



**Festival of Festivals - La Femme de l'hotel.** SEE STORY PAGE 8.



## FEATURES

**FEMINISM AT THE FESTIVAL:** *Broadside* provides a rundown on films at Toronto's Festival of Festivals which are relevant to women: from a feminist caper to a documentary on Dr. Morgentaler; from the lives of teenage girls to that of a nightclub singer. Page 8.

**CHOICE REVISITED:** Feminists must review our position on abortion and on reproductive choice, and not be afraid of the consequences of opening up the debate to question ambivalences. An excerpt from Kathleen McDonnell's new book, *Not an Easy Choice*. Page 4.

## NEWS

**PEACE PROCESS:** The debate concerning feminism and the peace movement continues: women as earth mothers nurturing the world vs. women as angry activists fighting a complex system. Amanda Hale reports on a conference on "Women and Education for Peace and Non-violence," held at OISE in Toronto. Page 6.

## INSIDE BROADSIDE

**MOVEMENT MATTERS:** Read about the Toronto Library strike, Australian feminists and ANZAC Day, the Robichaud case, the Queen's Women's Centre video on pornography, and more. Page 7.

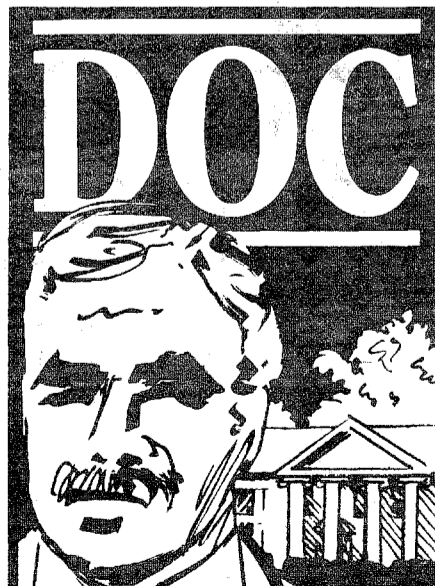
**GORGEOUS GEORGE:** With androgynous role models around, like Boy George and Michael Jackson, is gender-bending an influential aspect of the music scene? Not according to Susan Cole, who contends that the Parachute Club's political messages are far more important. Page 3.

## COMMENT

**BOYS (IN) BLUE?** Anne Cameron comments on an interesting double standard. When women protest against the violent effects of pornography, we're called hysterical and unrealistic. What's a little fantasy, after all? But when a police officer is killed by a boy whose favourite movie is *violent*, all of a sudden the effects of film are dangerous. Movement Comment, Page 7.

## ARTS

**FAMILY DOCUMENT:** Sharon Pollock's latest play *DOC*, about a maritime doctor's family, has an autobiographical base and a universal appeal. Pollock's father, a maritime doctor, and Ev, the play's Doc, are both work-obsessed patriarchs, but both Pollock and her counterpart, played by Clare Coulter, are feisty females who survive. Reviewed by Amanda Hale. Page 11.



**OUTSIDE BROADSIDE:** Don't miss this month's calendar of Toronto women's events for November, 1984. Page 15.

**INSPIRING MOVES:** Margie Gillis's recent dance performance, *New Dreams*, inspires a new approach to the body's movements. Gillis is a brilliant, independent dancer who transcends the theatricality of much modern dance, and who goes beyond convention. Reviewed by Janis Runge. Page 12.

**MIST-ICAL MATRIARCHY:** Marion Zimmer Bradley's major work, *Mists of Avalon*, details the struggle of the ancient matriarchal religion against the rising patriarchal Christianity in the time of Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table. Though from the women's point of view, the myths are so entrenched, says reviewer Anne Chapman, that Bradley doesn't fully succeed in telling the story anew. Page 13.

**OTHER BOOKS:** Carroll Klein reviews The Women's Press anthology of short stories, *Baker's Dozen*, page 12; Betsy Nuse reviews poetry collections by Rosalind McPhee, Marilyn Krysl and Penny Kemp, page 14.

# LETTERS

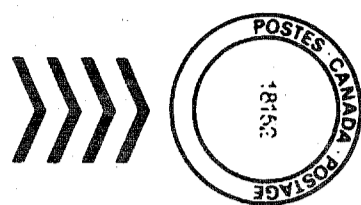
## S/M Off the Shelf

### Broadside:

The process of making decisions for a feminist bookstore is often difficult and fraught with many political considerations. To define who our customers are and how we can best meet their needs is much more complicated than it might appear. One would think that when ordering books our guiding criteria is simple: if it is a feminist book, carry it; if it is anti-feminist or anti-woman, don't carry it. This general rule serves us well 90% of the time.

Recently new material that is best described as lesbian pro-sadomasochistic has arrived at our store. After reviewing this material carefully, we found it to be anti-feminist, anti-woman, anti-semitic and racist. The material often utilizes traditional pornographic format in that it stereotypes women as enjoying violence and degradation and perpetuates an industry that exploits all women. This tendency brought home to us the fact that not every idea thought by a feminist is indeed a feminist idea. We, as a bookstore, will not promote the commercialized exploitation of women. We currently feel that the material that we have been asked to carry fits into this category.

Decisions made in this store are not carved in stone. Our process is continuous and is af-



ected by community response. As a feminist bookstore it is our responsibility to consider your opinions regarding our position. However, the ability of those of us at the front desk to effectively respond to your verbal comments is limited. The best vehicle for your ideas is a letter so that all of us will have the opportunity to consider them. Please address any correspondence to: The Toronto Women's Bookstore, 73 Harbord St., Toronto, Ontario, M5S 1G4.

The Toronto Women's Bookstore  
Toronto

### Broadside:

The following was a letter sent to the Toronto Women's Bookstore, with copies sent to Broadside, The Body Politic and Rites.

We recently attended an excellent slide show on lesbian sexuality compiled by Cyndra MacDowell and sponsored by the Lesbian and Gay Academic Society at the University of Toronto. During this presentation, a woman mentioned that your store would not carry, display or even order a whole range of magazines on lesbian sexuality. Needless to say, this comment sparked a heated discussion of your alleged policy.

As the only women's bookstore in Toronto, it is simply inconceivable to us that such a policy could ever exist. Given that your lesbian section is already extremely limited, this development certainly indicates to us your opinion of your rather *substantial* lesbian clientele.

We were labouring under the impression that the first principle of feminism was the notion of self-determination. When we are not given the freedom to select images of ourselves, (even when they are produced by other lesbians) from your liberated shelves, self-determination becomes meaningless and the word feminism is reduced to an empty adjective. Refuge in a homophobic world is rare for all lesbians; such an environment should exist in any feminist endeavour as a matter of course.

What we are left with is the assumption that we are held to be incapable of determining our own values, limits and sexual desires. Such an imposition of "norms" is clearly oppressive. Your policy easily translates into, "You women can be lesbians, but you must keep it tasteful." In short, there is a standard of

"what the community is prepared to tolerate" in operation here, and, once again, the group most affected by the arbitrary imposition of this standard has absolutely no control over its wayward application.

As owners of an alternative art gallery, we are all too aware of the power of Mary Brown and her scissor-happy gang. The issue of censorship is as complex as the society that it thrives in. Straight women such as yourselves must understand that every decision in favour of arbitrary censorship is a decision in favour of the censors, the police and the state. As such, your actions push us back one step further from finding out who the hell we really are

Anna Marie Smith  
Ruthann Tucker  
Sparkes Gallery  
Toronto

## Words on WITZ

### Broadside:

As author of the WITZ article (October 1984), I would like to reiterate several points that perhaps were not made very clear. Certainly it was the intention of my article to attract new members to WITZ, as that will ensure the dynamic necessary for new learning - the very purpose of the group. But equally so, my intention was to propose to the community the model of a seminar discussion group. Perhaps other groups similar to WITZ could be formed, tailored to the interest of those who would initiate and coordinate such groups (ie, gay only, men only, creative writing only, dance only - the list could go on). It is our hope that these groups could then network with ours. This would guarantee us - and these other groups - the further opportunity to express ourselves and enjoy the thoughts of others in a congenial environment.

Vera Tarman  
Toronto

### Broadside:

I have participated in the WITZ process since its inception in 1981, and have enjoyed the diversity of interests that WITZ brings together. To the point - I (and the rest of us) eagerly await response to the profile of WITZ published in your October issue. We always welcome new ideas and enthusiasms. Perhaps we'll overflow our 'format' and branch out into a larger network of diverse groups. In this way we could 'articulate, listen and demand to be heard' within an overall celebratory, high energy framework.

Joanne Volk  
Toronto

## High Holidays

### Broadside:

We are members of a group of Lesbians who met at the Lesbian Sexuality Conference last June and have been meeting monthly to evaluate the role of Judaism in our lives.

It seems that in recent years Jewish Lesbians have been forced to resort to writing letters annually to protest the scheduling of significant lesbian events on Jewish High Holidays.

This year the Debutante Ball was held on Kol Nidre Night - the single holiest night of the year for all Jews. Whether out of inadvertence or not, the result reflects a lack of respect for the diversity of our community.

There are at least five Jewish holidays that many of us choose to observe and to make a personal priority - two nights of Rosh Hashannah, one of Yom Kippur (Kol Nidre), and two nights of Passover.

We would ask, then, that in future a calendar marking Jewish holidays be consulted prior to the scheduling of any events in the women's community.

Lois Heitner, Karen Tully, and Judy Stanleigh on behalf of  
The Jewish Lesbian Discussion Group  
Toronto

## Resorting to Sex

### Broadside:

I received a publication which was inserted in the *Canadian Travel Press* last week. This is a newspaper which is distributed to the travel industry in order to inform us of recent changes, new resorts and airline information.

The staff at Travel Cuts sees countless brochures which arrive from the wholesalers every day. The brochure for "Eden II," however, was a shock to us all. We all found it distasteful, exploitive and totally uninformative about the resort it is supposedly promoting. There are nine female agents in our office and we were all shocked by the explicit nature of the photos in the brochure. Considering this brochure is not for public distribution and is meant to inform agents (whom we give an educated guess are primarily female across the country) of the facilities and nature of the resort, the brochure fails in our opinion in many ways.

Thought you might be interested.

Margot Haldenby,  
Travel Cuts  
Toronto

## Broadside

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## EDITORIALS

### Remembrance of Things Past

*Remembrance Day, November 11:* celebrating the 1914 Armistice of the "Great" War, and remembering those who gave their lives in that and World War II. It is a ritual involving processions to war memorials, two-minute silences, hymns to the dead, wreaths. A massive funeral service. Some say it is an empty ritual, symbolized by phallic monuments and plastic

poppies.

The irony of the poppy, sold on every street corner, is that its flower produces opium, the drug of forgetfulness. The irony is that the memory of war is selective. We remember war heroes, war crimes, the "glorious fight" for democracy. But the memory is of the past, of the "boys" who died. Feminists in many

countries have attempted to reclaim the ritual, to remember those women who are raped and killed in every war, with processions and protests of their own (see Helen Lenskyj's story on ANZAC Day, page 7).

But the ritual "Remembrance Day," while revering the past, fails to encompass what's happening all around us. Conventional wars, like the two "world" wars, no longer exist. Instead, many of us are in a slow state of war against a system which perpetuates the war machine, against nuclear proliferation, and against the side effects of nuclear technology - cancer, genetic mutilation, pollution, poverty and a sense of hopelessness bred into our children.

If we are to observe Remembrance Day, it would be more to the point to remember people who have devoted their lives to fighting against the system which threatens our lives, like Barbara Deming, a long-time peace activist who died of cancer in Florida last August; or to honour those people still living who continue the fight in their everyday lives (see "Evaluating the Peace Process," Amanda Hale's report of a peace conference in Toronto, page 6).

Lest we forget. ●

### This is Broadside

**Item:** Broadsideers are in the process of making plans for a giant extravaganza: our 5th Birthday Bash. The date to remember is Monday, December 17. The location (being finalized as *Broadside* goes to press) will be The Bamboo Club, or the Diamond Club. The line-up of entertainment includes something for everyone: Kye Marshall and her jazz trio, Sheila Gostick, a special visit from Nancy Drew, music to dance to, and more! Tickets will be available from *Broadside* or at the door. Don't miss this great event (more details next issue).

**Item:** In late September, 25 women attended a *Broadside* Benefit Brunch at the Beaches

house of two *Broadside* supporters, Charlene Roycht and Caroline Duetz. The atmosphere was enjoyable and the food (prepared by Caroline Duetz) was exquisite. Our thanks to Charlene and Caroline for all their work. For those of you who missed it, we will be holding similar gatherings in the future. Stay tuned.

**Item:** This month and next, we offer our annual Holiday Subscription Deal. A great way to give your friends presents that last the whole year. Save \$2 on each sub (renew your own at the cut rate, too). Details on the back page. Remember, this deal won't happen again - next year our prices are going up. ●

## Our Time?

Broadside:

I attended the first Canadian women's music festival in Winnipeg this year, and share Linda Kivi's excitement and appreciation (*Broadside*, October 1984). The festival was indeed in many ways a success, but I take exception to her account of the "lesbian issue" at the festival.

First and foremost, the word "lesbian" was never used from the main stage. Sunday night, Heather Bishop dedicated a song to the *homosexuals* in the audience, *not* the lesbians. For those of us who have been active in the lesbian and gay movements over the years, being called a homosexual is light years away from being acknowledged as a lesbian or gay man. The word homosexual belongs to clinical and homophobic environments. I must say at the same time that I appreciate Bishop's acknowledgement that we exist, but sadly regret her choice of words.

Further, although Kivi quotes the organizers as saying "lesbians were free to organize workshops as were other groups," the reality was that when some women attempted to do so police came and took down signs, many of which were already mutilated by anti-lesbian comments before the police even got to them. A few lesbians, determined not to be defeated, finally wore signs on their bodies saying where and when the lesbian circle was to be. The organizer's of the circle quoted the police as saying they had been requested by people in the craft tents to take down the signs as it was bad for business.

The festival organizers did a terrific job of getting performers from all across the country and of paying attention to minority representation among the performers, a fact which made the lack of lesbian content just that much more glaring.

Noele Hall did a concert at the Big Tent and had the courage to use the word lesbian and be proud to use it. It would have been more appropriate to have given her a concert on the

main stage rather than having her compete with Heather Bishop, The Pillow Sisters, Lillian Allen and Nancy White.

It simply is not good enough for the organizers to say we were free to organize our own workshops. First, no such expectation was placed on the visible minorities and secondly there was the issue of police harassment. Organizers committed to a feminist festival should have assured themselves that at least one performer would speak to the issue of lesbian women.

I am sorely tired of being invisible in this heterosexual culture, and it particularly grieves me to be so studiously ignored at a women's event. I have spent well over ten years of my life along with many other lesbian women struggling to keep the women's movement alive and well in Canada. I believe our sisters owe us at least representation and acknowledgement. I know many of the performers were lesbian, I can imagine (and would be very surprised if it were not so) that over half the organizers were lesbians, and

acknowledgement. I know many of the performers were lesbian, I can imagine (and would be very surprised if it were not so) that over half the organizers were lesbians, and many of the audience were lesbians. Are we still so scared of our own identities, still so full of self hatred, that we can not be proud of our own struggles and accomplishments?

It is Thanksgiving day as I write this letter, and when I consider what I have to be thankful for, I must include the brave and dedicated lesbians - like Jane Rule, Heather Bishop, Mary Meigs - who have decided that honesty about their own lives is more important than their careers. Further I have a very special thanks to all of us who do not see our names in print, who have in our jobs, with our families and our friends come out gay and proud. I only hope that some of the performers and organizers of the festival get to experience the empowerment that coming out gives to our lives as lesbians.

Chris Lawrence  
Toronto

## Girl George and Boy Jackson

by Susan G. Cole

Those of us still wedded to the notion that popular culture can be a medium for social change have been watching the gender bending going on in the entertainment industry with a great deal of interest. Most of the experimentation - a word used loosely here - is going on in the pop music field, where this summer an astonishingly androgynous and beautiful man named Michael Jackson made more money on tour than any other performer in history; when a transvestite named George O'Dowd, aka Boy George of the Culture Club, conquered the Top Ten; and where a Canadian band called The Parachute Club is trying to make a difference.

Michael Jackson, whose voice has not yet changed and who, at the age of 24, hovers still on the brink of manhood, is that remarkable combination of genius and arrested development. He is, as it happens, an arresting performer (I was there, and in certain circles people do not admit to that), brilliant, but really, in spite of the whispers of gayness and because of his hermaphroditic aura, quite unthreatening to anyone.

His audience spans all ages, but the ones who are onto him for the sex are mostly post-pubescent teens who prefer their idols peach fuzed and not too hairy. Leave the Magnum PI types to the over-twenty set; teenaged girls have always like cute boys (see also Donny Osmond, David Cassidy, Rob Lowe) better than hunky men. In other words, Jackson's contribution to gender deconstruction is not exactly hefty.

