Branching Out

CANADIAN MAGAZINE FOR WOMEN

FEBRUARY/MARCH 1976 $1.00



BEVERLY GLENN-COPELAND
page 32

Lorraine Monk
of the NFB

Justice for Rape Victims —
A Proposal

Eleanor Pelrine on Morgentaler

Tanya Rosenberg's
Male Body Sculpture



Mrs. Phyllis Ellis
Director
Alberta Women's Bureau

The Alberta Women's Bureau is an information and referral service for Albertans. If you have concerns with which you require assistance and don't know who to contact, call, write or visit us at our new offices.

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Alberta

WOMEN'S BUREAU

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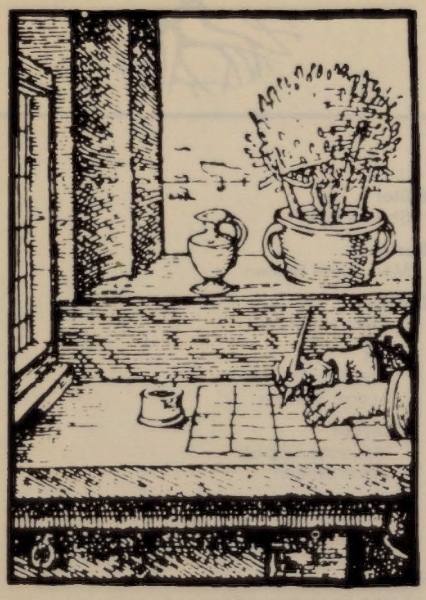
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letters



The following are some of the comments from the November/December reader questionnaire.

November/December issue

Beaugrand-Champagne's pictorial essay was worth more than a thousand words!

Calgary

I like the expansion of the book review section.

Texas

I never agreed more with an article than with "Enough" by Karen Lawrence. Amen. What she said about many women's magazines also applies to *Branching Out*. Must you accept only articles, stories and poems from women?

Edmonton

Karen Lawrence is so right. There are times when an artist can use the things around her to create really great, imaginative work but this seldom happens when "problems" are aired.

Ottawa

Most articles were too dry and with little "people interest" from paragraph one on.

Edmonton

"What did you think of IWY?" was a good idea but didn't reflect enough variety.

Ontario

"Women Who Won The West" was inspiring. A baby in the rain in a tent!

Ontario

"Women Who Won the West" was too simplistic.

Halifax

I just didn't respond strongly to this issue.

Edmonton

This is the best issue you've put out so far — interesting, positive, strong!

Vancouver

Feminism

I perceive that women *are* growing and their situation *is* changing. It's time to direct ourselves to the subtleties. The changes won't be made through anxious pleas — we've made as much ground as possible that way. From here on in it's the cool, thorough approach that will do the trick.

Edmonton

Articles of wider interest and not just the old women's Lib issues. New approaches to old problems.

Montreal

A more radical approach would give *Branching Out* more punch.

Ottawa

More articles for or by women who do not appear so radical in their "liberation." Many of us have come to terms with our life and enjoy harmony.

Manitoba

I get tired of angry feminist rhetoric.

Ontario

More items on women's progress and less on the actual liberation aspect. Most women who read *Branching Out* are already liberated.

Ontario

Men/Women

I like the magazine because women write the articles and manage its layout etc. I would like to see a broadening of topics.

Edmonton

Resist those who wish men included in the magazine. We are a long way from equality and this must be achieved first.

Ottawa

Branching Out gives me the distinct impression that the only way a woman will ever find herself is to become an island or to surround herself with women who are also struggling. If we as women are strong in ourselves we can draw on men's knowledge without fear of losing our freedom.

Ontario

There should be less "up the female" which to me is a putdown of females. Women should not be so small minded.

Ontario

Less wailing please, especially in the poetry and fiction. One would think men were the enemy. Quite a number of our ills have seen self-inflicted.

Ottawa

Arts/Politics

More emphasis on economic and political issues, less on the arts. If women are to become truly equal they must be at the top of the power structure in significant numbers. Because these areas are so foreign to most women they are afraid to tackle them and stick to creative areas.

Alberta

We have to stop moaning about our sad lot and turn to action. Even letters to M.P.s and M.L.A.s supporting legislation would be helpful. Women need to agitate more!

Edmonton

More on social and political events concerning women rather than concentrating on arts.

Peace River, Alberta

More information on women in the arts. Keep up the book reviews.

Brockville, Ontario

Branching Out is my favorite magazine because of its promotion of women's arts. I recognize myself in experiences and feelings expressed by your contributors.

Ontario

The magazine should broaden women's horizons not only on a social but a political level. It should be more informative than entertaining. It's not that women's progress in the arts is invalid but I'm puzzled as to how it can benefit the oppressed female factory worker or the single parent struggling for survival.

Montreal

More women in the arts, history and literature. I like the poetry. More film reviews.

Ontario

The poetry is absolutely meaningless to anyone but the poet herself. I've never read such a lot of stupid verbiage trying to pass for poetry anywhere else.

Alberta

Your poetry and photography continue to be first class.

Ontario

Regionalism

Too much emphasis on western Canada (especially Edmonton) in the advertising and some of the articles.

Ontario

Since I'm a western Canadian I'd like to see lots more articles by and for us.

Alberta

More material from women gleaned from all provinces.

Vancouver

More acticles from people in Quebec. Bring in as much variety as possible.

Montreal

Articles on women in Newfoundland.

St. John, Newfoundland

Etcetera

Keep your integrity in advertising policy — avoid cosmetics ads, for example.

Willowdale, Ontario

I really do object to articles that seem to revolve around bad language and vulgarity.

Manitoba

I would like to see more articles about women in other countries and how they are coping.

Montreal

The magazine needs more social conscience. It is too "high culture" — we are not all literary.

-St. John's

Branching Out's high quality and all-encompassing nature commend it. The assumption that the reader is a mature, intelligent, many-faceted human being makes the magazine special.

Alberta

Edit your letters to the editor.

Ontario

Many of your articles are boringly wordy and some are too esoteric, especially book and film reviews.

Ontario

The book review section seems without direction. Adult and children's books should be clearly separated. How about selecting books that will make a real contribution towards women's equality?

Newfoundland

Keep serious, not flighty.

Saskatchewan

Publish a humorous article or story — it's all so *deadly serious*!

Montreal

Improvement in art work please.

Ottawa

I think your feature articles could be more in depth than they are.

Brandon, Manitoba

I'd prefer shorter articles.

London, Ontario

The magazine is "samey" and perhaps cliquish.

Bonnyville, Alberta

More French. Layout generally good with some inconsistent lapses. High gloss paper very distracting.

Ottawa

A past issue had a great short story about two women falling in love — so accurate. We chickenhearts need guidance about the manifold possibilities. The present categories are so ironclad and exclusive. Won't it be nice when we can freely express our feelings for each other without fear and restrictions.

Ontario

I feel I am becoming more liberated in my old age and your magazine certainly has its influence.

Edmonton

Branching Out has really disappointed me. For about the past six months the quality has dropped noticeably. The topics are handled in such a boring unimaginative way — no controversy, no new viewpoint. Can't you please, please put in a bit of freedom, a bit of fire? If the magazine continues to be so uninspiring and dull I'll just stop reading this golden opportunity gone stale through lack of courage.

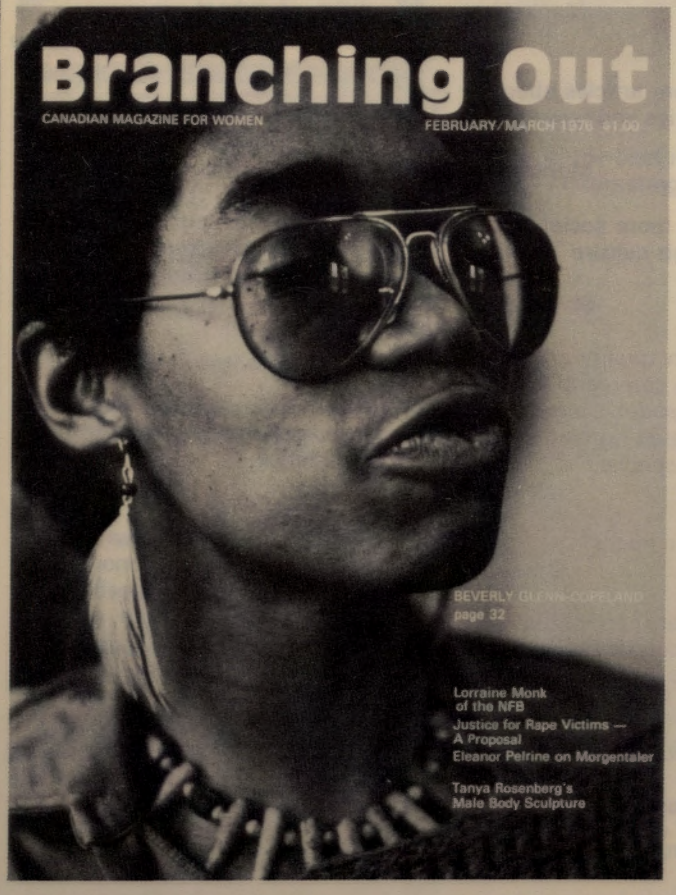
Edmonton

NOTE TO SUBSCRIBERS

This issue of *Branching Out* was delayed one month because of difficulties caused by the postal strike. We hope to produce six issues of the magazine this year but if this proves impossible subscriptions will be extended.

Some subscribers have written to say they did not receive their last issue. If you are missing one or more issues you should have received, please notify us, including your full address.

Here's what some of our subscribers are saying about Branching Out



"One of the finest Canadian magazines on the market today."

". . . good editorials."

". . . A very honest portrait of women. It puts the women's movement in perspective."

". . . consistently getting better."

"Monotonous, predictable, whiny."

Well, *most* of them are glad they subscribed.

Shouldn't you give us a try?

6 issues for $5.00 12 issues for $9.50

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editorial

"I guess the women's movement is pretty well over," someone said to me the other day. He had heard, with apparent relief, that 'libbers' had gone the way of 'flower children', 'ecology freaks' and other period personae. An outsider's view perhaps, but not, I think, without validity. Take for example the fact that Myrna Kostash, *Maclean's* columnist on women, wrote her last column in September citing the fact that her own passion as a feminist was gone: "we pushed and we shoved. But nothing moved." Or look at American journalist Nora Ephron who notes in the preface to *Crazy Salad*, her recent, bestselling collection of essays about women and the movement, "It has become more and more difficult for me to write about women . . . I'm afraid I have run out of things to say." A similar sense of depression and resignation has set in with some of the staff of *Branching Out*.

Most women I have talked to recently recognize this change of mood. While they do not say the movement is over, they say it is "shifting gears" (presumably downwards), or it "needs new blood" (not theirs). As a feminist, I've spent some time wondering how all this will affect me. As a member of the staff of a women's magazine, I wonder how it should affect our editorial policy or, indeed, if a magazine like *Branching Out* is still needed.

It's hardly surprising that so many women have lost the fresh energy and enthusiasm they had several years ago. The early idealism of any movement is sparked by a sudden realization of injustice. This awareness can be reinforced through communication, as it was for women who joined consciousness-raising groups and discovered a sense of community with other women, who shared their fears, their anger, their frustration. More reinforcement came from the reams of studies and articles that suddenly flowed from the pens of academics, the typewriters of journalists, the computers of government offices, the minutes of ad hoc committees. This barrage of information increased people's awareness of women's problems, but its impact paradoxically diminished. The facts of discrimination were always the same; new responses seemed impossible. In a situation that was no longer dynamic, we lost our energy for making changes. I think a desire to seek new ways of responding to now-familiar problems is turning many women away from organized feminism.

My personal reaction to all this is a sense of uncertainty rather than depression. I agree that the major obstacles to women's equality still remain. Yet few of us are likely to return to our former passivity and "female" roles. Not everyone has "run out of things to say" if recent publications by women's groups are any indication. And those women who are still active seem to be working with a quiet efficiency and effectiveness. This style of operation may not be flashy, but I think it will bring tangible results. For example, a group in Toronto, after a year of research and preparation, recently established a women's credit union, geared to the special needs of an all-female clientele. For these women, talking about their difficulties motivated them to work collectively on a solution.

In our last issue, fiction editor Karen Lawrence expressed a wish to see women's writing reach into areas of wider interest, to see fresh approaches to the overworked "women's issues." Her viewpoint is shared by others on the staff and was echoed by many readers who replied to our recent questionnaire. Clearly, *Branching Out* will have to satisfy this desire if the magazine is to sustain the support of staff and readers. As editors we want to expand the scope of our content while retaining the identity of *Branching Out* as a women's magazine (which we believe *is* needed — as a group women are still underdogs).

In this issue we introduce two columns which explore new areas. Linda Duncan begins her series on the law by proposing how to prosecute rapists in a startling — but legal — way. Future articles on the law will cover such topics as the environment and creditors' rights. Write to her if you want to contribute other topics or write an article of your own. The second column, *head way*, was conceived by Karen Lawrence as a space for contributors who have broken a habitual pattern in their ways of responding, who have expanded their self-awareness. Our first contributor, Anita Lerek, describes how her ideas about art and politics changed during a conference of poets held in Toronto.

The two columns are examples of how we would like to change the magazine so that the new directions women are taking will be a vital part of *Branching Out*'s content. We want to be aware of the changes in women's lives, to find out whether they are still active in the movement or are trying to explore their strength independently.

Sharon Batt

Lovers
like
two great circles
crossing.
One is red
or yellow
or orange.
One is blue
or green.
Or they
are different shades
of one colour.
But where
the circles
intersect
they flash
all the wild
spectrums
of light
and
become
indefinable colours
or no colour
or invisible
or they are one shade
of one colour.

Rosemary Aubert

I found
a cockroach
in the washroom,
the first one
since we came here,
and tears made me
weak again.
It is two a.m.
I think of you
racing through the rain
alone
or trembling
with a reed of a blonde
in some suburban motel room
and I want so badly
to talk to you.
I don't want to say
how I used to love you
or how I could always catch
the light falling across your face
like a breeze,
making you beautiful.
I only want to tell you
about that sordid invasion
of the place
where we used to brush our hair
together,
where I would look up
and catch my smiling face
over your shoulder
in the mirror.

St. Joan in Silken Armour

an interview with Lorraine Monk

by Susan McMaster

photos by Vivian Frankel

Lorraine Monk is the Executive Producer of the Still Photography Division, National Film Board. Recently she talked to Susan McMaster about her job, her life and her aspirations.

* * *

"Nobody has done more for Canadian photography than Lorraine Monk." She laughs with surprise, perhaps embarrassment. "Oh, you mean Still Photography?" No, I am quoting a prominent Canadian photographer who referred specifically to Lorraine Monk, the Executive Producer of the Still Photography Division. "Well, yes, I guess that's true . . ."

We are sitting in Lorraine Monk's sunlit living room, drinking Perrier water and lime juice. Sketches, photographs and paintings on the walls were done mostly by friends. An antique toy — a cast-iron coach and horse set — is whimsically at home among the rich rugs, occasional panes of stained glass, and deep, soft furniture arranged for conversation.

"I think the most important thing I've done is be a kind of dragon protecting the still photographer in this country. I have set standards of price and treatment. Now nobody is going to push a still photographer around. A good photographer is worth as much as a good bank president, because he affects the world we live in. He affects our lives, our way of seeing, our whole way of responding to the world and interpreting reality."

Since her appointment in 1960, Lorraine Monk and her division have produced eleven books, including *Call Them Canadians, A Time To Dream,* and *Canada*, which won the 1973 Leipzig medal for the most beautiful book in the world. Canadian exhibitions and slide shows include the International Women's Year exhibition in Ottawa in 1975. Over ninety exhibitions of Canadian photography are presently showing around the world. Monk's division buys the work of thousands of freelancers annually. Her projects are commercial as well as aesthetic successes; *Canada*, first published in 1967, is still in print and has sold 100,000 copies. Monk has received the Order of Canada, the Centennial Medal, the Excellence of Service Award for the Federation International de l'Art Photographique.

Today, Lorraine Monk looks more friendly than formidable. In a long white dress, with her blonde hair coiled around her head, she appears as serene as the Sunday sunshine. Where is the woman who has fought some of the bitterest battles in Canadian bureaucracy, who has been called 'arrogant' by some and 'ruthless' by herself? Who is called 'dragon lady' in some circles?

I get my first glimpse of that woman when I ask why the NFB spends only two per cent of its budget on the still photography division.

"Less than one per cent!" she exclaims. "Including me, there are fewer than ten permanent employees in my division. I'm trying to give local power to the regions, to spend my money on photographers rather than on bureaucracy. Unfortunately, in the government, all that counts is the number of employees you supervise, the size of your division.

"Our ten people are the core of four exhibitions a year in Ottawa. We have ninety exhibitions travelling in Canada and around the world. We have 2,000 freelance photographers and an audience of literally millions for our shows and our books. But still photography is apparently a low priority for the board. I have to get sponsorship from other sources to put out a book; they haven't funded even one of them."

The Secretary of State supported *Photography 1975 Photographie*, the book of the Ottawa IWY show. Impressed by earlier successes, commercial publishers often buy the rights to the books: *Photography 1975 Photographie* is now available as *The Female Eye.* Her current project, *Between Friends / Entre Amis* will be published simultaneously by the Film Board and McClelland & Stewart.

She recalls the days when a government agency would phone to request a photographer for 10 o'clock the next morning. She would send somebody over who would be told to wait, as they weren't ready yet. At 11 o'clock, the photographer might be told to come back at 2:00. Finally he would be let in, told to take a picture, told where to take it, and to take it *fast*, because they were very busy people.

That happened a couple of times; then Monk stepped in. She told her photographers it didn't matter what level of government they were dealing with, "when you go in there, you're directing a film as far as I'm concerned. You're in charge of that room, and everybody there will sit, stand, or co-operate for you." She insisted that photographers begin work when scheduled, and that clients be billed for waiting time. Her photographers were artists, and were to be treated with respect. People who weren't prepared to accept her terms were told to find their own photographers.

She feels that photographers have been their own worst enemies; they were so anxious for assignments, they allowed themselves to be pushed around. "I know the weakness. When you're hungry and the rent is due, you think $14 a day is better than nothing. It's a tragedy."

She feels very strongly that it is vital to set standards and prices for good photography and stick to them. She is infuriated by the government information officer who wants to prepare a booklet and thinks a few photographs would give it some spice. When the officer hears the cost — $150 per day, plus film, processing, and expenses, and $50 minimum per photograph — the response is often, 'Well, that's incredible. I'll buy a camera and take my own pictures.'

"And I say, listen, buster. You go right ahead, you give up your $18,000 a year job where you sit with your feet on the desk to read the *Globe and Mail* and drink your coffee, You leave early when you want to catch a plane or watch a football game, You get paid whether you work or not, whether you're sick or not, you get paid for holidays. No photographer in this country earns $18,000 a year. Most of them are grubbing along on three or five thousand a year. So you take a camera,

and I'll send somebody I know who can write *and* take pictures to take over your job."

Monk believes that people will pay for good photography if they have to. A bank called one day to request the rights to a photograph from *Year of the Land*. She told her secretary it would cost $300. They refused to pay 'that kind of money for a black and white photograph' and kept calling back. Finally her secretary refused to deal with them anymore because they were so rude. Monk took the next call. 'The man said, 'we want to do this little brochure.'' 'Are you going to run it for internal use?' Well, no. 'That'll be $600. Are you going to run it nationally?' Yes. 'Well, that'll be $1200. Do you see the possibility it could ever be run outside the country?' It could. 'That'll be $1500.' 'Fifteen hundred dollars for one black and white photograph — you must be mad!' 'Yes, I am mad. I don't care if you buy that photograph or not, don't ever be rude to my secretary again.' Two days later the cheque was on my desk, because they wanted the photograph."

