denmark (Amnesty International Danish Medical Group and International Rehabilitation and Research Centre for Torture Victims, Copenhagen, Denmark, 1985) summarizes it by stating:

"Just as, in some countries, adults are imprisoned because of political, religious or other ideological opposition to the prevailing regime, so, too, are many children arrested, with or without their parents. Several examples are known — Latin American and South African, for instance, of children spending a long time in prison or prison camps, under conditions of poor hygiene and poor nutrition. An increasing number of pregnant women are being arrested and deliver their babies in prison. Some of these infants are removed from their mothers immediately after birth and are never heard of again. Other children are born in prison to mothers raped by prison staff. Children may witness the often brutal arrest of one or both parents, and even their torture, abduction, or execution, or they may be left unexpectedly on their own, at home or in the street, if their parents are arrested. Some children are born after their fathers have been arrested or executed and have never seen them. To others, a long lasting separation from one or both parents is an enormous mental strain, causing anxiety and insecurity. Children are also used as

witnesses in legal proceedings or as hostages. In the latter case, there is evidence that children have been present while their parents have been tortured, or the children have been tortured in front of their parents to "make the parents talk" (Latin America, South Africa, Iran, Iraq, Indonesia). There are also records of the rape of small girls and mass executions of children (Ethiopia, Central African Empire, El Salvador). In the discussion of that study, it also summarizes the experiences of people as follows: it is evident that refugee children suffer serious, perhaps lifelong sequela, psychological as well as social. To the children in the present study, the period since the parent's arrest, has been characterized by insecurity, and the circumstances have been quite incomprehensible to them. The children have not seen one or both parents for months or years and then one day have been flown with their mother or both parents to a remote, unknown country. Children need emotional and physical security and the above-mentioned stress on a child and his family affects the child to an extent which the parents on the nature and duration of distress on the child's own constitution. This, the abuse of human rights to which people are exposed to in parts of the world will have far reaching consequences, not only to the present generation but also to the next."

Children involved in repressive situations receive little attention at the time and often for long periods afterwards. The child lives its crisis within the family crisis. The family lives its crisis within the crisis of the community. The community lives its crisis within the crisis of the nation at large. Children, due to their stage of psycho-emotional and cognitive development are at a loss to understand, process and integrate situations that he/she experiences and that are even beyond the comprehension of the adults. The trauma alters the quality and the physical integrity of the family atmosphere. There is a disruption or loss of the parental bond. There is a collapse of parental roles and often with an inversion of these parental roles (children taking care of their parents). Children's perceptions of the trauma are also different from the adult's perception due to the role of fantasies (children do live their normal lives with a large measure of fantasies), and the child has difficulties, many times, sorting out what is

reality and what is fantasy. The child's immature, cognitive, affective and language development put him, again, at a disadvantage in terms of verbalizing experiences and the effect these experiences have on him. Traumatic experiences create or reactivate anxieties and insecurities and the world is perceived as unsafe, not worthy of trust. Trust is a key issue in the development of personality. Children are in the stage of establishing the foundations of their personalities. I do not need to speculate in terms of the effect of real, extreme traumatic situations in the development of children. Children present with a narrow repertoire of symptoms that would range from reactive symptomatology to complex psychiatric conditions which are difficult to evaluate and treat. The severity of the symptoms seem to be associated to a number of factors:

1. Younger age (no positive formative experiences, personality in the making)
2. Degree and nature of the trauma
3. Duration of the exposure to trauma
4. Chronicity of the trauma without complete resolution of the conflictive situation (e.g. missing parents)
5. Explanation provided to the child (most children do not receive explanations or are given false or evasive ones)
6. The degree of fragmentation with which the family has lived the ordeal (e.g. parent missing/dead/detained, other relatives in different countries, etc.) (Appendix F).

Children are also in an extremely difficult position as they perceive their parents as being "punished" for their doings and may be seen as guilty in the children's eyes.