More important than teenaged predilections is the substance of the vision the Jackson family has been conveying through the media. The package for Michael Jackson's bestselling album, *Thriller*, contains an album sleeve that features Michael's own illustrations for two of his songs. One drawing represents a song called "The Girl is Mine," which Michael sings with that other peach-fuzzed pop prince, Paul McCartney. The drawing caricatures Paul and Michael standing toe to toe pulling a woman apart, all in the name of love, of course. Michael has a flair for detail and he has remembered to sketch in the pain of his love object. If you have the album, or if your child has it, look at this picture.

It makes you wonder what all those families were doing at the Jacksons' victory tour concerts. Hopefully they noticed that a great deal of the Jackson material is not exactly family fare. The video for the song "Thriller" (directed by John Landis, presently charged with manslaughter in the deaths of two children on the set of the *Twilight Zone* movie) contains roughly one hundred acts of violence, not including Michael's transformation into a werewolf, reported to have traumatized some preteen viewers. The video's narrative can be summed up in a few words: scare the hell out of the girl.

The Jacksons' latest hit song, entitled "Torture" (seriously), has a video to go with it that does justice to the title - faces without mouths, eyes growing out of hands, whips for days. Androgyny aside, and regardless of Jackson's success in breaking through a powerful colour barrier, his vision and that of his

packagers is entirely consistent with the viciousness and anti-womanness of run-of-the-mill mainstream culture and in many cases represents the entertainment industry's heavy excesses.

As for Mr. O'Dowd, he is at least an adult with a discernible past (Michael's has been mystified through childhood stardom). Boy George wears dresses and makeup, grins slyly whenever he's asked about his sexual orientation and dodges the question deftly by saying straightforward things like, "People are people and we have to live with each others' difference." This, we must agree, is a step in the right direction. O'Dowd is serious about the constraints of gender roles, he hangs out with transvestites (gossip columnists love him for it) and he carries it all off with a degree of class.

Cynics will argue that dressing up like a girl makes for good copy. And it does. But by Boy George's own account, he has had to struggle with gay oppression, particularly as a teenager when he was sorting out his identity. The worst that can be said about him is that he wants to sell records, and more heinous crimes have been committed. Boy George is for real and the fact the he has been accepted, even celebrated, in pop culture suggests that questioning gender is not career suicide. Good news.

But so what? Does it matter in the great scheme of things? The last time boys grew their hair was for the so-called sexual revolution in the sixties (a major letdown for women). For a while, longhaired hippies tolerated being called effeminate but only because they did not care what people on the outside thought, as long as they and the rest of the men on the inside were getting sex in the volume that would have astonished their detractors. The insiders appreciated the wider access to women, and sometimes demanded it. While women were relieved to be out of the 50s repression that had denied them any sexuality at all, it wasn't endless sex that they were after but more choice. The insiders wondered: "Aren't you liberated?" Being long on hair does not necessarily mean being long on consciousness.

But the fact is that Boy George has not inspired very many men to grow their hair, let alone to adopt drag. The kids emulating Boy George are female. You could see some of them outside Boy George's hotels when he last toured, legions of female Boy George clones. Boy George winds up failing to convince young men to challenge gender construction and instead gives young women validity for their femaleness. Male authority can be wielded in the most startling ways.

As far as content goes, the Jacksons stick to boy-meets-girls formulae and it is hard to listen to the Culture Club without hearing the crack of bubble gum. Boy George's package denotes some cultural consciousness, but except for his most recent anti-war ditty and the occasional lyric that evokes a recognizable emotional world, the consciousness disappears as the record turns. He may look the part of a dissident, but he certainly doesn't sound like one. This does not bode well for musicians who really do have something to say and have chosen pop music as their vehicle.

It will be interesting to see if Toronto's Parachute Club, whose roots are in the feminist and artist communities, will break

through to the mainstream with their second album, entitled *At the Feet of the Moon*. The band looks different enough, mostly because four women front the group and because Lorraine Segato is a uniquely riveting performer who gives the band a sexual intensity that seems, untypically, not to have been abused along the showbiz route.

But it's the content that counts here. *At the Feet of the Moon* has its share of overt political messages, ones that dispute authority in "Walls and Laws" and long for liberation in "Freedom Song," tilting all the time to the left. But the songs about desire and sexuality are even more subversive. A song like "Equal/Equally," about seeking balance in relationships, could not have been written by someone without an explicitly feminist consciousness. And as for gender bending, the

song "Sexual Intelligence," which according to the album notes was inspired by the writings of Andrea Dworkin, refers directly to gender construction and how it distorts communication and thwarts desire.

A few weeks ago, the Parachute Club played the outdoor playground at Canada's Wonderland for an audience that danced, bopped and smiled. Segato was singing about sexual intelligence - to a family audience. The Parachute Club wants to shake things up, but the question remains: If Michael Jackson can attract a family audience in spite of a vision that is fraught with terror, if Boy George can conquer the fashion front without art that says anything of substance, will the Parachute Club be able to get an audience to rebel? Or will the audience just dance?

WANTED!

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TORONTO WOMEN'S  
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## The Beguinage

The Beguinage is a new member-run housing co-operative of 28 one, two and three-bedroom townhouses and apartments at 333 and 415 Shuter Street in Downtown Toronto. Living at The Beguinage means co-operatively owning your own home without a down payment. Monthly housing charges \$430 to \$700 plus utilities.

The Beguinage is for women and women with kids. Occupancy December and January. Find out more about this exciting community of women working together to make a home that is more than just a place to live.

Information meetings, November 12,  
November 27 and December 13 at 299  
Queen Street West, Suite 401 at 7:30 pm.  
Call (416) 925-2475, Ext. 330.



## toronto rape crisis centre

We would like to extend our thanks and appreciation to all the women in Toronto who attended the 1984 Take Back the Night, helping to make it such a success. A special thanks goes to those women who volunteered their time and energy to the organization of the march.

In solidarity,  
The TRCC Collective

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The 1985 Edition of...

# THE PEOPLE'S CLASSIFIEDS

## THE ALTERNATIVE DIRECTORY FOR METRO TORONTO

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# Not An Easy Choice

by Kathleen McDonnell

The following article is an excerpt from Kathleen McDonnell's new book, *Not an Easy Choice: A Feminist Re-examines Abortion*, which will be released this month by *The Women's Press, Toronto*.

Abortion is one of the most volatile and contentious issues of contemporary life. For over a decade it has elicited an extreme, seemingly irreconcilable, polarization unmatched by other social issues. On the one hand there is the loose alliance of feminists, leftists and liberals who argue for the individual woman's right to choose abortion. On the other, there is the self-styled pro-life movement, heavily influenced by the Roman Catholic Church and right-wing conservatism, which opposes abortion in all circumstances. These hard-and-fast political lines and the relative availability of abortion sometimes obscure the fact that abortion as a political issue is of relatively recent vintage. It has only been in the last decade and a half that abortion has been legally available at all in Canada. Prior to that time the word was rarely even mentioned in public, and women were forced to seek out abortions in an atmosphere of shame and secrecy, risking their health, their fertility and even their lives to obtain a procedure they nevertheless regarded as essential to their own survival and well-being.

Throughout the sixties abortion reform groups mounted a campaign to pressure governments in Canada and the US to liberalize or completely repeal their restrictive abortion laws. By the late sixties, within an atmosphere of change and social ferment on many fronts, these efforts appeared to have borne fruit in Canada.

In 1969 the new Liberal government of Pierre Trudeau adopted a number of amendments to the abortion section of the Criminal Code. These amendments, shepherded through the House of Commons by then-Minister of Justice John Turner, legalized abortion in Canada for the first time since the early nineteenth century, when the first British statutes prohibiting abortion were passed. Far from making abortion an essentially private matter between a woman and her doctor, as most proponents of reform had long advocated, the 1969 amendments permitted abortion only under certain stringent conditions: continuation of the pregnancy had to be shown to endanger the woman's life or health, and the abortion had to be carried out in an accredited hospital and approved by a therapeutic abortion committee made up of not less than three staff doctors.

The much-hailed "reform" quickly revealed itself to be an unjust, unworkable measure that owed everything to the need for political compromise and little to concern for women's health or reproductive freedom. According to Professor Larry Collins, the 1969 amendment merely enshrined in law what had already become standard practice in many Canadian hospitals. For over a decade doctors had been carrying out abortions under fairly strict criteria, shielded by an informal hospital committee system that reviewed every application for abortion. Most hospitals where abortions were being performed prior to 1969 had adopted a daily or weekly quota, a limitation not mentioned anywhere in the law but which continues to this day. The federal government, according to Collins, opted for an abortion reform strategy that would not rock the doctors' boat, but would instead protect their "monopoly over the delivery of abortion services and... the doctors and their hospitals from legal liability." In doing so, he argues, the new law accomplished nothing but the defusing of the controversy over abortion and the appearance that the government was taking action on the issue.

The government's strategy was to attempt to ensure that no effective state action would offend any faction. Without legalizing abortion, the 1969 reform law enshrined the rhetoric of reform while basically just legalizing established medical practices. — (Larry D. Collins, "The Politics of Abortion: Trends in Canadian Fertility Policy," *Atlantis*, Spring 1982.)

Abortion reform crusader Eleanor Wright Pelrine termed the new law "the reform that

hardly was." Feminist groups, who had been active in the movement for reform, denounced the government's measure and stepped up their efforts to achieve their aim of free abortion on demand, organizing a cross-country Abortion Caravan in the spring of 1970 that culminated in a sit-in in the House of Commons. But the government's strategy was effective. It knocked the wind out of the sails of the reform movement at a critical time, saddling it with a half-measure that made abortion just accessible enough to neutralize pressure for outright repeal of the law.

It became grimly clear in the succeeding years that women in Canada did not win the right to abortion in 1969. The government's own Badgeley Committee, set up in 1976 to examine the workings of the abortion law, found it to be unworkable, a bureaucratic obstacle course that endangered women's health by prolonging the approval process and increasing their anxiety about the outcome. By the late seventies, due to growing pressure from the anti-abortion movement and a political climate generally less favourable to women's rights, access to abortion had actually dropped all across the country. Some hospitals shut down their therapeutic abortion committees altogether. Many others reduced their daily or weekly quotas, or stopped performing second trimester abortions. Although abortion was supposedly

It has only been in the last decade and a half that abortion has been legally available in Canada

legal across Canada, women were forced to travel long distances, often even to the United States, to terminate unwanted pregnancies. The situation approached a crisis point and appeared to be ripe for a mass political mobilization around the abortion issue. But this did not happen. Aside from intermittent skirmishes with Right-to Life groups attempting to win control of hospital boards, the abortion rights movement remained relatively quiescent, to the extent that this writer could claim, in 1981, that "abortion is the forgotten issue of the women's movement in Canada." ("Claim No Easy Victories: The Fight for Reproductive Rights," in *Still Ain't Satisfied*.)

All that changed dramatically in 1983, however, when abortion once more assumed centre stage in the Canadian political arena. An irony for feminists lies in the fact that the abortion issue was rekindled in this country largely by the actions of two men: Dr. Henry Morgentaler and Joseph Borowski. In late 1982 Morgentaler, the hero of the abortion rights movement in Canada for his open defiance of restrictive abortion laws, announced his intention to open illegal clinics in Winnipeg and Toronto. These clinics would operate along the lines of his well-known Montréal clinic, which had been providing abortions without harassment from the Québec government since Morgentaler's acquittal by three separate juries on charges of performing illegal abortions in the mid-seventies. Around the same time as the first Morgentaler clinic opened in Winnipeg in May 1983, anti-abortion crusader Joe Borowski's constitutional challenge to the existing abortion law came to trial in Regina. Borowski's lawyers argued that the fetus was entitled to the full rights of a human person under the new Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and that the existing law permitting abortion even under limited conditions was a violation of those rights. Borowski's attempt to have the abortion law struck down was ultimately unsuccessful. Both Morgentaler clinics in Toronto and Winnipeg were shut down by police raids, and he and other clinic staff faced criminal charges in both cities. The effect of these actions has been to put abortion back on the political map in a way that has aroused more

media interest and public sentiment than at any time since the early seventies.

Canadian feminists are now presented with an important opportunity to reach out to women and men on the abortion issue. How should we respond? In large measure, of course, we have already responded in the most forceful way we know, by organizing public forums and demonstrations and building public support for Dr. Morgentaler and the other clinic workers. These efforts have been effective in mobilizing committed feminists and advocates of abortion reform. Innumerable polls tell us that the majority of the Canadian public supports a woman's right to abortion, at least in some circumstances. But for the most part this much-vaunted majority does not choose to "vote with its feet" and prefers the anonymity of opinion polls. Furthermore, our majority support has still not resulted in the achievement of our goal: the repeal of restrictive abortion laws and the acknowledgement of the individual woman's right to choose abortion.

Is there something missing in the public discussion of abortion? Why has our feminist perspective not gained hold more strongly? On many other issues, among them rape, pornography and equal pay, feminists have had a tremendous impact upon popular thinking in recent years. The feminist perspective on these issues has actually entered the mainstream, where it meets with considerable sympathy, while the feminist commitment to the absolute right of women to choose abortion is still seen as "too radical" by most people. And it is indeed radical, as is the notion that women should control our own bodies. There is no way to soften the impact of that radical demand without diluting our stance on what is a bedrock issue of modern feminism. But can we perhaps search out new ways of talking about the abortion issue, add new dimensions to it - not to obfuscate or water down our perspective but to make it more accessible to many women and men we have not yet reached?

The fact is that feminist discourse on abortion has changed little since the late sixties and early seventies, when the contemporary women's movement first formulated a position on abortion and women's rights. This position has its roots in Simone de Beauvoir's pioneering work *The Second Sex*, in which she developed the theory that freedom from "the slavery of reproduction" was the pivotal factor in the liberation of women, a theme socialist feminists such as Stella Browne in Britain and Emma Goldman in America first posited earlier in the twentieth century. De Beauvoir documented in great detail the political, social and psychological constraints that women's long history of enforced childbearing had imposed on them, and argued that only with the ability to "master the reproductive function" would women achieve true equality with men and full participation in society. The other key aspect of the issue highlighted by de Beauvoir was women's sexuality. Women would not be able to express their sexual natures as freely as men as long as they had to bear the consequences of unwanted pregnancy. De Beauvoir advocated women's free choice on abortion, and the abolition of all restrictive laws, a truly radical demand in the late forties, when *The Second Sex* was first published.

These themes were picked up by the "second wave" of feminists in the late sixties and early seventies. The ability to control reproduction was seen as an absolute precondition to the political, economic and sexual liberation of women. The authors of the abortion manifesto in the Canadian anthology *Women Unite*, for example, stated that:

The ability of a woman to control her own reproductive processes is a necessary precondition if women are to throw off the bonds that have for so many centuries stifled their full potential as human beings.

Similarly, abortion reform activist Lucinda Cisler says in the 1970 American anthology, *Sisterhood is Powerful*:

Without the full capacity to limit her own reproduction, a woman's "freedoms" are tantalizing mockeries that cannot be exercised.

Although these early feminist texts laid a solid groundwork for a feminist perspective on abortion, little was done to develop it in the succeeding years. Much was written on abortion, both in Canada and in the US, but most of it was not particularly analytical, emphasizing instead practical and strategic considerations - what is an abortion, how to get an abortion, inequities in abortion legislation, and political action on the issue. This emphasis merely reflected the preference for action over reflection where abortion was concerned. Because so much energy has gone into fighting the Right-to-Life and maintaining what abortion rights we now have, feminists have had little time to think analytically about abortion. We have been too busy fighting in the streets and working in clinics and referral centres. What theoretical development did take place around abortion was confined to the introduction of the notion of "choice" in the mid-seventies and, later, the more comprehensive idea of reproductive rights.

Feminist theory in other areas has greatly expanded, developed and matured in the intervening years. Feminists have generated a deeply radical and enormously influential critique of violence in our society, for example, and have shown how it serves to perpetuate the exploitation and oppression of women in the form of rape, wife battering and pornography. The feminist view of the family and women's role in it has evolved from the anti-nuclear family sentiments of the early women's liberationists, to a more complex, multileveled vision, helped along by such groundbreaking works as Adrienne Rich's *Of Woman Born*. Feminists have developed an extensive critique of patriarchal thought and institutions, and have related it to the nuclear arms threat and the destruction of the environment. Religious feminists have revolutionized the role of women in established churches and the ways in which we think and talk about spirituality. In the general area of reproduction and women's health we have shown how sexism and patriarchal attitudes influence the kind of health care we receive and the kinds of contraception that are made available to us. Yet with abortion itself, we are still marching with many of the same slogans, and with much of the same general position, as we did in the early seventies.

