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COVER: Graphic by Jeanne Taylor
Design by Claudia Macdonald

KINESIS
Vancouver Status of Women
400A West 5th Ave. Vancouver, B.C. V5Y 1J8
873-1427

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Published 10 times a year
by Vancouver Status of Women
400A West 5th Ave., Vancouver, B.C. V5Y 1J8

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April 84

KINESIS

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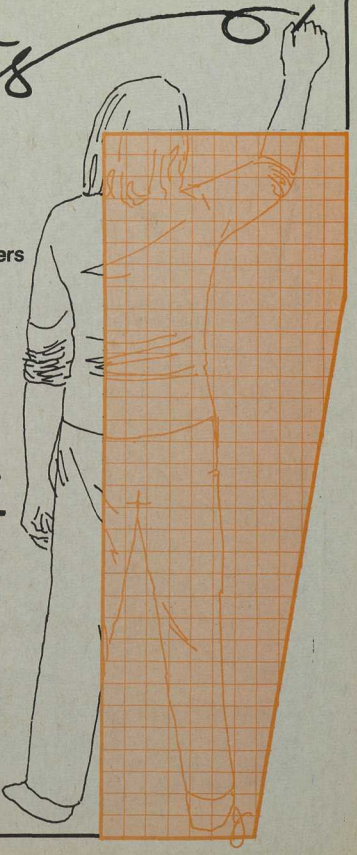
news about women that's not in the dailies

Women and the Arts



interviews with local photographers

pioneer women writers

girl groups of the 60's

Also this issue:

women and the NDP

soviet peace activists

grenada: before the invasion

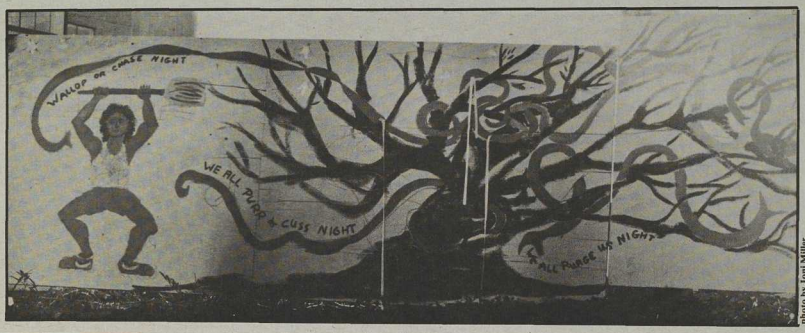


photo by Joni Miller

This Granville Island mural is the work of many women in preparation for Witches' Eve, April 30, a traditional night for women's actions.

No decision on VSW funds

In an end of March letter, Attorney-General Brian Smith informed the Vancouver Status of Women that the organization will receive interim funding for the months of April and May. However, a decision is still pending regarding funding for the remaining year. VSW was not the only "special project" put on hold for an extended two month period. All special projects funded through the Attorney General's Ministry are awaiting approval for their 1984 budget submissions. Other special projects include: People's Law School, Native Courtworker's Association of B.C., WAVAW/Rape Crisis Centre, and Elizabeth Fry Society.

In the letter sent out to all special projects, VSW was also informed that if the organization received a cut in its 1984 grant, the cut would be made retroactive to April 1.

The concern over a future cut made on a retroactive basis makes current planning almost impossible, say staffers who have been juggling the insecure funding situation since January. Nonetheless, Board and staff are hopeful that the two-month interim period indicates a grant to be forthcoming.

Supporters who have not yet written a letter to the Attorney-General are urged to do so immediately.

Porn experts challenged

by Susan Cole
Reprinted from Broadside

Feminist rhetoric has grown so powerful and convincing that a number of American and Canadian scientists, men for the most part, are working on impressive careers bolstered by their study of the effects of pornography on viewers.

For the first time ever, an attempt was made to gather together these august clinicians for a conference on media violence and pornography. The Toronto conference, held Feb. 5th, was sponsored by three action groups: Action Group on Media Pornography, Canadian Coalition Against Violent Entertainment and the National Coalition on Television Violence. The brains behind the conference belonged to David Scott, a local Ph.D. candidate in psychology with a high profile on the Metro Toronto Task Force on Public Violence Against Women and Children.

All the heavyweights were planned for the agenda: Neil Malamuth (U of Manitoba); Edward Donnerstein (U of Wisconsin, whom you may remember as a bearded scientist from 'Not a Love Story' who talked about what a "time bomb" agressive pornography can be); Dr. Dolf Zilman (University of Indiana), who's been looking at reactions to so-called non-violent porn; Peter De Julio, the Toronto Crown Counsel who has prosecuted more obscenity cases than just about anybody else in Canada; and the biggie, Dr. Everet Koop, Surgeon-General of the U.S., slated to give the luncheon address.

The preponderance of men on the original schedule (to say nothing of the American representation) prompted those women who were able to hear of the conference through academic channels to wonder where all the women were. American feminist law professor Catherine MacKinnon was one of them, and she phoned Scott to question the women's absence from the agenda. Scott quickly covered his tracks: "Would you like to come?" "Yes, I would," said MacKinnon, "and make sure Andrea Dworkin is there too, and all the women organizing across Canada." Scott confessed he should include them all.

In the end, the conference agenda looked like a paradigm of sex stereotypes, with men appearing as the objective discoverers of truth while women appeared to be doing what we do best - react. The morning was to be taken up with reports from the academic sector. The first panel on violence and television featured nine participants, two of whom were women. The second panel promised the findings of the research on the effects of pornography - five panelists, two women. The luncheon address was to be given by the star of the show, Dr. Koop. The first panel of the afternoon on pornography: victims and perpetrators, included two women. Then Andrea Dworkin was to address the throng. The two panels with a preponderance of women were crammed in at the end of the day.

In the meantime, the conference organizers thought they had the uneasy coalition between feminists and the decency contingent under control, without understanding that you simply cannot bring activits out to a conference of this nature without having a political potboiler on your hands. Scott attempted to diffuse the tension by admonising the participants "not to raise the potentially divisive issues, such as homosexuality and abortion."

The morning session began and the drone of scholarly male voices filled the auditorium. Donnerstein livened things up with his findings on aggressive pornography, informing the audience that prolonged exposure led his subjects to trivialize rape. As usual, Donnerstein's visuals were compelling: a remarkable sequence from an R-rated (US) film called "Toolbox Murders" which features a female victim masturbating in a bathtub before being brutally murdered to the tune of a love song. Still, none of the material was in context.

continued on p. 27

B.C. Women's Centres meet

Eighty women representing 30 women's centres from throughout British Columbia and the Yukon met in Richmond at the beginning of March to discuss funding, networking and priorities. The conference, which arose from concern about the funding insecurities experienced by the centres, was sponsored and attended by representatives of the Secretary of State Women's Programs.

Women at the conference attended workshops on the funding process, writing applications, networking, and the priorities of the centres. Many pointed out the added burden that women's centres are taking on in the face of massive cuts to social services in B.C. The result was a resolution to lobby the Secretary of State to keep adequate ongoing funding in place for women's centres working toward social change. Carol Gordon, of the Cranbrook Women's Centre, says, "We don't want to have to keep changing our goals to accomodate Secretary of State rules for qualifying."

The presence of Secretary of State representatives enabled the women to drive this point home, says Gordon. "One of the reasons the conference was so good was we could voice our feelings in unison. They were right there, they had to listen, and I think they heard us."

Other results of the conference were the formation of a provincial steering committee, and plans for another conference to be held next year. The steering committee will be working on sharing information in the province and the Yukon as well as implementing the resolutions.They have already mailed a post-conference questionnaire to the delegates, asking what their centres have, and what they need. A packet of materials compiled from presentations delivered at the conference is also available.

For more information contact the Steering Committee: Carol Gordon, c/o Cranbrook Women's Centre, 101 7th Ave. South, Cranbrook, V1C 2J3, 426-2912.

MOVEMENT MATTERS

Liberal budget: Another disappointment for pensioners

by Lorri Rudland

In December, 1983, after months of special hearings across Canada, the Parliamentary Task Force on Pension Reform released its report. Unfortunately the report will not significantly assist women.

Following its release, Minister of Finance Marc Lalonde brought down the Feb. 15 Liberal budget. In the budget Lalonde was supposed to demonstrate the Liberal government's oft-stated commitment to improve pensions, particularly the lot of women. Not surprisingly, the budget was another disappointment for pensioners.

The major goals of pension reform are to ensure that retirement income is not too severely reduced from pre-retirement income, and that it be adequate to establish a dignified standard of living. The Parliamentary Task Force failed to come to grips with these issues despite the testimony of most women's organizations, labour unions, and progressive community groups, whose solutions were clear: raise Old Age Security (OAS) to a decent standard of living, do away with the income-tested Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS) as much as possible, and double the earnings-related Canada/Quebec Pension Plan from a 25% to a 50% replacement rate of pre-retirement income. None of these groups expressed any confidence in the private plans, which could be notoriously unreliable, not available in all jobsites, discriminatory to women and not protected against inflation.

All of these groups expressed confidence in the public Canada/Quebec Pension Plan which has immediate vesting, portability (transfer of plan between workplaces), inflation protection and is generally non-discriminatory.

The Parliamentary Task Force failed in three major ways to address the real needs of women and men in Canada for a dignified retirement income:

1. They failed to increase the OAS and GIS to at least the poverty line. Instead they recommended that the GIS (the income tested supplement) be increased to a maximum of $102/mth, which would equal $644. Under the recommended increase, Task Force members admit that it would provide no benefit increase to 3/4 of the elderly. It would only assist the extremely poor.

The Liberal government's response to this recommendation in their February budget speech was to reduce the increase by 1/2. Pensioners will now receive a $50 increase: $25 on July 1st and on Dec. 1st. This amount raises a pensioner's income to $7100/yr., which is $1300 below the urban poverty line.

2. They failed to recommend an expansion of the Canada/Quebec Pension Plan (C/QPP). Instead, they rely on private plans to do the job.

3. They failed to redress the poverty of all women over age 65, whether they worked in the home full-time or in the paid labour force. Instead, they recommended a small homemaker's supplement ($130/mth) which will go to one-earner couples only (where the spouse works full-time in the home). This proposal bonuses the one-earner family (13% more pension income than the 2-earner family or single working person) and compensates full-time homemaker's for housework, while ignoring the housework of single women, or women who work in the paid labour force and at home. Most significantly, pensions for homemakers becomes a kind of deferred wages for housework. It reinforces traditional roles of women and philosophically allies women with the new right who have no doubt whatsoever about where women belong.

Pensions for homemakers reinforces traditional roles and philosophically allies women with the new right, who have no doubt whatsoever about where women belong.

The Parliamentary Task Force made clear its commitment to private and individual pension plans as the correct vehicle from which Canadians could prepare for retirement. So, they tidied up the private plans.

Certainly, many of their recommendations we appreciate, and are long overdue, including a two year vesting rule, coverage for part-time workers, disclosure to both spouses of the full details of pension benefits, mandatory credit-splitting between spouses, mandatory survivor's benefits, some inflation protection and opposition to termination of survivor benefits upon remarriage in both C/QPP and private plans. But these adjustments are not good enough. The majority of Canadian women and some men over the age of 65 will still live below the poverty line.

In the February budget speech, Lalonde reiterated his party's commitment to the elderly and then told them how much of an increase they would receive. As previously stated, the increase is only $50 spread over 1984. The rest of the amendments Lalonde proposed are in line with the Parliamentary Task Force proposals above: Strengthen the private plans and improve the individual retirement savings plans.

But only 38% of women workers are presently covered by private plans and no sudden increase should be expected as private plans have not expanded in any significant way for over forty years.

Lalonde has not made any commitment to the special homemakers pension, and instead stated that he will begin discussion with the provinces on introducing this item into the CPP and on improving CPP survivor and disability pensions.

KINESIS

KINESIS is published ten times a year by Vancouver Status of Women. Its objectives are to enhance understanding about the changing position of women in society and work actively towards achieving social change. VIEWS EXPRESSED IN KINESIS are those of the writer and do not necessarily reflect VSW policy. All unsigned material is the responsibility of the Kinesis editorial group.

CORRESPONDENCE: Kinesis, Vancouver Status of Women, 400 A West 5th Ave., Vancouver, B.C. V5Y 1J8.

MEMBERSHIP in Vancouver Status of Women is $20/year (or what you can afford). This includes a subscription to Kinesis. Individual subscriptions to Kinesis are $13/year.

SUBMISSIONS are welcome. We reserve the right to edit, and submission does not guarantee publication.

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KINESIS is a member of the Canadian Periodical Publishers Association.

Nelson women protest sexist ad

Nelson women are taking action to protest the local paper's endorsement of a violent and sexist advertisement.

The Nelson Daily News has reprinted, free, on its editorial page, a blown up version of a Heads' Boots ad that advertises "Powerful boots for men who work" with a semi-clad woman with an axe embedded near her head.

Anyone who sees sexual symbols and connotations in the apple, axe or trees surrounding the scantily-clad woman should "seek psychiatric help," said the publisher's note in the March 5 edition.

Local Kootenay Tractor manager Peter Hartridge, whose store placed the ad, says, "It's sexist in a way, but hell, today what isnt ? You look at anything it's sexist. Just look at car ads." He claimed that the ad, which he calls "eye-catching," does not perpetuate sexism.

Hartridge also said it would be fair to use a black person or a Jew to sell a product, where that kind of advertising could clearly be labelled exploitative.

The Nelson Women's Centre has sent the ad, along with a complaint that it sets up a potential rape scene, to Media Watch, the national watchdog on sexism in the media. Kootenay West MP Lyle Kristiansen has also registered his objections.

-from Images

ACROSS B.C.

Artists protest video cancellation

Vancouver artists put two resolutions through the Vancouver Art Gallery (VAG) AGM, and organized an informational picket of the gallery as part of mounting public protest against the first major assault on alternative forms of representing sexuality in the city.

When Luke Rombout, Director of VAG, decided to cancel 'Sexual Views', the second part of the *Confused* video series by Paul Wong and his co-producers Jeannette Reinhardt, Gina Daniels, and Gary Bourgeois, he was acting as an ex officio censorship board.

The artists' protests took the form of an informational picket a few days prior to the AGM, during which they painted banners and collected more than 300 signatures in opposition to the decision, and two motions at the AGM, requesting that the VAG Board of Trustees apologize to Wong and his co-producers, and that a committee be formed to examine the lines of authority at the gallery. Both motions passed. About 300 people attended the meeting.

While Rombout's decision is not direct state censorship in the sense that it is experienced in Ontario, where *Not a Love Story*, some gay and lesbian publications, *A Message From Our Sponsor*, and other works critiquing the dominant expression of sexuality have been banned, it is nonetheless a political ruling.

'Sexual Views' is comprised of twenty-seven interviews with individuals, couples, and families (traditional and non-traditional) speaking about their early sexual experiences, sexual orientation, and preferences of sexual activity. It is a valuable work in that it presents sexuality as information, not as erotic or pornographic material; it provides a clear view that heterosexuality is not the only possible sexual practice and it empowers the speakers by allowing them to represent their sense of their own sexuality to the camera and the audience.

Rombout cancelled the show because of its content. He felt that the Vancouver art public (an ambiguous entity) was not ready to see people talking openly about sex, albeit in a restricted viewing space. Not only is that decision presumptuous, but it also suggests that alternate attempts to represent sexual experience have no place in a public arena. It relegates sexual experience to the private sphere of the bedroom, while leaving untouched the rampant increase of pornography, rock video, and right-wing morality which fills another public, but supposedly private, space, the television.

A recent letter, drafted by the Vancouver Artists League for endorsement, says the decision "represents a dangerous and negtive suppression of the artist's right to create. It undermines the public's right to have access to as broad as possible a spectrum of art work within a public gallery."

The letter, signed by the Unit Pitt Gallery, the Western Front Society, Video Inn, and the League, states its objections to the show's cancellation for several reasons, including that "it is not the function of a public art gallery to control the production of art, but rather to encourage and support its development." The letter objects specifically to the rejection of the show only three days prior to its scheduled opening, and says that the gallery has impugned the reputation and artistic integrity of the artists.

It goes on to point out that the parameters of video art include documentary and semi-documentary concern with social, political and moral issues, and that 'Sexual Views' falls well within those parameters. The artists also question "why pornography is readily available within our culture, but an art work that deals with sexuality in an honest and non-exploitative way is censored."

The letter expresses a fear on the part of these artists that Rombout's decision is "a political one based upon a new orientation of (the galler's) leadership towards a conservative public image, presumed to be in line with its recently enlarged membership, its extensive corporate patronage and public funding from municipal. provincial, and federal agencies."

Women who feel strongly about this issue can send a letter to VAG at 750 Hornby St., Vancouver, B.C. The Paul Wong Defense Fund can be contacted at 688-3827.

Kamins melds art and politics

by Michèle Wollstonecroft

Jeannie Kamins is a visual artist who is very visible in the Vancouver community both as an artist and a political person. Kamins, an active member of the Vancouver Artist's Alliance, was part of the Artist's protest at the Vancouver Art Gallery on March 18th. Jeannie was responsible in the five hours of the protest for collecting the 378 signatures on a petition protesting Luke Rombout's cancellation of Paul Wong's video installation.

"The cancellation of this video show is symptomatic; I am supporting this as an issue that affects all artists. My reason behind the protest is that the Vancouver Art Gallery shows no respect for or interest in local artists. We feel that we have a right to have representation and participation in the Vancouver Art Gallery. We don't want it to be just a museum."

Jeannie Kamins, herself, is exhibiting her work in two current exhibitions. *Aerotika II* at the Phoenix Gallery, is a group show based on the theme of the erotic. It includes some of Jeannie's large fabric applique of people bathing.

Jeannie also has a one-woman exhibition, *Portraits*, at the Unit/Pitt Exhibition Space.

A happy-looking self-portrait in the front window invites the passer-by into the gallery. In the centre of the room is a piece that represents an entirely different sentiment. *Thank God They Don't Have the Bomb* is a large painting which portrays 11 members of the "inner-circle" of the Socreds. Bill Bennett is portrayed in a tutu, Grace McCarthy is there, Rogers, Hewitt and so on. The scene is like an orgy, with fleshy pink bodies, one dressed only in leather whipping another. They feast on drinks and food served to them by Jack Munro. In the background looms the stadium.

Beside this painting is a corresponding written text that describes each minister and explains his/her role in budget cutbacks. When asked if she thought the people portrayed in this painting might find it offensive, Jeannie replied, "I sent them all invitations to this show."

. . . Our Apologies . . .

Kinesis regrets the following error which appeared in our March 84 issue. Re: book review by Cy-Thea Sand on Makeda Silvera's book *Silenced*, fourth paragraph from the end, second to last sentence should have read: "It is a disquieting image and an indication of the limitations of radical feminist theory", not racial feminist theory, as printed. Our apologies to Cy-Thea Sand, the author of the article.

Battering case sets precedent

by Margaret Keelaghan

The issue of battered women is one that we are all concerned about, but when a man goes one step further and murders his wife or lover, we can feel nothing short of outrage. Men are murdering their wives in 'domestic disputes' at an alarming rate and worse, a significant majority of these men are getting off with appallingly light sentences.

A case in point is the brutal slaying of Linda Marie Chemko late last summer in Vernon. Statements at the preliminary hearing on November 1, 1983, by witnesses bore testimony to frequent beatings before the death, the death itself being the result of one of the most severe beatings the coroner had ever seen. Despite a mass of evidence supporting the original second degree murder charge, on November 24, Steven Chemko pleaded guilty to a reduced charge of manslaughter. He was sentenced to four years. Chances are he will be released in less than two.

One of the justifications for Chemko's light sentence was the precedence set by other cases with other such murderers getting off with the same or lighter sentences. Obviously, some changes in the judicial system are in order. The underlying mentality still seems to be that a man's wife is his possession and he may do what he wants with her, and this includes killing her.

One step in the direction of making changes is to demand a public inquiry in to the Chemko case. As many letters to the Attorney General as possible are needed. Please voice your concern. Write to Brian Smith, Attorney General of B.C., Parliament Buildings, 506 Government St., Victoria, B.C. V8V 1X4.

New university challenges budget

The first semester term at Budget U. has officially started. The university, opened by Women Against the Budget, is intended to give information about the current political situation in B.C.

Course offerings cover a wide variety of topics, including series on "Grimm Fairy Tales: the Mythology of the Right", "Newspeak is Alive and Well and Living in British Columbia", "Cut Along the Bias: What's Happening to B.C.'s Educational System", "How the Right Got it Together and Why the Left Had Better", and "Everything is For the Best In This Best of All Possible Worlds." Featured speakers come from diverse backgrounds to cover many different perspectives on the problem. Courses are designed to promote student participation. Budget U. creators hope that the university will promote new ideas and new political strategies to deal with government social and economic policies.

Unlike other universities in this province, registration is not required, and courses are free and open to everybody.

If you want more information about the courses, which run into May, contact the Lower Mainland Solidarity Coalition at 879-6884; or 255-7820; or 251-1402. Or write to Women Against the Budget, Box 65366 Station F, Vancouver V5N 5P3. Donations are welcome, please make cheques out to Women Against the Budget, and mark them for Budget U.

Graduation night is Saturday, May 12 at the Ukranian Hall, 805 E. Pender and diplomas will be awarded.

ACROSS BC

Women and the NDP

Where to from here?

by Jan DeGrass

As the New Democratic Party heads for its May leadership convention, it is apparent that many feminists are left somewhat disillusioned with the party's performance over the past year. After all, the disillusionment started early, back when they lost the May '83 election after having had seven years to develop new policy, work out a winning strategy, and "revitalize" the party - a phrase that features prominently in much of the leadership campaign literature.