But she doesn't always win. In 1970, as a result of the federal task force report *To Know and To Be Known*, the Still Photography Division was partially disbanded. The advisory and public relations functions, as well as the library of prints and slides Monk had been collecting for ten years, were turned over to the newly-formed Information Canada. The staff was cut from twenty employees to ten.

"It was a disaster for the still photography community of this country. I fought a bitter battle right to the wire, I fought it with every bit of political manoevring and manipulation I could. I didn't give up easily — I did not 'go gentle into that good night' and I have raged many times.

"It was a tragic decision. There are very 'in' words that impress people who control money in government — centralization, efficiency. So somebody could prove on paper . .

"In fact, they wanted to take everything I had. I said I would burn every negative in my collection, would chain myself to the Parliament buildings rather than turn them over. I insisted on my right to keep what I called 'the creative work,' whatever that means. I think it's been a disaster, because we were building up an invaluable, irreplaceable, priceless photographic documentation of this country, and we lost a large chunk.

"I think that was the low point of my life. I became very depressed as I watched the people I loved go. It wasn't just the money or the photography, it was the people. I felt like Saint-Exupery — sort of this little band of men who had created a kind of magic place on the edge of the world, and now it was being destroyed, it was over in a flash."

Lorraine Monk has a strong sense of loyalty and affection for her staff, feelings which are returned. An ex-employee says she is one of the few bosses whose staff misses her when she goes on a trip. Perhaps that is because she doesn't think of herself as a boss. She relates the story that once someone asked her if she worked for one of her employees, who had apparently been talking as though he were the head of the division, and she replied that she did. "I don't have any sense of ego that required me to set the record straight. I work for all the people in my office, I really do."

Is Monk saying she doesn't have the driving desire for power and status that is behind many successful people, that she doesn't care for prestige and authority? "I don't give a tinker's damn for prestige and authority. For still photography, yes, but not for me."

She claims to be unambitious. "We all have a desire to be accepted by our fellow man, but to be singled out . . . I really very often find it terribly embarrassing. I'm gathering other people's work and exhibiting it, and sometimes I think I get too much of the credit for what other people have done."

What has happened to the woman who told me earlier, "Nobody takes me lightly. Nobody." I can't reconcile this self-effacing image with her impressive track record; it seems an impossible contradiction. What is the source of her energy, her drive, her success, if not ambition?

"I have a stronge sense of perfection. If I'm scrubbing the sink in the kitchen, I will do it as though my life depended on it. I don't divide the world into what's worthy of being done well and what isn't. If you have to do it, you might as well make it the most important job in the world."

For a minute she sits, considering her answer, and seems to find it inadequate. Her next words are less dogmatic, more reflective.

"I think I've always been somebody in search of a cause. Maybe I have a Joan of Arc complex. Maybe I've always wanted to die for something, maybe I have a religious fever that I needed to translate into something and found it in still photography.

"Not that I want to go out in a blaze of glory and have a military funeral with crosses and flags. I want to feel, in my own mind, that I gave something back to the world I live in. That sounds corny, theatrically religious, yet I don't know a more honest way to put it."

She explores the idea, trying to locate the exact source of her energy, unwilling to let the question drop until it is satisfactorily answered.

"I have an intensely passionate nature. If I'm making an omelette, somehow I manage to make it a thunderingly dramatic event.

"I think it's something that's born in you. I'm a very theatrical person. I love the excitement of doing something, pushing myself to the ultimate. I love to set almost impossible standards, and then try to reach them, try to get higher and higher. It's an affliction. Maybe I'm just a compulsive perfectionist. Why do I do it? But I do . . .

"Maybe that's why I don't believe in the hereafter. I was reared to believe there was a God who was going to reward me if I did something well, that there was an eternity I was going to live in afterwards. But when you come to the conclusion on your own that there isn't anything else . . . there's today, there's no tomorrow, there's what you can do with today, and there's having to look in the mirror at the end of the day and respect yourself or not. And that's my own, ultimate standard. Living with myself, feeling that I don't have to be ashamed.

"If I were a typist, I'd probably want to be the fastest, best, most efficient typist in the world.

"In some way I have to justify the fact that I'm on this planet, polluting it, sucking in the little bit of air that's left, I have to put something back into it. I happen to be in this job, and I want to do the best I can and give it all the energy I feel I have."

A deeply felt, active sense of responsibility toward her society, an idealistic love of her profession, a compelling perfectionism — do these spring from her early years? Monk was born and raised in Montreal, and had what she calls "a happy and gently religious childhood."

"You don't realize that you're growing up in this funny, warm, tiny little world. There were three girls and a boy — my father's only son died at the age of five of meningitis. I was six, and I think buried somewhere in my subconscious was an incredible desire to do something for my father to replace the son who had died. It was in the days when people were buried from the living room. He was laid out in his white sailor suit in the coffin, and I saw my father crying over him. It had an incredible impact on me because men tended to think their sons were the most talented, and this son was the end of my

father's dream. I don't think I've ever even verbalized it.

"Any of us girls could have gone to university, but I was the only one who did. No pressure was put on us to do anything but be good, and to be happy. But I could not be happy unless ... somehow I wanted to do something to make up for the image of my father crying over my brother's casket. I know that when I went to McGill I worked very hard to get high marks because I wanted to please my father. I adored my father, he was an incredible influence in my life. He is really a great, great man, a great philosopher, very large of mind, very beautiful."

The last piece has been fitted into the puzzle. Satisfied that she has explained the source of her energy, Monk moves naturally from her own childhood to anecdotes about her four children, three of whom are still at home. She is as passionately devoted to them as she is to still photography.

"Karyn (her youngest child) asked me this morning, 'why did you have your babies? What motivates women to have babies?' I said, 'I really love babies.' It's a very old-fashioned thing to say. I would love to have had more. I'd love to have adopted a Vietnamese orphan.

"I've never felt a conflict between working and my children. When I need more time, I simply go twenty-four hours to create it. I come home, I put on my apron, I go into the kitchen, and I become their mother. I really enjoy that. I don't feel imposed upon, I don't feel unliberated. I love it!

"I went into the Board as a writer. Inevitably when you're in a small office, you don't have designers or layout people, and you have to start doing it. When the head of the office left, I had three children and I was pregnant with Karyn. The last thing on earth I wanted was a lot of responsibility. I wanted a job that would be interesting but that wouldn't sap all my energy, that wouldn't intrude. I felt I didn't want to shortchange four children.

"They hired a man. He was on trial for six months, but he didn't work out. I was ordered to take the job —'In the interim you've been doing it, and on the first of January you must take over officially' — and there I was, eight and a half months pregnant! So I got back in a hurry.

"I've never taken more than a week off to have a baby, and that's because I'm very strong physically, although I get pneumonia at the drop of a hat. I've had TB, and I know what it is to lie flat on your back for a year. But apart from that, I have the most incredible energy and drive."

Has being a woman affected her in her job? Has it been a handicap or an advantage? Does she handle her job differently than a man might?

"I suppose inevitably, whether it's conscious or unconscious. You can't deny it. I have been known to burst into tears to get my own way — isn't that despicable? Except that I really feel this passionately about still photography that when I see people putting it down, I cry, I really do. I don't know whether that's because I'm a woman or because I care so much."



It's hard to imagine Monk in tears. I comment on her reputation for toughness, for being able to handle anything that comes her way, including MCPs. "Oh, I *bully* them if I have to. Depends on how far their chauvinism goes." But she seems impatient with the whole question of professional sexism, as if it is something that has never particularly affected her — with one exception. "I *have* wondered why it is that in the NFB I'm not part of Board management, I don't have any say in the creation of policy. There has never been a woman at that level, and there must have been women available.

"I have often said I would like to have some impact on the creation of Board policy. I think sometimes I've had valuable observations to make. There's never been a board director or senior management person who's been a woman. Makes you wonder."

She is enthusiastic in her support of International Women's Year. "It's had a great impact on everybody. I've never felt particularly threatened because I'm female. In this country, women, many times, have equal opportunity of work;

it's very new though, and there's a long way to go. But in other countries . . . I read about the conference in Mexico — it doesn't matter what was accomplished. It's the beginning of a change in people's attitudes. Women are no longer a joke; you don't put them down, you don't pat their bums quite so easily. I think women are going to be taken a lot more seriously, they're going to be more respected all over the world.

"Inevitably there are abuses. Token females are being hired to do token jobs. That's horrible, but it's the inevitable interlude before *real* change."

Monk rejects the present emphasis on professional differences between men and women: her concern is quality. "I don't divide the world into male and female, I divide it into good and bad. When I thought of Judith having a show, I didn't think, we must give a show to a woman photographer. I really didn't think about it in those terms." (The reference is to Judith Eglington's 1973 exhibition, subsequently published by the division as *Earth Visions.*)



"There are three outstanding women photographers in this country in terms of the volume of work they've done. Nina Raginsky is very good, Clara Gutsche is outstanding, and Judith Eglington is great.

"There are some really splendid woman photographers coming along: Lynne Cohen, Claire Beaugrand-Champagne in Montreal is fantastic, Sandra Semchuk on the prairies, super." The IWY exhibition showed "that artists are now working with photographers, combining photography with other mediums like painting and print-making. It's a very exciting development."

Monk's current project is a bilingual book entitled *Between Friends / Entre Amis*. It is part of Canada's contribution to the U.S. bicentennial celebration in 1976. Thirty Canadian photographers portray the people and places within thirty miles of each side of the Canada-U.S. border. It will be produced entirely by Canadians, and printed in Canada, for publication on July 1, 1976. Monk predicts it will be a runaway success.

"We're printing 20,000 copies to be deposited in libraries across North America, 10,000 in Canada and 10,000 in the States. McClelland has bought the commercial rights, and is gambling he can sell 70,000 copies, even though it's bilingual. He's selling this book on a non-returnable basis. I believe it will happen, that the book will sell out before it's actually on the market, it will be pre-sold.

"This is the biggest commercial publishing venture in Canadian history. It's going to catch the public imagination and take off, no question about it. The first edition of *Year of the Land* was 25,000 copies; it's only now, after ten years, that sales are approaching 100,000. We're printing 90,000 on our first run and gambling they'll all be gone before the first one hits the bookstores — an act of faith. I predict that in the next ten years, it'll sell a million copies. It'll be the first illustrated book to do it in this country."

The woman who is the central figure in projects of this magnitude has a great deal of power over the success of Canadian photographers — commercial or aesthetic success. She buys work from thousands of photographers a year, paying professional rates. What makes a good photograph? The question seems difficult; the answer comes slowly, hesitantly.

"I would normally say one that I like, but that's too off-hand. A good photograph, like a good anything, has lasting qualities. It's a thing to enjoy, it's going to survive the test of time. The ones I buy, I'm gambling they are the great ones of today.

"Why do we still love the cave drawings? Think about it. Thousands and thousands of years old, and you look at them and say, 'Wow!' It's almost an instinctive reaction to something that's really good, that really gets to you. And when I look at a good photograph, I hear bells. I do. I don't have any other judgment in buying photographs than if I hear bells."

Does Lorraine Monk take photographs? She laughs. "Would you like to see my pictures? I'm very normal and ordinary in that I have a camera and I take pictures. Just pictures of my kids . . ." We leaf through a few — Karyn on the couch, John and David in jeans and wide hats, slightly lop-sided self-portraits, several of John Reeves, outstanding Canadian photographer, clowning in her kitchen.

She sifts through the snapshots, smiling slightly when she comes to a favorite. She appears completely at ease, at home with herself, with the place, with her life. Is she happy?

"Am I happy? No, I don't think I am. I think it's my curse to see, not what I've done, but what I haven't done. Tomorrow morning when I go into the office and see what has to be done before I leave (for the Frankfurt Book Fair) I won't be happy. I am just fighting a lot of battles for next year's programs, more galleries, for more — how can I be happy? You have to be really unaware to be happy all the time.

"I'm happy when I'm with my children, I suppose. This morning with Karyn, talking about life and why you have babies, that was a nice moment. Life is not a continuous process, it's incidents like that when you touch somebody's life. Photography is reaching out and touching somebody, and communication is touching somebody. This morning Karyn and I touched each other emotionally, and it was a warm moment. I loved it; I was happy.

"You know, truth is the pursuit of truth; maybe happiness is the pursuit of happiness. Once you think you've got it, that's when you really delude yourself. I haven't got it. I'm still pursuing it though, feverishly, relentlessly . . ."

I gather up my papers and tape recorder, and she walks me to the car, looking anything but feverish with her graceful step and her long white dress. Lorraine Monk: ruthless and sentimental; feminist and romantic; career-woman and doting mother; idealist and Dragon Lady. Lorraine Monk - the most important woman in Canadian photography today. ***

From Atwood to Zaremba

founding a feminist bookstore

by Peat O'Neil

drawing by Audrey Watson

What brings two nursery school teachers, a librarian, a journalist and an American teacher together? What could motivate women without business experience to sink time and money into a venture that would frighten seasoned business*men*?

Patti Kirk, Marie Hagedorn, Joy Wilson and Pat Leslie are the current members of the collective that owns and operates Toronto Women's Bookstore at 85 Harbord Street. Needing books about feminist issues and suspecting that other Canadian women would support a bookstore owned by women, the group founded Toronto Women's Bookstore in June, 1974. These women and some former collective members risked a few hundred dollars, lots of time and sweat.

Toronto Women's Bookstore clientele are as varied as the booktitles. Middle-aged women exploring their life goals visit, asking for guidance through the morass of feminist writing. Soft-voiced college men browse through the store hoping to expand their newly raised consciousness. Bright, fast-moving women inquire about the latest Lessing shipment. And there are the wierdos who apparently think a woman's bookstore is a dirty bookstore with a new name. Every visitor receives personal attention. For a novice feminist they suggest a good anthology and for the misinformed misogynist they indicate where to shove the requested sexist porn rag. The Toronto Women's Bookstore staff enjoy their work.

The first location in Toronto's Kensington market district was cheap, but ill-chosen. Customers were meager, so when space was found on busy Harbord Street, near the University of Toronto, the group decided to move. Putting their minimal advertising budget towards the increased rent, thinking that the good location would generate word-of-mouth advertising, was a sound decision. In the new location, they rely on university generated trade and off the street browsers. Business is expanding to the point where "We can pay ourselves now", smiles Patti Kirk ruefully.



Paying the workers is one of the collective's two goals. Stabilize to the point where members of the collective who work in the store receive a living wage and, when profits appear (in a couple of years suggests Patti), they intend to fund women's projects. In preparation for disposing profits, the group is being incorporated as a non-profit organization with the assistance of a female lawyer who donates her efforts.

"With a little help from friends" is the essence of how this group survives. Their bookkeeper, who wanted to work in the women's movement, but didn't see herself picketing parliament, donates her time. A salesman from one small Canadian publisher shared business information about registering the company name. Other Toronto booksellers help by sending customers who request feminist books. Toronto Women's Bookstore reciprocates the favour by sending people who ask for books not in the store, to the appropriate small bookstore.

It could be said that they have succeeded in spite of themselves. Knowing nothing about how to run a business, or of retail marketing techniques, or how to publicize the company, they still have somehow managed to succeed. One mistake sits in shiny splendor in the midst of make-shift brick and board bookcases. "Let me tell you about that cash register," says Kirk. "We didn't know how to keep good sales records in the beginning. So, our bookkeeper suggested getting a cash register. We asked a large cash register company for information and the next thing we knew, we had a life time contract . . . with interest!" The collective could have used an adding machine and cash-box system, but in purchasing the cash register they learned a lesson in business economics and its presence in the store augers well the future when the Toronto Women's Bookstore will have sales volume worth of that early expenditure.

Women considering a retail business career on their own could ask

lefebvre gallery
12214 jasper avenue

Lefebvre Gallery
Edmonton

Feb. 7 - 20

Paintings by
Dave Maclagan

March 6 - 19

Batik by
Lee Beames

Porcelain Heads by
Jean Mihalcheon

Toronto Women's Bookstore members to share their experiences. Part of the learning experience for the collective is developing operating methods suitable for a changing group of six or seven people. Many women's businesses encourage flexible work schedules and the systems instigated by the bookstore could be applied elsewhere. For example, to ensure that all store workers maintain familiarity with new books and stock fluctuations, each woman works at replacing stock each day. All the women are familiar with the procedures of running the store, but havoc and duplicated effort is kept to a minimum by designating two coordinators to handle ordering, correspondence and work schedules. Currently, Patti Kirk and Marie Hagedorn share the organizational work.

The stock takes time to peruse. If you can think of a book by a woman or about feminism *not* on their shelves, then it is probably sold out or not available in paperback. The bookstore collective keeps prices to a minimum so that all women can afford to buy feminist books. Pamphlets on feminist issues are stocked specifically to meet the needs of women's groups with low budgets. "Five dollars will buy a group one book, or we can send a stack of pamphlets and reprints." "Mail orders for pamphlets come in from all over the country," says Patti Kirk. The collective issued a new mail order catalog in January, 1976 (write TWB, 85 Harbord St., Toronto and send 25 cents for postage). Women across the country can have access to books about women through the mail order service. Orders from the United States concentrate on books by the two Canadian Margarets — Atwood and Laurence. The collective welcomes suggestions for additions to the mail order catalog and can fill special orders on request.

There is no master list of books on women's issues, so the group has made up stock lists. Some spend free time combing *Books in Print* looking for books by or about women. Another woman in the collective takes notes on what other bookstores or libraries are selling relative to women's issues.

Most publishers don't send representatives to show the bookstore workers previews of books scheduled for publication. "We're too small; they don't really care about the small bookseller," sighs Kirk. "We'd love to see an advance blurb on books by or about women, but our first order would be small and they have other priorities." Some publishers do send representatives and the bookstore has a lot of catalogs for special orders. People visiting the store can make suggestions for books they would like to see stocked. Certain books are runaway best sellers. *Our Bodies, Our Selves* is constantly out of stock, and so is anything by Virginia Woolfe. Women are beginning to come to Toronto Women's Bookstore to purchase books by established female writers. Patti Kirk attributes this trend to a feeling that people would rather patronize the small shop-keeper than the big chain stores. The small businesswoman does have a chance.

The work is shared by all members of the collective. They have torn out walls and painted shelves. They discuss the merits of new stock (*Fear of Flying* caused some friction in the group). They determine the arrangement of display areas and the profit margin per square foot of selling space vs. the esthetic effect of more shelves. They live (one of the group lives below the store), eat, sleep and talk books — women's books — their books. Their concern and energy are the hallmarks of their success to date. Information exchange about women in our society is the reason for their existence. To fulfill that ideal successfully, the members of the Toronto Women's Bookstore became competent businesswomen. And that is what brings them and keeps them together.

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Codpieces: Phallic Paraphernalia

by Tanya Rosenberg
photos by James Shavick

The codpiece: that crucial flap in the costume of the well dressed Renaissance man, now all but forgotten. Or repressed? Historical footnotes tell us that the codpiece was introduced by the church for modesty's sake, when the abbreviated male tunics of the day threatened to expose too much. Puritanical intent was subverted and the codpiece soon became an ornamental fashion which spread to every Christian country. Countries developed their own national shapes. Noblemen decorated their codpieces with rich embroidery, jewels and bullion. Proud men of all classes stuffed their codpieces for sturdy appearance. The man of practical bent used his codpiece as a pocket for his handkerchief or for oranges which he would pull out in company and hand to the ladies. But even useful fashion is ephemeral. Although many men fought its demise, by the late 17th century, this symbol of virility was passe.

