



Festival of Festivals: From Place of Weeping. STORY PAGE 8.

FEATURE

FILM FEST: *Broadside* presents a variety of films by a variety of reviewers, seen at Toronto's Festival of Festivals: from Maria Luisa Bemberg's *Miss Mary*, to South African Darrell Roodt's *Place of Weeping*, to American Joan Churchill's *Lily Tomlin*, to Canadian Léa Pool's *Anne Trister*, and more. Page 8.



NEWS

ORDEAL BY ICE AND FIRE: Andrea Dworkin read from her recent novel *Ice and Fire* to a Toronto audience and described the difficulties of a woman writer: finding the voice, finding the solitude, finding the publisher. Patricia Seaman reports. Page 3.

OPEN HOUSE: Two-year-old Margaret Frazer House, a Toronto hostel for ex-psychiatric patients, is one of the few supportive, all-women housing environments available. Beth Follett interviews some of Margaret's residents. Page 5.

POST-FORUM: The Nairobi Forum '85 was an overwhelming experience for many women around the world, but is its aftermath helping the struggle of women on the home front? Philinda Masters reports on a Post-Nairobi conference held in Toronto last month. Page 6.

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INSIDE BROADSIDE

COP OUT: The newly formed Women Against Violence Against Women takes on the Toronto police for not showing up at a rape forum, and for not informing women of the presence of a "balcony rapist" in one neighbourhood. Melanie Randall comments. Page 7.

ARTS

CREATING IMAGES: Québécois filmmaker Léa Pool, director of *La Femme de l'hotel* and *Anne Trister*, talks with Eleanor Wachtel about the two films. Says Pool, "I wanted to speak about creation and love, and the link between them. When you create something, it's very important that you are in love." Page 12.

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PERFORMING PASSION: Nancy Beatty's performance in a stage version of Elizabeth Smart's *By Grand Central Station I Sat Down and Wept* concentrates on visual images, but conveys the anguish of passion by which Smart was consumed. Ellen Waxman reports. Page 13.

VEILED ILLUSIONS: Egyptian feminist Nawal el Sa'adawi, speaking in Toronto, explodes some myths surrounding the false images of Arab women as either belly dancers or veiled women: "Women who have reverted to fundamentalism wear veils imported from the US." Amanda Hale reports. Page 13.

AMOROUS JOURNEY: Aritha van Herk's recent novel *No Fixed Address* follows the heroine Arachne on the road, first as a bus driver then as a travelling saleswoman, until she's last seen disappearing up the Alaska Highway. Reviewed by Ingrid MacDonald. Page 14.

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Take Back the Night

Broadside:

We were pleased to read the editorial on Take Back the Night in last month's *Broadside* (October 1986). The Toronto Rape Crisis Centre has a dual role in providing service to women, and as activists/community organizers. Our struggle to become "sensitized to the prevailing forces that are shaping political activity in the women's movement" has been grounded in our front line crisis work with women, and it is encouraging to have this acknowledged in your editorial. Therefore, we were puzzled by your statement that not all the speakers at the rally dealt with issues of violence against women. Over the years the women's movement has broadened the traditional definition of violence against women to include control of our bodies issues (abortion, lesbianism, differently abled women, prostitution) in addition to those of rape, assault, incest and harassment. The strength of the anti-rape movement is in its refusal to separate rape and assaults from the rest of who we are. When women seek counselling they bring along with them their culture, their race, their class and their sexual history. As our major protest of the year, it is vital that Take Back the Night reflect all of who we are as much as possible.

Each year in planning Take Back the Night we must make choices on which issues to focus. In the past three years alone we have prioritized violence against women and children in the home, the violence done to homeless women, prostitution and state and police violence done to us. We hold community planning meetings so women can give input on the issues of greatest concern to them. This input, coupled with our own analysis of the political climate for women in Toronto, provides the theme for each annual Take Back the Night. Our pamphlet describes in more detail many of the issues that cannot be featured in the rally.

So given all of the above, it is always a challenge to provide speakers and entertainment that adequately represents the reality of women in Toronto while at the same time trying to keep it short. Therefore we need the input and direction of an active community of women to help us make these decisions year after year.

This year we were excited by the response to our community meeting in August where volunteers (including the Feminist Network) distributed over 4000 pamphlets and posters throughout Toronto, as well as making placards and helping out with the marshalling and organization of the night. The Immigrant Women's Centre facilitated our community outreach by translating our poster into five languages. It is this kind of energy that

led to 1000 women marching on Yonge Street, despite attempts by the police to harass and intimidate. The spirit of the march was certainly evident at the end of the evening where over 100 women rallied to protest one of our members being ticketed for making too much noise! Shouts of "Police harassment" and women's refusal to disperse prevented any further ticketing and harassment. We were very moved by women's immediate response to the ticket — dollar bills thrust into our hands and offers of court accompaniment. While waiting for a court date to be set, we are working with Jack Layton's office to lay a complaint against P.C. Quigley, the ticket-happy officer. Women with further complaints against the police should contact us (416-597-1171) and Jack Layton's office.

Next year we hope to build on the spirit and experience of this year's march. As the only event that attempts to encompass all the forms of violence against women, the struggle of organizing Take Back the Night is this: how to make the march new and exciting to those experienced activists that come out year after year, and how to outreach to women who are not yet politically active?

We will begin planning the 8th Annual Take Back the Night in May, 1987. We urge individual women, community groups and newspapers to participate at that time so that we may keep this event a strong and vital one.

Toronto Rape Crisis Centre

IWD '87

Broadside:

The Toronto planning committee for International Women's Day 1987 has been meeting through the summer and fall. We are a grouping of women of colour and white women, of different class backgrounds, sexuality and political perspectives. Some of us were active in the 1986 coalition, others were not. A call was put out in early summer asking women to participate in this process. Our goal was to have the 1987 coalition adopt within it new ways of organizing and working together, recognizing the differences of class, race, ability, and sexuality. Not doing this has been one of the biggest barriers to unity among women. Although objective differences among us are crucial, we do not believe that they carry with them automatic and fixed conclusions about the possibilities of shared political work. Such difference, if recognized, can be the focus of positive political struggle, which will hopefully lead to necessary changes in the women's movement and society as a whole. We are particularly conscious of the need to fully integrate an anti-racist perspective into feminist

organizing. We have taken the statements, recommendations, and evaluations from IWD 1986. Many lessons have been learned which hopefully will move the coalition and the women's movement closer to this goal.

Because of the importance of structural and process questions (role of caucuses, direction, leadership, decision making, committees, etc.) being fully discussed prior to the actual organizing process, we are calling a first meeting for 11 am-5 pm on Sunday, December 7 at OISE, 252 Bloor Street West, Room #4-412, with appropriate breaks scheduled. The location is wheelchair accessible. Proposals for issues or themes may be brought to this or subsequent meetings in December.

The planning process has been very useful and very productive. We are urging women to join with us in the coalition itself. It will need your energy, your diversity, your ideas to be a success. We are building on the lessons learned from past years, and need women to help us to do that. We want to make International Women's Day 1987 truly representative and reflective of the women's movement in Toronto.

The March 8th Planning Committee
 Toronto

Quote of the Month

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—R.E.A.L. Women
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EDITORIAL

Free Trade: No Bargain for Women

As the federal government continues its pre-occupation with free trade agreements with the United States, interest groups have been left to sort out for themselves what the implications of the negotiations may be. At present the PC's are painting a rosy picture of future scenarios, but a paper drafted by Marjorie Cohen, a Vice President of the National Action Committee on the Status of Women, warns that free trade is going to have a specific and negative impact on women. The paper, entitled "The MacDonald Report and Its Implications for Women," traces the economic factors that bode poorly for women workers under the free trade regime.

Cohen begins by assessing the manufacturing sector, where women's labour is highly concentrated, and where, as the MacDonald Commission admits, there is likely to be the greatest vulnerability. The Commission's report, Cohen writes, identifies the manufacturing sector as one of those which will become weakest if free trade talks are successful. The textile and clothing industries and four others are named as potential casualties: two-thirds of the people working in these sec-

tors are women, constituting 42% of all manufacturing workers, whose work lives will be jeopardized if free trade philosophies prevail.

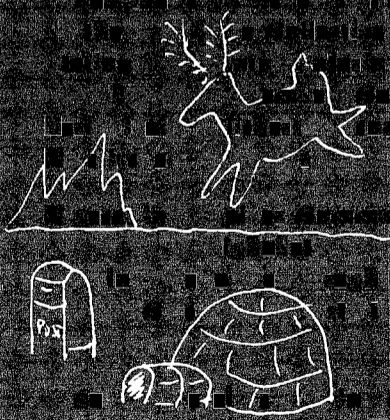
Cohen criticizes the Commission's report for its ingenuous speculation about what will happen to these women. The Commission explains that displaced workers will be retrained into more highly paid jobs which will work in their interests. But this, according to Cohen, is based on belief not fact. Already women are under-represented in job training programs, and the assumption that these workers, many of whom have been on the job for over thirty years, will be prepared for such a significant change of life, is actually quite callous. A garment workers strike recently settled in Toronto drove the point home, especially as workers complained that there were no other jobs to go to.

The Commission, when it is not talking about retraining, talks about other "adapting behaviour" which is a euphemism for relocating, something married women with children do not find easy. A quick look at the manufacturing situation suggests that, if some economic sectors will benefit from free

trade, others will pay for those benefits, and the ones paying the costs are going to be women.

Taken together, the vulnerability of the manufacturing sector, and the uncertainty similarly anticipated for the service sector where 80% of all women workers are employed, free trade begins to look less and less appealing. This does not take into account free trade's inevitable threat to Canadian cultural policies, or even the fact that free trade could mean a virtual blizzarding of Canada by pornographers who are anxious to change the pornography-free (that is, relative to the US) conditions enjoyed by Canadians.

But what Marjorie Cohen and NAC have done is to begin a process that other women's groups would do well to join. Taking into account the interests of women, an entirely new body of material can be generated to garner opposition to the Mulroney strategy, and to subvert the free trade talks. *Broadside* is interested in any views of free trade that place women first on the priority list. We share with Cohen the view that free trade is going to be bad for women. ●



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Dworkin as Novelist

by Patricia Seaman

Andrea Dworkin's novel *Ice & Fire* is a case in point of the publishing industry's attempt to control the circulation of texts. Dworkin was in Toronto on October 1, when she read four selections from the book, answered questions in reference to the readings and discussed her experience of writing. The subversive nature of women writing and the disclosure of their vision of the truth was discussed in context to the difficulty Dworkin had in finding a publisher for the novel.

Each of the sections was presented as a self-contained vignette. They were realized as examples of the structure of the patriarchal hierarchy, and gave some insights into the mechanisms of that structure. The predominant theme throughout the work was the oppression of women, its inherence in the system and the resultant displays of violence. Dworkin's text itself is not "oppressive" however, in spite of the subject matter. The restorative aspect may be that the characters are involved in a process of self-actualization by the simple fact of confronting and questioning their situation within the structure. These characters, whether because of poverty or lack of autonomy, have no buffer against the system but through an emerging awareness take the first step away from being a commodity. The language Dworkin uses in this novel often contains an implied threat, which works to unveil the continuous submerged hostility toward women. The language is often rhythmically repetitive and evokes a quality of incantation. As well, the book contains much unexpected humour.

In the first section Dworkin describes a typical children's game in which the boys chase the girls, eventually catching and isolating one who then becomes the "witch." She is then ostracized from the rest of the group. Dworkin cited this game as being essentially one of solitude and loneliness for the girls as opposed to the complicity and group action of the boys. The narrator poses a series of questions as to the purpose of the game, the rewards and humiliations of playing and the implicit acceptance of all the players of the rules. The analogy between the game and societal sexual rituals is clear. Children's games are one method of socialization in which they rehearse patterns of behaviour they will fall back on through their lives unless they analyse and modify that behaviour. The tenuous thread between what is real or pretense, or the reality of "pretending" was discussed in relation to each of the sections. If one pretends to participate in something, is the act real by virtue of participation or pretense by virtue of intent? Dworkin remarked on the absurdity of a binary division of real and imaginary.

The question was posed again in the next section in which two women who are lovers and who live in poverty survive by prostitution. The characters interact in a ritualized game where the threat of violence is constant and only thinly concealed. The women participate in the game even though they recognize the precariousness. They comply with the violence directed at them, they are aware, they pretend to participate, in effect they do participate. In this section Dworkin uses the repetition of structure and sound as in, "Mr. took us out to dinner, Mr. took us to the beach," or in, "he concentrates, he fucks," to set up reverberations of the truth of this interaction. She decodes these rituals of behaviour by describing their physicality. In composite the status of the strata of the hierarchy and the artificiality of the interactions is exposed. The women of this piece finally find refuge in each other entwined together in their "endless night."

The next section of the novel as well as much of the discussion, was concerned with the process of writing. According to Dworkin, the book is not autobiographical, but it describes her experience of writing. She said the value of writing is that, in itself, it is a rebellious act, a resistance to being silenced by the system. There is a need to com-



municate women's vision and that she created a "space for her truth." She cautioned women to prevent what they have to say from being trivialized and to take their rage and use it productively, to organize, politicize, and create a literature of protest.

In describing the nature of the writing process, Dworkin noted that the act itself disrupted a basic premise of the social order, that in order to write a woman had to know herself in solitude and respect her own right to solitude, and deny that she be required to be available for interruption. Dworkin believes solitude should be perceived in a personal/political context.

In response to a question as to the differences between writing fiction and non-fiction, Dworkin said there were very few differences because *all* writing requires imagination. No matter what one is writing it must stay with the reader in a visionary way. Women cannot live in a world of platitudes and that is why she herself dwelt on the physicality of

places and details, in order to anchor the novel in the concrete and avoid being didactic.

Discussion from the floor was essentially concerned with the implications of defining women sexually and reproductively. It is this definition that leads to the denial of women's basic humanity, exposing them to violence in its myriad manifestations, as in covert hostility, or rape, or the unequal distribution of the world's resources. The possible alarming consequences of reproductive technology, even the gynocide of women, were approached as no longer theoretical questions.

The final section from the book was a description of sexual violence as it evolves in the institution of marriage, the power structure that promotes it. The character experiences the escalation of an initially non-threatening situation into acts of aggression. Textually, Dworkin presents the course of events very simply, as in, "He needed confidence, so I married him." Subtextually, the implications of this are infinitely complex.

Dworkin's next book, which will be published in the spring, is entitled *Intercourse*, and should offer some insights into the politics of sexual intercourse. Dworkin will no doubt continue to provide raw material for controversial discourse.

Patricia Seaman is a Toronto feminist.



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Dr. Bertell, a Roman Catholic nun and an expert on low-level radiation, relays a sense of urgency in her lecture on the world's "nuclear addiction."

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This Oscar-winning film records a hard-hitting lecture given by nuclear critic Dr. Helen Caldicott, then president of U.S. Physicians for Social Responsibility.

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Dossier: The Pornography Paper

by the Working Group on Sexual Violence

Building on the long history of women organizing to stop the sexual exploitation of women and children, the advent of the second wave of feminism in the late sixties precipitated the recent growth of concern about violence against women.

Consciousness-raising groups provided the first safe forums for women to begin to describe the experience of their lives, and provided an audience of women who were interested enough to listen. The creation and growth of women's centres, rape crisis centres and transition houses were a direct result of women acting on what they heard.

For the past twenty years feminists have been teaching ourselves to listen more carefully, and to take what women tell us out into the world. Many of us have had to face stories of greater brutality, greater barbarism than we would have thought was possible. And, over time, we have peeled back the layers of sexism and silence to discover the many methods of sexual subordination: employment discrimination, sexual harassment, rape, wife-battering, prostitution, incest, child sexual abuse, sexual abuse of older women — and pornography.

We came to understand women's oppression as a continuum, encompassing a widely disparate range of issues, related in source, significance and impact. We know it is not possible to eradicate any one form of women's oppression without also responding to all the other associated forms of oppression. But our experience has taught us that the at times overwhelming scope of the continuum of women's oppression cannot be broken until we break the silence and address each of those issues which harm us — never for a moment forgetting the links that make the oppression so successful.

Having been raised in a "liberal" society, many of us had ignored pornography, assuming it was merely sexually explicit pictures — sex education at best, tasteless at worst. Years later, having spent time with the victims of male violence, we took another look and found the sexually explicit pictures were in fact a distorted glorification of the abuse suffered by women we had talked to. We saw images of women bound, gagged, whipped, raped, infantilized, burned, chained; defecated, urinated and ejaculated upon; images which lauded the hatred of women. Since we'd last looked, pornography had grown, had become more malevolent, more acceptable, more profitable, and more overtly violent. We recognized the male voice of the pornographers was much louder than the voices of the women on the pages of the magazines or on our crisis lines. And we got angry.

As angry women, we organized community forums, Take Back the Night marches, and a range of other attacks on the industry. We spoke, wrote, distributed leaflets, spray-painted, picketed and protested. Some women firebombed. Some made films. The film *Not a Love Story* captured some of our analysis and our anger and took it out to a wider audience, broadening the debate.