Symptoms are dependent on the stage of development of the child. The younger children tend to present with symptoms associated with body functions: sleep and eating disorders, colics, diarrhea, temper tantrums, developmental delays. The older child tends to present with affective and behavioural problems: depression, irritability, anxiety/fears, withdrawal, somatic complaints, immature and dependent behaviours, bed-wetting, soiling. Later on, the child tends to present with academic and learning difficulties. (Appendix G).

The child living in exile faces additional tasks that have been identified as: (1) deal-

ing with acute separation and losses, (2) cultural translocation, (3) cultural shock and the risk of assimilating too much in the new culture, (communication problems, intensified generational conflicts), (4) rejection as a foreigner and (5) academic problems. (Appendix H).

Efforts have been made by professionals working in this area, to investigate, document and research the effects of repression on the development and mental health of children. This task, for obvious reasons, has proven a very difficult one. The value of investigating the effect of repression in the normal development of children is extremely important. A better understanding of how traumatic experiences operate in: (1) distorting the child's developing personality, (2) creating new neurotic conflicts, (3) reactivating old neurotic conflicts and (4) creating reactive symptomatology, would allow the best approach to a reparative (healing) process as well as a possibility to intervene at a preventive level, once some "normality" is brought into these children's lives. Many refugee children still have missing or detained parents, parents struggling with their own emotional survival, families uncertain about their legal status in Canada and so on. These "unfinished" situations make intervention difficult and painful, not only for the children but also for the therapists involved.

Studies done with Latin American refugees, adult and children, are mostly of the Chilean population. This is basically because the Chilean refugees have been in exile longer. The passage of time has allowed the community to get organized enough to start dealing with its difficulties. A summary of some of the studies done with the Latin American refugee population is presented here. Studies done on children, victims of repression, who remain within the repressive situation, are not included here.

"The Social and Psychological Reality of the Latin American Child in Exile". The Social Work Collective. (Louvain, Belgium, 1979).

This document is a description and analysis of those stress provoking factors which have had a traumatic impact on the world of Latin American children, who, together with their parents, have had to

adjust to the conditions of living in exile. Repression, exile, school and anomalies in the family structure seem to be the most obvious factors which underlie and bring about the difficulties and desocializing processes observed among the children of the Latin American exiled community. As a kind of enforced transplantation, exile for the child is a trauma characterized by: (1) separation and the pain of loss, (2) the problems of adaptation, (3) cultural shock and the risk of acculturation, (4) the experience of being rejected as a foreigner, (5) communication problems, one of the most inherent difficulties in the condition of the child. On entering school, the child in exile is faced, perhaps for the first time, by racism because "he is a foreigner". This takes the form of insult, ridicule, rejection and aggression on the part of other children and sometimes even on the part of the teacher. The exiled child is also in a disadvantaged position because he does not know the language of the country and faces a strong possibility of failing at school which may leave him in a permanent situation of frustration. As a result of repression and exile, the family is subjected to all the anxiety and stress inherent in this situation, which particularly affects the child who may become the scapegoat of family tensions as well.

"The Influence of Political Repression and Exile in Childhood". Latin American team. (Cimade, France-Spain, 1979).

A sample of 52 Latin American children from the ages of 5-13 was studied. The parents were living in exile (France and Spain) after suffering repression in their country of origin. The families were middle class and were mainly professionals and intellectuals. The purpose of the study was to analyze: (1) the influence of traumatic experiences on the exercise of the symbolic function, (2) modification of the parental image and its influence on the process of socialization of the child, (3) modes of communication and distortions in the process of transmission and their influence on the formation of ideological identity. Methodology: (1) drawing of the family, (2) picture arrangement (verbal projections), (3) resolution of situations (cards depicting different situations), (4) construction of a city and representation of imaginary events. All the children were average or above average cognitive abilities. The result generally showed: (1) a notable simplification of the