But one footnote has yet to reach the history books. At Montreal's Powerhouse Gallery in October 1974, artist Tanya Rosenberg mounted the exhibition *Codpieces: Phallic Paraphernalia*. The codpiece lived again, briefly. The artist played with classic forms to produce outrageous variations — a rabbit fur piece, a Batman, a chessboard, a plastic wrapped meat package. Some of the creations were worn by male models who paraded down a runway in a parody of a fashion show.

"This show caused quite a stir" recalls one observer. Clearly the artist intended it to do just that. When *Branching Out* discussed photos of Rosenberg's codpieces at an editorial meeting, we learned first hand just how controversial the works are. Witty social comment or sexual exploitation? We debated, we argued. Finally we wrote to Tanya Rosenberg and asked what she, the artist, wanted to say when she created *Codpieces*. Following is her reply.

First I'd like to give you a little background, because I think it's relevant to the whole damned business of codpieces.

I quit producing art after being told in art school that I didn't make "beautiful lines" and that if I really loved art so much I should go into art history, because "women just don't make it as artists". For over four years I didn't even do a drawing. I typed. Then a bit of the women's movement hit me in the face, I got a divorce, and I decided that I would do art no matter what anybody said. I didn't know what I would do, but I quit my job as a secretary and went on unemployment, so that I could devote some time to finding out about my creativity.

I went to Powerhouse. I went to night school. I started to look at people's work, go to galleries. I was very insecure because I had been a secretary and everyone knows that secretaries aren't real people, let alone artists. Anyway, do you know how I felt about 95% of the work I saw? I was bored. I saw other people walking around galleries looking bored. I said to myself, "Tanya, it's time to put some excitement and fun into this art scene and you can do it."

I personally believe that there are two basic types of artists (I'm not placing a value judgment on either, just trying to give you some insight into my head space.):

There are those artists that are concerned with the physical elements of a medium. They place their emphasis on technique, formulas, form, shape, movement, color, balance. Their approach is predominantly intellectual and academic. The main product, whether abstract or realistic, is esthetic. I call these artists purists (not in the art history sense of the word).

Then there are those artists who are concerned with issues: social, political, emotional, psychological, etc. They use the medium as a vehicle for expressing a point of view or an experience. Some people might call it a "message" (I hate that terminology, but it's the best I can come up with!) I call these artists visual philosophers.

This is, of course, a simplification. There are artists who are both, sometimes one, sometimes the other. It is possible to be emotionally stirred by an abstract painting by Georgia O'Keefe, just as it is possible to be impressed with the color and form used in a painting by Salvador Dali.

Obviously, I consider myself a visual philosopher. I am more interested in influencing the attitudes of people through my work than I am with esthetics. This is not to say that I feel my work is not esthetic.

Codpieces is controversial. I think I am probably more aware of that than anyone else. Someone might be able to walk by a painting of dancing nudes without a response, but let me tell you, *nobody* walks by codpieces without responding strongly one way or the other.

When I started making codpieces and showing them to friends and fellow artists, I received as much negative feedback as positive (perhaps a bit more negative, actually). Women on the whole were more enthusiastic than men (for obvious reasons). But there were women who considered the work gross and exploitative, and even revolting. I was accused of being: 1) sexually messed-up 2) sadistic 3) sick 4) a "ball-crusher" 5) a man hater 6) obscene 7) dangerous 8) insane 9) suffering from penis envy etc. etc. ad nauseum.

At first I was very intimidated by these negative responses. I began to think that maybe these people were right, maybe I was "fucked up"; and frankly that scared me. Did I want to continue producing art that made people think I was a terrible human being? Did I want to expose my sickness publicly? Yes, there were times of apprehension.

Of course, not all the responses were negative. The positive ones were as strong as the negative ones. There were



people (men and women) who felt codpieces were humourous, original, beautiful, fun, intriguing, practical and socially relevant.

Along with these responses came questions of doubt (even from my closest friends!) . . . What did it all mean? Was it art? Could I bring it all together? Would it make sense? How would it work?

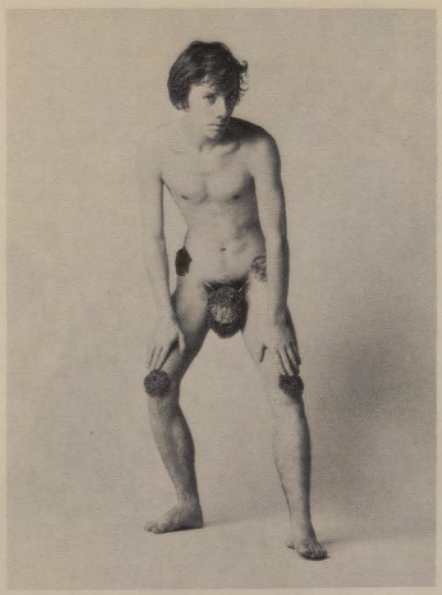
At this stage I was taking night courses in drawing and involved at Powerhouse. I was advised by more than one person that to do codpieces as my first exhibition might prove to be detrimental to my career as a whole. It was suggested that perhaps I should start with something a little simpler and more acceptable, like drawings, establish myself as reputable and then do something more far out. Considering that I had only had one year of art school at the age of 17 (I was 25) and a few night courses here and there, some people were afraid that I was attempting to do too much too soon.

True Libran that I am, I weighed all of these things very carefully. I suddenly realized that I had stumbled onto a very touchy subject — male sexuality — and that if I ever did publicly execute this exhibition I would certainly be opening up a gigantic Pandora's Box. Given the intensity of responses at this early stage (only about 4 codpieces had actually been made, I just rapped a lot about the total concept), I decided that I could not give up the idea merely because it was unpalatable to some. I decided to go with my instincts. I had something to say and I would say it and take my chances reputation-wise. I trusted myself.

As more and more people saw codpieces, I received more and more feedback. Once I had made up my mind that I was doing it come hell or high water I was able to evaluate feedback in a more objective way. This is particularly relevant to the question about dealing with the negative attitudes of some people (codpieces as exploitative; offensive).

I realized that how other people reacted to my work was not my problem. I began to see that when they made strong abusive remarks towards me that they were actually projecting their own fears and insecurities onto me, the artist. My imagery was there for viewing, the viewer's response was not necessarily my intention. The viewer's interpretation of my motives for creating codpieces was more an indication of what his/her motives for creating them might have been, not mine. This is a game people play with artists all the time — they want to think that they *know* what the artist is thinking. For example, I'm feeling uptight about this piece of art, therefore the artist must have intended me to feel uptight; therefore the artist is sadistic! . . . but in reality I may have quite un-uptight feelings about that piece. It is only the viewer's reaction that is relevant to the viewer, not my intention, so that any effort on their part to "psych me out" so to speak is pointless. Just as any effort on my part to control the viewer's response is pointless.

I found that people who were uptight about sex in general thought codpieces were dirty. Men who were of the opinion that "women's libbers" were into castrating males saw codpieces as castrating. Men who bought *Playboy* magazine to oogle at nude ladies saw codpieces as oogle material for women. Men who exploited women as sexual objects saw



codpieces as a means for women to exploit men sexually. But men who had a consciousness about roles they were expected to play in society saw codpieces as stabs against those roles. Men who were aware of the sexual exploitation of woman saw codpieces as a statement against sexual exploitation altogether. People who were openly interested in sex and had a healthy attitude about it saw codpieces as enjoyable and refreshing. And on and on.

Not everyone saw codpieces the same way — each viewer had his own favourite piece. And the pieces themselves changed depending on who wore them and what that model did with the piece.

I would like to clear up a point here. The codpieces themselves were works of art, each had its own statement to make. I dislike calling the men who wore them models, but I can't think of a better word. My concept was that the body and the plastic art would combine to create a totally new form of art. This did happen. Each piece changed in meaning from body to body. Each male model felt differently wearing each piece. They looked different, they had different significances. This is why I cannot even conceive of them as being exploitative — I see it more as an internalization and extension of the wearer's personality. Some models refused to wear certain pieces because they could not relate to them, they did not become a part of the whole, the body sculpture.



I would like to add that you haven't even seen the most controversial pieces. One piece was a styrofoam meat package with a hole cut into the centre so that the testicles and penis popped through. They were covered in saran wrap and labelled $1.69 lb. Another was a small balsa wood box lined in green velvet with a lid that opened up so that the penis could be viewed lying quietly on the velvet. There was a yalmulka with side curls running down the man's thigh; and an embroidered cross in black and gold with a rosary used as the tie. Probably the most outrageous piece was of yellow acetate with a 3-hooked fishing lure on the inside. The metal portion of the lure lays on top of the limp penis and the hooks dangle about ⅛" off the tip. Needless to say this piece creates an incredible tension and quiet when worn. It is also remarkably un-obscene even though the acetate is see-through. The viewer's eyes become fixed on the hook (not the genitals). The light plays off the metal and reflects in the acetate. This piece makes men cringe with pain when they see it hanging in my living room. *BUT* — the models who wore that piece have an entirely different attitude (it is one model's favourite piece incidentally). They felt that they were no longer human beings in the normal sense of the word. They felt a primal base. They suddenly became aware of the frailty of mankind in a way they had never felt before. They also felt that their bodies were actually pieces of sculpture and an integral part of creating a strong and significant artistic statement. They (the men) were art. One model admitted that he was nervous and somewhat afraid before he put on the acetate piece (he did so voluntarily) — partly because of the hooks and partly because it was transparent and he felt he would be uncomfortable if people were staring at his genitals. After he put it on, however, he felt an incredible calm and exterior tension — he realized that his penis was *not* simply a



sexual or erotic thing. It was no longer a penis. Part of his body — yes, but it was creating a new meaning for him. It made him feel his vulnerability as a human being. He said that wearing that codpiece was one of the most extraordinary emotional and intellectual experiences he has ever had.

You must also realize that when you see a codpiece hanging on a wall it seems one way; when you see it on a model in a photograph it seems another (it loses its movement, for example), and when you see a man wearing it in person it changes again.

My exhibition opened on a Sunday night. I had six men modelling. The intention was that they would wear a piece for a while, mingle in the crowd, and change. As it turned out this was impossible. Over 500 people showed up to see what was going on — all sorts of people — artists, straights, businessmen, gays, couples, singles, wierdos, teenagers, etc. We set up a makeshift runway and the models walked to and from the dressing room. There was a strolling mandolin player (without much room to stroll) and taped 15th and 16th century Elizabethan music when he wasn't playing. The codpieces were mounted on the walls in different ways. There were 6 life size blow-ups (nudes) with codpieces mounted on them; some were mounted on drawings of male torsos; some were mounted on board with photographs to show how they were to be worn; some were hanging on a coat rack (the feather and fur fashion pieces.)

The crowd was incredible. The atmosphere was ecstatic and electrifying. The responses were as varied as the people. Some women cat-called and whistled (so did some men!) . . . some men had to leave because they were uncomfortable . . . some ladies were tittering away at one point about how "disgusting" it all was, but they stayed to the end! I won't go into great detail about positive reactions, but the following were the most frequent:

- from women, "It's about time!"
- from men, "For the first time in my life I know what it feels like, really *feels* like, to be a woman."

I think the most moving comment came from a young man who grabbed me by the arm as I walked through the crowd. He looked me straight in the eye and said in dead seriousness and with much emotion, "Thank you, thank you."

Codpieces can be seen on many different levels. The following are some of the ways I see them:

- Codpieces are satire. They not only satirize male sexual stereotypes, but male domination of religion; male intellectual superiority.
- They are a de-mystification of the male body and cause a re-evaluation of the validity of society's expectations of the male ego.
- They treat men as truly sexual beings; as approachable sexual beings. (I don't think women object to being treated sexually — we're all interested in sex — but they do object to the double standard).
- They eroticize the male body and make them enticing, intriguing and appealing. They are sensual. They counteract a common feeling that penises are ugly and unattractive.
- They provide men with the freedom of sexual expression. No longer must they hide behind grey flannel suits! They *can* be



peacocks. Check out the animal world, it's the males that are colorful. Look at men in more "primitive" (?) cultures, they too are much more colorful.

- They are liberating. More male sexual liberation means more female sexual liberation by eliminating narrow sexual role playing.
- They question the psychological roles that men are forced into by society.
- They are political "feminist" statements about the male role in society and the woman's relationship to those roles.
- They are emotional statements about the female/male roles.
- They are dead serious.
- They are funny and fun to touch and wear and see.
- They are a new concept in men's fashion. Wouldn't you just flip out if some guy invited you up for coffee after a date and said, "Excuse me while I slip into something a little more comfortable" and came out wearing a luscious white rabbit fur codpiece?
- They make people think.
- They treat sex as a healthy, normal part of life.
- They have the potential to change men's views of their own bodies (If they'd only put one on!)
- They attack the myth of male superiority and the sacredness of the male phallus as a superior, strength symbol. (Men are just as vulnerable as women.)

I could go on. As you can see, codpieces can mean many things. They don't all mean all things. They can be everything or nothing. They focus on many different taboos and attitudes. They can be superficial or profound. It all depends on you, the viewer.

On top of all the personal controversy. there's the artistic controversy. The Montreal Star art critics came out with "But is it art?" About six months later in another article about Montreal art, however, they wrote that they were a product of a "highly creative will." So — I'm used to the questioning.

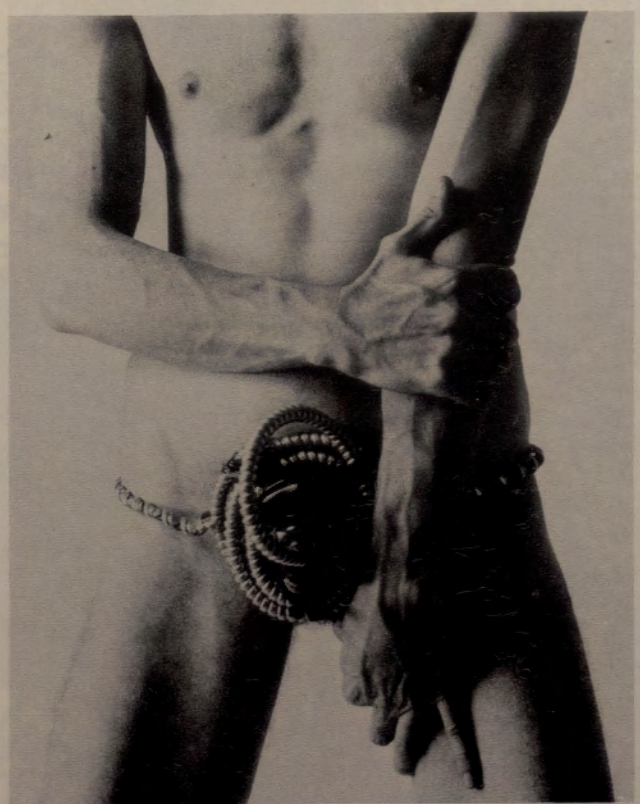
I know that the codpiece exhibition was unlike anything that they had ever seen or read about. It was original. It didn't have a predecessor. It wasn't a happening, a painting, a sculpture, an environment. It wasn't conceptual, Dada, surrealist, pop. It wasn't straight static art, it wasn't theatre. It wasn't any of those labels.

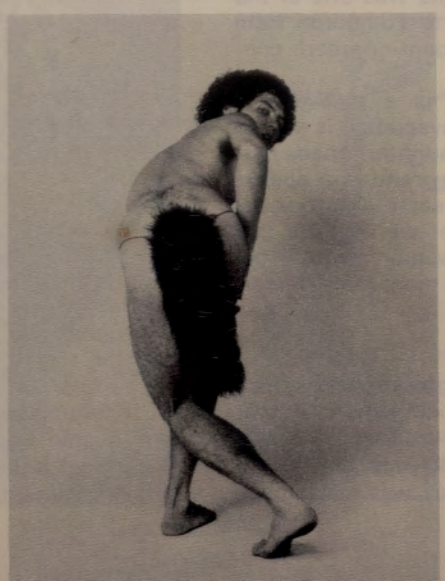
Most of all, it bloody well wasn't *boring*.

I'm now working on a couple of new ideas that I hope will be just as mind boggling. You haven't heard the last of me yet!

I don't think codpieces could have been produced by anyone but a woman. I would also like to add this one last thought . . . I sometimes wonder: If I had produced a series of breast plates and chastity belts in the same satirical vein, using female models, would I have had to face such criticism and controversy? I don't think so. What do you think?

***





From the Other Paris

interview with Mavis Gallant

by Karen Lawrence

photo by Alice Baumann-Rondez



It always seems to me an unexpected gift to read an evocative, moving story, and an extra bonus to find that the writer is a Canadian woman. I first encountered Mavis Gallant's 'My Heart Is Broken' in a college anthology several years ago, and after reading more short stories and her novel, *A Fairly Good Time*, I wondered how such a provocative woman writer had escaped my attention for so long. Part of the reason may be the scant attention paid to Canadian novelists when I was in school; in addition, Gallant has lived and worked in Paris for many years, and her stories, published mainly in 'The New Yorker', and praised highly by critics the world over, have largely escaped the notice of Canadian readers.

Gallant, along with several other prominent Canadian writers, attended a short story writer's conference at the University of Alberta last January. Reading a story to a large crowd, mostly students, her delivery was rushed and somewhat nervous, and I had the impression that she was unaccustomed to public readings. Afterward, she expressed concern about her reception, which had been good, and about whether the needs of the students were being met at the conference. Her committment to helping younger writers is strong, and was one of the reasons she came to Edmonton from Paris for the student-oriented conference.

Mavis Gallant is a high-energy personality; her conversation is a rapid fire of questions, laughter, anecdotes, and serious opinion, and she speaks with ease on a great many topics. I asked her about her working life, her difficulties as a woman writer, her views on feminism, men, male/female social roles.

On her early career — —

'I began working as a subaltern for a Montreal newspaper when I was twenty-three. I soon realized that a male co-worker with less responsibility and doing less work than I, was making $18

a week more, and at that time $18 was a lot of money. When I went to my boss, I didn't ask 'pay him less' but 'pay me more', and was told that the man needed the money more, "He's a man, he'll have a family to support." At that time I was the sole support of our family, my husband was a student. It broke my heart. I saw that's how it was in Canada.'

On the formation of the Montreal Press Club — —

'They began to talk of forming a Press Club and I was very excited; there was lots of speculating about where we'd have it, and the bar and so on, and I looked forward to the camaraderie. But the women were excluded — I realized that they didn't want our company, we were pests to them. One of my friends said "Look Mavis, we can't have you because we don't want our wives here." Then I realized that these men never went home, they got married and left their wives in the suburbs. Once a year, at an office party, they were allowed to come, with their hair done, their little black dress and pearls, all alike, and they were pests — then they'd retire to the suburbs for another year, have another baby named Ronald or Gary or Nelson. And I thought then, whatever God does with me, that's one thing He's not going to do, I will not be the little woman in the suburbs, waiting at home while he has his fun and his friends and his career . . . It had an enormous effect on me.'