Is a re-evaluation of the feminist position on abortion really needed? Many feminists, including many active in the abortion rights struggle, would say no, because the issue is still essentially the same: the need for women to control our own bodies and our reproductive capacity, so that we can achieve full liberation as human beings. And of course they are right. On some level the struggle is and will continue to be exactly the same, until we have achieved real reproductive freedom.

### Women's experience of abortion is not being integrated into the way we talk politically about abortion

Others may argue that this is not the time to introduce new, potentially divisive elements into the feminist discussion of abortion, because we must pull together to combat the rise of the Right and a growing anti-feminist backlash. They are right, too. We do take a risk if we open up the agenda on abortion. Much like the current debate on pornography and the role of censorship, re-examining abortion holds the fearful possibility of splitting the women's movement and giving ammunition to our enemies.

But the most persuasive argument in favour of opening up the abortion agenda is simply that it is already happening. Larger developments in society are right now having a direct effect on the abortion issue and are demanding to be taken into the feminist account. If we ignore them we run an even greater risk: of becoming rigid, stagnant and ultimately irrelevant. What are some of these larger developments?

First, women's experience of abortion is not being addressed and integrated into the way we talk politically about the issue. Many feminists have long acknowledged privately that having an abortion is not the straightforward exercise it sometimes appears to be in our leaflets and slogans. Many women feel alienated from the women's movement precisely because they don't see these feelings discussed or validated. The Right-to-Life movement is talking about them, however, and is active in offering support services for women experiencing post-abortion grief or doubt. But feminists are the ones who should be talking to these women. We are the ones who can offer them real support and validation around their abortion experience.

### The federal government opted for an abortion reform strategy that would not rock the doctors' boat but would protect their monopoly over abortion services

Second, we are not reaching the great middle ground of people who have moral qualms about abortion. These are not the confirmed anti-abortionists, but people who simply feel that abortion does have a moral dimension that they don't see being addressed in the feminist stance. They may support a woman's right to choose abortion, but still hold back from full support of the feminist position for reasons they often cannot articulate. What many of these people need is simply the reassurance that feminists are as aware and concerned about the moral dimension of abortion as they are, that we don't regard it as a simple surgical procedure.

Third, developments in medical technology are radically changing the nature of the abortion debate. Our expanding knowledge of fetal physiology and psychology makes it more and more difficult to simply dismiss the fetus in the abortion discussion. The fetus is literally becoming a "patient" while still in the womb, the recipient of surgery and other therapeutic techniques at gestational ages well before the cutoff point for abortion. Advances in genetics and prenatal diagnosis are making abortion on eugenic grounds, as opposed to the social, economic and psychological grounds stressed by feminists, more and more common. How does this kind of selective abortion of "defective" fetuses fit in with our right to choose? New developments in abortion technology itself are impinging on the abortion debate, making it increasingly difficult to define precisely what an abortion is. Induced abortions are now usually performed some time after the sixth week of pregnancy, since it is difficult to accurately diagnose pregnancy prior to that time. A whole new range of "interceptors" - drugs or devices that intervene in the reproductive process after conception - is under development. Interceptors cannot readily be classified as either contraceptives or abortifacients: they do not prevent conception, but they terminate a pregnancy long before it can be verified, often prior to implantation of the embryo on the uterine wall. Many fertility experts consider implantation rather than conception to be the starting point of pregnancy, since they estimate that in the natural course of events nearly half of all fertilized eggs fail to implant and are expelled from the uterus. Interceptors are already in common use. The morning-after pill is one; so is the IUD, which is thought to produce a uterine environment hostile to the implantation of a fertilized egg. In light of all this, what, then, is an abortion? And how will we integrate these ever-expanding developments into our understanding of it?

Fourth, men are beginning to take on a greater role in every aspect of reproduction and parenting. A few men, backed up by the Right-to-Life movement, are beginning to talk about men's rights in abortion, and argue for male veto power. How are we going to res-

pond to this threat to our reproductive autonomy, while at the same time encouraging more male participation and responsibility in birth control, sterilization, the birth experience and child care?

Fifth, some feminists are beginning to perceive a dissonance between our stance on abortion and our stance in other areas. Feminism has tended to ally itself with non-violence, with justice for the oppressed, with nurturance and respect for life and for the ecosystem. Yet abortion is in some sense an act of violence, and indisputably results in the termination of life. Is there a contradiction here? Possibly. It depends as much on how we define our feminism as it does on how we view abortion. For how much are these "nurturant" qualities a fundamental part of feminism? Some see them as an actual threat to feminism and to women's autonomy - the old idealized Mother Earth figure served up in a new but still oppressive guise. Others argue that the real task of feminism is to reclaim and validate these nurturant aspects rather than embrace patriarchal, male-defined values. The more we delve into these questions the more contradictions we find, but that need not frighten us. Life is full of contradictions, and facing them squarely and honestly can lead us to a new and deeper synthesis of our values and beliefs.

We need to do more than simply re-examine abortion. There is a need for the development of a much more comprehensive feminist perspective on every aspect of reproduction, including abortion. New reproductive technologies are now in place that call into question the whole nature of the reproductive process, and our key role in it as women. Some critical questions will have to be answered over the coming decades: to what extent will we choose to intervene in and exert control over the process of reproduction? For what purposes should we be doing so? And, most importantly, who will make the decisions? Who will be in control? The intensity of the coming battles over these questions may well make the fight over abortion pale in comparison. And an irony lies in the fact that Right-to-Life is one of the few social movements to explore and talk about the reproductive engineering trend with the seriousness that it warrants. Feminists must become intimately involved in this discussion now, before these technologies begin to see even wider application.

A re-examination of abortion is incumbent upon us. But, in a more positive light, it presents us with an exciting challenge, an opportunity to reach out to more women and men, and to deepen our understanding of both feminism and the reproductive process. Of course, we are simply talking about a choice to bring into our public discussions some of the questions we have discussed privately for so long. We are also talking about a shift in emphasis, a re-focussing of our attention on aspects of the abortion issue we had not given enough consideration to before. . . . There has been a need among women for this kind of re-examination, but it has been largely fear that has kept us from carrying it out - fear of where it will lead us, fear of creating divisions among ourselves, fear of our opponents using it against us. It may be a difficult and painful exercise at times, but we have to trust ourselves and our ability to come through it. We have to trust that our re-examination of abortion is really a coming full circle, and that we will arrive back at our starting point - abortion is a woman's right - but with a changed, deeper understanding. ●

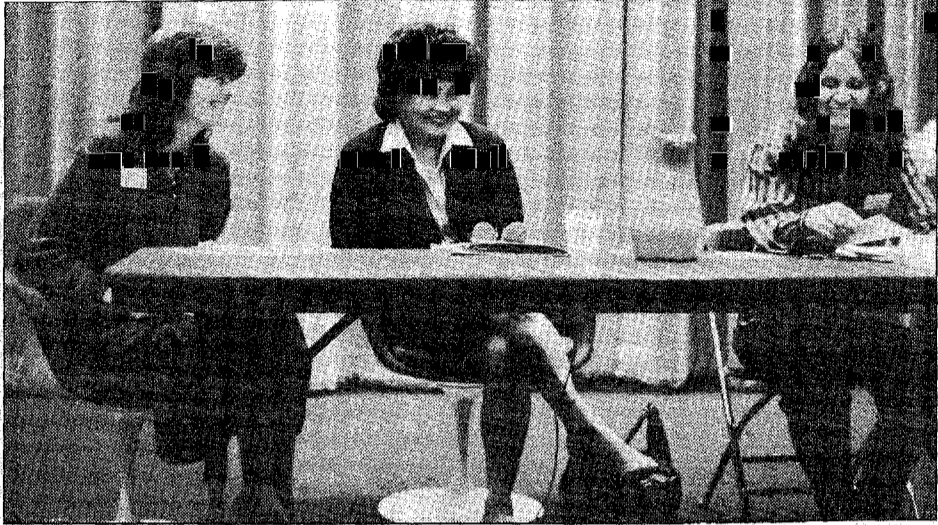
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# Evaluating the Peace Process

by Amanda Hale

The feminism/women's peace movement debate came to the fore at the conference on Women and Education for Peace and Non-Violence, sponsored by the Centre for Women's Studies in Education, held recently at OISE in Toronto. Academic papers were read by women from Canada, the United States, England, Germany, and Japan on topics are divorced from the intellect.



Women for peace - from left, Margaret Wells, Setsuko Thurlow and Jeri Wine.

subjects ranging from the history of women in the peace movement to the very contemporary problem of how best to educate for non-violence.

The same question arises with increasing frequency these days; it came up recently in the pages of *Broadside* ("Pure but Powerless: The Women's Peace Movement," July 1984): the question of which comes first, feminism or the peace movement, or are they indeed synonymous? The first speaker, Berenice A. Carroll of the University of Illinois, in her paper "Feminism & Pacifism: Historical and Theoretical Connections," argues that the historical connection between women and peace has resulted in a stereotyped image of femininity and passivity. She claims that war is inherent in the patriarchal structure, a fact which provides an ideological groundwork for the link between pacifism and feminism. And she supports her claim with quotes from Virginia Woolf ("Patriarchy, dominance and war are inextricably connected") and from Mary Daly ("Patriarchy is the state of war."). But women and peace are not synonymous with feminism and pacifism, Carroll points out. It would seem that much of the divisiveness on this issue is semantic. Perhaps the word *feminism* misleads people into thinking exclusively of *women's* issues and *women's* liberation, rather than of a global revolution of human values. The pacifism which is part of feminism is not passive. It is passionate, and actively seeks political change. It stems from the fresh lively emotion that Helen Caldicott (the Australian physician and peace activist) speaks of in the NFB film *If You Love This Planet* when she diagnoses a male-dominated society, which shows no emotional reaction in the face of impending nuclear disaster, as sick. When the system cannot cope it closes off the emotions and we have a state of sickness. Collectively this translates as a pornoculture in which the emo-

The pacific behaviour of the general populace is not pacifist, says Carroll. It is passive, "female," subjected. The soporific, brain-washing effect of television, mechanical work, and urban living emasculates the majority which is then subject to the control of government, big business and the media, which act as raping males. The biological males within the masses take vengeance on the women and children, perpetuating a chain of oppression and violence. This pacific,

"female" behaviour has historically been handed down as the cliché image of women's role in the peace movement. The men maintain power while the women type, lick envelopes, and make coffee. A mythical image exists of women as natural peacemakers - an image couched in passive terms. But women are dynamic activists, powered by passionate emotion, fierce love, and a determination to survive.

Carroll showed slides of two contrasting images foisted upon us by the media. First, the angry-abrasive-radical-dyke feminist, who alienates so many heterosexual peace movement women. Then an ad-attractive woman with two children - isolated, tense, looking out at the camera as though at a rapist/murderer threatening her children, one at her breast, the other clinging round her hips. It was a subliminally pornographic image. "I want my children to have a future" she says; while the angry radical says "I wouldn't mind a future myself." These stereotypes of selfishness and selflessness are dividing women, potentially the most powerful creative human force. Male power is violent. It springs from resourcelessness, from the void. It is a reaction against emptiness and disconnection. The embodiment of this power is the neutron bomb.

The divide and conquer ethic is consonant with dualistic male philosophy. The radical feminists, who protest biology as destiny and want to be equal in all ways, aspire to female manhood, according to Carroll. (Perhaps *radical* is a misnomer as misleading as the term *feminism*.) This is a reaction against the gender conditioning which takes over from biological differences and carries them to unnaturally dualistic extremes. The absolutism of the radicals' androgynous world view is simplistic and unrealistic. It is symptomatic of the boxed and labelled thinking which isolates feminism from the peace movement. Isola-

tionist thinking resists the links which provide a global view. It is vital to be aware of the connections between all the forces currently at work. Feminism and pacifism are not mutually exclusive. It is not a question of primary and secondary. Feminism clearly encompasses the concept of peace, whether it be in the home or in some inter-galactic battlespace. World war, in the conventional sense, is a romantic myth of the past, kept alive by the bloody reality of localized wars being waged around the world right now. Our concern is no longer with war, but with the general disease from which nuclear weapons sprang, and from which they proliferate every day. The diagnosis and treatment are as much the concerns of feminists as pacifists. Exclusive feminists are like "malestream" physicians who treat symptoms instead of causes.

Dorothy Thomson, a historian at Birmingham University in England, active with CND since 1958, and with the Greenham Common Women's Peace Movement since its inception, addressed the relationship between gender and war, pointing out that patriarchal history is structured upon intermittent wars. We live in a perpetual postwar/prewar situation, partly because the capitalist system is dependent upon recovery from and preparation for war, in the traditional pre-nuclear sense. But the nuclear age makes pacifists of us all because nuclear power precludes war and replaces it with the no-contest situation of total annihilation. Opposition to war in the form of conscientious objection has historically been on a high moral plane, says Thomson, but now it is an across-the-board movement of basic human survival.

Thomson spoke of the polarization of male and female values at Greenham Common, paralleling them with the false polarity of images within the peace movement. On one side of the chainlink fence and rolls of barbed wire are massive impersonal mechanical images of military power; armed soldiers with impassive faces, army vehicles, helicopters circling over symmetrical concrete buildings and missile silos. On the other side are women and children in woolly hats and brightly-colored clothing, gathered in small camps, sleeping in tepees and benders (makeshift tents), cooking over open fires; unstructured groups whose lives are a constant improvisation. Although they have achieved nothing concrete, says Thomson, these women are an international source of inspiration. They represent hope in the face of a mad abstraction which seeks to protect life by obliteration. Greenham is theatre. It is the poetic symbolism of resistance. As such it is art, and art has impact where an appeal to the isolated intellect fails.

Thomson made the interesting point that disarmament is insufficient because we cannot uninvent the nuclear bomb. The technology to create nukes is very simple. We have to deactivate the warring instinct which led to the invention and stockpiling of nuclear weapons.

Yvonne Bennett, of Carleton University, read a paper entitled "Vera Brittain and the Peace Pledge Union: Women and Peace." Vera Brittain, British feminist and peace activist, came to pacifism by positing pure reason against the romantic insanity of the First World War in which she was caught up as a nurse. In 1917, while nursing a captive soldier, it occurred to Brittain that she was trying to save the life of a man that her brother, fighting in Ypres, might have tried to kill. And this struck her as absurd. The life of the mind, informed by the heart, has in fact a lot more to do with women than with men who appear again and again, from soldier to lover

to businessman, as hopeless romantics. Brittain saw education as a critical factor for women and remarked upon "the inherent tendency of the domestic routine to anaesthetize." According to Brittain, feminism arises when civilization reaches the stage where an enlightened minority sees the need for reason over force.

Setsuko Thurlow of the Toronto Board of Education, herself a survivor of Hiroshima, spoke movingly about "The Atomic Bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and Women's Role in the Japanese Peace Movement." Thurlow made a psycho-social study of survivors while living in Japan for a year. She spoke of the psychic numbing suffered by survivors, about their guilt, and about the denial of their trauma. The Americans confiscated photographs, film footage and reports. They set up an Atomic Bomb Casualty Commission, a self-serving organization which studied but did not treat the nuclear victims. Survivors were not supposed to talk about their suffering. The massive grieving was repressed by a restrictive social and political milieu. There was social discrimination against the radiated survivors, as there is against AIDS and cancer victims today. And any attempt at a pacifist movement was considered to be anti-American. However, pacifist groups did form, despite discouragement, and survivors came out to join them.

Margaret Wells, also of the Toronto Board of Education, spoke about "Teaching for Peace in the Secondary School." Wells designs new courses around such subjects as nuclear disarmament, north/south relations, ecology and equal rights. She pointed out the hypocrisy of perpetuating Canada's traditional image as a peacemaker, while ignoring our participation in the nuclear arms race. She spoke of the "titanic mentality" of some students whose stock response is, "What does it matter anyway, there's no future." The dilemma of teachers and parents is how to deal with this very real fear and despair which is being experienced today by children of all ages.

The conference ended with the screening of three films "for possible classroom use." *Pikadon*, which translates as flash/roar, is an excellent but quite horrifying animated film with images which struck deeper than all the celebration of the previous two days. *Pikadon* shows the events of the morning of August 6, 1945 in Hiroshima. We see flesh turning raw as the outer layers of skin are burned off; eyes pop out of their sockets and hang on the cheeks; flesh melts and falls from the bones.

*The Lost Generation* is a documentary, made with film purchased during the Ten Feet Campaign when Japanese citizens raised money to buy back ten feet of film footage confiscated by the Americans after the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Narrated by Jane Fonda, the film shows a series of interviews with survivors as they are today, with flashbacks to the documentation of their injuries, just after the bombing. "Of course, I never married," says a woman with a scarred face, weeping as she sees the film footage of her 23-year-old self after the bombing. A scarred man says he is happy now, but his is sorry for the children, whom he obviously considers to have no chance of a future. Mr. Tanaguchi (also featured in the film *Dark Circle*) was a telegraph boy in August 1945, and still works for the telegraph office. His entire back was burned off. He spent 21 months on his stomach. He hated all adults, throughout his tortured adolescence, for allowing it to happen. He was covered in bedsores which became infested with worms. He recovered, he is married, with children.