Broadening the debate meant taking it beyond the normal reach of the feminist community. And women, many of whom were not feminists, recognized some of their own experience in those images and in our words.

These women wanted pornography and pornographers stopped. They wanted the lies stifled. They wanted the abuse in and by those pictures to end. So they took the information and their own understandings about the way the world (and the state) works and proceeded to try to stop pornography. They called upon the police to prosecute, the consumers to boycott, the censors to censor, and the legislators to legislate. Many didn't want to stick around for hair-splitting discussions on what pornography was. They knew what it was, and they wanted it not to be, anymore.

There is little recognition that the men called upon for help were men who learned about women through pornography.

As each level of the state insisted they could do nothing, women looked to the next, more powerful level. There was sometimes little recognition that those called upon for assistance were men who themselves learned about women through pornography. So the men in power saw the women who called upon them to silence the pornographers as having more in common with the women in the pictures than with themselves. Faced with deciding "how bad it is" these men could choose between their direct experience of physiological effect (whether it gave them an erection), or a perception of what their wives and daughters ought not to see. Having ignored the voices of the victims of sexual subordination for so long they would not see the harm, only the offence. Defining the physiological effects as their own private right, and convinced that their wives and daughters would not look, they did nothing. And that made the women more angry, and louder.

Then they asked the rhetorical question: What do you women want anyway? Women answered differently. Some called for changes to the criminal code, some for censorship boards, some for regulation, some for human rights codes, some for civil remedies and almost all for education.

Many of those of us who spoke about the connections between pornography and violence against women were skeptical about calling upon the patriarchal state to intervene on our behalf. We focussed on education and direct action. But we soon found that a consequence of our work was that other women took this new understanding of pornography as harmful and demanded that the state do something about it. The debate moved from the community centres, the feminist press and the streets into the hallways of the legislatures and into the mainstream media.

The voices of women calling for the silencing of pornographers were soon joined by the voices of men and women calling for the protection of the family and of the morality of the community. Taking the "sexual" out of "sexual subordination," men and women on the right demanded an end to "smut," insisting that non-heterosexual sex be put back in the closet and genitals and extra-

marital sex be hidden in brothels, at stag parties, or in magazines under the mattress.

Feminists struggled to hold on to the experience of women, trying to define pornography in a way which said what it was and what it did. Some tried to explain pornography as not sex, and not about sex, but about violence. Others tried to say that it was very much about sex, about power, about men defining women's sexuality and about the use of male power against women through sex. The latter argument was unacceptable, rendered inaudible, in the hallways of the legislature and in the mainstream media.

As feminists who saw that pornography was about male power and the sexual subordination of women, we looked for a way to remove the power of speech from the pornographers and from the police and to place that power in the hands of the women who experienced harm. We talked about defamation, damages and our human rights. Catharine MacKinnon and Andrea Dworkin are two American feminists who talked with those who suffered damage and translated what they heard into a civil ordinance. Together they and many other women lobbied intensively for its passage in Minneapolis and in Indianapolis. And what they said and where they said it became news. As patriotic Americans, the left and the liberals attacked it as unconstitutional and *them* as suppressors of freedom of speech and underminers of civil liberties.

Freedom of speech and civil liberties are very valuable commodities to those who don't have them. The left and women have a history of being short-changed. There was a very strong reaction against assumed allies apparently giving those rights away; this reaction was particularly strong from those on the left and from those women who have some rights and fear they have something to lose. They called the threat censorship, and they called those who spoke about freedom of speech for all women pro-censorship.

Pornography is about denying women speech, about binding women's mouths closed, about putting false words on women's lips, in pictures and in practice.

To be anti-censorship is, in effect, to be in favour of freedom of speech for pornographers. Further, it is to define pornography as speech and not practice. But pornography is about denying women speech, about binding women's mouths closed, about putting false words on their lips, about murder and torture and rape and submission and seduction in pictures and in practice, and in practice with the pictures. And so being anti-censorship is about valuing the words of those who are anti-censorship over the words of the women who are pictured and practised on, and in particular over the words of those women who talk about what they mean.

However, there are those who attempt to value both equally. Accepting that pornography is sexist and degrading, they argue

that it must be counteracted with organizing, education, and the development of a feminist erotica. They argue that the voices of women and left-thinking men will drown out the voices of pornographers and we will all live happily ever after, or if not happily, at least we won't be censored.

But what voices you hear depends on where you are. For those women who are raped today, for those women whose men force them to act like the women in the pictures, for those women who are coerced into posing, for those children who are learning what sex is and what women are from the videos and magazines in the local store or in their homes, and for those women in our movement who help the survivors come to terms with those experiences, the voices of the harmed are louder than the voices of those preaching a feminist erotica. It is probably safe to say that for most of the population the voices of the pornographers and their customers are more audible, indeed they overpower those who dream out loud of a feminist sexual discourse.

We know that freedom of speech belongs to those who own the presses, and among those who own the presses there is a preponderance of rich, white men. We also know there is a preponderance of those same rich, white men in the apparatus of the state, in the legislatures, in the courts, and practically everywhere decisions are made about our lives.

The patriarchal capitalist state continues to profit from and shore up the free-enterprising pornographers while simultaneously promising women protection from harm, from defamation, from violence, and from infringement of civil liberties. The pornographers claim freedom for themselves while placing women in bondage; the state claims to protect liberties, liberties which are available only to those who are permitted, and can afford, to exercise them.

Being a feminist means putting women first and starting with women's experience. So we must start with the experience of women as subordinated, as without liberty. In choosing to address the issue of pornography as one among many facets of women's oppression, we must start with the experience of women as subordinated, deprived of liberty, in, by and with the use of pornography. And we must recognize the silence and the damage of that experience.

From this starting point, we have sought to make women's voices audible, in every available forum, in our communities and in the courts. To that end we have argued for and continue to argue for a civil right, the right of women to pursue, into the courts, the men who have damaged them. We have argued against the use of the criminal courts because that would place the decisions and the speech in the hands of the police, and would define society and not women as harmed. We are working on defining the nature of that civil right, and more specifically the nature of the harm, a definition based on women's experience and one which would allow some compensation for what has been lost.

There is no compensation for the silencing nor for the subordination, but we believe that recognition of that silence and of the harm, publicly and monetarily, is part of breaking the silence and stopping the harm. At the very least, it would reduce some of the profits of those who impose silence and do harm. At best it would give the silenced and harmed a forum to speak.

The debate about pornography is very much a debate about freedom of speech. However the question is not more or less freedom, but *whose* freedom. On this question the women's movement divides along predictable lines: the liberals, who seek to enhance the freedom of the police and censor boards (while trying to defend sex education, art, and gay rights); the socialists, who oppose the diminution of their own freedom of speech (and of everyone else who already has it); and the radical feminists, who demand that the voices of women, all women, be heard.

(The Working Group on Sexual Violence is a Vancouver group which includes Kate Andrew, Jan Barnsley, Megan Ellis, Debra Lewis and Frances Wasserlein. This article was also published in Kinesis.)

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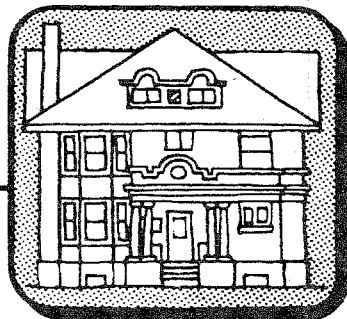
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Margaret Frazer House

Open House

by Beth Follett

Margaret Frazer House has been open for over two years now, a small alternative service for women with histories of mental health problems. It is a ten-bed group home for single women between the ages of 18-64, with 50% of the beds allotted to women coming directly from hospital psychiatric units and 50% to women referred by a variety of "street" agencies — women's hostels, youth services, community agencies. Currently, the length of stay at Margaret's is six months, with an optional extension of a further six months for women who require the time to more adequately adjust to the demands of community living. While staying at Margaret's, women are expected to be involved in supportive activities either inside or outside the house, in preparation for movement toward more independent living. Women pay \$219 a month for food and rent. Most residents receive their income from Welfare or Family Benefits Allowance.

Margaret's is one of only two "women only" houses in Toronto and operates as a feminist collective. Women are encouraged to look to one another for support in an effort to reduce their dependency on staff. The shift towards equality between staff and residents, the maintenance of the philosophy of the residents being persons of as much intrinsic worth as the staff, are difficult practices precisely because there are so few models in the community.

The complexities of the women's lives, the struggles they have had, the clever ways they have managed inequality do not always stand out in the words they used in this interview to describe their pasts. While some have experienced shock treatment, none mention it. Because intensive insight-oriented therapy is not an aspect of the counselling done at Margaret's, the women were not asked to disclose information about their experiences of battering, or sexual abuse, or neglect. These are, however, the real experiences of some of these women.

The women range in age from 20 to 40. Some have had numerous re-admissions to hospital. One of Margaret's objectives is to decrease women's dependency on hospital. While some of the women interviewed have had brief stays in hospital while at Margaret's, none were in hospital at the time of writing. Trish, Barry, Velma, and Veronica are currently living with family and friends. Elizabeth has gone back into the hostel circuit. Cricket is still at Margaret's. Katrina Clare lives with her boyfriend.

The staff refers to Margaret's as a "safe" place to explore your self, your abilities. Was it like that for you?

Katrina Clare: I didn't do too much exploring. I don't think I really made good use of Margaret's. Staff encouraged me a lot to go to various programs — Woodgreen Community Centre, Puzzle Factory Theatre — but I don't think I was ready for it, I was sorta into "yesterday."

Velma: It helped me find myself. Staff cared for me, for residents there. Whenever I was going to commit suicide, staff stopped me, we talked about it. I used to try to commit suicide about once a month. I still think about it.

Cricket: I think so, yeah, because Margaret's gives me a chance to be who I am and I don't always have to put up a big front. The staff let me make my own decisions; like whatever I feel I can do or am ready for, it's accepted. When I first moved to Margaret's one of the big issues for me was being a lesbian, and staff supported and accepted that without a big hassle. That helped me a great deal. One thing I like about Margaret's is that the staff are not big on hospitals. They try to deal with

problems in the house without locking you up in a corner.

Veronica: Margaret's was a very good place for me. I got a lot of comfort there. Do you know what that means?

Barry: I never saw Margaret's in that way. It became a "safer" place, but I never saw it as learning. I never saw myself doing anything, but that's my own hang-up. I never see myself doing anything that could possibly be good for me. I never thought I was exploring my "abilities." I knew how to cook, I knew how to clean up, that's one of the things you learn there. I never explored that. As far as meeting other residents, I finally ventured to do that. It felt more like home, then. Those were uncharted waters. I didn't feel like I was searching for anything; I didn't feel like I found anything. Except for finding my energy to do chores, whereas at home I wouldn't.

What was it like to live in a household of women?

Veronica: It wouldn't have been the same if there'd been men. It would have been a lot of trouble for me. No, not trouble. Confusion.

Cricket: I don't know how to answer that because I'm used to it. This isn't the first group home I've been in. I don't think right now I could handle living with men. It feels a lot safer to me to live in a house of women. I feel on the whole that women are a helluva lot more accepting and supportive.

Katrina Clare: It was challenging. You had to deal with different personalities. Sometimes their, quote, illness made things difficult. Sometimes it was fun.

Barry: I didn't find it as threatening as I would have had there been men there. I don't mean it wasn't threatening, because I didn't know anyone, but it was safer.

Elizabeth: I found it fairly easy. I actually prefer to live just with women.

Do you plan to continue to see either staff or other residents from Margaret's?

Barry: I've been back to Margaret's, and I plan to go back again for occasional dinners. And I see (one staff) as a friend.

Elizabeth: I see (a supportive housing worker) quite frequently, but mind you, I like her. I come back to the house quite often.

Cricket: I would like to keep in contact with the staff at Margaret's. I still keep in contact with two residents who have left.

Velma: I see staff. I see about five staff. One is my follow-up worker, the rest see me because they care about me... and because I miss them, of course!

Veronica: I see a follow-up worker.

Katrina Clare: Occasionally, as my time table is so different from theirs... I work nights (laughter). (Katrina Clare works as a prostitute.)

What is your goal in terms of housing? Will you live alone or with others?

Katrina Clare: I think I'd like to be with one other person, with a steady activity or job. It would be better for my mental state, because hooking isn't doing me any good.

Trish: I'd like to live in Scarborough, with three other women, in a supportive housing facility.

Velma: Here, I'm happy. With my family. It's too lonely living by yourself.

Elizabeth: Oh, I'll never have a permanent home, I don't think so.

Cricket: Sometime I hope to be in a monogamous relationship with somebody and live with her in our own apartment.

Barry: I think I'd like to live alone. Staying alone at my sister's, I really liked it. I don't have to worry about what people think of my illness. I can be responsible for my own decisions.

What does the term "ex-psychiatric" mean to you?

Trish: It means mentally ill. Nobody ever refers to me that way because I don't tell anyone I was in hospital.

Velma: Mental. Crazy crazy. Lots of people have used that term for me. I consider myself crazy, because only crazy people hear voices. Because I don't know anything.

Katrina Clare: It's a nice term for people who think it's worthwhile, for professional people, people who prefer to use it. I don't consider myself "ex-psychiatric." I consider myself Katrina Clare. I think a lot of people like to label you that — manic depressive, ex-psychiatric, it's all the same; a label. Someday I'll be an ex-hooker, I hope (laughter). Ex-psychiatric is a contrary term. You don't just go to hospital for three weeks, and then you're fine. You see a doctor, whatever. It's a contradiction.

Veronica: I'm not really sure. I think it means that you are in Queen Street and then you're not. I guess I'm an ex-psychiatric person now. I'm out now. I'm glad.

Elizabeth: It would mean past psychiatric. I don't think of myself that way. I was put in hospital. I had no choice.

Cricket: The "ex" in ex-psychiatric is a positive thing for me. Since I've been a psychiatric patient for most of my life, I really like the word "ex."

Barry: I'd say in the last year I'd learned a lot. You know that commercial on TV? "My father got sick last year and now his friends and people at work treat him differently. He's not sick anymore and it's not fair." Now I really relate to that commercial, and I understand it. I understand a lot more about psychiatric units. When I heard the term "psychiatric" before going into hospital, I thought "crazy." But then I was there, and they were all *people*... they laughed, they cried. They weren't the "demented sickos" you were led to believe. I want to tell a potential roommate that I attend groups for ex-psychiatrics, but I'm afraid she won't understand, will think we're all crazy! You have to, well, not actually lie, but not tell the whole truth, you can't mention it. If someone said that to me I'd say, What of it? I don't even have to know! While I was in hospital, I tried to get a place with a woman who wanted to share cooking, and I said, No, I've got to cook my own meals, I've an eating disorder, and she said, No way. I don't want to lie. I want to be honest because I know I'm not crazy — well, most of the time (laughter).

If you have spent time in psychiatric units of hospitals, what was that like?

Barry: When I think back, when I first got out, I missed it so much, I thought about it as a place I loved. But while I was there I hated it. It was torture. The hospital was good, the staff were the greatest people in the world, but my program made it really difficult to be there.

Veronica: I didn't like it at all. We had a lot of group meetings every day. We had medication given us three times a day. I didn't like it, I was doped up all the time. I didn't like going to group meetings but I had to, I had no choice. I didn't like a lot of things, but that's the way it was, I had to accept it. Margaret's was more free. I got well at Margaret's.

Trish: I didn't like it. I didn't like the people or the staff.

Katrina Clare: It was a nightmare. That's no understatement either. Jail was a better experience. The staff, the doctors, they enjoy restraints and needles and other methods to keep you under control. I don't think they do you any good. You're so drugged up. The minute you raise your voice it's "Let's get the needle going here!" It's zombie city.

Cricket: There is certainly quite a bit of it that I would like to forget, but near to the end of my stay there I was on a ward that was really supportive.

Elizabeth: I really don't remember. It is very far away.

Velma: So so. They gave me a lot of drugs. I was on 1200 mg. of CPZ. Now I only take 450 mg. The hospital helped me through my crises. Food wasn't too bad. Better than living on the streets. There was a lot of hostility between me and my therapists, always arguing about money, about getting a needle if I didn't take my drugs. I had a lot of rage there for both residents and staff. I wouldn't send my worst enemy there.

Any other comments you'd like to make? About yourself? About Margaret's?

Trish: I liked being at Margaret's.

Elizabeth: I think that girls could live like this, in these places, all their lives. There's nothing wrong with it. I mean, they had what happened to them, you know, in hospital, but that's over. I think anyone could live here happily all their life.

Velma: Margaret's was good for me. I learned to hug people there, the staff showed me love. Staff always tried to work out problems there without sending me back to hospital. It showed that "beasts" can be liked, too. My mom used to call me a beast.

Barry: I think people should know that just because you've been in a group home, you're not a "juvenile delinquent" or "maladjusted." You go for so many different reasons. People just don't understand, they jump to conclusions, they think of you as trouble, a bad egg. If you say a psychiatric group home, well, that's the be all and end all.

