Branching Out

canadian magazine for women

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Shaking the Motherhood Myths

Stepmother

New Mother

Divorced Mother

Community families

Kibbutz Style, Hutterite Style

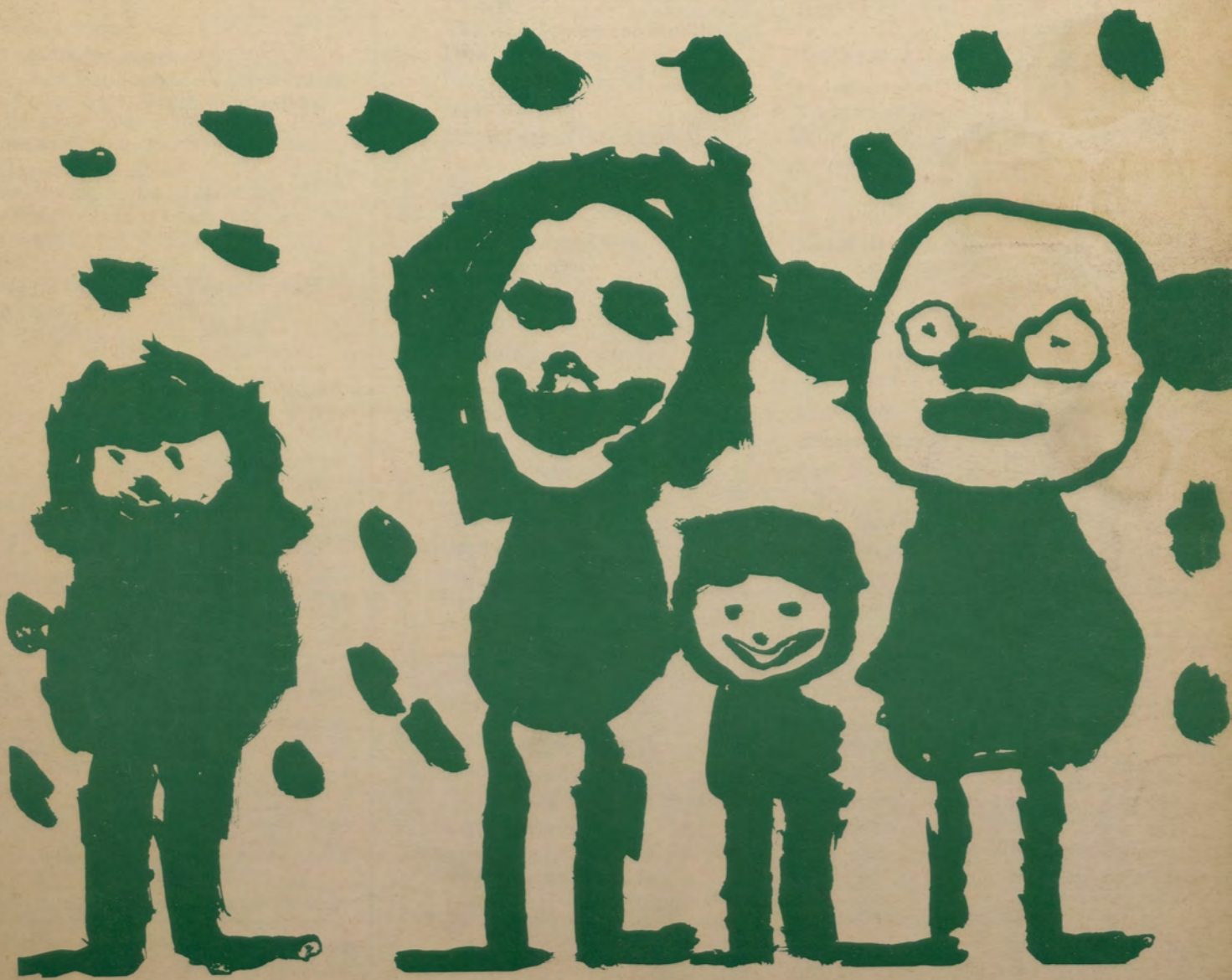
The Day Care Mess

Talking Back to the Experts

London's Homeless Mothers

Plus

Fiction, Poetry, Reviews



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Every Issue

Features

Women in the Arts

Cover Drawing by Topher

headway

The Child Is Mother Etc.