- continued next page

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# MOVEMENT MATTERS

## Library Strike

TORONTO - Close to four hundred workers at the Metropolitan Toronto Library, over 80% of whom are women, have been out on strike since October 1. Three Canadian Union of Public Employees locals are involved in the strike - library assistants (Local 1582), librarians (Local 1806), and maintenance workers (Local 2758). Negotiations on the 1984 contract broke down when union negotiators refused to accept the numerous "takeaways" proposed by management. The strike has closed down the main Metro Library building on Yonge St. just north of Bloor and the Municipal Reference Library at City Hall. The Metro Library is the largest public library in Canada.

The changes proposed by management are mostly in the sections of the contracts related to seniority and the effects of technological change. It seems to be no coincidence that these changes are being suggested in the same year that the Library's management announced plans to install a large new computer system. Management would like to reduce the ability of the union locals to protect their members if and when there are layoffs at the Library. CUPE wants to assure that its members will have a chance at new jobs created by technological change and that the Library will offer retraining to employees. Management would also like to reword the recognition clauses in the contracts to exclude over forty jobs from the bargaining units.

Union members originally voted in favour of using strike action in late August, in the belief that they could not afford to give up the protection that the 1983 contract provided. The only previous strike at the Metro Library was in 1980, when library assistants were on strike for four days.

There has been widespread support for the strike from other CUPE locals, especially from those in libraries, and from the labour movement in general. The workers on the picket lines at the Library and at City Hall have also found that there is considerable public support for taking a stand on issues related to job security and automation.

As it appears that this may be a long strike, the three locals are seeking financial as well as moral support. There have been many contributions, large and small, to the strike fund. Union locals from other libraries in the city organized a benefit dance on October 26. (Donations will be gratefully accepted.)

As *Broadside* went to press, a mediator for the Ministry of Labour brought the two sides together, on October 24. The union offered to settle if management would take all the "takeaways" off the table, and if it would guarantee job security to all those on the job for one year or more. The negotiating team said they had no authority to make a settlement, but the outcome would be decided at a meeting on October 30.

Pressure has been brought to bear on the politicians at Metro Council who are ultimately responsible for the operation of the Library. Jack Layton, an NDP alderperson, proposed a motion at the Council meeting on October 23 which would have forced the Library Board to ask management to withdraw their takeaways. The motion was defeated, but the situation was debated for an hour and a half.

For anyone interested in showing their support for the strike, solidarity rallies are held at the main door of the Library every Wednesday from 4:30 to 6 pm. Donations will also be gratefully accepted. For up-to-date information on other events, call strike headquarters at (416) 961-7040

## Video on Porn

KINGSTON - The Queen's Women's Centre in Kingston held a three-day conference on pornography last February. The speakers were videotaped, with the intention of creating a series of discussion tapes for people concerned about the issue. Now, the project is going ahead. It is hoped that feminists currently doing research on pornography - be it theory, effects data, or legal reform - might be interested in sending their papers as the Centre is planning to cover a wide range of issues, including a critique of current legal and psychological analyses. The videos will be distributed with comment papers and an extensive bibliography. Feminist references are badly needed. Also, contacts with action groups to include in a list of feminist groups struggling against pornography at a community level. Please write: Queen's Women's Centre, 51 Queen's Crescent, Kingston, Ontario, K7L 3N6 or call (613) 547-6970.

## ANZAC Remembrance Day

Every April 24, Australian ex-servicemen across the country march to commemorate their mates who died in war. The day is called Anzac Day, in memory of the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps men who died at Gallipoli, victims of the male death-culture, British military tradition and Turkish bullets. Like Remembrance Days elsewhere, the celebration of male camaraderie frequently terminates with a night of drinking and brawling in pubs or RSL clubs, making it a day when women's safety on the streets, or at home, is in greater jeopardy than usual.

For several years, Australian feminists have staged Anzac Day protests, which have taken the form of silent vigils, women's marches and wreath-laying ceremonies, and anti-Anzac Day rallies. A recent issue of *Girls' Own*, a Sydney feminist newspaper, reported on women's protest actions and published letters which reflected on the logic and effectiveness of these strategies.

Confrontations with the 'real' Anzac marchers, or with police, were not uncommon, ranging from verbal harassment to physical attacks. In Brisbane, Queensland, in a state which has the dubious distinction of being the most repressive in the country, police held (but did not charge) thirty women who interrupted the dawn service with protest songs. Told that this was for their own "protection," they were nevertheless released as soon as the service was over, and shortly after, an attempt was made to run them down as they crossed the street.

Defacement of phallic war monuments with spray paint and graffiti was reported in two cities, but this was not an action of organized women's groups. Not surprisingly, the RSL and the press made the inevitable connections

and accusations. A self-styled vigilante group in Perth, Western Australia, promised to stake out monuments next year and spray vandals with a permanent brown dye. The group's spokesman, a man whose personal mission is to preserve "the family unit," dismissed the actions of protest marchers by claiming they were not 'ordinary' women, just "feminists and lesbians."

Although these confrontations have only increased the outrage and determination of most Australian feminists, some are questioning the strategies employed to date. They are asking whether it is effective simply to accommodate themselves to the male routine and ritual, and some express a well-founded fear of physical injury. The points they have raised are of universal relevance wherever women are protesting the misogynist sentiments and practices which men revere and celebrate on Remembrance Days. Some options discussed in *Girls' Own* include the following:

- Join the traditional men's march, to reclaim the day for women
- Have a Take Back the Night March which ends at the dawn service
- March after the men's march, or on a different day
- Develop alternatives to the male rituals: song, dance, silence
- Demand the abolition of Anzac Day (or its equivalent)

-Helen Lenskyj

## Sexual Harassment Case

OTTAWA - The date of November 7, 1984 has been set for the appeal by Treasury Board on behalf of the Department of National Defence and Dennis Brennan against a successful sexual harassment decision in favour of the complainant Bonnie Robichaud.

In a decision dated February 21, 1983, the Canadian Human Rights Review Tribunal found that Mr. Brennan had been guilty of sexual harassment. The review tribunal also determined that the employer was in law liable for the sexual harassment, in that it had failed to communicate a clearly defined policy against sexual harassment; it had failed to conduct an investigation into Mrs. Robichaud's allegations; and it had failed to monitor Dennis Brennan's activities in relation to personnel who were called to testify before the tribunal in the first instance.

Those who want to demonstrate their support can do so by wearing a yellow rose on November 7 in what ever part of the country they may be; to those who can, by attending the appeal hearing in the Federal Court of Appeal in Ottawa, on November 7, 1984 at 10:30 am. It has been 5-1/2 years since Bonnie Robichaud made the complaint of sexual harassment to the Department of National Defence at CFB North Bay, Ontario

## MOVEMENT COMMENT

### So Now They Tell Us...

by Anne Cameron

The past month has been a month of chickens coming home to roost for the law enforcement agencies in the country. Six police officers have been shot and killed in Ontario and Québec and more officers are recovering from serious injuries. Senior police officials and some government figures are calling for a re-examination of the capital punishment question, and are speaking out against film and video violence.

There is a kind of selective blindness in their reactions that puzzles me. When teachers were trying to teach me math in high school, they hammered repeatedly on the fact that things equal to the same thing are equal one unto the other. But some things, it would appear, are more equal than others.

When the RCMP wanted to stop a meeting in Québec a few years ago, they burned down a barn which was, at that time, against the law. But the MacDonald Commission, investigating allegations of police wrongdoing, rather than press charges against the police, passed a law making any alleged wrongdoing no longer wrong. When the Wimmings Fire Brigade in Vancouver got sick and tired of the flood of misogyny, hate material and pornography and burned out Red Hot Video, there was no recognition of the equality of purpose, reason, rationale, and effect.

Police officials are quite able to see the connection between Sylvester Stallone's *First Blood* character and the deranged youth who opened fire on the police. But when feminists point to the connection between the on-going depiction of woman as victim, woman as target, woman as toy, we are either shrugged off as being shrill and hysterical, illogical reactionaries, or man-hating bra-burning weirdos.

When feminists demanded an investigation into the effect of the Red Hot Video merchandise, we were accused of being the next best thing to Nazi censors, and the police themselves not only were willing to speak out against us, they were willing to move out against us, even placing round-the-clock security personnel inside the Red Hot Video stores to protect the multi-billion-dollar industry that thrives on hatred against women and children.

When we protested that these porn videos were at the very root of the growing violence against women, were in fact contributing to the increase in both numbers and violence of rapes and assaults, when we said that the garbage was predisposing society to accept as normal the sexual abuse and exploitation of children, we were deemed more than a little bit nutsy.

But now it is the boys in blue who share the bullseye target. Now it is not just women and children who are being cut down by the loons:

and suddenly, golly gee fellas, maybe it does something to the human mind to see this stuff over and over and over again.

When we protested the depiction of mutilation, assault, and murder of women, we were told we were over-reacting, and anyway, we had no sense of humour. Now the *Toronto Star* (September 23, 1984) admits that "the documented evidence is overwhelming to show that violent acts - graphically depicted in movies or television - are often copied in real life by those who get caught up in the fantasy and can't tell fact from fiction."

The fiction is: violence against the police is different from violence against women and children. The fact is: what was tolerated when it was used against us is now threatening those who protected the ones making a profit from our pain. The fiction is: the police are entitled to more protection than the rest of us. The fact is: they are at least trained and armed to protect themselves, and we aren't. They are paid to protect us and haven't been doing it; have, in fact, protected those who get rich, get entertained, and get their rocks off watching us being terrorized, brutalized, violated, and killed.

I do not advocate killing the police. I do not say that those who have murdered men in uniform ought to be set free. I do say that if it is true that society has become too violent and too quick to commit or accept atrocity, those concerned about it ought to look to the roots of the problem. The police have too long indulged in and tolerated violence themselves.

We do not have to give any of our energy to the growing outcry against the murdering of the police. What we have to do is put our energy into making them admit that what is being done to them has been traditionally done - and ignored - to us. We have to show them that a society which does not extend a full measure of protection to those most powerless is a society that will soon have no protection for anyone.

Sexual abuse of children is on the increase, and is an outgrowth of the pornography industry. And very recently in Toronto a judge did not send a convicted child sexual abuser to jail because jail might not be either comfortable or safe for him. Another man who, for a year, tortured and sexually abused a ten-year-old girl was given a 90 day sentence, to be served on weekends.

We have to make the police and the judges see that their disregard for the safety of children and women is a direct cause of the growing lack of safety for their own enforcers. Things equal to the same thing are equal one unto the other.

Anne Cameron is a screenwriter and novelist living in Powell River, BC. Her latest book is *The Journey, a lesbian western*.

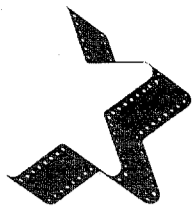
## PEACE, from previous page

The National Film Board documentary, *If You Love This Planet*, directed by Terri Nash, is a must for anyone who has not yet seen it. The clear impassioned thinking of Helen Caldicott is uplifting. (All three films are available for rental from the organization "Hiroshima/Nagasaki Relived," 69 Olsen, Don Mills, Ontario M3A 3J4. Tel: (416) 444-7955. Rental, \$25.)

Also screened during the conference were National Film Board video tapes of a new film entitled *Women, Peace, and Power*, by Bonnie Klein, Terri Nash, and Dorothy Rosenberg. The tapes, which have yet to be edited and rearranged, promise to result in a strong statement, not so much about war as about the more relevant problem of living in a nuclear society. The footage includes an interview with a woman at Greenham Common, dialogue between Canadian and Russian women, coverage of the protest against Litton Industries, and sequences with Sister Rosalie Bertell demonstrating the presence of highly

penetrative radioactivity in the soil at nuclear waste dump sites, upon which housing communities have been built. A woman from the Marshall Islands, herself a cancer victim, speaks about the consequences of nuclear testing in Micronesia. Now there is a new phenomenon - jelly fish babies which, as a result of genetic damage, emerge from the womb unrecognizable as human beings. They are known to be alive because they palpitate; fortunately they only survive a few hours.

The conference was both informative and inspiring. Powerful artistic statements are being made. Academic research is being done, reaching back into herstory to dispell some of the historical myths. Educators are searching for ways to communicate with frightened children who have no sense of a future; struggling to reach the balance between informing and traumatizing. There is a lot more to peace and non-violence than preventing war. We must prevent the machinery for it, which is killing us more slowly and horrifically. The cold war has become the slow war of extermination. The world is in a state of nuclear siege.



## Festival of Festivals: From

Once again, Toronto's *Festival of Festivals* came through with more films that were made by, for and about women than even three of us could get to see. I regretfully passed up on the really high calibre Canadian retrospective: not only had I seen most of them before, but not one of the "ten best" was woman-produced. Instead I caught two new Québec films: Léa Pool's *La femme de l'hotel* and Micheline Lanctôt's *Sonatine*. New from English Canada, Gail Singer's *Abortion: Stories from North and South* was reviewed last issue (see *Broadside* Vol. 6, no. 1), while *Democracy on Trial: The Morgentaler Affair* will be discussed below in conjunction with a very different documentary: Epstein and Schmiechen's *The Times of Harvey Milk* (USA).

Of course I have regrets. I missed Patricia Gruben's *Low Visibility* (Canada) and I sincerely wish I had missed Jackie Raynal's *Hotel New York* (USA). I regret that there isn't room to write about everything I did see: John Sayles's *Brother From Another Planet* (USA), brought to you by the same gang as *Lianna*, is a gentle comedy, and well worth seeing. It will never cease to amaze me that a white, middle-class man can successfully and inoffensively pull off movies about lesbians, never mind the black community in Harlem. I would love to shred Rohmer's *Full Moon in Paris* (France) and try to convince you all that Radford's *Another Time, Another Place* is not the garbage its own promotional campaign makes it out to be. There is also a fine piece to be written on Wim Wenders' *Paris, Texas*, a film that brings the strength and human warmth of love to the screen in a way that makes us aware that we have been watching mere shadows up until now.

Finally, I regret the sacrifice of a piece on Neil Jordan's *The Company of Wolves* (Great Britain), a chilling re-telling of "Little Red Riding Hood" that is grimmer than Grimm, leading to the startling conclusion that if men are wolves, there's an equal and opposite wolf to contend with in a woman's sexuality.

Instead, the focus is on women's films and women's issues. Zelda Barron's *Secret Places* (Great Britain), Marsia and Dina Silver's *Old Enough* (USA) and Micheline Lanctôt's *Sonatine* (Canada) are all films made about the friendship and growing intimacy between teenage girls. Sarah Lambert's *On Guard*, a feminist caper film, is one of the finds of this year's *Festival of Festivals*. *Der Beginn Aller Schrecken Ist Liebe* (The Trouble with Love) was made by Helke Sander, one of the founding members of the feminist film community in West Germany. Sally Potter's *Gold Diggers* (Great Britain) and Léa Pool's *La femme de l'hotel* (Canada) are both dynamic, feminist films that deal directly with the image of woman-as-star. What follows is a selection of pieces that cover the full range of films by men about women's issues, and more to the point, films by women, through our own glass.

- D.G.

### Growing Pains

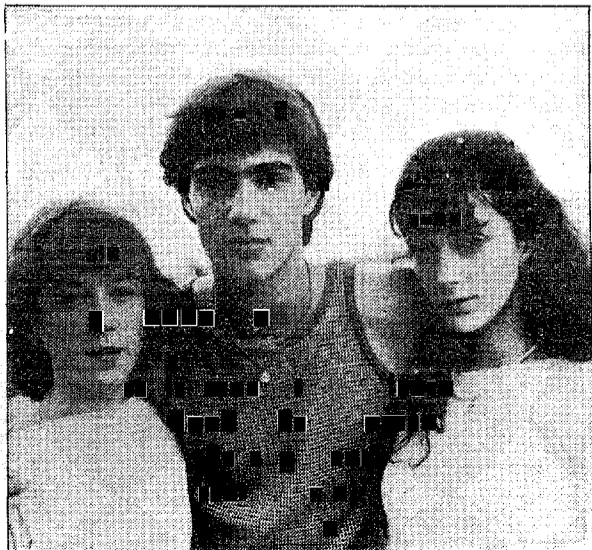
*Old Enough*: Written and Dir.: Marsia Silver. Prod.: Dina Silver. Ed.: Mark Burns. Cast: Sarah Boyd, Rainbow Harvest, Neill Barry. (USA)

*Secret Places*: Written and Dir.: Zelda Barron. Prod.: Simon Relp, Ann Skinner. Ed.: Laurence Mery-Clark. Cast: Claudine Auger, Marie Therese Relin, Klaus Barner. (Great Britain)

*Sonatine*: Written and Dir.: Micheline Lanctôt. Prod.: Pierre Gendrou. Ed.: Louise Surprenant. Cast: Pascale Bussièrès, Marcia Pilote. (Canada)

by Donna Gollan

There is much to be learned about the current state of womanhood when women filmmakers turn their cameras back on the experience of girlhood. Zelda Barron's *Secret Places* (Great Britain), Marsia and Dina Silver's *Old Enough* (USA) and Micheline Lanctôt's *Sonatine* (Canada) introduce us to three different friendships between two girls, in each case their ages and cultures slightly altered. Silver's girls are on the exciting verge of puberty, Lanctôt's a cynical fifteen, and Barron's just crossing over the edge to womanhood. Each time and culture brings us slightly differing influences, yet the borders begin to blur as we pick and choose the elements from each film that best describe our own experience as women, very young women.