capacity to represent, and impoverishment in the use of the imagination. The greater the similarity of the stimulus shown to the traumatic experiences of the children, the greater the withdrawal. The children, even though bright, appear unable to take risks, to use their creativity and their imagination and generally appear "psychologically paralyzed", (2) parents were perceived as ineffective and inadequate. This disqualification does not appear as aggressive, or motivated by a dislike of the parents, but rather as a way of preserving the real parent figure, (3) a tendency to trivialize conflict, putting value on submissive attitudes as the cleverest way of dealing with conflict. The most stable value was that of winning, but through passive techniques. Children avoided arguments and/or confrontation. Generally, there was an over-valuation of intellectual activities, a moral indifference in the face of any aggressive stimuli, a confusion in the definition of conflict and a lack of a clear sense of belonging to groups or sides. The results obtained stressed the conclusion that, both the situation of repression and exile are having a disturbing effect on the development and socialization of children and families in these situations.

"A Study of Some Problems of The Children of Exiles in France Analyzed From a Psychological Perspective". (Anna Vasquez, Paris, France, 1979).

Longitudinal study of the behaviour of children of exiles (Chilean) in comparison with regular immigrants and French children, and looking at the concept of transculturation. Methodology: classroom observations, interviews of children, parents, teachers, principals. The study showed that children of refugees use codes of behaviours that differ from those of the new country of residence. A brief analysis was made of two different social codes which appeared to impinge with the greatest frequency on the lives of the refugee children. These are: (1) the French model of the family is the norm and the school assumes the existence of conflicts and problems among those children who live in family groups which do not conform to this model, (2) the social code of the school is rigid discipline in which competition takes preference over cooperation and rote learning and speed are promoted as important elements in education. This is combined with the discriminatory and class nature of

the schools which affect children of working class background and the children of foreigners. When different social codes clash in a disadvantaged situation like that of the small exiled community, the subjects have great difficulty in maintaining their innate cultural standards.

In the case of children living in France, the situation develops in an acute form in the school, which maintains single standards of behaviour which are different from those of the subjects reference group. Many children suffer from this conflict without being able to verbalize them or by confining themselves to expressions of wholesale rejection ("school is a drag", "I can't stand school"). Children may develop psychosomatic symptoms. The study makes references to types of school behaviour, which differ in France and Chile and illustrate the conflicts and difficulties which this situation provokes in children.

"Attendance and Follow-up of Chilean Children of School Age by a Team from the School Medical Service, Geneva" (Miriam Heymann, Geneva, Switzerland, 1979) (Appendix J).

The school's medical service is a child psychiatric service dependent on the Ministry of Education, which deals with the mental health of minors in the canton of Geneva. The present work was carried out in the neighbourhood of Lignon which has 1,500 children of school age, of whom 14 are Chilean, 12 being the children of exiles. A program of mental hygiene was conducted at the school to detect possible difficulties experienced by these children. The work was done through classroom observations and teacher interviews. The study showed that 8 out of the 12 refugee children, according to the school, had difficulties which in some cases were quite significant. The younger child tended to present rather more behavioural problems, and were described as "hyperactive", "aggressive" or with "regressive" attitudes. In the older children, learning problems predominated, with difficulties of performance in school. Two of these children presented much more serious problems and required clinical attention. Both children presented with depressive types of reactions.

Sabiá

Portavoz (voice carrier)

Flying Fish Records

by Marva Jackson

PORTAVOZ, an excellent album produced by Los Angeles-based group Sabiá, unabashedly fuses traditional and current popular styles of Latin American music with strong political themes. The images presented come from the reality of hardships created by endless violent social struggles such as war, poverty and racism. Sung in either English or Spanish each song is accompanied by a translation and explanation found on the inner record sleeve. Since Sabiá's inception in 1977 by four women while they were attending university in Providence, Rhode Island, they've consistently drawn material from a variety of sources. These include the Nueva Canción (the New Song Movement rooted in the folklore of Latin America relating to modern situations), contemporary works by writers in the Americas as well as original songs by members of Sabiá, particularly Libby Harding and Francisca Wentworth. *PORTAVOZ* offers a wide range of musical selections beginning with 'Tambor De Alumino' (Aluminum Drum), one of two on the album by Argentina's Julio Lacarra. Written in the Afro-Uruguayan rhythm *candombe*, the heroine is a mulatto woman named Maria who represents the role that the women of Uruguay played to help "bring down the military dictatorship by protesting in the streets, beating on pots and pans".