by Karen Lawrence

The problem with writing about parenting is that I am unable to make a simple, unqualified statement about it. Every phrase that comes to mind, every description I work up sounds fatuous. It is important to me to express my thoughts and feelings with precision and clarity, and this is really a messy issue.

Primarily, there's my hesitancy to describe myself as a parent — I have not given birth to any children. My experience with parenting is a result of my relationship with a man who is the father of four children. These five people are my family. Those words grip me deeply; I feel great joy and sadness, at once. Our coming together was a time of significant changes in my life, changes which unsettled me, put me in touch with parts of myself I hadn't encountered or dealt with before. At first I found it hard to take the kids' reality, their permanence, seriously. We couldn't go on a trip or buy groceries or move away without considering them. I was used to living with a partner and to living alone; both situations permit a flexibility of lifestyle which is not possible when living with kids. But I wanted to be with him, and he came with the kids, so that was our situation.

History: When I am getting to know the kids, I keep telling myself "You don't want to be their mother. They already have a mother." I joke with them, give them presents, talk about rock and roll. Nothing heavy; it's all fun. The second time I meet Sarah, she sits in my lap and sings me a little song. "It's about time, it's about place, it's about time I slapped your face." Ouch.

My first 'heavy energy' experiences are with Sarah. She considers herself the only permanent woman in her father's life, and tells me quite casually one evening when we're having dinner together that I'll probably be replaced (her dad has had lots of girlfriends, some of whom have remained fast friends with Sarah after the other relationship faded). We have an intense love/hate affair. We are jealous of one another. She is

Renn, Todd, Karen, Derril, Sarah, Garner *photo by Lauren Dale*

beautiful, insolent, seductive. I think she flirts with her father shamelessly. She thinks I do too. When I hear him calling her the same pet names he calls me, I feel sick to my stomach, hot and cold. I am harsh with her, far harsher than I am with her brothers. I want to teach her everything I have learned about sex-role stereotyping, chauvinism, female power, woman-hating, woman-loving: I want her to start from *there*. But rhetoric doesn't interest her, most of the time. She wants to sing in a rock band, she sends away for beauty kits, she revels in male attention. Yet in spite of our differences — which are often differences between two people, a young woman and an older one, a Scorpio and an Aquarius — there is a deep bond between us, a physical intimacy, love. When we first met, she was seven; I was twenty-three.

Stepmother (vb. trans.) a. to provide with a stepmother. b. to behave as a stepmother to, esp. with a suggestion of unfairness or cruelty.

World literature (especially folk and fairy tales which are usually read to/by children) is full of wicked ugly stepmothers, who torture, beat, humiliate and otherwise misuse kids. Strangely, there are no wicked stepfathers — perhaps because men had more freedom to remarry. Where does all this stuff come from? I wonder about it once in awhile, with shudders. When it becomes clear that I am going to be around for a time, the kids and I get into heavier numbers. It seems that when I'm not around they come and go, relating to their dad how and when they want to; but when I'm around, they feel threatened, left out, and complain that he doesn't spend enough time with them, that they're lonely. When he cloisters himself in the T.V. room with the kids, I feel left out and ignored (I hate T.V.). He feels caught in the middle, tugged at from each side. Sometimes I feel palpable waves of hostility and resentment from the kids, and I im-

agine they figure I'm trying to usurp their mother's place, I'm spoiling the chances of their parents getting together again. After a year, Todd introduces me to some people as 'Dad's current heartthrob'.