Man in the Middle: from left, Sarah Boyd, Neill Barry and Rainbow Harvest.

*Old Enough* is the story of the friendship between Loni, an upper class girl who is nearly twelve and Karen, the daughter of a building superintendent, who is about a year older. One of the most striking images in the film occurs when they first meet. It is shot in the classic Hollywood style of love-at-first-sight. Loni catches sight of Karen and is instantly struck by her appearance of budding sexuality. First we get a long shot of Karen, then the camera "walks" towards her, from Loni's point-of-view. The camera switches back to a close up of Loni,



and then another of Karen. Karen, this time, notices that she is being stared at and reacts the way we've seen actresses react a million times to the male gaze, she shoots Loni, a sparkling, flirtatious look. At this point they are interrupted by Karen's older brother who, naturally, interprets Loni's interest as being directed towards himself. This interruption breaks the spell and Loni rushes away. When she looks back, the irritating boy is gone and she and Karen exchange one last, hopeful look. This is the beginning of the story of the trials and tribulations of female intimacy.

What they have to teach each other is often scary, their differing class attitudes forcing them apart at regular intervals. At first Karen takes advantage of her age and Loni's attraction to her, setting herself up as older and wiser, the keeper of the key to Roman Catholic mysteries, the art of applying make up thickly, and efficient shoplifting. Inevitably Loni gains power by withdrawing her love, until Karen finds herself fighting with her brother over Loni. "She likes me. Leave her alone. She likes me." Karen charges in with the fierceness of possessive jealousy but recoils when Loni offers her tokens of physical affection, a dance, or a kiss. Loni, in her confusion, turns to her mother whose unhelpful explanation is that single women stay single because they haven't found the right man yet. It is Loni's younger sister who comes a little closer to the mark. The voice of prudence, she wrinkles her nose and exclaims "she dresses funny." Loni grins, "Yeah," she breathes, "I like it."

Zelda Barron's *Secret Places* is the story of Patience and Laura. These two young girls attending a British girl's school during wartime share a history that is very like the story of Loni and Karen. Rather than class differences, they struggle with different origins, their English and German friendship enduring particular hardships because their respective countries are at war. While *Old Enough* is the story of class struggle as seen through the context of a personal relationship, Laura and Patience must battle racial prejudice. This film, too, documents the forced destruction of their intimacy at regular intervals as outside influences interrupt, sometimes as a result of race, as when Laura is separated from her classmates so that they cannot attack her, blaming her for the deaths of their brothers and fathers. At other times, it is clear that despite the sheltering warmth of the school atmosphere, they are not growing out of their intimacy as they should. "You two are too old to still be having passions on girls."

Like Karen's older brother in *Old Enough*, there is a boy who tries to intrude between Laura and Patience when he falls for Patience. It is interesting that the way that this irritant to their intimacy is resolved is quite acceptable by heterosexual standards. Laura "steals" the boy from Patience, thus causing yet another rift between the two girls. She then casts off the boy and sets about healing the rift between herself and Patience. Somehow it is an ending we rarely see on film: boy loses out. Perhaps we owe its emergence to the creativity of a woman filmmaker. Certainly it is a story familiar to our own girlhoods.

In the final instance in which Laura and Patience have been separated "for their own good," Miss Trotter explains to Patience that she is to go to Oxford, that "nothing silly and sentimental should stop you." Laura, who is the Alien anyway, and facing enormous family burdens, simply cannot manage without the support of her friendship with Patience. Studying in isolation, she finally gives up in despair and cuts her wrist. While she is recovering in hospital, the two girls once again renew their bond. Even though the last scene sees them at a

graduation dance, swept away by two soldiers, the final frame is a camera freeze on their faces, when their two heads cog together in the movement of the dance, the soldiers rigorously excluded from the image.

If much of the stories of *Old Enough* and *Secret Places* revolve around class and race issues as illustrated by a personal relationship, the thread that pulls them together is one of importance of female sexuality. What is captured in both these films is the intensity of feeling that occurs not before we lose our innocence as girls, but while we do so.

Micheline Lanctôt's *Sonatine*, on the other hand, uses its friendship between Chantal and Louise to illustrate alienation, their friendship rigorously avoids intimacy and so leads to its own destruction. *Sonatine* is a sad little tale from Québec. The action is slow, as if to allow us the maximum time possible to interpret its cynical message. The two girls turn impossible love objects, a bearded sailor who speaks French and an older bus driver, as they crave love and attention and find, naturally, that their needs are ignored or misunderstood. Together they share every thought, every moment, via recordings on their Sony Walkmans. Trading talk to listen to each other's attempts at cracking the world's shell of indifference is an apt metaphor for two girls who need touch, whose experiences are just so many words separated from their mouths and ears by alienating machines. It is as if their bond is as thin as the wires that connect their headphones.

One striking image that recurs in all three films is of the two girls in each case on a bed. In *Old Enough* they exchange momentous secrets. *Secret Places* shows us a scene of startling intimacy as the two girls fall on the bed after dancing together and exchange a kiss. In *Sonatine* the two girls lie on their stomachs, propped up on their elbows, waiting for the phone to ring. "If it rings it means that somebody cares about us." It does not seem to occur to them that they care about each other.

As if the cold chill that pervades *Sonatine* is not enough, the end is absolutely devastating. Lanctôt meant this film to be a metaphor for alienation in Québec. Certainly the relationships in all three films can be seen to stand for complex concepts in addition to the strictly personal level. Whether they be on colonialism, racial prejudice or class difference, it is on the personal level that we get a chance to see our own cultural history is the British reserve that interferes between Laura and Patience, American brash friendliness that fuels the intimacy between Karen and Loni. Absolute alienation destroys any chance of love and mutual support between Chantal and Louise. *Sonatine* is any yardstick, as a Canadian, I can only be glad I survived my own girlhood.

### Feminist Caper

*On Guard*: Dir.: Susan Lambert. Prod.: Digby Duncan. Cast: Kerry Dwyer, Liddy Clark, Jan Cornall. (Australia)

by Randi Spires

One of the finds of this year's Festival is *On Guard*, a feminist caper film with great political angles. It was made by the women, Susan Lambert and Sarah Gibson, who could be characterized as the Holly Dale/Janis Cole team of *Dot Under*. Lambert and Gibson previously collaborated on a number of feminist documentaries, but *On Guard* is the first fictional film for both.

The plot of *On Guard* is refreshingly straightforward and distinctly feminist. A group of women, some of whom live in a communal lesbian household, plan to sabotage the computer information banks of the multi-national Utero Corporation. For ten years the company has been conducting experiments aimed at perfecting technological control of reproduction. With the collusion of hospital medical personnel they have secretly been extracting some of their most essential materials, ova, from women seeking such operations as D&Cs and tubal ligations.



Tuned in, or out? Chantal and Louise.

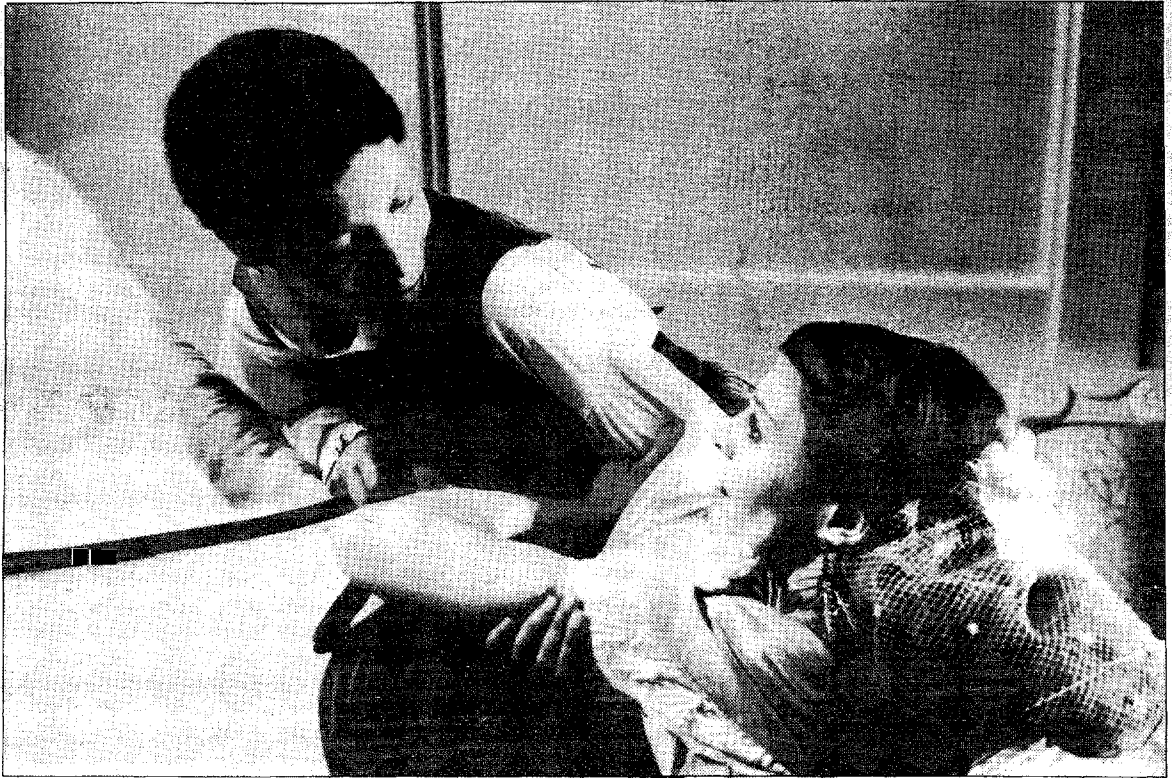


# Acting Out to Actualization

fra To fund this research the Utero Corporation has received huge grants of government money. At the same time funds for such services as day care centres and women's health clinics have been cut back. If these trends were to continue, then control of reproduction would be put in the hands of a small male elite and the social value and political clout of women would decline. Thus this terrorist operation is an heroic attempt to buy women of the world time to take control of their reproductive destinies. These saboteurs are not only planning to destroy the Utero data banks but have also arranged to broadcast a film about this job immediately after completing it. Naturally this seems to invite comparisons with last year's Festival hit, *Born in Flames*. Both are women's adventure films; but while *Born in Flames* tended to meander unmercifully, *On Guard*'s plot lines are clean and to the point. The sabotage is presented simply and credibly. As in *Born in Flames*, there are philosophical discussions but those in *On Guard* are brief and arise organically from the action.

Some of the issues which *On Guard* manages to touch on are the familiar tensions which arise in communal living and the difficulties mothers have in making major changes in their lives because they tend to think not only about themselves but also about their children. Also, the plot is delightfully complicated when a diary containing details of the upcoming operation is lost. The women are in greater danger than ever since the diary will no doubt be found and probably deciphered. When the diarist is asked why she recorded such information instead of just putting down her feelings she replies that such notes were important for women's herstory.

While the caper part of this movie is pure fantasy, other aspects of the film closely relate to our daily lives. It is important to see ourselves portrayed positively on a large screen knowing it was women not too different from us and our friends who put those images up there.



Which one's the "star"? Collette Laffont and (left) Julie Christie.

## Traumatic Triangle

*Der Beginn Aller Schrecken Ist Liebe: (The Trouble With Love):* Dir.: Helke Sander. Prod.: Jürgen Mohrbutter. Ed.: Barbara Von Weitershausen. Cast: Helke Sander, Lou Castel, Rebecca Paul. (West Germany)

by Amanda Hale

*The Trouble With Love* starts out with a tense encounter between two women who look as though they might be romantically involved. But the familiar old situation soon becomes clear. There is a man between them. Freya has inherited Traugott from her longtime friend, Irntraut. They attempt a civilized triangle, illustrated by an arrangement on the bed with Traugott's arm around Freya's waist, Freya's hand on Irntraut's knee, Irntraut's hand fondling Traugott's foot. It doesn't work. The women are hopelessly focussed on the man and he, under this enormous pressure, falls ill with scarlet fever, "a child's disease."

This film is a wonderfully sardonic look at a classic male/female relationship. Freya has a teenage son who pops up on a couple of significant occasions, firstly to try to elicit a declaration of unconditional mother-love, and secondly to tell her that he is grown up and doesn't need her any more. These occasions parallel phases in Freya's non-relationship with Traugott, the implication being that the classic male/female connection is a mother/child relation. Traugott is transparently boyish, emotionally immature, self-involved, sadistic, and totally without feeling for anyone but himself. He is hopelessly romantic and myopic, enjoying self-aggrandizement for his work with political prisoners, for which he is persecuted and put on trial, without seeing the contradiction in his relationships with women who become his political prisoners. His father was a Nazi who fled with the family in 1945 to South America. Traugott rejected his father, and even the German language for a while. He returned to Germany and his work

with political prisoners is supposed penance for the sins of his father. But Traugott perpetuates the pattern in his dealings with women. He is an inveterate womanizer and has numerous affairs, later "falling in love" with Marian, another of Freya's good friends, and yes, you guessed it, bang goes another female friendship.

As the central character and "scriptwriter," Freya supposedly has control over events, at least intellectually. She is strongly analytical of the relationship, refusing to give up on it, or on Traugott when his passion wanes. She doesn't want to act like a helpless victim. She explores all avenues in an attempt to discover what went wrong. She consults books, her women's group, even a lawyer, researching the relationship as a political prisoner might research her case. Freya is a sympathetic character but she just won't learn. She is obsessed with the impossibility of making an unevenly matched relationship work, and simply cannot come to terms with her irrational attachment to this worthless shell of a man.



Love Trouble: Helke Sander and Lou Castel.

Freya's cerebral approach fails to quell her emotions. What is happening in the heart, the real scriptwriter here, is indicated by bizarre and unremarked happenings such as characters collapsing and falling to the ground for no apparent reason. This inner turmoil is paralleled by intermittent sequences of buildings collapsing on black and white newsreel film. Traugott has frequent breakdowns, Freya bays at the full moon like a crazed dog, Irntraut's suppressed hysteria is indicated by highly charged operatic arias each time she appears. The high contrast creates some hilarious moments, but the film also becomes extremely tedious as the situation is stretched beyond its substance. It tapers off inconclusively with Traugott and his new woman sailing to South America to "start all over," with Freya, mounted on a shire horse, watching their departure, against a background of dramatic sunset. On the soundtrack is something that might be laughter or sobbing, or a mixture of both.

## Celluloid Circles

*The Gold Diggers:* Dir. and Ed.: Sally Potter. Prod.: Nita Amy, Donna Grey. Cast: Julie Christie, Colette Laffont (Great Britain)

*La Femme de l'hotel:* Dir.: Léa Pool. Prod.: Bernadette payeur. Ed.: Michel Arcand. Cast: Paule Baillergeon, Louise Marleau, Marthe Turgeon. (Canada)

by Donna Gollan

Two of the most thought-provoking and feminist films at the Festival of Festivals were Sally Potter's *The Gold Diggers* (Great Britain) and Léa Pool's *La femme de l'hotel* (Canada).

Both films employ a circular style of narrative, allowing the viewer a few more clues and another layer of the narrative, little by little, as the story doubles back on itself. Each in its own way is an example of women exploring our own images in film. *The Gold Diggers* makes the connection between the woman-as-star (using Julie Christie in the lead role), the wealth she produces for others to reap and the image she creates for others to consume. *La femme de l'hotel* deals with the depletion of a woman's resources which this process entails.

Having made these connections, however, it is important to note that Pool and Potter use widely different approaches. *The Gold Diggers* is an experimental musical comedy - almost dreamlike in its construction of many little stories and herstories. *La femme de l'hotel* on the other hand, plays with the borders between film and reality, at times exposing those borders, and at times dissolving them. The effect of both these approaches is oddly similar. Instead of being drawn into the narrative we remain aware that we are watching a film. In the first place because *Gold Diggers* is so obviously constructed, and in the second because *La femme de l'hotel* reminds us on purpose by occasionally yelling "cut!?"