Just two months following the NDP defeat last spring, voters got a taste of the consequences of losing. Everyone - NDP or not - lost to the Social Credit's harsh and repressive budget package that came down in the wake of their electoral victory. To a party steeped in the importance of parliamentary procedure, the NDP MLA's subsequent trashing in the legislature virtually stripped them of any remaining ability to take up the vanguard of the anti-budget fightback. As the legislature dragged to its weary end, thousands of B.C. citizens threw their support behind Operation Solidarity and the Solidarity Coalition, taking their fight onto the streets and the picket lines.

Even at that point, however, there was still a certain amount of sympathy for the elected opposition MLA's who were fighting a losing battle with a government that was prepared to change the rules whenever it wanted and that left no tactic untried to render the opposition as ineffectual as possible. But when the NDP publicly withdrew its support for the Solidarity strike action, arguing that the legislature was the only place for the fightback to take place, sympathy was increasingly lost in a groundswell of anti-budget outrage that was heading for a general strike.

In the November '83 issue of *Kinesis* the article "Women Evaluate Crisis" gave a sampling of opinions from feminists active in Solidarity organizing. During the course of interviewing more than 20 women for that article it became clear to *Kinesis* writers that a profound frustration with the NDP leadership's lack of support for community based anti-budget work was brewing. This month, with the provincial leadership campaign underway, and a cry from a number of candidates for a renewed party, is a good opportunity to examine the source of that frustration from a feminist's point of view.
view.

Where does the disillusionment stem from? Are the cries for revitalization really new, or are they they same old electioneering under a new title? Is the 'women's candidate' Margaret Birrell running to assauge the party's feminist conscience or is she a serious contender? If, as evidenced by her background, she is a hard-working women's rights activist, why has there been such an underwhelming show of support for her from the B.C. women's movement?

As has been amply pointed out by Women Against the Budget, the Solidarity Coalition, and a multitude of other social service groups, those who have been most severely affected by the Social Credit budget have been women. On an electoral level, women are left with little choice but to fight the policies adversely affecting women by voting for the NDP or not voting at all. In an essentially two-party province, dissatisfaction with the Socred's policies means only one alternative. But how much of an alternative is the NDP?

People who vote for a party because they have no choice, are unlikely to be enthusiastic or vocal campaigners. They are more likely to feel as if they are being taken for granted. Why would politicians concern themselves with a constituency that has its guaranteed vote? Unless, of course, those politicians truly believe the principles that its party stands for.

Evidence of belief in party principles is always abundant during campaign time, but an examination of the six candidate profiles as published in *The Democrat* (the NDP's paper), indicates where the candidates stand on women's issues.

Margaret Birrell, certainly, buttresses her campaign with two issues she says she is "convinced are of vital concern to New Democrats": technological change and the rising waves of commercialized pornography". Although she stresses that the hi-tech revolution is of concern to all workers, it is surely no accident that these two issues are of paramount importance to women. When questioned, Birrell contended that she sees women's issues in every issue. "There are policies already in place within the NDP," she says. "If elected, a woman leader would move on those programs immediately."

That sentiment is echoed by Frances Wasserlein, an activist who has worked with battered women for many years. "Oh yes, the policy is there in the NDP... there's policy coming out of their ears... but its action they need." Wasserlein won't support the present campaign because she has lost a lot of faith in the NDP. "I'd still do election work for the NDP as an alternative to the Socreds. The NDP is all we've got. But I really think there are so many other issues that women have to work on, especially issues like violence against women."

Wasserlein points out that Birrell's is an "uphill fight - a fight to change attitudes and behaviour. She may be seen as an outspoken feminist, even a troublemaker, who is being nurtured in the bosom of the party. Later on, a moderate candidate would look much less dangerous by comparison. She's very brave. I don't mistrust her motives or what she's doing."

Not only Birrell, but Bill King, Bob Skelly and even Dave Stupich invoke vows of action for the 'women's rights cause'. Skelly in particular, calls upon the NDP to "reach out in a positive way to the women's movement, to youth, to environmentalists, to the unemployed and to the peace movement" - a package which cuts a wide swathe through feminist concerns. But in Birrell's opinion, the reason most candidates are showing sensitivity to women's issues is because she came onto the platform. Whether that is the case or not, cries for a change in the party may be coming a bit too late. Many women may just not be listening anymore.

Esther Shannon, Women Against the Budget activist, says she considered supporting Margaret Birrell, describing her as "a dedicated and committed woman, probably more so than the NDP deserves." Shannon felt that a logical extension of much of the work women were doing on the budget would be to move their organizing en masse into the party, perceiving Birrell as the kind of candidate who might support such a move. But the idea didn't fly among a lot of other women activists, said Shannon, and she suggests at least two reasons why it didn't. "First, there is considerable suspicion among many feminists of electoral politics...secondly, there's a problem with the role that the NDP has played over the last couple of years."

Shannon expresses the views of other women interviewed when she says the NDP has lost touch with their roots:"They gave little or no support to the protest movement arising out of the budget - and that was disgraceful. They're not supporting the actions that people produce; they were trying to keep too much to the middle ground. Frankly, with the Socreds forming a visible right wing, I don't think there is any middle ground in B.C. right now." Or, as another WAB activist Penny Thompson, puts it: "Women either have been burned or are burned out" by their organizing efforts with the NDP.

Wasserlein agrees: "The thunderous silence of the NDP toward Solidarity, from about July onward, was horrible. It was like being left alone out there in the political wilderness. I still remember how angry I felt when I listened to Dave Barrett give a TV interview at the end of August and say that he didn't think people could organize an anti-budget group like Solidarity... he didn't think that people could keep it together. It shatters any feeling of support one might have for the NDP leadership."

Birrell, whose campaign has moved in concert with the efforts of party workers to transform the NDP, makes some distinctions about the leadership of her party. "I think you have to differentiate between the leadership who didn't support Solidarity and the rank and file NDP who were out on the marches and were actively working with the protest movement."

"I completely understand many anti-budget organizer's frustration with the party," she said. "But within the party, groups like the Women's Committee have continually worked to make policy changes and to make the structure non-hierarchical. We now have a body of literature. We've published *Priorities* (NDP women's magazine) for 12 years. But of course we have to reinforce those words. There has to be action."

Birrell says that during her campaign many people have identified with her as a woman talking about democracy within the party. "I get support from a tremendously broad basis," she says, "the broad democratic base that is so important to women." Birrell makes it clear that her motivations to contest the leadership of the party do not centre only on raising womens issues, however. She considers herself a serious candidate, and says she is out to win the campaign race.

Johanna Den Hertog, NDP women's activist and trade union workers, makes a point regarding how women interested in the NDP could actively work to bring about changes in the party. "It's so important for people to realize that the NDP is not an anonymous huge machine. There's only so much we can do, even in the party. When you compare the resources we have, with

continued next page

ACROSS CANADA

Festive Collective pride

Women in Montreal showed their collective pride for International Women's Day 1984 with week-long celebrations. From March 5 to 10th activities were organized by Women's centres all over the city, including Com-femmes, Centre des Femmes de Laval, La Ligue des Femmes du Quebec, the YWCA, Centre D'Education et D'Action des Femmes, Curio-Femmes, Centre des Femmes de Verdun, Comite des Femmes Immigrantes and many more. The Women's Information and Referral Centre chose March 8th as the official date to change its name to The Women's Centre. The McGill Women's Union and the Concordia Women's Collective collaborated to present an art show, films by women directors and a series of discussions on feminist fiction, poetry, women in Nicaragua, pornography, film and literature.

On March 8th, 3,500 women of all ages and diverse backgrounds gathered at the Montreal Paladium to enjoy an evening of performance and song; there were 3 hours of showtime in all with a dance afterwards. This event was sold out! La Vie en Rose (publishers of the Quebecoise feminist periodical of the same name),who organized this spectacular but crowded evening, are talking about having a similar event next year in a larger space so that more women can attend.

On Saturday, March 10th, approximately 4000 women participated in a march to celebrate IWD. This two hour demonstration had a festive spirit, with clowns, balloons, music, songs and slogans such as "toute les femmes ensemble/de plus en plus fortes" and indeed, after such a week of solidarity, women's pride was strong.

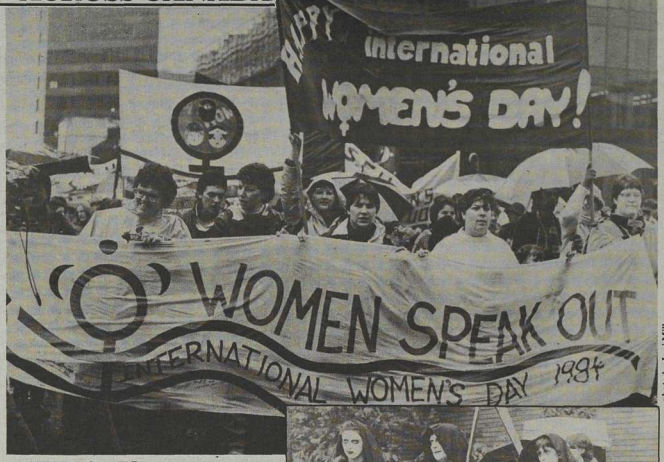

photo by Joni Miller

IWD in Vancouver

In spite of wet weather, approximately 400 women took to the Vancouver streets March 10th to celebrate International Women's Day (IWD)(above and right). The march/parade included banners, costumes, and fooats, from women's groups throughout the Lower Mainland. IWD activities, on the theme 'Women Speak Out', continued over the weekend, with an Information Day on Sunday at Sir Charles Tupper School, which had a full days programme in French, as well as films, information tables, and workshops on a range of topics.

photo by Joni Miller

R.E.A.L. women attack feminism

by Pat Daley

One of their steering committee members is named "Femmie". One of their aims is "to promote, secure, and defend legislation which upholds the Judeo-Christian view of traditional marriage and the family." They are R.E.A.L. Women, "realistic, equal, active for life," and they're "out for action," according to their President Grace Petrasek.

At a February press conference announcing the organization's existence, Petrasek said 10,000 women have joined since they got together last October "to express the beliefs of the majority of women throughout the country."

If their aims are indeed "realistic," then the majority of Canadian women recognize woman's role as educator and nurturer of the family in the home, recognize woman's contribution to society through her volunteer work in the community, support policies for women whose primary concern is the care and well being of their families, and support the pro-life movement.

"We have touched a nerve across the nation," Petrasek said. She may be right, especially if one considers the nerves of the three to four million women represented by the member organizations of the National Action Committee on the Status of Women (NAC).

"Their (NAC and Status of Women's Councils) views on many crucial issues undermine the family and are not those of the real women of Canada," states the Thornhill-based organization's brochure.

Petrasek said R.E.A.L. women have no interest in affiliation with NAC and would not work with feminists against pornography, for instance. They plan to affiliate with other organizations but Petrasek would not say with whom.

She did admit, however, that R.E.A.L. Women are looking into co-operating with organizations like the Alberta Federation of Women United for Families. (R.E.A.L. Women claims to have 1,000 chapters in Alberta). AFWUF was formed in November 1982 at a conference featuring American anti-ERA activist Phyllis Schlafly. It would appear that Schlafly is also the inspiration for R.E.A.L. women.

"We know her and know her work," Petrasek said, adding, however, that there is no connection with Schlafly. Even so, they have adopted her definition of the family-two or more people living together, related by blood, marriage or adoption-and share her mistrust of the media.

In fact, R.E.A.L. Women's program could have come straight from Schlafly's speech to AFWUF: opposition to choice on abortion, no-fault divorce, affirmative action, equal pay for work of equal value, universal day care; support for criminalization of prostitutuion, increased family allowances, a separate mother's benefit, homemakers' pensions, financial recognition for caring for elderly parents in the home, and government-funded parenting courses.

Many of the women active in R.E.A.L. Women come from the anti-choice movement, but Petrasek said they wanted an organization that could address broader issues.

Although there are 10,000 members, presumably each paying the $5 membership fee, Petrasek says R.E.A.L. Women has no funds. They will be applying for government funding for their lobbying efforts and their efforts to "safeguard the family, the basis of our society."

(Reprinted from the TORONTO CLARION, Feb. 1984.)

NDP Leadership continued from p. 4

those of the Social Credit Party, it's amazing we even do as much as we're doing."

Den Hertog, like other politically active women in the NDP, wishes more women would take an active role in electoral politics. "It counts for women to get power. It matters to many people who is in power, and what you fight for you do, within a much larger forum. Mind you, I don't think we automatically get power by having a woman in the leadership role - its harder than that. But I do think it's a good idea for women to run for these positions."

Birrell herself suggests that maybe one of the reasons many women don't vote is that "as women, too often, we look at political structures and realize they work against us." Nonetheless, she is prepared to throw herself into the party leadership race and that, in itself, is an interesting move considering the blanket of indifference that seems to envelop much of the women's community on the issue of the NDP as a viable opposition, at this time. In many ways, she faces a double struggle. Not only must she convince her party that she is indeed a serious and viable candidate for party leadership, but she must do so without a groundswell of feminist support in the province. The lack of support, however, seems to have little to do with Margaret Birrell as an individual. It stems from a dissatisfaction with the party as a whole.

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"One of the good things about the organization starting out small was that the women within the organization raised a debate within the party on what should be the role of women in the society. Had a party come to power without that kind of analysis, there would have been no clear perspective on the conditions and aspirations of women in Grenada."

Phyllis Coard, Secretary for Women's Affairs in Grenada's New Jewel Movement. February 1983.

Phyllis Coard was the Secretary for Women's Affairs in Grenada's Bishop government. Currently she is imprisoned, along with her husband former Deputy Minister Bernard Coard. The following is exerpted from a speech delivered at a conference on "Co-ordination of Development Funding"(The Role of Non-Government Organizations in rural development of Grenada), on February 21st, 1983. It has been edited only for length.

The organization of women really began in December 1977 with the organization of the Women's Arm of the New Jewel Movement. Before, the women had never been organized in any kind of community action programme at all. Of course there were women's organizations, but they were mainly church groups and charitable groups, but in terms of a social action programme designed to engage women in participation in the society, that had never happened before. This organization in its original conception was really very small.

In those days, we were living through a time of terror and a lot of people were scared to join anything that looked as it it was against the dictatorship. Many women were afraid because if they had a job it was something precious. They could not afford to join anything that would be likely to run the risk of losing them their job, or that could even lose them a child of theirs. Many were the only breadwinner in the family. Unemployment at the time was 50% and higher among women.

Because of this, the organization stayed small in terms of membership although it had fairly broad support. We used to give out pamphlets calling for equal pay for women, talking about how to bring down the price of food and create jobs for women etc.

One of the good things about the organization starting like that was that the women within the organization, and the New Jewel Movement which later took power, raised a debate within the party and with the men in the party on what should be the role of women in the society. Had a party come to power without that kind of analysis, there would have been no clear perspective on the condition and aspirations of women in Grenada.

The women who started the organization were a group of active and dynamic women who were engaged in a constant and rigorous debate. By the time the revolution occured there were clear outlines; we had reached a clear consensus as to what must be done to bring about equality for women in the society. The four decisions that we had made were firstly, the state must have a firm official postion advocating equality for women and that the state must support that with laws which would ensure that no legal discrimination against women was committed.

The second decision was that every woman must have the opportunity to work and therefore to be economically independent. Most Grenadian women want to work. A recent survey among the unemployed women of the country showed that only 13% of those questioned said that they did not want to work outside the home. We think that women should be encouraged to be economically independent and when we say work we do not mean working in low paying jobs. Sometimes women in some countries are given the right to work but it's mainly at the lowest paid jobs in the society. We want to ensure that women have an equal chance to get the better paying jobs in the society through equal access to skills training and education at all levels.

Thirdly, we saw that it would be necessary to provide certain social facilities for women to allow them to work and become independent. I'm talking here particularly about day care, and also night care centres. When we talk about independence we don't only mean economic independence, but we mean the independence to involve oneself in community activities in the development of the nation. That means having to go to a lot of meetings at night. Women's meetings, Zonal Councils, Parish Councils - are our form of democratic participation. Women must attend these meetings to take part in the whole political process. Therefore, we want to develop a system of night nurseries as well as day nurseries. Of course there are other facilities like laundrettes and cheap restaurants and so forth that we are going to need in this effort.

Lastly, but definitely not the least important decision the New Jewel Movement made, was for women to receive education geared toward increasing the consciousness and confidence of women. We found that quite often when women have the technical abilities or leadership potential, a lack of consciousness and confidence about their ability, gets in the way. A leadership position in a trade union or a group is often turned down because of this lack of self-confidence.
We therefore feel it very important to offer leadership training, and I'm talking about the broad mass of women, because of the endless opportunities for women to play a leadership role at grassroots organizing levels, in cultural groups, in sporting groups, in women's groups, in youth groups, in trade unions and so on. Women today in Grenada have an opportunity to play a dynamic leadership role, in political leadership, in social services, etc. There are also jobs in managing industries which women must prepare themselves for.

Unlike during the old days in Grenada and in the Caribbean generally (even today) where leadership training and management training was/is given only to the elite, our view is that it must be given to all who want it. The very low level of education in general is one of the things that holds back our working people. Our women in particular tend to have a lower educational level because very often parents allowed the boys to stay on at school while the girls left school at an early age. It is not just the case of having passed through primary school and achieved a primary school certificate. It is also a case of general education - knowing about all kinds of things which middle class people learn about in a variety of different ways through the newspapers, through their families, their homes and so on. The working people of a country very often do not get that opportunity.

As a Women's Organization we think it's very important to learn about international affairs, and how to safeguard the health of the family and the nation, the economy and what has led to our underdevelopment, women and what role they should play in this process.

During the first three years of the revolution, with the establishment of the National Women's Organization as well as the ministry of Women's Affairs (we are the first island in the Caribbean to have a Ministry of Women's Affairs. I think we are the third in Latin America), the official policy has been to place as many funds as possible and as many resources as possible at the disposal of the Ministry on the question of education.

Unemployment among women had declined from 14,000 to 4,000 in the four years of the revolution. That is from approximately 69% unemployment to under 20%, which is still a high figure because 70% of the unemployed are women. The reason for this is that the demands of national development have meant that priority has been placed on agriculture and construction. These being traditionally male oriented areas, a lot of unemployed young men with not many skills have been able to find jobs. With the exception of some older women who are agricultural workers, women have not seen these as job areas.

However, while in the very first agricultural training school in St. David's there were 46 students of which only 6 were women, at Rocage on the west coast a few months after that, there were about

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40 students and about 15 of these were women. And at the last school in Boulonge there were about 60 students and half of them were women.

This brings us to the present and to the National Women's Organization projects that we are putting forward at this conference dealing with "consciousness raising and leadership training" and "skills training" (with particular emphasis on auto mechanics). The focus of the latter has emanated from women in the Parish Councils who were very interested in learning to operate heavy equipment, ie. tractors, bulldozers, etc. and other non-traditional work. Added to that interest, the needs of national development demand that during the next three years, the majority of jobs would be created in agriculture and construction - agriculture, because it is our major industry, and construction to lay the physical infrastructure of our country.

Our country is so underdeveloped that we believe that women should not demand special jobs to be created for them, but should enter the non-traditional field and work alongside men. Some women responded very confidently but there were also women who said, "Well, we could not go and fork land, we are just not physically strong enough." However, the debate among women deepened within all our communities and it was possible to see a shift in attitude among us. Having got over the first shock, a lot of women started to say, "This is really foolishness to say women cannot do this and women cannot do that."

Women started to come forward with ideas about the types of non-traditional work they would like to get into. A lot of women were also interested in carpentry, furniture-making, masonry and plumbing. Basically the aim of the National Women's Organization is to ensure that women get both the academic and technical skills, as well as the leadership skills to ensure that they play a full and equal part in society. (The National Women's Organization is made up of 6,500 women representing 28% of the population of Grenada).

Lastly, we are involved in education through the health brigades. In this we would be co-operating very closely with the Ministry of Health. They have recently appointed a National Women's Organization member to lead the programme of Voluntary Health Brigades which would be vehicles for health education within every community. These health brigades have proven to be highly successful in other countries in reducing infant mortality and improving the general health of the people. Previously seen as the preserve of a few health professionals, we are really breaking the question of health down and aiming to make health education the preserve of the entire people. For we think that is the human right of every person to know how to protect their health.

In summary, our programmes are social education, leadership training, women's mobilization into the programmes of education, skill training in agriculture, motor mechanics and craft, and health education through our health brigades. **With thanks to Dionne Brand for making this speech available to Kinesis.**

photo from Tribune, Sydney

Australia

IWD: Bigger and better

by Kate Rowe

With the emergence in Australia of 2nd wave feminism in the late 60's-early 70's, came the rekindling of International Women's Day. It was and still is, seen as an event which focuses on particular issues that women would like to have the politicians do something about; it is also affirming how good it feels to be a woman, to be feminist and hopefully to make people look at their own attitudes about women's position in society.

The first IWD march in Sydney took place in 1971; the major themes being child care; free,safe contraception; equal opportunities in education and safe legal abortions on demand.

This year's march proved to be bigger and better than ever-much to the surprise of all of us. Five thousand women, children and some men congregated at Town Hall Square in the centre of the city. The scene was multi-coloured-many dressed in the suffrage colours of green and lilac. People handed out leaflets on a gamut of issues including the prostitute collective, a photography exhibition on the Pine Gap (women's peace camp) and Anzac Day which is a public holiday in Australia commemorating the Battle of Gallipoli in 1915, a women's S/M workshop, paedophellia seminars, an upcoming women and work conference and many more.

The march took almost two hours to weave through the three main streets of the central business district.

This year women and unions, Aboriginal and various migrant women groups were represented and it was a pleasing sight to see that these groups feel part of the women's movement.

Women this year carried dozens of banners which clearly showed the growing diversity of the movement in Australia. As well as the groups just mentioned, other banners included a beautiful one from Actors Equity which said "Dead Men Don't Rape", one from Lesbian Line-lesbian teachers, feminist bookshop, and a contingent of women from a Women's Services Repair Project funded by the government to create jobs. Migrant groups represented were Turkish, Greek, Vietnamese, South African, and the perennial Spartacists and other socialist groups.