History: I spend some time in the kitchen fixing a late-night lovers' snack. When I carry the tray to our bed I find him with a child on each arm. "Oh, I thought we could have a nice intimate dinner," I cry in disappointment. The kids look at each other and say their good-nights; on the way out Garner murmurs "What a bitch." We eat together in silence.

The same night he tries to tell me what mistakes I make with the kids, the ways I am hurting them. I get angrier and angrier until suddenly a vast space opens up in my chest and I am sobbing "I want to be the only one". I have been re-living sibling rivalry. I am an oldest child who was displaced, first by a boy-child, then by a happy, sweet little girl. I had known the warmth and comfort of being the *only one*, and I had lost it. Now, in this most intense, loving relationship with a man, I am experiencing again the jealousy, the loss, the pain of separation.

Experiencing myself as a child brings me back to the kids. They want what I want: unqualified love and affection. They are already coping with a mother who lives 2000 miles away, whom they see maybe once a year. It is painful for me to hear them talking about her (she had been his *mate*), to see them longing for her, to realize that no matter how much I am here for them or how much I care about them, I am not the one they want, they will never feel that love for me. I met their mother, and heard her speak about her children, and shared with her my experience of them. And I realized that although her body birthed them, though she nursed them and cared for them and loved them, in a sense they weren't *hers*. Mothers and children have a deep psychic connection, but they do not *belong* to one another. I too have a karmic connection with these four spirits; there is a reason we have come together. It is for my unfolding and for theirs. I share in their lives. In some ways I know them better than their mother does now.

History: She is in town for a week – they are getting a divorce. She spends a couple of days at the farm with us. One evening we all have supper together, listen to music, talk. They talk a lot about 'the good old days' and the times they shared. One of the kids gets his camera and wants to have a picture of the whole family together. She suggests that I take the picture. I run downstairs and splash my face endlessly with cold water.

It's hard living with four men (and their friends); when Sarah is away I sometimes feel overwhelmed, hungry for some sistering, some close female sharing. In many ways the boys are alien creatures to me — I like them but I don't understand them. Sometimes I think they feel the same way about me. (At first it seemed a little trickier; I think they found me sexually attractive, and I them, and we might have related to one another in that way, in another time or place. Except for father. It all gets pretty murky and archetypal at this point.) But the rural community in which we live has spawned lots of kids I don't understand: boys who drink, arm wrestle, tell crude jokes and cruise main street in their cars and trucks; girls who chain-smoke, wear layers of make-up, giggle and marry at seventeen. Every weekend I hear snatches of conversation about guys who got the shit kicked out of them or who kicked it out of somebody else, about girls who are sluts or whores. Often the boys' *macho* trips — which flourish in this small-town atmosphere — anger and disgust me, and I find it hard to talk to them about anything. I hope that what I am as a woman, as a person, will do something to counteract their stereotypes about female behaviour; yet I feel hopeless about this when I see them surrounded by media images of women as tramps, coquettish secretaries, helpless victims — of women who 'love the boot'. I have fantasies about kicking in the T.V. set. I have fantasies about moving someplace where the kids' peer group will be composed of literate, sensitive, loving, warm individuals. (Hell, I'd like to find that peer group for *myself*.) I try to bring a feminist perspective into our conversations. They smile knowingly at one another almost before my lips part. Garner tells me, "Everything's sexist to you."

The best way for me to deal with the kids is to keep the channels open, to keep giving them the straight goods about how I feel. Sometimes I feel *powerless* with them; my wishes and/or demands make very little impression. When I ask them to assume their share of household responsibility their response is often minimal. When this happens I'm afraid to risk telling them how angry or hurt I feel because I don't have much confidence that they will love me even if I get angry. So I fall into a trap of bitching about them to their father. (He is blessed with a big scary voice which, when it issues 'orders', gets pretty fast results.) But I lose a lot by not dealing with them myself, and have no right to expect someone else to deal with them on my behalf. The last time I got angry and upset everyone got together in the kitchen and I told them what was going on. It was hard for me to lay it all out, but it was worth the risk — I released my anger and we came together in a strong, warm, healing way.