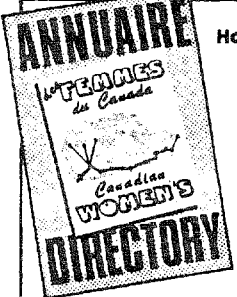
What would I want people to know about Margaret's? I think it's a good place to live. You're really cared for there, staff really know what's going on, they're really great. Margaret's is a special place. But for me it wasn't a safe place, because I had the weight contract always hanging over my head. Margaret's forced me to do things that I hadn't been doing because I didn't have the energy. Simple things, things that people take for granted — like washing dishes.

Katrina Clare: I think society would benefit greatly with more non-mixed houses for quote ex-psychiatrics. It's more confusing dealing with men when trying to get yourself straightened out.

Cricket: I think Margaret's is a great place. It's given me a chance to be out in the community when nobody else would touch me with a 10 foot pole because of my past history. Staff accepted me for who I was, and not for what they read on paper. They took the time to interview me and find out what I was all about. I don't think being here is all a bed of roses, but for me it's worth it.

Beth Follett is a Toronto feminist and a staff member at Margaret's.

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MOVEMENT MATTERS

Post-Nairobi: Redistributing the Wealth



by Philinda Masters

A resolution calling for the end of governmental funding of general post-"Nairobi" activities and demanding that funding priority be given to native women's and women of colour grassroots organizations closed a conference on follow-up to the NGO Nairobi "Forum '85," amid some consternation. But it succeeded in giving the otherwise unfocused conference some political bite.

As a non-participant — that is, as someone who didn't go to Nairobi — I found it difficult to comprehend the meaning of the Forum. It was at once overwhelming and insignificant: 15,000 women met in Kenya's capital for a non-governmental conference — complete with hundreds of workshops and a film festival — to parallel the official UN End of Decade meeting held on the other side of the city. But for what purpose?

The UN hammered out a "Forward Looking Strategies" document, which was accepted by its 3,000 delegates, and which has been taken up by Canadian governmental groups, such as Status of Women Canada, as a framework for policy decisions concerning women. But the UN has been hammering out such documents for years, particularly in the shape of anti-gender and anti-racial Conventions (1959 and 1969 respectively). *Plus ça change...*

Similarly, it was difficult to get a handle on the purpose of the post-Nairobi conference held at Ryerson in Toronto last month. By all accounts, "Nairobi" was a personal experience. Many participants spoke of its "changing their lives," and are still, 14 months later, trying to cope with its significance. The Toronto conference organizers hoped to take this experience beyond the personal, to forge some plan of action which would incorporate its perspective into the politics of the Canadian women's movement. But, for the first day at least, the conference appeared to be nothing more than a friendly reunion of women who hadn't seen each other since they left Kenya.

The conference was divided into workshops, plenaries, a film night, and a forum open to the public. For sheer interest value, the line-up of speakers was impressive, the interests represented wide-ranging: among them Lyse Blanchard, until recently director of the Secretary of State Women's Program, which took a large contingent of women to Nairobi; Dominique Norval of the Girl Guides; Emma Kivisild from the Vancouver feminist newspaper *Kinesis*; Molly Bonneau, Native Okanagan Women's League; Margaret Fulton, former president of Mount St. Vincent University; the Hon. Barbara MacDougall, Minister responsible for the status of women; Doris Anderson, formerly of NAC and *Chatelaine*; and Kumari Jayawardene, from Sri Lanka and author of *Feminism and Nationalism in the Third World*.

There was evident tension between the concerns of those involved in international development (and, after all, the official Nairobi theme was "peace, development and equality") and the priorities of home-grown organizations. There was concern that the framework of Nairobi, the preparation meetings, the pre-selection of participants, the media distortion of its content, would shape the response to it. There were cautionary notes that we must take the highly politicized "fact" of Nairobi to our own communities, to articulate the meaning of Nairobi and its Forward Looking Strategies to the women of Canada. There was anger, much of it submerged, at the blindness and racism of the Canadian women's movement, and of women at the Toronto conference. (Lil Guay Saultier, a Métis woman from Sioux Lookout, reminded participants that arranged marriages don't just happen in China or Sri Lanka, they happen here, in Canada, and that the Red Cross will respond to an international crisis but will not help a flooded native village in Northern Ontario.)

Above all, there was concern that the Nairobi Forum was hardly representative of women's groups in Canada — either in its preparation (native women's and women of colour groups were largely excluded from the planning stages) or in its follow-up (the research and policy-making in response to the Forward Looking Strategies document). The Forum was seen as a useless process which allowed the government to ignore how women really organize in this country while appearing to respond to priorities for women (set by the UN). The real issues and politics of Nairobi were not being addressed, and the "spirit of Nairobi," as Toronto conference co-ordinator Punam Khosla put it, was lost.

It was this spirit which prompted the resolution to stop further funding of post-Nairobi activities, and called for a redistribution of resources to native women's and women of colour groups who could then set their own priorities according to their needs.

air. Previous radio experience is not required; training is available at the station. Information is also needed about women's services and organizations, businesses, visual art, theatre, music. If you're doing something you want others to hear about or if you have news or information of interest to women, please contact the By All Means working group, 91 St. George St., Toronto, M5S 2E8; (416) 978-5267.

Daisy Zamora

TORONTO — The Simone de Beauvoir Women's Study Tour visited Nicaragua for two weeks in August. Since their return, the 14 Toronto women have re-formed as Women in Solidarity with Nicaragua. During the tour they met with Nicaraguan poet, Daisy Zamora and invited her to Canada. She will be reading at A-Space on Friday, November 21 at 8 pm.

Daisy Zamora will be reading in both English and Spanish from her new book of poetry soon to be published by the Nicaraguan Ministry of Culture. A-Space is at 183 Bathurst St., near Queen. The cost is \$4, and \$2 for A-Space members. The evening is sponsored by Women in Solidarity with Nicaragua and A-Space.

Support Cut for Women's Centre

This September, the Board of Directors of U of T's Students Administrative Council (SAC) voted against giving the eight month old Women's Centre any money toward their 1986/87 operating budget, despite the fact that the undergraduate population (whom SAC supposedly serves) contains more women than men. This decision doesn't seem so surprising when one considers the historical treatment of women's needs on campus.

The first three women to officially attend the University were admitted on October 6, 1884, yet it took twenty-one years for the University to recognize women's needs for a residence on campus. Hart House, the social centre of the University, was finished in 1919, but women weren't allowed full access (unescorted by men) until 1972. Three sets of blueprints were drawn up for a women's building comparable to Hart House, and two private houses were bequeathed for this purpose, yet it took until 1959 to get a women's athletic centre built.

The Coalition for a Women's Centre at U of T was born in January 1984. After two years of pressure from this group, a room was allocated at 49 St. George Street and has become the actual Women's Centre. Because the Centre aims to be useful to all women on campus, it was logical to approach many levels (faculty, staff, graduate and undergraduate students and college student councils) for support. All, except for SAC, have been extremely positive. In the summer of 1986, members of SAC's executive were informally asked for the best way to proceed to request funding (\$4000 was given the previous year, and \$5000 allocated the year before but not received because the centre wasn't functional). The Centre members were told to wait until the budget was presented to the board and then to amend it, and that they could not be included earlier in the process. During debate, it was held against the Centre that

they hadn't requested to be included in the budget originally.

Three different requests were put forth to the board to include the Centre (the budget had a surplus of over \$3000) — a motion for \$5000, an amendment to reduce the sum to \$3000 and a separate motion for \$2000. (The original motion lost by eleven votes, the other two lost on tie votes.) During the debate, despite many previous discussions with board members, profound misconceptions about women's centres and even women's concerns surfaced. The Lady Godiva Memorial Marching Band (an engineering affiliate which behaves as the name suggests) was proposed as a group more worthy of support because it does more for "spirit" than the Women's Centre. One woman feared that in future the Centre might bar minorities, since the decision-making collective now "discriminates against men" — clearly the very principles of a women's centre are misunderstood by anyone holding this view. The Centre was also accused of duplicating services already available on campus despite the fact that many student services, including SAC itself, refer women to the Centre.

Looking back on the debate, it seems clear that another obstacle stands between the Women's Centre at U of T and support for the Student's Council — not just ignorance, but also a lack of commitment to women. SAC's first Women's Officer resigned her position because of this lack of commitment. When the office was created, SAC's vice-president called it a token position, although this wasn't recorded in the minutes. The office was needed because the former Women's Commission (with its own budget and staff) had been eradicated in the drive for a "new and improved SAC." Does this sound like an organization which is committed to improving the lot of women on campus?

If you would like to discuss any of the issues raised here in more depth, or would like to know how you can help, call (416) 978-8201 or write to us at 49 St. George St., Toronto, Ontario, M5S 2E5.

—Jennifer Fair

By All Means

TORONTO — An ad hoc group of women is working to develop a women's radio show called By All Means. Starting in January the show will air from 12:15 to 1 pm every day, on CIUT-FM 89.5. After 20 years as a closed circuit radio station at the University of Toronto, CIUT has just been granted a licence with a signal powerful enough to be heard from Barrie south to Buffalo and from Kitchener east to Coburg.

As feminists, the group wants to create a show that is a source of accurate and interesting information about women and the issues that concern us and our communities. Each program will include news, interviews, music, reviews and a listing of events, and hopes to be truly representative of women's experiences, and accessible, in language and process, to all. It is committed to ensuring that the production group and the actual content of the show reflect the diversity of race, class, sexuality and ability of women in the listening area.

Right now women are encouraged to get involved in the production of the show and/or to develop material and ideas to use on the



Woman's Common board members: (top, from left) Liz Devine, Val Edwards, Jane Hinchliffe; (bottom, from left) Susan Coulter, Kye Marshall, Caroline Duetz.

Woman's Common

TORONTO — The Woman's Common is a non-profit private women's organization which intends to open a bar/restaurant catering to Toronto's women's community. Formed by a small group of women in 1985, the Woman's Common has successfully raised over \$150,000 of the approximately \$300,000 it needs to develop premises and open its doors.

The Club will provide a women-only space in premises located in downtown Toronto, combining restaurant seating with a stand-up bar and lounge in warm and comfortable

surroundings. Admittance to the Club's premises will be restricted to members and women guests.

The Woman's Common is now selling lifetime memberships to raise additional start-up capital. You will be hearing and reading a lot more about the Woman's Common in the months ahead, but in the meantime, you can call 416-469-4859 for more information. Just leave your name and number on the answering machine, and someone will get back to you.

MOVEMENT COMMENT

"To Serve and Neglect"

by Melanie Randall

To be female in a male supremacist society is to live with violence against women. No woman is free from suffering some form of the violence and harassment through which men terrorize us, define for us our possibilities and often circumscribe our actions. When men rape us, sexually assault us, batter us, sexually harass us, incestuously assault us as children, leer at us, follow us, whistle at us, or feel free to make offensive and intrusive comments to us as we walk in the streets we are reminded that all women are virtually always subject to sexualized invasion by men. The pervasiveness of men's acts of aggression against us means that we all must live perpetually on guard against the possibility of some violent intrusion into our personal space — in our homes, our places of work, in the streets. Yet there exists an enormous silence around the issue of male violence against women. Though feminists have made the entire range of men's violent behaviour towards women the subject of intensive analytical and activist work, no real understanding of the profound and ubiquitous nature of the problem has seeped into public awareness.

This set of issues has been brought to light yet again this past year in Toronto, where reported sexual assaults on women have increased a staggering 34% (according to statistics provided by the Metro Toronto police). But no public outcry is heard; the media remains mostly silent on the topic; the police work, at best, secretly and, at worst, are themselves part of the problem; there exists no comprehensive or effective political commitment or strategy to make the city safe for women; and the often brutal and always present aggressive, invasive masculine behaviour towards women persists every day and in all spheres, unchecked.

To break, in a small and local way, the silence around rape and other acts of male violence against women, more than one hundred people, mostly women, gathered at the 519 Church Street Community Centre for a public meeting about the recent wave of sexual attacks on women in that neighbourhood. The meeting was organized by WAVAW (Women Against Violence Against Women) and initiated by one of the women who had herself been raped by a man who had already assaulted at least four other women in the area. She was furious about this man's brutal violation of her; she was furious that the police had done nothing to notify her or the community at large that a man was stalking women in the Church and Wellesley neighbourhood, breaking into their apartments by climbing over second and third floor balconies, and then raping them at knifepoint.

Not satisfied with the police contention that they were doing everything they could, this woman organized the distribution of over two thousand leaflets, which were posted in apartment buildings and along the streets, to warn women that a known rapist was in the area and to invite all concerned about these assaults to attend the public meeting which was held the evening of October 7. The meeting was intended to inform the community

of the escalation of sexual attacks on women, to raise public awareness about issues related to violence against women, and to discuss police and media accountability to the community. Members of the Toronto police force and the media were issued formal invitations to this meeting. The press attended; the police did not.

Questions were raised at the meeting about the invisibility of the issue in the news and about the police's negligence in informing women of the immediate threat to their safety. Women from various groups and organizations, including WAVAW, the ad-hoc women's group which organized a rape forum earlier this year in Toronto's Riverdale area, the Toronto Rape Crisis Centre, the Sexual Assault Centre at Women's College Hospital, the Metro Action Committee on public violence against women and children, the Canadian Organization for Rights for Prostitutes, and a Toronto alderwoman, spoke about violence against women and what we can do about it.

One police officer responded to a woman's question with, "Would you want to lose your life by struggling just to stop someone from getting a few minutes pleasure?"

That the police failed to send representatives to this meeting should not perhaps be surprising, given their record of responding to either the issue or the victims of sexual assault. The actions and comments of members of the Toronto police force have consistently revealed a profound misapprehension of the dimensions and the impact of violence against women, as well as a gross insensitivity to the women who actually have been, or might be (read all of us) victims of sexual assault. At the meeting in Riverdale, a "community relations" police officer stunned a largely female audience by responding to one woman's query about resisting sexual attack with, "Would you want to lose your life by struggling just to stop someone from getting a few minutes pleasure?" According to this policeman, rape is about "someone" getting pleasure.

When, after the October 7 meeting, women phoned 52 Division to express concerns about their safety and question the police about their apparent indifference, the variety of police responses once again illustrated that the sexist and arrogant attitudes we would have liked to believe were long ago dead are, in fact, alive and well. A woman who phoned the police to say that she was afraid for her safety in her own neighbourhood (in another part of Toronto) was told not to worry because the rapist from the Church and Wellesley Street area had been caught and, he added, as far as he knew there were "no other rapists operating in the city." Another woman who called to ask why her community had not been told that a man was raping

women in the Church and Wellesley neighbourhood responded by saying that it would have "hindered the investigation." When she persisted and asked whether he would have told his own daughter, wife or sister if there was a rapist stalking women in the neighbourhood where they lived, he was quick to reply that "of course" he would immediately warn them. Yet he was apparently unable to extend his concern for women's safety beyond those females he identifies as his own.

When one woman phoned and expressed fear that despite the arrest of the "balcony rapist" she could still be raped in the Church and Wellesley neighbourhood where she lived, the officer she spoke to matter of factly informed her that he wouldn't live there if he were her. When asked if he was suggesting that she move, the officer replied that "it might be advisable" and suggested that either Scarborough or North York were safer places to live. If the police have privileged information about the existence of "rape-free" zones in this city, perhaps they would be kind enough to share this information with all of us, as statistics show that men rape women of all classes, all ages, all races, and in all neighbourhoods.

In addition to the misogynist attitudes often revealed by the police, there exists an even more dangerous problem: their willingness to put police "investigations" before the safety of women. Not only did the police fail to release information about the sexual attacks happening in the Church and Wellesley area, they actively discouraged one of the women who had decided to take her own action on behalf of the women in her neighbourhood from distributing posters there because it would "interfere" with the police investigation and might "scare off the attacker." Translated, this means that the police are more concerned with their pursuit of "criminals" than anything else. Another woman is raped; the police collect more evidence for the "investigation." The police only arrested a man after the distribution of the 2,000 posters warning of the rapist and apparently without the collection of any further evidence. Is this only a coincidence or were they waiting? Were the police using women as bait?

We do not plan on staying off the streets and hiding at home (as if homes were safe places for women anyway).

There are more incidents demonstrating police callousness and incompetence than can possibly be covered here; moreover, we cannot possibly know all the stories of maltreatment and insensitivity that individual women have received at the hands of the police when they have gone to them to report a sexual assault. But we know enough of them to document a rather ugly picture. That the police

failed to attend the October 7 community meeting is unacceptable. They claimed not to have received an official invitation to the meeting; in fact, a letter was sent by courier and was signed and received on Thursday, October 2, to formalize an invitation which had already been accepted over the telephone. 5,000 of Metro's 5,400 police officers have had some training in dealing with sexual assault, yet not a single officer could be found to attend the October 7 public meeting. At that meeting, Pat Marshall of METRAC suggested that a formal composite complaint go forth against the police. Nearly one hundred women signed a petition presented, along with a list of complaints and statements from individual women, and a demand for increased decentralized police training around issues of violence against women, at an official Police Commission hearing on October 23 at 590 Jarvis St., Toronto.

