Branching Out

canadian magazine for women

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Fashion and Feminism

Yvette Rousseau on Textile Workers

Women Garment Workers

New Looks for Spring!

How Eaton's Saw Us

Second-Hand Clothes

Sewing Your Own

Fishing Rights for Inuit Women

The Far Shore Reviewed

Fiction, Poetry, Reviews

Art by Violet Owen

Branching Out

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Every Issue

Features

Women in the Arts

Cover Photo by Cherie Westmoreland

letters

The article, "A Stage of Seven Women" (Sept/Oct 1976), is the finest of its kind I've ever read, giving those of us with no opportunity to attend the production of *La nef des sorcières* some real insight into the nature of the experiment, the impact of it as theatre, its political and aesthetic significance in Montreal, its contribution to feminist art. The generosity of the point of view is directed to writers, actors, audience and critics alike, and it is remarkable to me that Yvonne Mathews-Klein and Ann Pearson were able, together, to write so lucid and inclusive and engaging a statement that, half way through reading it to myself, I was compelled to stop and begin again to read it aloud to other people in the room. Books can lead their own lives independent of their critics, but the art of theatre is much more dependent on intelligent interpretation to secure it a hearing in more than one city. I hope theatre people across Canada and the States read "A Stage of Seven Women" so that *La nef des sorcieres,* as well as other plays like it, can be produced elsewhere. And congratulations to *Branching Out* for finding critics whose intelligence is in service to expanding our experience and understanding.

Jane Rule, Galiano, B.C.

In reference to "Things Do Happen in the Groves of Academe" (Sept/Oct 1976), it is perhaps worth pointing out that only in the twenties and again in the seventies have women constituted twenty per cent of doctoral candidates. Their proportion was considerably lower in between. The number of women who actually complete Ph.D. degrees is even lower, for reasons that Dr. Lauber enumerates. According to 1971-72 figures, that are by now exceeded, but not doubled, only 9.3% of doctorates awarded in Canada in that year went to women.

Anne Marie Decore, Edmonton

Many thanks for the warm and informative interview with mugda (Sept/Oct 1976). Having been in India at that same time, living through the same dum marathon group, I willingly second her comments on the space there. Becoming a sannyasin of Baghwan Shree Rajneesh has definitely done me a great deal of good.

It's tremendous to actually come across an article in an intelligent and creative magazine that deals for once with our spiritual space — an awareness of which is essential to true intelligence and creativity.

ma shivapriya, Petersborough, Ont.

I loved the photoessay by Diana Palting (Sept/Oct, 1976). She has spoken about blood and womb in a forceful and beautiful way.

Elvina Boyke, St. Albert, Alberta

What was originally at the base of the women's movement was an overwhelming need on the part of women to break through the desensitizing molds and to create a new vision of freedom for all people. I think the vision is being lost to a certain amount of infighting and extremism. We women take ourselves and "La Causa" too seriously. We are once again afraid to reach out to each other — to share energy.

Here in Dawson, people *must* reach out, in order to survive emotionally in the midst of vast territory and extremes of weather.

Sue Hellman, Dawson City, Yukon

I am pleased to hear future issues will have a "stronger feminist slant". That's good news.

Vicki Schmolka, Toronto

I like the magazine as it is and would hate to see it fold. If it becomes biased I shall probably enjoy it less.

Beryl Tyler, Edmonton

I would not like to see *Branching Out* become militantly feminist because I think we should present the talents of women without the hang-ups of sexual connotation. The magazine should speak out against discrimination, not because it works solely against women but because forms of discrimination demean all people. I think for *Branching Out* to become militantly feminist at this point would be looking back.

Doris Hillis, Macklin, Saskatchewan

I have decided that this year my Christmas donations will be entirely to publications which are in need and in which I believe. *Branching Out* ranks high among them. You've made it into an unfailingly interesting and varied publication, and I read it from cover to cover. Congratulations and good luck!

Margaret Laurence,
Lakefield, Ontario

Your paper's too expensive . . . I would like to say that I enjoy your magazine and have found the quality of writing considerably improved lately. I feel the writing is the selling thing in a magazine and wouldn't be affected by a cheaper printing process, although I agree the art and photographs would. Your new editorial policy sounds interesting.

J. Wilson, Montreal

I enjoy your magazine but have thought it wasteful of space and the paper too glossy. In these stringent times we should set an example to a wasteful continent.

Ida Robertson,
Sudbury, Ontario

poets

Anna Gerhard Immanuel is a Toronto writer. She spent a few important years in Jerusalem and has had short stories and poetry published there and in Canada.

Eleanor Verbicky is studying English at the University of Alberta. In 1973 she attended a creative writing course at the Banff Centre. Her poetry has also appeared in Interface.

Patricia Friars lives in Bonnyville, Alberta. She is a high school English teacher presently on a one-year maternity leave of absence. Platform Shoes is her first published poem.

editorial

Reports of *Branching Out's* death have been exaggerated — at least a little bit. We can't really deny feeling rather desperate last fall, when near bankruptcy, understaffed and faltering editorially, we decided to suspend publication. Many details of our four-month disappearance are neither dramatic nor particularly newsworthy. We held meetings, drafted and mailed announcements of all sorts, searched out new staff, unscrambled our accounts, held more meetings, and answered the mail that continued to arrive (not everyone thought we were dead).

This mundane activity list leaves one thing out: the why of it all. Why continue to publish *Branching Out?* As one who was ready, in September, to walk away from the pressure and frustration of trying to produce a magazine with too little money and too few readers, I was startled by the tenacity of the staff members who insisted they weren't prepared to give it up. Either they were reluctant to face the realities of the magazine's economic position or they didn't realize that habit had replaced their earlier, more active involvement. That there might be a genuine strongly-felt need for the magazine hit me only after we mailed an appeal for financial support to our subscribers. We had hoped for a dozen or so supportive letters and worried about how we would repay those who demanded immediate refunds. We weren't prepared for the volume of the response, or the intensity of some letters. Many readers sent cheques; others bought subscriptions for practically everyone they knew. Careful notes expressed disbelief that the magazine would cease to exist; help was offered, words of encouragement were scribbled on the back of subscription forms, carefully typed letters spelled out elaborate strategies for survival.

Realizing that many readers still wanted to receive the magazine didn't resolve a problem that we had been aware of for over a year. The content was becoming repetitive; we were dealing with a limited set of issues in fairly predictable ways. We wanted to diversify our material without having it disolve into a jumble of items on what women were thinking about anything and everything. Publishing feature articles on a single theme in each issue and approaching them from a feminist perspective seemed like a solution. Relating our feminist beliefs to all feature articles in the magazine seemed to be a clearer expression of what we thought *Branching Out* should do — something that no other publication was doing. Comments from readers on this first thematic issue will help us develop those to come.

Our recovery is far from complete — in the Canadian style, we're still preoccupied with "hanging on, staying alive". But with a little more help from readers we can overcome the obstacles to our survival. Pass on the word to friends that *Branching Out* is here for them too.

Sharon Batt

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Diane F. Ackerman, Sheryl Ackerman, Alicen R. Baker, Brig Anderson, Marilyn Assheton-Smith, Marion Batt, Evelyn Black, C. M. Blue, Roxann Brown, Roberta Buchanan, Edmonton Business & Professional Women's Club, Martha Colquhoun, Grace Cook, Jane Rothwell Corcoran, Dallas Cullen, Diane L. Dailley, Ann Darbyshire, Sally M. Davis, Yvonne Earle, Donna Fraser, Halyna Freeland, Ellen Gartman, Catherine Garvey, Connie Gerwing, Joyce Gilfillian, Doreen M. Haveman, Valerie Hignett, Ada Ho, Alison L. Hopwood, Susan J. Hosford, Isabel Huggan, Janet Johnson, Laura Johnson, Marilyn Julian, Marguarite Keeley, B. Kitteringham, Rose Knoepfli, J. C. Laird, Anne Lambert, Margaret Laurence, Mrs. W. Lawrence, Helen Levine, Robin Macovichuk, Kay McPherson, Vera Marchuk, Terry Matwichuk, Betty I.E. McClure, Pauline M. McGibbon, Jane McMichael, Ruth Godfrey Moore, F. Morris, Susan Ward Moser, J. Fraser O'Cleary, Donnie Patterson, Penticton Women's Center, M.A. Perreault, Patricia Perry, Susan Phillips, Kristin Purdy, Mary Jo Quarry, Lorna Rasmussen, Dr. O.R. Risk, Robert's Creek Women's Centre, Ida Robertson, Vicki Schmolka, Claudia Smith, Alan Sparkes, Lois Sparling, Janet M. Stark, Marylee Stephenson, V. Stikeman, Anne Tanner, Lesley Taylor, M.I. Terry, Phyllis Thatcher, Leslie Uyeda, Dirce Vardanega, Susan E. Wallach, Janet Walter, Dianne L. Walton, Beryl Tyler, Barbara Novak, J. Wilson, and anonymous friends.

headway

Go As You Are

by Karen Lawrence

I sometimes wince when I examine what's behind my behaviour, those times I am able to look at myself under a strong light and not lie about what I see. Asking "How do I feel about me these days?" often leads to speculation about self-esteem, about what I value in myself and what I think others value in me. Wondering about the latter leads nowhere, because I never really know. I *do* know that some part of my sense of self is tied up with the way I look — skin, hair, clothes, and shape — and when self-esteem is hovering near zero, I cast a harsh, critical eye over my 'image'. Then 'looking good' gets to be a complex issue:

	I feel good
so	I dress up
then	I get attention
and	I feel even better
	OR
	I look lousy
so	I punish myself
then	I get no attention
and	I feel even worse

Now, do I look good because I feel good, or do I feel good because I look good? I think it's usually the former, and that's what I try to come back to, a state of feeling good.

Clothes are a significant element in this little drama, and have always had special fascination for me. They seem to hold out the possibility of a kind of freedom, a freedom to try on different roles, which can be fun. I clearly remember feeling elegant at four, wearing a velvet-trimmed green organdy dress to a wedding; feeling secure at seven, knowing I looked smashing in my black and white 'snowflake dress' while passing out cookies on my birthday to my grade one class; feeling liberated at eleven when I began earning my own money babysitting and could spend it on clothing myself the way I wanted. "The way I wanted" was like everyone else, only better. Fashion for adolescents follows an ironclad code. The teenaged me groomed meticulously for those thousands of appraising eyes, sure to be watching. The most significant part of this ritual from the viewee's position was the *not-noticing*, sweeping past those for whom the whole show was staged with frosty unconcern, eyes front.

But of course I noticed when I was noticed, even at age four; the game wouldn't have been worth playing if I hadn't gotten some attention. What I wonder now is, how much of my confidence is tied up with looking good? How important is it to be thought sexy or beautiful? Do I use my looks to get things I want from others — attention, assistance, approval? If the answers are 'lots', 'very', and 'yes', then is it worth it?

Sometimes it is; this seems clear when I look at my life cycles. A few years ago, I was into the roles of serious student, feminist, tough cynical intellectual. Several pairs of tight jeans, some t-shirts and boots served me well, and helped create a clearly-defined don't-mess-with-me image. Then I went through some changes, and felt a strong pull to look for a sexual partner. I lost weight, cut off the long hair I'd been hiding behind, and began wearing skimpy shirts and clinging skirts in soft, sensuous fabrics. (This 'on-the-make' period neatly coincided with spring and summer.) I began getting the attention I craved and was living on that *edge* of high sexual energy, looking vital, alive and interested, feeling on top of things.

In retrospect, some of this behaviour seems predictable, ritualized: a mating dance, seeking, flaunting, connecting. On another level, it is the phenomenon of *getting strokes*. Doris Lessing explores this social ritual with remarkable insight and sensitivity in several of her novels (in fact, often enough for it to be considered one of her themes). In *The Summer Before The Dark* Kate Brown, a respectable middle-aged wife and mother, spends a summer un-covering her self. After several weeks of feverish illness, passed in solitude, she enters the world again, and finds her consciousness changed, her perceptions shifted. When she attends a play, the audience appears to be "a room full of animals, dogs and cats and wolves and foxes that had got on their hind legs and put ribbons on themselves and brushed their fur". She carefully observes how she is treated when she is no longer the attractive, well-groomed Mrs. Brown, but "an eccentric to the point of fantasy, with her pink, sacklike dress tied abruptly around her by a yellow scarf, her bush of multi-hued hair, her gaunt face that was yellow, and all bones and burning angry eyes". Towards the end of the story she is living with a young woman, Maureen, who changes her 'look' — hair, makeup, clothes — several times daily. Maureen acts as a foil for Kate; the young woman rotating costumes and their corresponding roles almost obsessively, the older woman realizing with rage and misery that for all her adult, sexual life she has been conforming, seeking approval, playing the same game "for years and years and years". At one point Kate stages a demonstration for Maureen: she passes a group of construction workers (male), unnoticed as her 'drab' self. Then she ties back her hair, removes her jacket to reveal a fitted dress, and re-passes as a sex object to "a storm of whistles, calls, invitations". But Maureen is still caught in the drama, and cannot hear the message yet. As for Kate, "she knew now, she had to know at last, that all her life she had been held upright by an invisible fluid, the notice of other people. But the fluid had been drained away."; and later, more starkly "What a lot of rubbish, what a con it all was, *what a bloody waste of time*".

If there's a midpoint on the Maureen-Kate axis, that's where I am. I still get trapped. I get that sinking feeling when my sister says over the phone "How do you look now, like a little pig?", or my father stares and mutters "You mean you don't shave your legs anymore?", or I look down at the stained, roughened hands with the dirty broken nails, that are attached to my wrists. But I'm finding some ways of shaking it loose. When people criticize the way I look /dress/am, it helps to remember that that's *their* trip — they might be experiencing envy, hurt feelings, embarrassment, jealousy — and I don't have to internalize their messages. (This seems hardest to do with family, for my need for their approval starts 'way back there'.) I *feel* my body enough to want to clothe myself in garments that keep me comfortable, warm or cool, and feeling good. I

wear what I want; dress codes must be perpetuated by people who are afraid to let their clothing make any kind of personal statement. My adherence to a daily shower and shampoo routine has slackened somewhat, and being grubby feels alright. Not reading fashion magazines or scanning newspapers for sales or going shopping makes the whole clothes/fashion scene much less important. This usually happens of itself, when one finds other, more interesting things to do.

What's most important is *being aware* of whatever it is I'm doing. If I get into a frenetic clothing or dieting trip, and can identify it as such, then I have a handle on it and a better chance of examining what I'm getting out of this behaviour. Deciding that behaviour is 'bad' or 'non-functional' doesn't eradicate the impulse or the need which motivates it. By living out what I do with awareness, I learn about myself, and the importance of the activity diminishes. Then I am more able to give up trying to please others — which feels good. Because I know that ultimately, the one I have to please is me.

Karen Lawrence is fiction editor at Branching Out. She recently completed a collection of poems entitled Nekuia: The Inanna Poems.

if you feel happy then
go as you
are you feel
happy if you
are and you
are happy if you
go as you feel you
are

if you feel like smilin and
feel happy as you
are laughin then
you feel as you
go you are happy if
you feel you can
go as you
are

Fishing Rights for Inuit Women

by Constance Hunt

The plight of native women in our legal system has received growing public attention since Jeannette Lavell went to the Supreme Court of Canada in 1974: she unsuccessfully argued that S.12(1)(b) of the *Indian Act*, which removes Indian status from a registered Indian woman and her children when she marries a non-Indian, was contrary to the Canadian Bill of Rights. Her case was opposed by several intervening Indian organizations who did not want the special status of their membership, as enshrined in the *Indian Act*, further reduced.

Inuit women have, in general, not been faced with this dichotomy. The Inuit are not subject to the *Indian Act;* although special provisions in certain game laws apply to the Inuit, there is no general legislation which governs their legal status. Hunting and fishing laws in the Northwest Territories have historically accorded special rights to all Inuit, regardless of sex. This was an accurate reflection of Inuit society, where women traditionally played a key role in food-gathering.

With the stroke of an unthinking pen in June, 1974, fishing rights for Inuit women in the N.W.T. were drastically altered. Previous regulations had recognized the right of Eskimos to fish for food for themselves, their families and their dogs. Since the Regulations contained no definition of "Eskimo", women and men were treated alike. In 1974, amendments to the N.W.T. Fisheries Regulations were made by Order-in-Council, without the consultation of the national Inuit organization, Inuit Tapirisat of Canada (I.T.C.) and without public debate. The amended Regulations contained, for the first time, a definition of "Eskimo". Thereafter, special fishing rights would accrue only to: (a) males who were direct descendents of Eskimos (b) legitimate children of Eskimo males (c) illegitimate children of females who were legitimate children of Eskimo males, and (d) the wife or widow of the above. Eskimo women married to non-Eskimos would be excluded, unless they had been deserted, divorced or widowed.