There was much noise with many women beating on drums and even a banjo. Two women were on stilts and danced to the beat for the whole route.

The march finished up in Hyde Park where a market had been set up selling food, drinks, books, clothes and massages. The celebration finished with a women only dance which was attended by 800 women who danced to local bands plus the "Typical Girls" disco.

The media coverage was better this year with more accurate reports, longer T.V. coverage and a focus on the politics as well as the celebrations. One radio station devoted the whole day to IWD using women D.J.s, women's music and women's programming on Greenham Common, Pine Gap, work and sexuality.

It is interesting to look back over the past thirteen years and see how the same issues have been raised year after year, as well as new ones specific to certain economic and political times. Themes like child care, equal pay, equal employment opportunities and the right to work are still major demands.

An abortion can be obtained in Australia though not on demand and it remains a bureaucratic nightmare. Contraception is also available. By 1975 the issue of discrimination was being debated and seen at last to be relevant to women's liberation. By 1983 the IWD Broadsheet was translated into seven languages. In the early 80's the struggle of Aboriginal women and their land rights was debated and support groups set up.

Most recently, due to the world-wide recession, the rights of women in employment, sexual harassment as an industrial issue, and women's activities within unions have started to be debated within the women's movement rather than to be seen as largely irrelevant. Politics aside, IWD has always been a wonderful colourful occasion with several thousand women marching through the main streets of Sydney with feelings of strength and unity.

Politics aside, IWD has always been a wonderful, colourful occasion with several thousand women marching through the streets of Sydney with feeling of strength and unity.

photo from Tribune, Sydney

The deployment of cruise and PershingII missiles in Western Europe changed the face of Western European peace movements, in some places forcing a demoralized populus to regroup and rethink, in others precipitating more and more radical actions. For activists on the other side of the Iron Curtain, the deployments have had serious ramifications - the fledgling 'unofficial' (that is, not state controlled) peace movements of Eastern Europe face more than the usual harassment from the state as a consequence of increased NATO pressure on the Soviet Union.

In Czechoslovakia, for instance, the USSR responded to this pressure with the announcement of SS-20 deployment, sparking what one Czech writer reports is more widespread disquiet than any single political issue since the invasion of 1968. Public protest has been followed by police questioning on peace activities and criticism of Soviet missiles, and there has been increased repression of human rights activists, especially those who have contact with the Western peace movement. One activist was sentenced to six years in prison, a sentence which has been interpreted as a warning to Czechs not to criticise the SS-20 deployment or conduct any peace activities on the issue.

'Unofficial' peace activities continue, however, in groups throughout the USSR, and in countries outside the Soviet Union, but nonetheless under Soviet influence. These activists target the Cold War mentality as the enemy, and often lay the blame for their repression squarely at the feet of the Western forces backing the Soviet government into an increasingly defensive position.

Women are at the forefront of many of these activities - they are also frequently bearing the brunt of increased repression.

German women freed

In late January, two East German (GDR) peace women who had spent six weeks in prison were released and the charges against them were dropped.

Ulrike Poppe and Baerbel Bohley were facing charges which carried up to 12 years in prison. They were arrested on December 12 (the anniversary of the Nato two-track decision). The reason given was that they had been in contact with a member of European Nuclear Disarmament (END) and Committee for Nuclear Disarmament (CND), Barbara Einhorn. Barbara was also detained for a week.

It is not known exactly why Baerbel and Ulrike were released. One theory is that the GDR authorities responded to pleas from the Western peace movements. Letters of concern were sent to GDR head of council of state Erich Honecker and a joint letter signed by a dozen movements was sent from the International Peace Co-ordinating Centre conference in Stockholm in January.

Another theory is that the women were victims of the international climate and the relations between the USA and the USSR and between the two Germanies. They were arrested as the first cruise and Pershing were deployed and the Geneva negotiations were breaking down. They were released on January 24 as the icy climate was slightly thawed by overtures between the Kremlin and the White House and the possibilities for detente between the GDR and West Germany.

That high-level Cold War politics have an immediate effect on the tolerance for dissent in Eastern Europe was stressed during the campaign for Baerbel and Ulrike's release. A statement from representatives of GDR women's peace groups was clear on this point, and demanded that the government of West Germany "should halt deployment of the new US missiles. Otherwise it should acknowledge it's partial responsibility for the arrest of Ulrike Poppe and Baerbel Bohley." The news that they were released could indicate a growing political tolerance in the GDR for 'unofficial' peace activities.

Baerbel and Ulrike were charged with paragraph 99, section 1 of the GDR criminal code which bars anyone from passing on unclassified information which could potentially harm the image of the GDR. The alleged evidence was said to be notes that Barbara had made of their conversations, though neither they nor Barbara have any anti-GDR intentions. In fact, Barbara is lecturer in GDR women's literature and has long been working to counter the Cold War image of the GDR.

Ulrike and Baerbel identify strongly with the aims of the Western peace movements. They were amongst hundreds of women who signed a letter to Honecker in 1982 protesting a new law which conscripts women into the Armed Forces in times of emergency.

Since then, they have continued their peace activities with stalls, discussions and letters of protest - including one to the West German Bundestag after it ratified deployment of the Euromissiles in December.

About the same time that Ulrike and Baerbel were arrested, other peace activists in Leipzig, Weimar and Potsdam were also imprisoned. Letters of protest, pointing out that these people are campaigning for the same reasons as the Western peace movements (which are given good press in the GDR) should be sent to *Erich Honecker*, Staatsratsvorsitz ender of the GDR, 102 Berlin, Marx-Engels Platz.

-from END Journal

PEACE

Soviet activist arrested

Olga Medvedkova, a leading member of the Moscow Group to Establish Trust Between the USSR and the USA, was arrested on December 8 and charged with "forceful opposition to the militia". This is the latest in a series of attempts by the Soviet authorities to silence the Trust group.

Last May Olga Medvedkova bravely joined three members of Women for Life on Earth in a meeting with members of the official Soviet Peace Committee. In September, the Trust group held a joint seminar with visiting Canadian and US activists. The group feels that since they are calling for the building up of trust through a process of normalization of contacts between people East and West at all levels of society and are not calling for changes in the Soviet system, they should be allowed by the authorities to function openly.

On October 14, group member Oleg Radzinsky was sentenced to five years internal exile in Tomsk, Siberia, after one year's imprisonment awaiting trial. Moscow Trust group members who tried to attend Radzinsky's trial were prevented from doing so by police detaining them for three hours (the legal limit). They were then told by the KGB to get into a van.

Medvedkova and others refused to get in, and were beaten up and forced inside. They were taken to a derelict building and detained for four hours - by which time the trial was over.

It is these events which have led to the arrest of Olga Medvedkova and two other group members, Valery Godyak and Olga Lusnikova (who is ill with nephritis). The charge against Olga alleges that while at the police station she assaulted a policeman. Godyak and Lusnikova support Olga's testimony that none of them offered any resistance to the police. The witnesses were told that since their accounts contradicted that of the police, they would be charged with giving false evidence. The original charge against Olga, which itself carried a sentence of two years hard labour, has now been replaced by a more serious charge. The fate of the other two is not known.

Trust group members have previously been harassed by the loss of their jobs and transfers to job sites in Siberia, but now the threats have become more serious. News of other group members is also grim: it is said that the KGB is trying to frame one man on charges of drug-dealing or 'speculation', and it is reported that another was taken to a police station and observed by a ten-year-old boy for several minutes, after which he was told if he did not leave the group he would be identified as a child molester (a crime punishable by the firing squad in the USSR).

The Moscow group, though devastated by what has happened, is unlikely to end its activities. Ten new members have joined since the trial of Radzinsky, and they have a growing network of supporters in other countries.

Support for the groups and Medvedkova's case has been forthcoming from the Western European peace movement. In last January, four Greenham women went to the Soviet Embassy to protest the treatment of the Moscow activists. They managed to get to see the First Secretary shortly before 11 a.m., and talks continued for 5 1/2 hours, by which time the four women felt the conversation was being led around in circles. At that point they stopped talking, and sat in silence in the Secretary's office for 90 minutes. Finally the Secretary was forced to read a copy of the Trustbuilders' Appeal that the women had brought with them.

-from Peace News

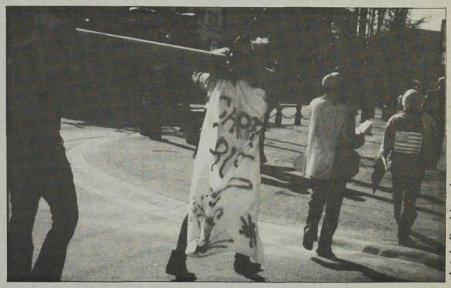
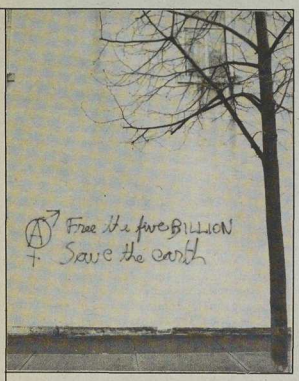


photo by Coral Arrand

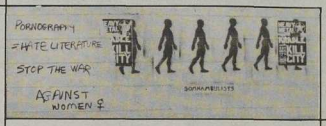
Canadian testing of the United States airborne cruise missile began on March 6. A local women's group protested the tests with a test flight of their own, in downtown Vancouver. Their cruise eventually crashed at the US consulate.

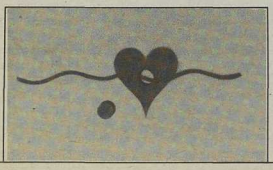
GRAFFITO

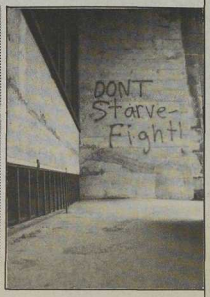
photos and design by Kim Irving

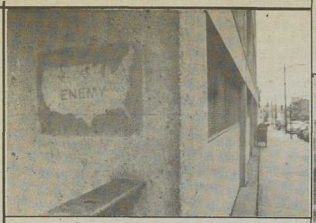


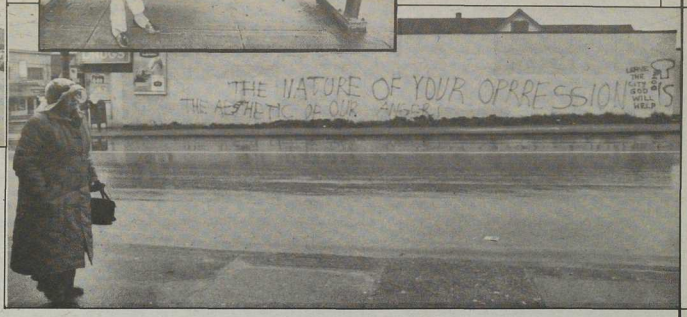
***GRAFFITO** – *(gra-fet'to) N,* derived from both Greek and Latin *1)* phrases or words written on the walls by one who graffits, *2)* strokes of the spraypaint, *3)* scrawls, scribbles done by hand, *4)* hen tracks, *5)* unsolicited impressions, *6)* writings not usually heard, *7)* oppressed calligraphy *8)* questioning authority.

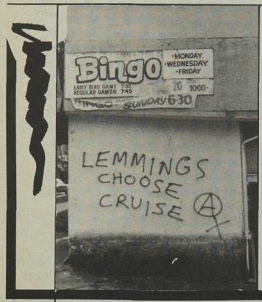


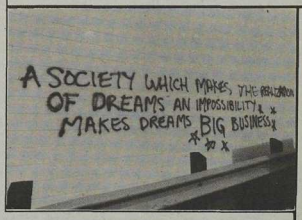












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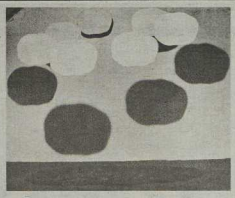
Observations on local women artists



Work by Georgiana Chappell (L), and Persimmon Blackbridge. "Significant achievements and great promise of things to come."

by Avis Lang Rosenberg

The following article is reprinted, with permission, from the Vancouver Art Gallery Catalogue, "Vancouver: Art and Artists 1931 - 1983." It has been edited for length.

If Lucy Lippard hadn't already used the title "Fragments" in *From the Centre*, I'd want to use it for what I'm going to say. This won't be a recent history of women and art in Vancouver, only a few observations, a few ideas, a few generalizations I feel okay about making.

First off, we have these terms "woman artist" and "women's art", which mean different things depending on which side of which fence you're on. The terms have a centuries-long history as prescriptive and dismissive categories, used by the Ones to try to keep the Others firmly in some conveniently chaste, unassuming, small-scale, subordinate place. Many people now want the use of those terms back, on *our* terms. But history lives on, and "woman artist" still sounds like someone-less-than-Artist to many ears and many minds. Happily, however, enough high-profile women artists have stopped seeing the term as an imposed label so that it is beginning to become a more objective form of description/self-description.

In the case of women artists who see themselves as such in a *positive* way, we're talking about people in whom a double realization/identification had to occur: that of themselves as women *and* as artists. These two factors can be experienced as being in harmony or at odds, as implying new and old forms of community or new and old forms of isolation and competition. We don't choose to be women; we *are*, and that's that. Female is the given (feminine and feminist are the popularly-polarized antitheses). But people *do* have to choose to be artists; in fact, it is a matter of becoming, of developing, not being.

Then there is the concept "women's art". To assume that all women who are artists inevitably and always produce work that displays female family resemblances in form, method, and content is to dangerously oversimplify the complexities and circumstances of creative endeavour. Patriarchal pronouncements from the 18th century through our own time have held this notion very dear, and it has fostered neither appreciation of the works at hand nor equal opportunities for women artists. Its logical escape clause, in the face of "undeniably" strong and successful work by women, has traditionally been The Exception, the woman artist who is not really or not just a woman and who is not like All Those Other Women Artists.

So we come to the notion of "female sensibility". *Yes* there is work that sings out WOMAN to the observant viewer, through its narrative or materials or declarations or, yes, perhaps certain formal predilections as well, but there is also work by women that does *not* do so. Are we to dismiss the latter as inauthentic, or alternately, to search out obscure revelations of its femaleness in tell-tale clues, so that our methods of categorization will stand vindicated? Furthermore, the sensibilities of numerous women, having been incorporated into their artistic output, are now out in the public sphere. The work is accessible as source and inspiration for whoever wants to pick up on it. What terms do we use when it is men who do so?

Another difficulty with the category "women's art" should be noted, one which arises within the community of committed artworld women. It has to do with the quest for an authentic women's art. The quest - if lacking in openness and flexibility - can become a form of control, an automatic dismissal of work that does not address itself in particular ways to particular issues. We do well to seek and herald effective feminist art, but to define too narrowly what that can encompass and to deny the worth of other work by women is to place a sentry at the door to what we've as yet gained only partial access: the fullest possible range of expression for the greatest number of women artists.

Vancouver women artists produced a tremendous amount of interesting work during the 1970's in every medium and at every level. Starting at the top of the visibility scale, there are people like Gathie Falk and Evelyn Roth...although I must say that as soon as I begin listing names, I get nervous about those I'll not be mentioning. Two of the seven artists in the National Gallery's International Women's Year show, *Some Canadian Women Artists*, were from Vancouver: Gathie Falk and Sherry Grauer. Gathie and Evelyn have been significant figures in the growth of performance art in this country (and elsewhere), as have Toby MacLennan and also Anna Banana of the Western Front. Kate Craig has been crucial to the extensive video production activity at the Front. Liz Magor and Marian Penner Bancroft both did major cycles of work in the seventies, in sculpture and photography respectively. One of the most dramatic installations I've seen anywhere was the roomful of ceramic shards and sentinels called *Rank Beginnings*, which Lynn Hughes did at the Vancouver Art Gallery just after graduating from the art school, then the Vancouver School of Art. Ann Kipling's weightless landscape drawings are riveting in the acuteness of their vision and the deliberate slowness of their growth.

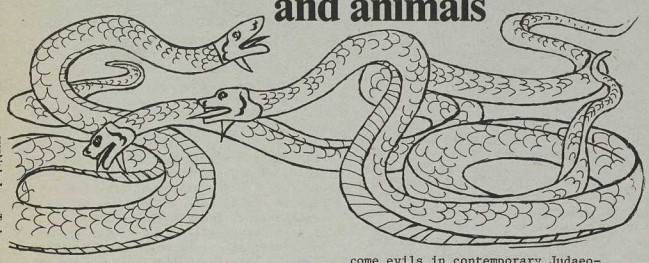
The Reelfeelings feminist media collective included a number of women who have gone on to take prominent places in art life on the continent: Renée Baert, who became Video Officer at the Canada Council; Ardele Lister, who directed the raucously revelatory Reelfeelings film called *So Where's My Prince, Already?*, was a founder and co-editor of the important artists' periodical *Criteria*, and has gone on to have her videotapes given the Leo Castelli imprimatur; Barbara Steinmen in video, Nomi Kaplan in photography, Svetlana Zylin (who starred in *So Where's My Prince, Already?*) in theatre. The Video Inn was an active centre for community/feminist video during the greater part of the decade, with Shawn Preus a key element. Women in Focus, and Marion Barling in particular, began to produce and distribute feminist media works; small and bare-bones as the group's Kingsway space was, it included a tiny gallery.

The list gets long very quickly. Judy Lodge, Judy Williams, and Sylvia Tait are three painters who must be mentioned. Before moving to New York, Lodge left her mark on Vancouver (and Banff) not only as an artist but as a committed teacher; Williams, along with printmakers Barbara Sungur and Wendy Dobereiner, succeeded her at UBC, where Gathie Falk had also taught for several years - as long as she could be persuaded to stay. Victoria-based photographer Nina Raginsky and ceramic sculptor Sally Michener were then on the faculty of the art college; major solo shows of the work of Raginsky and sculptor Ruth Beer, on the faculty of the University of Victoria at that time, were held at the Vancouver Art Gallery late in the decade. If it seems as though institutional recognition - in the form of solo shows, sales, and permanent teaching positions - must have been commensurate with the locally available female talent, one need only consult the faculty handbooks and my own survey of the representation of women in the Canadian artworld (*Criteria*, Fall 1978) to see otherwise. A light sprinkling of women - nothing more - seemed tolerable. Generally speaking, whether then or now, there's a little bit of room at the top and lots of room at the bottom. But things did improve here and there as the seventies ended, not because everyone with a pie to divide had suddenly become just or generous, but in large part because increasing numbers of women had become outspoken and persistent about the need for increased representation. A few key changes in art administrators also occurred at this time - Bill Kirby moving into the Canada Council, for example.

By the end of the last decade, many more artists had emerged with significant achievements and great promise of things to come: Karen Chapnick, Joey Morgan, Share Corsaut, Nora Blanck, Phyllis Green, Persimmon Blackbridge, Alexandra Dikeakos, Georgiana Chappell, Jeannie Kamins, Colette French, Chick Rice, Lyse Lemieux, Valerie Pugh - to name only some. Each year the roster lengthens. Several of the above-mentioned women were members of the Women's Interart Co-op, a fair-sized group begun in 1974 with some hopes of establishing a Woman's Building (a recurrent Vancouver project); they eventually settled for communal studio space in the barely-ventilated basement of the Avalon hotel, below what was then the Helen Pitt Gallery on Pender Street. Anna Buchan was instrumental in the creation of the co-op, which held once-a-month meetings and five annual group exhibitions before its late-seventies demise, and was, along with Women in Focus, an important "grass-roots" organization for local, vocal women artists interested in developing productive and supportive alternatives to the exclusionary mainstream. There were other groups, other contexts, other projects - some so alternative that one participant described them as "several people meeting in someone's basement", others with a more institutional focus. Through such means, the SUB Gallery at UBC became the site for a series of substantial group shows by younger local women artists; Judy Lodge helped make this happen.

I began by saying I could provide only a few observations about women/art/Vancouver, not a proper history. Indeed, I haven't mentioned filmmakers, animators, or potters; I've barely touched on the fabric/fibre arts or on women as educators, curators, key administrators, and other gallery personnel. Nor have I mentioned the locally-favoured non-art ways that artists found to pay their bills.

The Goddess, art, and animals



graphic by Jeanne Taylor

by Michèle Wollstonecroft

Beginning with studies in anthropology, ancient law and dream analysis, and archeological research into ancient sites and art, a re-evaluation of the feminine is taking place. Through seeking our foremothers we are finding that cultures have existed on earth without militarism, without the institution of private property and that these cultures revered the earth and her cycles rather than viewing nature as something to conquer and control. We are also finding that these Pre-Patriarchal cultures existed for many thousands of years.

In art this re-evaluation of the feminine is taking place in two ways, through the re-emergence of Goddess symbolism in the work of contemporary artists and through the discoveries and interpretations by feminists of the art of ancient civilizations. Publications *Heresies* and *Woman Spirit* as well as the work of researchers, for example, Gloria Orenstein and Mary Beth Edelson, are creating new arenas where contemporary art with Goddess symbolism can be viewed and discussed. We now have a number of exciting and well-informed writings by feminists on the subject of the Great Goddess in the art of the past. For example, Merlin Stone's *When God Was a Woman*, Maria Gimbutas' *The Gods and Goddesses of Old Europe, 7000 to 3500 B.C.* and M. Esther Harding's *Woman's Mysteries, Ancient and Modern.*

Buffie Johnson, a feminist researcher and painter, now in her 70's has spent the past 20 years investigating the orgins of the Great Goddess. She has written articles on Goddess symbols in art, including two that she co-wrote with Tracy Boyd, "The Eternal Weaver" (The Great Goddess, *Heresies*, Issue 5) and "The Eye Goddess and the Evil Eye" (Lady-Unique-Inclination-of-the-Night, New Brunswick).