*Gold Diggers* weaves together the lives of two women. Celeste, played by Collette Laffont, a woman of colour who works as a bank clerk, dares to question her role at the computer terminal by trying to discover the connection between gold and the figures on her screen. Ruby, played by Christie, is rescued from her life spent adorning pedestals and dancing in a grand ballroom by Celeste, who sweeps her away on the back of a white horse. When Celeste attempts to help Ruby discover what had brought her to this pass, Ruby is not very helpful: "I don't know much, I was kept in the dark... In the early days, I spent a lot of time tied to tracks."

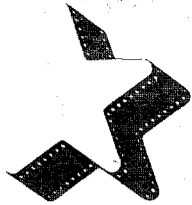
Of course Ruby is the heroine or, in Hollywood terms, the "star." Potter is careful not to duplicate Hollywood's methods, and the result is an almost unrecognizable Julie Christie. The film is playful and occasionally silly, making game of everything from rituals of gold worship to the dreaded "male gaze." The two women are constantly being hounded by men in pin-striped suits so that they may be firmly put back in their places. On pedestals and before computer screens they would be making money for men behind the scenes, as star and drudge. The fun and wit of their refusal to submit makes this film at once a lot of hard work to view and a fine challenge to the present state of patriarchy, and patriarchal filmmaking.

*La femme de l'hotel* is the story of Andrea, a film director who is trying to make a film about a heroine who has given her all as a singing star, and finds herself cut adrift. When she meets a stranger in a hotel who, enigmatically, might fit this description, Andrea stops creating and begins observing. Estelle has come to the hotel because she is lost, unable to get on a train and go somewhere and equally unable to go home. As she watches Andrea developing her life into the film, Estelle feels robbed of her gestures, her life, her very self. In fact, the real crime Andrea commits is not robbing Estelle, but turning the actress in her film into the terribly depleted, almost exploited woman who can no longer separate her own despair from the despair she is supposed to be recreating. "Do I... does she ever get out of it?" she asks in terror.

Estelle, in fact, gains strength as she sees her story unfolding before the cameras, and watches the actress playing "her" life. It is almost as if she rediscovers her lost identity, layer by layer, as it is laid out before her. It is a painful process for Estelle, but she meets the challenge with a surprising strength. Andrea recognizes the source of that strength: "She uses despair as if it were her last hope left." Acting on that hope, Estelle is able to resume her journey by train. Leaving a note for Andrea she explains that she is leaving, but not leaving the story. In fact, she is able to leave precisely because she knows

• continued next page

FESTIVAL, from previous page



her story is still being told. Playing on that double meaning, the final image of the film is of the anonymous actress boarding the train, intercut with Estelle, herself, riding away.

Both *La femme de l'hotel* and *The Gold Diggers* present us with challenges which we do not usually face at the movies. By keeping us at a distance, not drawing us into the plot, they allow us more room to figure things out. We can watch with detachment an examination of despair and alienation of the self in *La femme de l'hotel* without being depressed by it, because the film does not demand that we see what they see, or that we feel what they feel. Similarly, *Gold Diggers* has built into its structure a place for the spectator. Potter wants us to "get" her visual jokes and to understand some of the concepts that make up current feminist film theory by watching an entertaining film. The pleasure is in the recognition we experience of our own herstory on the screen, whether it be the emotional bankruptcy that results from the manipulation and consumption of an image of womanhood that has never been real, or the light-hearted examination of the economic value of that image.

## Documentaries on Trial(s)

*Democracy on Trial: The Morgentaler Affair.* Dir.: Paul Cowan. Prod.: NFB. (Canada). *The Times of Harvey Milk.* Dir.: R. Epstein, R. Schmichen. (USA)

by Randi Spires

*The Times of Harvey Milk* and *Democracy on Trial: The Morgentaler Affair* are documentaries that cover issues of great importance to many women. The Morgentaler film is the more structurally innovative, using elements of docudrama and re-enactment, interspersed with traditional interviews and documentary footage. But more often than not *Democracy on Trial* seems to be saying one thing and showing another. It is *The Times of Harvey Milk* which was made by the gay community, for the gay community, about a leader of that community who was eventually murdered, which emerges as the more balanced, more informative and more moving film of the two.

The focus of the Morgentaler film is on the three Québec jury trials. Morgentaler, although he never denied performing abortions and breaking the law, was acquitted each time. The people of the jury seemed to be saying that the law, not Morgentaler, was in the wrong. The second and third trials occurred only because an appeal court overturned the jury verdict. As a result of public outcry over Morgentaler's repeated prosecution, a federal amendment was passed preventing the overturning of a jury acquittal by a higher court.

Director Paul Cowan tries to create sympathy for Henry Morgentaler by delving into his past and having him comment extensively on what motivated him to take up the abortion crusade. Morgentaler emerges as a hard man to like, an egoist, an exhibitionist with a martyr complex. Two questions arise from this. First, is any other type of person likely to take on and follow through with such an all-encompassing commitment; and second, does it matter? Doesn't all this personality nonsense distract from the real issue of a woman's right to control her body and the legal and political processes that prevent her from doing so?

While it is important that the "stars" of any political fight be seen as real people, not as saints without flaws, the focus and strength of any movement should not rest on whether or not its leaders have sympathetic public personae. When we support Morgentaler's defence fund we are helping not only him, but our sisters and, ultimately, ourselves.

At other times, the director's choice of images serves to ridicule and undermine what he is purportedly saying. For instance, during his re-enactment of the police raid on Morgentaler's first Montréal abortion clinic, Morgentaler is shown calmly drinking a coke and eating a sandwich. This is all very sensible, for as Dr. Morgentaler explains, he will probably be locked away for at least 12 hours without access to food or drink of any kind. But this image of the good doctor calmly smiling and eating, intercut with images of terrified women being rushed from clinic to police car is profoundly disturbing. They, too, face long hours in police holding cells without access to amenities. Some of them have just had, or were just about to have, abortions. What of them?

Another disturbing sequence occurs when Dr. Morgentaler receives the news that he will be tried for the third time. He has already been in jail for several months and in frustration and anger he lashes out at the guards. As a result of this understandable reaction he is thrown into "the hole." But do we really need a shot of the nude, tubby doctor lying like a beached whale in solitary confinement cell? Doesn't Morgentaler who has fought and suffered, deserve his dignity?

In *The Times of Harvey Milk* the focus is not so much on Milk's personality, although this is not ignored, but on how he and his followers helped organize and give political voice to the many minorities of San Francisco's Castro district. Although Milk ran for office openly as a gay man and Gay Liberation was probably the cause closest to his heart, his vision was one of justice for all people. Once elected to the post of San Francisco District Supervisor, he worked diligently on behalf of many groups, from gays to senior citizens, from peo-

ple of colour to the working poor. He drew campaign workers from all segments of his community.

This varied support turned out to be particularly significant when Milk spearheaded the successful drive to defeat the Briggs Amendment, a proposition which would have denied lesbians and gays the right to teach in public schools.

All this information is presented through a series of interviews with those who knew Milk, interspersed with TV newsreel footage and still photographs. Gays make up the majority of those interviewees but others are included. Gradually, as some of these people are interviewed again and again, a picture of how Harvey Milk developed politically emerges. We also get a sense of how these people had their perceptions altered and their lives enriched by their contact with him and with one another. We never grow bored with these talking heads, not only because what they have to say is often so riveting but also because each set of comments is kept brief. Slowly, we discover that what is also being revealed is the development of pride, political consciousness and unity in the lesbian and gay community of San Francisco.

One of the most remarkable personal transformations presented in the film is that of labour organizer Jim Elliott. Before working on Milk's campaign he had been decidedly homophobic and had considered police harassment of gays perfectly acceptable. Eventually he came to perceive gays as real people and not just "fruits and kooks." This also enabled him to successfully deal with his own daughter's lesbianism.

An indication of the dignity and maturity which the lesbian and gay community achieved by working together during the Milk era is shown by their response to his murder. Instead of angry riots, there was an enormously moving candlelight parade of more than 45,000 people.

But violence is foreshadowed throughout the film. During shots of a Gay Pride Day march, a voice-over describes a will Harvey Milk had recently dictated, which was to be opened "in the event of my assassination." In describing the candlelight parade, one of the interviewees mentions a Black man standing on a corner repeatedly asking the marchers, "Where's your anger, where's your anger?"

Months later, after Dan White had been found guilty of manslaughter only, and sentenced to a mere five years in prison, the faith in the ultimate justice of the American system which Harvey Milk had given his community was shattered and violence erupted. At this point, one feels both sympathy for the violent reaction and an ominous feeling that it signalled the demise of community political pride and unity so carefully wrought by Milk and his supporters.

Ultimately, *Democracy on Trial* is a personality profile with an addendum on jury trials. Nowhere is a woman's right to have control over her own reproductive system ever discussed. The lesson of *The Times of Harvey Milk* seems to be that the pride and political unity of oppressed groups is a fragile thing, difficult to develop and easy to shatter. While charismatic people often prove useful, in the end people must be organized around issues so that the success or failure of a single personality does not unduly influence a cause. ●



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# ARTS

## Family Flashback

by Amanda Hale

Sharon Pollock's new play, *Doc*, opened the season at Toronto Free Theatre to critical acclaim. Winner of the Governor General's Award for *Blood Relations*, a gripping drama about Lizzie Borden and her family, Pollock now presents us with a semi-autobiographical drama about a New Brunswick family. Again the theme is a feisty female fighting against family oppression but, as is confirmed by Pollock's program notes, she has moved from historical and societal themes to a more personal focus. Although the characters in *Doc* - Ev, the doctor of the title; Bob, his wife; and their daughter, Catherine - have, according to Pollock, much in common with her and her parents, "they are extensions of real people and through telling their story, my personal journey of discovery is hopefully made large enough to communicate itself."

This is risky stuff and the result is a powerful drama which is at times exasperating - exasperating because it's the same old story of male power within the family, a suffering woman and a traumatized child. The story is so familiar, so tedious, that one longs to move on into a positive, imaginative area where new paradigms for the future might be forged. How many times do we have to be told how things have been, and still are for the suburban hordes, within the nuclear power-structured family?

But the female characters are so strong and courageous that they triumph, despite the mother's alcoholism and eventual suicide, and despite the child's fierce self-reliance which cuts her off from the other characters and leaves her a lonely little figure with no one to embrace but herself - which she does at the end of Act 1, making one of the more powerfully charged moments in the drama (a moment facilitated by the dramatic device of having two Catherine's on the stage simultaneously: the young Katie of the past, and the mature Catherine of 1978 when the action takes place).

The play is structured almost entirely as flashback. Catherine, who is a writer and obviously quite liberated by contemporary standards, visits her 73-year-old widower father. He is highly respected as the local doctor and is about to have a new hospital named in his honour. After a dialogue between father and daughter, the action flashes back to Ev's days as a medical student at McGill University in Montréal. Oscar, his best friend and fellow student, acts as a contrast throughout the play, highlighting Ev's energy and ambition

with his own weakness and lack of drive. Ev upsets his jealous mother by marrying Bob, who is a nurse. They have a child, Katie, followed later by a boy, who strangely never appears as a character. We see the gradual descent from bliss to hell as Bob becomes a prisoner in her own home, and Ev throws himself into his career with increasing fervour. He is hardly ever home, and then only for a few minutes until he is called out on a case or driven out by his wife's desperate, bitter suffering.

Early in the piece, Bob expresses a strong desire to return to work, but Ev will not allow it. Oscar is there to comfort Bob, dance with her, take her to parties. They also kiss, but Bob's heart is not in it. Her only infidelities are with the bottle and death. Young Katie observes her mother's increasing frustration and unhappiness, and becomes as alienated from Bob by her proximity as she is from her father by his absence. There is a horrendous moment between Bob and Katie when the child screams her hatred, and wishes that her mother would die.

The swing between exasperation and being drawn into the play by its emotional power is a direct reflection of the male and female characters. The two men are written as unpleasant and often offensive. Oscar is a wishy-washy hanger-on who uses Bob and Katie as surrogate wife and child. Ev is a very well written character because, although we know he is the villain of the piece (albeit a puppet of the social structure), we can see all the angles on him. He evokes a variety of responses, both in the category of rationalizations for his behaviour, and condemnation of the same. What is ultimately inexcusable is that he watches his wife heading for suicide and, although he gets her the best medical care and encourages Oscar to act as escort, he never gives her the only thing that could have helped her to survive within the family structure - a little personal attention, freedom, encouragement. He also neglects his mother to death. She is killed on a train track, and sends a suicide note which Ev never opens. He and Catherine burn the letter in an ashtray at the end of the play when we come full circle back to the present and the eve of the hospital dedication. It is ironic that Ev, at 73, complains that the hospital is overtechnologized, and that people die unattended while the staff watch their vital signs on machines. Ev's wife and mother also died of medical neglect, but not as patients. However, the daughter is a survivor, and she survives presumably to write her story, as Pollock has used her own story as inspiration.



Doctored Lives: Ev (Michael Hogan), Oscar (Michael Kirby) and Bob (Kate Trotter).

Some of the dialogue between the men is contemptible; their talk about "banging" females for instance. Ev goes into the cliché macho martyred routine when a patient dies; wallowing in self-pity and deflated ego (he is not god after all, he couldn't save the man's life), he buys a mickey of rum and a condom and drives around aimlessly in his car. Bob, who has had a hysterectomy for fibrous uterus, finds the condom, a discovery which only adds to her misery. There is a particularly unpleasant, rambling monologue, delivered by Ev, concerning an evening with some prostitutes in Montréal, during which Oscar disappears into the brothel and pencils all the internal organs on the torso of a prostitute. The point of this story never becomes clear. It seems like a gratuitous appeal to coarseness and ignorance. The talk about "banging" drew big laughs.

Despite Ev's philanthropic rhetoric about the health of his patients, his duty as a doctor and so on, he is plainly an egomaniac who feeds voraciously off the power of his doctor image. He is both critic and captive of the medical profession. Doctors are notorious for their addictive personalities, many of them being addicted to drugs through easy access. But the biggest and most addictive drug is power, and few doctors resist becoming junkies.

Just as one feels exasperated enough to walk out, the drama swings over to the women, and we are slowly drawn in and gripped by the portrayal of the process they are undergoing.

Kate Trotter is luminous as Bob. Her delicate beauty contrasts with the inner strength she brings to the role. Bob is a spirited woman and she tries, god knows she tries. She even joins the IODE and is afraid that she might grow to like it. Her major preoccupation, apart from drinking at her dressing table while brushing her long blonde hair, is hiring and firing maids. This is her form of power, while her errant husband plays god in the community.

Henriette Ivanans gives an excellent performance as Katie, striking just the right balance between vulnerability and resilience. Clare Coulter's role as Catherine is difficult because she is on stage throughout the piece, with hardly any dialogue during the flashback, the main body of the play. Coulter, however, has a powerful stage presence and maintains her involvement in the action throughout.

An effective set designed by Terry Gunvor-dahl creates a ghostly atmosphere with the use of reflecting panels and white furniture, some of which is draped with dust sheets. Guy Sprung, who directed the first production of this play at Theatre Calgary last spring, directs a fine cast of actors including Michael Hogan, who handles the character and age span of Ev with his usual proficiency, and Michael Kirby, who gives a skillfully accurate portrayal of Oscar, the classic loser. The play moves on to the National Arts Centre in Ottawa after its Toronto run, and will open there on November 13. ■

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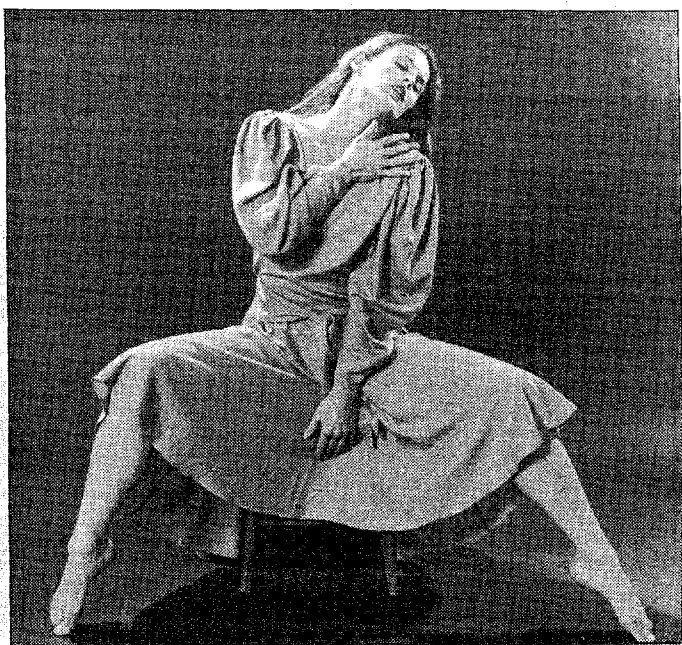
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# Magical Manoeuvres



Inspired: Margie Gillis in "New Dreams."

by Janis Runge

Since seeing Margie Gillis dance at Toronto's Music Hall in September, my body wants to dance, or at least move around more freely, maybe even fly a bit on special occasions. I want to use my body's faculties for exploring its own capacities. I know where that feeling comes from: Margie Gillis's *New Dreams*.