Is any of this coming through? I just can't stuff it all in. I am becoming aware that I am not describing a *thing* but a *process*. Relating to these four kids is a tremendously complicated process, because I am dealing with their trips plus all my own — my kid trip about how adults should be/are, and my adult trip about how kids should be/are. What I *can* say about all of it is that I sure am learning a lot. The more I open up to it all, the more I learn, the more I feel. I am adding a parent dimension to my kid dimension. My kid dimension has been immeasurably enriched, to the point that I want to say to my parents "I *know*, Ma. Dad, I *know*."

law

He Can Break Your Leg But Not Your Watch

by Stella Bailey

A husband who is separated from his wife visits her. In the course of a heated discussion he beats her up and breaks her jaw. Although the wife can initiate criminal proceedings against her husband, she cannot sue him civilly and thus recover damages for her personal injuries, that is, monetary compensation to cover such items as medical expenses, loss of earnings, pain and suffering. However, had her husband smashed her television set, she could sue him to recover damages for the loss.

A wife suffers injuries in a motor vehicle accident while a passenger in a car owned and driven by her husband. The court decides that the husband was sixty percent at fault and the other driver was forty percent at fault. Assuming that the wife's damages totalled $10,000, she could only recover $4,000 — a sum which represents the degree to which the other driver was at fault. To pay the expenses which the other $6,000 would have covered will mean depleting the family funds or perhaps obtaining a loan. Had the injured passenger been the driver's sister, brother, mother or father, however, his insurance company would have been liable to pay the $6,000.

These two examples illustrate the effects of a law called interspousal tort immunity in force in all Canadian provinces except in Quebec, Ontario and Manitoba which recently amended their laws. This law provides that no husband or wife may sue the other for a tort — a wrong committed against a person or his/her property. In addition to assault and negligence, the torts illustrated in the above examples, conduct for which husbands and wives have been unable to sue each other include false imprisonment, malicious prosecution, deceit, fraudulent conspiracy and libel. There are exceptions to this rule. A woman may sue her husband for the protection and security of her property; and in the three provinces of New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Alberta, a man may sue his wife for the protection and security of his property.

Before considering the reasons for this unjust rule which prevents one person from recovering for injuries inflicted intentionally or negligently by another simply because they are married to each other, a few comments will be made about the situations where the tort was committed before marriage or during a separation. With the exception of Alberta where the position is not clear for either husbands or wives, it is possible in those provinces where interspousal tort immunity is the law, for wives to sue their husbands during marriage for torts committed before marriage. As for husbands, they have the same right of action against their wives unless they live in British Columbia, Saskatchewan, Prince Edward Island or Newfoundland.

Although the husband and wife were one in law, the husband was the one.

Where a tort is committed during a separation, the general rule is that no legal action will lie between a husband and wife. The reason for this rule is that a man and a woman are legally married until they are divorced or their marriage has been annulled, even though they may not be living together. However, in at least two provinces (New Brunswick and Alberta) a suit is possible where the husband and wife are judicially separated. In New Brunswick, the Married Woman's Property Act provides that a husband or wife may sue the other while living apart under a decree or order of judicial separation for a tort committed during the separation. In Alberta, the Domestic Relations Act provides that after a judgment of judicial separation has been granted the wife shall be considered a single woman for the purposes of suing and being sued in a civil action. It could be argued that a judicially-separated wife can sue her husband for a tort committed during the separation. Unlike the situation in New Brunswick, the same argument could not be made for the husband. Practically speaking, however, these exceptions to the general rule have little effect since most people who are separated do not have a judicial separation.

As for divorced persons suing each other for torts committed during the marriage, at one time they could not do so. However, a recent case has held that they, as well as spouses whose marriage has been annulled, can now sue for torts committed during the marriage.