Johnson was in Vancouver in early February to give a lecture at the Western Front on "The Lady of the Beasts", a slide presentation which focused on the animals of the Great Goddess. Johnson showed approximately 50 slides of artwork reperesenting cultures from paleolithic times to the present and including art from many countries around the world.

"Presenting the Goddess through her beasts, is an attempt to vivify her personality, to discern her meaning and relate her to contemporary needs," says Johnson. "The Goddess's invitation is to be inwardly free and unfettered and to transcend limitations. Clearly the world needs to regain its balance. A re-evaluation of the feminine through the study of the Goddess and her beast is, I believe, a pretty sure path towards that goal." The Goddesses and Gods revered by the ancient religions have become evils in contemporary Judaeo-Christian religion. Realizing their original menaing is to change one's point of reference.

Even though fertility was a major theme in the myths and rites of the Goddess, her realm encompassed far more than reproduction. "The Goddess took the form of many different animals to explain her meaning, function and general personality. Her meaning is very diverse."

Johnson explained that the bird is the main symbol of the goddess, and that there are many instances of this as water birds, hawks, doves, swans. The bird represents re-birth because it is born twice, first as the egg is laid, and then when it is hatched. Many paleolithic cave paintings and engravings show rituals where people are wearing bird masks. Later, in Greece, we see an invory carving of a priestess of Artemis with a long pole on her head, on top of which is a hawk. The pole is a symbol for the tree, most likely the moon-tree,(from which it has been suggested that the cross has evolved as a symbol.)

Johnson also discussed the bull, which represents the Great Mother, changes in the weather, and the moon. The horns of the bull are like the crescent moon, hence the association of the two. The horn of the bull was considered to have power, and images depicting the bull's horn as a sacred object have been found in stone age art. The bull is also associated with the weather god and there are many sculptures showing the bull, or a group of bulls, pulling the weather god in a cart. The bull thus symbolized changes in weather.

A beautiful colourful fresco from Knossos, (3000 B.C.) shows men and women "bull-leaping". This combination sport/religious activity demanded that the leapers grasp the bull's horn and leap over its back. Grasping the bull's horn allowed one to experience the flow of the Goddess's power. A 6th century temple figure from Sicily shows the Goddess sitting on the bull holding onto its horn.

As early as paleolithic times the fish was a symbol of fecundity because she lays so many eggs and because life begins in the water. The fish was also an important symbol of the underworld. An example Johnson showed was of an Egyptian sarcophagus painting that showed the "dog of the underworld" wrapping the mummy in the shape of a fish, preparing the dead one for the journey into the underworld. By transporting the dead to the underworld the fish was also giving an opportunity to new life, and the fish as food represented nourishment.

The pig is an animal "that was once sacred but now abhorred in the Judaic tradition. The pig was sacred because it is a very fertile animal; when the pig is killed the entire animal can be used for food and clothes and in bad times, it eats its farrow, which thus return to the place they came from, and produce more fertility". (*The Wise Wound*, by Penelope Shuttle and Peter Redgrove).

The Goat represented the womb. "If you look at well-drawn anatomical pictures of the womb, you will be able to see in it the significance of a wise goat-head bent forward, with magnificent sweeping horns, which are the fallopian tubes,"(*The Wise Wound*). The goat today has come to represent the devil, with horns and a beard, but in ancient times it was revered for its horns as well as its usefulness as a provider of milk, meat and clothing.

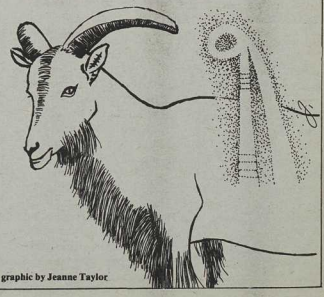
Today all over southern Europe, the Goat is associated with the expression "He's got horns", which means that a man's wife is sleeping with another man. Clearly this implies the kind of fears the current dominant culture has of the power of the feminine; if women are not suppressed by the institutions of the patriarchy, marriage for example, then the horned beliefs wil re-emerge.

Animals of the goddess also had specific relationship to the moon. The hare, for example, is associated with the moon because people saw the face of a hare in the moon, and the snake shedding its skin associated it with women's menstrual cycles and, hence, the moon's cycle.

In pre-patriarchal times the snake also represented re-birth and re-generation. The snake was associated with the underworld as well as representing the phallus in the worship of the moon. Once one understands the symbol of the snake in pre-patriarchal cultures, all the mythology surrounding serpents take on new meanings. Myths that talk about killing snakes are describing the destruction of religions that worshipped the moon.

There are many good reasons for studying Goddess symbolism in art; beginning with symbolism itself and how it is used in this world. Currently the religious symbol systems that permeate our daily lives are used to maintain, sustain and promote patriarchy. As Carol P. Christ says, in her article "Why Women Need the Goddess" Phenomenological, Psychological and Political Reflections",(*The Politics of Women's Spirituality.*) "We must first understand the importance of religious symbols and rituals in human life and consider the effect of male symbolism of God on women...Religious symbol systems focused around exclusively male images of divinity create the impression that female power can never be fully legitimate or beneficient...Symbols have both psychological and political effects, because they create the inner conditions (deep seated attitudes and feelings) that lead people to feel comfortable with or accept social and political arrangements that correspond to the symbol system."

Because religion has such a compelling hold on the deep psyches of so many people, feminists can not afford to leave it in the hands of the fathers."



graphic by Jeanne Taylor

critical lens:

SCREENING THE MEDIUM

by sara diamond

from New Freedom, by Aine Ramsden

photo by S. Sesp

The titles of video productions by women are too numerous to list. They provide a stark contrast to the number of female producers, directors and technicians employed by video's big brother; television. With the emergence of portable, relatively inexpensive equipment, women have predominated the video scene, not only as independent producers, but as curators and administrators of the many video co-operatives and parallel galleries in Canada, Quebec, the United States, England and Europe.

Why such enthusiasm when, after all, women have experienced exclusion from most technologies? In the case of video, women have established their capacity to understand a constantly evolving technology, controlling and redefining its parameters. Video is a relatively new medium (some 15 years old), one which was initially cheap and remains fairly accessible.

There was no video establishment with vested interests to defend against women's incursion, as has been true with other visual art media, theatre and music. There is an analogy to be made with women's role in early photography, where, at the turn of the century, women made great strides in a new medium.

The field was open with no preconceived notions of form. The availability of video occurred simultaneously with the growth of the newest wave of feminism, a time when women were concerned with regaining control over their imaging and asserting their capacity to use technology.

Video has been a central counter-medium for women because it allows us to take back some of the power that television, a centralized mass media, has wrested away. We, as women, are its major advertising audience, our distorted image fills the monitor and we are its programming audience. Television dominates our culture; it is impossible for North Americans seeing a videotape, to not make mental reference to t.v. Video artists have put this to good use. The key to women's video is the process of self-representation, whether it be in the documentary mode of giving voice and presence to women who are traditionally ignored as an authoritative source, or through art works which refer to the packaging and imaging within consumer society in general, and of women in particular. Female video artists have rendered an extensive critique of television through this work. Women have used video art to "deconstruct" the mass media: to show the ways that it works upon our minds and desires. The very existence of self-presentation by women, whether explicitly feminist or not, has been an important, if small scale rupture.

Video has been a valuable consciousness-raising tool. It provides a comfortable, familiar, but alternate venue in which social issues can be presented in a synthetic way. Video is effective in small group discussion formats. It lacks the formal, dream-state qualities of film and this is more conducive to discussion.

Video's accessibility has made it attractive to groups without vast financial resources, as a means of representing community, labour and women's issues. A strong feminist documentary tradition has emerged in video. Women have looked to rank and file sources for spokespeople, thus affirming the importance of democratic process and demonstrating the ways that issues and even structures, such as political organizations and unions, effect people on the immediate human level. Feminist video has given space to criticism within political process as well as to a vision of the goals and highlights.

Women have worked in production collectives, proving that a creative group process is possible. Video lends itself to such a format, both in the need for more than one pair of hands in the production process and to a share of the financial burden of equipment, tape and editing facilities. Video is cheaper than film, but it is still costly. Collective production has encouraged skill sharing and demystification of the technology: many women producers are capable camera and sound technicians as well as scriptwriters and directors.

Video allows the possibility of working with people either through intensive consultation or training in the use of equipment. This process, as well as the finished product, can enable a group to see the extent of its power within what may have been experienced as isolated moments in a struggle. Video allows for immediate feedback; it can be played back on the spot, critiqued and developed. Tape can be recycled, so many different ways of documenting a situation can be tried, and the most effective used.

Feminist documentary provides a vital resource through which to see recent women's history. There are a series of tapes, for example, on violence against women; they reflect the developing understanding of the issue; strategies for dealing with violence through transition houses, attempt to work with state authorities, and self-defense etc. as well as feminist documentarians' vision of how to best empower women through the video medium.

Women video producers have increasingly networked with each other. Festivals in Canada, Quebec, the United States and Denmark have helped women develop an overview of work and share issues. A feminist distribution network has emerged, with groups like Vancouver's Women in Focus organizing international access to women's productions.

Women in Vancouver have made important contributions to video production as independent video artists, through work in mixed collectives, and within women's media groups. The first Vancovuer women's media group was Reel Feelings, who used video, together with film, slide-tape, sound and photography. Their work included art and documentary productions. A women's media collective formed after this with many of its members linked to Video Inn which began in 1973. Video Inn introduced Women's Media Nights, which featured work by local and international women producers. Women in Focus, a video production, film and video distribution centre and gallery/performance space began in 1974, continuing to the present day. It has trained many women in video production as well as creating its own tapes. A women's media group formed in 1978, providing support for women engaged in various aspects of media and producing several tapes on battered women. Amelia Productions, a feminist video collective produced 14 tapes from 1980-1982, and continues to distribute its work. Media Watch has monitored the mass media and has produced video tapes for use in its education work.

Video art is emerging into the mainstream. As video art becomes increasingly recognized, women will be challenged to maintain an innovative, critical and central role. Institutionalization usually results in attempts to relegate women to support roles. Both women video artists and feminist consumers must not allow this to happen with video.

Although not all women video producers are feminists, either in their work or political orientation, a great deal of video work by women has had a positive impact for women, both by the criticism of the media embedded in it - what does it mean when the object seizes the camera and turns it on herself and her world - and by opening a major art form for women. As feminists, we spend many hours cirticizing the media presentation of our lives. It is equally important that we support and participate in the development of alternative visions and assist in their widest possible distribution.

Dance!

Karen Jamieson Rimmer company, Vancouver

by Faith Jones

Women dancers live with the constant competition of athletes and none of the financial rewards.

Professional dancing is one of the places where our society's concern with youth - and especially youthful women - is exaggerated, to an even more extreme level.

Women dancers are pitted against each other, not only on the basis of their dancing, but also on their appearance. Changing rooms are the scenes of whispered gossip (usually malicious), crying, insults and sarcasm.

One of the hardest positions for a woman dancer is that of apprentice to a company. Women apprentices have a much longer period of initiation before they are asked to become full members of the company than men do. Some may wait as long as three years, while men are almost always accepted after one. Apprentices are unpaid, and must either get another job (on top of eight hours of dancing a day) or live with their parents. For young women entering the field, hard work with no pay isn't always worth it, and many quit before they get a chance to work professionally.

All this is true of male dancers to a much lesser extent. Perhaps because of our society's notions of machismo, the number of women always outranks the number of men, by as much as double or triple in some companies. Men dancers can afford to be more generous, helpful and friendly with each other, since the competition is so much less.

Part of the problem for dancers in Vancouver is that funding for dance companies is minimal. In the past few years, several dance companies have lost funding or had it reduced. No wonder competition is so stiff.

In spite of these problems, Vancouver women dancers are active and interesting. Some approach their work from a feminist perspective, while others are more traditional. This is a highly random sampling of the local scene.

Perhaps the best-known Vancouver company is Anna Wyman's Dance Theatre. In spite of their phenomenal success internationally the company does little that challenges the audience. International critics describe her "delightful whimsy" (India), "elegance of movement" (Germany), and "voice rich with promise" (France). They have little to say about her content. Although her dancers are technically excellent, and are utilized to their full advantage in her choreography, there is no feminism or woman-orientation in her work. In this sense, she is strictly traditional.

More enjoyable for feminists is Mauryne Allen's Mountain Dance Company. Although recent works are slightly less promising, in the past she has displayed great respect and affection for women in pieces like "For Gwenneth". She highlights her female dancers, allows them freedom, and encourages them to choreograph themselves. Allen's own dancing may be a clue to this: her body is large (by dancers' standards), strong, her movements deliberate. She explores diverse topics, including fantasy, religious myths and current fads. The joyous "Barkmulch" contrasts two dancing couples - a tuxedoed man and evening-gowned woman versus breakdancers.

Gisa Cole, formerly co-director of the defunct Prism Dance Company, also has a delightfully untraditional body for a dancer. Who said you have to be tall and skinny? Cole is neither, and her movements are enough to change those perceptions. What a relief to watch this perfectly ordinary-looking woman, and see the magic she can create. Of all her work, one dance stands out particularly. "After the Fire" is a solo for a woman, and it describes the pain of mothers whose children die young. A technically challenging and emotionally racking piece, "After the Fire" continues to move audiences years after its creation.

Dancers like Helen Clarke and Jennifer Mascall, independant and experimental, are among the most exciting Vancouver dancers. Their work is highly unconventional, challenging notions of dance form as well as suitable content. Mascall's "True Lies" is an examination of male-female relations. Clarke's "With Hiroshima in Mind" was constructed with just that: it is a semi-improvised piece of dance-theatre performed last year on the anniversary of Hiroshima. At one point, audience members came dangerously close to breaking down altogether. Could someone like Anna Wyman dare such an emotional and highly sensitive subject?

At the forefront of the latest revitalization of the Vancover Dance scene is Karen Jamieson Rimmer with her seven-member dance troupe. She collaborates closely with composers, which may explain why every part of the dances work so beautifully together. Her highly acclaimed "Sisyphus" is a reworking of the legend of the man who was condemned to roll a rock up a hill forever. In her piece, our whole society is being asked a question. The dancers slam against a wall, unable to break out of their trudging lives. The music by David McIntyre perfectly expresses the despair and frustration of the theme.

At Simon Fraser University, teachers get a chance to show their work in occasional dance shows. I only wish they had more opportunity, because some of their work is extremely fine. Dance professor, Iris Garland, combines strength and fluidity, showing off the best in each dancer.

One stunning piece in last fall's SFU dance show was "Voices In Doorways" about female socialization. Surreal and intense, the piece was undoubtedly the highlight of the show.

Interestingly, although there are more women than men teaching dance at SFU, the department is headed by a man. Well-known and highly qualified though he is, one can only wonder at such blatant sexism on the part of the administrators.

Although women in dance in Vancouver have it hard, our support can help bring more woman-oriented content into their work. They are always open to feedback, volunteer workers and financial contributions. If we, as a women's community, give them honest, critical support, they will support us with exciting, women's art.

photo by Lee Boyko

THE GIRL GROUPS

For seven years (1958-65) the airwaves were completely dominated by women

by Connie Smith

(Author's note) Part I of this article, an historical and political perspective, appeared in *The Radical Reviewer*, issue nine, 1983)

During the years of 1958 to 1965, there was no such thing as a "girl group" - only great songs performed by great singers - who happen to be female. The term "girl group" came much later through media hype and a desire to categorize, imitate and later dismiss this incredible phenomenon. What phenomenon? For seven years, the airwaves were completely dominated by women.

During this chapter in music history, there were over 1000 singles released that charted - performed by over 130 different groups of women or individual female performers. And because most of these women were black, the music charts were integrated in a way that has never before and never again been equalled. During this era of women's music, at least 40% of the biggest hits every year were by black women, compared with March, 1984 when the number of females of any colour to make the Top 50 averaged around 3. This article profiles only a very few.

The Chantels: Original members - Arlene Smith (lead), Lois Harris, Sonia Goring, Jackie Landry, Rene Minus. Ages (when signed): 13-16 years old. Residence: New York City (Bronx), N.Y.

The group was organized by lead singer, Arlene Smith who had been trained as a classical singer. She performed solo at Carnegie Hall when she was 12. the girls were discovered when they were waiting backstage at the Alan Freed Show for their idol, Frankie Lymon. They began singing to pass the time and were heard by a man named Richard Barrett who took them to producer George Goldner. They were on of the first groups to sign with Goldner on his END label.

The Chantel's most significant recording was "Maybe", released in 1958. It was such a success that Goldner couldn't meet the demand, so the bootleggers took over. However, The Chantels early recordings were considered to have too much of an "earthy black R & B sound" to keep them on the charts consistantly. They did manage to have four major hits in spite of this prejudice.

Eventually, there was trouble between The Chantels and the record company because royalties weren't forthcoming yet Goldner and Barrett were getting paid.

Finally, Goldner has other financial obligations which forced him to sell END Records. The Chantels went to Carlton Records without Arlene. Arlene finished school at The Professional Children's School and went on to Juillard. The Chantels continued recording for a few more years. Arlene still lives in New York and teaches music.

The Shirelles, formed in 1958, still perform in New York today.

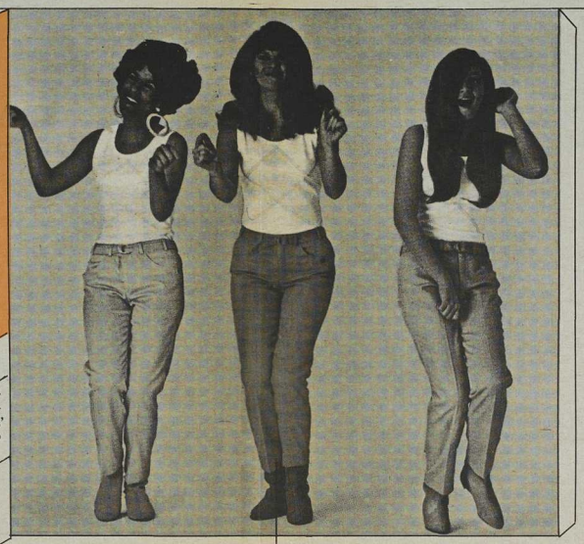
The Shirelles: Original members: Shirley Owens and Doris Coley (lead), Beverly Lee, Addie "Micki" Harris. Ages (when signed): 17-19 years old. Residence: Passaic, New Jersey.

The teenagers began singing together in junior high and were appearing regularly at talent shows in high school when they were referred to Florence Greenberg at Decca Records. Florence became their manager and in 1958 she recorded The Shirelles singing their original song, "I Met Him on a Sunday". She then formed her own company, Scepter Records, with songwriter Luther Dixon.

In late 1960, The Shirelles' recording of "Will You Still Love Me Tomorrow" became a hit all over the world. They were overnight sensations. They were voted Most Popular Group in every poll held by WINS Radio (Murray the K) from 1961 to 1963.

Eventually their emotional, gospel strengths had to be down-played in favour of a more white sound.

When the young women turned 21, they went to collect their trust fund held for them by the recording company. It was empty. However, not to be undone, The Shirelles celebrated their 25th anniversary last year. They are frequent performers at The Bottom Line in New York.



The Shangri-las recorded the controversial 'Leader of the Pack,' banned at some radio stations.

The Marvelettes: Original Members: Gladys Horton (lead), Wanda Young, Katherine Anderson, Juanita Cowart, Georgeanna Dobbins. Ages (when signed): 17-18. Residence: Inkster, Michigan, a suburb of Detroit.

Gladys was 15 when she formed The Marvels and with the exception of Wanda Young, all the girls were students in high school. The group auditioned at a school-sponsored talent contest where the first prize was an audition with Tamla/Motown. They sang The Chantels' hit "Maybe" and placed fourth. Because they were so good, they were given the audition anyway. However, they were told by the Motown representative that their material should be more original. So over night, Georgeanna wrote "Please, Mr. Postman". They performed the song at their audition and were signed immediately. When the song was released in 1961, it hit #1. It remained at the top of the charts for six months.

In spite of the fact that The Marvelettes (as they were now called) were Motown's hottest act, their first two albums didn't feature the group's picture. It was feared that their looks would not be acceptable to white audiences. However, they continued to have Top 40 and Top 10 hits.

In 1963 their career began to slide. Other acts at Motown were receiving more attention and the Marvelettes were left to anyone wanted to produce them. They had come backs in 1964 and 1967, but by 1969 they were completely out of the picture.

The Shangri La's: Original Members: Mary Weiss, Betty Weiss, Mary Ann Ganser. Ages (when signed): 16-17 years old. Residence: Queens, New York.

The group began singing together because they loved music and because it helped them forget the kind of lives they were living. Their favorite singers were Little Anthony and the Imperials, Mary Wells, The Flamingos and Dionne Warwick.

They were so committed to their singing that they released a record in high school for an obscure company named Kami-Sutra Productions. The record was soon forgotten, but Kami Sutra did not forget the papers they had the girls sign. Later, the Shangs were used by an enterprising young man named George (Shadow) Morton to break into the music business. He played their demo for Red Bird Records, who thought Morton's song was weird, but who loved the singers. Just after the girls signed with Red Bird, Kami-Sutra showed up and a deal had to be arranged. What transpired left The Shangs' earnings to be divided up between two companies. With this arrangement, The Shangs received an average of $50 per performance and little if no royalties. By 1964, they were the #1 white group in America.

The material recorded by The Shangs was the most controversial of all the songs recorded during this time. "Leader of the Pack" was unofficially banned at some stations and it was banned officially in England. Their songs also spawned a series of editorials in newspapers and on radio and t.v. Their material was considered too real and too complicated to be understood by the mainstream audience. However the group toured constantly - mainly with all-black reveiws.

It was usually chaos when The Shangs performed and their life on the road was very difficult. There were rarely breaks during their tours and their manager changed from day to day. They never knew what versions of their songs were being released, or what songs were on the charts. They just kept touring. Meanwhile Red Bird was involved with some unsavory companies and the label folded. The Shangs were left with nothing. They moved to another label, but the damage had already been done.