In addition to demanding that the police work actively and effectively to "catch criminals," it is important to question what work they are doing to protect women, something which is supposed to be a part of their mandate. We are tired of hearing from the police the numerous ways that they think we should protect ourselves. We do not plan on staying off the streets and hiding at home behind locked doors (as if homes were safe places for women anyway); we want to know what the police are doing to protect women from rape. Even more fundamentally, we want to know what they are doing to stop rape altogether. We want to know how they are addressing the problem of violence against women with a clear view to its complete eradication.

To demand effective, responsible police work around issues of sexual assault is, of course, not a sufficient but only a necessary part of a much bigger political project. Violence against women is so deeply embedded in the social life of male dominant societies that it cannot be challenged without a fundamental restructuring of social, political, economic and personal relations throughout society as a whole. But we can only work toward this larger goal in small, persistent and sometimes inconsistent ways. The power and efficacy of political mobilization and organization does yield results and can have a significant, if limited, impact. Even on a local scale public awareness can be raised, political demands can be formulated and occasionally met, the media can be used to disseminate information, and women's anger can be channeled into focussed political strategies to work towards tangible changes in the conditions of our lives. And clearly one of the most basic and profound of these changes would be the ability to exist in the world without being sexualized, harassed and assaulted by men.

Melanie Randall is a member of WAVAW (Women Against Violence Against Women), a network of feminists organized to combat violence against women in all areas of our lives, which meets regularly to speak out and take political action against violence against women.



toronto rape crisis centre

The Toronto Rape Crisis Centre would like to thank all the women who helped organize, performed, spoke and marched in our 7th annual Take Back The Night March.

Your energy and commitment made this the most successful Take Back The Night March ever! Next year — 1000 more women on Yonge Street.

We are pleased to announce our move to new premises. Our new phone numbers are:

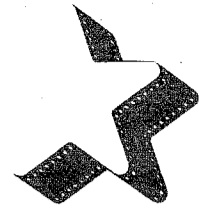
597-1171 Business Line
597-8808 Crisis Line

Gretchen Mehegan

Insurance Broker

Fire/Auto/Commercial

536-8941



Festival d

Absences and Influences

by Marusia Bociurkiw

To a lot of people, Toronto's Festival of Festivals is like Christmas in September. For those of us who have been churning out images all year, it is a chance to be on the receiving end of new ideas, shots, plots, structural innovations. Everything is usable. One exults in variety and difference. One sees five movies a day and becomes delirious and happy.

For the feminist reviewer, on the other hand, some sobering reminders are mixed in with the fun: conventional interpretations of feminism, sexuality, race and class that reflect only too well the backlash, the cutbacks, the losing of ground. The Festival has become, after all, fairly mainstream (its sponsors include the Ministry of Trade and Technology, Labatt's, Cadillac Fairview, the Royal Bank and the Toronto Sun). An increasingly large proportion of the Festival films (and all the gala films) are big-budget commercial releases. Corporate sponsorship is tricky. It has been proven in other instances, however, that the more the interests of culture and business become intertwined, the less cultural work can play a role in radicalizing its audience.

And so, one doesn't expect an overwhelming amount of feminist ideology to permeate such an event; indeed, there was even less feminist content this year than in previous years. But one looks also at absences, and at influences. If the forces of capitalism serve not simply to organize economic production, but also to order consciousness, then film is a major player in the "consciousness industry." It is interesting to see how feminism has been seamlessly (and some say senselessly) integrated into dominant cinema. It is the women's movement that a year ago allowed Steven Spielberg, for example, to release a big budget Hollywood film about a lesbian relationship, or which would inspire a film like *Men* by German filmmaker Doris Dörrie (a paean to male bonding) in which one male character says to another: "What do we need women for? We cook, we clean, we do our own laundry." Sigh.

There is good news, that a festival of this scale is a rare and exciting chance to catch glimpses of possibility and pleasure: films that resist the economic and social constraints that surround them. And bad news, that these films were hard to find this year (and often screened only once, and in small theatres). Some of these films were by women, some were not; many were from Latin America. Few will be distributed or seen again in Canada. As American feminist filmmaker Lizzie Borden (*Born in Flames* and *Working Girls*) put it, there are two kinds of censorship: mandatory and economic. If the censor board or the customs office doesn't seize those images, the connected problems of money, distribution, and time will.

There was a surprisingly low ratio of films by women at the Festival: only 40 out of some 300 (or 12%), and an even lower ratio of feminist content. It is not that so few women are making films, but rather that what women's films are being made are being distributed to, and seen underground by, subcultures of women's audiences. Which is fine if that's what you want, but discouraging if you don't. A related factor is that of resources. If Canadian statistics are any indication, there is no shortage of women in film schools and art departments. But something happens in those first few years after school: the huge amounts of time and energy required for fundraising can be a total drain. It took Donna Deitch three years to raise the \$1.5 million she needed for *Desert Hearts*, the lesbian love story she directed; she describes those three years as "debilitating and humiliating."

Context is all-important: where the films get shown, who will or will not agree to distribute them. Because of the way video production grew in tandem with the women's movement, it has the benefit of feminist and artist-run distributors that film — older and more male-dominated — does not. Such distribution can act as a focus for community strength and community self-image; it can broaden the base; build audiences; popularize feminism. General film audiences, totally unexposed to feminist cultural work, will get the imitation (eg, *Men*, *Three Men and A Cradle*, *The Decline of the American Empire*), in which certain aspects of feminism are appropriated, while other crucial aspects are cast to the wind.

In Cuba, they talk about "cinematic hypnosis," that state of swallowing garbage whole and thinking you've been enlightened. The task is to broaden the discourse, so that subversive ideas will be heard, and funded. Cuban director Alfredo Guevara once said (of Latin American cinema, but this applies to feminist film as well), "We do not claim to have created this audience already, nor do we think it is the task only of cinema." Still, it would help if more women's films were programmed into the Festival of Festivals.

So, while appropriation was popular this year, other big themes included the breakdown of the monogamous heterosexual relationship (I counted at least ten films on this theme), women going crazy (often related to the previous theme), and prostitution (usually presented as tragic-yet-alluring, sexy-yet-filthy). One of these took my award for most misogynist film of the festival: *Rosa La Rose, Streetwalker* (France, 1985, dir. Paul Vecchiali). Parisian streetwalker Rosa is blonde, buxom, and generous; so much so that she frequently refuses to accept money from her customers, finally falls in love with a

john, and in the last shot of the film is so conflicted that she slowly and poetically stabs herself to death. A male fantasy: the whore who comes, and for free.

Lesbians appeared here and there, exotic figures existing in total isolation. An example of this was the French film *Therèse* (directed by Alain Cavalier), the story of Saint Therèse de Lisieux, a feisty teenager who in the 19th Century cajoled the pope into letting her into the austere Carmelite order. Now, as we all know, girls in those days had excellent reasons for joining convents, which included: escaping marriage in favour of female companionship, education, and the chance to be taken seriously. This was merely hinted at in one nun's comment to the young Therèse: "You'll never meet the man who'll satisfy you! He doesn't exist!" Lesbian relationships have always been a part of convent life, and so it is not really surprising when one of the nuns falls passionately in love with the cute young Therèse, who doesn't mind, except that she loves Jesus more. And so the crush becomes obsessive, destructive, and finally weird, presented as though no nun, surrounded by the energy and strength of a community of women, ever loved another.

If lesbians were infrequent, people of colour were almost absent. In general, most of the films I saw (except for the Latin American films) were produced in the most formulaic of narrative styles, and depicted the lifestyles of the wealthy. It would seem that if it is mostly people with money who make movies, then their natural inclination is to make movies about themselves. (*That's Life*, a commercial release by and about Blake Edwards and Julie Andrews, is the perfect example of this sort of narcissism.)

The presence of over 90 Latin American films in the Winds of Change series (see accompanying article by Amanda Hale) made the contrast between mainstream North American/European wealth of resources/poverty of ideas, vs. the courage and innovation of third world filmmaking, uncomfortably clear. These films, as well as the handful of strong films by or about women and people of colour, were what made the festival worth reviewing.

Rosa Luxemburg

Germany, 1986, 122 min. Dir. Margarethe Von Trotta

Margarethe von Trotta's latest film is somewhat of a departure from her previous work: without the humour of *The Second Awakening of Christa Klages* (1978) or the structural experimentation and charm of *Marianne & Julianne* (1981), *Rosa Luxemburg* is a sober but challenging film.

As film legend has it, von Trotta first discovered Rosa Luxemburg during her own involvement in the student revolts of the 1960s, when she noticed Rosa's face on a poster between Marx, Lenin, and Ho Chi Minh. She decided then and there to someday make a film about her.

Rosa Luxemburg was an important German political figure and theorist/writer/orator for the German Social Democratic Party until she left it in 1914. The film follows her political life and depicts her as a courageous and passionate woman with ideas and convictions frequently ahead of her time, including a strong belief in pacifism and the need for a general strike. She also fought to keep the party responsive to the needs of the working class, and to maintain a spirit of self-



criticism and egalitarianism within the party. At one point, she points out to her male comrades that she is well aware of their desire to have her focus on female suffrage rather than on the "big politics." They choke uncomfortably into their wine glasses as she casually proposes a toast "to the revolution."

The challenge in such a film is to give a dimension to a historical figure that a documentary would not do, and as such the film succeeds only partly. There are only occasional glimpses into Rosa Luxemburg away from the lecture podium or the conference hall. At these moments she is depicted as joyous, intelligent, and sensual: dancing at New Year's; discussing politics in bed with an adoring young lover; singing a Polish lullaby to the daughter of a friend.

In the movies, the line between political and personal can be very fine: in the hands of, say, Bergman, this would have been the story of Rosa's individualized angst; if Warren Beatty (*Reds*) had done it, it would have been a chic relationship movie. There are not many precedents for a film that attempts to depict a woman as activist and organizer within the context of a political movement and a sequence of historical events. If von Trotta errs in favour of history and theory as opposed to human drama, it is to give us a dignified and complicated portrait we might otherwise not have received.

In keeping with this approach, the director steadfastly

refuses to glamorize Luxemburg's life, and so there is scant after scene of her in prison (she was interned during most of World War I), writing in her journal or tending her small garden. The disillusionment she faces when the Social Democrats take power in 1918 and nothing much changes is contrasted with her fervour in founding the Spartacus movement and editing its publication, *The Red Flag*. By now however she has aged visibly; finally, only a year after her release from prison she is arrested, murdered, and thrown into a canal.

This is a demanding film that presupposes a certain amount of knowledge about German social democracy and its so-called "failed revolution" to be fully appreciated, and it isn't the version of European history you got in school. Someone I talked to afterwards said, "A film like this is like a monument. Serious and grey-hued though they might be, monuments of women are still rare, especially in film."

(*Rosa Luxemburg* will be appearing at your local Cineplex very soon.)

Place of Weeping

South Africa, 1986. 90 min. Dir. Darrell Roodt

Place of Weeping is one of the few films to emerge out of South Africa in recent years, and the only one at the Festival. Directed by 24-year-old Darrell Roodt, it features a strong principal female character, Grace (Gcina Mlophe), and a plot which, though a little too reliant on the heroism of Philip (James Whyte), your basic white male reporter, is uncompromising in its stand against the oppression of Black farm labourers in South Africa.

The film opens on a shot of the labourers lining up to get their week's pay: a few bills and a bag of flour. When one of them asks for more, the landowner violently splits open the bag of flour and snarls, "Get off my land." He later beats the labourer to death. Thanks to the indignation of Grace, a local Black woman whose brother was killed by his boss, and whose death went unreported, the story comes to the attention of Philip, a reporter assigned to the area. Grace is unable to get the labourers to take the boss to court; when she herself confronts the boss her powerlessness in the situation is made clear: the boss cuts back rations to all the labourers.

Place of Weeping is an odd combination of beautiful, long, silent takes, and Hollywood-style action: car chases, killings, high drama. Most interesting is the debate embedded in the film. Grace argues for non-violent action: "Things are changing: a thorn is taken out by another thorn, a cow is stolen, a fence is taken down..." while the revolutionaries in the mountains — who briefly abduct her — ask her to join them in armed struggle. Grace responds: "What good are your guns? It's the poor people who suffer and die!"

In the end, the reporter's heroics do little to change the situation: it is Grace's courage and, finally, the intervention of the revolutionaries — who kill the landowner — that produces some (limited) change. The film makes no bones about where, in this instance, the power lies. Grace and another woman go into hiding, and the final take — a subjective shot in which the camera searches for, and finally finds, them — indicates that they will not live long.

That the revolutionaries — and therefore the revolution — do live, is only implied, but this implication is enough to provoke thought and empathy amongst audiences seeing the film. *Place of Weeping* is important for its insights into the life of the Black South African farm labourer.

(It will probably not be commercially released in Canada, but does have a North American distributor, so could be obtained for special screenings.)

Lily Tomlin

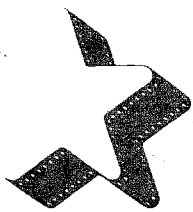
USA 1986. 90 minutes. Dir. Joan Churchill, Nicholas Broomfield

When I went to see *Lily Tomlin* I found myself sitting between two middle-aged men. I didn't pay them much attention until, halfway through the film, bent double and laughing my face off, I looked over and realized that neither of them had moved or even smiled for the past 45 minutes. With a sudden feeling of malicious glee, I thought to myself, "Now they know what it's like," that sense of outsidersness that so many of us endure when, as feminists, or as lesbians, or as women of colour, we go to the movies and are confronted with our invisibility.

Lily Tomlin covers the making, workshoping, and performing of the one-woman show, "Is There Intelligent Life in the Universe," a collaboration between Lily Tomlin and her partner Jane Wagner. The film's structure is unremarkable and the shooting is OK; what really makes the film moving is the rapport the filmmakers establish with Tomlin and Wagner, and the incredible, positive, pro-feminist, pro-lesbian warmth of their humour that ensues. It's not easy to go into someone's house/backyard/rehearsal studio/hotel room day after day with camera, lights, and crew; the results can often be fairly wooden. The relaxed feeling of this documentary is therefore quite an achievement.

The film weaves in and out of: performance sequences; script discussions; interactions among the all-woman crew; interviews; and clips from Lily's previous TV appearances which give us a historical perspective on Ernestine, Agnes, and Mrs. Beazley, the TV commercial persona. They

festivals



from Lily Tomlin

1975, Mrs. Beazley was promoting the helmet-like results of "Stay Put" hairspray; in 1985 she is shown extolling the merits of her new vibrator: "Sexual freedom to me was freedom from sex; then along came New Vibrations: I get more out of this than I do my Sunbeam blender. I still think sex is dirty, but now I wouldn't have it any other way!"

From the sexual revolution to the Michigan Women's Music Festival, this film shows Lily Tomlin documenting our issues and in-jokes in a way I have never seen done before. A hilarious but also rather moving sequence depicts the growth of feminism through the 70s; her grappling with such diverse issues as body hair ("a sure way to tell the radicals from the middle-of-the-roaders...") and lesbianism; her friends who at first made her uncomfortable with their "Lesbians Ignite" T-shirts and their homemade candles "shaped like labia majora, with the wick symbolizing a tampon string," and then became role-models as our 70s feminist (to the strains of Cris Williamson's "Sweet Woman") triumphantly describes her first lesbian relationship. Skits such as these somehow manage to combine a sense of recognition and affirmation with a strong sense of satire and self-reflexive irony. The footage of the workshop sessions includes audience discussion from the Broadway run; Tomlin and Wagner are shown constantly encouraging and integrating such input into their work; their role in both broadening and popularizing the above issues is an important one.

And then there is Trudy, the bag lady with the cosmic commentary, "Going crazy was the best thing that ever happened to me: What is reality? Nothing but a collective hunch?" And the new age mom trying desperately to cope with the 80s: "Sometimes I think Bob is getting too much in touch with his feminine side. Last night I think he faked an orgasm!" Her children are ahead of their time; upon visiting Santa Claus, one of them pulls off Santa's beard and demands to know, "How many animals died for this beard?"

The performance sequences cut away to serious and detailed discussions between Wagner and Tomlin, delineating the precise amounts of satire and exaggeration that will go into each character. The film stresses that the other side of the applause and the laughs is the incredibly hard work of writing, rewriting, and endless rehearsal.

(This is a wonderful film that unfortunately may not get the wide distribution it deserves, due to a legal battle now happening between Tomlin/Wagner and the directors. Apparently, the film includes quite a bit more performance footage than the artists had originally agreed to. Let's hope they resolve it soon.)

Working Girls

USA, 1986. 90 min. Dir. Lizzie Borden

Like Lizzie Borden's previous film (the underground feminist hit *Born in Flames*), *Working Girls* acquired a certain amount of notoriety before it even opened, due to cuts demanded by the Ontario Censor Board. In 1984, the demand for a cut from *Born in Flames* (a shot of a woman rolling a condom onto a penis, part of a montage of women's work) was repealed after outcry from the cultural community; in this case, two cuts were asked for, and only one (a spanking scene) was repealed. The other, a 5-second shot of a prostitute's hand jerking off a man's penis, was not repealed, and so Borden (who had already been forced to cut the shot for American commercial distribution), after much agonizing decided *not* to pull the film out of the Festival. She came up with a compromise solution: tape placed over the "obscene" shot, through which the image was partly visible, and somehow seemed more visible than ever. At the screening, Borden introduced the film by talking about censorship and describing the image as graphically as possible.