The first piece of Gillis's performance was called "Who Gets to Fly Anymore, Anyway?" I'm sure there isn't one person in the audience who isn't still reacting the way I did, who isn't still finding herself continuously surprised and delighted by her own body and its memory of a performance that celebrated movement and dance as though it should be a normal part of everyday life.

Jennifer Schick, a former professional ballet dancer, once said that after her introduction to modern dance's emphasis on the body as a manifestation of the self, she found that ballet concerts seemed like comical displays of egos, all up there on their tippy

toes trying to be seen, but having nothing at all to do with the feelings of dancing.

New waves in the arts, as *New Dreams* shows us, can be more than marketing hype; they can be inspired by an energy and a joy of re-discovery of human potential. No art form need be only a formal display of superior skills that separates the performer from the audience. Gillis's work is obviously highly skilled, but it is not a sacrifice to the God of Visual Formalist Abstraction. Her audience can actually feel the movement, and feel it for a long time after the last curtain call.

Gillis has a funny little piece about traditional dance: "Nocturne" (choreography by Martha Clark), is a wonderful little parody of an empty-headed lady flitting about in a tutu before hobbling off stage with a cane, her little toes mangled and exhausted. The filmy costume is a marvellous contrast to those of her numbers in which Gillis appears bare breasted (not as a gimmick, but more because that part of the costume would have added nothing about dance to the performance).

The piece she did more or less flat on her back on the floor ("Give Me Your Heart Tonight"), also speaks to the way that modern dance can also fall into the same trap as ballet, but there's also more to the piece than that. "Give Me Your Heart Tonight" serves as a somewhat saucy little reminder that the idea of movement and dance infusing Gillis's work does not depend upon the normal conventions of the proscenium arch/stage. She makes us realize that we shouldn't be dancing just on the stage or in the streets, but also in the office, on the edge of the bathtub, or even at the dentist's. Dance need not discriminate between horizontal and vertical; the human body need not be catapulted into outer space for it to enjoy the exploration of its relationship to gravity. Dance and movement need not be enslaved to conventions, artful or otherwise. Mocking them can be fun, too.

The last piece of the program, "How the Rosehips Quiver," uses the archetype of a "wallflower" at a social dance, and laughs lightly at Gillis's own failure to submit to the conventions. Even when confined to a chair, Gillis just can't stop dancing.

Gillis's work has always been transcendent of the contemporary convention and rhetorical reactions. As many of us know from experience, the rhetorical reactions can become as much an obstacle as the conventions we in-

herit. Seemingly not so for Gillis; she just can't stop dancing. She was, after all, the first to know that Tom Wait's almost excruciatingly plaintive "Waltzing Matilda," begged to be danced to when many of us found Waits almost so degenerate that we refused to even listen! In the early days, before she was "discovered" by both the North American and Chinese media, as she danced on the Great Wall of China, there was an almost eerie, almost brittle fury, in her work. A wildness. But the wildness was justified by her struggle for the freedom to let the spirit of dance break through and beyond cultural conventions. In *New Dreams*, Gillis is more confident, more relaxed and more delighted, and dances with a more gentle humour.

I won't speculate about whether or not the bad lighting and weak costumes in the opening pieces were actually intentional. The contrast with the pieces that followed did lend a sense of development to the *New Dreams* program, and we got to see more and more: enough to know to demand at least two curtain calls.

By the end, we were all convinced that dance can communicate a lot more than what it might look like. Gillis is interested in lots more than visual display and she knows how to make that obvious enough.

## Baker's Bounty

**Baker's Dozen.** Edited by The Fictive Collective, Toronto. The Women's Press, 1983. \$7.95

Reviewed by Carroll Klein

Reading *Baker's Dozen*, the new anthology of thirteen short stories by Canadian women writers, is like spending a particularly exhilarating evening with a group of old friends. If you read the small magazines and pay attention to the feminist literary scene in this country, you will experience the same pleasurable sense of recognition that I felt as I read through the table of contents. The Fictive Collective of the Women's Press has opted for submissions by women who are becoming recognized as fine Canadian writers and whose works appear with comforting regularity in a variety of literary forms and media. Poets, novelists, creators of anthologies, playwrights, journalists - all have turned their hands to short fiction in *Baker's Dozen*. While there may not be any surprises in the guise of new, unpublished writers, the collection is solid, compelling, and occasionally brilliant.

The lead story, "Guilt," by Betty Lambert (whose death in 1983 is noted in a statement after the Introduction) is one of the finest pieces of short fiction I've read in a very long time. Martha Gordon's husband, Ted, has left her for a younger woman and she is determined to Behave Well while all around her are encouraging Martha to rave and weep. Martha takes a job teaching in a men's prison - she doesn't want to inconvenience Ted financially - and discovers in herself a wonderful-

ly ironic ability to survive. She learns to be selfish and, ultimately, to pose the question that she's wanted to ask her pompous husband for years, the question that has stood between her and her freedom. I might have chosen to end the anthology with this story but then again, it's a great hook.

Maureen Paxton and Lake Sagaris provide experimental pieces that break from traditional narrative form and provide some rigorous and intriguing analysis of text. However, Donna Smyth's story, "Red Hot," is the most accomplished of the non-traditional stories. It is a pastiche of violence and pornography, told through an actual account of Jane Stafford's murder of her brutish, abusive husband, a crime of which she was subsequently exonerated. Smyth has cut language to the bone and spared us nothing.

Makeda Silvera's and Greta Hofmann Nemiroff's stories create a startling contrapuntal exercise placed, as they are, next to each other. Silvera's rage is reflected in bleak, unadorned prose. Her ear for dialogue is remarkable and she evokes the world of a black welfare mother with an emerging feminist consciousness with considerable skill. Nemiroff's character is entrenched in the articulate, political, academic bourgeoisie, the landscape of most of Nemiroff's published work. The women in the two stories connect despite class differences, in their atavistic anger and desire.

My only complaint about this anthology is the almost, but not complete, predominance of white heterosexual assumptions. But manuscripts of the quality of these thirteen stories are hard to come by, and the combination of *Baker's Dozen* is a dynamite read. ●

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# Dames of the Round Table

tic exercise of power in the "real" world of physical violence takes primacy over the much more problematic, complex and waveringly "real" magical and manipulative powers of even those women to whom they owe what they are. Perhaps unavoidably, given the constraints of the traditional material, King Arthur remains the lynchpin. The major women characters are all related to him; and are in various ways "behind (his) throne." The major, recurring issues in the book are not gender-related; and issues that are, tend to be handled in surprisingly conventional ways.

Of basic importance to the book, serving as context for all that happens in the story, is the struggle between the religion of the Goddess and that of the Christian priests. It is symptomatic that their markedly different attitudes towards women is not shown as the core of the opposition between them. To be sure, the point is clearly made that women who serve the Goddess have access to learning and high status. They move about freely, needing to account for their actions to no man, unlike the "housebound hens of God." They can rightfully take any man they wish to be their lover, and choose whether or not to bear a child. Women control the land's fertility as well as their own, and command power and authority through the Goddess; the power of men, the hunters and warriors, can only be legitimized into authority through women.

The contrast with those who are Romanized, and often Christian, is repeatedly brought out. Among them, custom gives men absolute authority as well as power over women, whom they treat as "beast of burden and brood mare." The priests are fanatical misogynists, who condemn all women as evil due to Eve's sin and hedge them about with restrictions and guilt.

Yet what is emphasized as the reason why those opposed to it wish to stem the Christian tide is not its patriarchal bias, but the priests' intolerance of any truth other than their own, and their narrow-minded denial of others' right to their own reality. The desirability of diversity, and the multiplicity of reality determined as it is by individuals' own perceptions and beliefs, are two of the major threads running through the book. A third concerns fate as opposed to free will. The characters, male and female, variously struggle against, deny, or long for choice and the responsibility that goes with it, with the author on the whole leaning towards determinism. To everyone is given the choice to cooperate freely with their destiny, or to be dragged along by it in spite of themselves. As Bradley puts it in some of the books in her successful Darkover series, "the world goes as it will, not as you or I would have it." Her treatment of these issues as hurban, leaving gender out of it, can be seen as both a strength and a weakness in this particular book.

Of the major female characters, most carefully developed are the three who embody aspects of the Great Goddess. Morgaine, the protagonist and intermittently also the first person narrator, Arthur's older half-sister, is Maiden, Mother and Crone. She yields her

virginity to him when he comes to her unrecognized as the Horned God at his ritual king-making, having mothered him as a baby; and becomes the Death Crone in bearing him the son at whose hands he is slain. Viviane, Arthur's aunt and High Priestess of Avalon, center of Goddess worship, is Wise Woman. She plans and works for a High King to unite all Britain and resist both Saxon barbarism and Christian fanaticism. She uses the desire of the warleader Uther Pendragon for beautiful Igraine, her half sister, who as a result becomes Arthur's Mother. It is Viviane who engineers Morgaine's role in providing Arthur with an heir; ensures support for Arthur's kingship from the various tribal, religious and cultural constituencies in Britain; and gets him to swear that he will "deal fairly with all men whether Christian or pagan," and not "cling to one God only, despising all others." Her plans go awry when Morgaine, feeling manipulated, renounces Avalon; and Arthur falls under the influence of the fourth important woman in the book, his wife Gwenhyfar. Dazzlingly beautiful, a "pale gold white angel" of excessive piety, she is a featherheaded, fearful nonentity, albeit a notable housewife. Her hold on Arthur's love and regard is hard to fathom - unless it is due to her being the helpless blue-eyed blonde that men stereotypically fall for. In any case, it is critical to the plot, since her nagging of Arthur out of guilt-ridden piety (she sees her inability to give Arthur a child as divine punishment for her love of the handsome Lancelot) leads to his forswearing his oath to deal fairly with the Goddess and her followers.

It is interesting that among these four women it is the two strong and powerful ones who find it difficult to establish love relationships with men. Viviane has "never found any man who meant more to me than necessity, or duty, or a night's pleasure." Not, perhaps, coincidentally, she had only found one man, other than her father the Merlin who, she thought, came near to matching her in strength. Morgaine's relationships with men are ambivalent. In her love for Arthur there is more of mother and sister than of lover or mate. She desires Lancelot, and seems to have strong feelings about him, but comes to the conclusion that "I did not love him." She is merely fond of Kevin, the Merlin after Viviane's father, who had "never asked anything of her save love" and had been "perhaps her only friend" as well as her lover. Accolon, her stepson, is a ritually sexual rather than emotional partner; their relationship is pervaded by that of priest and priestess, conduits of the divine. Yet timid, silly Gwenhyfar, who sees herself "dull as a hen, a simple housekeeping woman" next to Morgaine, enjoys and reciprocates the constant, faithful love and devotion of "the two greatest men within the borders of this world": Arthur and his premier knight, Lancelot. Igraine, untrained in the Mysteries and a puppet to Viviane's power, loved Uther "as her own life," having a bond with him enduring beyond death and more important to her than any other relationship; and was loved in return.

It is also noteworthy that even a strong

woman is rescued by men. Kevin saves Morgaine from death, calling her out of the coma of depression; and Accolon's lovemaking is what restores her powers as priestess.

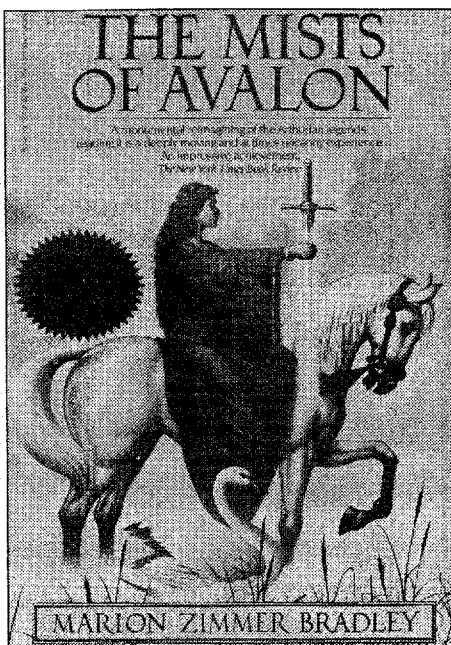
In physical lovemaking, only hinted at in a couple of instances between women, intercourse is where it's at. The "childish toying" that alone Lancelot offers Morgaine is not only unsatisfactory but insulting. Yet repeatedly women seem to desire men less than they desire men to desire them; and even the priestesses of Avalon are not autonomous in their sexuality, giving and withholding themselves not according to their own feelings but at the command of the Goddess. The only character who does what she likes sexually and enjoys it is Morgause, who is "not fit" to be a priestess, and "sees, under the mantle of the Goddess, only power" - not someone the reader is meant to approve of.

Apart from repeated references by both male and female characters to the "pettyness" and the "stuffy, aimless lives of women," who indulge in "small gossip" about the "women's things - embroidery, servants, breeding," there is virtually nothing about the lives of ordinary women, only the elite, those who have power, whether as servants of the Goddess or as queens by the custom of some tribes.

References to looks recur with striking frequency throughout the book, influencing self-image and attitudes towards others. Beauty, one of "woman's weapons," is mediated through men's eyes; inspires love; carries worth; is coveted and envied. Those beautiful and handsome are overwhelmingly tall, fair, young (or look so), and more conventional than not. Morgaine and Viviane, the most autonomous and powerful women in the story, the ones who accept that they have a calling to act beyond the conventional women's sphere, are also the ones who, small and dark, think of themselves as ugly and envy other women's beauty. Among the men described as slender and dark are Lot, Arthur's bitter enemy; Accolon, who sought his death; and Mordred, his bastard son by incest who killed him.

Bradley is above all a spellbinding storyteller, and the new slant she has given her subject adds to the fascination of the story. But the slant is considerably more shallow than it might have been, and this is not due to lack of awareness. She has dealt thoughtfully with feminist themes before, notably in the Darkover novel, *Thendara House*. Rather, it would seem that in *Mists* the traditional world view so strongly pervaded the material she worked with that it exerted a palpable pull, serving as brake on the degree of transformation accomplished. The result is an intriguing but frustrating book, in which, even given the absence of feminist intentions, the potential for gender balance and individual humanity rather than sexual stereotyping has only been partially realized.

Anne Chapman is on sabbatical from Western Reserve Academy in Hudson, Ohio, and is currently a Visiting Scholar at OISE's Centre for Women's Studies in Education.



by Anne Chapman

King Arthur and his knights were the central characters in a complex, massive and confused body of chivalric romances. Arthurian tales and poems, reflecting some conditions and myths of much earlier times, were written in several European languages during the twelfth century and have inspired countless works of the imagination since. The originals blended three main themes: the knight as fighting man bent on glory; courtly love, glorifying high status women for adding to the consequence and prowess of those knights, other than their husbands, who adored and desired them; and spirituality, expressed in the knights' quest for the Holy Grail - the cup from the Last Supper in Christian mythology. In this "matter of Britain," women were at best peripheral.

In her complex and massive book, *The Mists of Avalon*, described on the cover as "the magical saga of the women behind Arthur's throne," Marion Zimmer Bradley mostly follows the traditional plots, characterizations and themes. She orders them, however, in her own way, and provides for them a novel framework: the change from pagan Goddess worship to patriarchal Christianity in Britain. Radically new also is her telling of the story from the female characters' point of view.

Admirable for its scope and daring; hard to read critically because it takes a lot of resistance to avoid being caught up in and swept along by the fascination of the story; and spine-tinglingly powerful in evoking reality for worlds shaped by ritual and belief, of magic and faerie, *Mists* is an ambiguous triumph. It is an imaginative illustration of "how the story of the world would be different if women were at the centre, alongside men" - a question some historians have been asking ever more insistently since Mary Ritter Beard. But it is so more in letter than in spirit.