The Dixie Cups: Original members: Barbara Hawkins, Rosales Hawkins, Joan Marie Johnson. Ages (when signed): 14-17 years old. Residence: New Orleans, Louisianna.

The Dixie Cups, best known for 'Chapel of Love,' which uncharted 'Love Me Do.'

The three singers were discovered at a talent contest in New Orleans and were taken to New York. They auditioned in the Red Bird office and signed the same day. Their first recording was in 1964. It was called "Chapel of Love" and it went to #1 in six weeks, knocking off the Beatles, "Love Me Do".

Their next major hit was a New Orleans traditional song that the girls had been singing since they were children. It was called "Iko Iko" and it reached #20.

"Iko Iko" is considered the purest record by the Dixie Cups because it was sung and recorded naturally using traditional gospel call and response. Although the group was doing well, they weren't receiving royalities. Their manager moved them to another label, hoping to get some money for the group, but the new label wasn't interested in them after they signed them. However, like the Shirelles, the Dixie Cups continued performing and they can still be seen in New Orleans.

The Crystals: Original members: Barbara Alston, Pat Thomas, Dee Dee Wright (Kennibrew), Lala Brooks, Mary Thomas. Ages (when signed): 15-17. Residence: Brooklyn, New York.

Like many of the others, The Crystals sang together in high school, where they decided they wanted a career in music. Phil Spector "discovered" them when he heard them making a demo tape. They became his first contract on his newly formed Philles Records.

The Crystals got off to a rough start and were often victims of Spector's business deals. They were made to record a terrible little record called "Do the Screw" which Spector used to get even with an ex-partner and likewise for "When He Hit Me, it Felt Like a Kiss" - a song Spector wanted recorded to scare off another business associate. The Crystals hated both songs and did not want their image associated with such inferior songs. Fortunately, "When He Hit Me..." was banned.

Spector had a belief that the singers on his records were interchangeable and expendable. To prove his theory, he used Darlene Love and The Blossoms to record "He's a Rebel" and put the Crystals name on the label because he was trying to get the song out before another producer and he didn't have time to get the group together.

The Crystals were often angry, confused and overlooked during their years at Philles. Other problems arose when the girls wondered aloud where their royalities were. They also wanted to expand their material and do more jazz. No was their answer. The end came when The Crystals objected to the muddy quality of their recordings. (Otherwise known as Phil Spector's wall of sound). Spector's response was to make the recordings muddier still.

The Chiffons

In spite of all the trauma, The Crystals were perhaps Spector's most important group, as they had four individual million selling singles and several others that almost made the mark.

The Ronettes: Original Members: Veronica Bennett, Estelle Bennett, Nedra Talley. Ages (when signed): 16-17 years old. Residence: New York City (upper Manhattan), N.Y.

The girls were fans of both R & B and rock and roll. They had been singing together since their early teens. In 1961, they got jobs as dancers at the Peppermint Lounge and later worked with Murray the K. They did all this at the young ages of 16 and 17. By mid-1961 they managed to get a recording contract with Colpix Records and they released a few singles between 1961 and 1962. They called themselves Ronnie and the Relatives and later The Ronettes.

When Phil Spector met them, they were doing session work around New York. Although he had never heard them sing, he decided to sign them because he liked the way they looked - particularly their thick eye liner. Phil took an interest in this group like no other group on his label and eventually he left his wife for Veronica Bennett.

"Be My Baby" is considered The Ronettes most significant work. A copy of it was enclosed in plastic and placed in a time capsule to be opened in 2063. The inscription on the casing reads "An Example of the Perfect Pop Record".

The relationship between The Ronettes and Spector seems to have been a good one. Veronica enjoyed the recording sessions and she sang all her songs in the dark. However, she left The Ronettes right before their tour with The Beatles. Spector had asked her to choose between her career and himself.

The Ronettes career came to an end because Spector went into seclusion, taking Veronica with him. A variety of personal and political forces acted upon him and by 1966 it was all over.

However, during this past year, Veronica (now Ronnie Spector) has surfaced as a single woman and is continuing on with her career.

Martha and The Vandellas: Original members: Martha Reeves, Annette Sterling, Rosalind Ashford, Gloria Williams. Ages (when signed): 18-21 years old. Residence: Detroit, Michigan.

The group was originally called The Del Phi's. Martha Reeves sang tenor. Martha audition for Motown but could only get a job as a secretary. She took the job and used it to get the rest of her group into Motown to do session work. The Del Phi's had made a name for themselves during the "doo-wop" period.

The Del Phi's got their break when Mary Wells didn't show up for a session. The song they recorded didn't chart, so Gloria left the group and Martha took over the lead. Martha was a very accomplished singer whose talents ranged from gospel to opera.

Their first two recordings "I'll Have to Let Him Go" and "Come and Get These Memories" were successful. But their third release in 1964 became one of the most exciting sounds in rock history. The song was "Heat Wave". However, "Dancin' in the Streets" remains their most memorable record.

Although their career seemed to be going extremely well, they began to get shuffled from producer to producer. Berry Gordy had taken an interest in another group, The Supremes. By 1967, Martha and the Vandellas were not even on Motown's backburners, but the group wasn't officially disbanded until 1971.

The Chiffons: Original members: Judy Craig, Barbara Lee, Patricia Bennett, Sylvia Peterson. Ages (when signed): 16-17 years old. Residence: New York City (South Bronx), N.Y.

The girls met in high school and sang in the lunchroom or on the street. A young man they knew recorded their voices and took the demo around to various producers. A company called Bright Tune Productions signed them.

The first song they recorded was "He's So Fine", a song selected by the producers because they were after the Spector sound. The song went to #1 in six weeks.

However, as time progressed, The Chiffons became very unhappy. They were dissatisfied with their choice of material and they wanted more input into the creative end of their careers. Also, huge amounts of money were being deducted from their royality cheques for studio time which they were not using. The producers were doing quite a lot of experimentation in the studio and The Chiffons were footing the bill.

The Chiffons sued and won, but no other producer would touch them after that. Eventually they went back to their old label and had a Top 10 hit, "Sweet Talkin' Guy."

graphic by Jeanne Taylor

5 local photographers

A Visual dialogue

by Michèle Wollstonecroft

Many surveys, discussions and articles have been published recently that have revealed that women in the arts receive less recognition, opportunities and earn less than men in the arts. (See Susan Crean's "The Thirty Per Cent Solution; Sexism as a Fine Art", *This Magazine*, January/84 and Sharon H. Nelson's "Bemused, Branded and Belittled, Women and Writing in Canada", *Fireweed*, Winter/82.) While few artists make a lot of money, women artists make the least. Most women artists support themselves with low paying jobs; jobs that require shorter hours and pay higher salaries are few.

Having read the "statistics" and talked with many artists, I wanted to find out what Vancouver women photographers were experiencing. I interviewed five women photographers including, Kiku Hawkes, Paula Levine, Donna Hagerman, Susan Dirk and Cheryl Sourkes.

Photographers have enormous financial constraints. Materials, supplies and equipment are expensive; for those who are eking out a living to support their art this means forfeiting holidays, entertainment and generally maintaining a poorer lifestyle. The stress attached to being poor is extremely high.

I asked each photographer how she got into photography--what was her training? Is she getting commercial jobs? Has she been funded by the Canada Council or other such agencies? How is she supporting herself otherwise and, as a result, how much time is she able to devote to her art? Is she able to afford the equipment that she needs? Is she getting the exposure she needs (exhibitions, publishing)?

The interviews revealed that these photographers would rather talk about their work than these issues,but reluctant as we all were to dwell on economic details, financially things are very bleak for these photographers. Four of them have to do other work to support their art. For those who are employed at other jobs, this leaves little time to do their photography.

One of these photographers usually works as a waitress; she is currently unemployed and can't afford to print her photographs. One earns some money doing part-time babysitting for a film maker while he goes off and makes movies! One has been on welfare for a number of years. One works at night so that she will have the daytime to do her photography. One photographer who was asked to participate in this article refused because she has recently begun working in a restaurant and doesn't "feel like a photographer".

In her article "The Thirty Per Cent Solution" Susan Crean says:

Still the mythology surrounding the notion of excellence runs deep and is compelling. As I've said it has a lot to do with the late arrival of sexism as an issue in the arts and the difficulty women have had even recognizing its existence in their own lives. For in this field, sexism works through sins of omission not comission; opportunities not offered rather than promotions or pay denied. It is extremely hard to detect when it is happening and harder to tie into any concrete analysis of systemic discrimination. And, as we well know, women are only too willing to believe that setback in their careers is deserved...

Today in Vancouver there are a lot of women artists creating excellent work, but Vancouver is not a city that is interested in art, by women or men. Galleries and exhibition spaces are not readily available to local artists, and even fewer to photographers. Given the statistics that show women visual artists receive between 20% and 30% of the exhibitions and funding, this does not leave much of the remaining meagre opportunities that do exist to Vancouver photographers who are women. Another problem is that daily newspapers devote little space to the arts and the chance of getting reviewed is lower if you are a woman.

Despite the fact that there is an enormous amount of good artwork being done by women photographers in this city, Vancouver women artists still have to deal with the sexism inherent in the system as well as the general public disinterest in local work. It is time for the Vancouver Arts Community to address these issues.

The intention of this article was, however, to present a perspective of women in the arts...not women in poverty. I asked each photographer to comment about some aspect of exhibiting in Vancouver.

graphic by Jeanne Taylor

Cheryle Sourkes originally studied science. Cheryl says "Photography is the meeting of art and science through the machine." Her work combines abstract and traditional photography. She has exhibited her work in group shows since 1970 and for the past four years has shown annually. Last April she exhibited her "Street Photographs" at the Coburg Photography Gallery. Cheryl is part of a group show, "Art and Photography", taking place at the Vancouver Art Gallery in May and June 1984.

"It is sad that there is not more response to local work here in Vancouver. There is not enough support from the Vancouver public. There is so much really good art being produced in this city. Exhibitions are a gift to the city; they are a lot of hard work. Artists are people who are working and enriching the city. If I didn't have a show every year I'd never get to see all my work at once! I love that. When my work is up I get to bring the eyes that I bring to a gallery to see my own work. I find that valuable."

Cheryl also noted that the Coburg Gallery, the only exclusively photography gallery in Vancouver, has a policy of showing 50% work by women and 50% work by men as well as 50% local work and 50% work from other places.

Paula Levine earns a marginal income from photography. She works as an auxilliary worker at Vancouver Transition House. Paula studied at Emily Carr College and received some grants while a student. She was a member of the now defunct Women's Interart Co-op. Paula considers her work to be documentary but "not impartial or dispassionate". She has shown her work in libraries and coffee houses and has been in a number of group shows, including the B.C. Festival of Women's Art, and one-person exhibits such as her documentary of Spiritualists ("May I Come to You, Please?") shown at the Artists Gallery in Vancouver and the Sechelt Art Centre in Sechelt.

My work usually has to do with people and their lives, choices and experiences. Galeries give a kind of public validation and giving this validation to people's experiences is sometimes a valuable thing. As a feminist who is an artist, I am concerned about the influences public avenues have upon the forms my work takes. If I allow myself to have an excessive reliance upon the traditional avenues for art, then my work will inevitably be shaped by those spaces ready to receive it. I don't think this is good for women artists to do for it limits our explorations right from the start.

Donna Hagerman is an artist who is moving into doing commercial photography as well. Until January Donna worked nights in a home for girls. She studied photography at Emily Carr College and has been doing photography since she was young. Donna has shown her work since 1979, has received some funding in the way of a project cost grant and some awards.

"I'm interested in showing with other artists, I can't handle the financial burden of a one-person show right now. I am interested in exhibits that create an environment and I want to work with other artists to give the sense of involvement. In the past I feel that artists have been working alone, it's time for women and men to work together, to be more political and business-like. In Seattle, for example, 1% of tax goes to a municipal art purchase fund. Artists are pushing for a similar sort of fund here.

I feel optimistic and excited right now about the art environment in Vancouver; I feel like it is coming of age, even in this economic slump. We're surviving! I don't expect to make a living from art."

Donna and Kate Abbott are currently cocurating "The Wedding" which will take place at the Contemporary Art Gallery in May. This artist-organized exhibition will include the work of 10 artists on the theme of the wedding: it will include a

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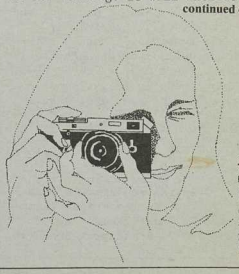


graphic by Jeanne Taylor

The Economics of Creativity

by Cy-Thea Sand

The following is an excerpt from an essay-in-progress about working class perspectives on literature.

"...there are no private lives; we are all bound in an economic web, and we benefit and suffer from its tightening and its loosing together."
Marge Piercy

What is a working class woman like me doing among all these books, messing with critical standards and perspectives and fretting about the making of literature? I work part time at a clerical job which allows me precious writing hours but financial insecurity and anxiety threaten to erode my attention and confidence.

You could say that the economics of creativity is ever present on my mind. I am constantly juggling time and money, seldom with good humour, and for some time now I have been trying to make sense of what I'm doing as a critic living outside of academe, loving literature while hating the classist assumptions of most literary discussions.

I do not and cannot dismiss the making of literature as a bourgeoise pastime. But I do agree with marxist criticism that defines bourgeoise literature as being primarily concerned with individualism when it is collective action people need to change their material conditions. It is also true that progressive literature can tell us how things could be while pre-revolutionary literature simply tells us how things are. But the act of telling it like it is has been and is concentrated in small enclaves of privileged people, mainly men, and telling like it is for women is in and of itself revolutionary.

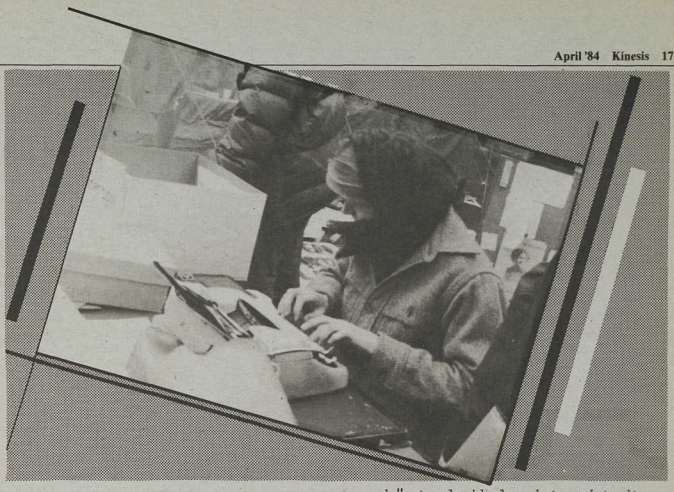
Nonetheless I need to ask: what women get to make literature? What are the conditions conducive to publishing and how do they affect the style, content and form of women's writing? As we welcome more and more published work by women I want to know if the means of that writing - the time, money, equipment, contacts, role models and publishing opportunities - are available mainly to white, middle-class women. Are working class women-white and of colour-getting their share of the grant money available to writers in Canada, for example? As Montreal poet Sharon Nelson has indicated in her research* only a very small percentage of Canadian women receive grants or get published at all.

I would venture to guess that most of the women who do are white, college-educated, middle-class women and/or wives of university or literary men. I am not suggesting we fight over the crumbs available-the boys love how much we are forced to do that already-but I would caution the feminist literary community not to consolidate artistic opportunities into the hands of our more privileged sisters.

Are we doing any direct action as a community to support writing as an honourable form of activism? Are we sharing what is available or at least asking questions that may lead to alternative avenues of support? How do under-financed alternate presses reach out to historically disadvantaged people? Are our presses, journals, newspapers and bookstores being supported by our community as fully as possible?

At the beginning of her book *Keeper of Accounts* (Persephone Press, 1982) American poet Irena Klepfisz acknowledges the financial support she received from her mother and from the will of another poet, Claudia Scott.

I like this idea of naming the means of



how our work gets done and would encourage all women writers to do something similar. In my more optimistic moments I hope that this action may encourage wealthy women to will money to individual women writers and/or to feminist publications and presses. At the very least, acknowledging the cost of creativity focuses our attention on the serious problem of support for our poets, critics, writers, editors, intellectuals and visionaries.

The economics of creativity emphasizes the historical/material aspect of women's lives and is an element I want to see integrated with and incorporated into the feminist critical process. Klepfisz writes:

I feel it is important to give this history of how KEEPER OF ACCOUNTS came to be written not only because I am grateful to my mother and Frances (executor of Scott's will) for making it possible, but also because I want to remind myself and others of the circumstances that are most conducive to creative work. A block of uninterrupted time-unencumbered by a job or financial anxiety-is critical to every form of creativity and rarely available to most of us, especially to those of us outside of the mainstream. I feel particularly fortunate to have received it in these time of economic depression and do not want to take it for granted.

Klepfisz' point about the conditions of creativity being so seldom enjoyed by "those of us outside of the mainstream" is a crucial one. How can we fully appreciate feminist literature, or place it within an historical context, without an awareness of the limited nature of its production?

When the production of literature is limited to those few with adequate time, money and contacts, innumerable critical questions are posed. For example, in a recent article in the *New York Times Book Review* ("Whatever happened to feminist fiction?" March 4, 1984), Elinor Langer observes that much of recent fiction by white middle-class women operates almost exclusively on a private level. The public world of impending nuclear holocaust, racism, hunger and poverty are divorced from their fiction and "not only ideology but society itself is oddly absent".

In the novels of the sixties and seventies by white women "the world was an obstacle to be challenged, now it has been left behind." Langer avoids a more incisive discussion of the class perspective her own thesis raises by noting a few brilliant exceptions to her point and by extolling a general need for more imagination and moral vision in fiction by women. But despite her reticence the point comes through loud and clear: economic and social privilege serves to isolate women from the public domain and limits the scope of their fiction. White middle class women are telling like it is for women in more and more numbers but the private nature of their focus leaves the status quo unchallenged and renders their work ahistorical. Alice Walker, Gloria Naylor and Toni Morrison may be winning literary prizes, but the fact remains that the literary market is overcrowded with privatized writings by white middle class women.

It's imperative that literary discussions within the women's movement become more class conscious. Feminist criticism must embrace the economics of creativity and its implications for working class women-white and of colour, disabled women and women of age. I do not want to witness a reinvention of the literary wheel in the form of a canon honouring only writers with privileged backgrounds and perspectives. I am concerned about the survival of the poor radical writers among us and about those of us with different angles on the world. Writing is an act of cultural survival, a basic human need to make sense of it all and for many of us, the very focus of our lives. I want writing recognized more fully as the work that it is, and that more women want to do. The unusual and the unfamiliar should not be crushed by economic circumstance while our more privileged writers perpetuate an already overworked view of the world.

The epigram is from Marge Piercy's *Particolored Blocks for a Quilt* (univ. of Michigan Press, 1982.)

*Sharon Nelson's research was published in *Fireweed*, Winter 1982. (P.O. Box 279, Station B, Toronto, Ontario. M5T 2W2

Sisters to the Country

by Kandace Kerr

"For our silenced people, century after century, their beings consumed in the hard, everyday essential work of maintaining human life. Their art, which still they made - as their other contributions - anonymous: refused respect, recognition: lost."

Tillie Olsen
Silences

"I am beginning a journal as a sequel to the one I kept on the journey. I must lessen, if possible, the great distance which separates us by putting you au courant with my life here. Thoughts and feelings will go down, as well as the details of daily occupations."

Selina Bompas
December 27, 1874
Northwest, Canada

Silina Chalotte Cox was a cultured, genteel woman of forty, a writer and musician, when she married her cousin, Archbishop William Bompas. Following their wedding, the Bompas' travelled to Canada, to the Archbishop's new diocese in North West Canada. From 1874 to her husband's death in 1906, Selina Bompas lived in the Northwest Territories - spending most of her time alone, while he was off visiting his diocese. To remain at least in spiritual contact with her sister, and to keep from extreme loneliness and boredom, Selina kept a journal. It is one of the few first person accounts of life in the north before the turn of the century, written from a woman's point of view. There is little of capital P politics in *A Heroine of the North*, published in 1929. Rather, there are descriptions of Native and Inuit women and children, accounts of famine, disease and death, tales of co-operation between white and native women, and pages of loneliness, of longing for a return to her former life of music, poetry and writing.

Selina was not alone in her situation. Like thousands of other women she found herself at the mercy of her husband's lifestyle, and made the best of it by keeping busy - turning to writing to keep from going completely mad.

A devoted second hand bookstore hunter, I discovered Selina's book a few years ago - and embarked on a search for more journals and books by women who homesteaded and explored British Columbia. What I developed was a collection of first woman accounts of the homestead/frontier life in this province, from the mid-1850's to the present.

"This unpretentious little book is the outcome of my experiences and adventures in Alaska. Two trips, covering a period of eighteen months and a distance of over twelve thousand miles were made practically alone...Enough...has been noted to give my reader a fair idea of a woman's life during a period of eighteen months in a few of the roughest mining camps in the world; and that many may be interested, and to some extent possibly instructed by the perusal of my little book, is the sincerest wish of the author."

May Kellogg Sullivan
A Woman Who Went to Alaska (1903)

As with malestream history, the accounts I have found so far have been written by women who had access to publishing, and to the tools of the language. This meant it was mostly middle and upper class women who left published accounts of their lives. Working class women scarcely had the time or the education to recount their experiences: one woman I spoke with was told her reminiscences weren't 'good enough English' to be published. The publisher wanted to rewrite her life to put it into what he called 'readable English'. Few immigrant and native women have left accounts that are easily accessible.

That is not to say that these women did not leave accounts, or that their experiences are insignificant because there is no written record, but rather, that it will take more work on the part of researchers like myself to find that information, to explore oral herstory, to discover that part of women's experience. What is important is not the individual stories of extraordinary women, but the common experience of homestead women.