The obvious question which follows this brief survey of the interspousal tort immunity rule is: why does tort law discriminate against married persons by prohibiting suits between husband and wife for personal injuries? To answer this question one must first go back in time — for centuries. In the earliest English law book is found the theological metaphor that husband and wife shall be one flesh. This concept, the unity doctrine, which became part of the stock in trade of lawyers, produced widespread effects in the law. In tort law, since husband and wife were one person, they could not sue each other. As well, a married woman could not be the sole plaintiff or defendant in a civil action. Thus she could not sue her husband or anyone else for that matter nor be sued by him, or any other person. That did not mean, however, that a married woman could commit a tort against someone other than her husband and escape liability or similarly that someone who committed a tort against her would escape liability. It simply meant that it was her husband who sued on her behalf or was sued by the other party and that she was merely joined as a party to the action. A husband, of course, could sue and be sued by others without joining his wife. For the wife then, the unity doctrine explains somewhat why she could not sue or be sued by others. For some purposes the wife's legal personality was totally extinguished. In these cases it can be said that although the husband and wife were one in law, the husband was the one.

The legal unity of spouses is one principle that played an important role in the development of the interspousal tort immunity law. Another is the con-

cept of marriage as a guardianship profitable to the husband, which seems to have developed in feudal times and which continued until the nineteenth century. During this period of time, a husband profited by marriage in the sense that he essentially became sole owner of his wife's property. Since a married woman had no property, her husband was personally liable to other persons for the torts which she committed during and after marriage. This liability of the husband was another reason why husbands and wives could not sue each other. After all, where a wife injured her husband, and if he had been allowed to sue, he could not collect from her since he already owned all her property.

It was in the late 1800's and early 1900's that the concept of marriage was altered with the enactment of Married Women's Property Acts in England, the United States and Canada. This legislation allowed a married woman to acquire and dispose of property and protected her property by allowing her to sue her husband and others. By allowing suits between husband and wife with respect to property, it can be argued that the legal unity of husband and wife was abolished. Therefore, after this time, it can be said the basis for the interspousal tort immunity rule (that is, conjugal unity and marriage as a profitable guardianship) no longer existed. Why then has the law persisted until today in the majority of common law provinces? There are five arguments which are usually given for retaining the existing law and thereby denying husbands and wives the legal relief which would be available to them if they were not married.

One of the arguments used is that allowing the husbands and wives to sue each other would disrupt domestic harmony. However, the most common interspousal tort occurs in automobile accidents where the wife, as passenger in a car owned and driven by her husband, is injured. In those cases, it would be the insurance company which would bear the loss and not the negligent spouse. Therefore there would be no question of domestic tranquility being destroyed. It should be mentioned here that provincial Insurance Acts would have to be amended in order that the insurer would be liable to pay the damages of the injured spouse. Presently the Acts do not allow recovery where the spouse or child of the injured suffers personal injuries.

With respect to non-motor vehicle accident actions, cases indicate that domestic harmony has been destroyed before the tortuous act has been committed, that is, the assault or slander is committed after the parties have separated.

Yet another rebuttal to the domestic harmony argument against allowing spouses to sue each other for personal injuries incurred is that the law allows them to sue each other for other reasons. Women can now sue their husbands for the protection and security of their property; men, in certain provinces, have the same right. Both wives and husbands can sue each other for breach of a contract entered into between the spouses. Spouses can institute criminal proceedings against each other. Parents and their children can sue each other in tort. What of the argument of preserving domestic harmony in these cases? Obviously that consideration did not bear enough weight to prohibit those laws. There seems to be no valid reason why civil actions for personal injury should be exceptions to the rule.

Another argument in favour of retaining the rule is that criminal law provides an adequate remedy. But that is not always the case. A spouse who is injured in a motor vehicle accident caused through the fault of the other spouse cannot initiate criminal proceedings. Even where crime has been committed, the injured spouse may not wish to proceed by way of a criminal action. A separated woman, for example, who is dependent on alimony and maintenance payments will not want to see her husband imprisoned. Besides, criminal law does little to compensate an injured person. While the Criminal Injuries Compensation Act of Alberta, for example, provides for an injured spouse to obtain expenses incurred as a result of the injury and monetary loss resulting from incapacity to work, there is a limit of $10,000 where damages for physical disability or disfigurement and pain and suffering are awarded.