On women writers — —

'The married women I know who write have an extremely difficult time . . . they seldom have men who will put up with the time and effort this consumes. The men are uncomfortable with solitude. Simone de Beauvoir is one of the few women I know who has worked this out. They have never lived together, but every afternoon she goes to see Sartre and they work, at different desks, in the same room. There is no jealousy, no separation, no competition.

Men writers marry women who are going to type for them, answer the phone, take care of the laundry, and say "He's working, I'm sorry, he's working", and after she types the book and he's making a bit of money he sheds her, and gets a little woman who can't type, and won't. I think a woman writer often has to make a choice between one or the other.'

On feminism and men — —

'Would I describe myself as a feminist? Well, if you mean would I march down the street and throw stones, no, or that I hate men, no. I like men, I like the company of men, that's why I live in a country where you get the company of men and where men like women, which they don't in Canada. I don't think men in North America like women. I think they like to go to bed with women, but they don't like their company. Even in France, where women still have a great many legal problems, there's a great deal of what I would call *moral respect*. And in terms of jobs, there is none of this "That's a good job for a woman" "Not bad for a girl" kind of talk. I think that the Ministry of Women is doing great work; they now have a board which screens all television advertisements and eliminates those which are sexist — I think this is important.'

On marriage and social roles — —

'Whenever I've come close to marrying again I've had to ask myself "What kind of a life would this mean? Is his life larger than mine — because mine is large. Will my life take in his, or will his take in mine?" If I had lived in Canada I may have married just because of social pressure — here an unmarried woman is somehow odd, an extra woman; it's hard for a woman to live alone here. It still seems to matter socially that people be matched up — hostesses begin cock-counting, he's with her and she's for him; if you're having an orgy, fine, but for chocolate soufflé what does it matter? The awful thing is, it's the women who do this. Women suffer a lot from women.'

On her critics — —

'There was a review published in a prominent American magazine, after one of my books came out, reviewing my work along with that of Mary McCarthy and another woman with whom I had nothing in common except that we were women. They called it 'Good Housekeeping'. I never bought the magazine again and I mention this in reviews whenever I can.'

———————

Mavis Gallent is a masterful short story writer. The title story of one of her collections (*My Heart is Broken* Paper-Jacks, 1974) is perhaps her best-known story. Two other collections are in print; *The End of the World and Other Stories* (McClelland, 1974) and *The Other Paris* (Books for Libraries, 1970). One of her novels, *A Fairly Good Time* (Random House, 1970) is a compelling portrait of a transplanted Canadian woman trying to make it on her own in Paris. Gallant is a mannerist — she studies people's lives and habits in the manner of Henry James, and her characters are not to be forgotten. If you haven't read her work, do so — her witty, sophisticated voice has earned her a special place in Canadian letters. ***



MOVING?
Please let us know six weeks in advance what your new address will be.

lions in the light

the backyard is filled
with airy lions
lying on their backs
pawing the trees

they sometimes crouch
in beautifully imagined outlines
their extended nails
pierce the lawn
leaving mysterious sharp holes

they leap the house
claw upward to the sun!

each morning
their eyes
like shafts of light
return behind the trees

I have not dared to
touch their shimmering fur
I hear their purring
smell their heat

sharks

this social ring
of smiling faces
ringed in red

watch their mouths move

their teeth
their rows
their hidden red smiles
in the air
they move
they circle
stir
their precise jagged teeth —

see the sharks smile



Mary Humphrey Baldridge

image in flux

etchings by Toti Draginda










SUGAR





The Window

by Lygia Fagundes Telles
illustration by Barbara Hartmann



The woman put forth her hand and smiled. The man didn't seem to have noticed the gesture. He stood motionless in the middle of the room, his arms hanging, his eyes fastened on the window.

"There was a rosebush over there."

Slowly she tied the belt of her Japanese silk robe around her waist. She closely scrutinized the tall, thin, slightly stooping man, his greying hair with silver reflections.

"A rosebush?"

"A rosebush," he said in a veiled tone, his eyes roaming the room. "Once it yielded over one hundred roses. Big, red roses . . . "

"How come you know about it?"

"My son died in this room."

She sat down on the edge of the bed. The smile gradually faded on her thick lips, besmeared with lipstick.

"Your son?!"

"This was his room," said the man, turning his weary eyes to the woman. They were a pale blue and he spoke in a whisper, as if afraid of being overheard. One eye was much larger than the other. "His bed stood exactly where yours stands."

She uncrossed her legs and glanced self-consciously at the bed, full of colorful cushions. She forced a smile:

"Is that right? . . . When was that?"

"I don't know."

She stared at him. She held out a pack of cigarettes:

"Would you like one?"

"I don't smoke."

"Very smart of you. People say that tobacco causes that disease I don't even like to mention by name. I'd like to quit, but whenever I do, I start putting on weight like crazy," she complained, pouting. The front of her robe had fallen open. She held it together, but loosely, so that it would come open again. "Won't you sit down, *senhor*?" she asked, pointing to a small, red chair by the dressing table. "Make yourself comfortable, darling."

He sat down, drawing in his legs to avoid touching the woman's. He clasped his hands. He was neatly dressed but his clothes seemed too large for his body.

"I had to see this window again."

"Just the window?"

"My son died here."

"That must have been terrible," she said after a moment of silence. Dreamily, she blew upon the live coal of the cigarette. She looked hard at the man and then tried to chuckle: "It's my good luck that you picked this room or I wouldn't have met you . . . I like your type, you know."

"He used to tend to the rosebush."

In the room next door someone turned on a record player. The music drawled on softly, it was a *samba*-song. Clearing her throat constrainedly, the woman shrugged. The front of her robe fell open down to her nipples. Crossing her legs, she let the golden slippers drop to the floor. She uncovered her plump knees.

"Well . . . ? Do you work around here? Give me your hand, let me guess what you do . . . I can read hands; once I told a guy, you're going to win in the lottery! And would you believe it? He did. Give me your hand and I'll tell you right away what you do, come on, darling . . ."

"I don't work," he murmured, his eyes searching the ceiling of the room. They rested on the window. "Strange, isn't it? It looks smaller without the rosebush."

Stretching her naked arm, the woman stubbed the cigarette out in the ashtray. She buried her hands in her curly hair, pulling it backwards. She inspected the man, intrigued:

"There wasn't any rosebush when I moved here."

"It died exactly a month after he did."

"Well, when I moved here, there wasn't even the trace of a flowerbed. That was three years ago, I'm from Rio Preto, did I tell you?"

The man took a small injection box out of his pocket and started to turn it around his fingers. He twitched his mouth sideways.

"Before he died he would ask me to open the window, he wanted to breathe in the scent . . . While he was strong enough, he would lean over it; later, when his strength was gone, he would gaze at it from the bed. A shoot of the rosebush kept getting inside the room. It was such a harsh, impetuous shoot that I had to keep pushing it out, but it would come back full of thorns and leaves . . . I never had the nerve to cut if off."

The woman began to slump into the bed until her back was against the corner of the headboard and the wall. She pulled a cushion towards her and rested one elbow on it. She narrowed her eyes and began to nibble at her thumbnail. She was speaking softly now, in the same muffled way as the visitor:

"What do you have in there? An injection?"

"Nothing," he whispered, opening the box. He raised his face, baffled. "It's empty."

A door banged loudly. The woman started.

"I always flinch when a door bangs," she explained. "I get nervous easily . . . "

"I'm sorry," he said, lowering his voice even more, "but I had to see this window."

"Make yourself at home. Ah, well, suit yourself, if that's what you like . . ."

"It was very important for me to come back here."

"I know, I understand those things . . . Are you a foreigner?"

"My father was a Dane."

"A Dane," the woman replied flatly. She bent over to reach for a cigarette. "As soon as you came in, I thought you must be a foreigner. What's your name?"

He hung his head. The veins on his forehead, gnarled, swelled. He looked old with his head bowed like that.

"Houses should have more windows."

Footsteps echoed heavily in the room next door. The music on the record player had stopped and the needle was scratching the record. The woman drew in her legs and covered her naked feet with a cushion. She fastened the front of her robe.

"Brigitte is crazy about this record, she must play it a hundred times a day. Now she's going to play the other side. Would you like me to go and tell her not to?"

"Don't bother," he whispered, his open hand reaching out towards the woman. He quickly withdrew his hand when he saw her flinch. "Have I frightened you?"

"Oh, no! It's just that I'm too jumpy. I've been nervous lately, I think it's the heat, it's quite hot today, isn't it? But I can ask her to turn it down, I'll be back in a minute . . . "

"The button to turn down the volume is right here," he said, pointing to his ears. "All buttons are inside us."

The music started over again, now accompanied by a woman's voice crooning absent-mindedly.

"Do you have the time *senhor* . . .? I have an appointment with Mirtes."

"I don't have a watch. But why did you call me *senhor*?" he wanted to know, examining her with an affectionate expression. He attempted a smile: "We used to gather before the fireplace. I saw snow for the first time at my grandfather's. It covered everything, one couldn't even open a windowpane. Then we'd stay in the living room, playing by the fireplace. There was a little hunchback in a yellow outfit and cap and bells. He had gold teeth. I'd tumble with him on the rug and tickle him just to see his teeth . . ."

"I also have a gold tooth," she said amidst giggles. "But it's in the back; at times it hurts too, damn it."

"Spring starts today. You would have had beautiful roses."

The woman knelt on the bed. She looked pale, her lips quivered. She was now speaking like him, softly.

"Listen, wait a moment and I'll get us a cold drink, O.K.? Nancy made a delicious drink with berry juice and lots of sugar. Ice-cold."

He unclasped his hands and stared at his long fingers which were fanning out in bafflement. His voice, husky, cracked:

"A small window, that's all that's necessary. Then it would be possible to breathe. And maybe a rosebush shoot . . ."

Still on her knees, the woman began noiselessly to slide down to the floor. She opened the door.

"Be good, O.K.? I'll be back in a moment."

Night was falling. The purplish shadows of the sunset gave the red of the bedcover an old wine tinge. The breeze blew stronger, rustling the tissue paper tutu of the little doll hanging from a thread before the mirror. On the record player, the needle stubbornly continued scratching the end of the record. The man, as much part of the twilight as the objects around him, sat motionless on the red chair.

"Have I been away long?" asked the woman, entering stealthily. "I had to go out for some oranges, we were out of that cold drink, I made some more, it's in the fridge," she said breathlessly. She remained at the door, her hand twisting the knob. "I'll turn the light on, geez, it's too dark in here!"

"No, please, it's fine so," he asked gently. He was speaking almost inaudibly. "This is the time when the scent begins, we can smell it better in the dark."

"What scent?"

"The scent of the roses."

She leaned her head against the door, gasping, her eyes wide open. From the hall came the sound of shuffling footsteps. Male and female voices were crisscrossing hurriedly. The door opened. A male nurse strode in, followed by another one. Three astonished-looking women stood watching from the outside. Someone turned on the light.

The man got up and covered his eyes with his hand. Gradually he raised his head, his eyes still shut tight. Finally he was able to look at the nurse who was unfolding a straitjacket. Serenely, he put out his hands. On his face there was an expression of deep sadness:

"Is it necessary?"

The nurse's smile was embarrassed; he shrugged as he folded the straitjacket. And he went up to the man,

cont. on p. 47

law

Rape Logic: Hit 'em where it hurts

by Linda Duncan

This article is the first of a series on women in the law. Hopefully the articles will spur discussion and feedback. Both the author and editorial staff would appreciate hearing your opinions. Please forward your reactions and suggestions for future topics to Linda Duncan c/o *Branching Out*.

Discussion of the problem of rape has centred around antiquated criminal laws and proposed amendments. Whether it is because of ignorance or misdirection, women who are victims of rape have not been making use of their rights inherent in civil law. Hopefully this article will cause women to reassess their thoughts and channel their energies into a new form of action against rape.

Women have been fighting rape for centuries. In *Against Our Will: Men, Women and Rape*, Susan Brownmiller has documented the historical development of society's attitude to the act of rape in different cultures throughout the centuries. While at one time rape was an acceptable form of behavior and a method used for gaining a woman's property, most societies evolved mores against rape. Because women were considered the property of fathers and husbands, severe punishments were inflicted on the rapist and often on the raped woman. Eventually, control of the problem evolved from purely paternal concern to state concern for the public good. Consequently, Canada developed criminal law provisions.

The criminal sanctions which Canada has adopted from English law presently appear to be the major form of redress. It has become increasingly evident from legal and public criticism that the criminal law system has failed to combat the incidence of rape in any substantial way.

> Assuming that the rape complaints are valid, a man who rapes a woman, who reports the rape to police, has roughly 7 chances out of 8 of walking away without a conviction. Assuming only one woman in five reports the rape, his chances increase to 39 out of 40. If these figures take into account the high percentage of those who receive probation or suspended sentences, his chances of escaping incarceration are in the vicinity of 98 to 99 out of 100. Forcible rape has a lower conviction rate than any other crime listed in the Uniform Crime Report.[1]

Canadians have dismissed these reports of a high incidence of rape and low conviction rate as an American phenomenon. Yet in the city of Edmonton, a police department statistical report states that for the year 1974, only 21 cases went to trial and only 6 convictions were obtained out of 149 reported cases of rape. For the city of Toronto, it is reported that only ten percent of women raped make a report and of those cases that do go to court, the conviction rate is only 30 per cent.

These statistics show that the existing criminal sanction is blatantly ineffective in combating rape. Police policy, court procedure and evidentiary laws have been major deterrents to the initial reporting of the offence. Through police interrogation of the complainant, many reported cases are labelled unfounded. The reasons may include seductive appearance of the complainant, relation of the rapist to the complainant, and ingestion of alcohol or drugs by the complainant. Victims of rape who are aware of the interrogation procedure are justifiably leery of reporting the offence.

The complainant who passes the initial interrogation must undergo two further interrogations at the preliminary hearing and at trial. Once in court, the evidentiary rules weigh strongly against a conviction.

While in all criminal trials there is a high standard of proof for the protection of the accused — proof beyond a reasonable doubt that the accused committed the offence — in a rape trial the accused is afforded the additional protection of the requirement of corroboration. Corroboration means that a rapist cannot be convicted unless there is outside evidence and testimony other than the testimony of the victim. Because of the nature of rape however, outside testimony is rarely obtainable. Consequently an accused rapist apprehended by the police and positively identified by the victim will, in the vast majority of cases, be acquitted.

There is a further insult to the woman's integrity. Generally, at trial the victim will be cross-examined on her previous sexual experiences, with the rapist or otherwise. This is the most obvious point in the legal process where the victim is on trial. Although amendments to the criminal code in relation to the relevance of evidence of her sexual history have been introduced, the right to cross-examination will remain.

Red tape, probably public embarrassment, and vested societal myths combine to ensure that the negligible rape conviction rate continues. Those few convicted spend a relatively short term in prison and undergo no recognizable rehabilitation, evidenced by a high recidivism rate (62% have a previous record, 21% have been previously convicted of a sexual offence). The only deterrent created by the criminal law system is the effect on the woman's freedom of movement. Women continue to be inhibited by their fear of the rapist roaming at large, unlikely to be apprehended or convicted.

There are more palatable alternatives for the rape victim than the criminal law. Some larger urban centres have been able to establish rape crisis centres to encourage initial reporting and aftercare. Most of the centres are ineffective or inoperative because of lack of funding; attempts to seek government cooperation and financial assistance have been fruitless. Incredible as it seems, governments have looked at the high incidence rate, low conviction rate, lack of aftercare of the victim and rehabilitation of the offender and have chosen to take no action.

A number of rape victims are seeking financial assistance from the Criminal Compensation Board in their province. This compensation, however, is strictly limited to immediately identifiable financial loss including medical bills, prescriptions, taxi fares, am-

bulance fees and any other costs arising directly from the rape incident. In a few cases the woman will be granted a monthly sum for the period she cannot work. No substantial or general damages can be awarded under the covering legislation.

A remedy with more potential has been used surprisingly infrequently. Under tort law a woman can take her attacker to court and sue him for damage for assault. While actual court cases are rare, the right exists. The advantages to the victim in this form of legal action are manifold.

In a civil suit it is the woman who initiates the action as plaintiff. In the criminal trial the woman is merely a witness for the prosecution, and in most cases receives no legal advice as to her right to speak or not to speak in court. In the civil trial the plaintiff, through her legal counsel, is in control of the proceedings and has the benefit of her lawyer's guidance throughout the case.

The onus of proof in a civil case of assault is much less than in a criminal case of rape. While in the criminal trial the crown must prove the guilt of the accused beyond a reasonable doubt, in the civil trial the victim/plaintiff need only persuade the court that it is reasonably probable that the defendent/rapist assaulted her.

Proof of penetration of the penis into the vagina, a fact necessary to a criminal conviction, is not an essential element in a successful civil suit for assault. The victim/plaintiff need only prove to the satisfaction of the court that she was physically assaulted in some way by the defendent once having identified the defendent/rapist as her attacker. What weapon the rapist uses and where he puts it is not crucial in a civil trial. In fact, the actual act of rape need not have been carried out. Attempted rape or mere threat of imminent rape may be determined by the Court to be an assault.

In a criminal case, if the Court finds that the victim contributed to the rape, the rapist will not be convicted. In a civil case where the victim/plaintiff is found by the Court to be partially responsible for the asault — for example, drunkenness, hitch-hiking, or voluntarily keeping questionable company — she does not necessarily lose her case. It has been held to be "unfair to penalize the victim of another's much more reprehensible conduct by an out-and-out denial of redress on account merely of a momentary lapse in self-protection."[2] Judgment may be in her favour, but damages reduced in proportion to her assessed responsibility for the resulting rape.

Most important, the plaintiff/victim will benefit financially from her legal action. In bringing civil suit, the plaintiff/victim can claim special damages which may include the cost of clothing, medical expenses, including psychiatric care,and loss of earnings. She is also entitled to claim general damages. These encompass compensation for long-term physical disability and psychological damage; more recently, compensation has been granted on the basis of medical evidence of suffering from mental shock, humiliation and embarrassment. The amount of damages will vary with the circumstances of each case.

A further remedy available in a civil action and perhaps the most effective so far as the public is concerned, is exemplary or punitive damages. Exemplary damages have been granted in cases of gross negligence to deter others from acting with wanton and reckless disregard for the rights of others. Punitive damages have been more readily obtained in those cases where the wrong complained of is "morally culpable or actuated by reprehensible motives, not only to punish the defendant but to deter him as well as others who might otherwise be so prompted from indulging in a similar conduct in the future."[3] There has been some dispute as to whether allotting punitive damages amounts to double jeopardy (being tried twice for the same offence) where criminal action is being



or has been taken. There are cases where punitive damages have been allowed. Practically speaking, there appears to be little threat of double jeopardy, considering the improbability of obtaining a criminal conviction.

On the legal costs of bringing a civil suit, some lawyers will, as in other cases, enter into a contingency agreement. The lawyer and client simply agree in writing that the lawyer will receive a set percentage of the judgment. This figure can include court costs. Legal aid may also be available.

At this point it is worth considering another of the unfounded myths about rape: why bother to sue at all, since all rapists are strangers, sex maniacs and transients? According to the Edmonton City Police Department, the majority of reported Edmonton rapists are employed labourers; moreover, in Toronto the rapist is reported to be the white-collar educated male. Both classes of rapist can be hit where it hurts.