Most women ended up on the frontier because of their husband's activities. Couples headed to the frontier to homestead, to trap, to mine and look for fortune.

"My husband was a rover, and above everything else he was also a trapper at heart. For him, stories of that kind were like wild tales of a gold strike. He gave up then and there all thought of our plans to go back to Fort McMurray, on the Athabasca River two hundred fifty miles south, where I had been looking forward to the presence of other white women, a few frontier comforts, and a doctor in case I or the baby needed one. The three of us, Walter decided, would spend the winter trapping on those rich fur grounds."

Olive Fredrickson
Silence of the North (1972)

In order to keep a homestead, one partner had to live full time on the land, while the other partner worked for the wages necessary to live on. As it usually was easier for men to get work, women were often left alone for long periods of time, with all the homestead responsibilities added to domestic and child rearing routines.

"The weeks Bill worked at the mill in the winter were lonely, but there was always work to do. Feeding and watering the animals, looking after the chickens, getting in a good supply of wood every day...Snow was melted in the winter instead of hauling water from the creek...All baking of course was homemade...I knit, made rugs and quilts and read everything it was possible to find. Books passed from hand to hand until they were nearly worn out...The days in the winter were very short. It was dark until nearly ten in the morning and by four in the afternoon...One time I ran out of coal oil for the lamp when I was alone...Even though I was warm and comfortable and had lots to eat, the nights were a million years long. The darkness and the deadly silence nearly got to me. At the end of the week when Bill got home and brought the oil I didn't know if I was more glad to see him or the five gallon can of coal oil."

Ida Scharf Hopkins
To the Peace River Country and On (1972)

A small handful of women explored this province, western Alberta and the North. Agnes Deans Cameron, the first woman high school teacher and principal in B.C., travelled with her niece Jessie Brown from Chicago to the Arctic Ocean in 1909 - a trip that covered ten thousand miles, over a period of six months. On their return, mostly because they needed money, Agnes wrote *The New North*, an account of their exploits, and launched an extensive lecture tour that took her across Canada, the United States and Europe.

When I began my reading I assumed that these women were 'liberated' well ahead of the feminist movement of our time. So I was continually disappointed to discover that the women wrote of their experiences in relation to the men in their lives, or to their families. It took some time before I could discard my Walt-Disney fostered notions of the heroic pioneer woman, relax my feminist idealism and see these women in their social and political contexts. To expect these women to measure up to *my* definition of liberation was unjust - to understand and appreciate *their* definition of liberation is a process that continually astounds me.

Isabel Edwards is the author of *Ruffles on my Longjohns*, an account of her life with her husband Earl in the Bella Coola valley. When I spoke with her last year, her response to my queries regarding liberation made me rethink my whole definition and approach.

"The best compliment that could be paid a woman on the North Coast was that she was a darned good worker and a darned good cook."

Isabel Edward (1983)

Women continue to homestead to this day, but it is under somewhat different circumstances. Very seldom do they follow husbands or lovers, but often head out on their own, as did other women before them.

Sisters to the Country is based on the writings of women who homesteaded and explored British Columbia, from the mid 1850's to the present. It is currently running as a 15 part radio series on Vancouver Co-operative Radio (102.7 FM, 104.9 cable) Monday nights at 8:30.

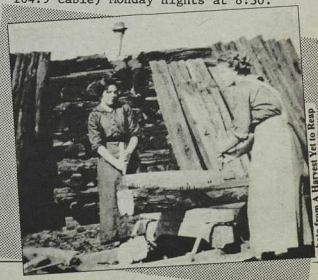


photo from A Harvest Yet to Reap

British novelist challenges ideology

by Linda Grant

British author Beryl Bainbridge lives in London with her four children, the lover of one of her daughers, a grandson and a pet water buffalo called Eric. She watches Coronation Street and Crossroads, Britain's longest running soap operas, breakfasts on fried eggs, coffee and cigarettes and sometimes does a spot of gardening:

"I'm a believer in plastic flowers", she says "and I stick them in the borders outside. As long as one brings them in during winter, they bloom again next year as radiantly as the day they were bought."

Despite her cult following among British feminists, despite the fact that she has twice been nominated for the Booker Prize (Britain's most prestigious literary award), despite the filming and televising of her novels, Beryl Bainbridge remains unfamiliar to most North American readers. Some North American feminists are hostile to her bizarre brand of fiction which, though minutely filtering day-to-day domestic experience, does not deal with traditional feminist themes and portrays women as neither oppressed victims nor fighters for women's rights. In her work, things and people simply are what they are.

Beryl Bainbridge's world is one of cosy comedy, sudden sadness, mounting unease and final fear: the tedium of an adulterous dinner party is alleviated by the violent intrusion of armed bank robbers (*Injury Time*). A civil servant armed with a fishing rod, on an illicit trip to the Soviet Union with his mistress, gets tangled up with the KGB (*The Winter Garden*), a wokers' outing to a stately home ends in a murder and the despatching to Italy of a body interred in a wine vat (*The Bottle Factory Outing*).

To achieve the effect of the confrontation with the world of hostage-takings, gun-swinging mothers-in-law and KGB interrogations, the private domain of everyday life is immaculately executed. What makes Bainbridge's work so fascinating is the evocation of English everyday life: eggshells strewn in a privet hedge like left-over Christmas decorations, fish and chip suppers, slippers and a pipe. In contrast, bizarre events seem even more unreal but people's fantasies assume comic proportions. In *The Bottle Factory Outing* there are two views of the projected excursion, Brenda's and Freda's:

> *...the thought of the Outing filled her with alarm. It was bound to rain, seeing it was already October, and she could just imagine the dreary procession they would make, forlornly walking in single file acoress the grass, the men slipping and stumbling under the weight of the wine barrels, and Freda, face distorted with fury at the weather, sinking down onto the muddy ground, unwrapping her cold chicken from its silver foil, wrenching its limbs apart under the dripping branches of the trees. Of course Freda visualised it differently. She was desperately in love with Vittorio, the trainee manager, and she thought she would have a better chance of seducing him if she could get him out into the open air, away from the bottling plant and his duties in the cellar.*

In the same novel, Brenda's mother-in-law attempts to kill her, having saved up her pension for three weeks to buy a gun. Here, the madness is somewhow intensified by the banal nature of the transaction: "She'd told the lady in the shop it was for her grandson and the lady had been very helpful. She gave her a card to go with it. She brought out of her handbag a paper target in red and black to show them."

It is fitting that the ultimate violence always seems inexplicable to most of the participants. Not only does communication fail, but the absurdity of people trying to communicate at all becomes apparent. Each character is acting out a private fantasy and following a private agenda. At the most extreme is Adolph Hitler's older sister Bridget planning his future as a bell-boy in a Liverpool hotel (*Young Adolph*).

More painfully familiar is the determined unassertiveness of Brenda:

> *There had been other small incidents that illustrated her extraordinary capacity for remaining passive while put upon. There had been the man on the bus who felt her leg almost to her knickers without her saying anything until she had to move because it was her stop and then she'd said, 'Excuse me, I'm sorry.' And the woman with the trumpet who had stopped her in the street and asked her if she could borrow a room to practice in. Brenda loathed music. When Freda opened the door to the trumpet player and told her*

When everyday things are observed in a detached manner with no one playing villain or heroine, we experience a surprise. Ideology, we see, has all sorts of holes in it, and we can step through them into the unexpected.

> *what to do with her trumpet, Brenda hid behind the wardrobe.*

Out of the gaps between people, despite the desire that it might be otherwise, come a certain levelling. When the gun goes off and the hostage-taking is in progress - that is when the familiar has been decisively violated - a kind of insight comes. Here characters find themselves as spectators as if the actors in a play suddenly realize themselves to be players and begin to watch the action of the drama. In *Injury Time* Binny is chosen as hostage:

> *I knew it would be me...I hope Alison remembers to do her teeth. She watched with interest, bent over her knees, as Harry bundled the wounded Geoff into the passenger seat... The car began to move. She could see Edward's stomach as he ran beside the window - he was holding the handle of the door, preventing it from closing. There's no room, she thought, he's too fat.*

What I have described so far may seem rather beside the point, compared with the mainstream of contemporary women writers.

Beryl Bainbridge

The urgent themes we have come to expect which assist us in defining our place in the world and directing us forward to new, unimagined ones are decidedly absent in Beryl Bainbridge's work. What then, is all the fuss about?

For me, the fascination in her novels is both complex and simple. For most of us life is little considered. Ideology exists not as a set of ideas, constantly pointed out and debated, but as everyday things or institutions whose rules we manoeuvre our way through. When these are observed in a relatively detached manner with no-one assigned to play villain or heroine, we can experience an enormous surprise. Ideology, we see, has all sorts of holes in it and sometimes we can step through them into the unexpected.

Beryl Bainbridge is principally an observer who draws our attention to the matter-of-fact. Thus seen, it assumes bizarre, even grotesque proportions. This effect is intensified by the absence of value judgements. Hostage-takers and madmen *are* villains - in terms of their 'jobs' as hostage-takers and madmen - but otherwise they are dealt with in an even-handed manner.

Women-characters are not necessarily central in her novels. In progress is one about a Victorian clergyman who murdered his wife. This is not woman-centred writing in the sense which feminist criticism has understood it. On the other hand, her male characters are often pompous, middle-aged creatures, victims of spreading bellies and the culmination of a lifetime of cautious ways. Even their escape attempts are faintly ridiculous. Edward, in *Injury Time*, conducts an extra-marital affair:

> *...there'd been a few unfortunate lapses, like the weekend she'd rung his house from some drinking club in Soho. He'd answered the phone himself, thank God, but it was frightfully tricky, standing in the hall in his pyjamas in the middle of the night trying to convey through references to tax returns that he loved her, fearful of Helen on the landing listening to every word...There had been too that incident when he couldn't see Binny because he wanted to prune his roses, and she'd threatened to come round in the night and set fire to his roses.*

Is Beryl Bainbridge a feminist? I suspect that if she were asked she would feel a little bewildered. Certainly, her writing is not feminist in the sense we would normally understand it. On the other hand, here is a woman writer both prolific and critically acclaimed who will certainly survive into the next century. This article has been intended as an introduction to her work. What is now needed is a more thorough examination. Feminist theory needs to sharpen its teeth on her novels.

REVIEWS

Reclaiming the cave

by Barbara Godard

The parable of the cave has a venerable history of negative connotations from its introduction in Plato's *Republic*. There, ignorant mankind, bounded by nature and blinded to the ideal, dwells in an underground cave and must be educated, led out into the light in what is a parable of ignorance. That the cave is a female place, secret and often sacred, is not developed by Plato, but would have provided an additional reason for his banishing women from his republic. Women writers have given a different twist to this parable, transforming it into one of creation, as Sandra Golbert and Susan Gubar have shown in *The Madwoman in the Attic*.

Zarkeen. By Pegeen Brennan. Montreal: Quadrant Editions, 1982.

Mary Shelley in her introduction to *The Last Man*, a work of science fiction, is one of these writers who have reclaimed the cave for women creators and visionaries. In this introduction, she describes her visit to the cavern of the Cumean Sibyl and her accidental stumbling into an inner chamber where she found fragments of bark and whitish leaves, the sybelline leaves, on which the hierophant inscribed her divine intuitions in the written characters of several languages.

Mary Shelley was unable to read these inscriptions - her linguistic skills were weak in a tradition of male education - but her companion, Percy, was able to do so. By deciphering the enigmatic messages, translating, transcribing and recreating them, Mary Shelley remembers the forgotten wisdom of the sibyl. In doing so, she gives birth to her own wise and creative self, reclaiming the cave for a cthonic truth which stands in opposition to Plato's idealism.

Whether or not Pegeen Brennan is familiar with Shelley's version of the parable, this is the one she develops in *Zarkeen*. A first novel, this is a powerful fable of female creativity and should be read by everyone interested in gynocentric aesthetics. In spare prose, this narrative is similar to the creation legend of "The Ice Woman" narrated within it, and develops a similar thesis, namely that the creation of the world or of artistic worlds is the work of women, producing as they reproduce themselves.

Zarkeen unfolds the hero quest of the female artist into what Adrienne Rich has called "the cratered night of female memory". Here she reconceives, gives birth and brings forth art. *Zarkeen* circles backward into what will be the future in that feminist spiral depicted by Nicole Brossard.

Drawing on knowledge of pre-historical societies with their powerful goddesses and projecting this vision of power for women into our future, this novel is an example of the currently popular, feminist, Utopian, archeological fictions. Others in this genre are Madeleine Gagnon's *Lueur* and Margaret Atwood's *Life Before Man*. *Zarkeen* differs from these two in following the spare outlines of myth rather than a more developed fictional narrative. And in this lies its power.

Zarkeen relates the events precipitating changes in custom among a fictive group of prehistorical people. More specifically it depicts the origins of artistic activity among humanity as three pregnant women in a cave gestate the "sister" arts, painting, song, dance and sculpture.

The protagonist Zaru enters a cave to wait out the nine months of her pregnancy. In accordance with tribal custom, her dreaming will guide the men towards their quarry during the hunt. Women and men live separately, the women being called "the People" since they are the first creations of the "Ice Woman". "The Hunters" or men have been created afterwards to give the women sexual pleasure and to chase the animals, though it is the women's inspirational power which guides the hunter's spear to its target.

Zaru is a strong dreamer and has been marked as the next leader of the tribe. While she is within the cave she discovers drawing, the ability to put her thoughts outside herself onto the cavern wall, first outlined in charcoal, then dug into the surface with a sharp stone, each step towards greater permanency being paralleled with increased success by the hunters. Later she is joined by two other pregnant women who find alternate ways of making concrete the images of their thoughts in music and sculpture.

Engaging in this new activity involves the breaking of tribal taboos forbidding any of the products or weapons of the hunt from entering the women's caves. Danger is threatened, but overcome when Zaru learns to project her thoughts into the past or future, allowing her to emerge from the cave with a new son and increased power as tribal leader.

Brennan attempts to create a highly symbolic language for her imaginary tribe which is somewhat difficult to follow despite the apparent simplicity of the words. In this way, like Atwood, Gagnon, Brossard and other women writers, Brennan demonstrates the inadequacy of our language to convey women's experience.

In the language of the People, both the living and growing potential of the individual and the foetus growing within the belly are called "the white self". And it is this white self, pushing away the black self of death that initiates the first art. A much discussed contemporary theory of influence among male writers emphasizes the Oedipal relationship between strong father and strong son and sees the origin of art in the act of parricide. Brennan is consciously establishing a female aesthetic in her fable, the origin of art being intimately connected with the life-giving reproductive power of women.
For Zaru, the moment of first creation instigated by the white self involves a blurring of the distinctions between inside and outside, between womb and cave. In the cave, surrounded by rock on which she can place her hands and leave no imprint, Zaru puts her hands on her sex, which is described in terms of wetness, rocks and earth as "that little cave inside me." Feeling her way, trying to understand her world with her hands, she feels little hands inside her womb like butterflies and wishes she could capture them so they would not be lost in their fleeting sensation. This feeling introduces an orgasm, the first one she has ever had on her own without a hunter. and in this orgasm, art comes into the world. Zaru traps her thought on the wall, outlining her hand with a burnt stick to leave its print on the wall.

In her account of the origins of art, Brennan makes explicit the connections between sexual fulfillment and fertility and the overflow of these sensations into the permanency of art. This is an aesthetic based on birth, on multiplication. Women's art is not inhibited by her lack, her hole - her absence of a penis-pen - but is encouraged by the sheltering cave of her body's plenitude.

These new metaphors for creativity based on female biology and life experiences are extended when later in her pregnancy Zaru is joined by other pregnant women. Skyla with her hand on her belly to feel the child stirring finds hew own way of making images concrete in word and song, accompanied by the drum and reed instrument she invents. Yoran, struggling for life, puts her hands on the bellies of the other two women to feel the tiny white hands, then moulds a statue of a "fertility goddess" which she reproduces in a bone carving. The term "sister arts" is developed literally as the women collaborate on their dreams and inscribe them in their varied art medium. As a trinity, figures of power, they evoke the figures of the three fates weaving the tapestry of the world.

This is an aesthetic based on birth, on multiplication. Women's art is not inhibited by her lack, her hole, but is encouraged by the sheltering cave of her body's plenitude.

The joy of reading this book comes from its use of female metaphors of reproduction as a basis for aesthetics. Woman is not male-minue here, a negative space wanting to be filled, confined in a cave which is but the shadow of reality. Quite literally, the cave becomes the centre of the world, the *umbilicus mundi*. My initial enthusiasm, however, was somewhat dampened by problems encountered in the latter part of the book. One was a printers' problem, a consistent inversion of the names of Skyla and Yoran after this latter entered the cave.
The other had to do with the artist's vision and what seemed to me to be an abrupt shift in perspective at the end of the fable. While throughout the narrative Brennan seems to be developing an aesthetic of sexual difference and advocating a separatist stance - that first drawing is produced by self-induced sexual pleasure - at the end the tribe is to be reorganized on a new basis that integrates the Hunters with the People. This change is the first decision taken by Zaru as she emerges from the cave as leader. The decision was made when Zaru gave birth to a second boy and not to the girl she was so sure she was carrying. While in the cave the women have talked over their concern about their separation from their children and of how the young boys continue to seek them out even though this is expressly forbidden by tribal law. The joining of the two groups is symbolized in the new baby's name, Zarkeen, a port-man-

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REVIEWS

RUBYMUSIC

by Connie Smith

In 1968, Aretha made a triumphant tour of Europe. She appeared on network television and her concerts were standing room only. Aretha had broken new ground for black female singers, and she personified what was now officially know as soul.

The late '60's also brought the civil rights movement to a head and Aretha worked with Jesse Jackson and Martin Luther King.

In the last months of 1969, Aretha went into semi-retirement. She avoided new recording sessions while she wrestled with scars from her childhood and the recurring difficulties in her marriage.

She emerged in the latter part of 1970 to give a benefit concert for Angela Davis. She also divorced her husband and released the album "Spirit in the Dark". Although Aretha said little about her problems, she told all in a way which had become her trademark. Aretha wrote five of the songs on "Spirit in the Dark", each one commenting on the struggle she had just been through.

Again, Aretha retreated from recording and considered abandoning her career. Atlantic was desperate, so they released a collection of previously unreleased songs. The album was "Young, Gifted, and Black."

Aretha made another comeback with a concert at the Fillmore and a new album, "Amazing Grace". The album was good solid gospel but it wasn't a big seller with the white audience. Her next series of albums did not go over well either and her greatest critics said her direction was blurred. At the same time, her original work "Master of Eyes" won a Grammy award in 1973, but it was never released on an album, only the '45'.

In the mid '70's, Aretha's style definitely changed. She experimented with a variety of producers, including Curtis Mayfield and Quincy Jones. Her stage performance became more flamboyant and she shifted away from soul into pop. She went from playing electric piano on many of her recordings to playing no piano at all. Eventually, she made her way to disco.

As for her private life, again it took a turn for the worse. In 1979, her father was shot by burglars when he surprised them in a robbery attempt. He has been comotose since. Recently, Aretha staged the Second Annual Artist's Ball to raise money for his staggering medical bills. Although the event was "fabulous" according to Aretha's brother Cecil, union costs for staging the affair put them in the red.

In 1981, Aretha began recording for Arista Records. She co-produced her album "Love All the Hurt Away", but the album was very orchestrated and her voice wasn't always the focal point. However, she still won the Grammy for best female solo vocalist.

Her next album, "Jump To It", released in 1982, went to number one on the pop, and rhythm and blues charts immediately and her 1983 album "Get It Right" was number one on the soul charts. But somebody still didn't get it right.

In October of 1983, Aretha sued Arista. Her claim was that she didn't receive royalties for 600,000 copies of the albums "Aretha" and "Love All the Hurt Away".

She also said that Arista made charges against her recording fund account instead of her royalty account and this diminished the amount available to her for the costs of recording. Arista was alledged to have hired Luther Vandross as her producer for considerable cash advances without consulting her.

Last month, Arista settled out of court and Aretha received an undisclosed amount. She also agreed to record two more albums for them. The first, which will be a live album is due out any time. She won this one.

In total, Aretha Franklin has released at least 126 singles and 65 albums; 14 of which are greatest hits collections.

Make yourself 'new'

by Helen Potrebenko

The magazine *New Woman* contrasts the "new woman" with the "old lady" to the latter's detriment. For example, a new woman believes that "Hiring a housekeeper is the best thing a career woman can do to free up her time." it isn't explained why the housekeeper doesn't have her time freed up - probably she's just an old lady anyway.

The article I read first was one which promised to give infallible advice about how to get rid of psoriasis. Here's an example of the really scientific advice contained therein:

Let me spell it out so that you'll never forget it: It is known that high cholesterol levels paralyze the big white cells that gobble up the toxins and debris, eliminate cancer cells and thus strengthen your immune system.

Not only is this nonsense, it doesn't relate to the rest of the article which doesn't claim that lack of "big white cells" causes psoriasis. What appears to either cause or contribute towards psoriasis, according to the article, is one side of your body weighing more than the other. If you play games which unbalance your body, you'll be like a car that has suffered a head-on collision. I mulled this one over for a while and decided it must mean that just because you don't have axles doesn't mean you can't straighten yourself out.

In the middle ages, it was believed that "noxious air" spread the bubonic plague. I must say this makes as much sense as supposing that a human body physically or metabolically resembles a car.

The advice about how to cure psoriasis goes on to say that one should accelerate lymph circulation by jumping up and down on an "inexpensive trampoline"(?) You can't eat avocado and you can't go bowling. Avoid noxious air and signal when you turn.

There was also an article about a new program for treating heart disease. I didn't read it just in case it recommended bowling or a moderately expensive trampoline - then what about my psoriasis?

In fact, there were a great many articles I couldn't bring myself to read. One was about fashion loungewear designer Olga Erteszek's relationship with "her finest creation - her daughter Christina..."