By prohibiting suits between husband and wife, some think that a deluge of litigation is thus avoided. If suits were allowed, they say, the courts would be filled with husbands and wives making all sorts of accusations, whether founded in reality or not. Contrary to this belief the American and British experience with these laws have indicated that there is no real basis for the fear.

The remaining arguments in favour of interspousal tort immunity deal with insurance. One argument is that tort actions between husband and wife would encourage collusion and insurance fraud. But surely it is for the courts to determine whether an action is based on fraud and collusion. Furthermore, actions are allowed between husbands and wives where property is involved as well as between other family members and friends. Could not these situations be potentially collusive as well? The Ontario Law Reform Commission made enquiries in Australia in those states where husbands and wives can sue each other for motor vehicle accident injuries and learned that collusion and fraud between husband and wife are not problems.

Another argument concerning insurance is that, if the law did permit husbands and wives to sue, the spouse who caused the injury would benefit since the insurance money would become part of the family funds. However, this same argument could apply to other family members who are allowed to sue. As well, and perhaps more importantly, this argument ignores the fact that the purpose of awarding damages is to compensate the injured spouse for such items as medical expenses, loss of wages, and permanent disability.

A final argument relating to insurance is that the cost of insurance would increase. However the Manitoba and Ontario Law Reform Commissions made enquiries and learned that abolishing the law would have little effect, if any, on the cost of insurance.

In my opinion, there is no acceptable reason why a spouse who is injured by the other spouse, either intentionally or negligently, should not have a legal right to a civil action against the spouse. It follows that the law prohibiting suits between husband and wife should be abolished and that a new law should be enacted providing that husbands and wives may sue each other in tort. As already indicated, other provincial statutes such as the Insurance Act, would also have to be amended so that the law would be effective.

Until the law is changed, however, situations such as those described at the beginning of the article will continue to occur. Wives (and husbands too) will be assaulted, slandered, and injured in automobile accidents, but they will not be able to receive compensation because the injury was inflicted by their spouse. You may well wonder whether you can do anything to avoid the injustice of the present law. The alternatives available to avoid undue hardship, other than reform of the law are not very satisfying. You could avoid marriage. If already married, you could refuse to accept rides with your spouse. However impractical, unless the law is changed, these are the only alternatives.

Stella Bailey is a second year law student at the University of Alberta in Edmonton. She works with the Women's Project at Student Legal Services and is a member of the National Association of Women and the Law, Edmonton caucus.

Return to Elk Lake

1
The 401 is a taut muscle of highway
flexing in the April sun

stretching toward the snowed-in landscape
of your office daydreams

the small Elk Lake A-frame your thoughts curl up in
between meetings, classes, the grading of exams

You've talked often of your northern sanctuary:

its ceiling-high windows
its fireplace built of local brick
the backyard patio
you pieced together with your own hands

but the miles that numb our legs
won't be pared away for hours yet

2
Hungry? you ask
Open the sandwiches; the coffee's on the back seat

The sky layers into evening

Nothing but static on the radio
as you speak of your last trip up
and the car purrs its way