Borden is critical of the Festival of Festivals for not taking a more public stand against censorship, which might have resulted in a full repeal. (It should be noted here that *Working Girls*, a feminist film, was the only film in the Festival to be censored by the Board, proving once again whom censorship laws are the first to attack.) Borden's decision to keep the film in was criticized by artists. She responded: "For me *not* to have shown the film would have been what the Censor board would have loved!" (See an upcoming issue of *Broadside* for a full interview with Lizzie Borden.)

With or without the "dick shot," *Working Girls* is a film whose matter-of-fact demystification of sex trade work will surprise many. Says Borden, "I wanted to go into the bedroom without being sensational. I wanted to simplify prostitution to the level of any other kind of service job." Before starting shooting, Borden did extensive research, and spent a lot of time in a New York brothel where an artist friend of hers works (preferring to earn money through prostitution, rather than the long hours of waitressing).

Working Girls presents a day in the life of a brothel — not a seedy, plush-curtained house, but a bland-yet-tasteful apartment where five fairly ordinary looking women work. They are supervised by a blonde, squeaky-clean Madam, Susan (Ellen McElduff), who's almost convinced herself that what she's doing is social work. Molly (Louise Smith), the main character of the film, shatters stereotypes from the first

shot of the film, which shows her sleeping with her Black woman lover in a light-filled apartment, waking up, making breakfast, feeding their child, and riding off to work on her bicycle. For those who are aware that many prostitutes are lesbians with solid relationships outside of their work, the premise is not extraordinary; still it is refreshing to see a lesbian character presented with the dignity and strength of Molly.

Molly's work as a prostitute allows her to be a photographer; on a good day at the brothel she can make \$800 (which is about what the average artist makes in a month). The job is presented as anything but exciting, however: the men appear, the girls get them drinks, and then before hitting the bedroom, they sit in the living room and make polite conversation, in which one is reminded of every boring cocktail party or reception at which one was required to be "nice."

The camera never leaves the apartment and the bedroom shots quickly become routine. The men are unremarkable, and easily satisfied, and the details are sometimes amusing: one woman pretends to tongue a penis with a licked finger; another counsels a john on how to kiss on a date. The film veers back and forth between the light and dark aspects of the work. In a conversation with one of her "regulars," Molly is asked why she won't see him outside of the brothel. "Because I don't think you like women, or see us as equals," Molly responds. "As long as I'm paying for this we're not equals," he says. Molly replies, "Maybe that's why you come back each week?"

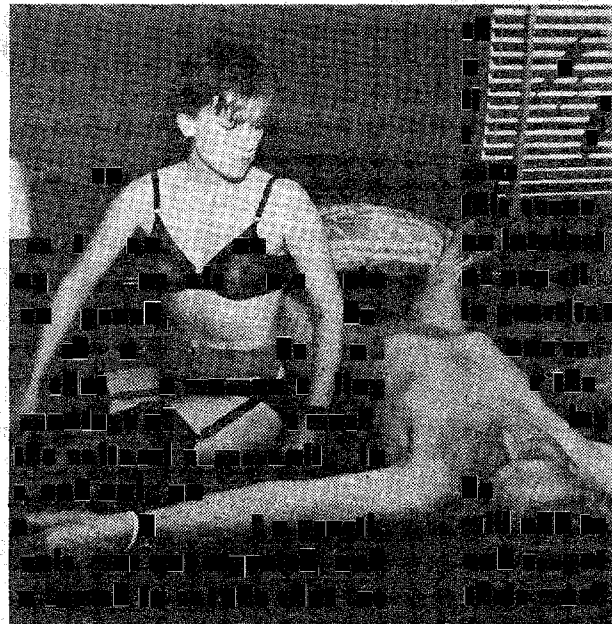
By contrast, the exchanges between the women are almost always supportive and interesting, the way coffee breaks in any women's job ghetto are. The women share a joint and joke about Susan, the boss, or exchange dreams about starting a business or a new career.

The work is presented as clean and safe: the women undress, wash, put a towel on the bed, and afterwards wash and get dressed, again, and again. By the end of the day, Molly — and also the audience — is more than ready to get out of the apartment. When Molly is forced to do a double shift, the feeling of the film changes and becomes more intense: the lighting harshens, the pace quickens. Molly bursts into tears; has an argument with Susan; loses control, for a moment, with a john. A new woman, a single mother, starts working that evening, and is revolted after her first trick. "It gets easier," Molly tells her, "but if you can't handle it you should get out."

The ending of *Working Girls* is a little ambiguous: frustrated with Susan's power-tripping, Molly blows up at her and quits. Just before, she had taken a card from a john — a genteel, elderly man — who asked her to see him outside of the brothel, saying he could pay her well. Where previously she's shown throwing out such cards, she carefully files this one away in her wallet. According to Borden, Molly is quitting the brothel, not prostitution; but given the moralism that's part of certain feminist critiques of prostitution, a moral ending could (perhaps wishfully) be projected onto this scene. Another problem is that Molly is something of an intellectual, with two degrees, and therefore has the veneer of one slightly removed, who might — unlike many women in prostitution — leave at any time to pursue other options. As one sex trade worker has put it, "We don't wake up bank tellers the next day, OK? We can't all be Anne Murray."

Working Girls appears at a time when the relation between feminism, feminist sexual ethics, and prostitution is being debated. Lizzie Borden is well aware of this debate; this film will add to it as a view of prostitution that is well-informed and empathetic, portraying prostitutes as being in control of their work, and prostitution as an economic alternative to the low wages and low status of most women's work.

(The film is being released commercially. Borden plans to premiere it in Toronto — and hopes to make it a fundraising benefit for the Canadian Organization for the Rights of Prostitutes — early in the new year.)

Louise Smith as Molly in *Working Girls*

• continued next page

Festival of Festivals, from previous page

Sitting in Limbo

Canada, 1986. 96 min. dir. John N. Smith

A year ago, while working in a low-income housing development, I organized some screenings of Canadian films dealing with women and poverty for a group of sole support mothers to see. The idea was to find out what educational resources were available and to check out what they were or were not saying. The women gave each film a thorough and scathing critique: all were outdated; most presented low-income existence in a deadly, almost horrifying way. There were a lot of what the women called "macaroni stories." Nobody dealt adequately with racism. There wasn't much fighting back, or wit, or wisdom, the way there was in their own lives.

Sitting in Limbo is an NFB-produced dramatic feature about a young Black couple, Pat (Pat Dillon) and Fabien (Fabien Gibbs), and the inner-city Caribbean community in which they live. Though definitely not without shortcomings, the film does begin to deal with certain aspects of poverty and racism in a Canadian setting that nobody else will deal with, and it does present a strong woman character (Pat) with a sense of humour and savvy that the women I worked with would appreciate.

Pat lives in a small Montréal apartment with two other single Black women and their infant children. The place is chaotic but supportive. In their dealings with men, on the

other hand, the women are relentlessly skeptical. One scene shows Fabien visiting Pat, and demanding a sandwich from her while she is doing her homework. She looks at him uncomprehendingly, and responds drily, "I know you're not talkin' to me."

Pat becomes pregnant by Fabien. "Is that positive I'm pregnant, or positive I'm not pregnant?" she asks at the drugstore. Fabien, meanwhile, is having trouble at school, due to truancy. He is encouraged to leave by the kindly (white) principal. Fabien's lack of motivation in life has been well-established by now; this scene, in which he's gently squeezed out of the school system, only begins to hint at the streaming of Black youth into vocational schools or dead end jobs, a fact of most urban Black kids' lives. Without further information, however, Fabien's chronic listlessness could almost be seen as natural; a dangerous and racist stereotype lurks here.

Pat, like most pregnant teen women, decides not to have an abortion and to keep the baby, so Fabien goes out looking for a job and is turned down again and again (another veiled reference to racism that is not sufficiently developed). Pat goes to the baptism of a friend's child; the words of the religious ceremony are intercut with a shot of a Black woman pushing a baby carriage through a Montréal snowstorm, alone.

Fabien finds an apartment, and Pat, unheeding of her roommates' warnings, moves in with him. Pat's strong sense of humour and irony carries her through the first few rocky

months with Fabien; Dillon is skillful in developing a character that is witty and insightful. Pat at hairdressing school: "Why do we come here as Black students and learn to curl, wash, and set white peoples' hair? Someday I'm gonna set up a haute couture salon for Blacks only, and maybe I'll hire one white person, so I don't look like a bigot!"

The weather gets colder and there's no heat in the apartment: Pat stages a one-woman sit-in at the landlord's house and gets heat. But the sense of survival-against-all-odds — which is the strongest, most authentic part of this film — is not sustained to the end. Fabien loses his job; the furniture is repossessed; finally, Pat has a miscarriage, and the last shot (and it's a long one) is of her crying in a hospital bed. We are left with an image of her powerlessness and with a sense that being poor and Black is nothing but a dead end, which is irresponsible on the part of the filmmaker.

Sitting in Limbo, when it's good, is right on, and when it isn't, becomes reminiscent of National Geographic: an "exotic" subculture, presented out of context. The director (who is white) spent a lot of time discussing and workshopping the script with the actors; still, it's unfortunate that the script veers into treacherous waters as often as it does.

(This film is available at your local NFB office and will also be screened at commercial theatres in the near future.)

Marusia Bociurkiw is a video producer, cultural activist and member of Emma Productions, a feminist media collective in Toronto.

Challenging Content

by Susan G. Cole

There were a number of discernable threads that wound their way through the feature films at the Festival of Festivals, produced by women in North America, Europe and Australia. But, even with the presence of a film directed by the always original Chantal Ackerman, the film festival uncovered little interest among women filmmakers in the formal issues of representation. *Golden Eighties* is Ackerman's feature length musical set in a shopping mall. It promises insights into consumerism and objectification but the attempt at producing a musical takes away the film's bite. Essentially there were no films at the Festival that ripped into masculinist representation the way Sally Potter's gloriously irreverent *Goldiggers* did two years ago, and nothing had the cerebral satire of Yvonne Rainier's 1985 assault on male values *The Man Who Envied Women*. The only movie that explicitly mentioned feminist film issues was Pia Frankenberg's tepid *Noisy Martha*, a German comedy about a female film director who worries that she is superficial and besides, cannot finish her script. The result is, surprise, a superficial movie that is annoyingly scriptless, all of which trivializes the commitment many women filmmakers have made to transforming the male language of film.

The Festival did give ample evidence of a growing number of female directors that have developed into highly skilled manipulators of images. Gone are the days of the unsteady camera, the inaudible soundtrack (mercifully, we could hear every word of Lizzie Borden's new movie *Working Girls*), and, *Noisy Martha* notwithstanding, there was a blessed absence of meandering scripts and unfocussed ideas.

The Australians in particular have turned out two fine and entertaining films. Nadia Tass tells a wonderfully rollicking story in *Malcolm* (a film likely to get a North American release). The movie, named after the main character (played by Colin Friels), is about a social misfit who can't keep a job but is a wizard at devising what appear to be useless inventions. Recently fired and strapped for cash, Malcolm takes in a boarder, Frank (John Hargreaves), who in turn takes in his love interest, Judith (Lindy Davies). Combining the ingenuity of Malcolm, the pursuits of the ex-con Frank and the supportive energy of Judith, the three of them plan a hilarious heist. Nadia Tass, herself an actor, gets the best out of the three principal actors, and whoever dreamed up Malcolm's toys has an inspired gift for gadgetry.

Robyn Nevin's *The More Things Change* poses a specific dilemma within a relationship. Lex (Barry Otto) is a dreamer. His wife Connie (Judy Morris) is a good deal more practical. But for the time being she has agreed to live on a gorgeous farm two hours outside the city where she works as an editor. She supports the homestead. He works, sort of, on the farm. However, he can't get too much done because their three-year-old son Nicholas needs attention. Lex and Connie decide to hire a live-in baby sitter, Geraldine (Victoria Longley), who needs refuge while she completes a pregnancy she has to keep secret. No, Lex and Geraldine do not get it on, Nevin being uninterested in clichés and predictable conflicts, but things do disintegrate on the farm for more realistic reasons.

Both these movies are beautifully made, cinematographically splendid, with performances that are sharply honed. But *Malcolm* is a bit of harmless fluff, *The More Things Change* is a relationship movie, and it would be giving it the benefit of the doubt to suggest it was interested in the feminist insight that the personal is the political. Plainly somewhere along the way — remember *My Brilliant Career*? — women-centred issues seem to have fallen by the wayside.

This is especially true of the European films at the Festival, films which also demonstrated deft execution but which showed a significant decline in the filmmakers' interest in illuminating specifically feminist themes. Judging from the German entries, the heyday of Frauen und Film are definitely over. Suddenly the dour Germans have turned to comedy and the results are oddly without much political sinew. Doris Dörrie's *Men* is a good example. Julius (Heiner Lauterbach), a successful adman, discovers that his wife is having an affair with the bohemian Stefan (Uwe Ochsenknecht) and resolves to sabotage the affair by moving in with Stefan and influencing his rival. *Men* (which could come to a theatre near you)

Louise Marleau and Albane Guilhe from *Anne Trister*

provides an interesting contrast to Denys Arcand's abusive and incomprehensibly popular *The Decline of the American Empire* (which doubtless will come to a theatre near you. Try not to notice). The men in *Men* dominate the screen and the challenge for Dörrie is to make them credible and sympathetic. Unlike Arcand's attempts to put words in women's mouths, Dörrie's men make sense, and they are sometimes very funny. But alas, the fact that some men can be possessive and obsessive and get silly about it is hardly the stuff of revelation.

Perhaps the most ambitious and politically sophisticated of the European offerings came from Vera Belmont, the French producer turned director, whose *Rouge Baiser* (Red Kiss), set in 1952, tells the story of the disenchantment of a teenaged political activist. Nadia (played by the luminous Charlotte Valandray) is a 15-year-old red diaper baby born to live and breathe the rhetoric of the French Communist Party. At a violent anti-American demonstration, Nadia is rescued by and subsequently falls in love with Stephane (Lambert Wilson), the proverbial "other," an older, hopelessly bourgeois photographer who frequents jazz clubs and promotes fashion. As Nadia grows more entranced with her frivolous photo-journalist, two unrelated events pull the rug out from under her already disintegrating political framework. Her mother's first lover returns from Russia with a shocking account of anti-Semitism and repression in the Stalinist regime, and later, Nadia's Communist cell throws her out of the Party for consorting with a fascist.

Rouge Baiser is meant to be Vera Belmont's poison pen letter to the Communist Party, which actually expelled her from its ranks under similar circumstances. But for all its historical detail and its attempt to apprehend the real lives of political activists, this work from a politically serious artist winds up being weirdly antifeminist. Nowhere does Belmont question the power dynamic between Nadia and her older (by more than ten years) lover. In fact, we are meant to sympathize with Stephane against whom Nadia's father has filed statutory rape charges. Surely, 15-year-olds have a right to sexuality, but Stephane is an arrogant egotist whose next "adventure" will take him to Viet Nam to fight for the French. And so Nadia's ringing insistence on sexual individualism in the face of the Party line plays falsely to the feminist ear, which would find her claim that it doesn't matter who she sleeps with — tolerance is what counts — a little hard to take.

At this year's Festival it was evident that North America has become a fertile ground for women filmmakers with a powerful vision. The movies from this part of the world combined technical excellence with uncompromising explorations into issues that matter to women, making it clear that at least this year, home-grown filmmakers have made the most signifi-

cant contributions to the feminist scene world-wide. Lizzie Borden's film *Working Girls* is technically much more sound than *Born in Flames* and, except for the Hollywood-style ending, is a realistic and unsensationalized account of life in a New York brothel — no blood, no horror, just sexual drudgery. Anne Wheeler's *Loyalties*, the story of Lily Sutton's attempt to cope with her husband while relocating to Lac La Biche (see review, *Broadside*, October 1986), deserved the roars of approval it received from the Festival audience. And Léa Pool's lyrical love story *Anne Trister* broke new ground for lesbians who, ever since the release of *Desert Hearts*, have been waiting for another view of a lesbian relationship.

Anne Trister is Léa Pool's second feature film. Her first feature, *La Femme de l'hotel*, won the Critics' prize at the Festival two years ago and revealed a cool and detached cinematic style seldom associated with women directors. *Anne Trister* is much more accessible and for that reason will likely not engage the critics as much, but it is bound to intrigue more random viewers than *La Femme de l'hotel* was able to capture. In counterpoint to the slow flowering of an affair between Anne and Alix, Pool traces the gradual breakthrough Alix is able to make with an emotionally blocked young girl who is her patient at the hospital. The two stories of communication and growing trust are woven seamlessly into this extremely affecting movie. *Anne Trister* will likely give rise to impatient grumblings. Some will note with disdain that both Alix and Anne dress with relentless elegance (one critic called *Anne Trister* "a shoulder-pad movie"). Other viewers looking for a roller coaster ride of emotions won't get it here. *Anne Trister* comes across with the kind of restraint that is Léa Pool's signature. This is not a densely-plotted film, in which a great deal happens. Sexually speaking, and this will disappoint those who breathed heavily through *Desert Hearts*, not much happens at all. But *Anne Trister* is a richly textured movie, replete with spectacular images, especially one in which the streets of Montréal in the dead of winter are made to shimmer like the desert, the main metaphor in the film.