The potential ramification of these amendments was far-reaching. Not only would Eskimo women married to whites be treated as non-Eskimo, but, additionally, fishing rights might be removed from their children. In essence, the amendments forced an *Indian Act* type of definition upon Inuit women; the new law was based on the assumption that intermarrying Inuit women would automatically adopt the life-style of their husbands. Since 1971, a similar definition had been found in the Narwhal Protection Regulations; all other marine mammal legislation in the Northwest Territories had treated Inuit men and women alike.

Fisherwoman Stonecut by Pitaloosee

Due to the method in which amendments were made, the Inuit were unaware of the changes until, three months later, they were discovered in the Canada Gazette. Regulations, as opposed to Acts, are made outside of Parliament and in most cases require only the authority of the Governor-in-Council (Cabinet). Regulations normally become public knowledge only after publication in the Canada Gazette. Immediate attempts were made to have the amendments removed. A letter of protest was sent to the Minister responsible for fisheries, the newly appointed Honorable Romeo LeBlanc. He was invited to attend the Annual Conference of the Inuit Tapirisat in Cambridge Bay in September, 1974, to explain and defend the changes. Neither he nor his officials appeared; nor was any reply received from him.

The amendments were discussed at length at the Annual Conference. Many male delegates criticized the changes, supporting the right of Inuit women, whether or not married to non-Inuit, to retain special fishing rights. A unanimous resolution was passed by the male-dominated conference calling for repeal of the changes in the N.W.T. Fisheries Regulations.

The resolution was forwarded to the Minister; in subsequent meetings with fisheries officials, efforts were made to have the special status of all Inuit women restored. Little headway was made until several months later, when a story by an Edmonton journalist intervened to support the Inuit position. The reporter had attended the Annual Conference in Cam-

bridge Bay, and filed a story which outlined the Inuit discussion of the Fisheries Regulations. In a circuitous way, the issue came to Cabinet attention. A reader had sent the story to the Honorable Marc Lalonde, Minister of Health and Welfare responsible for the status of women. Mr. Lalonde forwarded the matter to the Honorable Madame Sauvé, who, as Minister of the Environment held ultimate responsibility for the fisheries branch. Personally interested in the case, she sent her assistant to the I.T.C. to inquire into the Inuit position on the issue. Once the background to the amendments had been explained, the wheels of justice, for once, turned rapidly. In June, 1975, further amendments were passed to the N.W.T. Fisheries Regulations and to the Narwhal Protection Regulations, restoring Inuit women to the same position as Inuit men, regardless of marital status. Ironically, a press release at the time of the 1975 amendments heralded the alterations as a victory for women's rights, and an indication of the non-sexist philosophy of the Liberal government. This, from the same government that had authorized the discriminatory laws in 1971 and 1974!

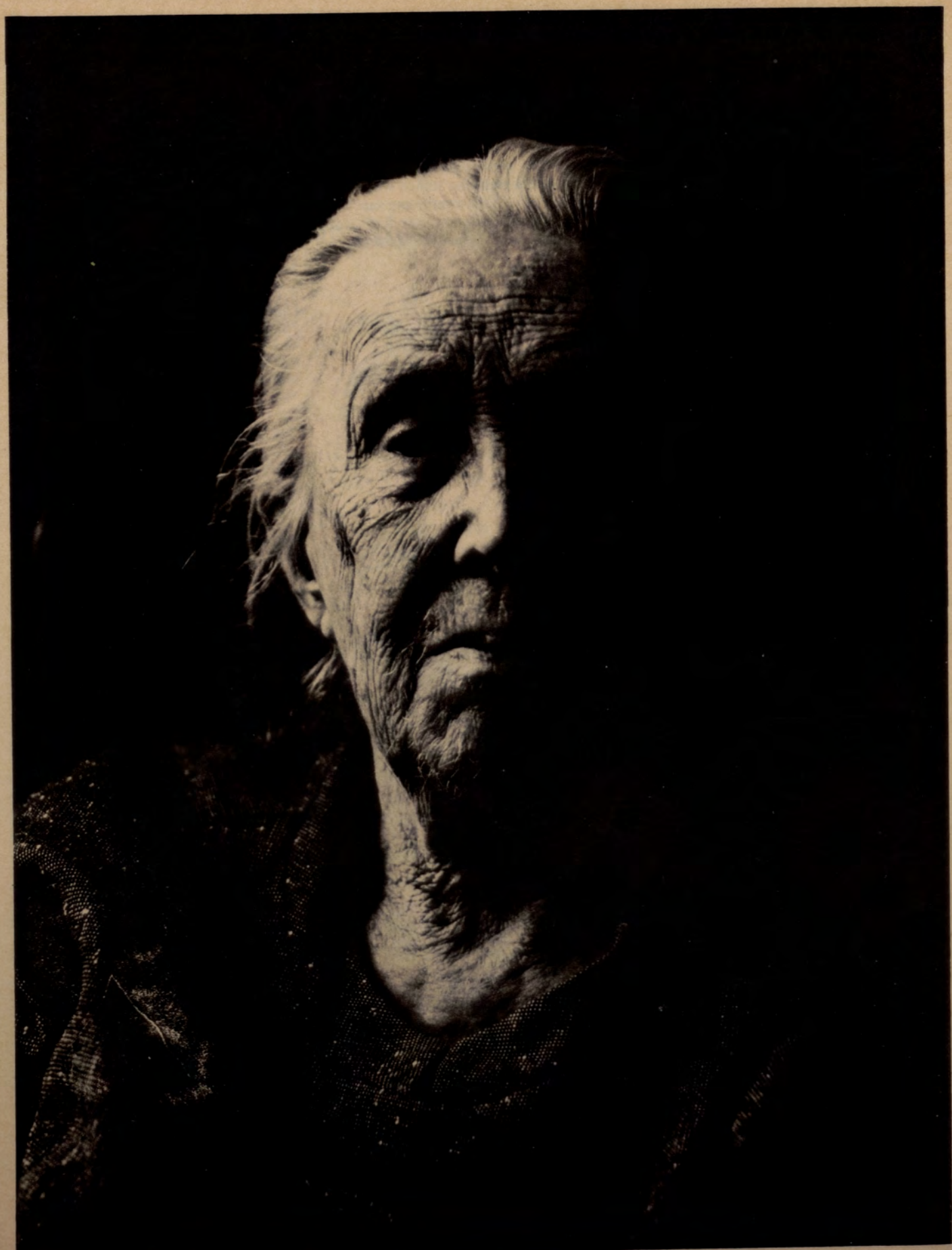
The Fisheries Regulations chronicle shows how the derogation of native women's rights can take place unnoticed. Vis à vis Inuit and Metis women, this is so because special rights are set out, for the most part, in regulations and not in Acts of Parliament. Amendments are often drafted by bureaucrats, then submitted to Cabinet where they are rubber-stamped. In the case of the Fisheries Regulations, one can speculate that Cabinet approved the 1974 amendments not with malevolent intent, but due to a failure to appreciate the effect of the changes. This example shows the desirability of enshrining special rights for all Inuit in a federal act, alterable only after public debate.

Native women in the Northwest Territories have, historically, received a more sensitive reception before the courts. The first two judges of the Supreme Court of the N.W.T., Judge Jack Sissons and Judge William Morrow, both made decisions which supported the culture of the Inuit in matters of particular significance to women. In *Re Noah's Estate*, Judge Sissons put the judicial stamp of approval upon customary Inuit marriage; this decision permitted an Inuk woman and her children to inherit the husband's estate, despite the absence of a "legal" marriage. Government lawyers had argued, in that case, that the woman was a mere concubine. In *Re Adoption of Katie*, Judge Sissons recognized customary Inuit child adoption, removing any necessity for formalized adoption through the social welfare agencies. More recently, in *Re Wah-shee*, Judge Morrow approved customary adoption by an Indian's white wife who had joined her husband's band. These decisions have gone a considerable distance in melding native customary law with the English common law which is the fundamental law of the Territories.

Historical experience, however, reaffirms the view that native women must adopt a watch-dog stance with government to ensure the continuing sanctity of their rights. In contrast to Indians, Inuit men have been supportive of the rights of Inuit women. They have retained the philosophy of their ancestors, who recognized the significant role played by women in a hunting society. One hopes that this trend will continue, and that Inuit society will not be plagued by the sexual inequalities found in southern life.

Constance Hunt is Associate Professor of Law at the University of Calgary. From 1973-5 she was legal advisor to the Inuit Tapirisat of Canada in Ottawa.

Pitaloosee is a Cape Dorset artist whose favorite theme is the mother and child. She and her husband have four children and four stepchildren.



Mrs. Dora Brown by Diana Palting

poems of time
by Anna Gerhard Immanuel

Collected Bones

Late, in the moonlit huddle
we saw ourselves
bleached, silent even in death
and a nagging noise, a neighbour's rathaired child,
showed us with her flush how only
live things live.

Late, beneath insistent noises,
seeping, like a stream underground,
we saw ourselves
pushed under time and rathaired children,
carried beneath nagging noises,
stifled, like things no longer living.

Cornered, white and polished,
a moonlit huddle, I saw your bones.
Past them old ladies walked their dogs
beside them old ladies curbed their dogs
Around them rathaired children shouted
with the strength of redhaired flushing things
ringarosing time.

Later still, the ladies, old, the breathless pugs
in stiff-haired piles, the stiff-haired children
breathless, the shouts pushed under time,
swept past us, and under you, in
bleached and boneless waters.
we closed our collars to the damp
and hurried home
where fires raged above collected bones.

Emma Bovary

and when about to die
they torment me, the cheeses uneaten,
the soul shrivels, a scrofulous thing
blistered by wantonness; a desire
for cheeses, fruit in baskets,
arranged pyramidally, as Emma
arranged hers, cleverly;

and when about to die
they roll rollicking, each peach soft
across its blanket of moss
rolling slowly downward toward that
infinite spot, Jerusalem, that
golf-hole of souls;
will they pick hers out wan
but radiant tumbling like a pink-haired child
from that basket of sorrows,
of cheeses uneaten and fruits.

April 1975

Eeii the garden is chilli red hot a steaming jungle
deep-pitched shrieks and pure full cries —
long skinny noises like tubular grasses, weeds,
high tangly brush — chi chi chi chi chi chi

the sun is up laterally a godhead's supine glow
red across, the jungle glowing over baby cries —
and hazy prowling animals, spotted, bellies to the ground

all that jungle stealth: mustard and black animals
were stuffed with flaming eyes or fanged, in coils,
in gardens at daybreak.

I will tell you what I am thinking:
i really must die.
Ah! a clue (i just snickered)
it is impolite to speak of oneself
how are you? who? your baby?
dead, your baby must die.
See, this is what I am thinking:
you, you really must die.
In time! ha, (i was just thinking)
come, let's drink to the future —
to your glowing skin and full tube lips
i can think of nothing other than life, in coils, in
gardens at daybreak.

Women in the Textile Industry

An Interview with Yvette Rousseau

interview by Michèle Baril
translated from French by Carolle Séguin

Yvette Rousseau has been the president of the Advisory Council on the Status of Women since the fall of 1976. From contacts I had had with her when she was vice-president of the Council I knew her to be a vital woman, tireless in her struggle to improve the feminine condition. However, it was not her recent appointment as Katie Cooke's successor that I wished to discuss with Yvette Rousseau, but her long-standing fight to improve the working and living conditions of women in the textile industry.

I've been a union activist for more than 30 years now, thirty years in which I've been defending women, most often without their participation and against their will. I have experienced the deplorable conditions that are found in textile mills: sixteen hour work days for $19.00 a week, assembly-line work under unbearable and unceasing tension, the race against the clock, the effort necessary to exceed the daily work quota and receive a bonus that would help us make both ends meet. I don't think Canadian women are really aware of what is going on in these factories. The working conditions of women are actually inhumane.

We are in her spacious apartment overlooking the long ice rink of the Rideau Canal. In this subzero weather, the rare die-hard skater can be seen. Warm colours, furnishings heavy with memories and gifts from friends fill the space she lives in and provide a striking contrast to the misery she is depicting.

In most mills sanitary conditions are deplorable; in some, grossly disgusting. Women have to eat in a hurry on some dusty table corner. Where there is a bathroom, it must be shared with ten people or more. No one can live, much less produce, in such conditions. Nonetheless, thousands of women do so in Canada.

I wonder about that part of Yvette Rousseau's past that has made her so familiar with the industrial environment. She has shared the same lot as the women she is describing and, from this sharing, has gone on to struggle for improvements.

I was born in a small village in the lower St. Lawrence region, near Rivière du Loup. I knew nothing of the industrial milieu until several years after I was married. In the early 50's my husband became seriously ill and was forced to retire. Teaching, a career I had undertaken before marriage, seemed too heavy a responsibility at a time when the education of my eight children was my first priority. Moreover, factory work was in closer relation to the economic realities of the time. Most women had to work in mills, for low wages, or else receive a welfare allowance. Some of them had no choice. I did, but, rather than living on welfare, I preferred to work in the mill.

In view of the clergy's historical hold on French Canada, the lessons of "morality" and "human dignity" included in the Sunday sermon, the sometimes justified, sometimes exaggerated pride of French families, and the precarious economical situation of the time, one can understand why many women chose hard work for meagre wages rather than welfare.

When I first worked in the Coaticook mill, I was a floor lady. Besides supervising the work of 73 women, I was in charge of the division of tasks, to be done according to very precise instructions, and of writing up my department's production report to be handed in to the management office. The capacity in which I was employed allowed me to study, from all angles, the question of injustices and discrimination against the women.

I could not remain insensitive to the situation. From the beginning, I helped to form a union. From being a simple member I became union secretary and soon found myself participating in negotiation discussions during which I tried to settle grievances. The supervisory work I performed allowed me inside knowledge on each trade. With this information at hand, I could

easily identify the problems and so act on behalf of my co-workers to defend their interests.

When I felt ready to operate a machine, I asked to be allowed to do so and my request was granted. The responsibilities were different. I managed, on piece-work pay rates, to obtain a slightly better salary. Above all, I was holding the same kind of job as the women I represented. I was able to bring forward the same complaints as they did. During negotiations, I knew what I was talking about when I demanded a fairer system for the division of tasks, when I rebelled against the fact that a better machine was granted to one woman rather than another for the sole reason that she had caught the boss's eye, when I denounced the fact that women were excluded from certain trades such as weaving, dye-works and pressing, when I noticed the discrepancy between the wages of men and women.

There were few women who were militant. Few among them tried to organize themselves collectively in order to solve their problems and fewer still were active in the unionizing process.

Unions have always been looked down upon and it was even more so at that time. We were accused of communism, considered as revolutionaries. We were, in fact, revolutionaries, but non-violent ones. It was the shame of my family that I, who could have been a school teacher, preferred to be a union organizer. Lack of information, fear of dismissal, lack of solidarity between working women, and unawareness of their exploitation, accounted for a low rate of participation in the struggle to improve work conditions. All these factors, which should have discouraged me, served to motivate me further in my involvement in the movement to unionize.

Most of Yvette Rousseau's work was done in Quebec. She is a former executive member of the Confederation des Syndicats Nationaux (CNS), one of the major unions in Quebec, vice president of the Canadian Federation of Textile Workers, a delegate from CNS to the Royal Commission inquiry on the status of women, and president of the Quebec Women's Federation. For several years she held information sessions on family economics and consuming. She is also the author of a book dealing with women who work the night shift in industries. I wondered what she knew about conditions in the textile industry in the rest of Canada.

I have been with the Advisory Council since its formation three years ago. I have had the opportunity to visit industries across Canada. In certain areas, Ontario for example, the salaries are more respectable, but everywhere the working conditions are inhumane. Last year I visited a factory in Zenon Park, Saskatchewan, where women had to wear masks to work because of the high dust content in the air. Who has ever heard of byssinosis? It is a pulmonary infection, also called "cotton mill fever", and it affects mostly women since it is they who constitute the majority of textile workers. This condition can degenerate into anemia and can provide hemorrhaging in women who inhale cotton dust and chemical products used in dyeing. Is it because this lung condition affects mostly women that the governments don't undertake inquiries? Who really knows the situation of the women textile workers? For example, at the Advisory Council, I am the only one to have had practical experience in the industrial environment. Public awareness of women in industry is just beginning to spread throughout Canada. But we are far from knowing enough about what is going on. One of the chief causes of the miserable situation in the textile industry is the silence that is maintained on the true working conditions of women.

I asked if changes have been brought about by the action of feminist groups and the increasing public awareness of women's problems. What concrete actions could be taken to improve the working conditions she described?