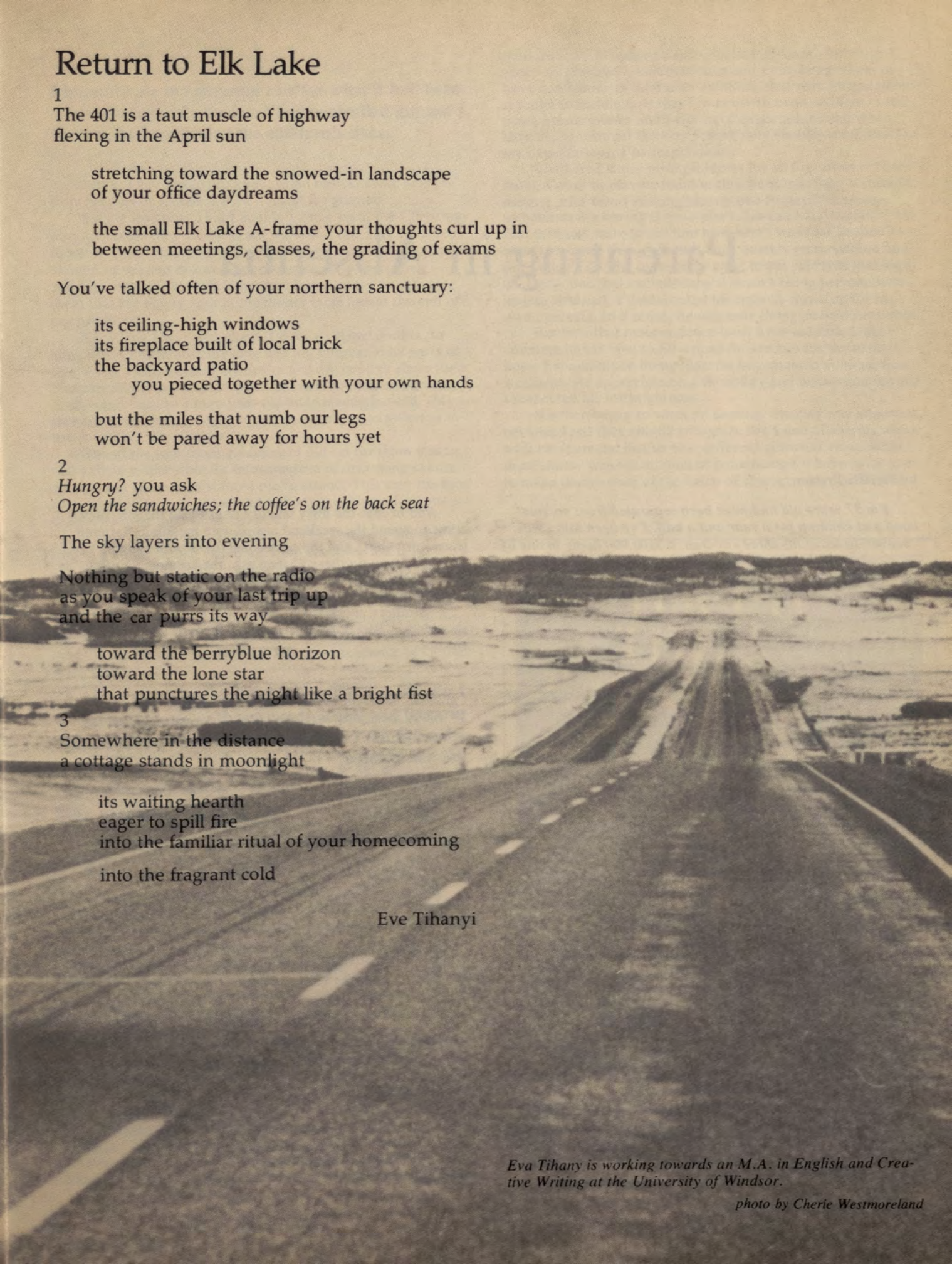
toward the berryblue horizon
toward the lone star
that punctures the night like a bright fist

3
Somewhere in the distance
a cottage stands in moonlight

its waiting hearth
eager to spill fire
into the familiar ritual of your homecoming

into the fragrant cold

Eve Tihanyi



Eva Tihany is working towards an M.A. in English and Creative Writing at the University of Windsor.

photo by Cherie Westmoreland

Parenting in Absentia

by Patricia Preston

I'm 37 years old and have been separated from my husband and children for a year and a half. I've been told I was "brave" to leave my three children, a $100,000 home in one of Calgary's oldest and most attractive areas, and the security of my husband's good income. In fact many went so far as to say I was "crazy", "stupid", or "impulsive". I didn't lay much credence to the latter because I'd been with my husband 13 years and the decision was long in coming. I never thought about my departure in terms of courage. I just realized, after much turmoil, that, as Susan Sontag said in her Hanoi Diaries, "If you can't put your life where your head is, then what you think is a fraud." I was fortunate when I left to have a profession, so I knew I could support myself financially.