I read the first and last paragraphs only of "The Making (Over) of Diane". The first was:

To start, New Woman *cleansed Diane's face with Alogen's Clarifying Cleansing Emulsion, followed with Alogen's Papaya Scrub Exfoliante and Rose Hips Tonic/ Freshener.*

The last was: "Result: New hairstyle, new makeup, new look, New Woman."

(Can anyone tell me why women "cleanse" their faces rather than cleaning or washing them?

I was most interested in "The New Heroine of our Society - the Woman who Makes Things Happen" thinking it was about us wild-eyed feminists. But no, it was about women executives.

The "Finding Romance" article started with a boldface inset:

Watch Out. There is one state others always pick up: The feeling of loneliness...There's something in your eyes and tone of voice...And people react with either pity (if they're charitable) or aversion, but not *with attraction.*

"Making Yourself Approachable" is written as if you were approaching either men or women but the accompanying drawings all illustrate women approaching men. To do this, you must be: complimentary, dramatic, controlled, narcissistic (it's "considered a plus by some men") funny, use sensuous gestures, be proud of your body, say hello with energy, make your handshake count, make eye contact, look good, be nurturing, don't stand up straight ("when it comes to inviting attention, the moderate slouch is more attractive"), don't wet your lips too often or fiddle with something near the mouth (this "is a very aggressive, sexual mannerism, and is considered in the worst possible taste"), help others in front of a man, don't smile continuously. All this while jumping on a trampoline?

I didn't do the quizzes. One said "Check off which voice flaw belongs to you... breathy, whiny, whispery..."etc. You can't have a voice; you can only have a voice flaw.

All women's magazines must have a least one article on dieting and another one on recipes and *New Woman* is no exception.

One of the feature articles gives nine "red flags" to look for in your marriage which indicate "you and your mate should consider professional help". You can never be sure unless you read your magazine, can you? Indeed, one of the readers writes: "I always cut out the articles and place them on my husband's pillow." Another reader discovered she wasn't self-confident by answering the quiz on the subject in a previous issue.

Back to the red flags, number six is:

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REVIEWS

Heart Like a Wheel

by Janie Newton-Moss

Although originally marketed as a drag racing move, *Heart Like a Wheel* explores more thoroughly ace hot rod driver Shirley Muldowney's personal struggles through her meteoric rise to become the first woman to dominate professional auto racing.

Like *Coalminer's Daughter* it shows a woman determined to develop her innate talents without the support of privilege, connections or money.

"There's not a man anywhere who is worth you giving up the ability to take care of yourself." Thus Tex Rogue greets his daugher's decision to marry Jack Muldowney, her high school sweetheart. She ultimately heeds his advice for although early on we see her wearing Muldowney's "Road Kings" jacket while he works up a competitive sweat with his fellow dragsters, one of the final frames is his silent salute as he watches the televised victory of one of the most important races of her career.

Her professional and personal relationships are all with men. The director, Jonathan Kaplan, is unapologetic in illustrating how sexist the world of competitive drag racing is. At her first key National Hot Rod Association event she has to beg, cajole and threaten to be accepted as an entrant. Eventually she sets a track record of 155 mph over a 1/4 mile distance. An early sponsor eager to cash in on the novelty of a female professional dragster packages her in a wig and hot pants. Even when an established name, the media insist on attributing her success to the cars that have been built by her husband, then by her lover and fellow competitor, Connie Kalitta, and finally, by her son John. A nice touch to balance this distortion is to show young girls hanging around the tracks seeking her autograph.

Much has been made of the film's editing which works superbly to show the duality of her life. The harsh realism of juggling a career with a family is shown by cutting from her ecstatic facial expression at winning her first amateur race to her hands collecting dishes and tips from the tables at Good Joe's cafe. Later we see her at the finishing line and then in bed with her lover, making use of the conventional representation of power for male athletes in film.

The four most important people in her life, her father, husband, lover and son are all inextricably bound up with her career. All of them encourage her but when threatened both husband and lover withdraw their support. After a particularly violent and confused encounter Connie Kalitta screams at her:

"If it hadn't been for me you'd still be getting speeding tickets in that little town you came from."

We are invited to draw our own conclusions when, in the next scene, she beats him in a race.

Violence erupts twice and at each point, she leaves the man with whom she is involved and makes a major decision about her career. These scenes show both a personal struggle and act as a microcosm for the violation she faces as a female competitor.

Only once, at her son's birthday party, do we catch a glimpse of the women on the periphery of her life: her sister, her mother and her lover's wife. The only sustained dialogue she has with another woman is when her illusions about being "the number one thing" in Connie Kalitta's life are shattered by a coffee shop confrontation with one of his other lovers.

Shirley Muldowney acted as creative consultant on this project, thus affording Bonnie Bedelia the rare opportunity of studying first hand the person she was playing. The result is a sustained three dimensional performance from an actress better known for her stage and television work. My resolution upon leaving the cinema was to turn to the sports pages more frequently.

BONNIE BEDELIA (L), stars as the champion race driver, SHIRLEY MULDOWNEY (R), in her compelling biography, HEART LIKE A WHEEL.

Get my swan costume ready!

by Erin Moure

A few months ago, Lorna Crozier was in Vancouver to promote her new book of poems, *The Weather*. Remember? It was November, a record-breaking month of rain, and then in the last two days, cold sunshine - *prairie cold*. Lorna Crozier was in town, bringing us the weather.

The Weather, by Lorna Crozier. Coteau Books (Thunder Creek Publishing Co-operative), Moose Jaw, SA, 1983.

Her latest collection is dedicated "To the Crozlers, whose name I have reclaimed." Crozier, author of *Crow's Black Joy* and *Humans And Other Beasts*, was formerly known as Lorna Uher. As she claims her name, she claims her own poetic territory, her strength emerging more surely in her words.

At the end of the first poem, "The Apple Tree", petals of the apple blossom are called "blessings", landing on the heads of people beneath the tree. And blessing is a fitting motif for the whole book. Its images are winds, birds, the hand that smudges inner and outer skies, but the overall sense is one of blessing, hard-earned. The cruel hurting edge that once characterized Crozier's work, that manifested itself in reaction to certain harsh facts about human kind, is not found here. These poems push forward; they are action rather than re-action; they affirm Crozier's active power as a woman capable of love and of knowing the natural world.

The book is divided into four sections called, lamely, Section One, Section Two, and so on. The first section portrays mostly human beings, who are strange ponderous figures in the natural world. The love that arises between humans is closely allied with nature: butterflies, bats, gophers, black birds, caraganas, the smell of rain, and more. The section starts with a blessing and stays on the earth's wise surface, where the weather is.

The images of birds are often present. In one poem, Crozier writes of Pavlova, the dancer, on her death bed. Pavlova's tenacity at the arrival of death reflects the poet's own tenacity; her last words were "Get my swan costume ready!"

In Section Two the dominant images are still those of animals and birds, but now, sometimes wryly and humourously, prairie settlers appear. We are in a special place, its presence not exotic or hidden. The power in the prairie earth comes from simple clarity, and not from a mystification of what is real. Its clarity is both ritual and accessible; sage is called "sage" and not "witches' moss". Things are powerful in their simplest names.

Section Three is a long poem about the first white woman settler on the prairie: a mentor to whom Crozier listens. Though I found the poem successful from the point of view of narrative, I was left thinking that a sequence is somehow more than this. Crozier comes close to approaching a more synthetic vision only at the end of the poem. I wish she had started with the last section.

The fourth section starts with a poem called "The Women Who Survive." And the poems that follow chronicle many deaths; the suicide of the old who walk out barefoot into snowstorms, the death of pariah dogs in Mexico, death at the job, the threatened death of imprisonment and torture. Then the section takes an incredible lunge, in the poem "Indigo", about a woman in the (perhaps Asian) mountains apprenticing to be a cloth dyer, apprenticing for decades under a teacher now in her nineties, dyeing cloth indigo. It is an astonishing and beautiful poem, that ends:

Every day the old one grows
in the other's eyes.
There is much to learn
and much to teach
here
where all things are:

REVIEWS

A Little Night Reading

by Cy-Thea Sand

Look Me In The Eye: Old Women, Aging and Ageism, By Barbara Macdonald with Cynthia Rich. 115 pgs. Spinsters Ink. S.F., CA. $5.95 (U.S.)

A powerful indictment against ageist attitudes and assumptions, *Look Me In The Eye*, is a book that shakes out the mental cobwebs and emotional dust of ignorance and fear. It demands attention and respect. Barbara Macdonald and Cynthia Rich articulate and analyze our collective distaste of the aging process in humane, passionate terms. Some of the essays in the book originally appeared in various gay and feminist periodicals beginning in 1979. In 1982, Barbara wrote "An Open Letter to the Women's Movement" when faced with evidence that as feminists we hadn't learnt much about ageism over the preceding five years.

The letter was written in response to a questionaire Barbara received from a university women's centre in the process of developing a service for lesbians over 65. This essay alone is worth the price of the book. Another essay of Barbara's I particularly enjoyed, "The Power of the Old Woman", discusses three novels concerned with aging, one of which is May Sarton's brilliant work, *As We Are Now* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1973). The other two are Valerie Taylor's *Prism* (Tallahassee: Naiad Press, 1981) and June Arnold's *Sister Gin* (Houston: Daughters, Inc., 1975). This is ground breaking work; each word is engaging, intelligent and intent on confronting the taboo on aging which is particularily harmful to women.

the mountain,
the stream flowing from it,
two women at the centre,
all the blue of the world
flowing through their veins
into cloth
for those who live in cities
they have no need to see. *(page 76)*

Poetry is like that, too; all the blue in the world flowing through the veins, the apprenticeship that ends close to death, the refusal of the constructed world of humans called "cities". I finished the poem with a sense of awe and a sense that the world is parasite upon women like these. As Thomas Merton wrote, the ability of the world to hold together depends on just a few people, perhaps as few as two or three, who live close to the spriit. It is because of these people, I think, that the earth blesses all of us, in spite of what we do to it.

Crozier's final section moves from death to a feeling "close to love". It ends with praise, benediction, an invocation of Rilke, which reminds me of Rilke's own words: *Ever newly begin the praise you cannot accomplish.* When we praise, Crozier writes, "the house we imagined/ builds itself around us". Our empty spaces fill with wind and light. Our bodies become part of the weather.

Get my swan costume ready!

The Women of Brewster Place by Gloria Naylor. 192 pgs. New York: Penguin Books, 1983. $5.95

Using a dead end street as a metaphor in the lives of seven Black women, Naylor has written a powerful work of conscience. *The Women of Brewster Place* resounds with what Alice Walker has termed a "womanist" perspective. Women befriend and betray each other but the most memorable image is of an old Black woman healing a younger woman after the devastating loss of her child:

Ciel moaned. Mattie rocked. Propelled by the sound, Mattie rocked her out of that bed, out of that room, into a blue vastness just underneath the sun and above time. She rocked her over the Aegean seas so clean they shone like crystal, so clear the fresh blood of sacrificed babies torn form their mother's arms and given to Neptune could be seen like pink froth on the water. She rocked her on and on, past Dachau, where soul-gutted Jewish mothers swept their children's entrails off laboratory floors. They flew past the spilled brains of Senegalese infants whose mothers had dashed them on the wooden sides of slave ships. And she rocked on.

What comment does such writing command except to say that *The Women of Brewster Place* won the 1983 American Book Award for a first novel.

That's How It Was by Maureen Duffy. 221 pgs. London: The Virago Press, 1983. $8.95

This autobiographical first novel by the acclaimed British playwright and novelist is both a celebration of her mother and a rare protrait of a working class artist as a young woman. The work was originally published in 1962. In 1982, Maureen Duffy writes in the Preface: "The grammar school was the key to escape from poverty that at the same time brought with it alienation from the escapee's working class background if not from the family roots themselves."

Her book explores this issue and in doing so dramatizes some of the problems educated working class women share. The novel's tension revolves around the need for Duffy's protagonist to succeed educationally and the child's chronic anxiety about her mother's health. The mother/daughter relationship in this work is one of the most moving I have ever read. Duffy's rich language threads together her insights and experiences into an unforgettable fictional memoir.

In The Shadow Of The Wind by Anne Hebert. Translated by Sheila Fischman. 184 pgs. Toronto: Stoddart Publications, 1983. $16.95 (hardback)

Anne Hebert's latest novel is an exquisite feast of lyricism and suspense. The role of the female as Other is juxtaposed to what I read as Hebert's central metaphor - a grandmother's early morning swims with her granddaughters:

Felicity, my grandmother, awakens earlier every morning. Arriving before dawn sometimes, she takes Olivia and me through the darkness, the better to see the daylight...
The first pink glimmer on the gray sea and my grandmother declares we must splash about in it right away, that it's the new soul of the sun unfurling on the waves.
When the high tide comes later, covering the shores in full daylight, Felicity stubbornly refuses to swim, becomes unsociable and distant. One must love her at dawn when she's tender and soft, set free from a spell.

Hebert writes of the essential danger women are in - teenaged girls are murdered, a housewife commits suicide - when men view them as existing only to satisfy male demands. With skill and mastery Hebert dramatizes, for me, Mary Daly's idea of women being spell bound by male domination, a necrophilic condition leading to shame and death.

Down Below by Leonora Carrington. 54 pgs. Chicago: Black Swan Press, 1983.

A short, awesome work, *Down Below*, chronicles surrealist painter and writer Leonora Carrington's experiences with insanity in Spain during World War II. I was first introduced to the work of Carrington in the Vancouver Lesbian Literary Collective where we read her novel, *The Hearing Trumpet*. Both this novel and *Down Below* are surrealistic in imagery and tone. The graphics of Debra Taub compliment the text with their esoteric evocations.

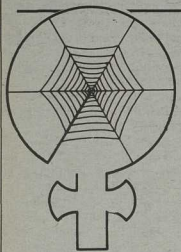
An excellent essay complimentary to a reading of *Down Below* is Gloria Feman Orestein's "Towards A Bifocal Vision In Surrealist Aesthetics" (TRIVIA, Fall 1983)*. In her essay Orestein develops the thesis that through insanity surrealist female artists "felt free enough to protray the Goddess as creator, as the natural symbol for women's *artistic* creativity". *Down Below* abounds with images and symbols of the struggle of a woman to transcend the linear and limited perceptions of a world which binds and restrains her. And on a narrative level the book exposes the horrors of psychiatric abuses, as well as the psychology of domination.

*TRIVIA is a relatively new feminist journal of ideas. Her address is P.O. Box 606, N. Amherst, MA 01059, U.S.A.

("A Little Night Reading" is published quarterly in *Kinesis*. Review copies of fiction, auto-biographies, criticism and feminist journals should be sent to Cy-Thea Sand, c/o P.O. Box 24953, Station 'C', Vancouver, B.C., V5T 4G3.)

A mention of a book or journal in this column does not preclude it being reviewed in depth in future issues of Kinesis. *Review copies of fiction by and about women may be sent to Cy-Thea Sand, P.O. Box 24953, Station C, Vancouver, B.C. V5T 4G3.*

SPIRITUALITY



Working in witchcraft

by Jennifer Svendsen

Starhawk, author of THE SPIRAL DANCE (Harper & Row, 1979) and DREAMING THE DARK (Beacon Press, 1982) was in Vancouver this month to give three workshops.

Starhawk wove a web with us--a web of song and speech, meditation and ritual--a web to empower and bond us. On the Friday night she spoke of magic, of sex, and of politics, before leading us in a ritual. The day-long Saturday workshop focused on Empowerment and Ritual, while on Sunday the focus was Bonding and Ritual. The atmosphere throughout all of them was one of relaxed intensity. That we are hungering for this sort of thing was evidenced by the fact that both day-long workshops were filled before any advertising was undertaken.

Despite a hectic schedule, made even more difficult by a nasty cold, Starhawk generously gave me an interview before returning to San Francisco. My first question was one which had caused me much amused speculation ever since I learned that Starhawk was teaching at Holy Names College.

J. What is a nice witch like you doing teaching in a Catholic college?

I was hired to teach in a program called the Institute for Culture and Creation Spirituality. It's headed by a guy named Matthew Fox and what he's trying to do essentially is change the focus of Christianity to Creation rather than Sin and Redemption. He's very into being ecumenical and thinking feminist, so he hired me to teach there. It caused a certain amount of flack with the Pope...

J. How did you come to witharaft?

S. I got involved when I was a teenager. I'd been raised Jewish, but as a teenager I explored other kinds of spirituality--some things that were more mystical, more based on experience and less on just following a set of customs. I think two things attracted me to the craft. One was the imagery of the Goddess. It was a real revelation to me--I found it very empowering as a woman to envision the spirit of sacredness as being in my own form. The other was that sexuality was sacred. That was very important to me. It was the only religion I ran across that confirmed my own basic opinion about sexuality.

Also, in the Craft there was no authority figure you had to obey. There was no dogma. You didn't have to give your will over to somebody else. At that point I didn't have much of a feminist consciousness, but I had an intuitive dislike of having some elderly man telling me everything I should do with my life. I wanted to think for myself.

J. You obviously do that. What you describe as traditional witchcraft (something which tends to be very hierarchical and into elders, with different degrees of initiation, etc.) seems very different from what you,yourself, do. How did you go from the traditional training you received to the way you are now?

S. Well, I've just always basically been very arrogant. I've always had this idea that nobody could tell me anything. One of the things I've had to grow up and learn is that, yes, there are indeed people who can tell me things. But, I've always felt that if the Goddess is immanent then I've just as good a line on Her as anybody else. Originally, when I was 16 or 17 I had some very minimal training in the Craft.

Then I moved away and didn't do much formally, although I did rituals on my own, I studied art, which was in a way a strange version of magical training. Then years later, when I got back to witchcraft, I had some contact with Z. Budapest. She is of the Dianic tradition and I found myself not totally drawn to it. She was, however, very affirming about doing things in the way that works best for you.

When I moved to San Francisco I got together with some other people and we started a coven, very clearly on our own ground--our own premises. We would experiment and try to see what worked and were not necessarily bound by any of the traditional stuff. It was after that I met the man who really taught me a lot. On one hand, he's really very old school, but on the other, he was always very much of the opinion that whatever you created and invented that worked was valid.

J. What sort of people are attracted to witchcraft?

S. Originally witchcraft was strongest in the lesbian feminist community. Now there are a lot of people attracted through the anti-nuclear movement and some because of general new-age stuff. So, there's more of a mixture. But I think women have a lot more to gain. Witchcraft has certainly been a very strong force in the lesbian cultural community.

J. Could you talk a bit about the so-called split between feminist spirituality and feminist political action.

S. I think it's really a false separation. The witches I've known have always been political. Feminist spirituality and witchcraft have taken a bad rap for the gurus. The old-line Marxist analysis of religion applies perfectly to patriarchal religions but doesn't have much to do with feminist spirituality and earth-based religions.

J. Can you give us a definition of witchcraft and of magic?

S. When I speak of witchcraft I am referring to the old religion of the Goddess that existed long before Christianity, that has its roots in pre-patriarchal times. Magic is the art of changing consciousness at will.

Starhawk is a member of Reclaiming--a collective that, among other things, is involved in the teaching of the Craft. They also publish a "political, feminist, pagan" newsletter. To subscribe to the newsletter, write to: Reclaiming, PO Box 14404, San Francisco, California, U.S.A. 94114. Cost: $3-10/yr; $6-20 two yrs; minimal income-free.

When is magic magic?

by Heather

A discussion of Starhawk's recent Vancouver visit might start with a riddle: when is magic magic? I'm asking this riddle/question in response to a series of conversations I had with women during the days following Starhawk's talk and day long rituals.

These talks revealed some underlying disturbances with the way the weekend's events unfolded. Many women were left feeling troubled, and with unresolved emotional flotsam and jetsam, or they were left with a very surface impression of the weekend.

In my discussion I postulated that the reasons for this were the two-fold,and perhaps, contradictory goals of Starhawk's day long workshops. On the one hand, she was going to bring people together to share with each other, and on the other hand she was teaching skills for raising energy (in other words, magic). With forty different people and forty different egos in the workshop it was difficult for everyone to feel they could open up to the experience and be safe. To future organizers I would recommend smaller workshops.

Also, some of us needed a political focus for the work as we did it. Or let's say that such a focus was sorely missed. Why could we not have zeroed in on the cruise missile as we wove the web on Sunday? It was somehow not enough that we were all gathered together in the name of magic.

Certainly some of the feelings of disappointment centre around expectations. Starhawk's flu attack left her with a very soft voice for the hour and a half of her talk. Some found it difficult to stay with her for the duration. She was also at the tail end of a month of engagements,flying to Vancouver straight from New York City.

I think some of us were looking for a witch in glitter platforms with chitchat full of wicked phrasing and timeless aphorisms (try performance artist Laurie Anderson for this effect). Instead, we had a real human being: one who catches colds, looks a little like the hippie heritage she is very much a part of, and who was undoubtedly a bit of an American away from her home turf. (She said she found Canadians took longer to 'loosen up'.)

All of this is not to deny that many women did have a deeply fulfilling experience, or at least enjoyed the weekend for what it was. As a personal comment, I felt the weekend to be a rather gripping irony. After reading Starhawk's books and looking forward anxiously to her arrival in the flesh to 'show how it's done', I had a distinct feeling of being let down. In a sense I felt as if I had let life play another joke on me: magic and the reclaiming of your own power is not an experience you can import from the Bay area on a March weekend, bottle up, and take home. It takes work with your own community, in that old backyard of the personal.

I think Starhawk would agree.

LETTERS

Coffeehouse open to groups

Open letter to Kinesis readers:

La Quena has in the past publicly advertised our space as available for progressive groups to use on Monday nights, without charge. This policy has up until now been unclear to many people and so we are writing this letter to help clarify exactly what our policy is.