Unfortunately, I can state but few changes. The economic situation has improved but what is needed is a massive information campaign, organized conferences, and pressure brought on the government. So much time and effort is necessary to change people's mentality and attitudes. Women themselves must demand their right to more humane working conditions. That's where organizations such as the Council on the Status of Women, in Quebec, or the Advisory Council, can begin to do something. Without pressure, no government agency will take the initiative.

Yvette Rousseau's personal position is clear, her desire to act, evident. I asked if her position on the Advisory Council on the Status of Women permitted her to engage in concrete action.

The Council's aim to change articles in Canadian law that discriminate against women and to apply all recommendations made by the Royal Commission's inquiry on the status of women. However, the Council has not taken a stand on improving the working conditions of women in the textile industry.

An inquiry has been undertaken by the Advisory Council which may mark the first step in helping women textile workers improve their situation. It is a study dealing with health risks to women in the working force. I am expecting a lot from it. But I expect even greater results from the Council's project to recommend the formation of a commission on the rights of the individual, to which, I suppose, the federal government would nominate women who had a real power of inquiry and who had the authority to fine guilty parties. It is evident that industrial magnates and unions are not open to the idea of fair play, they are not willing to study the question of the fate of women in its true light. This would be one way of solving the problem. Its effect would be the elimination of strikes, a union's only weapon, albeit one that is outdated. Strikes now last so long that they solve nothing. They only serve to exhaust those who must have recourse to them.

A commission on the rights of the individual that would have the power to apply, tomorrow morning, a fine of $5,000 to an industrial magnate who maintains similar conditions to those that women have endured for many years, would be a step on the right road. Then there will be a chance of change. This commission could bring about respect for a law that would stipulate equal pay for equal work. If the working conditions of women in the textile industry did one day improve, the industries themselves would benefit from it and the living conditions of women of all levels, all across Canada, would be changed. But we must begin at the beginning, at the working level in industry, where the problem is most crucial.

I left Yvette Rousseau impressed by her determination and sincerity, and hopeful that her efforts will truly benefit all women.

Michèle Baril has worked as a journalist in Montreal and is now employed in information services in Ottawa.

Carolle Seguin is a secretary in Ottawa and is completing a B.A. in English literature at the University of Ottawa.

Yvette Rousseau will be in Edmonton, March 22, to talk about the status of women in the textile and garment industry. The presentation is open to the public and will be held in the multi-media room, Education II, University of Alberta. For more information call 432-2473.

photo by Vivian Frankel

Garment Workers: A Bleak Future?

by Terry Szlamp
White Stag photos by Valerie Boser

Whatever you're wearing right now, chances are at least one item was cut, sewn, inspected and packed in one of the five to six hundred plants in Canada that make women's clothing. Central to this industry is the machine operator, almost invariably a woman, and very often an immigrant. Her income is lower than that of most employees in manufacturing industries in Canada and rather than earning a flat hourly wage, she is paid according to the piece work system in which her earnings depend on the number of pieces she sews per hour.

Recently I visited two major clothing plants in Edmonton, Great Western Garment (G.W.G.) and White Stag. G.W.G. employs approximately 500 operators in a large factory that makes jeans and it is a sea of women that keeps the machines buzzing and the material feeding past the needle and onto the next part. Apart from a half hour lunch and two ten minute breaks during the day, the women work virtually non-stop. At White Stag, there are 100 operators working at a less frantic pace than their counterparts at G.W.G., but they are dealing with a more expensive material than denim for their line of women's quality sportswear.

Both these plants are branches of large manufacturing firms and the machine workers belong to international unions. Ann Baranyk, business manager of local 120 of the United Garment Workers of America which represents G.W.G., explained the piece work system to me. Piece work is based on a quota system in which the operator is paid at a fixed rate for each piece she sews. The piece rates are computed individually for each job by an industrial engineer who estimates what is called the "100% efficiency level" of an operator. In the band finishing operation, for example, which involves sewing up the end of the waistband once it has been sewn on and turned, the piece rate has been calculated on the basis of an industrial Pfaff machine with a speed of 4800 revolutions per minute. The 100% efficiency level in this operation has been calculated at 33.7 bundles of 20 units, or 674 units total over eight hours. Thus, a woman sewing at the 100% efficiency level in the band finishing operation would earn $3.21 per hour or $25.68 per day. Should she sew faster than the 100% efficiency level then she is paid proportionately more (at the rate of 76¢ for every bundle over 33.7); if she sews slower, then she is paid less (using the same per-bundle rate to calculate the wage). The union regulations, however, ensure the minimum payment of $2.90 per hour, 15¢ an hour above minimum wage. Slow operators, who are unable to sew enough units to earn the $2.90 per hour union rate are generally weeded out during the three month training period when they are not union members and are paid at the minimum wage. If the operator is a union member and is not earning up to the $2.90 minimum rate, she may be switched to another operation.

According to Ms. Baranyk, some sewing operations are more desireable, for the operators in these processes find it fairly easy to meet the 100% efficiency level. She puts the band finishing operation in this category, calling it an opera-

tion with a "loose" rate. In such an operation, it might be possible for the operator to earn $5.00 or $6.00 an hour, while in another operation, the woman may have difficulty earning the 100% efficiency rate of $3.21 an hour. An operator has the opportunity to bid on a better operation, if there is a vacancy. Openings are posted and the most senior operator applying for the vacancy will get the job. At G.W.G., Ms. Baranyk estimates the average wage at about $4.20 an hour, while White Stag president Al Boyd puts the hourly average wage at his plant at $4.14.

Mr. Boyd of White Stag, and Don Freeland, marketing vice-president of G.W.G. in Edmonton both told me they were quite satisfied with the piece rate structure. Said Mr. Boyd, "For the manufacturer, the piece work system is a good system. It motivates the operator to do a better performance and she can earn better wages." Mr. Freeland's contention was that life in Canada, with its minimum wage, is too easy. If everyone were on a commission type of salary or a piece-rate system, they'd "have to hustle". As it is, Canada has trouble competing with those countries that export cheaper goods.

Ms. Baranyk objects to the piece work system for two main reasons. She feels it puts the operator under constant pressure, and leads to an emphasis on quantity rather than quality. "A lot of work that comes through now is so carelessly done because they're trying to beat these quotas. If I'm making $5.00 an hour and I want to make $5.25, then $5.50, I get careless simply because it's quantity that counts. There is no incentive to produce quality work. Productivity seems to be the whole thing these days. When there are two or three operators on the same job, there is a pressure to keep up with the fastest operator."

The stress on the operator who has "mastered" her operation can be particularly acute if her routine is interrupted in some way. If her machine breaks and she is forced to move to another one, the change will affect her rate (even if the machine is the same make). The same sort of disruption can occur if the operator begins to work with a different fabric than that which she is used to. For example, this might occur if she sews a knit fabric after working for a day and a half with denim. The frequent style changes necessitated by the fashion industry are stressful for the operators for the same reason. A seemingly minor change in the operation she is used to can set a proficient machine operator's rate back considerably. When this happens Baranyk says an operator can get nervous and high strung. "We have had tears and some of them get so upset they have had to book off sick for the day."

presser at White Stag, Edmonton

. . . To understand women's powerless and disadvantaged position within the Garment Industry, it is important to examine the particular response to and participation of women workers in union activity. In general, female participation in unions reflected their more general socio-economic role as second-class workers and their strike activity usually resulted from extreme oppression in the work place. Women workers responded to conditions of superexploitation, like the lowering of wages and speed-up in production demands, but their ongoing union activity tended to be limited. . . . .

From *Women at Work: Ontario 1850-1930* by Acton, et al. Reprinted with permission from the Women's Educational Press.

Baranyk feels a better system would be one which the operator was guaranteed a wage close to the present with a bonus system for the operator who produces more than the set quota. The woman who was not especially fast, but who did a more careful job would then be guaranteed a wage above the present minimum. Union negotiators for local 120 have managed to eliminate the piece work system in the cutting centre (here employees are virtually all men) and in the distribution centre (men and women are employed here in about equal numbers). As for the machine operators, "We've been trying to get a guaranteed wage for years and years. Of course we're going to do the same thing come next contract." But there are many more machine operators than employees doing other work in garment factories and Baranyk did not know of any plants in North America where a piece work system of payment was not in effect for machine operators.

In general, the conditions of G.W.G. And White Stag probably compare favorably with those elsewhere since both plants are well-established and have long been unionized. In Montreal, where Canada's clothing industry originated 100 years ago, there are many more plants, large and small, unionized and not. Fifty-five percent of all those employed in the industry work here. Three years ago, journalist Sheila Arnopoulos investigated factory life of Montreal immigrant workers and reported shocking conditions in some of the non-union garment factories and contract shops. Employers exploited the fact that the workers did not know the Minimum Wage Act or hesitated to complain for fear of losing their jobs. The minimum wage commission was lax in enforcing the Act, so employers got away with paying far less than the required minimum. She found that the piece work system was abused by some employers who set rates so low that it was impossible for workers to meet the minimum wage. Other employers paid the minimum wage but conditions were poor. At one place workers could not leave their seats, at another, the washroom was small and unsanitary, while at yet another plant, two women were struck by their bosses during confrontations. When Arnopoulos' account of her experiences were published in the *Montreal Star*, a sewing machine operator wrote in to unload her frustrations after 25 years on the job. Although the factory at which she worked was unionized, she had suffered nervous breakdowns and claimed that respiratory diseases, use of pills and alcoholism were common among workers. She alleged that the union ignored the employees' grievances and the workers competed for "favors from the boss" to secure better paying jobs.

Even with good conditions and decent pay, pressure and fatigue are inherent in the work itself. Ann Baranyk admits with some understatement that "working on the same operation day in and day out could be very boring". Many people quit. In Montreal, Arnopoulos reported constant turnover of machine operators and thousands of vacancies. A report published by the Manitoba Fashion Industry in 1974 cites a tur-

nover rate in that province of 173% for machine operators during the first six weeks, and 67% per year for operators who have been employed for longer than six weeks. In Toronto, the annual turnover in the same time period exceeded 100%, the industry has been able to absorb the effects of such turnover because of the available workforce. Considering that there are about 90,000 jobs in the clothing industry in Canada, it is evident that the country has a rather large pool of women prepared to put up with boredom, pressure, and below average wages.

The real threat to the industry is not a lack of machine operators but competition from low-cost Asian imports. To protect the industry, import quotas on clothing were imposed December 1, 1976, restricting imports to 45% of the total Canadian market. Ostensibly, these quotas will benefit those working in the industry by protecting them from massive layoffs. Whether this is likely to happen is questionable. Import quotas were imposed to protect the textile production industry in 1971, in response to a similar crisis. Political economist Rianne Mahon, analysing developments since that time, concludes that workers in the textile manufacturing industry are in fact not likely to benefit from the government's present strategy. The strategy consists of affording temporary protection while encouraging the threatened industry to specialize in product lines that are too technologically advanced to be duplicated by the underdeveloped countries. Once modernization has taken place it is argued that jobs within the industry will be upgraded, affording higher wages and greater job security for many workers. Those laid off would be redirected into other, probably better jobs and provided with training. Mahon argues that workers who were laid off jobs in the textile factories were frequently unable to find re-employment. A few have been able to obtain upgraded jobs in modern textile factories, but the majority must continue in unskilled or semiskilled jobs or receive some form of welfare.

Mahon suspects the consequences for workers in the garment industry are likely to follow a similar pattern. How long the import quotas on clothing will remain in effect is still questionable, but when they are eventually lifted, machine operators will most likely suffer the brunt of layoffs and unemployment. Industry won't likely undertake the job of retraining the workers and the government won't commit enough resources to reach more than a few of the affected workers. So, although they are already working for lower wages, the machine operators will probably be forced into even lower paying jobs as domestics, restaurant or laundry workers, or ultimately, unemployment.

White Stag cutting area (above), machine operators (below)

Terry Szlamp is an Edmonton freelance writer and a comparative literature student at the University of Alberta.

Vivian Frankel teaches photography and freelances in Ottawa. She recently had an exhibit of photographs of women at work at the University of Ottawa.

SPEAKING "GARMENTESE"

Everywhere in Canada the garment industry depends heavily on immigrant women to run the machines. Women who, because of language difficulties and a low level of education, cannot easily find other employment. Communication between operators and management, and operators and union representatives is, at best, difficult, and sometimes requires the use of translators.

In Vancouver, the YWCA and the Vancouver Status of Women office are doing something to help these people. As a result of their study done on the problems of immigrant women in the work force, they sent a recommendation to Canada Manpower that "the Department should take an affirmative action approach to encourage pilot projects of language classes given at the place of work." Manpower agreed to cost-share a pilot program through its industrial training program budget. They next successfully solicited the involvement of Jantzen of Canada, Limited to participate in the project.

An international firm that encourages staff development and in-service training, Jantzen employs 300-400 workers in its Vancouver office, most of whom are Chinese, Italian, Portugese, Japanese, and East Indian immigrants.

The classes, lasting for six weeks, were structured around the garment trade terminology plus Jantzen relations and procedures. Sixty women had completed the course by the end of 1976.

The first class of 12 was hand-selected by Harvey Dahl, Jantzen personnel Manager. "I made the selection from that portion of staff (40%) not fluent in English," he explained. "The first 12 had no choice in the matter. At first they were apprehensive, but as classes progressed they became enthusiastic. Then I had no problems recruiting the remaining women."

One of the results found in an evaluation of the program by the Vancouver City Social Planning Council was a boost in staff morale since English trainees were better able to communicate with their co-workers. Jantzen was also pleased with the results and according to Mr. Dahl felt that they had already made back the money invested in the program because of the decreased absentee and labor turn-over rates for the program participants.

In fact Jantzen President George Crutchly and the International Ladies Garment Workers Union have been promoting the institution of similar programs in other companies and have already attracted the interest of two or three other garment companies who are planning to begin their projects later in the year.

While generally pleased with the program, Renate Shearer of the Vancouver Social Planning Council feels it is restrictive in that "it trains the women only in speaking a 'trade English'. It doesn't necessarily make her more viable in the community." Jo Mitchell of Manpower, while sympathetic to Renate's concerns, replies that "we have to go by the books. Manpower regulations are only interested in making the woman marketable."

by Dulce Oikawa

doing it yourself

by Paulette Bourgeois

I don't know why we went through the ritual because we never bought anything. She would grab my hand, tell me to stop dawdling, stop touching, and my legs would pump miserably to match her marathon strides. She would flip through racks of crinolines, lace and frill. I'd stand still, turn around, take off and put on for buxom sales-women who told me I looked Just Darling.

Mother would take a look at me, then a look at the price tag, and say —" I can make it for half the price." We always ended our shopping sprees in the fabric section where the smell of stiff cotton made my eyes run. It was a routine that repeated itself until I was ripe for my domestic role. I was taught to believe sewing was creative, economical and something EVERY woman must know.

But, is that a true picture? *Sew Business,* an American publication for retailers in the home sewing industry recently printed an editorial about women and sewing:

> The retail level of this industry will have to adapt itself to the changing role of women in our society. Home sewing must become easier for the time starved customer. New products, new methods, new instructions — all with the time factor in mind — must be developed to meet the needs of the new woman.
>
> (Sew Business, October, 1976)

Apparently the editor has a different image of women from the executives of the fabric and notion industry who, in the same publication, commented that — "The much publicized 'return to femininity' is finally here. Our greatest encouragement is that women are starting to look like women again."

This vivid fantasy that women are returning to sugar, spice and petticoats, that women will stop dressing for function and start buying silk, lace and ribbons again is a notion seller's dream.

Major pattern companies and retail fabric outlets propagate these myths through direct appeals to an outdated stereotype. Pattern books depict women as funloving, carefree, wholesome mothers of children wearing coordinated outfits. These women apparently sew between tennis matches at the club, visits to the zoo, holidays in the sunny Caribbean and coffee with the "girls".

The reality is that more women are working, fewer women are sewing and the entire home sewing industry is desperately trying to reverse a downward spiral.

"What's the point of sewing? A lot of women work because they need the money and you can buy ready-made clothes for less than it costs to make them," says Barbara Alexander, editor of a new retail magazine, Canadian Home Sewing and Needlecraft News. Nor does she see women returning to a more "feminine role". "The home sewing industry is in a slump," she says, and attributes this to the faltering economy and the increasing numbers of working women.

One reason for the decline in home sewing is the increased cost of textiles and the low cost of imported ready-made clothes from countries with minimal labor costs. Less than half the textiles (46%) sold to clothing makers and fabric outlets in this country are Canadian. The rest is imported from the Orient and the United States where mass production and bulk sales result in lower prices, with which the Canadian manufacturers cannot compete. However, the government is attempting to support the failing textile industry. Last August quotas were imposed on imported polyester and, in December, quotas were extended to imported ready-made garments.