It is almost astonishing that *Anne Trister* has come out of Canada, home of the not-so-brave when it comes to sexuality. But if the Festival of Festivals is any indication, Canadian filmmakers have found a new and striking confidence. Some critics might contend that North Americans are behind the Europeans, playing catch-up with the feminist films that used to come to us from abroad. Others might insist that filmmakers here are ahead of their European sisters, refusing to sacrifice content for the self-styled intellectual superiority that accompanies the European post-feminist stance. But either way you cut it, ahead or behind, Canadian and American filmmakers are in a much better place. ●

Winds of Change

by Amanda Hale

This year's Festival of Festivals featured a retrospective of Latin American cinema called Winds of Change. 96 films were shown, including documentaries, narratives, new releases and classics, from 13 Latin American countries. The majority of films I saw were recent releases, made in 1985 or 1986, like the Brazilian film *A hora da estrela* (The Hour of the Star), adapted from a novel by director Suzana Amaral who began cinema studies at the age of 37 after having nine children.

A hora da estrela is about Macabea, a very ordinary plain young woman, alone in Sao Paulo, living in a dormitory and barely surviving with a dull typing job. She is a metaphor for Brazil. "Macabea is always acted upon and this is Brazil. We Brazilians do not act, we react," says Amaral. Macabea's stoic acceptance of her bleak existence — punctuated by hot dogs, Cokes and radio programs — sustains her until Gloria, a promiscuous co-worker, awakens in her the desire to be loved by a man. She takes a day off work and dances round the empty dormitory, posing before the mirror like models she has seen in bridal shop windows. Suddenly aware of her emerging sexuality, yet painfully naive, she fantasizes that every man wants her, until she is picked up by Olympicus, a particularly obnoxious version of manhood. He drops Macabea for Gloria, who in turn rejects him.

In the final scene Macabea visits a fortune-teller and the submerged frustrated romanticism which has powered the story surfaces as, reacting to the fortune-teller's prediction that a rich gringo will fall in love with her, she flips out into the fantastic. The narrative and cinematic styles change at this point, reflecting the romantic cliché with images evocative of shampoo ads, intercut with the suspense of the final "chase," as the handsome stranger speeds towards her in his sports car. Amaral's view of Brazil, symbolized by a woman trapped in passive romanticism, is poignant and visually seductive. But as Macabea heads for death at the hands of a man whom she eroticizes, in a scene which spans both fantasy and reality, the critical point is clear.

Maria Luisa Bemberg is an accomplished Argentinian writer and director in both film and theatre. Her most recent film, *Miss Mary*, stars Julie Christie as governess to the children of a wealthy Argentine family. Again, the theme is repressed sexuality — there is no place for Mary's passion and in denying her own feelings she must deny the reality of colonial bourgeois decadence which she sees all too clearly, manifesting in various forms of neurotic behaviour. The family is portrayed with grim humour: the weak womanizing father, the manic-depressive mother who alternates between her "crying room" and the piano where she plays passion-

ately and interminably while grandpa swats flies and grand-ma sorts family photos into piles of "dead" and "alive." Mary's charges, two pre-pubescent girls, move from spirited childhood into rebellious adolescence, and eventually move apart as one is forced into marriage after losing her virginity, and the other retreats into neurosis. "Do you think my family is mad?" she asks Mary. "Do you think we have too much money?"

The climax of the film occurs, predictably and appropriately, at night during a torrential rainstorm when Mary and the young son of the family make love. She is dismissed the next day and submerges the experience into her habitual pattern of denial. "Everything will be all right," she says later, as a truckload of boys pass under her window chanting "Peron, Peron, Peron!" The film is structured in flashbacks from 1945, showing Mary's arrival in Argentina in 1938, and spanning the South American and European political situations of the day. Bemberg has created a rich collage of personal experience, threaded through with political and historical significance. The elegance of the setting, filmed in blue-grey tones with splashes of colour, is darkened by the ever-present threat of madness hovering beneath the surface.

Las Madres de Plaza de Mayo is a documentary collaboration by Susana Muñoz of Argentina and Lourdes Portillo of the US. It is a powerful tribute to the mothers of the 30,000 "disappeared" who have been gathering to protest in the Plaza de Mayo, in front of the Presidential Palace in Buenos Aires, every Thursday since April 1977. A blend of interviews, personal testimony and political history provide both overview and heart-rending details of a situation in which young people seeking political change have been kidnapped, tortured, killed. The agony for the mothers is not knowing whether their children are alive. Most striking is the spirit and determination of these women. "There are thousands of us, thousands," they say. A woman addresses the camera: "You are our last hope!" She lists the institutions they have appealed to for assistance, including church, embassy, consulate. "They have all closed their doors on us." Children born of the disappeared in concentration camps are being raised by military families. *Niños Desaparecidos* (Missing Children), a short film by Estela Bravo of Cuba, documents the grandmothers' search, in many cases successful, for the grandchildren they have never seen.

"When history cannot be written with a pen it must be written with a gun." This is the opening statement of *El Salvador - El pueblo vencerá* (The People Will Win), a 1980 documentary produced by the Film Institute of Revolutionary El Salvador, directed by Diego de la Texera. It was an extremely dangerous venture which resulted in the death of four people who participated in the film. As well as a historical back-

ground of El Salvador, conveyed through animation and paintings, there are interviews with members of the CIA-backed National Guard who speak with conviction of their admiration for the American government: "We need their help. We are fighting for them, to conquer communism." There are horrifying scenes of the aftermath of a village massacre. "My husband was all I had," cries a villager. Her anguish contrasts with the impassive faces of her children. "They chopped him to pieces! Why did they do it?" A small boy grieves at his father's burial, then joins the revolutionary FMLN (Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front). The high contrast of a struggle for "liberation or death" is reflected in the dramatically transposed images of corpses with cut throats, grief-stricken survivors, and images of American culture — the White House, well-dressed smiling Americans drinking and chatting in a celebratory atmosphere.

Tiempo de morir (A Time to Die), directed by Jorge Ali Triana of Colombia, won the award for best film at the 1985 Rio de Janeiro Film Festival. The screenplay is by Gabriel Garcia Márquez and the film is true to his typical stylistic web of rich imagery which captures the patterns of life and destiny. The story of Juan Sayago, released after an 18-year prison sentence for killing a man, explodes the myth of machismo. The women's roles emerge strongly, despite their relative powerlessness within the traditional structure of Latin American rural culture. This is a subtle film with haunting imagery which tackles macho men, guns, murder and revenge head-on, and overcomes the subject matter by going to its heart.

In *Frida*, Mexican filmmaker Paul Leduc tackles the life and work of Mexican artist Frida Kahlo. Ofelia Medina plays Frida in this minimally verbal feast of images which features Kahlo's paintings and significant scenes from her life. The surrealistic fragments of her painful and dramatic life are somewhat elliptical, making this a cross between an "art" film and a docu-drama. She is a difficult woman to portray without falling into the clichés of narcissism, neurosis and masochism, because her personality was shaped by illness and pain, due to a childhood bout with polio and a crippling streetcar accident in her teens. However, Leduc balances her personal pain with scenes of political and social involvement in a circle which included her husband, Diego Rivera, and Leon Trotsky.

Frida had many lovers of both genders and her lesbianism is acknowledged on screen, albeit somewhat clumsily. *Frida* is well worth seeing, not only for the portrayal of Frida Kahlo, but for the essential spirit of Mexico which it captures — the celebration of life amidst death, which Frida embodies in her constant creative struggle against physical deterioration. ●



Julie Christie in *Miss Mary*

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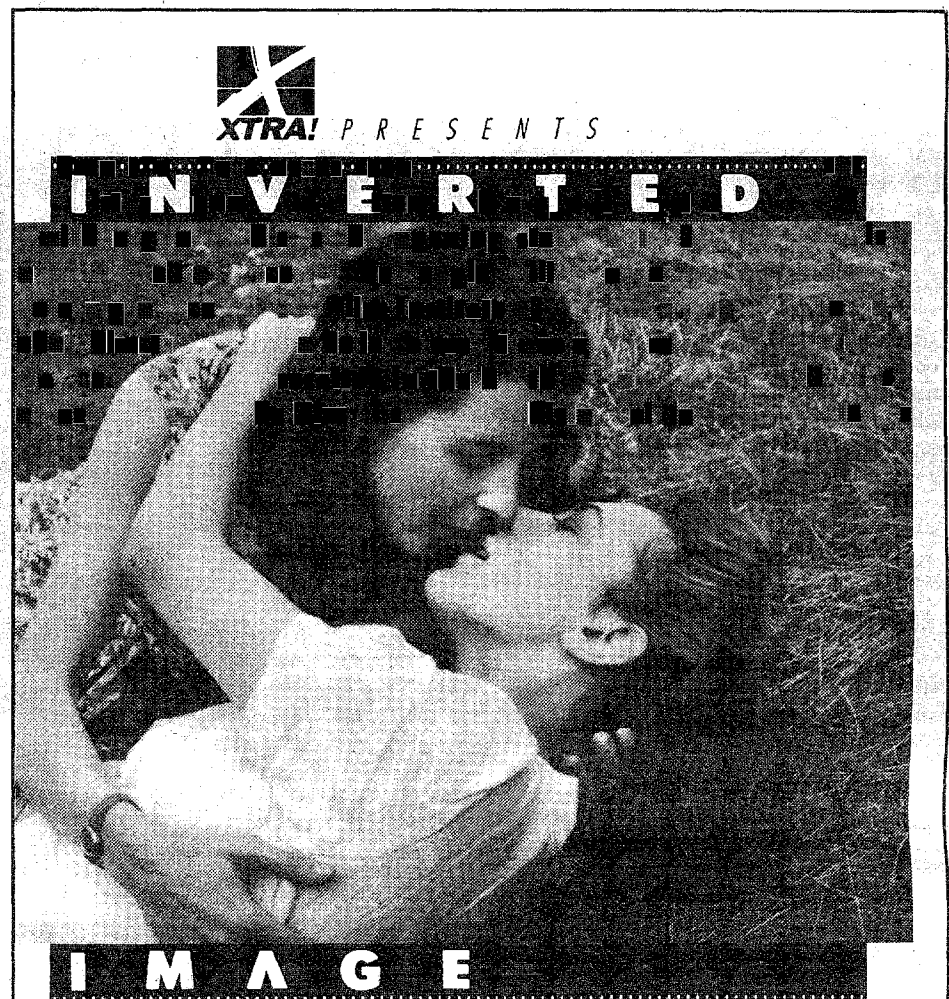


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ARTS

Desert in the Snow

A Conversation with Léa Pool

by Eleanor Wachtel

It's only two years ago that Léa Pool attracted attention outside Québec with her first feature, *La femme de l'hotel*. It won seven awards, including Best Film Award at the Toronto Festival of Festivals, a Genie Award for Best Actress (Louise Marleau), Grand Prix de la Presse Internationale at the Montréal World Film Festival, and Public prize for Fiction at the Women's Film Festival in Créteil, France. A year later, in 1985, Pool directed her second feature, *Anne Trister*, which was a great draw at the 1986 Berlin Film Festival and won prizes at Créteil as well.

Born in Switzerland in 1950, Léa Pool immigrated to Montréal in 1975 to study Communications at the University of Québec. Since graduating in 1978, she has directed video, short films, documentaries, television programs, and most recently, the two features. Her 1978 documentary, *Strass Café*, won awards at four festivals and enabled her to obtain funding for further documentaries. In 1982, she directed *Eva en transit* about the Québec pop singer, Eva. Also between 1978 and 1983, Pool taught Cinema and Video at the University of Québec in Montréal, and she was co-ordinator of the Montréal World Film Festival, responsible for programming German cinema.

As is usually the case, her features have received greater distribution than the shorts and thus *La femme de l'hotel* and *Anne Trister* are the works that have interested audiences outside Québec. *La femme de l'hotel* is an evocative, somewhat experimental film, shot in black and white. A woman, Estelle (played by Louise Marleau), about to take a train from Montréal to Toronto, decides to check into a Montréal hotel instead. A former singer of some sort (and likely a former inmate of a mental institution), she is feeling dislocated and wanders the streets of the city when she's not haunting the hotel. A filmmaker, Andrea, is shooting a movie about a singer in the same hotel. She discusses the project with various people, especially the actress who's playing the singer. "As filming continues, Andrea repeatedly encounters Estelle, who seems to be growing more and more desperate.... A strange bond is established between them and the film Andrea is making seems to resemble Estelle's life more and more" [from Vancouver International Film Festival program]. That, more or less, constitutes the "action" of the film. Connections are made but their exact nature is left opaque.

Anne Trister is a more conventional narrative, in colour, visually striking and with a strong musical score (the latter, a characteristic shared with *La femme de l'hotel*). Anne is a 25-year-old Swiss art student who decides to leave her family and boyfriend and move to Montréal after her father dies, (a Jew, there are scenes intercut depicting his burial in Israel). In Montréal, she stays with a family friend, a psychologist Alix (played by Louise Marleau), with whom she falls in love. She also undertakes a fabulous environmental art project — transforming the interior of a cavernous warehouse. The movie's structure involves several variations on triangles: first, the three female characters — Anne, Alix, and Alix's 10-year-old disturbed patient; Alix and her boyfriend and Anne; and Anne, her boyfriend and Alix. As in *La femme de l'hotel*, the ending is ambiguous.

Léa Pool is an intriguing filmmaker. While she was in Vancouver for the film festival last June, she agreed to be interviewed in a language that is not her own.

Eleanor Wachtel: I think image and sound track are very powerful in your films — at least the two features that I've seen, *La femme de l'hotel* and *Anne Trister*. Do you have a visual arts background?

LP: No, but when I was a student, I liked art.

And I was interested as a child in painting and drawing and photography, but it was all by myself.

EW: When the singer Estelle in *La femme de l'hotel* starts to wander the streets, were you thinking at all of Bergman's *Persona* where an opera singer goes suddenly silent?

LP: It's very strange that you speak of this film because for me it's one of the most important films that I've seen. *Persona* is a very, very strong film. When I made *La femme de l'hotel* I never thought that there was a comparison between these two films, but now I think of course that there is something.

EW: One thing that occurs in both films is the idea of home; these are women who don't have a home or are not sure where home is.

LP: I feel myself an exile because I'm an immigrant and also because of my roots. I think Jewish people always have this impression of being an exile and I think women are also in exile. I'm interested in speaking about people who are a little bit apart, marginal people. I'm very close to these people, even if they are very well clothed (she chuckles).

EW: I think one thing that reinforced that was the motif of shifting sand, in *Anne Trister*.

LP: Yes, sand has always been very important in my own imagination. I don't know why. It's a question of time. It's also something that you cannot grasp. It falls. The first time that I was in Israel — I was there four times — I was so impressed by the sand. I have family there and they all tell me that the first time I sat in the sand just taking it in my hands, saying, "It's so fine."

EW: Alix says something about sand.

LP: They (Alix and Anne) were both in the desert once and they are very close because they both like the sand and the desert.

EW: It's a connection for them.

LP: She said that the desert is beautiful and that she took rocks in her suitcase and she had to throw away clothes to fit the stones in. And it was very hard to travel with a suitcase full of stones.

EW: By contrast, you use Montréal as a setting, especially snowy, blowy winter scenes.

LP: This is my view of Montréal. All the people in Montréal are very interested because they don't shoot Montréal that way in films. It's really my view as a foreigner. I'm so impressed by the snow.

EW: Were you worried in choosing a name like "Trister" for your character, that it would seem too Dickensian, too obvious?

LP: I haven't thought about this. It was a name on a grave that I saw in a cemetery and I was very touched by this. Anne Trister. I think that I had the courage to tell this story after I saw this name because it makes a distance between me and the character. Of course, trister, tristesse, it's possible to make this connection.

EW: When you show groups of three women, do you have any particular sympathy for any one of these women? For example, in *Anne Trister*?

LP: No it's difficult for me. All three are very different. I think Anne Trister is a difficult person because she took everything from people and she doesn't give a lot. So if you look at the character like this, she could be not such a wonderful person. Alix is very touching because she is very open to other people and how she feels the feeling of Anne Trister and how she helped her. But I also like people who are not wonderful, who have problems and are heavy sometimes. I don't like only wonderful heroes. Anne Trister is an anti-hero a little bit.

In the way Anne Trister tried to understand her life and to grow, I think it's very touching. She's 25 and she has to learn a lot, of course.



Léa Pool

Alix is 40 and she is much more open to life and to other people.

EW: When you set out to make *La femme de l'hotel*, did you have a sense of what you wanted to communicate?