"The cry of freedom (Jose Artigas*) strengthens her/and fills with determination those who are like her/To the joy of Orien-

tales** she will come to reap/That which many others are determined to destroy".

Side one also contains a moving anti-apartheid anthem, 'A Song For Soweto' (Una Canción para Soweto). Using reggae and Latin American rhythms Sabiá's keyboard player Gary Johnson and guitarist Libby Harding bring to life lyrics written by American poet June Jordan. The combination of flute player Francisca Wentworth and Chilean writer Roberto Marquez' beautiful melody increases the haunting poignancy of the instrumental 'Pampa Lirima'.

Another American writer Robin Flowers crosses several borders with 'Who Are The Terrorists?' (Quienes Son los Terroristas?). The listener/tourist is introduced to the joys of living in a world where the poor can't get any poorer but the rich increase their gains anyway — from Mexico to Nicaragua.

"Well, I wanted to go to El Salvador/where the coffee grows high on the hillside/they say that's where the companeros hide/Well, I wanted to go to El Salvador/but as soon as I crossed the border/I saw that the place was crawling with soldiers/Her name was Patricia/They came at night and dragged her away/They wanted to know who are the terrorists?/Well, I wanted to go down to Nicaragua/The perfect end to my vacation/in a revolutionary nation/But when I got to Nicaragua/I found out that all the friction/was a U.S.-funded contradiction".

Sabiá crosses borders through all of the

Americas. Whether performing in support of projects like the 'Tools For Peace' campaign raising material aid for Nicaragua or travelling to the Honduran refugee camps during international visitors programs to act as witnesses to see that no atrocities were committed by Honduran officials. While visiting Mesa Grande, Honduras in August of 1983 Libby Harding recorded a song by Salvadoran refugees which Sabiá consequently published as a cassette and bilingual songbook called HEAR OUR VOICES. Sabiá incorporated some of those recordings on PORTAVOZ. 'Canción A Ronald Reagan' (Song To Ronald Reagan) was written by an unknown Salvadoran refugee.

"All of the Salvadoran mothers/Ask one favor of Ronald Reagan/Place your hand upon your heart/and stop sending so much repression... /We are ashamed to tell you/That you have murdered our population."

The sense of irony in lyrics (which sound like an extremely polite request is further heightened by Sabiá's rich musical texturing, characteristic of all their work. This results from mixing traditional Latin American instruments such as the quena, zampono and bombo with instruments prominent in 'popular' Western culture like the electric bass guitar, synthesizer and saxophone. All band members play several instruments and share the vocals.

PORTAVOZ was recorded with six musicians but Francisca and bass player Paul Olguin have recently left the group to pursue other musical interests. Two founding members, guitarist Erika Verba and percussionist Mari Riddle (graduates in Latin American Studies) have remained through Sabiá's musical and philosophical development. Collectively the group has a history steeped in Latin American culture. Libby's father Timothy Harding, is an authority on Latin American music, and following in the footsteps of her sister Cindy (another founding member who makes guest appearances occasionally) Libby joined Sabiá in 1982. Before that Libby, who has a degree in Audio-Tech Engineering, performed with folk music and Nueva Canción groups in Los Angeles and Mexico. Erika also has a minor degree in Ethnomusicology and wrote her thesis on the life, poetry and music of Violeta Parra. She has produced radio programs on the folk music of Péru and Women Composers of Latin America. Mari, the Chicana member from a border town in

Eagle Pass, Texas, grew up listening to and playing Canción Romantica and Mexican "Nortena" music. An accomplished dancer as well as musician, Mari was the Director of the First Festival of Traditional Latin American Folk Music in Los Angeles in 1981.

"The stereotypes are strong and in Latin American music there are not as many women instrumentalists as singers. We met a woman in the Vancouver Folk Festival travelling with a group from Costa Rica. She's the flute player but the amount of work and what she had to do to convince her parents that it shouldn't be seen as bad for her to be travelling with 7 men to go to the festival, just for her to go to rehearsals was difficult."