Civil litigation is not the perfect solution to the problem. Most rapists should be tried, convicted and jailed or hospitalized. Civil procedure is often as antiquated in practice as criminal law. The victim must still suffer through trial and pretrial interrogation. Yet, as Brownmiller has said, "in making rape a speakable crime, not a matter of shame, the women's movement has already fired the first retaliatory shots in a war as ancient as civilization".[4] Criminal law serves society only when it is drafted in a way which enables convictions, provides effective penalties, and is enforced to the highest degree possible. The existing criminal sanctions, enforcement policies, and court proceedings are not deterring rapists.

The rape victim can carry the fight to the rapist by rising above the rape mythology, facing the problem squarely, and taking effective action. Through civil litigation, the victim can fight back and hit 'em where it hurts.

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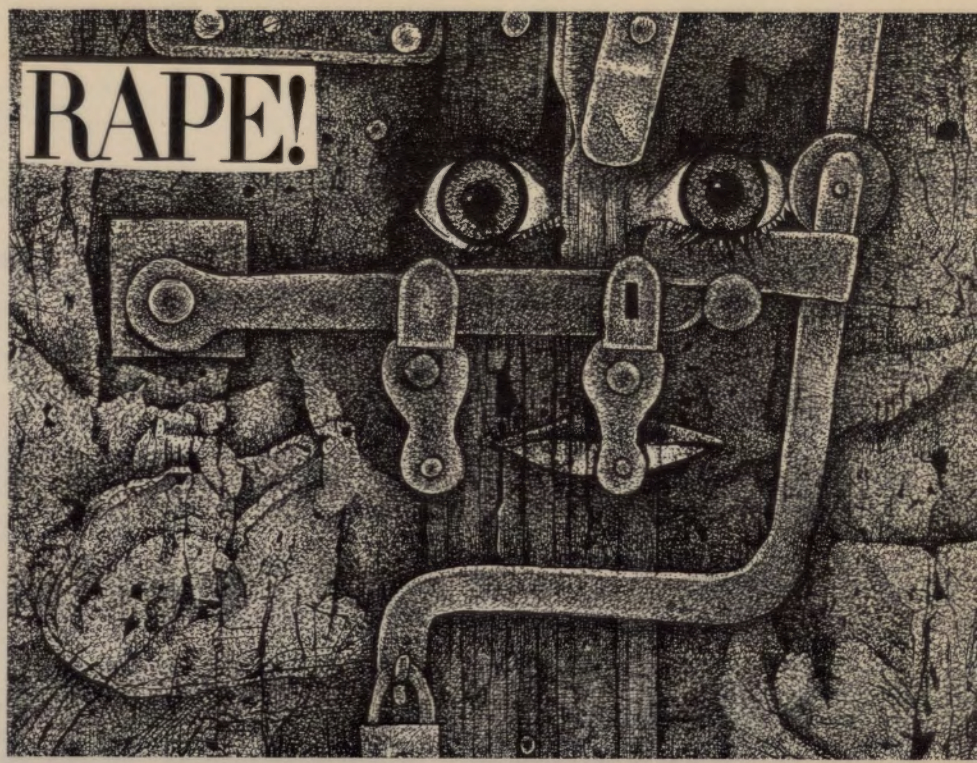
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I would like to extend my thanks to Brig Anderson for her patient editing of the article.



ARE WE PARANOID?

by Jane Dick

illustration by J.P. Nourry-Barry

> Rape is a form of mass terrorism, for the victims of rape are chosen indiscriminately. But the propagandists for male supremacy broadcast that it is women who cause rape, by being unchaste, or in the wrong place at the wrong time — in essence by behaving as though they were free.
> — Susan Griffin (from a poster)

Three times a day, every day, someone in Montreal is raped. Someone is forced to submit to some form of sexual intercourse. This someone is usually a woman, and she will never be the same again.

Three times a day. This estimate is based on statistical percentages, which in turn are based on the estimate of many rape authorities that only one out of every ten rapes is reported. That means there are about 1100 rapes every year in Montreal; that total does not include assualts and attempted rapes. And rape is on the increase.

Add to this the fact that few women are raped more than once. Think about it. By process of elimination, the circle is getting smaller.

Montreal has the third highest incidence of rape in Canada. 1100 rapes a year. One-tenth of these rapes are reported. That's 110. Probably only half of the accused men will be located by the police, and maybe a dozen of them will make it to court. Chances are they'll get off scot-free. Chances are that out of 1100 rapes only three men will be convicted.

While researching rape in Montreal, I encountered many authorities — doctors, lawyers, police — who cared little about the existing rape situation and/or knew almost nothing about it. Chief gynecologist at one hospital was confident that rape was decreasing. He wondered if rape was possible these days with women's liberation and the new sexual morality. He had never seen a rape victim himself.

Hospitals in Montreal tend to send victims to the police. If a doctor examines a rape victim and she decides to press charges, the doctor has to testify in court. That costs time and money, and it's kind of a drag. It's best not to get involved. This situation exists only in greater Montreal. Hospitals in the rest of Quebec will examine victims.

Montreal police turned out to be an interesting crew. Some were very understanding, some sarcastic. Neither position had anything to do with the individual officer's experience with victims. When I phoned one local station to inquire about their rape experience, the officer I spoke to chuckled, "If you find me a willing victim, I'd love to do the job." The police must thoroughly question victims, as they would for any crime, though one wonders what prompts some questions. Just over a year ago a Montreal woman was taken to police on a stretcher, bleeding badly, almost unconscious. They asked her if she had had an orgasm. Montreal has on record documented statements from women who received phone calls from the officers investigating their cases, inviting them to have further sexual relations.

A victim must decide immediately if she wishes to prosecute, so that she can be examined at the Institut Medico-Legal. She can be admitted there only within 24 hours of attack, and only at the request of the police. Afterwards, with a signed document in her hands stating that the legal physical examination has been conducted, she may go to a hospital for treatment. Some weeks later she will return for VD and pregnancy tests.

The doctors at the Institut are trained to deal with victims of rape and assault, and it is their job to testify in court. Five forensic pathologists are on the staff headed by Dr. Jean-Paul Valcourt (the only non-female I encountered who had full comprehension of just how deplorable the situation is). He explained the examination procedure. A woman is present at all times and the entire procedures and reasoning is explained to the victim beforehand. A check is made for physical marks of violence and to determine the time the violent action occurred — a bruise might be a week old. The state of the hymen is checked to see if the victim is a virgin, or has had recent intercourse. This evidence is not necessarily conclusive, since a hymen may be very elastic or the rapist may not have penetrated. The presence or absence of sperm is determined. Again, this is not conclusive, since the rapist may not have ejaculated.

The state of mind of the victim is generally assessed in order to appreciate the state of her will. If she is a minor, mentally retarded, heavily drugged, or drunk at the time of the rape, her consent to intercourse would not be valid. Most victims seen at the Institut are young women (many hitchhikers); there are also many child victims.

Unfortunately, the Institut is not equipped for treatment of victims. The Rape Crisis Centre is the only resource most victims can turn to for help, counselling and support, 24 hours a day. The staff keeps files on doctors, lawyers, and police, and can give advice on whom to trust and whom to avoid. The Centre has been in operation since March 1975. It is a bilingual volunteer service operating on a very small budget. The Centre offers courses in self-defense, consciousness-raising, and volunteer training programs, and conducts consciousness-raising sessions with the police from time to time.

Surprisingly however, I met women there who told me it was not important to raise men's consciousness about rape, only women's. Certainly women must be fully informed, but it seems to me that it is men who will stop rape if it is to be stopped. Many women today know how to fight off attackers, but knowledge does not guarantee success.

Armed with the above facts, I approached numerous Montreal males about their understanding of rape. Reactions ranged from 'But women like it' to complete inability to understand how any man could rape. One man confessed that he'd like to rape 'just to see what it would be like' and another proclaimed vehemently that all women should be allowed to carry guns and get a medal for every rapist they shoot down. Many men merely said 'you women are obsessed with rape.'

In spite of the Rape Crisis Centre and the Institut Medico-Legal, the rape situation in Montreal can inspire paranoia. The statistics are frightening. But rape education in Montreal doesn't seem to reach enough of the right people. It is directed to professionals, institutions, and women. Women are being educated to express anger, and that's fine. But my conversations with some of the male populace have convinced me that the average man needs the same information as the average woman. Highly sympathetic men are baffled when indiscriminately labelled 'enemy' by militant women. Given the facts (three times a day is the scariest), even the most flippant of men pause for thought. I've witnessed informal rap sessions wherein men — even classic male chauvinists — began to question and challenge their own and others' attitudes about rape and aggression. Somehow sisterhood against rape must foster brotherhood against rape. Maybe peoplehood will result. Otherwise women will get angrier, men more defensive and violent, rape will continue to increase, and the circle will get smaller and smaller.

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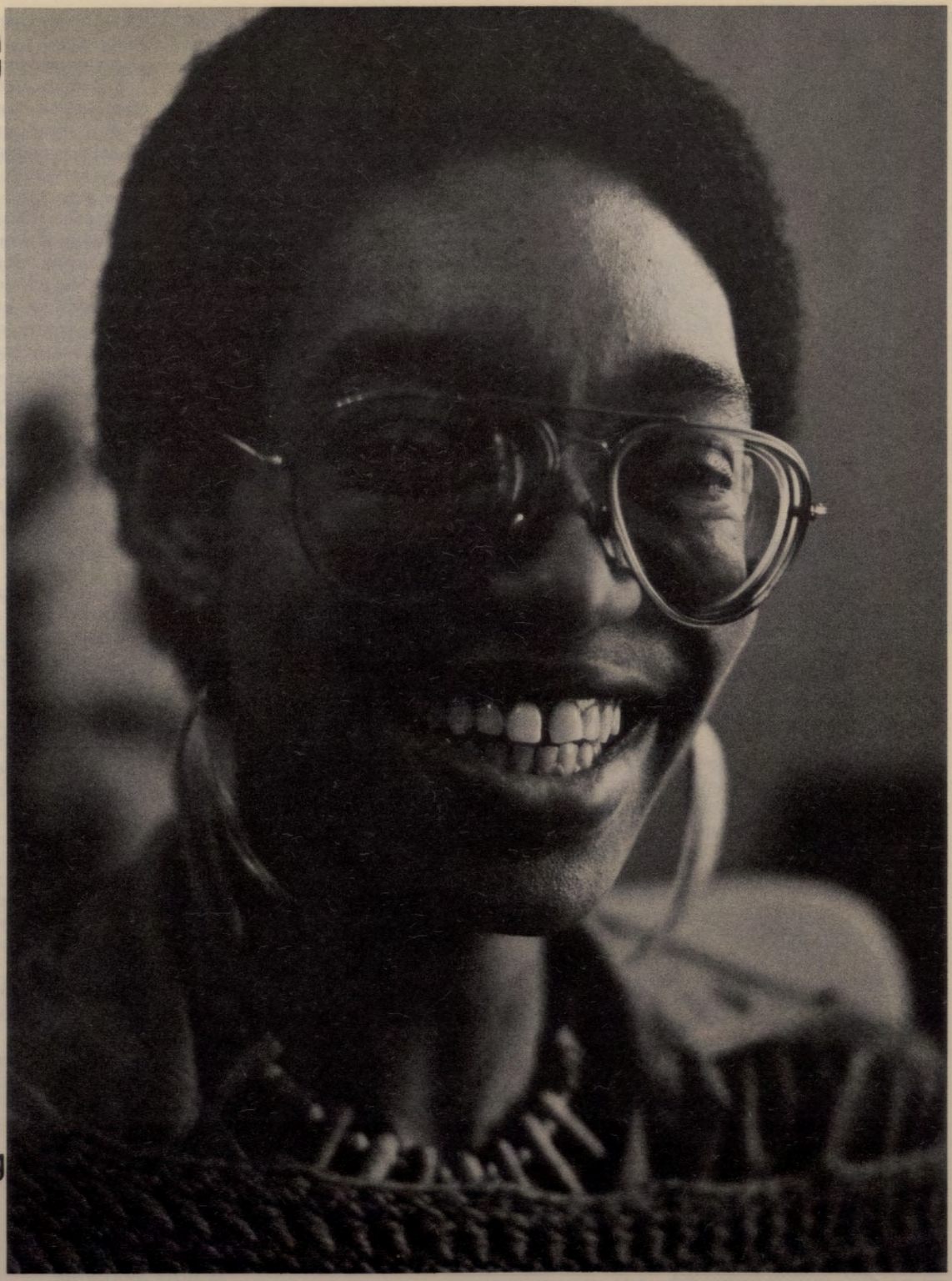
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Discovering the Wheel

interview with Beverly Glenn-Copeland

by Beverley Ross

photos by Diana Palting

The night before my interview with Beverly Glenn-Copeland, I went to see her performance at the Hovel, an Edmonton coffeehouse. I introduced myself, and we chatted a few minutes before she went on stage. She showed me the Senegalese drum she was warming up on. The conversation was punctuated by the rhythms at her fingertips and her zany, infectious giggle. As I soon discovered, neither is ever very far from the surface.

On stage, she was as real and unguarded as she had been in the back room. Her physical presence was one of ease and motion, manifesting itself in an unhurried pace that flowed from song to song, space to space, as Beverly switched from guitar to piano and back again.

Her songs were varied, light and heavy of mind and spirit. The lyrics spoke positively of potential growth and understanding. Rhythm was everywhere: in her voice, her instrument, and her body. At one point, for several magic moments, she played her Senegalese drum and sang with it, in the same language of past and power and dance.

The next day, we sat on the floor and talked over a tape recorder and cups of mint tea.

Where did you come from musically?

I was in a family that was oriented to music. My father used to play piano for hours and hours a day, so I was very involved from the beginning. I ran into it somewhere along the way. I discovered that I had a nice voice, so I went out and trained it. I did that by enrolling in a Bachelor of Music course (at McGill University). I went to New York and studied with an opera singer for a while. I had been studying and performing classical music, then in 1968 I decided that it wasn't relating to my contemporaries. So I just switched. I went out and bought a guitar, and started playing it and writing songs on it immediately.

Do you consider yourself a Canadian?

A Canadian-American. I consider myself both. It's typical of Americans, typical of the latest class of immigrants. I'm from Philadelphia originally.

Are you living in Montreal now?

No, Toronto. There's lots to keep me busy there, radio and television shows and miscellaneous concerts. But I think for me Toronto is mostly just a good head office and a good place for media because of all the shows coming out of there. Last spring and summer I played there a lot, but then I just decided that's enough of it. There are not that many places there that I want to play.

The present form of my music and the fact I haven't yet formed my band limits the kind of environment I can successfully carry to concerts, media, and some sorts of coffeehouses or places that are oriented towards stage presentations rather than environments where the music is the background for getting together with your friends.

Did you take part in the women's festival in Toronto?

Yes. I took part in a joint concert of about six or seven ladies and a concert of black ladies doing a history of womanhood from one particular culture. It was like a review. Someone came up with a script that had everything from dancing to narrations and poetry and slides —kind of a mix-and-match bag. I participated in that as a drummer and as a singer, playing some of my own music toward the end.

What about your relationship with Daisy DeBolt?

She's my musical buddy. It's very special in the sense that I really love her work and I really love her as a person. That combination makes it lots of fun to be around her, so we do it as much as we can. Sometimes I go down to her house in the Quebec townships and we futz around for a couple of days. She's very eccentric. She likes to have parties consisting of a few friends all dressed up in their finest rags. It's a salon, you know, Daisy's salon. It's an eccentric salon. All her friends appear at various times, and proceed to party, which usually means forced labor in the garden. Inevitably, you arrive either at planting or harvest.

Is it getting easier to find women to play with?

I don't know. There are more women playing out there. It would be nice if I could run into a really funky lady bass player. Well, I already have, but she just hasn't finished developing her chops yet, so I can't play with her. But one of these days . . .

Women have limited what they've played so as to be able to work. They've been playing guitars and pianos, but now they're really stretching out. Like this woman in Toronto who's part of this quintet, Kathy Moses, who is just phenomenal on flute, but recently she's started playing sax as well. She's just as good on sax.

Are you looking specifically for women for your band?

No, I'm definitely not looking specifically for women. I'm just looking for the funkiest musicians I can find. Musicians who play from their guts, and that can be anybody.

What about drumming? Last night you very modestly said you didn't do much, but it was really fine . . .

I like to drum. I like rhythm and I like harmony. I like Europe for its harmony. In my head, I've started moving towards being a drummer. I marched in Hawaii with a fife and drum corps, with a tenor drum, as part of my Buddhist practice, and that was what got me thinking about drumming seriously.

Would you like to be the drummer in your band?

No, but I'd like to be *a* drummer in a band. If I could do that, I'd be very happy. I'd just sit back and be the drummer.

I'd like to have the type of band where I do what I do, and the band is an entity of itself. The musicians would also write and there'd be a whole other section to the concert of music from the rest of the band, of which I'd be the piano player. I'd like to be good enough



to be the piano player . . . or maybe the drummer. I can't imagine what the real drummer would do. Maybe he'd sing.

The album you made with GRT seems to be closer to classical roots than the music I heard last night.

Well, I had only been *not* performing classical music for a year and a half at that time. So it was fresh off the Classical Press. But that was five years ago, and I've had the opportunity to play for a lot longer, to find my own voice. There are still classical roots in it, but it doesn't sound classical. I've left all the old "pearly tones" behind.

Your rhythm comes out in so many places. I notice it with you even more than with Daisy, a sort of drive you might call "masculine".

It comes out of Africa, that's all. That makes it not more masculine but more dominant. The emphasis is really on making sure that the rhythm is there. Rhythm is for dancing in Africa. There's usually no solo drumming in that sense. The minute anybody drums, it's dance time. There's no dissociation between those two things. They are a part of each other, dancing and rhythm.

Madame DeBolt is coming from Europe, basically. Her harmonies are so incredible and shifting. Her music is much more water-like than mine. But then she's a Cancer and I'm a Capricorn, you know.

I think of my music as music to move bodies of people from one space to another, or around in a circle. But music to move bodies with. Some of it is music to move heads with, but the characteristics that stand out are the incessant, relenting motion and pulse.

What about your Buddhist practice?

It's been very instrumental in my life in the last two years. I've been a practicing member of the Nichiren Shoshu Academy. It's a chanting practice. The chant is *Nam-myoho-renge-kyo*. That's the basic practice. That's the foundation of my whole life right there, I would say. The foundation existed, but that's what gives the foundation meaning.

Everybody has dreams, everybody seeks happiness. The key to realizing dreams is to be able to weed out the negative functions in your life that stop you from attaining those dreams. I was aware that I needed a practice and I'd been looking for one for years, but it wasn't until two years ago that I found one I could trust, that I felt was the highest and most idealistic and at the same time most realistic combination.

The chanting seems to help you solve the problems of why you're not able to achieve the things you want. It connects you with a larger rhythm. It's supposedly the rhythm of the universe.

Where did you . . . ?

Bump into it? In L.A. You bump into everything in L.A. I went to L.A. to make my fortune. I thought, nothing's happening, so I'll go to L.A. and be discovered, or something like that. I went down there and I really wasn't ready. I wasn't prepared. I ended up not singing once the whole time I was there. I could do it now, but I wasn't ready then. But what I found instead was this chant.

I was working in a flower shop to keep myself alive. I was really going backwards, 'cause there I was in L.A. and I was stuck, I was trapped, and I couldn't get away. One day four ladies walked in. It was very interesting that it would be four ladies. It was like they had clued in on my feminist vibes and sent me four ladies. They were all colors of the rainbow. There were two black ladies, an oriental lady and a caucasian lady. They were radiating some kind of beauty and confidence I had never seen before. I thought, wow! They handed me a little card with a meeting time on the back of it.