It is now agreed that the space be available on Monday nights to the following groups:

1. Identifiable groups for their own private meetings, at no charge, i.e. Union Sisters, who meet once a month on Monday night.
2. Any public events or meetings that La Quena co-sponsors and co-organizes, at no charge.
3. Identifiable groups may rent the space for $25 for social events, for public or limited public access from 6 - 11p.m. Limited public means open to the public of Lesbians, Chileans, Students, etc., depending on who the renters represent.

We understand identifiable to mean a group that is known in the community, that has a name and a membership. At this point, we are not willing to rent the space for individuals for socials.

Any group that is interested in using the space call La Quena at 251-6626.

Carmen Metcalfe and Trisha Joel for La Quena.

Reader objects to Kinesis ad

Kinesis:

Reading through the programme from Wallflower Order and Grupo Raiz's recent Vancouver performance I noticed your ad near the back of it. Reading it made me begin to wonder whether you are writing articles about "women filmmakers" who are over 19 or so and if the "girl group singers" you are referring to are perhaps children, or if they are girl groups like the Shirelles or the Shangri-las. I can't help getting pissed off when I constantly see women musicians being referred to as girls. Maybe you could write some articles on some progressive music and women's groups.

Connie Nowe

Ed. Note: The copy in the abovementioned ad, which was for this month's supplement on the arts, reads: Articles on goddess imagery in art...writing and class.. graffitti...girl group singers...women filmmakers...dance and politics...and more. The girl group singers mentioned are *those like the Shirelles and the Shangri-las.*

They are referred to as 'girl groups' only because it is a categorical term of the music world, something Connie Smith explains in her article on pp.14&15 . The paper never *refers to women musicians as girls, but this does not mean the paper is unwilling to look at the phenomenon known as 'girl groups'. We do run a monthly music column,* Rubymusic, *and frequent articles on progressive music and women's groups. We regret that the article on women filmmakers will not be appearing this issue.*

Woman seeks info on scoliosis

Open letter to Kinesis readers:

Scoliosis. Animal? Vegetable? Mineral? What is it? Do *you* know? It seems very few people out there, including professionals, know much about the spinal deformity known as scoliosis. Yet according to statistics I've read, one in ten people has it to some degree. Of those, eight out of ten are girls or women. That's a large segment of the female population, no matter how you look at it. Considering these statistics, I am surprised that there is so little information available about it, and that I have seen virtually no articles in women's magazines or newspapers on the subject.

I have been aware of my scoliosis for about 25 years. During that period of time, I've seen numerous specialists (mainly men), including chiropractors, physiotherapists, orthopedic surgeons, rheumatologists and massage therapists and have paid dozens of visits to my GP in an attempt to find more information and bigger and better painkillers. Those specialists generally seemed to be long on opinion and short on knowledge regarding scoliosis. One orthopedic surgeon told me that 'Some people can handle pain better than others', and another implied that my particular spine deformity was my own fault because I have weak back muscles. The only concrete information I've been able to get was about the physical characteristics only, and most of that data was found in outdated books at the public library.

Having talked only briefly with a few people who have scoliosis (whom I've since lost contact with), I am interested in getting more information and/or exchanging experience and ideas with others who have it. Surely there are women out there who feel as isolated as I do with it. I'd like to correspond or talk with them about how scoliosis affects them in terms of pain; whether and in what manner their mobility and/or ability to function physically has been altered; what, if any, treatment they have undertaken and whether it has worked or not; how their deformity has affected their relationships with close friends and family, and their work situation; how they deal with thoughts of what their lives may be like in the future.

I am requesting that anyone with scoliosis write to me so that we might exchange information (include your phone number if you like). At this point, this quest is for personal reasons, but at some point in the future I may write an article with a view to educating the public *and* professional people about not only the physical aspects of scoliosis, but the emotional, psychological, and social as well.

Linda Field, 1468 Grant St., Van. V5L 2Y1

Zarkeen continued from p. 20

teau name composed from those of his mother and father.

This joining seems to undermine the aesthetic developed in the cave and creates a certain ambiguity of response from the reader. Is the fable to be read as a celebration of women's creative and visionary powers that would enable her to become the effective leader for the entire society? Or is it to be read as the story, becoming increasingly well known as the result of the work of women like Merlin Stone, of woman's fall from power?

This latter is a definite possibility given the consequences depicted in *Zarkeen* of the invasion of female space by the Hunters. In a series of escalating invasions, taboo elements from the hunt are brought into the cave, women's creative space. First of all there is the meat which so greatly strengthens the dreaming, then the bone for Yoran to carve her thoughts in, and finally Keenig, the hunter himself. Through this last violation of the sanctuary, the Hunters have gained the power to destroy the People. Zaru's newly discovered ability to visualize the future, to foresee developments, enables her to block this male destructive force nourished by an entirely different symbolic system and myths.

Brennan may be suggesting that women must use their greater power to communicate their myths to the young boys and thus win ascendency over the males in this community. However, such a conclusion offers little hope for the woman reader who is aware of the ways in which our own society has cast aside female visionary powers and futuristic fictions. Women's word has not generated much force against male stories and ideologies. I am thus more inclined to read this as the story of our fall from grace than as a blueprint for future empowerment.

I reflect on the relative endurance of the Platonic myth of the cave. It has become central to our society, while we can no longer read the sybelline leaves from the other cave. Nenetheless, the power of Brennan's fabel rests firmly in its attempt to give us greater knowledge of the creative strengths to be found from a visit to this other cave where women, strong in body and spirit, emanate a nonrational approach. And this advocacy of women as active producers of meaning locates *Zarkeen* in the mainstream of contemporary feminist writing.

VIDEO INN PRESENTS:
Women's Video Nights II

Evenings of technical workshops and tape viewings for women. All women are welcome.

7:30 - 10:00 pm

April 24: Women and Video Art

As part of our community outreach Video Inn presents tapes from our permanent collection. Includes work by Julie Healey, Shawn Preus, Anne Ramsden, Teri Chmilar, Kate Craig, and others.

May 1: Women and Documentary Video

A variety of documentary visions will be explored with topes from the Video Inn's permanent collection by Amelia Productions, Keiko Tsuno, Martha Rosler and Teri Chmilar. Discussion will Follow Screening.

May 8: Production

¾ inch portapak production for women. $10.00 Producers members/$15.00 others.

May 15: Editing

Video editing for women. Basic knowledge of ¾ to ¾ inch editing will be taught. $10.00 Producers members/$15.00 others.

VIDEO INN
261 POWELL STREET
VANCOUVER, B.C. V6A 1G3
688 - 4336 / 688 - 8827

BULLETIN BOARD

EVENTS

WOMEN'S HISTORY IN B.C. CONFERENCE, April 27-28, 1984, Camosun College, Victoria. Topics include: history of equal pay, women in the kitchen in the '20's, club women, Chinese women, early women missionaries and lots more. Registration: $25/$15 (students and unemployed). Registration forms available at UBC and SFU History Depts. or contact Barbara Latham, Pac/Can, Camosun College, 3100 Foul Bay Road, Victoria, V8P 4X8, 592-1281, Local 337.

JOY KOGAWA will read from her prize-winning novel *Obasan* at 8p.m., April 27th, in the Young Building, Camosun College, Victoria, to open the Women's History in B.C. Conference. This reading is sponsored by the National Book Festival and is open to the public. Free admission.

ANNE CAMERON will read some of her work on Saturday, April 28th, at 8p.m. in the Young Building, Camosun College, Victoria. The reading will be followed by a presentation of "The Rainbow Women of the Fraser Valley: Life Songs Across the Generations" by Marilyn Ravicz and Laura Buker. Cameron's appearance is sponsored by the National Book Festival. These events are free and open to the public.

PACIFIC CINEMATHEQUE EXPLORES the new British cinema in April with a series of films produced and distributed by the British Film Institute. Screenings include: "Crystal Gazing" by Laura Mulvey and Peter Wollen on Friday and Saturday, April 6 & 7 at 9:30p.m. Jan Worth's "Doll's Eye" on Wednesday and Thursday, April 11th and 12th at 7:30 p.m. Double-bill: Anna Ambrose's "Phoelix" and Carola Klein's "Mirror Phase" on Wed. & Thurs., April 25 & 26 at 7:30p.m. All films at NFB Theatre at 1155 W. Georgia. Admission by membership, can be purchased at the door. Non-subscribing membership $2, subscribing membership $10. Admission is $3 per film, $5 for double-bills.

AMERICAN VIDEO ARTIST Doris Chase will be appearing at Women In Focus Arts and Media Centre on April 11 from 8-11p.m. Chase will be presenting her most recent work in video, including "Mask", "Three Story Suite" and a retrospective video documentary. "Three Story Suite" is a trio of feminist folktales from Persia, Africa and Polynesia. There is a $3 admission charge to non-members. Workshop "How to Keep Control of your Images and Make Money Too" by Doris Chase on April 12 from 8-11p.m. Registration fee is $15. Interested participants are encouraged to pre-register. Contact Women In Focus at 872-2250 between 9:30a.m. and 5:00p.m., Mondays to Friday. Contact person: Brenda Ingratt.

CANADIAN ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT of Women and Sport (CAAW&S) sponsors Walk and Roll, Women's Activity Day, May 19. Opportunity for all women to learn about fitness, and for women's groups to network. Next organizational meeting, 7:30p.m. Sport B.C., 1200 Hornby. Call Hilarie at 687-3333, Loc. 242, Mon-Thurs. 9-12, for more info.

WORKSHOPS

THE VANCOUVER WOMEN'S HEALTH COLLECTIVE will hold an information sharing workshop on Alternative Insemination for lesbians and/or women without male partners, on Monday, April 30, at 7p.m. at 1501 W. Broadway (the Health Collective.) We will discuss the emotional and practical considerations to do with conception, pregnancy and child-raising, the social and political issues surrounding alternative insemination, the process of finding and screening donors, and how to chart our fertility cycles. For futher info, phone the Health Collective at 736-6696.

THE VANCOUVER INCEST AND SEXUAL ABUSE Centre Society is again offering a 90 hour certificate course for therapists who wish to improve their skills and knowledge in the area of sexual abuse in preparation for work with adult survivors and mothers of sexually abused children. The course will begin May 4 and the final session will be held June 10. Fee: $500. For more info please call V.I.S.A.C.S. at 738-3512.

IN HER OWN IMAGE - Phototherapy Experiential Workshop, Sat., April 7, 9-5, fee $35. Conducted by Judy Weiser, psychologist. Workshop through University of B.C. Continuing Education (workshop LS -1515-284). For more info call 689-9709.

THREE WORKSHOPS BY MARGO ADAIR...May 5, Sat. Theta training, working at deeper subconscious levels to visualize changes in our lives. For men and women with some previous visualization experience. May 6, Sun. Health-using visualization for healing, women only. May 4 & 7, Fri. & Mon. evenings - Tools for Political Thinking. Two evenings of discussions, learnig to develop an analysis and understanding of political ideas. Women only. Private session time also available. Payment is on a sliding scale. For locations/childcare and any other details, phone Jude at 254-0320.

New Woman continued from p. 21

Severe psychological problems or dramatic gestures - suicide attempts, physical violence, leaving home - that drain emotional energy that could ordinarily be directed to self-help.

I can understand that if my husband left home, this would be a hint that something was a little wrong in our relationship, but what does the rest of the sentence mean?

From the pictures and the articles about executives and how to start your own business, it is clear that "new women" are not like you and me. They are rich, young and beautiful. But from the articles it is clear that the quest for youth, beauty and money must be singleminded and unrelenting. Although one of the reasons for the unrelenting quest appears to be a lucrative career, the main purpose seems to be to catch a man. It doesn't seem to me that one's career would be at all affected if one stood straight, looked lonely or even had psoriasis whereas these things are clearly presented as the death-knell to any chance of meeting a man.

Possibly this magazine is primarily aimed at single women or maybe this issue is an exception, but catching a man seems more of a priority than holding him. Married women presumably can smile continuously, look lonely or wet their lips as long as they keep a sharp eye out for the "red flags".

These magazines feed off insecurities, my friend says. Are young American women really so insecure? So willing to be guilted? So eager for ignorance? Help!

Photographers continued from p. 16

quilt by Ronnie Tessler, a ceramic wedding cake by sculptor Bill Rennie and Kate Abbott's piece on wedding imagery from comic books.

Susan Dirk has been working in photography since 1978. Susan studied photography at the Maine Photographic Workshop. She uses a "Diana" camera, a plastic view-finder camera that takes 120 roll film. The plastic lens of the Diana softens the image and gives a nostalgic impression to the photograph.

"It's simple, a very basic tool; because of its simplicity, technically, you have to know the camera well, how the quality of the lens affects the picture. It is not at all inhibiting to people who I photograph in the street."

Susan has shown her work in group exhibitions in New York, Boston and Vancouver, including "Photo Perspectives '83" at Presentation House last November. Susan voiced her concern that the galleries are not accessible to the 'ordinary' person. Her photographs are documentation of her environment: the city. It is the common person Susan wants to reach with her art. "In the old days Life magazine had that sort of imagery, but not today." Current sensation-oriented magazines do not portray the common person.

Kiku Hawkes is a photographer who earns much of her income from teaching and from commercial work. Kiku has exhibited in a number of group exhibitions as well as having a solo show of her "Fantasy" piece at the Camfari coffee house last year and a show of her "Belly Dancers" series at the Northwest Exhibition Centre in Hazelton during March 1984. (See *Kinesis*, July/August,1982). Kiku's experience in showing her work in Vancouver has been a negative one.

"Shows for photographers are hard to come by in Vancouver. I have found the attitude of gallery people towards the artist to be fairly irresponsible: for example,... yes, you have a show...sorry, things have changed...we'll call you with our decision in two weeks...and that turns into no response for two months...and then it takes another month to get one's slides back.

This is aggravated by the scarcity of galleries handling our work and the essentially social nature of the decision-making process (so-and-so has a show and that gallery owner recommends the person's work to another owner, etc.) Breaking into that can be difficult.

There is a real confusion as to what good photography is: that which is new is worth more than that which has been done before, but is being done again well. Often the decision of what gets shown relates to art as a commodity--that which sells will be shown over that which doesn't have a market.

Why do I do it if I seem to receive so few rewards? For what it gives back to me. It is a secret place, a somewhat objective platform where I can stand and be detached from all the nattering things; a thing that I have ultimate control over. Something I can trust even if it's not going smoothly at the time--a way of knowing my core, giving it form, putting it out to the world in a hopefully memorable way."

BULLETIN BOARD

"RELATIONSHIPS IN THE AQUARIAN AGE: Alternatives to the Marriage Model" is again being offered on May 5. This workshop led by Louise Pohl is designed to promote clarity in the area of relationships. The time is 10a.m. to 2p.m. Fee is $20 and pre-registration is necessary. Call 685-1695.

ON THE AIR

TUNE INTO CO-OP RADIO 102.7 FM:
WOMAN VISION, Mondays, 7:30p.m. News, up-coming events, music.
DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES, Mondays, 8:30p.m. Special documentary features.
THE LESBIAN SHOW, Thursdays, 8:30p.m. Reviews, herstory and weekly features.
RUBYMUSIC, Fridays, 7p.m. Women's music.
NIGHTWATCH, Wed. April 11, 7:30, feature on incest.

GROUPS

WOMEN INTERESTED IN GROUPING with other women to: -talk/-make new friends/ -learn from each other's lives about our reality as women/-do something about it...Phone Rape Relief & Women's Shelter for more info: 872-8212. Childcare on site. Wheelchair accessible.

CLASSIFIED

LOOKING FOR A HOME: Arrow, my dog, and I are looking for a new home. Women's house preferred. We are non-smoking, mostly vegetarian, politically active, and tired of too many changes lately. We need to settle. Call Monika 253-4802, or leave message.

DISARMAMENT AND BEYOND CONFERENCE II

April 29th at Langara Campus, 100 W. 49th. Registration 9a.m. Waged $6 unwaged $3.50. Workshops will be geared to making the connections between disarmament and womens, third world, environmental and nature issues plus 5 strategy workshops ranging from Armchair War Resistance to Civil Disobedience will explore what can be done. Also films, book tables, free childcare, differently abled access table. Pre-register for childcare 874-0137. Sponsored by Women Against Nuclear Technology and Trident Action Group.

FEMINIST SEEKS TRAVEL COMPANION beginning with fortnight tour hosted by the Women's Union of Greece to sites celebrating historic women. We arrange own travel to (and from) Athens, arriving June 19th. Tour over, visit other Greek Islands. Exciting? Call 987-2715. Deposit deadline is April 30.

LESBIAN INFORMATION LINE
L.I.L.
Need Information? Want to Talk?
Contact L.I.L. — (604) 734-1016
Thurs. & Sun. 7-10 p.m.
collective or write 1501 W. Broadway, Vancouver

AUTO REPAIR: complete car care by women. Have us do your spring tune-up. We have reasonable rates and a mobile service. Call Susan 254-7909 (We now have an answering machine).

LOST: Brown hardcovered journal and every woman's almanac at Sunday's International Women's Day event. Please return: Carol-Anne at 874-2007. P.S. I lost them at the Vancouver Women's Health Collective table.

WOMAN TRAVELLING TO NEW MEXICO in May is interested in looking into possibilities of how to get there. Would there be anyone driving down that way? Even as far as San Francisco or L.A. would help. Call Carol-Anne at 874-2007.

SUBLET FOR SUMMER (June, July, August). Furnished room in comfortable feminist East Van household. $200/mth. plus hydro. Some storage space. Non-smoker preferred. Call Renee (w) 435-7525, and/or Carolyn, Emma (h) 254-3358.

LITTLE MOUNTAIN NEIGHBOURHOOD HOUSE SOCIETY has groups for single parents. Single Mothers meet on Mondays from 5-8:30p.m. at 3981 Main St.(at 24th Ave.) Potluck supper from 5-6:30p.m. Childcare is provided. Single fathers meet every other Thursday from 5-8:30p.m.

"INDEX/DIRECTORY OF WOMEN'S MEDIA" Available from Women's Institute for Freedom of the Press, 3306 Ross Place, N.W., Washington, D.C., U.S.A., 20008. $8(US)

BED & BREAKFAST IN NELSON, a Canadian Hostelling Association Mini-Hostel. Rates vary from $7 to $12 for single, $14-17 for double. For more info contact: Ms. Jane M.W. Steed, Killarney-on-the-Lake, R.R. 1, Nelson, B.C. VIL 5P4

Porn conference continued from p. 1

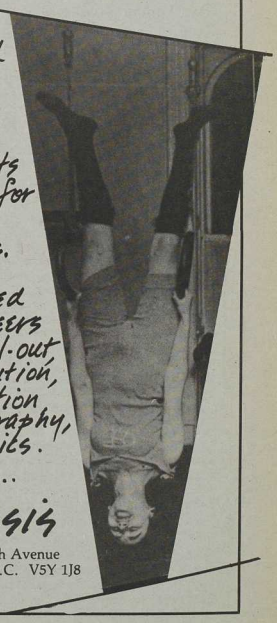
That is, until Wendy Stock began to speak. Stock is a psychologist from New York doing work on women's reactions to pornography. She outlined her findings briefly: whereas men get less repulsed and anxious after prolonged exposure, women become more so. This isn't exactly shocking news but academic circles often demand proof of the obvious. Stock knows all of this. She raced through her slides complete with the required graphs of quantification and analysis. Then she stopped and began to get the priorities straightened out. "It is impossible to discuss pornography outside of the generalized violence women experience in sexist society." There was an outburst of applause. She put up more slides, one showing a *Hustler* magazine spread featuring the gang rape of a woman on a pool table in bar in Massachusetts. The truth was coming out.

During the lunch break, the women participants were visibly agitated, caucusing quickly.

As the applause for Dr. Koop's talk began to die down, a phalanx of women drew up at the side of the auditorium. They looked determined. Something was in the air. Finally, they made their way to the stage. They unfurled a banner that read "Women's bodies, women's lives, we decide." and MacKinnon read out the women's statement. Rabbi Goldstein, scheduled to talk about pornography and ethics, put the clergy in their place. "Those of you who hear in confession of a woman being beaten cannot tell her to take those blows." "The Church has to take responsibility for confining women to the role of housewife and child rearer."

Then Andrea Dworkin appeared. You could hear a pin drop. "Thank-you," she said, "for taking feminist rhetoric seriously enough to base your studies on it." She expressed outrage that we would wonder whether a meat hook in a vagina "causes harm". She reminded the audience that this was entertainment. And then to the point: "If you love male supremacy and you abhor pornography, then you don't abhor pornography enough to do anything about it." Pauline Bart changed her mind and decided not to talk about her research.Instead, she told the audience that when she was completing her Ph.D thesis, she became pregnant and had an illegal abortion. She almost died from the botched procedure, and if she had, she said, or if she'd had the baby for that matter, she never would have done any of her work on rape, pornography and violence against women. "So don't tell me when I'm at a conference on pornography not to talk about abortion." End of remarks.

At least thirty members of the audience walked out of the women's'demonstration', including Ontario Censor Board Charman Mary Brown. At the end of the day, the last speaker, a Dr. Rudecki, who specializes in TV violence, exhorted women not to resort to violence in their protests, as if taking ten minutes on the podium, peaceably, and after having been "censored" by conference organizers, could even be breathed in the same breath as the horrifying violence flashed on the screen throughout the day. Dr. Rudecki's parting shot was that women should try something else - like starvation protests. There's consciousness for you; let's fight violence against women by committing actions of violence on ourselves. But consciousness was never built in a day.

Women's silence and pornography have always been closely linked and it was the breaking of that silence that brought the issue into the glare of media attention surrounding the conference. By commanding women's silence, by attempting to shut women out, conference organizers struck a female nerve that created a kind of magic that day. Many women left feeling more like getting back to the old activism than every before. The real lesson of the day was: You cannot shut women out. It simply cannot be done. *The Globe and Mail* quoted the beleagured David Scott as saying that he had "asked the women to leave their guns at home." Pauline Bart put it best. "Oh, we left our guns at home," she said. "But we brought our politics with us."

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