The economy isn't the only ogre in the sewing business. Ms. Alexander says a major factor in the sewing decline is the amount of time it takes. Women today don't want to measure a pattern, pull out the sewing machine and fiddle around with darts after a full days work.

There is a paradox here. While fewer women are sewing, more women are finding time for crafts like macrame, rug hooking, weaving and needlepoint. (The Bee Hive Knitting Company which supplies yarns and kits for various crafts has increased production so substantially that its plant now operates on a 24 hour basis for the first time. There are over 32,000 looms in the province of Quebec alone.)

Barbara Alexander characterizes these crafts as "fun, quick and the kind of thing you can do in front of the television". You can't do that with sewing.

Advertisers promote the "creative" aspect of making it all by yourself, but sewing patterns allow little room for improvisation: they mimic rather than encourage creativity. Patterns are designed to copy, line for line, detail for detail the current fashion trends. The emphasis for sewers is not to create, but to duplicate. The aim is to make a wardrobe that looks store-bought. Vogue even provides labels for original designs from Dior, St. Laurent and other design noteables to help further the illusion that clothes aren't really created at home.

Although crafts may be quicker, sewing is becoming easier and less time consuming. Home sewing has changed since the days when every seam was overcast under the hawklike gaze of a home-ec teacher. Fabrics, patterns and machines have advanced with modern technology. Knits don't unravel so the finishing is minimal. Bonded fabrics eliminate the time of hemming and placing interfacing. These innovations in techniques and fabrics make sewing far less tedious. It is true that cheap, mass-produced clothes can cost less than sewing your own. Nevertheless, looking beyond cost and considering value, sewing takes on a different perspective. Cheap clothes are generally characterized by poor quality material and seams that fall apart. Clothes sewn at home mean a better fit, construction and quality fabric. They can have finer details like bound buttonholes, french seams and top stitching. Sewing is a better investment.

Sure, time is hard to find. I run around the university all day and then come home to a mountain of assignments. But with the new stretch sewing techniques, I can put together a T-shirt in half an hour and a simple dress doesn't take much longer. Shopping still means dodging over-solicitous saleswomen who say I look Just Darling in a size forty puse chiffon. The racks of clothes made for a society of Barbie Dolls always seem to go in where I go out. The simple, comfortable clothes I feel good in are always

difficult to find so I find pattern books instead. I know when I sew, that it's me, that it feels good and looks good. That's worth the effort. Sewing doesn't cost half the price anymore and anyone can attach piece A to B without a streak of creativity but cliche as it sounds — it's good to say — I made it myself!

Paulette Bourgeois is a journalism student at Carleton University in Ottawa. She has also worked as an occupational therapist.

My sewing space is a small room in the back of our house. Fabric is stacked in boxes on the floor; baskets are stuffed with thread and trims; jars are full of zippers, buttons, snaps, and hooks; and patterns absorb the empty spots. This is my own world where I grab whatever free time I can and disappear into those boxes, baskets and jars to make anything that I want. Anything!

Sewing has been a passion with me since I was very young, and I have been limited in it only by my abilities and imagination both of which have developed over the years. During the day when I am busy with other things, I plan out new projects in detail so that when I'm free, I'm ready to sew. I throw myself into a new outfit, sewing full blast, late into the night. Some of my finest projects have been made from fabric remnants and scraps that I urge and squeeze into an idea I have for them. This has an added plus of saving money for other things — like more fabric!

I have found that I will only enjoy making something if I've inspired its creation, which is why I never have been a success at sewing for a profit. Wearing something that I have made or seeing someone else wearing it is a thrill for me. My baby is an amazing inspiration as I am able to make his clothes so that they reflect "him". He doesn't have to fit into any particular style or color that is popular at the moment and he doesn't have to come off a rack. In fact, that applies to any outfit I've made aside from one unexpected experience. I made a dress for myself to start high school, and arrived the first day to find a friend wearing the same dress as I was! I think some comments about good taste, etc., were passed.

My enthusiasm and pleasure in sewing remain undiminished (inspite of higher fabric and notions costs), and I continue to sew because I love it. Nothing gives me greater satisfaction and pride than my sewing especially because it has a feel and a touch that comes from the love with which it was made.

Kathy Shute

Kathy Shute is a graduate of the University of Alberta School of Nursing and is currently involved in publishing in Edmonton.

But even sewing can't be too creative, too individual according to the advice offered to one pattern manufacturer. His patterns required some intelligence to follow, left quite a lot of room for individual expression, and the manufacturer was in trouble for that very reason; his patterns implied that a woman "would know what she likes and would probably have definite ideas." He was advised to widen this "far too limited fashion personality" and get one with "fashion conformity" — appeal to the "fashion-insecure woman," "the conformist element in fashion," who feels "it is not smart to be dressed too differently." For, of course, the manufacturer's problem was not to satisfy woman's need for individuality, for expression or creativity, but to sell more patterns — which is better done by building conformity.

Reprinted from *The Feminine Mystique* by Betty Friedan with permission from the publishers W.W. Norton & Company.

It upsets me when women ask — is it in fashion? A woman should be able to choose what she likes, what she feels comfortable in.

Women's fashions have been tied up in women's relationship with men. We were told — this is what you should wear to make HIM look good, to make HIM feel fine.

Now you see people in the street who are expressing themselves with clothing. People buy clothes from second-hand stores. You see more clothes that are original designs.

Some women come into my store and they want help coordinating their wardrobe. If they don't sew for themselves, or someone doesn't sew for them, then coordination is their last chance for creativity.

Many women want to change their image and instead of deciding what suits their taste, their personality, they follow the fashion trends.

It's too bad. They move from one mold right into another, but then men have been liberated for years and they're still wearing three piece suits.

Penny Faulkner, owner of Potbelly Boutique and Ontario clothes designer in an interview by Paulette Bourgeois.

It was economics, not any particular creative urge, that got me involved in sewing my own clothes. The fact was, at least in the 60's, you could sew a dress for half the price of one you bought.

And sew I did, starting with misshappen shifts in gawdy prints and eventually becoming competent enough to sew skirts, dresses and shirts I could wear in public. Whenever there was a big occasion, I searched out pattern and material and spent the three weeks prior sewing something new. It became part of the process after a while; the sewing of the new dress as important as the event itself.

Consistently, I chose simple patterns and uncomplicated, inexpensive fabrics for two reasons. First of all, I am basically lazy and, second, I am even-more-basically cheap. I found sewing simple items worked well with both of these traits.

But time was passing and I was becoming involved in a career. And when the big, office Christmas party approached, I decided it was time to move out of the "make-it-tonight" patterns and $1.49 a yard fabric, and into something a little more sophisticated.

I reached for the Vogue pattern book and selected an elegant, flowing sort of dress. Then, I chose a shiney, jersey fabric at $6.00 a yard. The total price, with pattern, zipper, thread, fabric, hooks and seam binding, came to about $35.00.

Ever so carefully, I laid out and cut the fabric. I even read the pattern directions before doing anything. Step by step I assembled my creation but, somewhere, I must have gotten my steps crossed. Rather than go into the painful details, I'll just say I blew it. I tried to take it apart, but my efforts only left little holes in the fabric.

I wadded up the mass of jersey, complete with pattern, zipper, thread, et cetera, and took it all to the Goodwill barrel in the basement of the apartment building. I knew that somewhere, sometime, a woman would pick up the jersey monstrosity and turn it into a matched set of oven mitts.

As for me, I cried, and resolved to stick to the "make-it-tonight" patterns and the $1.49 fabric. As for the party, later that week I quietly bought a $40 dress from the Bay.

Valerie Boser

Valerie Boser is a student in the journalism program at Grant MacEwan Community College. She has done some freelance work for CBC radio in Edmonton.

A First-hand Look at Second-hand Clothes

by Penny Gudgeon
illustration by Toti Draginda

She's not very old — in her thirties, maybe — with a couple of grimy, sad-eyed kids trailing behind her as she hunts a little desperately through bins and racks and piles of things that weren't good enough for somebody else: Or, she's a pensioner, and her only hope of owning a warm coat for the winter lies in the fluorescent shabbiness of the Salvation Army Store.

This is the kind of person who buys secondhand clothes, right? Poor, downtrodden, undiscriminating? Wrong.

Secondhand clothing stores are proliferating all over the country, and it's not because we've turned into a population of welfare recipients.

In the last few years, used clothes have gained a respectability they never had before, and a lot of it is due to our fascination in the seventies with the padded shoulders and ankle strap shoes and lace camisoles of the past. Suddenly, yesterday's mangy muskrat jacket or itchy pink tulle formal becomes the fashion find of today, not to mention that cotton sundress your mother finally threw out in 1963. Jean Tait is in charge of women's clothes at Ottawa's Superfluity Shop, a secondhand store which has been in business for charity for thirty years. She says the store gets all kinds of customers these days. "Some even come in their mink coats," she laughs.

It used to be that if you wanted old clothes (and who wanted old clothes?) your only choice was to head down to the Salvation Army, or a similar charitable organization staffed by kindly volunteers, and sort through holey socks and musty sweaters donated by people who could afford better things for themselves. Not so today. The trappings of the past have become popular enough to considerably broaden the clientele of the old thrift stores, and give rise to a new, highclass type of secondhand outlet: the "antique" clothing shop. Herein you find clothing and accessories from a specific fashion period, carefully hung among potted palms and daguerreotypes of someone's great-grandparents. And then there are stores which blend the old and the new, like Ottawa's Rhapsody Rag Market, where you can buy brand new Afghani dresses in front, or step to the rear to rummage among old corduroys and army greatcoats and velvet teagowns.

"Ten years ago, people weren't wearing secondhand clothes," says Avis Partridge, co-owner of Wild Things in Ottawa. The store carries pre-1930 clothing, and in the six years she's owned it, Ms. Partridge says there has been a steady increase in the number of women who like the idea of wearing old things, and who appreciate the painstaking workmanship that has gone into them.

Julie Griffith of Rhapsody Rag Market agrees that secondhand clothing has become very popular in the last few years, mainly because it's cheap. Searching for something unique yet useable in a secondhand store is like treasure hunting, and, once found, there is that mysterious element of who-wore-it-before? That feeds the imagination and invests a particular dress or coat with more character than its Simpsons-Sears counterpart could ever begin to possess.

The growing availability and popularity of secondhand clothes means that women who want to dress creatively have an alternative to shopping in the department store wasteland. But it takes time and patience to shop around for a used garment with potential. The used clothing business is no different from many others in that the market can offer as many inferior items as things of real value. It might take a lot of looking to find the sweater that doesn't look as if it, well, came from the Salvation Army, or that fur jacket without too many bald spots.

The fabric and its condition should be major considerations when you're in the market for something old. Used clothes may cost a lot less than new ones, but why end up with a closet full of shredding silk just because it was cheap? Satins and chiffons also disintegrate with time, and it's wise to stay clear of fur coats that look worn around the collar, armpits and shoulders. If the fur is dry or brittle, the coat won't last long. Old woollens and cottons are the most durable of fabrics, and are all the more popular for being natural fibres, unlike the synthetics of today — like fresh vegetables vs. canned, says Ms. Griffith.

Secondhand clothes dealers agree that someone's always overcharging, and prices vary so much it's wise to shop around. The pricing of clothes depends on factors such as the quality of the fabric, how old the garment is, what kind of condition it's in, how stylish it happens to be, by today's standards and therefore how much in demand it is. Ms. Tait at the Superfluity Shop says fur coats are extremely popular these days, and a raccoon coat will sell within hours regardless of its price.

Then, too, prices depend on how great the store's overheads are. Prices at thrift stores are generally substantially lower than

Everything is artificial these days, it seems to me. Silks and people have gone out of style, or no one can afford them anymore.
From **The Stone Angel** by Margaret Laurence

in specialized antique clothing shops, attractively decorated. There you pay more for the atmosphere, and for clothes that have been cleaned and repaired. Thrift stores keep their prices down by selling items which have been donated, and sometimes need buttons replaced and seams stitched. You may find a fur coat there for $5, or a sweater for 50c.

Many dealers buy their goods from a variety of sources. Linda Ducharme, owner of Flash Cadillac in Ottawa, began selling used clothes last August. She buys them by the bale from secondhand distributors in the United States, and in accordance with health regulations, the clothes are cleaned and fumigated before being brought into Canada. Everything needs ironing, she says, and some items require mending, but buying in bulk enables her to sell dresses at $1 apiece.

Avis Partridge of Wild Things takes pride in handpicking her stock at private sales and auctions, then washing and repairing each garment before offering it for sale. In common with other stores Wild Things accepts clothes brought in by private individuals, and will sell them on a consignment basis.

Are secondhand clothes for everybody? Ms. Partridge explains that feeling good in used or antique clothing is a matter of being comfortable with the style, and enjoying the fact that your wardrobe has a past. A lot of women might feel downright foolish sporting someone else's castoffs, and blue jeans will always beat out Granny's beaded flapper dress for comfort. The option at least, is open to us.

Penny Gudgeon is a journalism student at Carleton in Ottawa.

Toti Draginda studied art in Canada and London, England, and she is now doing freelance advertising work. A series of her etchings was featured in the February/March 1976 issue of Branching Out.

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CULTURE


MOVIES

Maureen O'Hara With Pimples

by Ruth Rifka
illustration by Barbara Hartmann

Late summer, 1942.

My first job — Aunt Fanny was paying me real money for doing practically nothing. Benjie and Irving were three and two, and she was pregnant again. I saved her sanity, she told me, coming every day for those two weeks.

I didn't feel right taking so much — ten dollars a week. I ate her candy and cheesecake and the steady supply of blueberry buns and chocolate cake Uncle Eddie brought home from Health Bakery, and all I had to do was chase the kids, or play with them out in the yard, or drag them places.

Whenever I got in the door, Aunt Fanny expelled a sigh of relief similar to when she watched at the window for Mrs. Mac, her dipsy cleaning woman. Mrs. Mac, always late, trod up the street wearing a different fruit-festooned straw hat each week; 'My ladies are so good to me.' Mrs. Mac dutifully scrubbed, but the bedrooms kept their sour left-over smell of diapers. Benjie still soiled and wet hemself, and Irving was untrainable.

Never having had a sister or brother, I enjoyed the visit each day. For twelve, I was very important — one of the 'employed' but I hated walking down Palmerston, wide boulevard of the Jewish rich, that foreign country upon which I intruded.

Somehow I got to talking to the girl next door, Natalie, a child model and actress on the C.B.C. When I made overtures towards friendship, she studied my green nubby wool coat, hand-me-down from Aunt Sara, and the knit suit, another hand-me-down, from Aunt Fanny. In Natalie's perfect face, wrinkled with distaste, I read back my image with a thud of self-recognition. The mature bulk of sweater and coat squared off my already substantial shoulders, wider than Joan Crawford's.

With an air of urgency, Natalie gave an analysis of my potential. "Why don't you do something with yourself! Look at you! You look . . . . . thirty!"

And she dismissed me with a toss of her feather-cut blue-black curls. Naturally, she was prepared for this cool August day with a pretty cashmere sweater and skirt in the newest fall colours, a lovely combination of plums and greens and purples.

I felt my sweat mingling with the musty perfumes of Aunt Fanny and Aunt Sara.

Then seemingly thinking over her meanness, Natalie called, as I climbed the steps to their duplex, "You're really not so bad, you know. You look like Maureen O'Hara . . . . with pimples."

Now, entering their apartment, I head for the tall mirror lining the cupboard door and study that awkward reflection; the horrid green coat which makes my bosom look matronly, the hideous length — silly with my loafers.

Uncle Eddie still hasn't gone to the office and I glimpse him behind me. There is annoyance in his eyes. What have I done, I wonder. I pick up the drift of his going into their bedroom, kissing my aunt goodbye, and his coldly angry comment, "That sister of yours. What is she trying to do to the kid?"

There continues a critical murmur about my mother, and the way she sends me out in the world.

"Well, for _____, don't hand down any more of your shmahtas to her. Give them to rummage!"

"The kids are in the back, Elizabeth" my uncle informs me, as if I couldn't hear the din.

I go into their bedroom first. My poor Aunt Fanny lies there, drinking some tea. Her engorged breasts, which swell incredibly year by year, are blue-veined, sprawling all over the covers. Between sips she cries distractedly in rhythm with every fresh shout from the fenced-in yard. A six-foot chain-link fence and a padlocked gate; yet Benjie has managed to escape, once by burrowing under the fence, and once by climbing over, falling on the cement walk next door, and breaking an arm.