LP: Not exactly, but there were two things. I wanted to speak about creation and love, and the link between them. That when you create something, it's very important that you are in love or you expect something from someone. It could also be the lack of love, but it's to fulfill an emptiness that you create. And this is in both my films, *La femme de l'hotel* and *Anne Trister*. But also, I wanted to make a portrait of a woman using three women (in *La femme de l'hotel*), three parts — one part, Estelle, is perhaps the most unconscious part of a woman; and Andrea, the filmmaker, is the active part, the creative part, the conscious part of a woman; and the actress is the body.

I used three parts because it's so difficult to make a portrait of a woman in one person; we have a lot of faces. It was an *essai* to try to do this.

EW: Margarethe von Trotta often uses two women — there's a relationship, an emotional tension between two women.

LP: In my films, there are always three — in *Anne Trister* there's the child and two women. There is also the relationship between two which is primary. But I need a third one. I don't know why. In *La femme de l'hotel*, it's three women of the same age, 40 years old. In *Anne Trister* it's a ten-year-old girl and a 25-year-old woman and a 40-year-old woman. But it's also the relationship between the three women that allowed me to speak about two women. It's strange, creation, because we never know exactly why. We can only try to explain after, but when you do it, you don't know exactly why.

EW: When a first feature film is not only about a woman, but a woman filmmaker, one can't but ask about the autobiographical aspects of the film.

LP: Yes, of course, but I think *Anne Trister* is more autobiographical. I think when you make a first film, it's easier to speak from where you are. And it allowed me to speak about the image. I'm very interested in the reproduction of reality in the image. In *La femme de l'hotel* it's a filmmaker and in *Anne Trister* it's a painter, and both are playing with images. And how you can change your perception of the reality.

EW: Were you afraid of being accused of indulgence in showing the problems of the filmmaker in *La femme de l'hotel*?

LP: I think the process of filmmaking is not very important in *La femme de l'hotel*, it's much more the way Andrea is questioning her own creation. We don't see a lot about how a film is made or what the problems are in filmmaking. If it were so easy, it would be wonderful; in my films, there are no problems with money. Of course, there are in life, but I'm not interested in showing these things because we know this already.

EW: And everyone dresses so well.

LP: Yes, because of the kind of occupation they have — if you are in an aesthetic occupation, when you make movies or you are a painter, for me it's important how the people are dressed. And Alix in *Anne Trister*, she's a psychiatrist and she has money.

EW: Can you go into more detail about the sense in which *Anne Trister* is autobiographical?

LP: You always change the reality, but, for example, I come from Switzerland and I came to Montréal after the death of my father. And my father was a Jew and asked to be buried in Israel. So this is very autobiographical. The other things are part of my life and part of the lives of my friends. Of course I'm not a painter, but I'm not far from this. The child is very close to me and looks a little bit the way I did as a child. And all the characters are people that I met in my life, but it's not exactly the same.

EW: *Anne Trister* has something of adolescent self-absorption.

LP: After the death of somebody very important in your life, I don't think you're so wonderful; you're very closed.

EW: When you made *Anne Trister* and had a scene involving two women, were you concerned how discreet to be? Because in the scenes where the women make love with their boyfriends, they're naked and quite explicit. In the scene with the women, it's more discreet.

LP: I think my film is much more about the birth of love. I was not so much interested to see the act, but rather the birth of the love between these two women. And perhaps it's more difficult for me to show this.

EW: So, what does happen at the end of *Anne Trister*?

LP: I don't know. For me, she leaves Montréal and continues her life. We don't know exactly. There are a lot of possibilities of ending the film: she can return to Switzerland with Pierre; she can go back to Montréal and continue her love story with Alix; she can also stay alone. It's open. I like films that are open at the end. For me, I think she stays alone.

EW: You're not a romantic.

LP: No, I'm very romantic, but I think if the film was closed at the end, it would not be so interesting. I don't want to give an answer. I don't make films to give answers.

EW: It also fits the image of shifting sand.

LP: We never know what will happen after. And also Alix, when she gets the sand in the mail from Anne, after Anne has left, she could have kept it, but she doesn't, she just lets it run through her fingers. I myself, if I am romantic, I would keep the sand. So Alix is perhaps not so romantic too. But it's perhaps more romantic to let it flow.

In the desert things can grow. A North African writer said, "To be made of sand, not of crystal, lets you be able to fall, and be resurrected."

Eleanor Wachtel is a Vancouver journalist and an editor of Room of One's Own.

Grand Central Passion

by Ellen Waxman

Actor Nancy Beatty begins her performance of the play based on Elizabeth Smart's novel *By Grand Central Station I Sat Down and Wept* sitting at her typewriter and playing out her story. As she becomes increasingly consumed and obsessed by her tormented love affair, Beatty combines both the passion and anguish of her role by incorporating a sensual and often frenzied use of her body in athletic and acrobatic movements. Initially clothed in a green sheet which assumes different forms, Beatty's presentation continually concentrates on visual images. While the prose is sometimes difficult to follow with its unrelenting rhythm, Beatty's movements capture the audience.

Smart wrote *By Grand Central Station* in 1939, but it was not published until 1945. The work has been publicized as a fictional account of Smart's love affair with the poet George Barker. Smart, however, began writing the book before meeting him. While *By Grand Central Station* has been acclaimed as a masterpiece of poetic prose, the book was banned in Canada when originally published. Smart's influential and wealthy Ottawa mother prevented its importation into Canada. Scorned by her family and the moral dictates of the times for her love of the married Barker and the bearing of his four children, Smart lived 30 years of her life in England, often in poverty. She died in Canada last March at the age of 72.

Smart's obsession with love is not one which defines it in a celebratory or liberating fashion. Rather, she seems more imprisoned by her passions. She cries that she is "infested with a menagerie of desires" as though diseased, and speaks of "my obstreperous shape of shame, offended by my own flesh." When describing her lover brushing her breast with his arm, she laments, "I went into the redwoods brooding and brushing with femininity and liable to humiliation worse than Venus with Adonis, purely by reason of my accidental but flaunting sex." Even with respect to her lover, who dominates her every feeling, she refers to his cold semen of grief. More than once she tells us that love is as strong

as death.

It is unfortunate that critics such as the *Globe and Mail's* Ray Conlogue deride the piece as "masturbatory prose" which "remains more at home inside the author's skull and groin." Women's pain seems better left internalized. When it refuses to remain inside of the private realm, it is seen as a hysterical intrusion into the structured order of things. Literary men have always written on the anguishes of love relationships but in a more abstract and acceptable manner. Smart, by confronting the world with her painful and obsessive love, exposes her full range of raw emotions for all to confront.

Smart reveals the myths of romantic love which men work so hard at shrouding in secrecy. The only secrecy in *By Grand Central Station* is the image of the male lover himself. While he is vaguely present throughout the play, no clear image of him emerges.

By Grand Central Station cannot be separated from the context in which it was written, for the world of the 1930s and 40s informs the text. Written at the time of the second world war, Smart was accused for being a Communist because of her presumed immorality. When prevented from crossing the Arizona border because she and her lover were unmarried, she questioned the Inspec-

tor on his desires. He responded, "We're family men. We don't go so much for love." Later she was shunned by older women of her class and told that she would regret breaking up a marriage.

By Grand Central Station is a difficult piece to perform. Beatty's nerve-exposed portrayal of the emotion-torn lover throughout the 75 minute non-stop performance is a tour de force, which portrays the intimate power of love in both its desperate and ecstatic moments.

Ellen Waxman is a Toronto feminist.



Nancy Beatty in *By Grand Central Station*

Illusion of the Veil



Nawal el Sa'adawi

by Amanda Hale

Nawal el Sa'adawi is a leading Egyptian feminist, medical doctor, novelist, and author of the classic work on women in Islam, *The Hidden Face of Eve*. She was in Canada for the first time last month, and she spoke at the University of Toronto, sponsored by the Arab-Canadian Women's Network.

El Sa'adawi spoke out against the false images of Arab women as either belly dancers or veiled women. The tendency of Westerners to think that feminism started in the West, and the belief that Arab women are more oppressed than Western women are impediments to international solidarity, she says. In a clear and broad analysis, El Sa'adawi revealed the root commonality of women's oppression and exploded some of the myths surrounding clitoridectomy, and the veil as a symbol of Islam.

Her opinions are informed by a blend of

personal experience and scholarship. She saw many advances made by Egyptian women under Nasser, because his economic policy, geared towards independence, encouraged women to go out into the workplace. Then Sadat's policy simultaneously opened the door to foreign goods (particularly US imports) and closed the doors of knowledge by encouraging religious fundamentalist groups, thus setting women back and increasing unemployment.

In 1973 El Sa'adawi was dismissed from her position as Director of Public Health, due to her socialist-feminist views; her books were banned in Egypt during Sadat's presidency; the women's health magazine she published was closed down; and in 1981 El Sa'adawi was imprisoned for alleged "crimes against the State" and only regained her freedom after the assassination of Sadat. "Of course Sadat was a hero in the West," she said, responding to a question from the large audience at U of T. "He was working for the West!" The open-door policy resulted in links with international capitalism: on Egyptian TV belly dancers advertise American shampoo, and upper class women who have reverted to fundamentalism wear veils imported from the US. The US multinationals constitute a neo-colonial power which prevents Egypt and many other third world countries from achieving economic independence.

The false image of Arab women in the West, El Sa'adawi explains, stems from the belief that Islam, symbolized by the veil, is the context for the oppression of Arab women. But the veil is not Islamic, she says, and does not represent the identity of Arab women. El Sa'adawi's analysis is historically based. The veil first appeared with the slave society, and has been as visible in Christianity and Judaism as in Islam. It is language and history which constitutes women's identity, and as long as 15 centuries ago, Arab women

were changing verses of the Qur'an into female-oriented language.

It is political/economic systems which are the cause of women's oppression, says El Sa'adawi, going back to the emergence of patriarchy with its double standard of morality (monogamy/polygamy) and its laws to justify the unjust duality. Religion is always the servant of the prevailing political system. This is exemplified by the fact that Islamic doctrine, practice and customs differ within the varying political systems of each Arab country, as well as in the predominantly Islamic North African nations.

Another issue which has been erroneously connected with Islam is clitoridectomy. Viewed in a historical, political, economic context, says El Sa'adawi, clitoridectomy can be seen as essential to the establishment of patriarchy, which is based on knowing the father of the child, and which therefore requires sexual control of women. It is everywhere, whether physiological or psychological. Women in the West have been genitally mutilated by Freudian theory: in positing the myth of the vaginal orgasm, Freud cut the clitoris psychologically. Although both forms of mutilation are barbaric, says El Sa'adawi, the psychological clitoridectomy is more dangerous, because you have the organ and you think you are free. The implication is that Western women have thought themselves free to impose their values on other cultures without sorting out the roots of their own insidious oppression.

There is a healthy tinge of third-world chauvinism in El Sa'adawi's global feminist analysis which would endear her to Germaine Greer, and which in my opinion is valid. "There is more depth to our conception of feminism in the third world," she says, "because we feel the oppression of international capitalism more than you do." She feels that the Arab people are generally better than

their governors and have been oppressed by rulers such as Sadat and Khadafy. Of course El Sa'adawi has her socialist bias and, in criticizing the open-door policy, does not remark on the alarming shortage of staples such as matches and toilet paper during Nasser's regime. The fact that Egypt's soap factories closed when US soap was imported is more an indication of mismanagement than an economic policy than of the policy being in itself unworkable. "Aid" to underdeveloped nations will never work until the motivation is pure, and free from the desire for control and profit.

On the subject of the Islamic fundamentalist revival in countries such as Egypt and Iran, El Sa'adawi notes that the revival of religious movements is currently a universal phenomenon, but that it is more visible in Islamic nations where state and religion are not separate. "The State should be secular," she says.

The audience represented a significant Arab sector, and the threatening nature of El Sa'adawi's sophisticated feminist perspective was highlighted by the reactions of a coup of Islamic men who challenged her interpretation of Islamic values. It was a volatile and exciting question period which served to affirm the good sense and solid historical basis of El Sa'adawi's presentation.

"Human nature changes," she said. "The slave society people were conditioned to love slavery. Women were conditioned to masochism and the adoration of their masters. But women are the new power in the Arab and Western worlds, fighting against sexism and racism. We are all in the same boat." Her message is one of international feminist solidarity. She elucidates the commonality of basic issues which have oppressed women since the rise of patriarchy; and which is all too often obscured by misunderstandings based on cultural differences. ☺

Sex and Wheels

No Fixed Address: An Amorous Journey by Aritha van Herk. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart 1986. \$19.95

Reviewed by Ingrid MacDonald

Aritha van Herk, who won the Seal Press prize for Best First Novel for *Judith* in 1978, has written an accomplished, pleasurable and intelligent third novel. It is an account of what it means to be female, sexual, working class and independent in the Eighties. *No Fixed Address: An Amorous Journey* tells the story of a strong willed loner named Arachne as she tries to establish some peace for herself in the world, until she takes to the road as an outlaw.

In Greek myth, Arachne was a renowned tapestry maker who was turned by Athena into a spider. Van Herk's Arachne is a bus driver for the Vancouver transit system who moves on a whim to Calgary to be with her lover Thomas. There she changes careers and becomes a travelling salesperson for Ladies' Comfort Lingerie. She drives an inherited antique Mercedes, sells more underwear than any other salesman, and has lots of sex with random men on the road. In an abandoned graveyard she encounters an elderly man: she befriends him and, with his consent, takes him on the road with her. This proves a fatal mistake: his meddling and cranky daughter charges Arachne with kidnapping. Arachne takes refuge on the road and disappears into the blue of Canada's far north.

A childhood of poverty and loneliness has made the adult Arachne angry, suspicious of intimacy, an outsider. Her motto in life as in work is, "Don't talk to the driver." The coldness that Arachne protects herself with is broken early on in the novel by an encounter with Basilisk, a Black man who rides her bus for 2 1/2 hours, until her morning shift has finished. Although he asks her home with him, they do not have sex: she sleeps on a bare mattress and he watches her and listens to Schubert.

After a week of such afternoons, he invites her to the symphony where he is the guest artist. Arachne had had no idea: he had described himself as a pianist, but fitting him into her stereotypes, she had thought him a jazz musician. She attends the concert, reluctant and self-conscious. She has never been to a symphony before and worse, she is the only one wearing a bus driver's uniform. His beautiful playing is an affront to her ignorance:

"It is unbearable, so thin, so brilliantly cruel, he is skinning her with the razor blades of his damnable breeding, his culture, his learnedness, the fact that he can lift and fall his giant hands over those ivory and white keys and bring out such perfect sounds."

Later they finally make love, in a clenched

and desperate passion, until they both sob. He leaves Vancouver and Arachne is shattered, not because she can not do without a man, but because her frozenness has been broken. This passage is typical of the kind of consideration of race, class and gender that van Herk is sensitized to in *No Fixed Address*. To her credit, van Herk has a feeling for romance and passion. As well, she is able to portray the ironic indifference that Arachne has for her many "road jockeys" as she calls them.

After Basilisk, Arachne meets another passenger, Thomas, a cartographer who has left his maps on her bus one day. She decides to drive him to Calgary where he lives, and then she decides to stay with him. They have an idealized relationship: their work takes them away from each other often, and gives them room for independence. Arachne is free to be moody and to pursue her infidelities. Yet they have a love that maintains its sexual passion.

Class differences become an issue between them as well. Thomas is from an upper middle class family. When he takes Arachne home for family dinner, the order of the silverware unsettles her, and the fact that she is a bus driver becomes a topic of condescending curiosity. To Arachne the humiliation that she felt at the dinner table signals the inevitable: that her background has been exposed, that she must leave Thomas before he leaves her for a proper woman, one of his own class. In the car afterwards she refuses to speak to him and begins to process of "erasing," a listless, mute state of depression. Thomas begs her to stay. If she will stay with him, he will give her a crash course in bourgeois sophistication, which he describes as games and disguises. She agrees sceptically to a new wardrobe but refuses to shave her legs or wear deodorant. She accepts his help, yet as she says, "She is disgusted by women who need men to rescue them."

By the end, *No Fixed Address* begins to resemble myth itself. The episodes lose their logical sequence as continuity and chronology is interrupted. Arachne disappears and resurfaces on the highways familiar to anyone who knows the roads of western Canada. Characters take on symbolic dimensions, such as Arachne's "doppelganger," her identical twin, whom she encounters on the highway, a travelling chewing tobacco saleswoman who hitchhikes with a bear, or the man whom she murders in self defence by driving a hat pin into his heart. The last few chapters in this "notebook on a missing person" fly away like so many pairs of Ladies' Comfort underwear scattered across the arctic highway where Arachne is last seen. Arachne inexplicably disappears, but she does not die. Is this so that van Herk can treat us to more of this strong and vagabond heroine? We shall have to wait and see if there is to be a sequel — perhaps *Arachne Strikes Back* or *the Return of Arachne II*. ●

PETA: An Oath to Freedom



Members of PETA, the Philippine Educational Theater Association, are coming to Canada — Vancouver, Edmonton, Winnipeg, Ottawa and Toronto — to present a play called *An Oath to Freedom* (Panata sa Kalayaan).