Although she is working towards a degree in urban planning, Mari continues to tour with Sabiá. She says that the experience performing during the Tools for Peace campaign showed the group "how well music and political action can work together." Through their travels to Latin America Mari has found several differences in the feminist movement there compared to the United States. "The women in Nicaragua were always saying that what they think is different with the feminist songwriters in the States and the ones in Nicaragua was that in the U.S. it was very very important for the Americans to identify themselves as women separate from men. In their world they feel that the struggle is not as separate. The struggle is together with their male companeros and choosing equal rights across the board because there is so much injustice across the board. Their songs reflect that, strong feminists, but defined in their terms."

PORTAVOZ, Sabiá's second album, carries the messages of people forced by outside forces into a battle for cultural and economic survival to those who haven't heard, and to those who need to be reminded.

Marva Jackson is a music programmer on Toronto's alternative radio station CKLN-FM 88.1.

**Jose Artigas: gaucho leader of the independence struggle in Uruguay*

***Orientales: Argentine reference to Uruguayans*

Women Struggling and Surviving

by Susan Korah

*Women and Change
in Latin America*

Edited by

June Nash and Helen Safa

Bergin & Garvey Publ. Inc.

pp. 367/\$14.95 approx.

"**T**his revealing and compelling window on women's roles ... " says the blurb on the back jacket in a gush of promotional rhetoric ... "the volume of the decade for scholars and teachers in Latin American development and women's studies programs." Even after stripping away the hype one is inclined to agree that yes, indeed, this is a revealing, compelling and important work ... too important to be left exclusively to academics, researchers and armchair social reformers cloistered in their ivory towers, "far from the madding crowd's ignoble strife."

A collection of research papers prepared by several feminist scholars, it documents, analyses, and most importantly, brings to light the enormous contributions of peasant and proletarian women (the vast majority in that continent) to the reproductive (child-bearing and homemaking) and productive (paid employment) spheres of life in Latin America. As Safa says in her paper "Female Employment in the Puerto Rican Working Class," the role women play in reproduction is by now at least acknowledged, but in the area of paid employment, their efforts tend to be hidden and grossly undervalued.

Thus, through the empirical research and theoretical insights of these academics, we see Latin American women in a variety of "exotic" locales — the highlands of Peru and


Central Mexico, the urban sweatshops of Jamaica, Brazil and Venezuela, the altiplano homelands of the Aymara Indians of Bolivia, and the plantations of Cuba. These papers however, are not merely colourful vignettes or journalistic slice-of-life pieces written for the entertainment of armchair travellers with a mild interest in "exotic" people and "quaint" ways of life. They are dialectical analyses of the relations of production and reproduction, and of the structural forces leading to inequality and oppression. As such they stimulate critical thinking about the realities of our own social existence since these forces exist in varying degrees in many parts of the world including the affluent societies of North America and Western Europe.

Fascinating glimpses of the day-to-day lives of women in specific geographic and social contexts add a human dimension to scholarly research and analysis. Generally, we see women struggling, surviving and triumphing in body and spirit over incredible obstacles created by the twin monsters of poverty and patriarchal value systems that deny their humanity and acknowledge only their sexuality and reproductive capability.

Neither strident nor doctrinaire in tone, the book is a forceful intellectual argument for shaping a social order that ensures a fair quality of life for the entire population rather than concentrates on production for the profit of a privileged minority. This is best summarized by juxtaposing the realities of the Capitalist-oriented development pattern of Brazil and the democratic type development of Fidel Castro's Cuba.

Unfortunately, the general reader with no background in political and sociological theory and unfamiliar with Marxist terminology will find the language a stumbling block. Many glaring proofreading errors and the choice of a less than pleasing typeface detract from the visual appeal of the book, but this is redeemed somewhat by the fascinating photographs taken by the writers during their field research. The book deserves a wider audience and the publishers would do well to consider producing a more popular version.

Susan Korah is a corporate communications consultant and freelance journalist with a special interest in "Third World" women's issues.



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