Poor Aunt Fanny, and soon there will be another of these smelly kids who drives her crazy. She says it herself, over and over.

"You're driving me crazy!" she screams until she has no voice. "You brats! You monsters! Animals!"

"I'll go out to them, Aunt Fanny."

She kisses me. "I'll never forget you for this, Liz, you'll see, you won't be sorry. I'll make it up to you one day."

"Do you want me to clean up first?"

The place is unbelievable. Not one square inch has escaped. In the living room are two scrub brushes, a pail, and the results of their joint efforts, Benjie's and Irving's. Soapy water is splashed everywhere.

Splashed on the sofa, with it cushions perched upon filings of toast rinds, gum wrappers and gum, candies and apple cores which Benjie and Irving secrete deep in the caverns of the sofa.

They wanted to help clean. The kitchen is a sticky trail of jam and cocoa and dried bits of egg. The table has glasses knocked over, orange juice spilling down the oilcloth to the floor. A kind of haze lingers; the daily familiar smell of burnt toast, because Benjie fools with the toaster dial.

"No thank you, Lizzie darling. All I ask is for you to take them away. Here's some money. Take them to the corner show to see "How Green Was My Valley". For the whole afternoon. The whole day."

"Ten dollars! That's too much." (A waitress makes fifteen dollars a week, if she's lucky.)

"You'll bring back what you don't need. Believe me it's cheap at twice the price. It's better than a sanitorium or nine ninety-nine Queen."

So I go out to the yard. They come running over and hug me. Phew! They reek of dried piss. Should I change them?

"Are you clean? Mummy gave me a lot of money and we're going out to have the best time. You can have whatever you want for lunch. And we're going to a movie. But you have to have clean pants before we can go."

"We clean. We clean. Daddy clean us." Benjie whistles through his snot-encrusted nose.

Uncle Eddie must have put on their britches from the day before, and that's what smells. Uncle Eddie never gets nervous. First thing in the morning he wraps a collection of leather thongs and straps about his arms, and says his prayers. Then he makes breakfast for the boys.

He's good at everything. Making money on Spadina Avenue. Pulling the apartment together like a jig-saw puzzle every night. And from what I've been able to gather, he gets one thing from this whole arrangement — 'it'. The 'it' that my aunts and my mother don't seem to shout any songs about. The 'it' for which my aunt sort of sings for her supper, producing progeny, and to my mind, living a thoroughly miserable purposeless life. But she is always so sorry for Yetta, Uncle Eddie's sister, for whom the whole family ploughs heaven and earth to find a husband, because she is twenty-four already. And prospects don't look good at all. 'It' and marriage are dismal, it seems, but old maidhood unbearable, for that means ostracism from the group. But Yetta has a good job now, and beautiful clothes, and goes to concerts and plays, and does whatever she wants.

With one hand I open the gate, while holding onto both of their jackets, then I resume a steel grip on their wrists. I know better than to trust Benjie, even with his one arm in a sling.

I feel sort of proud of them as I walk them down to College Street. Irving is chubbily beautiful, with blond curls, yet to be cut. Everyone gasps in admiration. I guess that's why Irving hasn't bothered learning to talk yet; it isn't necessary. Benjie is very clever. He has to be. His thin nose steadily drips, and his teeth never stop grinding, sleeping or awake. He's always moving. Always hungry. He never gets filled up, but he's half the size of Irving.

Benjie reaches up, puts his hand on my bosom. "You should get married. Your tits like mummy's."

I flush because of this little snot face. Little weasel puss. A horrified surge of self-dislike. How could I look so-ugh-old?

The morning passes as usual. I am the milk wagon pulled by these two runaway horses. Finally, they get wound down. After lunch we enter the theatre, which has two nurses on duty because of the great crowds.

"How Green Was My Valley" has been playing for weeks. And it's so wonderful; the green lushness, and the people. I feel I've known them all my life. I share in the hard life of the miners in their snug little valley. They are a small world enclosed there. And the enemy is poverty, which is why Walter Pidgeon, the preacher, won't marry Maureen O'Hara, because he doesn't want to subject her to the hard life. With her looks, she can get a rich man.

I am Maureen O'Hara. I am her. Yes, I do look like her. That snotty Natalie isn't the only one who's said so. If only I didn't have these pimples, because Maureen O'Hara's skin is like peach velvet. But my eyes are as green as hers. And my hair as red.

I can hardly believe my luck. Benjie and Irving have been good; eating the stacks of chocolate bars and popcorn, and letting the nurse take them to the toilet every once in a while, as I lose myself in the movie.

But now Benjie, that weasel, is acting up. "I wantta go home," he whistles through the congestion of green snot.

"No. It'll be over in a few minutes. Let me see the ending."

"I wanntttaaa go home!" Benjie insists. Irving cries in wordless unison, holding his stomach. Little animal! Has to get sick now.

The nurse and usher come marching down the aisle threateningly. Now I'll never know if Walter Pidgeon changes his mind and comes to Maureen O'Hara's rescue. She's so unhappy without him, married to the rich man she doesn't love. Maybe they'll run away together. Oh, it can't end this way. Not in the same 'it' of everyone else's life. Not *their* grand passion. Their 'true love'.

"Oh let me see the ending!" I beg Benjie.

"NO!"

I pull them up the aisle; let their rotten arms get yanked from the sockets!

And out into the daylight, where the sun meets my puffed eyes. I drag them home, frightening them, I guess, because they wet themselves in unison. The hot yellow fluid gushes down their britches and into their high-laced boots; I can hear it sourly slushing.

I pull forward, still not shaken out of the newly-enlarged reality of the movie. The poignancy of The Valley is closer than these sticky hands, Benjie's whistling through his nose, his relentless grinding together of teeth, and Irving's wails of indigestion. While this magic moment lasts, not all the smells and excretions and sounds which Irving and Benjie are able to produce together can bind me.

This time, I am the runaway horse, like Maureen O'Hara when she still had spirit.

Ruth Rifka has freelanced for various Toronto newspapers. Her poetry has been presented on C.B.C. Anthology and appeared in the Chronicle Review and Contact Magazine. Other short stories will appear soon in Fiddlehead and Room of One's Own.

Portraits

by Violet Owen

Violet Owen graduated from the Ontario College of Art in 1953. Her work has been exhibited in various galleries in Canada and abroad and is in a number of public collections.

Eleanor Verbicky

a movie-dream-scene and you are the star

scene one and only: the hero (tragic) strolls
calmly to my door and without knocking
enters
his hungry ego leashed leads him sniffing
through the rooms the camera
zooms in on the ego sweating panting
follows leash to hand and hero for a
close-up of his faceless face then
leaves them in the bedroom pans the empty
walls takes us to the kitchen just in time to
see love leaving by the back door slam
the ego howls the kitchen fades to
grey

Become Past Tense

You have forced his presence
into the past

he is the past tense
he is nostalgia, he

is walking toward you,
his smile defies
your wish
to dismiss him

past tense
threatens
advances
becomes
present tension

he is the past tense
he is nostalgia, his
eyes are green

Images For Sale

How Eaton's Saw Us

by Anne Lambert

Did you grow up reading the pages of Seventeen Magazine? Ladies Home Journal? Chatelaine? Eaton's Christmas Wish Book? I did. A steady diet of that kind of thing can really affect you. I still find myself paging through fashions in every catalogue, newspaper supplement, and consumer magazine stuffed into my mail box. A guilty confession for a struggling feminist.

I decided I had to know more about what it is that these mass merchandising magazines have been saying to and about women, and, as I usually do, I had to start right at the beginning — or almost.

My target was Eaton's Catalogue, which began publication in the 1880's and has probably influenced more Canadian females than all our feminist publications combined and multiplied by thousands. For many isolated women it was not only a source for merchandise but an important link to the outside world. The images contained within its pages fed the dreams and aspirations of the women who eagerly awaited its seasonal arrival.

As I poured over ninety years of Eaton's Catalogues I began to see changes in the way women were portrayed in pictures and, perhaps even more importantly, in words.

In the early catalogues, emphasis was placed on good quality and low cost. The consumer was described as knowledgeable, and quite capable of making her own decisions based on facts.

> One of the pleasures in dealing in ladies underwear comes from the fact that you are just as expert judges of it as we are. You are our real competitors. You furnish our standards. If ours is as good as

yours we win your trade, because ours cost less. Our task is to get the makers up to your standard and to get you to judge when they are up.

Rather than telling the customer what was current, the catalogue often left fashion choices to the customer.

Absolutely no better millinery work and materials the country over, and you can order such things by mail . . . write understandably about just what is wanted, your personal appearance, and give an idea of price. We can do anything we're told to do, especially when the instructions are plain and definite.

Most merchandise in the early issues was described in straightforward language with little attempt to feed the ego of the consumer. Fat and age were treated as inevitable, with descriptions such as "Old Ladies Fat Ankle Boots" and "Old Ladies Special". Drawings and photographs showed frankly fat or older models.

In the 1920's this began to change radically as euphemisms were developed and promises were made for the slenderizing or youthful qualities of clothing. "Slenderizing New Model for Large Women", "Fuller Figure Flattery", "Maturity With Charm To Minimize A Stately Figure". Models began to be consistently young and slim no matter what the size range of the garment. By the 1960's one quarter of all the words in the catalogue used to describe women's clothing were promising youth or slenderness.

realistic treatment of age, 1900

before euphemisms - 1914

glorification of slimness - 1945 (above), 1965 (left)

consumer ads 1952 (above) 1913 (below)

Words suggesting a feminine, dependant, clinging vine image were never used in the early catalogues, but with the twentieth century came such words as "dainty", "sweet", "feminine", "demure", "fragile", "delicate", and "tiny". During World War II, when women were taking on new responsibilities in a formerly male work force, these words were especially obvious, presumably to capitalize on women's insecurities surrounding their femininity in new roles. By the 1970's the quantity of these kinds of words was smaller but the words became more cloying: "sweetie", "dinky", "cutie", "softy", "cuddly", "flighty", and "peek-a-boo".

World War II also seemed to be a time for cheerful words in the catalogue: "gay", "peppy", "jolly", "cheery", "frisky", "brisk", "zesty", "jaunty", and "spirited". At a time when many women were suffering personal loss and anxiety from the war, the suggestion that the purchase of a garment would provide a happy state of mind was a successful selling technique.

In the 50's and 60's these cheerful words were extensively used in the housedress section: "The mornings will feel brighter when you slip into this"; "A

"bright and cheerful" - 1932

fat ankle boots - 1900

well finished apron in gay colors that will pep you up for the whole day". It seemed that not only the war was depressing.

The maternity section was a prime spot for cheerful words promising youth and euphemisms stressing concealment: "Bound to make your spirits soar everytime you put it on", "For mothers in waiting — the gay deceivers", "Concealing Anticipation Dresses". Because the specialized maternity dress was not developed until after the catalogue illustrations lost their frankness, they were always shown on very young models with no suggestion at all of a pregnant body.

Although women were often described in the many activities for which they might wear a garment, work outside the home was rarely one of them. Only during World War II did salaried work get recognition as a desirable image for women who were "working to win". If work were mentioned in describing the suitability of a dress, it was always in combination with other more "acceptable" activities: "for the office and on into date time," "smart on the job and sensible at home".

From the very beginning of the catalogue, women's role as a consumer was emphasized. Women were enticed to buy articles by suggesting that such a purchase would prove them to be good bargain hunters: "for wise mothers", "for careful shoppers". For many women this may have been their only feeling of monetary contribution to the family, especially after urbanization and improvements in farming resulted in less recognizably valuable work for women.

The words of Eaton's Catalogue became not only a way of describing goods for sale, but of selling an image, whether it be youth, slenderness, femininity, happiness, or wise housewifery. Although these images created by the catalogue may not have reflected the real women of Canada, they did provide an ideal which influenced the self-image of many readers.

An evaluation of the images which were extolled in the catalogue at different time periods gave me a new understanding of the women of the time and the popular culture in which they existed and an awareness of the images of women used by today's mass merchandizing media.

A good example of this is the exploitation of the women's movement by many large advertising campaigns. They are still selling the same goods but associating it with their image of a "liberated woman". The "you've come a long way baby" smoker and the "I'm worth it" hair dye are both acceptable and saleable images in 1977, just as the cheerful housedress wearer was in the 1950's.

My trek through the pages of Eaton's Catalogue has made me acutely aware of words in all advertising copy relating to women. I can not glance past the ads in the newspaper without mentally isolating each word and the image it conveys. If I am going to be sold an image by the image makers, at least I am going to know it. I just wish they still sold fat ankle boots.

Anne Lambert did graduate work in the history of costume and is now an assistant professor in the Faculty of Home Economics at the University of Alberta. She helped found the Edmonton group Options for Women in 1972 and is now a member of its executive.


(270). The "Marloe" hose supporter, same style as the "Hook-on" with different clasp, in cotton, 35c pair; in cotton frilled elastic, assorted colors, 25c pair; in silk frilled elastic, 50c, 75c, $1.00 pair.

The "Natural Body" Brace—C270. The Natural Body Brace brings relief and cure to sufferers at a much smaller expense than ordinary treatment. The small sum which it costs saves many hundreds of dollars, to say nothing of bringing health and happiness, which cannot be gained in any other way.

The Natural Body Brace is a rational cure for the ills of womankind. The changes and conditions to which a woman is subjected are more than liable to cause weakness and organic displacements which can only be remedied by the strengthening influence of a natural, uplifting support applied where it is needed.

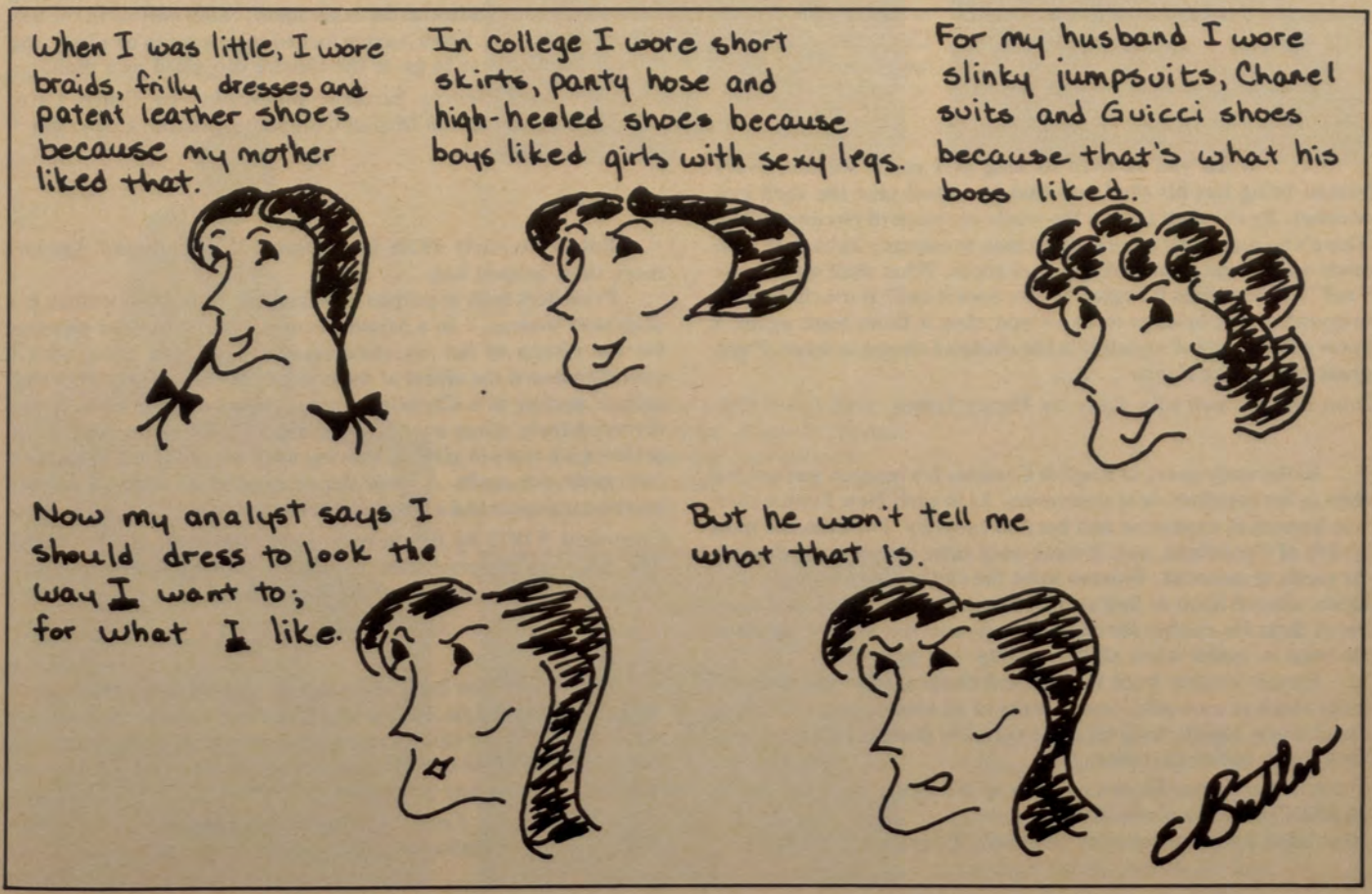
Price, $6.00.