The women are as actively and fully present in the world Bradley bases on Arthurian legend as are the men, yet while "at the centre," they are not central. The book is not woman-focused, it is story-focused; and, while women participate richly in the story, they and their concerns are not pivotal to it. It is men who are so. Their simple, direct, pragma-

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# Personal Journeys

**What Place is This?** by Rosalind McPhee. Toronto: Coach House Press, 1983.

**Diana Lucifera**, by Marilyn Krysl. Berkeley Ca.: Shameless Hussy Press, 1983.

**Binding Twine**, by Penny Kemp. Charlotte-town: Ragweed Press, 1984.

Reviewed by Betsy Nuse

In the tradition of the heroic quest or Klondike tall tale Rosalind MacPhee's *What Place is This?* relates a daunting journey - by train, tram and boats - from Skagway to Dawson City, and the opening production there in 1899 of an epic theatre piece called "La Siege Inferno." Like the sourdoughs of other Yukon stories, McPhee's protagonists are leaving behind "a frozen landscape of choices forever unalterable" but bring all their anxieties and sorrow with them to their new environment.

But here the parallels begin to fade. *What Place is This?* is far subtler than legend. Personal anguish is the centre of McPhee's concern. The Yukon may be a land "where nuggets lay like loaves of bread," but what can it offer Jessie, whose broken health has claimed her operatic career, or Malcolm, who saw their son drowned in canyon rapids?

McPhee offers a sparsely sketched northern landscape: glaciers, waterspouts, raw pioneer encampments, relieved by brief and poignant moments of companionship. The "courtesan" Ruby, star member of the theatrical troupe coming to perform in Dawson, comforts Jessie, "her words explaining the storm away, warm and held like a cloak around her." When their paddlewheeler is beached on a sandbar, the crew offloads a piano to lighten the boat and the beached passengers strike up an impromptu concert:

In the paling light a wolf howls.  
Then two of them. A chorus of long drawn  
out calls  
rise over the sound of distant rapids.

\*\*\*

The scene: a languorous afternoon in the American South. The setting: a ranch where doves nest and the cottonwood trees "Loose and loose their cluster of down." Enter - a murderer:

When you get home, he's  
eating the chocolate  
eclairs, using your  
ashtrays...

"You" - the reader - become disturbingly difficult to separate from the women who faces him in the poem:

He hates your  
Buick, white, your tan  
shoulders, your bags of  
groceries, your bright children,  
your doctorate, your dog, your  
catamaran, your electric  
eye garage door, your  
husband: successful  
and on the lookout for tax  
loopholes, budgeting a tenth  
to the United Fund, your  
husband, the banker.

It is a dramatic confrontation:

It looks  
bad: it looks like  
the murderer wants your money,  
but will take your life.

But:

he didn't count  
on your deciding fast  
to live, and you deciding  
fast to live without  
fear from here on  
out...

Like classical dramas - to which this poem relates in form and action as well as allusion - the simple story of *Diana Lucifera* echoes other scenarios of women facing violence. Who is this murderer? Is it really only a guy who "tried and tried the ads and couldn't get a job and thus didn't have it for child support" - or is he "your son, the murderer" - even the banker himself? Is he really a stranger or someone on a bench by the ocean who asked "you to come north with him so you'll say no"? Do you really surprise him or do "you look in the mirror because you're expecting the murderer and you want to be ready when he comes"?

On one level the "simple" drama is resolved - though on other levels it seems only to dissolve. And you - the reader - are left in the presence of the goddess herself:

bearing  
the blue fire through this  
soft air, accompanied by eagles  
and doves, the live  
world they systematically  
destroyed, all the species  
that learned to fear you and  
fled, now returning to your  
kingdom, returning  
to your hand.

\*\*\*

"In *Binding Twine*, I speak to people who might not normally read poetry, though in times of such stress they might write. Poetry is to me the natural medium for highly charged emotions, dealing as it does with the complexity of life. I'd like to make the leap to poetry possible for more readers," writes *Binding Twine's* author, Penny Kemp.

Her set of poems accomplishes this aim. Based on her own experience of losing custody of her children - after seven years of supporting them almost solely, after criticism from family and acquaintances, after legal wrangling, the story of *Binding Twine* lays heartbreak on disappointment and misunderstanding. Kemp may not be the first to tell this tale - but she speaks directly to, and for, many who may have suffered longer anguish in their silence.

I pledged if I lost the case  
I would write like mad.  
If I won, I would not.

When I lost I could not.  
Until I wrote myself  
out of dissolution,  
disillusionment,  
toward my own  
authority.

A solution I claim  
to move on.

*Binding Twine* relates Kemp's story in thirteen groups of short poems. Her introduction, partly quoted above, gives the factual background so the poems are left free to "sketch in" the *all important* aspects we might call details: the trivia of daily life so fondly remembered, the succession of emotions: shame, anger, despair and loneliness. It's the kind of collection in which every reader will be moved by some poems - and not necessarily by those that may move

another. From one of my favourites, "Binding Spell":

By Saturday cleanup.  
By Sunday love feast  
By goodnight cuddles  
come back.

*Binding Twine* is a courageous and accessible collection in the best tradition of the new "women's poetry."

Betsy Nuse is proprietor of Boudicca Books in Toronto.

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**HELP! WHERE IS THE FEMINIST** community in the Grey-Bruce/Georgian Bay area? If you can help please phone (416) 766-0190 collect or drop a line to Liza, 304-4070 Old Dundas Street West, Toronto, M6S 2R6.

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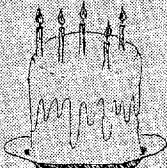
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# OUTSIDE BROADSIDE

## TORONTO WOMEN'S EVENTS CALENDAR NOVEMBER 1984

Compiled by Catherine Maunsell

● **Thursday, November 1:** "Underlying Acts," a show by Leena Raudvee. Gallery 940, 940 Queen St. East. Wednesday: 9 pm.; Thursday to Saturday: 1-6 pm. Info: 466-8840. To Saturday, November 10.

● **Thursday, November 1:** "The Girls Go Public," photographs by Ruthann Tucker, Deborah Hodgson, Rosalie Favell and Susan Ross. Sparkes Gallery, 1114 Queen St. West. Hours and info: 531-1243. To Friday, November 2.

● **Thursday, November 1:** Married lesbians group, a support and discussion group sponsored by Spouses of Gays. 206 St. Clair Ave. West. 1:30 pm. Info: 967-0597. Also Thursdays, November 8, 15, 22 and 29.

● **Friday, November 2:** "Midwifery as a Women's Issue," with speakers Sheila Kitzinger, Michele Landsberg, Mary O'Brien and Vicki Van Wagner. OISE, 252 Bloor St. West. 8 pm. Info: 923-6641, ext. 391.

● **Friday, November 2:** Women's Coffee House at 519 Church St. Community Centre. 8 to 10:30 pm. Pine Room. Every Friday evening.

● **Friday, November 2:** Bratty and the Babysitters. Beverley Tavern, 240 Queen St. West. Info: 598-2434. Also Saturday, November 3.

● **Sunday, November 4:** Lesbian Mothers' Pot Luck Brunch. Food and friendship. 1-4 pm. Info: 465-6822.

### Week of November 5

● **Monday, November 5:** The Women's Group, a support group for lesbians. 8 pm. 519 Church St. Info: Raechel, 926-0527. Also Mondays, November 12, 19 and 26.

● **Monday, November 5:** "Territoriality Revisited: Space as a Neglected Dimension of Gender Differences in Aggression and Defence." Talk by Anne Chapman. Noon, Room 4-411, OISE, 252 Bloor St. West.

● **Tuesday, November 6:** Lesbian Phone Line open tonight for calls from women. 7:30-10:30 pm. 960-3249. Also Tuesdays, November 13, 20 and 27.

● **Wednesday, November 7:** "Collaborations," a performance of poetry, dance and music presented by CKLN, Word of Mouth, Toronto Women's Bookstore and the Toronto Women's Writing Collective, featuring poets Ayanna Black, Nancy Kasper, Roberta Morris and Gisela Dominique, dancer Rashidah Blake and music by the Heratix. Bam Boo, 312 Queen St. West. Advance tickets, \$4 at the Bam Boo Club and the Bookstore. \$6 at the door. Info: 593-5771.

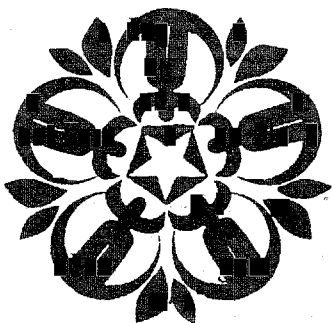
● **Wednesday, November 7:** "An Historical Overview of Women and War and Peace and Revolution," a talk by Ruth Pierson. Sponsored by the Women's Studies Programme. Bring your lunch. New College Library, 20 Willcocks St. 12 noon.

● **Wednesday, November 7:** NFB screens "Home Feeling: Struggle for a Community," a powerful and controversial documentary about Toronto's Jane-Finch corridor. Part of the Colour Positive film festival. NFB Theatre, 1 Lombard St. 12:15 pm. Info: 369-4093.

● **Wednesday, November 7:** Lesbian Phone Line general meeting. Interested women, prospective volunteers welcome. 7:30 pm. 348 College St., 3rd floor. Info: 960-3249.

● **Wednesday, November 7:** WOODS Film Night (Womyn Out of Doors). "Cry of the Wild," and "The Time Machine." Bring cheese, fruit or juice to share. 7 pm. Info: 924-6994 (mornings).

● **Thursday, November 8:** Gary Kinsman will talk on "The Battle over Sex Representation," sponsored by the Lesbian and Gay Academic Society. Rhodes Room, Trinity College, Hoskin Ave. 8 pm. Free. Interpreted for the hearing impaired. Wheelchair accessible. Info: 924-6474 or 533-0674.



● **Friday, November 16:** "Pathways to You," a holistic lifestyle festival. Health, healing products, food, seminars, videos, entertainment and much more. Metro Toronto Convention Centre (foot of CN Tower). \$4. Info: 698-3700.

### Week of November 19

● **Wednesday, November 21:** "Through Her Eyes: An International Film Festival," featuring film by women from Canada and around the world, with seminars and workshops. Harbourfront, 235 Queen's Quay West. Info: 364-5665. To November 30.

● **Wednesday, November 21:** The YWCA of Metro Toronto sponsors a second public forum on Premenstrual Syndrome (PMS) focusing on: an overview of PMS, recent research, psychological aspects of PMS, what patients should look for as consumers and nutrition and exercise. St. Lawrence Centre, Town Hall, 27 Front St. East. Free. 8 pm. PMS support group and info: 961-8100.

● **Thursday, November 22:** "Through Her Eyes"—International Women's Film Festival. Harbourfront, \$3.50 and \$4.50. Info: 869-8444. To Sunday, December 2.

● **Friday, November 23:** BJ and Max, a feminist duo. New Trojan Horse Café. 179 Danforth Ave. Info: 461-8367.

### Week of November 26

● **Tuesday, November 27:** Information meeting for The Beguinage, the new women's housing co-op in downtown Toronto. 7:30 pm. 299 Queen St. West. Suite 401. Info: 925-2475, ext 330.

● **Tuesday, November 27:** Mary Meigs will be reading at the Faculty Lounge, Scarborough College (Take 401 east to Morningside exit.). Free. 7 pm. Everyone welcome.

● **Friday, November 30:** Women's Independent Thoughts (WITZ). A seminar/discussion group for the exchange of ideas and creative endeavours in art, literature, philosophy and political thought. 7 pm. Info: Vera, 766-0755 or 536-3162.

● **Friday, November 30:** Bonnie Leclair performs folk and contemporary music at the Free Times Café. 320 College St. \$3. 9 pm. Info: 967-1078. Also Saturday, December 1.

● **Friday, November 9:** Amanda Hale's new play "The Medical Show / or the mystery of the purple hand," directed by Cynthia Grant. "An hysterical look at the history of malpractice." The Theatre Centre (Poor Alex), 296 Brunswick. 8 pm. \$3.99. Reservations and info: 927-8998. To Sunday, November 11.

● **Friday, November 9:** Sweet Lips. New Trojan Horse Café. 179 Danforth Ave. Info: 461-8367.

● **Saturday, November 10:** Deadline for submission to "Connexions" issue on Art for Social Change. "Connexions," 427 Bloor St. West, Toronto M5S 1X7. Info: 960-3903.

● **Sunday, November 11:** Ecumenical Liturgy "Re-remembering our dis-membered selves," followed by an overnight vigil at Litton, part of Remembrance Week of Actions at Litton. Trinity-St. Paul's United Church. 427 Bloor St. West. 7:30 pm. Info: 532-6720 or 532-6722.

● **Sunday, November 11:** Hike the Bruce Trail, with WOODS (Womyn Out of Doors). Meet at Grenadier Restaurant, High Park, 10:30 am sharp. RSVP by November 8. Info: 481-5879 (evenings).

### Week of November 12

● **Monday, November 12:** One Day Peace Camp, an all day camp at Litton with special gatherings at 10 am, 12 noon, 2 and 4 pm. Bring something to share—music, poetry, food, debate. Sponsored by the Cruise Missile Conversion Project. Phone CMCP for info: 532-6720 or 532-6722.

● **Monday, November 12:** Information meeting for The Beguinage, the new women's housing co-op in downtown Toronto. 7:30 pm. 299 Queen St. West. Suite 401. Info: 925-2475, ext 330.

● **Tuesday, November 13:** Opening reception for "Hands Off," an exhibition of sculpture and photography. Sandi Cooper's sculptures are modelled after parts of the human body and Pam Gawn's photographs address the themes of androgyny, gender identification and photographic illusion. Sparkes Gallery, 1114 Queen St. West. 8 pm. Info: 531-1243. Show continues to Friday, November 30.

● **Wednesday, November 14:** An installation by Sheena Gourlay. (Opening reception, 8 pm, November 16.) Gallery 940, 940 Queen St. East. Hours—Wednesday: 4-9 pm, Thursdays to Saturday: 1-6 pm. Info: 466-8840. To Friday, November 30.

● **Thursday, November 15:** "Sculpture," by Mary Catherine Newcombe. Justina M. Barnicke Gallery, Hart House, University of Toronto. Hours: Tuesday to Saturday, 11 am to 6 pm. To Thursday, December 13.

● **Friday, November 16:** Marianne Girard performs at Free Times Café. 320 College St. \$3. 9 pm. Info: 967-1078. Also Saturday, November 17.

● **Friday, November 16:** Taylor Green, storyteller and poet; plus two videos by the Hummer Sisters: "Hormone Warzone" (1983), a satire on modern birth control, and "Power Play," a look at Canadian Politics in 1984. New Trojan Horse Café. 179 Danforth Ave. Info: 461-8367.

● **Saturday, November 17:** "Rainbow Women in the Arts"—festival and concert, with music, dance, theatre, poetry and special MC Salome Bey. 8 pm, The Music Hall, 147 Danforth Ave. Info: Womynly Way, 925-6568.

● **Saturday, November 17:** Bratty and the Babysitters. Cameron House, 408 Queen St. West. Info: 364-0811.

● **Saturday, November 17:** The Women's Press is holding their slightly damaged book sale. 50%-90% discount on women's and children's books. Free refreshments. 16 Baldwin St. 10 am to 4 pm. Info: Margie Wolfe, 598-0082.

● **Sunday, November 18:** Monthly discussion/pot luck dinner for Jewish lesbians. Any Jewish lesbians interested contact Karen: 964-7477, or Susan: 591-1434.

● **Sunday, November 18:** Ruth Geller, a Jewish lesbian from Buffalo, will read from her new novel *Triangles*. Toronto Women's Bookstore, 73 Harbord St. Free. Refreshments. Maximum 35 women. Info: Patti 922-8744.



The Heretics in concert at the Bamboo, November 7.

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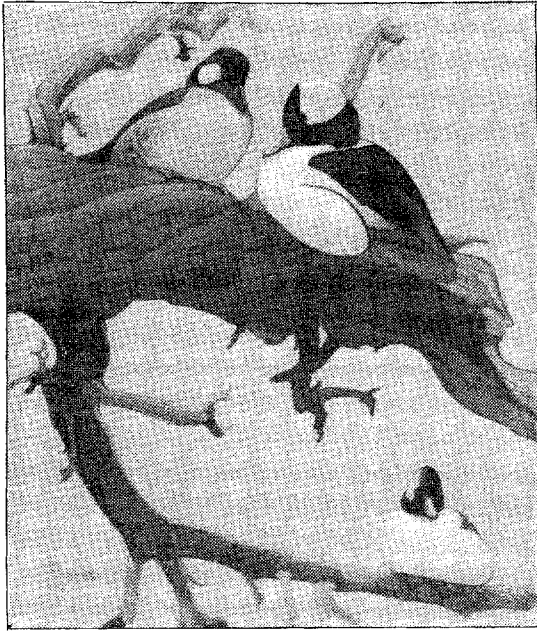
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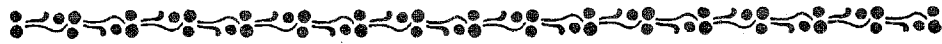
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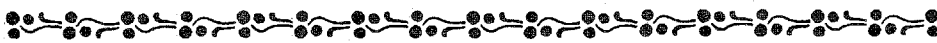
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