I'd been reading Buddhist literature a little bit over the years, and I'd been meditating on my own for several years. I think my concept of Buddhist practice was along the lines of Zen. I think I was looking for a Zen master.

I went to this meeting and there were all these young people as well as middle-aged people and one or two old folks. They looked like typical Americans, but they were full of energy. They were bouncing off the walls — I couldn't believe it. There wasn't anybody with a shaved head. The only thing mystic about it was this scroll they were chanting to and this incense floating around. Then the meeting began and they started doing all these non-Buddhist things, from my point of view. I was *appalled*. I kept sending messages to my friend like, how do we get out of here? But the chant was so strong.

Finally I started chanting for something concrete, which is how they suggest you check it out, because faith in Buddhism doesn't mean a blind giving up to those things which are not proven. It was suggested that you set a goal and try it. (Beverly's goal was an improvement in her finances. The result was so dramatic that she was convinced of the value of the practice.)

In Buddhism, there's this philosophy that if you're practicing the right thing, two kinds of things will show themselves to you: incredible benefits and incredible obstacles. The obstacles are like the negative functions of your life coming up to prevent you from overcoming. But the first thing that happens is this incredibly positive force rushes down the line to show you you're

on the right track. In a week and a half, I had actual monetary results. Now, the reason I was monetarily out to lunch was the causes I had made over a long period of time. I didn't change from being really poor to suddenly wealthy in a week and a half. I was just given enough money to get my shit together to start making the right causes towards having better finances.

How has this experience related to your music?

Well, first of all, from just a practical point of view, it has really helped my rhythm tremendously. My rhythm was there all the time, everybody's rhythm is there, it brings it out in everybody's life, that kind of rhythm. But for me, that's specifically in the music.

I chant as much as I can before I go on stage and it adds an energy level. That's been one of the most obvious benefits. I just have so much more energy. And confidence — it's increased my confidence a lot. I chant to try to be in the right space. I've become more relaxed on stage.

Most importantly, it's given me hope because I've seen people changing around me. All my friends that got turned on to it, their lives have started changing so I'm actually able to look around me and see the results of the practice. I don't want to live a life where I feel apathetic and there's no way I can bring about change. But it's obvious that if I'm going to do *that* I have to change myself first. I now see something that does that.

Just as an example, I never listened to the news and I never wanted to read the papers. I went for years without knowing anything that was going on. I just insulated myself entirely. I did it because I felt so what, what's the difference. I'm going to turn on the news today and the news will be exactly the same as it will be three weeks from now. Only the names will change. Such and such got murdered, there's a war here, people are starving, and what can I do about it? Nothing. I felt like I think most people feel, which is, my God, how do I even get a handle on this? How do I relate my life to all that's going on? I couldn't figure it out, so I just insulated myself.

And now, I haven't gone out and changed any great things in the environment, but at least I'm not afraid of reading about the painful things. Because I can see that, very slowly, one person to one person, it's going to be possible for people to get a grip on it. A politician who practices this philosophy or another philosophy that is as effective will be a better politician, a musician will be a better musician, a street cleaner will be a happier street cleaner.

"We are what we think we are/ you can discover the wheel". Your lyrics are now full of this hope.

That comes from the practice. There was a lot of hope in my stuff before, but there's just more of it. It's been compounded. I'm ecstatic, in fact, over the practice.

Does it give you an insulation from the business of music?

No, it does exactly the opposite. My business chops are really starting to come out. Before I started chanting, I could practice my music and I could really get into that side of things, but I just couldn't get the business end together. I just couldn't co-ordinate my energies. Whereas now, I'm busy studying corporate structures. I'm in the process of incorporating myself. I've just gone out and gotten backing for me to produce the music myself.

For a number of years, because I was insulating myself, I didn't go around looking for album contracts. I didn't approach anyone for a period of five years until just last spring in L.A. I realize because what I'm doing is different, I have to give them a master tape which is exactly what I want to present because its very difficult for them to imagine. For the last little while I've been chanting to get the confidence to go out and say to people who have extra money, "give me that money." I've just started doing it, I'm in the process of fundraising now, and I think possibly in a month's time it will all be consolidated and I can go into the studio and produce it myself.

I'm not going to do an album. I'm going to do a single. I'm going to be very commercial about it, and approach it from the commercial point of view, in the sense that I'm going to make the stuff I'm singing sound as commercial as necessary, while at the same time, I have to like it. Commercial for me just means funky as hell. I'm going in that direction as much as I can. I'm going to get it all on tape and take it to them and say, "this is what I'm talking about. Do you think anybody could dance to that kind of thing?' I know it's what they want. But two or three years ago I would never have been able to go out and operate as a businesswoman.

What sort of direction do you see yourself moving in next?

I'd like to get into comedy in a few years. That's my challenge, after I get the music thing going. A slapstick artist; I'm a buffoon, basically.

What about your songs? It seems that your images are mostly interior vistas. Do you think you'll try to place the images out there?

I don't know if I have any talents in that direction, or maybe I haven't developed them. To be able to talk about a "little old man who went down the street" — that kind of thing where as an observer you talk about things and reactions physically. Sort of a short story song. I'd like to move from a subjective complaining into a more objective cosmos.

Beverly Glenn-Copeland's album is on the GRT label, 9233-1001. If you can't find it in your record store, ask. Beverly also appears extensively on Bruce Cockburn's newest album, "Joy Will Find a Way", True North TN-23. It's a beautiful album. ***





Cruel and Unusual Punishment

Pelrine reports on Morgentaler

by Helen J. Rosta

I recently interviewed writer Eleanor Wright Pelrine, author of *Morgentaler — The Doctor Who Couldn't Turn Away*, by telephone. She was in her office in Toronto; I, in Edmonton. I had never met her in person, but when the conversation ended, I was left with the feeling that indeed, I had just met a tremendously committed, dynamic, and eloquent woman.

Dr. Henry Morgentaler, who suffered a heart attack in June, 1975, she told me, is presently serving his sentence in a Montreal convalescent home. He was brought into court on Monday, January 5, 1976 in Montreal, for the opening of the January assizes and The Crown asked for a postponement. "They're waiting for the decision of the Quebec Court of Appeal on the Crown's appeal against Morgentaler's second acquittal." Pelrine said that the Crown's appeal is based largely on the position that in an abortion case, the defense should not be allowed to call expert witnesses. "You will recall that in my book, the expert witnesses who appeared on behalf of the defense, were somewhat more credible than those who appeared for the Crown. In this day and age it's difficult to find sympathetic, human, and intelligent medical people who do not consider abortion as a viable alternative to unwanted pregnancy. The whole question of expert witnesses was settled a long time ago, but this is an attempt to prevent the defense from calling witnesses who carry a lot of weight with juries." In her book she quotes a spectator who called the Crown's witnesses "a group of people with nervous tics and twitches that were beyond belief."

Pelrine believes that before handing down a decision, the Quebec Court of Appeal is waiting to see what will happen to the Criminal Code amendment which would prevent a Court of Appeal reversing a jury decision. The amendment was reluctantly introduced by Otto Lang "to put an end to what he called 'the silly campaign' that had sprung up around the Morgentaler case." Ten charges are still outstanding against Dr. Morgentaler, but she said she didn't think the Crown would press the other charges. "They are just using them to harrass him. I don't think they would dare to bring him to trial. They'd look pretty ridiculous to carry through on another charge and have another jury acquittal."

Joanne Cornax, Dr. Morgentaler's nurse, also had been charged and was to come to court in the fall of 1975. What had happened to her? Pelrine told me the Cornax case had been postponed to January 5, 1976, and again to March, 1976. The charge against her is procuring an abortion. "This is the first time in Canadian history that a nurse has been charged when working with a doctor."

Dr. Morgentaler's assets are still frozen and the Quebec government refuses to bring the matter before the court, stating that he must bring civil action. Morgentaler's debts are now around $200,000.00. "His expenses are mounting with every court appearance." Pelrine estimated that the letters, telegrams, and petitions submitted on Dr. Morgentaler's behalf numbered in the hundreds of thousands. "An enormous number of letters were submitted from Montreal alone. The issue was not only that of abortion but the reversal of a jury decision. All of us concerned about the jury system are concerned about this case."

I told her I had written to Prime Minister Trudeau on Dr. Morgentaler's behalf (and sent a copy of my letter to Otto Lang). I got back a form letter from the Prime Minister's office, the essence of which was, "I understand your feelings but there are two points of view." "Anything that went to Otto Lang," she said, "went into a great void. However, Otto Lang has not been the only villain. I think the Prime Minister is the greatest villain of all. He purported to be a civil libertarian, but especially where women's rights are concerned, he is extremely reactionary, extremely cynical. It was Trudeau who introduced the 1969 amendment to the Criminal Code, and who said that the government has no place in the bedrooms of the nation. What he didn't say was that women would have to go on being punished for sexual activity."

In her book, Pelrine quoted the Prime Minister as calling Morgentaler "a fine humanitarian." I asked her about the context in which he spoke. She told me that at a public meeting in Kingston, Trudeau was asked why he had not pardoned Dr. Morgentaler. He replied, 'Dr. Morgentaler's a fine humanitarian. He's been my friend for twenty years, but he broke the law and must pay the price.' "Trudeau," she commented, "did not say a jury had found Morgentaler not guilty, and that this was the first time an appeal court ever had reversed a jury decision."

I asked if perhaps pressure had been applied to keep Dr. Morgentaler in jail. Pelrine thought so; she mentioned the National Parole Board's denial of Morgentaler's application for parole, in spite of the fact that the probation officer and the area supervisor had recommended parole. She quoted chairman Bouchard's remark, "We did what we had to do." "I also consider it disgraceful that he (Dr. Morgentaler) has never been told officially that his parole application was turned down. He had to read it in the National Press. Nor has his lawyer (Sheppard) been provided with reasons for the rejection." Pelrine stated that there is presently a private member's bill before the House of Commons, sponsored by Stuart Leggart (NDP), Gordon Fairweather (PC) and John Roberts (Liberal), recommending Morgentaler's parole.

Pelrine believes that in many cases, especially in Montreal, it was easier to get an abortion prior to the 1969 amendment. "Amended Section 251 states that abortions may be performed only in an approved or accredited hospital, after having been approved by a therapeutic abortion committee of at least three doctors, none of whom may perform the abortion. The majority of the committee's members must certify that continuation of the pregnancy would or would be likely to endanger the life or health of the pregnant woman." In her book she says the amendment did little more than bring the law up to what was then standard practice in a handful of metropolitan hospitals. During our

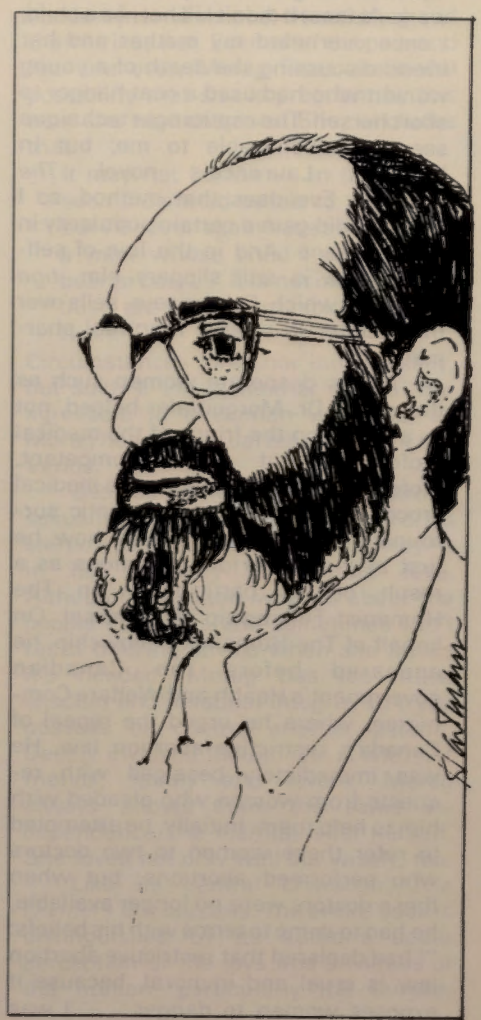
conversation, she quoted the Toronto doctor who said, "The law is designed to keep us all out of jail." Pelrine told me the amendment makes no reference to fetal defects (definite or probable). "Things are tightening up again. Statistics Canada (1975) lists 258 hospitals doing therapeutic abortions but in fact, there are considerably fewer hospitals which have operative committees (the three-doctor committee demanded by the amendment). We must realize abortion is no panacea. But the government has failed to live up to its responsibility in the area of family planning — it's understaffed and underplanned. It is important that when we write or speak about abortion, we think of it as a necessary last resort. However, until more research for effective contraceptives for both men and women has been done, there will continue to be a great demand for abortion."

I asked Pelrine who she thought was responsible for the great outcry against the right of women to obtain safe, legal abortions. "Who is responsible for the spate of letters to the editor, the vehement denunciations of abortion — many of which are made by women?" She believes this reaction is the result of a last-ditch stand of the hierarchy of the Roman Catholic Church. "Internationally it has lost out on everything — from eating meat on Friday to birth control. Women are being exploited and brainwashed by those in authority. And, traditionally, women have been made to feel sinful about sexual activity. Every woman is regarded as being inferior and unclean. In the Roman Catholic Church and in the Orthodox Jewish religion, a ceremony is conducted to cleanse a woman after childbirth. I think these women (the ones who are so vehemently protesting against abortion) are being exploited, and I feel sorry for them. In a democratic, pluralistic society like ours, one should not expect to force one's attitude on others. It is ironic that those who were most opposed to abortion are, in the majority of cases, also opposed to any effective contraceptive. The anti-abortion forces are extremely well financed and as women we have let them put us in a defensive position. The Knights of Columbus finances the billboards and full-page advertisements which appear as anti-abortion propaganda. One year I surveyed the advertisements in Edmonton and Calgary and estimated that approximately $8000.00 per month over a period of several months was being spent on anti-abortion propaganda."

I asked Pelrine about the stand, or lack of it, that legislators were taking in regard to abortion. "The condition of employment for being a legislator," she said "is that of suffering from some form of 'chickenshit'. People do not engage in full-time political activity unless they want to be all things to all people. In addition, there are damned few women in the House of Commons and no women in the Supreme Court. When I saw the faces of the Supreme Court judges who were deciding the fate of Dr. Morgentaler, I knew the case was lost because of the women's issue. They just don't understand; we might as well be speaking Hindi or Swahili. In addition, there is a feeling that pregnancy is the woman's responsibility. You'd be surprised at the number of people who have said to me, 'If a woman gets herself pregnant . . .' and I have had to reply, 'I don't think it's physically possible for a woman to get herself pregnant. We don't have self-pollination yet'." I told Pelrine that an Edmonton MP speaking to a group of university women had said, "If a woman doesn't want to get pregnant, she should keep her legs together." Pelrine replied, "If we were to tote up all the insulting comments which have been made on the municipal, provincial, and federal levels, we would be writing for the next 200 years."

Pelrine told me that before she started her book *Abortion in Canada* (which will be issued in a new edition this year), she began to make a list of all the women she knew who had had an abortion. Within a short time, the list numbered fifty. "I knew I had to write that book." I asked what she thought women could do to help Dr. Morgentaler and to give all women access to safe, legal abortion. She replied, "Many more of us have to stand up and say, 'I have broken this law. I have had an abortion in Canada. I have referred women in Canada for abortions; and I will continue to do so.' We have to ask our Member of Parliament 'How do you feel about the Morgentaler case? How do you feel about the reversal of a jury decision? How do you feel about abortion?' Politicians, being politicians, do respond to public opinion. The forces against the rights of women to have safe, legal abortion are well-organized and well-financed. Women who are for freedom of choice have to stand up and be counted.

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Conscience Came First

Morgentaler — The Doctor Who Couldn't Turn Away, by Eleanor Wright Pelrine. Gage, 1975, $9.95.

I hope that this book will be widely read; it is a timely one which deals with abortion law in Canada, its injustice, and one man's struggle against it.

If we were honest, most of us would admit that we have had an abortion or know someone who has. When I was in university, a young woman of my acquaintance got the name of an abortionist, a physician who had lost his licence, from her family doctor. He performed abortions in a large, northwestern American city and for years his name went the rounds of university women in need. But one woman who couldn't afford the trip (and the fee) went to a local non-medical person. She paid $200.00 and got an injection of green soap which didn't work. At least it didn't kill her. As a child, I once overheard my mother and her friend discussing the death of a young woman who had used a coat hanger to abort herself. The coathanger technique seemed unbelievable to me; but in Margaret Laurence's novel, *The Diviners*, Eve uses that method, so I expect it did gain a certain popularity in folk medicine. And in the line of self-help there is still slippery elm, *tige laminaire* which, Pelrine says, sells over the counter in a large Montreal pharmacy.

It was desperate women such as these that Dr. Morgentaler helped, not as a doctor on the fringe of the medical profession, but as a competent, professional who offered a safe medical procedure in pleasant, antiseptic surroundings. Pelrine describes how he first began to perform abortions as a result of his participation in The Humanist Fellowship of Montreal. On behalf of The Humanist Fellowship, he appeared before the Canadian government's Health and Welfare Committee, where he urged the repeal of Canada's restrictive abortion law. He was immediately beseiged with requests from women who pleaded with him to help them. Initially, he attempted to refer these women to two doctors who performed abortions, but when these doctors were no longer available, he had to come to terms with his beliefs: "I had declared that restrictive abortion law is cruel and immoral, because it exposes women to danger . . . I was agreeing with abortion on request, agreeing with the right of women to safe, medical abortion, yet refusing to do it . . . Abortion was against the law. I could lose my licence and my practice in medicine, which I had built up with a great deal of sacrifice and hard work. I could lose my reputation, my source of income for my family and myself. I could go to jail for five to ten years, even for life . . . I tried to send women elsewhere for help . . . Finally, I decided conscience must come first, the law must be confronted."

In 1969 Morgentaler terminated his general practice in order to begin full-time work in family planning including abortions. He researched procedures and concluded that the vacuum aspirator was the best and safest method. Morgentaler became an expert and published his findings on this method in the Canadian Medical Association Journal in 1973: the complication rate of 0.48%, based on 5641 cases, was very low. This was of particular interest to me since an acquaintance, a self-avowed 'anti-abortionist' who saw me reading Pelrine's book, commented that the law had really gone after Morgentaler because his operations were not antiseptic — which shows, I think, the kind of propaganda the anti-abortion forces are using. In truth, aside from providing a safe medical procedure the Morgentaler Clinic also provided a warm, supportive atmosphere. Pelrine mentions that professional and personal respect among the members of the medical team was extended to the rights and dignity of the patients.

Although Dr. Morgentaler had openly operated his clinic for several years, it was not raided until June 1, 1970. He and his staff were taken to the police station where they were rudely interrogated. It was on this note that Henry Morgentaler's long battle began.

Pelrine is very close to her subject, but I came away from the book feeling that I did not really know Henry Morgentaler, the man. Abortion is the real issue and the book only starts to come alive when Morgentaler becomes the victim of the law. (I use those words deliberately.) Before sentencing Morgentaler, following the reversal of the not guilty verdict by the Quebec Court of Appeal, Mr. Justice Hugessen stated: "By his massive and public flouting of the law, the accused has, in effect, forced the authorities to prosecute with more vigor and the courts to punish him with more severity than would have been the case if he had simply initiated one test case for the pursuit of the ideals which he claims." The truth is, Dr. Morgentaler not only tested the law; he helped women.