It has the unqualified endorsement of the best of the medical profession, and enthusiastic praise from thousands it has cured.

body brace for health purposes, 1900 (above) modern equivalent for cosmetic purposes (left)

AN EATON'S BRIDE, 1916

For many years, rural people in the prairies were dependent upon the Eaton's catalogue for practically everything — clothing, tools, machinery, household furniture, even luxuries. Flora Houle was living in Lamoureux, Alberta when she married J.P. Renaud, a teacher at Fort Saskatchewan, Alberta. The wedding took place November 16, 1916, and the 24-year-old bride chose her complete ensemble from the Eaton's Fall and Winter catalogue. Flora's gown cost $11.95, her white shoes, $1.50, her corset, $1.00 and her petticoat, $1.50. The watch she is wearing was a wedding gift from her husband.



Fashion Miscellany

Platform shoes
hold me up

The wind
wrenches aside my new curls
slobbers at my throat

I wear only
This Spring's Skinny Thins

The assault is soon accomplished

I shiver in your filthy City
Where are the Looks that were supposed to keep me warm?

Patricia Friars

On Mary Pickford:

. . . Her image began encroaching on her life. Mary who loved fine clothes and fashionable accessories, found that for personal appearances and photographs she needed a double wardrobe: her own sophisticated apparel and the youthful, plain and styleless dresses her fans expected her to wear.

from *Popcorn Venus* by Marjorie Rosen. Copyright © 1973. Reprinted by permission of Coward, McCann and Geoghegan, Inc.

". . . When you've lived as long as I you'll see that every human being has his shell and that you must take the shell into account. By the shell I mean the whole envelope of circumstances. There's no such thing as an isolated man or woman; we're each of us made up of some cluster of appurtenances. What shall we call our "self"? Where does it begin? Where does it end? It overflows into everything that belongs to us — and then it flows back again. I know a large part of myself is in the clothes I choose to wear. I've a great respect for *things* . . . . .

from *The Portrait of a Lady* by Henry James

In the early years in English Canada, few women worked full time as dressmakers or seamstresses. As in early New France cloth was imported, expensive and hard to come by. For even the most stylish of Canadians, new dresses were rare, since they took up to 30 yards of material. Women wore the clothes they brought with them; altered them to imitate more recent styles if they had time; recut them for clothes for the children; and finally used the cloth for rugs or quilts when all wearability was gone . . . .

Poorer women wore secondhand clothes, (servants traditionally received cast-offs), and women of all classes, particularly in rural areas, simply took off their valuable dresses and worked in their linen under-chemises.

From *Never Done: Three Centuries of Women's Work in Canada* by the Corrective Collective.
Reprinted by permission of Women's Educational Press.

As a minor gesture towards emancipation Aurore dressed in men's clothes; this, however, was less singular than it sounds. Many women did so in her day. It was often the only way to overcome the difficulties of travel, or of walking on unpaved streets. In Aurore's case it was necessary economy. Women's skirts were a hazard in the Paris streets of a hundred years ago. "I was like a ship on the ice, my thin shoes torn in two days, the high heels made me stumble. I never learned to raise my skirts properly. I got dirty, tired, caught cold, and saw with despair how my clothes quickly deteriorated and my velvet hats were ruined by every shower."from *Romantic Rebel: The Life and Times of George Sand* by Felizia Seyd, published by Viking Press.

The simplest way to see a play or an opera was to avoid the hideously expensive boxes and to choose the parterre (or pit) — the downstairs portion of the theatre where the spectators either stood or sat on benches. For the relatively cheap price of two and a half francs, fifty any *man* who wanted to could thus obtain standing room admission. Ladies on the other hand, could only sit in the less plebian boxes . . . . Since Aurore lacked the means to be a lady, the obvious solution was to go to the theatre disguised as a man.

From the book *George Sand: A Biography,* by Curtis Cate, published by Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston. Copyright © 1975 by Curtis Cate.

But in the early 1920s few national issues aroused America more than bobbed hair . . . .

Preachers took to pulpits to warn that "a bobbed woman is a disgraced woman." In a Missouri courtroom, a mother pleading for the return of her six children who had been living with a guardian heard the oldest of them testify to the judge: "We don't believe mother is a Christian woman. She bobs her hair." Men divorced their wives over bobbed hair. Other males banded together with vows to give up shaving until wives agreed to let their hair grow out again. A large department store fired all bobbed haired employees and a hospital discharged bobbed haired nurses.

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"You can either buy clothes or buy pictures," Gertrude Stein said. "It's that simple. No one who is not very rich can do both. Pay no attention to your clothes and no attention at all to the mode, and buy your clothes for comfort and durability, and you will have the clothes money to buy pictures."

from *A Moveable Feast* by Ernest Hemingway.
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New Looks for Spring!

photos by Cherie Westmoreland

At last! This spring, designers have tuned right in to your active, varied life. With a few quick changes and the *right* accessories, you can be as individual as you dare and still have the right-now styling that puts you ahead of the rest!

Up early, Kris beats the crowds to shopping. Passers-by can't help but admire her crisp morning-denim pants, lively socks, and up-to-the-minute T-shirt. An imported scarf by Mr. Sally, $10, adds the special touch of *luxe* you love, even when you're feeling casual. A boldly coloured jacket pulls the whole mood together and — bonus! — keeps Kris snuggy-warm!

Later, the same outfit takes Kris for a walk by the river. A quick change in the length of her ever-so-versatile pants and she is in tune with the quieter mood of the valley.

Kris loves these stylish but sturdy walking shoes in earth-brown leather by Walkers, $40, pepped up with interchangeable laces by Mood-Feelers, $2 per pair. This morning she has chosen a subtle mud-hued lace.

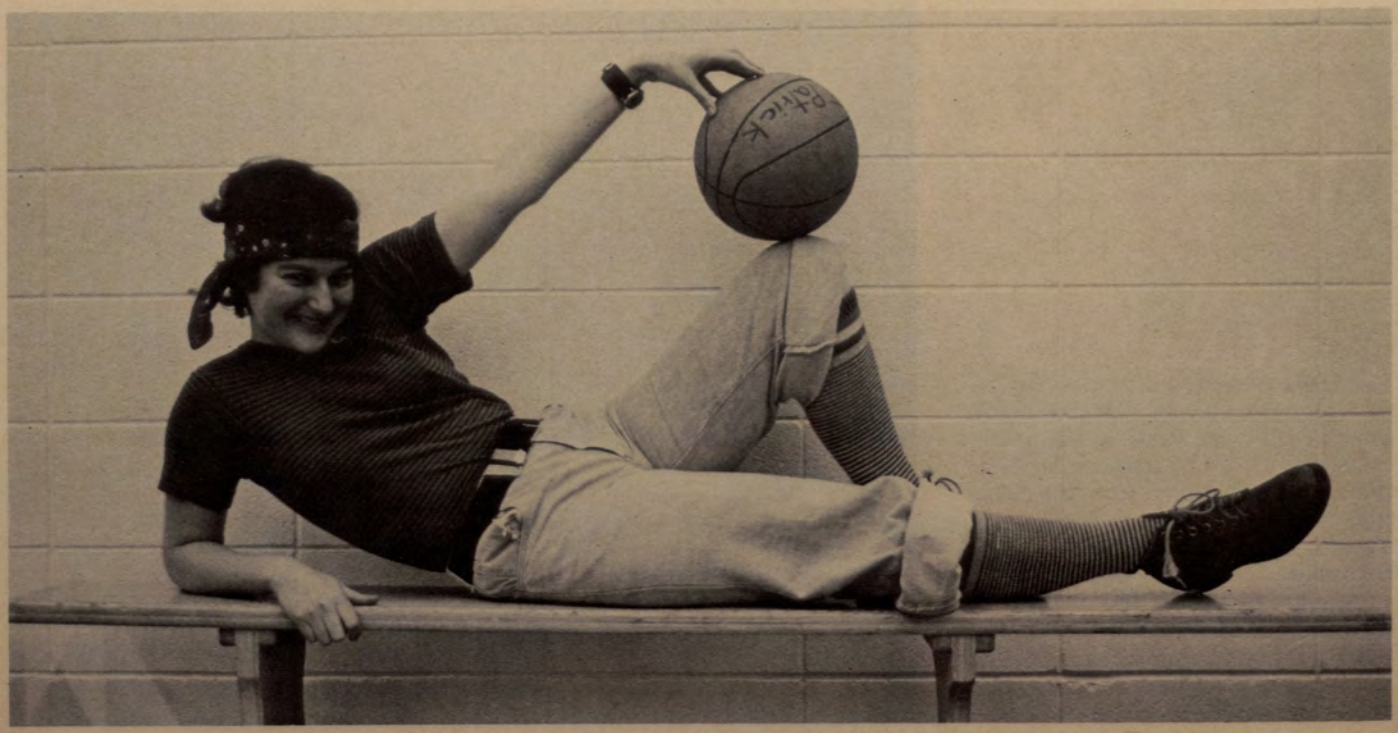
It's travelling time! Kris has switched into no-press pants, a little go-everywhere sweater and crush-resistant jacket. Never one for hats, she follows her own instincts with a brightly printed scarf. Perfectly acceptable this season! A vital accessory for the traveller, a Ticker-Tock watch, $65.

While *in transit*, Kris insists on shoes that feel good, look great. Her choice, softest leather in mock workboot design by Tricksters, $40.

At the other end of her journey, the vital freshening-up that gives even a natural beauty like Kris confidence to spare! Powder by Naturalook, $8. Not shown, but tucked into Kris' travelling bag, the rest of the Naturalook line: base $5, lip tint $5, lip gloss $4, Naturetone eyeliner $6, Day-lite eyeshadow $9 (six-hue set), Eyewide mascara $7, Youth-radiant blusher, $6.

On to the basketball game, Kris' favorite way of mixing fitness and fun! She emerges from the dressing room in a team-sport ensemble that is so '77, so uniquely her. The warm-up jacket, in team-colour checks, momentarily hides her special designed no-bind Sportster's T-shirt $15. Team-striped socks are by Rah-Rah $5 per pair.

For a witty touch, Kris sports an Italian import bandana featuring the other team's colours! Her Athletica shoes have a special floor-grip sole, $49.50. The watch, by Bash-Proof $65.95, ticks off the vital seconds. A final, practical touch, the Clip-Grip belt $16. Kris looks like a winner!



She's back in the city, in time for a special dinner date! Tonight, she opts for a look with classic lines, but superb detailing, finest fabrics. The 100% wool wrap features bright colour without last season's tasteless dazzle. These new tailored dress pants parody the street look with denim pre-washed by hand and artful, hand-frayed cuffs $60. Her T-styled sweater is hand-knit in finest wool and has its monogram hidden in the sleeve, for the subtlety that is so important in '77. Kris adds her own choice of this year's romantic accessories: richly-patterned silk scarf $20, anti-platform dress shoes $50, Triple-Fine watch with 63 jewels $85, and pure gold "Sweetheart" necklace with tiny diamonds — at $120, this years nostalgia-inspired bit of *luxe*!

Cherie Westmoreland is an information officer at Grant MacEwan Community College. She recently moved to Edmonton from Regina where she worked as a freelance photographer and participated in various exhibits.

Back at home after an elegant evening, Kris changes into comfortable lounging clothes and steals a half-hour of solitary relaxation. A loose green and white shirt with co-ordinated solid-hue cuffs keep off the night-time chill. A pair of knicker-styled pants gives solid comfort, and at-home socks that are *meant* to be worn shoeless are perfect for these cherished moments. Why the jaunty scarf? "I like it!" says Kris, "besides, even at home by myself, I want to know I'm ready for the unexpected visitor!"

Kris Purdy is hostess of C.B.C. radio's Edmonton A.M.

films

The Far Shore: In Sight But Still Out of Reach

by Margaret Cooper

The Far Shore, 1975. **Director:** Joyce Wieland; **Producer:** Judy Steed; **Screenplay:** Bryan Barney, from an original script by Joyce Wieland; **Cinematography:** Richard Leiterman; **Leading Players:** Celine Lomez (Eulalie); Lawrence Benedict (Ross); Frank Moore (Tom); Sean McCann (Cluny).

Given the state of Canadian feature production, Joyce Wieland's **THE FAR SHORE** deserves special attention. The fact that a first commercial feature relying exclusively on Canadian talent and subject matter has even been released is the result of dedication from every collaborator in the enterprise and an undaunted, inventive struggle for backing by Wieland and producer Judy Steed. That's nothing short of remarkable when you remember that Canadian movie making, just as with the cinema in a developing nation, faces foreign financing of allegedly independent film production, foreign control of distribution and screening facilities, and foreign manipulation of audience tastes through an unchecked flood of imports. Making matters worse, Anglo-Canadian movies, quite different from the Quebecois variety, are rarely indigenous in inspiration, emphasis, and immediate content. So understandably, a seven-year project like **THE FAR SHORE** commands respect for completion alone.

Just as understandably, a feature conceived, directed, and produced by women which also involves them in key editing, design, and performance positions is, to say the least, encouraging. Over the past decade, women may have become more directly responsible for the creation and diffusion of Canadian films, but direction and production of feature films still remain largely woman-free. Only lately have fewer than a handful emerged as driving forces behind an equally limited number of features. Combine this conspicuous absence of a female presence with the prevailing stereotype of our sex as "losers" and male appendages yet to be offset by radically different screen treatments of fully developed women, and you have additional reasons to be hopefully expectant about **THE FAR SHORE.**

Eulalie and Tom in The Far Shore

In it, artist-filmmaker Wieland — previously associated with shorts and non-commercial feature all noted for their novel experimentation, personalism and basis in national experience — has undertaken her most ambitious work so far. Using the conventions of narrative cinema while attempting to project a distinctly Canadian sensibility and style readily accessible to a wide audience, she shapes a film from easily identifiable polarities with complex implications. Her contrasts are strong and obvious, like the opposition of light and dark set up by an opening frame of translucent sky and a final image of opaque, murky water. The film pits love of art, nature, and peace against the incursions of commerce and agression. To do so, it puts forth melodrama, then interjects contemporary consciousness.

For its "northern love story," **THE FAR SHORE** fictionalizes elements from the life of painter Tom Thomson whose apparent murder in the Algonquin Park wilderness he knew intimately still remains unsolved. It also draws on Wieland's convent-reared Quebecoise mother-in-law whose musical talent and aspirations for a concert career were thwarted by her family. Beyond the rich potential of the two, ostensibly conceived as Canadian archetypes, we have visually impressive cinema. At the same time, we find a problematic film lacking cohesion. Weaknesses in screenplay, continuity, direction, and performance are further handicapped by an intentional surface transparency and a deliberate schematism bordering on banality.

The most serious difficulties originate in Eulalie, whose experience gives the film its center. An outsider in her brother's home, Eulalie's recent past includes an engagement broken by an ambitious Quebec lawyer. When Ross, the lovestruck engineer temporarily involved in Quebec bridge construction, proposes marriage, she accepts. But life as mistress of a Toronto town house in 1919 among Anglo-Canadians with faces a Quebecoise doesn't, as Eulalie puts it, "know how to read", soon breeds new

isolation. Worse yet, her role as wife to an increasingly insensitive husband intensifies her otherness. Within Eulalie's world of affluence, restrictions, and male domination, only a second "foreigner," woodsman and painter Tom McLeod, is attuned to her gifts and her solitude. Before long, Eulalie is more than the friend's wife responsive to Tom's gentle rustic preferences and those landscapes judged poor commercial risks by dealers and would-be patrons. On stifling Toronto afternoons, she seeks Tom out in his studio, even though his refusal to guide Ross and partner Cluny to northern silver has bitterly estranged the men. Ultimately, in the same Ontario wilderness which the artist reveres and the entrepreneur threatens, Eulalie flees her husband and joins her lover. Freedom is predictably short-lived, abruptly ended on a quiet northern lake by murderous shots from Cluny's rifle.