The association was founded in 1967 by Cecile Guidote-Alvarez, who subsequently left the Philippines in 1973 to escape political harassment. During its 20-year history, PETA has mounted over a hundred plays — original Filipino works to develop a pride in national theatre, as well as world theatre classics.

PETA does people's theatre — training modules and syllabi for use in children's theatre, sectoral theatre (with students, farmers, workers, professionals, tribal Filipinos), trainer's training courses for artist-teacher-leader-organizers with specializations in the fields of visual arts and design, body movement and dance, acting, directing, playwrighting, music, management and organizational dynamics.

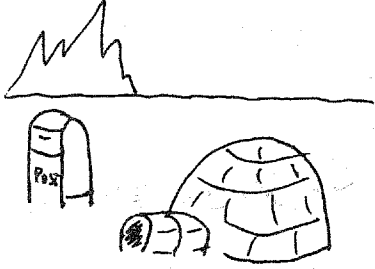
The theatre group addresses the revolutionary concerns of the people who have finally overthrown a dictator and are trying, in the space allowed

by Corazón Aquino's government, to push democratization as far as possible. But, as feminists, we want to know about abortion, birth control, lesbian rights — in a predominantly Catholic country — as well as efforts towards equal pay and domestic equality.

There will be an opportunity to work in groups with the women actors of PETA during the Interaction Workshops on November 3, when local Toronto cultural workers and activists will do theatre exercises prepared by PETA members as a means of trying to understand each other's situations. There will also be time during the cultural solidarity night at A Space on November 4 to talk about what we do here and to question them.

(In Toronto, performances of *An Oath to Freedom* take place at Central Technical Auditorium at 8 pm on Saturday and Sunday, November 1 and 2. Please call Canada-Asia Working Group (416-921-5626) or Gay Bell (416-466-3801) for more information on any activity you might want to participate in or attend or to offer assistance.)

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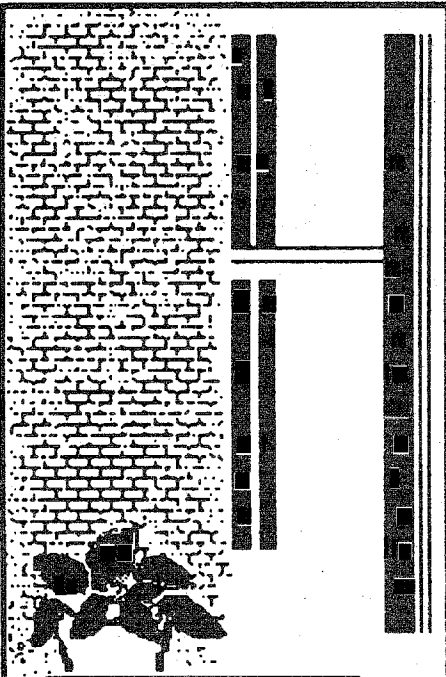
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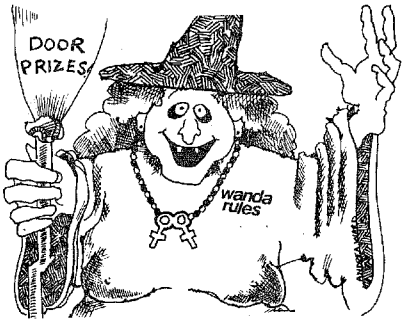
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• **Saturday, November 1:** "Witches' Night Out," a dance sponsored by the Lesbian Dance Committee. 167 Church St. 9 pm-2 am. \$5 advance/\$7 door. Tickets at Toronto Women's Bookstore and SCM.

• **Saturday, November 1:** Joy Kogawa reads from her new children's book *Naomi's Road*. 2 pm. Toronto Women's Bookstore, 73 Harbord St. All welcome. Info: 922-8744.

• **Saturday, November 1:** The Women's Press holds a "Slightly Damaged Book Sale." 229 College St., Room 204. 10 am-4 pm. Info: Margie Wolfe, 598-0082.

• **Saturday, November 1:** Toronto Jewish Film Festival. "I Love You Rosa," a film exploring ancient religious traditions and delving into concerns about women's rights, and "To Be A Woman Soldier, a portrait of women recruits in the Israeli army that debunks the myth of the equality of the sexes, revealing that women continue to carry out traditional roles in the military. OISE Auditorium, 252 Bloor St. West. \$5 (\$4 students and seniors). Info: 635-2883, ext 154.

• **Saturday, November 1:** WEN/DO, Women's Self-Defense classes 10 am to 5:30 pm. Info: 368-2178. Also **Saturday, November 8.** (WEN/DO courses are held throughout November at five Toronto locations. Call for information.)

• **Saturday, November 1:** "An Oath to Freedom" by the Philippine Educational Theater Association. Central Tech. \$7.50. Info: 921-5626. Also **Sunday, November 2.**

WEEK OF NOVEMBER 3

• **Monday, November 3:** Centre for Women's Studies in Education presents Popular Feminism: A lecture and discussion series. Janet Salaff speaking on field work and feminism. OISE, 252 Bloor St. West, Room 2-212, 2-213. 8 pm. All welcome. Free. Info: 923-6641.

• **Monday, November 3:** "An Equal Society: Into the Year 2000." A two-day conference exploring the role of women in the future. Both economic and social issues will be addressed, ranging from free trade to peace. Speakers include Marjorie Cohen, Pat McDermott, Akua Benjamin, Lois Sweet, Judy Erola, Margrit Eichler, Ursula Franklin, Stuart Smith, and Stephen Lewis. Sponsored by federal, provincial and territorial status of women groups. Metro Convention Centre. 255 Front St. West. 8:30 am to 5:15 pm. Free admission. Info: 965-5824.

• **Monday, November 3:** The Women's Group, an open lesbian discussion group, meets at 519 Church St. 8 pm. Info: 392-6874. Also **Mondays, November 10, 17 and 24.**

• **Monday, November 3:** Theatre workshop with women from the Philippine Theater Association. 6-10 pm. Bloor Collegiate Institute (west of Dufferin). \$5. Info: 921-5626.

• **Tuesday, November 4:** Cultural Solidarity night with Philippine Educational Theater Association. A Space. 183 Bathurst St. Free. Info: 921-5626.

• **Tuesday, November 4:** The Women's Information Line is open from 7-9 pm. Messages may be left at any time, at 598-3714. Also **Tuesdays, November 11, 18 and 25.**

• **Tuesday, November 4:** A book signing with Pauline Bart, author of *Stopping Rape: Successful Survival Strategies*. 6-7 pm. Toronto Women's Bookstore, 73 Harbord St. All women welcome. Info: 922-8744.

OUTSIDE BROADSIDE

November 1986

Compiled by Mary Gibbons

• **Tuesday, November 4:** Lesbian and Gay Youth (under 25) meet in a support group at 519 Church St. 7:30 pm. Info: 392-6874. Also **Tuesdays, November 11, 18 and 25.**

• **Tuesday, November 4:** Lesbian Phone Line open tonight for calls from women. 7:30-10:30 pm. Call 533-6120. Also **Tuesdays, November 11, 18 and 25.**

• **Thursday, November 6:** Women's Information Line is open from 7-9 pm. Messages may be left at any time, at 598-3714. Also **Thursdays, November 13, 20 and 27.**

• **Thursday, November 6:** Lesbian Phone Line open tonight for calls from women. 7:30-10:30 pm. Call 533-6120. Also **Thursdays, November 13, 20 and 27.**



Marxer and Fink in concert, November 15

• **Wednesday, November 5:** Public forum on "Stopping Rape: Rethinking Approaches to Rape Prevention," sponsored by Metro Action Committee on Public Violence Against Women and Children (METRAC). 7:30 pm. Toronto City Hall Council Chambers. Info: 928-9628.

• **Friday, November 7:** Toronto's First International Festival of Gay Cinema. "Inverted Images," featuring 23 full-length films, including 14 Toronto premieres. Harbourfront, 235 Queen Quay West. Tickets: \$4 (late night films \$3). Info: 364-5665. To **Saturday, November 15.**

• **Saturday, November 8:** Women'speak: A Gala Celebration of Canadian Women Poets, on the occasion of the launch of *sp/elles*: poetry by Canadian women. Works by participants. A-Space, 183 Bathurst St. at Queen, 2nd floor. 8 pm. Info: Martin Waxman, 499-8412.

• **Saturday, November 8:** The Company of Sirens present "Channels of Passion: Sounding the Sirens!" An evening of performance with Lina Chartrand, Shawna Dempsey, Janine Fuller, Cynthia Grant, Amanda Hale, Diana Meredith, Peggy Sample, Lib Spry and Patricia Wynter. At Coming Together Again: Women's Sexuality Conference, OISE Auditorium, 252 Bloor St. West. All women welcome. Tickets: \$7 advance, \$9 door.

• **Sunday, November 9:** Mariane Girard in Concert, singing original songs. Free Times Café, 320 College St. 8 pm. \$3 cover. Info: 967-1078.

• **Sunday, November 9:** *Novembermoon*, a film about a love affair between two women in Nazi-occupied France. "Inverted Images" Festival of Gay Cinema. 9 pm. Harbourfront Studio Theatre: 235 Queen's Quay West. Info: 364-5665.

WEEK OF NOVEMBER 10

• **Tuesday, November 11:** The Ontario Coalition for Abortion Clinics (OCAC) open meeting. Trinity-St. Paul's, 427 Bloor St. West, 7:30 pm. Info: 532-8193.

• **Tuesday, November 11:** Women's Night at "Inverted Images" festival of gay cinema. 7 pm. Harbourfront Studio Theatre, 235 Queen's Quay West. Info: 364-5665.

• **Wednesday, November 12:** Women Against Violence Against Women (WAWAW) regular meeting. All women welcome. 7:30 pm. 2 Murray St.

• **Thursday, November 13:** Tarragon Theatre presents: "Murder At McQueen" by Erica Ritter. Benefit performance for Organized Working Women. \$20 (includes wine and cheese). Tarragon Theatre, 30 Bridgman Ave. 8 pm. Info: 534-7504.

• **Friday, November 14:** Toronto Area Women's Research Colloquium, featuring Kathryn Morgan speaking on women and moral madness, with Lorraine Code and Dr. Rosemary Barnes responding. OISE, 252 Bloor St. West. Room 2-212. 3:30 pm. Info: 923-6641.

• **Saturday, November 15:** Cathy Fink, award winning banjo player and folk singer, with Marcy Marxer. Trinity-St. Paul's Centre, 427 Bloor St. West, 8 pm. Tickets: \$6 advance, \$7.50 door. Info: 597-8695.

• **Sunday, November 16:** Women's Services and How To Use Them: Disabled Women's Network (DAWN) monthly meeting and discussion. 25 Elm St. 1-4 pm. All women welcome. Wheelchair accessible. Call Joanne, 466-2838, or Pat, 694-8888 at least one week in advance if you need sign language, interpretation or have other special needs.

WEEK OF NOVEMBER 17

• **Tuesday, November 18:** The U of T Women's Centre Film Series presents: Canadian Women Writers. Innis College (Sussex at St. George), Room 222. 6 pm. Info: 978-8201.

• **Friday, November 21:** Daisy Zamora, Nicaraguan poet, former Vice-Minister of Culture, and revolutionary fighter, will read in Spanish and English from her new book of poetry. An evening of Solidarity sponsored by Women in Solidarity with Nicaragua and A-Space. Music by TINKU, a Latin American group, plus a slide show and speakers. Held at A-Space, 183 Bathurst St. 8 pm. \$4 (\$2 A-Space members). Info: 364-3227/8.

• **Saturday, November 22:** "Voices Spoken, Voices Heard" — an international event on violence against women. Keynote: Sandra Camacho, a Latina organizer from NYC, active in work against racism and violence against women. Workshops on state violence, domestic violence and sexual assault; all include connections with racism. 10 am-5 pm. Adult Education Centre, 1 Danforth Ave. (at Broadview). \$4 (\$2 unwaged). Wheelchair accessible. Childcare and registration: 961-8100.

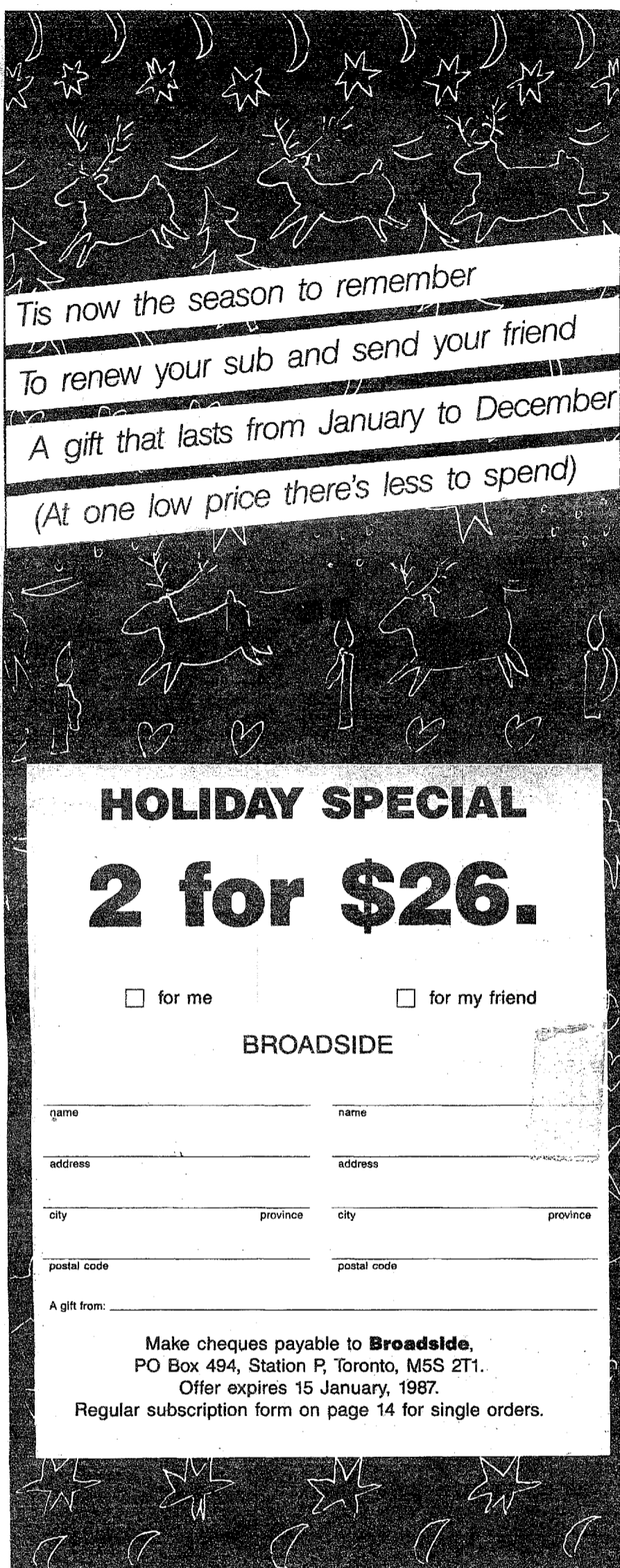
• **Sunday, November 23:** "I Didn't Know It Had A Name," a video tape about sexual harassment by Current Video. Shown in both English and Spanish, followed by a panel discussion. A-Space, 183 Bathurst St. 2-4:30 pm. \$4/\$2. Info: 364-3227.

WEEK OF NOVEMBER 24

• **Monday, November 24:** "Women and Sport — A New Ballgame?" — forum with Abby Hoffman, Bruce Kidd and Helen Lenskyj, author of *Out of Bounds: Women, Sport and Sexuality*. 8 pm. Library Science School, 7th floor lounge, 140 St. George. Info: Margie Wolfe, 598-0082.

• **Thursday, November 27:** Dangers of Home Cleaning Products: with Harriet Rosenberg, author of "Through the Kitchen Window: The Politics of Home and Family." South Riverdale Community health Centre, 126 Pape Avenue. 7:30 pm. Info: 463-7521.

• **Friday, November 28:** Women's Independent Thoughtz (WITZ): A seminar/discussion group for the exchange of ideas and creative endeavours in art, literature, philosophy and critical thought. Topic: Relaxation Through Massage. 7 pm. Info: 536-3162 or 487-2061.



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OTTAWA FEMINIST seeks submissions for anthology of Canadian women's poetry. Collection to be distributed during International Women's Week, 1987. "Celebrating Women's Diversity." Material welcome on all topics, from women all across Canada, particularly women not previously published. Deadline: 15 December 1986. Respond with addresses clearly noted to: 107 Beaver Ridge, Nepean, Ontario, K2E 6E5.

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THE COMPANY OF SIRENS, a feminist theatre group, extends an open invitation to all women to participate in "Sirens' Soirées," December 11-14 — informal nights of performance, poetry, theatre, dance, etc. Time limit: 5-10 minutes. We provide technical assistance and encouragement. Submit proposals as soon as possible to: Company of Sirens, Box 44, Station J, Toronto M4J 4X8, or phone (416) 461-6101 for further information.

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