The fault I find with Pelrine's book regards the inclusion of Morgentaler's writing. These verses may be legitimate outpourings of feeling, but they are not poetry. Furthermore, we don't need them to convince us of Morgentaler's sincerity. Even Mr. Justice Hugessen granted him that. And after reading Pelrine's book, one is convinced not only that Dr. Morgentaler is sincere, but that he is a humanist and an idealist. He could have played it safe, continued his family practice, turned away from the needs of women entirely. Or as one judge said, he could have continued to operate his clinic quietly and the authorities probably would have looked the other way. But that would not have challenged the abortion law, which he found cruel and inhuman. Therein lies his humanism, his idealism, and the reason for his present suffering: "I do not like to give up my freedom, and I believe that what is happening is injustice. It may be legality, but it's certainly not justice. I hope the day will soon come when justice for women in Canada will arrive. I hope that my sacrifice of my freedom will spur people into action, so that the barbarous cruel, and unjust law which limits and victimizes women when they seek abortion will be repealed from the Criminal Code." ***

Helen Rosta

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books

Morag Gunn: A Canadian Venus at Last?

by Laurie Bagley

The Diviners, by Margaret Laurence. McClelland and Stewart, 1974, $8.95. Also available in paper, Bantam, 1975, $1.95.

Margaret Laurence is the creator of some of the most memorable characters in Canadian fiction, among them Rachel, the sensitive and frustrated schoolteacher in *A Jest of God*, Stacey, one of *The Fire Dwellers*, a discontented housewife and anxious mother, and Hagar, the irascible old woman in *The Stone Angel*. In her most recent novel, *The Diviners*, Laurence gives us another of her distinctive heroines, a middle-aged writer named Morag Gunn. There are other strong characters in the book, and theme, structure and plot are handled with Laurence's usual skill, but the central character must dominate any discussion of *The Diviners*. Morag Gunn is important because she is the kind of independent and loving woman that we too seldom meet in literature — or in life.



Living quietly in rural Ontario, busy with friends and her writing, Morag recalls her past in a series of flashbacks entitled "Memorybank Movies." She remembers her miserable childhood in a Prairie town, her disappointing marriage to a college professor, her developing career and eventual success as a novelist, her love affairs, her difficult years as the single parent of a small child. These flashbacks, combined with narrative passages that describe Morag's present life, result in a vivid portrait of an unusually strong person.

Morag is a new kind of Canadian heroine. As Margaret Atwood points out in *Survival*, most female characters in Canadian literature fall into one of two mythological categories: the Diana, the weak and innocent young maiden; or the Hecate, powerful and cold, the negative old crone. While these pale virgins and sinister hags dominate the literary scene, a third type of character, the Venus, is conspicuously absent. "The question we must ask," writes Atwood, "is why no Canadian writer has seen fit — or found it imaginable — to produce a Venus in Canada." In Morag Gunn, we at last have a genuine Canadian Venus.

Like Venus, traditionally a fertility symbol, Morag is a mother. She cares for her daughter Pique responsibly and lovingly. And if we extend the concept of fertility to include products of the mind as well as the body, the characters Morag creates in her novels prove her doubly fertile.

Another of the Venus attributes Morag has is her fully-realized sexuality. Uninhibited by false modesty, guilt or other hang-ups, Morag enjoys sex both as an expression of love and for its own sake. Her initiation into sex is significant, revealing her attitude towards her own sexuality:

> Morag is astonished to find she is not scared. She takes her clothes off quickly, expertly, as though she has been accustomed for years to doing so in front of a man. She feels no shyness at all. Only the need to feel him all over her, to feel all of his skin. Her own body, her breasts and long legs and flat stomach, all these seem suddenly in her own eyes beautiful to see, and she wants him to see her.

After this single experience with Jules Tonnerre, who later fathers her child, Morag goes off to university. On occasional dates there she "feels herself burning up with a sweetly uncomplicated lust the moment she is touched by a man," and only her fear of pregnancy keeps her from becoming sexually active until after her marriage. Sex with her husband Brooke, at first one of the best aspects of their relationship, is marred by his increasingly patronizing attitude towards Morag. He gets into the habit of asking her whether she's been a "good girl" before they go to bed; presumably sex is to be her reward for cooperating with his game. Making love with Brooke, once a joyous "unworded conversation and connection," becomes only "an attempt at mutual reassurance."

For awhile after her divorce, Morag allows herself to be "fixed up" by friends and occasionally ends up in bed with her date. She finds the casualness of such encounters disturbing, although the physical experience itself is satisfying. With Chas, whom she scarcely knows and doesn't much like, Morag spends an enjoyable hour "screwing like animals all over the livingroom." But when she asks him to leave, he suddenly turns vicious, threatening and then strikes her. Even after the pain and fear are over, Morag faces the awful possibility that she is pregnant by this man she now despises. She concludes that

> It may not be fair — in fact, it seems damned unfair to me — but I'll never again have sex with a man whose child I couldn't bear to bear . . . It is not morality. Just practicality of spirit and flesh.

Circumstances force her into celibacy, but such a life is neither natural nor agreeable to a woman who has, as Morag has, the sexual temperament of a Venus.

Besides her fertility and her strong sexuality, Morag fits the Venus stereotype in another important way — in her capacity for mature love. Although she often worries about the people she loves and sometimes can't resist offering advice when she thinks it's needed, Morag has too much wisdom and personal integrity to try to possess or control another person. Deeply involved though she is with her friends, family and lovers, Morag always allows them the same independence she maintains for herself. She loves not only well but wisely, too.

Like its central character, *The Diviners* is a success. The entire book is distinguished by its author's acute perception of the joys and anxieties of the human, particularly the female,

situation. Tough and wise, often humorous and always real, this novel cannot be too highly praised. It establishes once again that Margaret Laurence, writing so well about characters hunting for some truth and meaning in their lives, is herself the most sensitive of diviners.

***

Margaret Laurence: More to her World than Facts

by Alison Hopwood

The Manawaka World of Margaret Laurence, by Clara Thomas, McClelland and Stewart, 1975; $10.00/hardcover.

In *The Manawaka World of Margaret Laurence*, Clara Thomas provides a compilation of facts about the life and work of Margaret Laurence. An introductory chapter and further information throughout the book give the history of her family, marriage, children, sojourns in Africa and England, publications, and honorary degrees. Each of her works, in order of publication, is summarized in detail — scenes, characters, events, and the relation of these to the life of the author. And yet, all this does not add up to the achievement of Margaret Laurence, the novelist. The datable, public events of her life do not account for the fact that she is our most distinguished Canadian novelist; re-telling her stories does not communicate the impact of her fiction.

The title suggests that the centre of the book will be an analysis of the kind of world the novelist has constructed, and the relation of Neepawa, Laurence's home town, to Manawaka, her fictional town. *The Manawaka World*, however, says little about Neepawa's history or social organization, except to relate the stories of the Simpson and Wemyss families, the novelist's immediate ancestors. Thomas observes that though "Manawaka is not Neepawa," its existence depends on Margaret Laurence's "ability to store in memory and to transmute what she knew and felt of it into a created fictional world." But this transmutation of experience into literature is frequently lost sight of in a mass of facts and dates.

Consequently, the book conveys information rather than insight. Life and literature are both treated as accumulations of facts, and Thomas writes about both in exactly the same fashion. Of Laurence's maternal grandparents, she writes: "The couple moved to the burgeoning little town of Neepawa, where John became an undertaker . . . The Simpsons had seven children — Stuart, Ruby, John, Rod, Margaret, Verna, and Velma." The chapter on *The Fire-Dwellers* begins: "Stacey MacAindra is Rachel Cameron's sister . . . the wife of Clifford 'Mac' MacAindra, a salesman, and the mother of Jan, Duncan, Ian, and Katie, ages two to fourteen." This kind of writing implies that the Simpsons and the MacAindras have the same kind of existence in the same kind of world. It obscures the divergence between life and literature, and does nothing to expand our understanding of either. To see Laurence's novels as fairly simple-minded transcriptions of life is to do them very much less than justice. They are worthy of attention because in them she has transformed the personal into the typical; because she has made patterns of national and human significance out of the random events of life.

The book is certainly thin as literary criticism, though it contains a considerable number of quotations of some length from Margaret Laurence's own comments on her writing. These suggest that she is (at least so far) her own best critic. Thomas makes some pertinent observations which could well have been amplified; among these are references to the importance of towns in Canadian fiction, to the fact that Laurence is particularly skilful in the development of individualized voices and is "a 'literary' writer." The exploration of such topics would have been worth much more than the many pages given to telling the stories, which are far better read in the original. A detailed comparison of Manawaka and "Elgin, Mariposa, Horizon, Deptford, Salterton, Crocus, and Jubilee" would demonstrate Laurence's strong grasp of social and historical realities. Discussion of the characters whose voices are an important contribution to our fiction would emphasize the truth and sharpness of her representations of how people think and act. Thomas might also have considered the influence of other writers; in particular, the relation of Margaret Atwood's work to *The Diviners* seems to me both obvious and interesting. Morag's rueful dialogues with Catherine Parr Traill, her inability to gut a fish or plant a garden, seem to be ironic echoes of *Surfacing*. in *Survival*, Atwood identifies the heroic with the tragic, and suggests that "the pull of the native tradition is not in the direction of individual heroes at all, but rather in the direction of collective heroes." Atwood's discussion may have affected the development of Morag Gunn, for Margaret Laurence has written a comic epic with a woman as "hero".

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Show Me!, by Will McBride and Dr. Helga Fleischhauer-Hartdt. St. Martin's Press, 1975.



> "This book is aimed at open-minded people who are prepared to rethink and perhaps even question their own attitude to human sexuality . . . The primary aim of this book is to finally do justice to the sexual needs of children and adolescents. This goal can only be reached by instructing adults thoroughly and realistically."

So states Dr. Fleischhauer-Hardt in the afterword to *Show Me!*. Most parents or other adults would like to be open-minded and would welcome a useful and well done supplement to their own communications with children about human sexuality. Unfortunately, *Show Me!* falls short of its goal, and in my opinion, does great injustice to the sexual needs of children and adolescents.

The explanatory text, which appears at the back of the book, is generally informative, but it seems to be added on in an effort to make the book saleable, rather than being an integral part of the whole. The photographs are the important part of the book. They are intended to portray a range of normal sexual activity from early years to adulthood in a natural, unrestricted manner. But the method of presentation is itself very unnatural. The photographs were made in a sterile advertising studio style with white seamless paper background and strobe lighting. The resulting photographs are flat, grainy, and washed-out looking. The style and quality of the photographs implies that there is no depth or richness to the sex portrayed in them. Why not use a natural setting and light rather than an artificial studio set-up? The photographer states that most of his models were friends: wouldn't they have been more comfortable in their own or his home?

The range of photographic material is extensive. There are pictures of a baby being held, a girl having an orgasm, a boy masturbating, a woman having a baby, an old man frowning at all of this and two double-page spreads (close-up and closer-up) of a couple in coitus. Why these two pictures deserve so much space is anybody's guess. Is the photographer afraid that without these graphic illustrations people won't be able to figure out how it all fits together? Or are they put in for the novelty of seeing coitus up close from the rear (a viewing angle most of us find impossible to achieve in real life)? Most of the photographs do at least have basic informational content, though the quality is questionable. But I would be reluctant for my children to view many of them because it might turn them off sex altogether.

In general, the book has an unnatural exhibitionist appearance. The captions introduce negative ideas which might not be in a child's mind if an adult didn't suggest them, such as wishes to kill the father and marry the mother, or envy over the fact that mother has bigger breasts or father a bigger penis. And the wording of these captions is banal.

Over a picture of a girl masturbating we read "My older sister told me that sometimes she rubs inside her VULVA on her CLITORIS and thinks about nice things and then she gets excited and has an or... she has an ORGASM then. That's BEAUTIFUL." Or with the photograph of a mother breast-feeding her baby: "Boy, he sure has a great feeding station."

A more serious criticism is that reading this book and looking at the photographs might cause some children to feel inadequate. One picture shows a young boy touching a girl's breasts. The caption reads "When I touch your breasts my penis gets all stiff. Whenever I see girls breasts I become HAPPY AND EXCITED." If your son didn't get a stiff penis easily, would he feel something was wrong with him? Or the picture of the girl supposedly having an orgasm from masturbating. How many girls (or grown women) can achieve an orgasm in that way? Are they sexually inadequate if they can't?

The book is also confusing about what is normal sexual behavior for children and adolescents. Many pictures depict sexual activity between children and adolescents. But the caption over a picture of an adult couple making love says "Mommy, I'm sort of scared. I don't want one of those things sticking in my vagina." Over another coitus photograph the answer is "there is no need to be scared. People don't sleep together like that until they're older." But the idea one gets from most of the pictures and text is that *all* sexual activity is pleasurable and quite alright for any age. How old is older, and why *don't* you do that until you are older?

It may be old-fashioned to bring up the ideas of responsibility, contraception and venereal disease when talking about this book, but I think it would have been more realistic to mention some of these things in the main part of the book instead of saving them for the small text portion at the back. Scattered through the book are not-so-subtle pictures of prune-faced older adults, which convey the impression that if you don't like this book, you must be a sexless, dried-up prude. In spite of this pressure to approve of the book, I don't. I want my children to grow up understanding that human sexuality is a great source of joy and mutual pleasure, a very personal and rewarding way of *sharing* with another person. I also want them to know that caring for another human being involves responsibility and some degree of commitment. It is possible they would see these values reflected in *Show Me!* but I think they will have a better chance of growing up with a healthy, happy, and loving attitude about sex *without* this book.

The positive result of reading *Show Me!* was that I did rethink my attitudes about sexuality and questioned what values I want to instill in my own children about sex. Perhaps this is the book's major redeeming feature.

Diana Palting

The Parlour Rebellion, by Isabel Bassett; McClelland & Stewart, 1975, $10.00 cloth.

In *The Parlour Rebellion*, Isabel Bassett refers to "the hundred years of struggle — from 1840 to 1940 (that) witnessed woman's liberation from the female ghetto of the nineteenth century and saw her win the vote". The women she has chosen to represent this period are an odd combination. They range from notables such as Nellie McClung and Emily Murphy to the almost unknown, Anna Gaudin and Peggy Shand. Anna Gaudin worked as a nurse among the Indians in northern Manitoba for 39 years, and is said to have operated on herself to remove a tumour from her

throat. Peggy Shand hiked the Chilkoot Pass to the Yukon during the gold rush of '97 and eventually ran a roadhouse there single-handed for 29 years. Their stories read like fiction and are just as gripping. A section on Quebec women, namely Claire Martin and Therese Casgrain, seems to have been tacked on at the end of the book. Neither woman really fits the 1840-1940 time span Isabel Bassett has set for herself. Their significant contributions to Canadian society came later.

Despite its shortcomings, the book sheds new light on the role of women in our history. *The Parlour Rebellion* would be an interesting addition to a survey course on women in Canada.

Julia Berry

Don't have your baby in the Dory, a biography of Myra Bennett by H. Gordon Green, Harvest House, 1974 $3.50.

Lutiapik, by Betty Lee, McClelland & Stewart, 1975, $10.00 cloth.

In keeping with the recent flood of books about women, publishers have suddenly sought heroic women, whether famous or not. Harvest House and McClelland & Stewart have chosen nurses as their heroines: ordinary women who took on challenging tasks. *Don't have your baby in the Dory!* has a crisis on every page. Myra Bennett, the British nurse who set out for Newfoundland in 1921, handles them all with extraordinary coolness. As the only medical help along 200 miles of isolated coast, she had to act as dentist, surgeon, diagnostician and cure-all. In the early years, her only anaesthetic was a swig of rum. Her most dramatic surgical job was sewing on her brother-in-law's severed foot on her kitchen table with no anaesthetic.

Author Gordon Green tends to get off on tangents about Newfoundland's history. He is overly kind to his subject, who at the age of 84 is still pulling teeth in the outports. Myra Bennett is certainly an incredible example of female stamina and ingenuity. For someone with a medical bent who can stomach horror stories, this is a fine book. However, I found myself wanting to know more of her discouragements and failures. Heroines have them, don't they?

Lutiapik is a less sensational adventure story. Dorothy Knight, a nurse in the Arctic for one year, handles the inevitable crises well, but has trouble coping with the isolation and lack of facilities. She is a more "real" person than Myra Bennett, and Betty Lee, the author, lets the reader see the devastating effect of white civilization on Inuit life and the inadequate measures taken to correct the situation. The story of Lutiapik (the name with which the Inuit christened Dorothy Knight) is not one of a heroine but of a capable, sensitive woman, who is a little easier for us to identify with. Her story is a sympathetic and moving account of both the beauties of northern isolation and the failure of government medical programs. In an epilogue, Knight points out that until 1970, northern health services were manned essentially by non-natives. Unlike the World Health Organization in Africa, where there are health problems similar to those in the Arctic, the Canadian government has not worked at educating the Inuit in health care.

Julia Berry

Hard to Swallow by Walter Stewart, MacMillan of Canada, 1974.
The Politics of Food by Don Mitchell, James Lorimer & Co., 1975.



You stand bewildered in the gleaming supermarket trying mentally to compare whether "two for 39¢" or "19¢ each" is the better buy, or you trudge dazedly homeward with two light bags whose contents total $50.00. Why are food prices so ridiculously inflated? The food industry, from farm to store, is a maze of agribusiness, marketing boards, double-ticketing, and other wonders that make most consumers shake their heads, sigh resignedly, and fork over the price without complaint.

Hard to Swallow starts with a look at the present situation, both national and world-wide, then propels the reader through the food chain, from its beginnings on the farm to the over-priced stock on the supermarket shelves. Each link is examined and assessed, along with its attendant bureaucratic bunglings, corporate rip-offs, and implications for consumers. The revelations presented are startling: vertically integrated companies (agribusiness) control all aspects of the industry from land to supermarkets, including related enterprises such as fertilizer plants and machinery. By the last chapter the reader is ready for help in finding a way out of the maze. Stewart's proposals for possible solutions to the food crisis are welcome and, as he suggests, "sane". Throughout the book, his style and wryly amusing anecdotes lend readability to what could have been a boring mass of facts and figures. For those who wish to delve deeper into the many studies which have been done on food prices, there is a comprehensive series of reference notes. There are two guides which should prove practical and helpful: the first, a list of 'rules for supermarket shopping' has been presented before, but should have more impact after reading the chapter on retail stores; the other is a diet and shopping guide which should help its users to find the best way of allotting money for food.

In contrast to Stewart's point of view as an angry and frustrated consumer, Mitchell writes as a relatively dispassionate observer. His book contains no sensationalism but is instead a detailed and carefully-prepared analysis of the food industry, concentrating on its intertwining with federal, provincial, and agribusiness politics. It also includes a look at the national and international situation, farmers, and oligopolies, but also presents in-depth studies of three important and basic foodstuffs: bread, beef, and dairy products. Unfortunately Mr. Mitchell's book reads like a text, and it is not until the final chapters that a bit of emotion shows. Regrettably, this limits its appeal, and much excellent and valuable information is lost to the casual reader.

In spite of the differences in emphasis and delivery, the authors arrive at many of the same conclusions. They advocate land control laws and land banks, guaranteed farm incomes, and replacement of glittery supermarkets with discount stores, co-ops, and/or farmer's markets. They stress restructuring, consumer education, and better use of money, so that decisions about future food prices and policies will not be made solely by governments and agribusiness to the further loss of the producer and consumer. In Mitchell's words: "Their record . . . should leave no one in any doubt about who will gain — and who will lose — if they (government and agribusiness) have their way".