Despite a story partly inspired by the sentimental fiction of James Oliver Curwood, **THE FAR SHORE** hardly permits that escapist identification typical of both melodrama and the traditional Hollywood "woman's film." Neither, however, does it entertain a critical perspective promoting anything but the simpleminded conclusions of its surface contrarieties. For one thing, the central figure disengages us through her two-dimensionality and totters on parodied stereotype. As fetching in the film's interior sets as she is in its splendid outdoor locations, Eulalie has elegance and grace appropriate to her class. Fine enough, but the frustrated artistry which brands her as unique translates largely into cliches: vague yearning for a stage career, dreamy sessions of effortlessly executed Debussy, trite praise for Tom's painting, and a disdain for the philistinism of Ross and Cluny reminiscent of aristocratic revulsion before table manners of servants at their ease. Deprived of a complete personality, Eulalie becomes the well-bred dilettante. She exhibits the same superior training in her piano playing that she does in her needlework, and, we begin to suspect, in her drawing.

Surrounded by a male trio even more cardboard then herself, Eulalie, like the land, forms a focus of masculine desires. In Cluny, Ross's former commanding officer and partner in schemes to ravage the wilderness, the film has a convenient bogeyman and the lovers' logical killer. Often drunk and always arrogant, Cluny speaks in slogans: the war has made a man of Ross, an entire canvas devoted to a single tree is a wasted one, etcetera. When alone with Eulalie, he barely disguises his lecherous interest. By comparison, Ross is a mediocre villain, near kin to the oafs the nineteenth century found ripe for cuckolding. His inability to understand Eulalie on anything but his own terms are as apparent in his intimidation by her music as in the unwanted lovemaking he forces on her. Yet if Ross is obtuse, he's not unfeeling, something a dog-like attachment and persistent passion readily attests.

Against these versions of conventional, acceptable manhood, Tom is undeniably the renegade. Non-verbal, pacifist, and intuitive, he seeks nothing more than the pursuit of his art and communion with the land. He may love and even desire Eulalie during their Toronto afternoons but he physically approaches her only after her wilderness initiatives invite him to do so. For all his positive features, however, Tom is the least credible of the group. He remains, in fact, the mere sum of contours badly in need of fleshing out.

Her existence defined by these three choices, Eulalie considers only two. And whether as escape from her Quebec isolation through marriage to Ross or as refuge with Tom from her Anglo-Canadian suffocation, each is expressed as flight empty of creative issue. Significantly, nothing comes of Eulalie's artistry. Just as nothing comes of her interest in ties with the two females in her milieu who are neither servants nor elderly. In the first case, Ross evades her request for future social contact with a nameless dinner party acquaintance. In the second, he promptly dispatches Cluny's guest south when the unfortunate woman is slightly injured as the men blast for silver on Ross's property. Necessarily then, in this scheme of things, self-assertion is rigidly circumscribed. Moreover, although Eulalie's bid for freedom may be rejection of her status as possession, it entails no recognizable *prise de conscience*. The action is motivated by her passion to join Tom, whom she has just seen fishing in the vicinity of Ross's land. Conveniently, he reappears while Eulalie, once more exposed to Cluny's verbal advances, rows past.

Liberty and its aftermath launch heavyhanded changes. After taking a hatchet to the boat that binds her to civilization and to Ross, Eulalie, straw hat streaming behind her, swims fully clothed across the lake to Tom's canoe. This extraordinary feat suddenly undercuts earlier symbolism with ambiguous humour. Running through the latter part of the film, this humour brings **THE FAR SHORE** close to outright caricature. At one point, a lake chase is teased by the comically ominous piano of standard silent movie scores. Elsewhere, less frantic canoeing finds a tranquil Tom and Eulalie in the cuddly company of a young racoon. With the pursuers at a safe distance, time is even spared for some lake-immersed nude lovemaking. To anyone familiar with the frigid temperatures of northern Ontario lakes, the improbability of such activity can hardly be ignored. But this intrusion of audience realism doesn't account for all the trouble in excess footage harmful to the sense of pace. Far more damage is done by the clumsy entrance of a 1970's consciousness.

Rather than a romantically filtered romp in sun-spattered meadows a la **ELVIRA MADIGAN, THE FAR SHORE** treats us to prolonged aquatic sex frankly focusing on the act's awkward facial and vocal accompaniment. Besides introducing a fair share of grunts and grimaces, the interlude also endows McLeod with an extraordinary capacity for successive sustained erections. Audience reactions to the performance — at least on the two occasions I saw the film — ran the gamut of awkward silence, good-natured "Bravos!," one incredulous masculine "Jesus Christ!," and much spontaneous laughter. While ludicrous, the sequence can be appreciated for its exaggerated play upon the hackneyed equation of "natural man" and "heightened virility." Even so, the poorly integrated love scene only aggravates **THE FAR SHORE'S** dilemma. A film self-consciously trying to escape total containment in established styles and forms becomes diffuse patternlessness. In it, sharply outlined cliches alternate with obscured sensibilities.

The end product is a curious patchwork. Heterogeneous pieces individually attract more attention than any coherent overall design. In other words, what works in Wieland's quilts does the reverse in feature film. Moreover, **THE FAR SHORE'S** female center becomes its most obtrusive component. There are serious drawbacks to Eulalie's convenience as the vehicle for interrelated contradictions in feminine, artistic, and national experience. But for a broad moviegoing audience, inevitably including large numbers of women, Eulalie per se certainly suggests more rewarding and provocative possibilites then the bourgeois individualism and romantic victimization advanced here. If we can easily sight such possibilities, we may anticipate their more successful exploration. For the moment, however, **THE FAR SHORE** still keeps them out of reach.

Margaret Cooper was a member of the NFT/Edmonton executive for over four years. Now a Toronto resident, she is preparing a critical survey of "New Cinema" in the Americas.

books

THE FEMININE ADDICTION
by Shirley Swartz

Literary Women: The Great Writers, Ellen Moers, Doubleday, 1976, $10.00, cloth.

The Faces of Eve: Women in the Nineteenth-Century American Novel, Judith Fryer, Oxford University Press, 1976, $13.75, cloth.

"I would have been as great as George Eliot," reads a tombstone in Spoon River, "But for an untoward fate."

> But there was the old, old problem:
> Should it be celibacy, matrimony or unchastity?
> Then John Slack, the rich druggist, wooed me,
> Luring me with the promise of leisure for my novel,
> And I married him, giving birth to eight children,
> And had no time to write.

Many of the "scribbling women" of the last two centuries may have longed for leisure and a room of their own; few had them. Biographers, critics, other women writers, like to recall that Austen wrote, in between interruptions, at a small table in the family parlour, hastily covering her work as approaching visitors passed the window; that Frances Trollope, in whose rooms the "doctor's vials and the ink-bottle held equal place," simultaneously wrote novel after novel to support her family and nursed her husband and two of her children, all three of whom were dying of consumption; that Harriet Beecher Stowe, cooking, teaching, urging her plumber to attend to her sink, and nursing her baby, looked forward to the time when the youngest of her seven children would sleep apart from her and she might stay up nights to write what would become *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. A "scribbling woman" today, convinced that she has improved her situation no more than plumbers have their promptness, need only recall Sylvia Plath, writing "at about four in the morning — that still blue, almost eternal hour before the baby's cry, before the glassy music of the milkman, settling the bottles." And, when she feels overwhelmed by self-pity, when she becomes certain that the chief

George Sand in 1834

talent of a woman writer must be the ability to go without sleep, there remains, to ease her back into laughter, de Musset's bitter story of how, exhausted after long love-making, he would awaken late at night to see George Sand at the writing-table in their room, covering page after page as she worked on her novels by candlelight.

The threnody of women writers has ever been the same: their domestic lives simultaneously diminish privacy and isolate them from their peers. That not all of them lie beneath the epitaph of Margaret Fuller Slack, the "would have been" novelist from Spoon River, is a tribute to the courage and wit with which women made their environments work for instead of against them. All too often, their critics have emphasized the limitations of domesticity while they ignored the resourcefulness women authors employed to counteract them. A critic more than willing to praise the exceptional precision of Jane Austen's language will go on to characterize her "vision" as too domestic and provincial; he (or she) will applaud the courage of Stowe's anti-slavery novel but deride the syrupy piety of Little Eva as distinctly feminine; will marvel at how, working in such isolation, Emily Dickinson achieved that spare emotion which informs so much poetry after her, yet complain that she wrote in ignorance of Hawthorne, Melville, Poe. This same critic will acknowledge the power of Plath's verse, but find the cry of that "goddam baby screaming off somewhere" all too pervasive in her last poems. Isolation in a feminine world, the equation runs, limits literary vision.

That Spoon River novelist with her aspirations to be "as great as George Eliot," knew better. She knew that, had she written at all, it would have been out of a well-defined *feminine* literary tradition, out of that self-awareness which Ellen Moers undertakes to trace and interpret in *Literary Women*. If Jane Austen's novels all open with references to money, this is not, Moers insists, proof of the limited and materialistic vision of women, but "female realism," the result of Austen's "deep concern with the qual-

ity of a woman's life in marriage." Nor is it idiosyncratic. Estranged from her husband, George Sand gained from him a small allowance, granted from her own money, with which to spend six penurious months a year — and six months only — in Paris writing. The money with which to maintain a more luxurious establishment and with which to educate her children she agreed to earn by writing. Gaskell, Eliot, the Brontes, Alcott, were working women: they wrote to support themselves and to augment family incomes and a realism — in Charlotte Bronte's words — as "unromantic as Monday morning, when all who have work wake with the consciousness that they must rise and betake themselves thereto" governs their heroines. But marriage is not all sense and sensibility. "Hear me, ambitious souls," warns the epitaph on the Spoon River stone, "Sex is the curse of life!" George Sand, unaware of de Musset's embittered observation of her, would hardly have agreed, but in "female Gothic," fear, psychological torment and perverse sexuality *do* commingle: Mary Shelley embodies the "trauma of afterbirth" in the monstrous Frankenstein; sadism and quasi-incest torment and destroy Catherine and Heathcliff; Christina Rosetti symbolizes the cruel sucking world of childish sexuality in *The Goblin Market*.

"Heroinism" — Moers grants the term's unfortunate connotations — the guises into which women writers have projected their desires for physical, economic and moral independence, creates a distinctly feminine literary tradition. "Travelling heroines," like Ann Radcliffe's Emily, can escape their limited feminine environments by picaresque adventures which defy both time and geography. Less literally and more commonly, they display their heroics by the exploration of the labyrinthian interior landscapes of castles and convents, transformed, in twentieth century annals of bravery, into the asylum of *The Bell Jar*. "Loving heroines" write no laments; instead Mary Wollstonecraft's Maria, Emily Bronte's Catherine, rejoice in the discovery of love and their own sexuality even when it seems to bring only emotional pain, and not infrequently, in the lives of authors at least, abandonment and illegitimate children. "I'm a woman and know womanhood," Marion Erle declares and this heroine of Elizabeth Barrett Browning's *Aurora Leigh* goes on to do what no male novelist of the time would have permitted her, to raise her child born out of wedlock. Still other heroines free themselves from the physical and moral restraints of their environments by becoming performers, above the laws that bind the rest of us. But we know that Corinne's beauty, and therefore her power, will fade; Willa Cather and George Sand can create operatic heroines as the type of woman — not necessarily beautiful — who achieves freedom through performance, but we recall operatic performances at which an aging star has been applauded, not for the voice which has lost its purity of tone, its range, but for the technical skill with which she has circumvented the effects of aging. *Sic transit gloria*, but what if a woman yearns for a surer, more enduring power? Let her pursue the tradition of "educating heroinism," that of Mme. de Genlis, Governor — the masculine title indicated her power — to the princes of France, instructing and ruling her royal charges by means of pedagogical fiction. Or let her do as Professor Moers has done and exercise a subtler influence over women themselves; let her show them — in a book both learned and lively, in which the sense of a particular woman reading other women writers is pervasive and never amiss — the strength of their own literary tradition. And, if she would like to tease a little, let her follow Ellen Moers' bibliographic model in which men appear only under the names of the women writers with whom they were associated. That Thomas Carlyle should appear under the entry for the wife whom he adored and burdened to such an extent she never exercised her own abilities represents some small recompense for his phrase, "scribbling women."

But have not men written of travelling, performing, loving educating heroines? Never as real women, Judith Fryer answers, but only as mythic abstractions, as one of *The Faces of Eve*. Polemically and academically, with occasional infelicitous lapses into a more personal style, Fryer searches American novels and short stories of the nineteenth century for a woman, even a minor character, who is "real," multifaceted. Instead she finds only concepts, Woman as Temptress, as American Princess, as Great Mother or New Women, fascinating creatures, perhaps, but not members of our communion. But, at the turn of the century, a woman "succeeded where the men had failed"; Kate Chopin wrote *The Awakening*, the heroine of which becomes increasingly aware of the real nature of her thoughts, emotions and, especially, sexuality. Edna's awakening sexuality lets her embrace death as a freedom from the constraints of American society in 1899; as she swims out to sea, she both confronts her self and accepts her sexual being. In death, Fryer posits, she becomes the first "real" woman in American literature.

But as Edna swims to her death, she experiences drowning as a recollection of a "bluegrass meadow" and the "musky odor of pinks"; she imaginatively transforms the sea, Freudian image of rebirth, into *landscape*. What, asks Ellen Moers, noting the transformation, is the sexual landscape of women? What replaces the watery "cradle endlessly rocking," the phallic trees, mountains and skyscrapers of masculine literature? Not, she asserts in a sensitive and courageous "postlude" about sexual metaphors in women's literature, the "inner space" of domestic interiors. Instead, novel after novel finds its heroines rejoicing in high open landscapes cut by ravines or paths, landscapes with plateaus and hills from which they soar to freedom on the wings of a bird imagery notable for the absence of nesting species. "The more feminist the literary conception . . . , the larger, wilder, and crueler come the birds." Nor is the flight a metaphor of genital erection, of the desire actually to become a man; rather it symbolizes the desire for a man's physical and moral freedom, for "free flying." The feminine sexual landscape responds to that desperate justification Daniel Deronda's mother gives for her most unmotherly behaviour: "You can never imagine what it is to have a man's force of genius in you, and yet suffer the slavery of being a girl."

Shirley Swartz is book review editor at Branching Out. She teaches English at the University of Alberta.

Miriam Waddington

GRIT AND GOLD
by Barbara Novak

Ice Age, by Dorothy Livesay, Press Porcepic, 1975, $3.25, paper.

The Price of Gold, by Miriam Waddington, Oxford University Press, 1976, $3.95, paper.

Living Together, by Joan Finnigan, Fiddlehead, 1976, $5.00, paper.

Landscape of Kin, by Jayne Berland, Fiddlehead, 1976, $3.00, paper.

The Sun in Winter, by Anne Scott, Fiddlehead, 1975, $5.00, paper.

Some Wild Gypsy, by Brenda Fleet, Borealis, 1976, $4.50, paper.

In an interview in *Canadian Forum,* Dorothy Livesay described the literary *milieu* at University of Toronto in the 1920's: ". . . I didn't mix with writers, there was no feeling of a group in those days . . . rarely would we show our poems. Certainly the girls wouldn't . . . a person like Nathaniel Benson would insist that you sit and listen to him read for an hour. This was the devotion one gave to male poets!"

Fifty years later I am reviewing, as a matter of course, Livesay's most recent volume of poetry, *Ice Age,* along with those of five other Canadian women.

Ice Age ought to be required reading for every Canadian woman — and also a *must* for everyone else. It is the work of a wise and sensitive woman whose vision has never ceased growing throughout the years.

Livesay has described the book as "serious" and even "gloomy," but I found it vaguely affirmative. *Ice Age* examines the condition of the contemporary world, focussing on themes of aging, the inevitability of death, loneliness, unity, and the awareness of women as individuals. In particular, her poems about women tend towards the positive, almost celebratory. Some, however, such as "The Stoned Woman" reflect horror at the condition of woman reduced to object. For me, it was one of the most simple, yet most powerful poems I've ever read.

Livesay is aware of a moral decline, a growing irresponsibility, a tendency to live lonely, shallow and selfish existences. Yet she makes her point without ever preaching.

The major poems in the collection are poems of warning, premonition. "Cloud Messages" and "Ice Age" are Yeatsian in their vision, almost echoing "The Second Coming" in their awareness of the growing chaos of the universe. "Ice Age" ends with a challenge for someone to dare to be righteous, dare to oppose the approaching destruction.

Miriam Waddington's recent collection covers much of the same thematic territory as does *Ice Age. The Price of Gold,* though, was somewhat of a disappointment. Not disappointing enough not to recommend it — "By the Sea: For A.M. Klein" is a masterpiece. And there were others, just as fine.