Donna Crowe

Women Loving, Ruth Falk, Random House/Bookworks, New York, 1975, $7.95.

This is a book which one would very much like to like. Wholly without art or style, it is meant to be the painfully honest record of a "journey toward

becoming an independent woman" in which the author holds nothing back in her attempt to document her search for sexual identity. Yet, rather than coming away from the book exhilarated by Ruth Falk's openness and courage, the reader is left depressed and irritated at the shallowness of what she ultimately reveals.

Her situation is a fairly common one. Raised in a conventional, middle-class family and fully assimilating its conventional expectations for women of marriage and family, Ruth Falk was horrified to recognize, well along in her twenties, that she was deeply sexually attracted to women. This realization precipitated a crisis which took the form of a several-year search for a sexual definition — was she homo-, hetero-, or bisexual? If she was bisexual, what did that mean in terms of the number, kind, and quality of the relationships she should have? Could she be bisexual and relate mainly to men? to women? or must she be careful always to retain simultaneous relations with both for the sake of balance? If she related only to women did that make her, horrors, a Lesbian? To resolve these questions, she tried various kinds of therapy (traditional, with both male and female therapists, rolfing, non-verbal therapy, and, I would guess from her language, a little transactional analysis), a variety of sexual relationships, a new job in California, feminism, interviews with bisexual women, and writing the book itself. In the end she concludes that her confusion has been to a large degree self -induced by her obsession with definition, that she is comfortable with a self that she defines merely as "sexual," and that she can work out a style of life for herself that allows her to relate sexually with whoever turns her on. Although Falk assures us that she feels much better, objectively her life seems to have changed rather little, since at the end of the book we see her again involved in the same triangular relation with a man and a woman with which her quest began.

Ruth Falk is cursed with total recall. She can remember and record what she ate, or didn't eat, in what restaurant, at what address, and what she was wearing at the time for any date over the last ten years. The result is an expensive book of more than five hundred self-indulgent pages, in which, because everything is important, nothing is. Although Falk declares her book is about feelings, she cannot find the language which will make us feel. Her style is a deadening mix of sociological and movement jargon, ungrammatical constructions, and plain embarrassing errors which betrays a contempt for her medium and an unwarranted demand for indulgence on the part of her readers. It is, moreover, a class-ridden book. Although she announces from the beginning her life-long concern with social change, she remains supremely indifferent to and even unconscious of the struggles of women who do not have sufficiently privileged a position to permit them the luxury of working out in endless detail the precise quality of their feelings. What is worse, she does not seem to know that this *is* luxury.

She is attracted to and can take seriously only women like herself who have style, nice apartments, important jobs, who are, as she says, "professional." Although she tries hard to relate her personal struggle to feminism, her book remains almost wholly non-political in any but the most superficial way. Because she avoids the serious questions of her relationship to class privilege, to power, to the patriarchy, she condemns herself to repeat endlessly her initial confusion.

Women Loving is a glossy trap. Its title refers to a subject about which too few books have been published and appears tailored to cash in on the legitimate hunger of lesbian women to find out more about themselves. It promises to support women in their struggle to find new ways of being and ends by suggesting that such a struggle, even if undertaken with the single-minded intensity of a Ruth Falk, will end precisely nowhere. Its chief value is in reminding us how rare and difficult an accomplishment Kate Millet's *Flying* really was.

- Yvonne M. Klein

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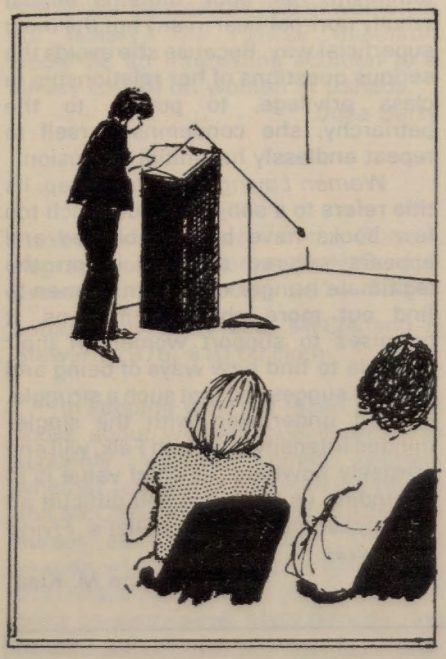
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head way

When I Met the Lady Poets



head way is a new feature in *Branching Out*. We hope to hear from readers whose awareness — about themselves, roles, relationships, reality — has changed. It can happen in confrontation with a friend, while playing a game, making love, watching a movie; a shift takes place and we are no longer the same. We are experiencing in a new way.

The first *head way* column "When I Met the Lady Poets", was submitted by a Toronto writer, Anita Lerek after she attended an international poetry festival.

by Anita Lerek

Canadian poetry has habitually been consumed in silence by a small minority of literate followers. Occasional readings to captive CanLit audiences have been the only break in the largely solitary and passive poetic experience. The week-long International Poetry Festival held in Toronto at the end of October considerably altered the status quo. For the first time ever, Canadian poets left the shelter of studies and entered the glittering world of international showbiz.

At noon, 2 p.m., 4 p.m., 7:30 and 10, all you heard was poetry, poetry everywhere. And it wasn't the old style solitary, philosophical stuff either. No, on the contrary — the crusty halls and salons of Hart House resounded with theatre, mime, movement, chanting, and every conceivable refinement of sound.

Contact was the name of the game all week. Local poets who had never published met established ones. Our stars — Layton, Atwood and Birney among them — matched the finest from abroad. Internationally-acclaimed poets such as Octavio Paz of Mexico, Robert Creeley of the U.S., Yehudi Amichai of Israel and others got together with distinguished counterparts from English and French Canada, as well as from the non-official cultures. Over 5,000 members of the public attended the festival. With the poets, they explored the most intimate aspects of the poetic craft.

The picture wasn't so rosy on the women's side. The murder of prominent west coast poet Pat Lowther had been announced just shortly before the opening of the festival; apparently she had not been invited to read. Soon after, there ensued a heated battle between 'rejected' poets and festival organizers, played out — of all places — in the editorial sections of the Toronto press. The omission of some notable English-Canadian women poets — among them Dorothy Livesay, Miriam Waddington, Margaret Avison, and P.K. Page — prompted the most scathing attacks.

The predominant tone of the festival was decidedly masculine. Of the thirteen major non-Canadian readers, only two were women — Diane Wakoski from California and Lilliane Wouters of Belgium. Thirteen appeared to be the magic number, for there were also thirteen major Canadian readers invited. Five were women: Nicole Brossard, Cecile Cloutier, and Anne Hebert from Quebec, as well as Margaret Atwood and Paulette Jiles from Ontario. In fact, the strongest female presence was felt not in the prestigious major readings during the week, but in the concluding marathon Saturday evening.

Initially, the only quality the female poets appeared to share was that they were women; it was impossible for me to link them up in any other way. What on earth could a shy, ex-hillbilly like Paulette Jiles have in common with sophisticated, tough-talking Diane Wakoski from Michigan State University? Diane strides confidently into a room; her words have the ring of a lecture delivered by an authority. Paulette complains about an imperfectly developed persona which renders her pathetically vulnerable before an audience. Both Anne Hebert, the stately lady of Canadian letters now residing in Paris, and Lilliane Wouters, a reserved elementary school teacher from Brussels, fiercely guard their independence from matrimonial ties in order to guard their creativity. On the other hand, Wakoski takes the opposite stand, asserting that she is looking for another husband to replace her fifth. Brossard, equally emphatically, declared her alienation from men and her infinitely stronger identification with women. Atwood, a Ph.D. in English drop-out, speculated on the possibility that her art was retarded by education, whereas 45-year-old Cecile Cloutier is on her tenth poetic publication while retaining a tenured position as professor of French at the University of Toronto.

In neither attitude, life style or performance did any of these poets converge. This initial observation dis-

turbed me greatly, especially in light of my constant search for signs of uniquely female ways of performing and perceiving the world. Their poetry disturbed me as well. The topics and treatment diverged widely, and in none of the works did I sense the voice of an indignant woman questioning the oppression around her.

Untitled Poem
Faim d'amour et faim de viande,
faims du ventre, sans merci,
et les autres qui commandent
aussi.

Faim pour la faim, o fringales,
faim pour rien, faim par plaisir.
C'est ainsi qu'on vous regale,
desir.

Faim de l'ame. Et j'en oublie.
Elles m'ont coute trop cher.
Je t'assume avec ta lie
ma chair.

Lilliane Wouters, "Untitled Poem" from *La Marche Forcee* 1954

My first reaction was anger. Diane Wakoski kept insisting she was not a feminist and that the only significant thing about her was the 'mythology of Diane' that she had created. I saw her as a sell-out. When both Lilliane Wouters and Cecile Cloutier clearly informed me that the spirit they wished to express in their poetry was that of an asexual creature — the human being — I instantly wrote off their poetry as the ravings of an outdated generation. Even Atwood and Brossard's poetry annoyed me. Here were two poets generally regarded as feminist writers of a sort. But in neither of their most provocative works — *La Partie Pour le Tout* or *Sexual Politics* — were there any direct allusions to women's oppression or salvation.

Both journalistically and personally I came to a halt. I felt I'd lost the angle for a distinctive women's poetry. And after all, that was the main reason for my coming to cover the festival. In addition, I began to question the possibility of forging a uniquely female cultural base. Maybe it is all rhetoric, and in the end we are all separate entities with no discernible links to draw on! For a while I felt like I'd lost not only a slant on a story but also a mode of ordering reality.

By chance I picked up Virginia Woolf's classic — *A Room of One's Own*. As I flipped through the pages I felt an impulse mounting through my body 'til bang — it exploded into consciousness. It was Virginia Woolf who finally helped me to piece together what the women poets had been trying to tell me all week:

It is fatal to be a man or woman pure and simple; one must be woman-manly or man-womanly. (p. 102)

. . . if we face the fact . . . that there is no arm to cling to, but that we go alone and that our relation is to the world of reality and not only to the world of men and women, then the opportunity will come and the dead poet who was Shakespeare's sister will put on the body which she has so often laid down. Drawing her life from the lives of the unknown who were her forerunners, as her brother did before her, she will be born. (p. 112)

It was the desire for independent and pure artistic expression that brought all the disparate women poets at the festival together. Odd that I didn't see this sooner. Now I understand why Atwood and Wakoski so strongly denounced the tendency of readers and critics to weaken the effect of their art through the imputation of autobiographical factors. Atwood elaborated on how hard it was for males to believe females capable of making artistic choices. Contrary to the rules of sexual stereotyping, she perceived poetry as a vehicle for evocation rather than for mere self-expression and emotional release. She recommended gardening and screaming as more effective antidotes for those needs.

And that was why Wakoski kept tilting attention away from her biographical givens and toward her personal mythology — a world totally of her own creation. Slowly it was dawning on me that only by inserting a strong artistic presence into the poetic tradition could women achieve full equality with men in that realm.

As Diane Wakoski put it, the explicit advocation of rights can be much more effectively carried out in the political realm: "Poems don't change laws".

. . . George Washington, I need your love; George, I want to call you Father, Father, my Father,"
Father of my country,
that is,
me. And I say the name to chant it. To sing it. To lace it around me like weaving cloth. Like a happy child on that shining afternoon in the palmtree sunset with her mother's trunk yielding treasures,
I cry and
cry,
Father,
Father,
Father,
have you really come home?

Diane Wakoski, from "The Father of my Country" in *Trilogy*, 1974.

However, by troubling the order of language and meaning in the artistic domain, the poet can shake up the elements of another order — the value order of the reader. And after all, isn't that where any profound change begins?

Not women's rights but universal truths, daringly exposed in a way exclusively reserved for women whose lot it has been throughout history to have singular contact with the mysteries of creation and all the paradoxes of unity that the process implies: that was the lesson I gleaned from the festival lady poets. ***

Black Rat

In the cold shade
of the eclipsing moon,
black rat.
His cold body in the black dawn
graven, upright,
still
eyes at my eyes.

Ai!
I am old!
One night — one
one night — 10
at my bier.

Strike! Ai! — the throat!
Black rat,
my teeth are bloody, so many.

Marilyn Bowering

Puberty Song

I saw the way you looked at me,
forbidden one;
the blood connection
makes you furious and strong.

I would not touch brother or sister,
mother or father —
but you!
My eyes are listening to your eyes.

ee-mah! go away!
My grandfather fathered you —
I'll leave you like winter.

I saw you in the water moss woods,
your face as pale as lichen.
The trees' green hair brushed your skin
and I ran before you knew it was me.

My real lover found a midden
and made me buttons of shell.
He is so fine,
sea-foam women are after him.

I'll leave him like spring.

cont. from p. 27

gently.

"Let's go then."

He gazed at the window one last time. Then he turned to the woman, barefoot and huddled up in a corner. He spoke so softly that only she could hear him:

"Why?"

The second nurse took his arm and in silence the group began to walk out into the street.

As if obeying a secret signal, the three women rushed into the room, surrounding their companion, who remained glued to the wall, clutching at the front of her robe.

"Wasn't that dreadful!" said the woman with a red kerchief tied around her head. "Weren't you scared to death? Locked in with a lunatic? I get gooseflesh just to think of it. Look!"

"He sure was rather good looking," said the blonde with the earrings. "He looked like that movie actor, that oldish one, what's his name . . . James . . ."

"Ah, I don't even want to know, heaven forbid me from running into a lunatic," interrupted the woman with the kerchief. "And how did you ever find out that he had run away ? My, my . . . you could work for the police. This shows that we should have a gun in our possession. A machine gun, my dear."

"Poor fellow, I felt so sorry . . . And he didn't do anything, did he?" the blonde asked, addressing her friend. "He could have taken advantage of the situation, but he didn't. I swear I felt so sorry, he reminded me of that actor, we went to see that movie together, his name was James something . . . "

Suddenly the woman seemed to wake up in the corner where she had taken refuge. Fuming, she glared at the three women. She pushed them out of the room:

"That's enough, do you hear? That's enough. Get out, leave me alone!"

"You don't have to be so rude! We only wanted to . . . "

"That's enough!" she yelled, clenching her fists. "Get out, all of you, out! You too, out . . . out!"

She slammed the door shut. The voices of the women talking excitedly at the same time went on for a while. Then the women tramped out into the street.

She saw herself in the mirror, unkempt and barefoot. Quickly she averted her eyes from her own reflected image. She turned off the light. Then, taking the chair the man had occupied, she sat gazing at the window.

***

— Translated from the Portuguese by Eloah F. Giacomelli

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people in this issue

TANYA ROSENBERG

Tanya Rosenberg is presently director of Powerhouse, a cooperative women's art gallery in Montreal. For the gallery's recent toy show she created a life-sized jack-in-the-box. She is currently working on a multi-media sculpture environment which will be completed sometime in the fall.

LYGIA FAGUNDES TELLES

Lygia Fagundes Telles is a contemporary Brazilian writer who has won major literary prizes. In 1973 she took part in a symposium on women in Brazilian literature at Indiana University. Her first collection of short stories was published in 1944 while she was attending law school. Translator Eloah Giacomelli grew up in Brazil and now lives in Vancouver.

JANE DICK

Jane Dick graduated from the University of Winnipeg with a bachelor's degree in dramatic studies and has since taken film courses at Concordia University in Montreal. She is presently doing freelance work in films and journalism. She began her research on rape in Montreal in October 1974.

LAURIE BAGLEY

Laurie Bagley is a mother and housewife and a part-time freelance writer. She was one of the founders and original co-editors of *Room of One's Own*. Her book reviews have appeared in that journal and in the *Vancouver Sun*. She now lives in Winnipeg where she is teaching a class on women and literature at the Free University.

LINDA DUNCAN

Linda Duncan is a lawyer presently working as a social planner for the Edmonton Social Planning Council. She is also on the board of directors for the Rape Crisis Centre of Edmonton.

TOTI DRAGINDA

Toti Draginda had formal art training in Canada, then studied for three years in London, England on a Canadian design scholarship. She became interested in etching and had her first one-woman show in London. She now teaches fashion drawing in Edmonton. She is also working on a book of etchings of Canadian women in historical costumes.

SUSAN McMASTER

Susan McMaster was editor of *Branching Out* from the time of the magazine's inception until last April. She is currently a freelance writer and a graduate student in the school of journalism at Carleton University.

DIANA PALTING

Diana Palting teaches photography and co-ordinates the photography program at Grant MacEwan College in Edmonton. She has also taught photography in Washington D.C. and has exhibited her work in various cities in the United States and Canada. She has two children.

MARY HUMPHREY BALDRIDGE

Mary Humphrey Baldridge is a Calgary playwright and poet. Her productions include "Tonight at Calgary Theatre Hall," "The Photographic Moment," and "Bride of the Gorilla". A book of poetry, *Slide Images* was published by Retort Press, New York.

MARILYN BOWERING

Marilyn Bowering has published one book of poetry, *The Liberation of Newfoundland* (Fiddlehead), and her poems, prose and reviews have appeared in a number of magazines, including *Canadian Fiction* and *Malahat Review*. She is currently working on a Ph.D. in Canadian Literature at the University of New Brunswick.

PEAT O'NEIL

Peat O'Neil is a freelance writer now living in Ottawa. She has studied English literature but her current interests are sports, medicine and the arts. She worked for several years in preventive medicine at the University of Toronto and has written articles for *womenSports* magazine.

HELEN ROSTA

Helen Rosta is a social worker with the public school board in Ottawa. She is also a writer and fiction editor with *Branching Out*. Her plays and short stories have won numerous prizes; she is currently revising a play she wrote this summer while studying at the Banff School of Fine Arts.

BEVERLEY ROSS

Beverley Ross is a songwriter and musician. She is presently doing freelance work for CKUA radio in Edmonton and is continuing her music studies at Grant MacEwan College. Her music reviews have appeared regularly in *Branching Out*.

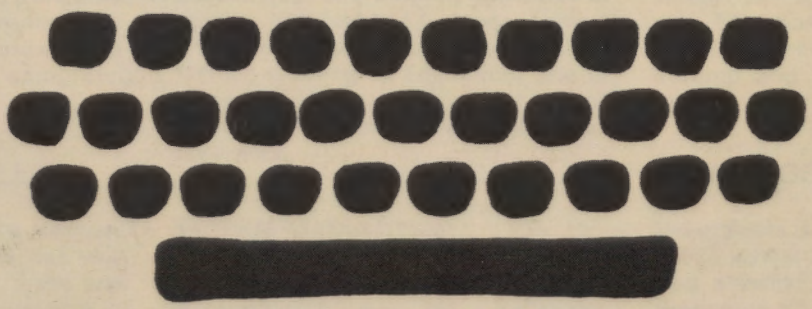
ROSEMARY AUBERT

Rosemary Aubert has given many poetry readings in and around Toronto. A chapbook entitled *An Even Dozen Poems* was published by Missing Link Press in 1974 and several of her poems will appear in the forthcoming *Stormwarnings II* edited by Al Purdy. She is a book editor at McGraw-Hill Ryerson.

VIVIAN FRANKEL

Vivian Frankel is an Ottawa freelance photographer and frequent contributor to *Branching Out*. A recent series of her photos appeared in the Information Canada publication "Federal Services for Women." She also worked on the book "To See Ourselves" published recently by the IWY Secretariat.

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