But the book lacks consistency. Some poems are overworked, too pat. "Don't Say Anything" is positively nagging. Several in the middle section might have been better had they ended sooner. And a propensity towards the "ironic twist" marred otherwise good poems. Such reversals seemed to be afterthoughts, as though Waddington suddenly decided to negate the seriousness of the poem, or negate it entirely. Finally, an overall sense of weariness pervaded the volume, a sense of resignation almost to the point of self-pity. "Profile of an Unlimited Woman," for example, went beyond the point of despair. By contrast, Livesay's "The Stoned Woman," thematically so similar, achieved a tone of controlled anger and even shock, which nevertheless left room for hope.

The gold is there alright, but the price seems to be that the reader must sift through the grit to find it. "By the Sea," "The Dead," the songs, the purely descriptive poems, and some of the lighter poems (when they are consistently light), these are the nuggets which make the "price" worthwhile.

Landscape of Kin, by Jayne Berland, is a collection of potentially readable poetry marred by a Procrustean bed of rhymes. Bordering on the sentimental at times, the book concentrates upon interactions within a family structure. Rhyme can be a pleasant effect, when it complements and supports the meaning. Livesay's use of rhyme was perfect — sonorous, yet unobtrusive. In *Landscape of Kin,* however, it actually detracted from the poetry. The words had been shuffled, pushed, snipped and stuffed until they fit the scheme. When that failed, the scheme itself was adjusted, resulting in unpredictable and unreasonable patterns.

Presumably, if a poet goes to that much trouble to incorporate rhymes into her poetry, she must really want them there. That's unfortunate, because unless Berland can become more skilled with the device, I think she would be better off without it. "Take Now Thy Son," a poem for four voices, is brilliant. In general, her choice of images is fresh and effective, and in the poems which did not have to contend with rhyme schemes, the rhythm was natural and supportive.

The major problem with Brenda Fleet's *Some Wild Gypsy* is that the book is simply too well organized. It suffers from a basic paradox. The persona of the wild gypsy speaks with four distinct, segregated voices: romantic, ironic, lover, and absurd. The result is a rather tame, academic gypsy — an irony which I suspect is unintentional.

Similarly, there are too many parts to the book. There is the dedication, quotation, preface, legend, four sections of poetry, followed by biographical notes. While the legend does have its charm, I found it overly serious and self-conscious, particularly placed where it is, as a form of introduction. As for the poetry, there were some fine pieces, but they could have been more carefully selected. There's quite a bit of drivel mixed in with the more effective poems.

Strangely, enough, although the structure of the volume is annoyingly pretentious, and some of the titles as well, the poetry is exceptionally liberated — free from any residue of self-consciousness. I'd like to see more of Fleet's work, in a more relaxed setting, where the gypsy can be free to really let go and be wild.

The Sun in Winter will not likely appeal to a large audience. It is a gentle book, which some readers may even find dull. Nevertheless, what it lacks in dramatic intensity, it offers in fine craftsmanship. The poems are gracefully chiselled gems of the imagination; spontaneous, yet polished.

Anne Scott writes about the movement between the personal and universal,

with the search for balance and wholeness, the dominant theme. The sun serves as central symbol of all that is mysterious — a unifying force governing the physical and the spiritual worlds.

In "The Poets" Scott suggests that she is aware her poetry is not for the masses. She takes an aesthetic stand against those poets who insist that words must not mean, but be. As for herself, she is perfectly content to capture a moment, an experience, or an idea, and recreate it into a thing of beauty.

Joan Finnigan's *Living Together* would make an ideal gift for your local MP if you happen to be from Ontario. It isn't your ordinary coffee table book. It isn't big, there aren't any colour plates, and it isn't beautifully designed. But it is a superb collection of prose poems and poetry that expose a rich world below the slick surface of life in Ontario.

The first two sections read a little like *The Spoon River Anthology*, only better — less affected. "May Day Rounds: Renfrew Country" is a densely packed prose-poem that juxtaposes officialdom (in the form of governmental statistics-seekers) with the souls of the individuals who are the statistics.

The last two sections are devoted to Kingston and vicinity and to Northern Ontario. It is here that Finnigan's language rises to meet her humanism. With delicate sensitivity and considerable versatility, she completes the collection with a more personal treatment of life in Ontario.

If you're not in the habit of giving gifts to your MP, or if you don't live in Ontario, *Living Together* would still make an ideal present — for yourself.

Barbara Novak lives in Toronto. Her book reviews and poems have been published in various Canadian Magazines.

And more books

Words and Women, by Casey Miller and Kate Swift, Anchor Press, 1976, $8.95.

"Over the centuries women have fared very badly indeed in the English language." In *Words and Women*, Casey Miller and Kate Swift have given us perhaps the most comprehensive discussion to date of the sexism which permeates our language and literature.

The first chapters of their book outline some of the major pitfalls: the generic "he" which subsumes one half of the human race in the other, the confusion between male/female differences and culturally-assigned masculine/feminine attributes, the misogynist stereotypes of women and the heroic stereotypes of men.

The concluding chapters focus on the relation of language to historical change and the adaption of language to social needs. The authors' view is that this process of adaption can be accelerated by the direct pressure of women for non-sexist language.

This may seem to many of us like getting the cart before the horse. Our main goal should surely be to change the material reality behind word-symbols, to eliminate the economic and social oppression which creates terms like "prostitute" and "sweatshop" in the first place. But there is argument, too, for waging the struggle on many fronts at once. No one will dispute the authors' contention that language is a powerful force which influences social reality; it provides the basic perceptual building blocks for any vision of human possibility. People who wish their language to reflect the real potential and contribution of women will find the authors' guidelines both reasonable and practicable.

Genevieve Leslie

Spirit of the People, by Margaret Randall, New Star Books, 1975, $1.95, paper; $7.00, cloth.

This is a book on Vietnam, and especially on Vietnamese women. Randall attempts to demonstrate "that Vietnamese women are 'new women' in the most strength-giving way." Using a format similar to that of a diary, she describes in great detail her observations and experiences in Vietnam in 1974. Her tour covered Hanoi, the capital of Vietnam, and the liberated area of Quang Tri in South Vietnam.

To illustrate her themes — the hardship of women under feudalism and imperialism, their resistance and their efforts to construct a new society — Randall draws examples from Hanoi's Museum of the Revolution, Vietnamese movies, and her conversations with a variety of women. She also describes how the Vietnam Women's Union and the Women's Union for the Liberation of South Vietnam supported their sisters in marital difficulties.

The efforts of Vietnamese women in the national liberation are impressive. They participated in various activities as cadres, propagandists, educators, farmers, nurses, guerillas, soldiers, spies, writers, poets, etc. Randall spends a significant portion of her book outlining the torture of women captured by enemies, and their loyalty to liberation.

The success of the book lies in the author's ability to relate women's struggles to the political situation of Vietnam, thus illustrating the role of women in the Revolution. However, as Randall herself noted, the book is full of "fragmentary, partial, (and) impressionistic" notes; these appear to undermine a scholarly description of Vietnamese women. Furthermore, this book fails to present observations in a well-organized manner, and so weakens its theoretical potential.

Bobby Siu

Walk In My Shoes: An Odyssey Into Womanlife, by Judianne Denson-Gerber, E.P. Dutton & Co., Inc., $13.25, cloth.

Judianne Denson-Gerber's invitation to walk in her shoes is a magnanimous and challenging offer. Dr. Denson-Gerber is not only a qualified lawyer, but also a psychiatrist, a professor, much sought-after speaker, and founder of Odyssey House, a refuge for drug-addicts, prostitutes, those suffering from any number of society's abusers. To term her a writer, as well, would be inaccurate. She is a chronicler of experience, a presenter of views.

Denson-Gerber defines womanlife

as the experience, essence and affirmation of feminine being. To write her book she breaks this down into five areas: woman faces herself, her mate, her child, her career, and the sisterhood. In that order!

It appears that Denson-Gerber feels that to leave out any of these elements is to be less than a woman should be. She agrees that every woman should have the right to her own choices (she is a staunch supporter of the American Equal Rights Amendment) but, if you are not convinced of the importance of, say, motherhood for yourself, then the author will annoy and frustrate with her frequently blithe assumptions and assertions.

She frames a medical report of her last daughter's chromosome count in "pink." She is astounded that a black friend (well-dressed, earning $15,000, living in a good middle-class area no less) cannot get a taxi as she can. She has her youngest girl in diamond studs (a two-year-old's best friend?). Am I being picky?

At the same time, she tells of causing trouble in restaurants over getting poor tables when with a female friend, or being the first to march through men-only portals in select clubs, and then it's right on Judi!

As far as walking in Judianne Denson-Gerber's shoes, well, anybody else's shoes will always chafe or pinch. But there is no question that to meet her, with her dedication to improving life for all, would be a positive, enlightening experience, one more rewarding than reading her book.

Karen-Lynne Henderson

Signs: Journal of Women in Culture & Society, University of Chicago Press, Published quarterly, Subscriptions: $16.00, U.S.A.; $17.50, Canada, *Signs,* The University of Chicago Press, 5801 Ellis Ave., Chicago, Illinois, 60637.

Signs is a truly excellent journal. It takes seriously the breadth of women's experience and it deals straightforwardly with the fact that experience is a *political* phenomenon. There is no sterile ivory-towerism here. What there is is careful, critical research, informed opinion, and an organization that allows for the wide range of work to fit smoothly together.

Being a "journal of women in culture and society" means that the material is truly interdisciplinary in scope. The "women in culture" aspect is addressed by articles from persons in the arts and humanities and by reviews of books in these areas. The "in society" facet makes for articles and reviews from a social science perspective. There is already a good historical reach, adding to the balance of study in all areas.

The section on "The New Scholarship," in which people critically review large portions of traditionally defined academic disciplines for their sexism in theory, analysis, and research, is truly welcome.

There are most interesting sections devoted to "viewpoint," and "Letters and Comments." There are reports on study in progress which should be of real interest.

While I take this kind of organization to be typical of the journal as a whole (not that it will not evolve over time), there has already been a special issue (Vol. I, #3, pt. 2) on one theme alone. It is on "Women and the Workingplace" and it is the lengthy, thorough and expanded results of a conference on occupational segregation held in May of 1975 (edited by Martha Blaxall and Barbara B. Reagan). Once again, it covers both contemporary and historical material from a wide range of perspectives.

To return to the political nature of woman's existence, what makes this journal far more than a collection of information on women past and present, and what distinguishes it from the traditional academic journals that now and then have an article on women, is that this is a journal that is deliberately set up to encourage every author to examine his or her material from the distinct perspective of feminism. This provides the unifying theme of the journal. It is true that some people have been able to ask the feminist questions in traditional journals, but I believe that is still a rare occurence. (By feminist questions I mean things like: What does what is being studied reveal about the oppression of women? how has it happened? how is this phenomenon contributing to oppression or alleviating it? does it exist in this situation/time/place? why or why not? These questions are as important in the arts and humanities as in the social sciences, as Millett's *Sexual Politics* showed so well years ago.)

But anyone who is familiar with the difficulties of setting up courses on women, of having research on women seem legitimate in the academic world (and therefore, permissible for graduate studies and fundable and publishable), knows there is a great need for places to publish lengthy, well-done research findings and rigorous critical opinion.

It's true that this is not the only journal that provides this kind of forum. Here in Canada we have the journal *Atlantis* which is undertaking, against considerable odds, the same task. Atlantis is particularly useful for a Canadian audience. There is room for both. Neither should be missed.

Marylee Stephenson

Women and World Development: An Annotated Bibliography, by Mayra Buvinic, Overseas Development Council, 1976. This comprehensive bibliography of studies devoted to women in society, is organized by topics ("Education and Women," "Women and Health, Nutrition, and Fertility/Family Planning" etc.) which are further broken down into geographical areas. The bibliography is preceded by a critical review of research in women's development and is followed by a list of Special Issues of journals and periodicals devoted to women's development and by a list of bibliographies devoted to the same topic.

Women as Winners: Transactional Analysis for Personal Growth, by Dorothy Jongeward and Dru Scott, Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1976, $4.95, paper. This self-help book is filled with pictures, case histories, diagrams and directions aimed at women who want to improve their self-image. It is almost a programmed learning guide, fascinating if you are into self-help books, I expect, perhaps a little condescending if you are not.

As it Happened, by Barbara Frum, McClelland and Stewart, 1976, $10.00, cloth. *As it Happened* has a lot of pages of Frum's interviews strung together with a little bit of information about how she got them. If you are a Frum addict, you will glory in it. If you are not, you will wonder at the extent of her egotism and ask yourself just why she should get rich for transcribing CBC tapes.

The Woman's Guide to Starting a Business, by Claudia Jessup and Genie Chipps, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1976, $4.95, paper. The first part of this guide deals with topics common to all businesses: legalities, accounting, banking (and borrowing), insurance, taxes, buying franchises. The second offers specific advice for specific types of businesses: retail, service, food, manufacturing, franchises. It would be useful to any woman contemplating her own business and its bibliography suggests further helpful references.

The New Husbands and How to Become One, by Andrew J. DuBrin, Nelson-Hall, 1976, $8.95, cloth. The title is fascinating; the book isn't. Dr. DuBrin specializes in the trite, in cardboard case histories — the characters have been fictionalized until they are all alike —, in stiff dialogues, and in lists of suggestions and a self-evaluation questionnaire that would disgrace the worst of women's magazines. He glories in the diminuitive so long used to keep women in their place: "New husbands are busy little housekeepers . . . ." Dr. DuBrin may quite rightly assume that many men are bewildered by the feminism of their wives; he errs in addressing them as idiots.

classified

Rates for classified advertising are $1.00 per word with a $10.00 minimum. Full mailing addresses including name, box number, street number city province, postal code etcetera will be counted as one word.

All classified ads must be prepaid; cheques or money orders made payable to *Branching Out* must be received one month prior to publication date. *Branching Out* is published six times yearly on the first day of each of January, March, May, July, September and November.

All text for classified advertising is accepted at the discretion of the publisher. Send to: Classified Department, *Branching Out*, Box 4098, Edmonton, Alberta T6E 4S8.

SERVICES

Free confidential birth control information and referral. For sale, "Love Carefully" T-shirts, buttons, bumper stickers. PLANNED PARENTHOOD ASSOCIATION OF EDMONTON, 616 McLeod Building, 10136 - 100 Street, Edmonton, T5J 0P1 423-3737.

NOTICES

Edmonton Symphony rummage sale, Prince of Wales Armoury, Saturday, April 23.

Branching Out requires drawings by children of their families for possible publication. Submit by April 1 to Box 4098, Edmonton, Alberta T6E 4S8.

CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

Responsible, dynamic advertising representatives required in major Canadian cities. Could be a part-time position, commission only. Branching Out, Box 4098, Edmonton, Alberta T6E 4S8 433-4021.

POLITICAL CANDIDATES 1945 - 1976

A research project investigating the participation of women in Canadian politics at the three levels of government is underway. All female candidates in federal and provincial elections and by-elections between 1945 and 1976 are included.

At the municipal level, newspaper research has been completed on women candidates in civic elections in Victoria, Vancouver, Edmonton, Calgary, Regina, Saskatoon, Winnipeg, Toronto, Hamilton, Ottawa, Montreal, Quebec, Moncton, Fredericton, St. John, Halifax, Charlottetown and St. John's.

For each province, the project wants to look at one or two smaller centres and have chosen the following:

KAMLOOPS,B.C.
PRINCE RUPERT,B.C.
MEDICINE HAT, ALTA.
GRANDE PRAIRIE, ALTA.
PRINCE ALBERT, SASK.
SWIFT CURRENT, SASK.
BRANDON, MAN.
OWEN SOUND, ONT.
MANIWAKI, QUE.
GRANBY, QUE.
EDMUNDSTON, N.B.
BATHURST, N.B.
TRURO, N.S.
SUMMERSIDE, P.E.I.
CORNER BROOK, NFLD.

If you were a candidate for municipal office [excluding school boards] in one of these communities between 1945 and 1976, or contested a federal or provincial seat between 1945 and 1976, I want to hear from you. Before mailing the questionnaire in spring, I want to have as many names and addresses correct as possible. If you have a friend or relative who should be included, please let her know, or drop me a line where I can reach her.

Jill Vickers,
Department of Political Science,
Carleton University,
Room B640,
Loeb Building,
Colonel By Drive,
Ottawa, Ontario K1S 5B6

Some things every woman should know

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A Brief Look at the Women's Movement
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Helpful suggestions on how to put together the type of resumé that wins job interviews.

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Too often, certain credit ledgers remain closed to women. This information sheet outlines ways that will assist women to obtain equal access to credit.

Write, phone or come in for your copies.
Alberta Women's Bureau
1402 Centennial Building
10015 - 103 Avenue
Edmonton, Alberta T5J 0H1
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Alberta
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