I was unaware of the anguish I would suffer because of my separation from the children. In fact, I wonder if I had known how much I'd miss them whether I would have left. I had, despite attempts otherwise, built a large part of my life around them. I could always easily tell anyone who I was because my identity revolved around my role as parent.

On Sundays after they've gone, I return to my apartment and glance furtively around for traces of their presence. Corners from candy wrappers. A comic book or two. Maybe even a forgotten t-shirt I can wash.

Reminders. I ask myself if my parenting now centres around reminders. If it does, then I wonder what became of the multitude of duties and responsibilities I had always associated with parenthood.

Take those t-shirts and all the other washing I did — one soak cycle running into another until I'd soaked, rinsed and washed for thirteen years. I hated washing clothes when I was in the house and I still do. Yet I felt then, with some carry-over now, that parenting carried with it a number of required mundane tasks. Like washing clothes. My husband and children expected that I'd do them and I responded. And now, to maintain my status as parent, I still lean toward fulfilling expectations my children have of me in that role. So I wash their clothes — on weekends when they're with me and then when they've gone, leaving behind assorted clothing to remind me not only of them but also of my role.

And in case the dirty laundry doesn't do the job, they come to spend the weekend armed with mending. Tattered jeans, torn shirts and the occasional dress with hanging hem.

"Will you fix these?" they ask, the crumpled clothing an outright challenge to my parenthood.

"You're still our mom," they say, as if rehearsed.

"Mothers' work," my 13-year-old son says and shrugs his shoulders. "Part of being a parent," he adds and hands me the clothes.

I was shaken to learn that life at the house could proceed just fine without me. How could that be when I'd felt I was the parent around whom family life had pivoted?

And I am, too. But in absentia. It's been a year and a half since I left the house. My three children are still there with their father, who insists I stopped being a parent the night I left. I don't share his view, although often life would be simpler if I did.

Being a female parent carried many expectations for me, all of which were relatively easy (although often annoying) to meet while I was with the children. I cooked, cleaned, tutored, drove, listened, counselled and bandaged as I'd been taught. On call twenty-four hours, year round. Never any question that mother "could" and "would" do it — the "it" being anything my children or husband slotted into that spot.

But when I left, my role as parent changed. At first I was uneasy with and fearful of the change. I'd leaned heavily on my mother/parent role and now my mothering was reduced to every other weekend. Although I'd suspected my dispensability, I was shaken to learn that life at the house could proceed just fine without me. "How could that be?" I wondered, when I'd felt I was the parent around whom family life had pivoted. If I'd questioned my self-worth during my marriage, I now felt doubly dubious about my value as a mother.

I knew I had to re-examine my role as parent. I needed to establish some guidelines for my benefit as much as for the

I began to see my parental role for what it had been — an ego trip. My husband had controlled me and I, in turn, had controlled the children's lives.

children's. They needed to know some basics, some new interpretations of premises they'd taken for granted.

Simple logistics. That I couldn't show up at the Christmas concert unless they called to tell me it was on. That I wanted to know about school activities and to still attend them. That I wanted to see and discuss report cards and to meet their teachers. Somehow their father had begun to try to convince them that my empty spot at the dinner table meant the end of my parenting.

Each time I was with them, I'd try to dispel doubts, to allay fears. I reiterated my love and my interest in all parts of their lives. I emphasized my desire and my need to share their interests and to participate when possible in their endeavors, pretty important to a nine-year-old and eleven-year-old. (My teenager had already begun to see parental participation as intrusion rather than support.)

One of the important guidelines I did set for them was to make them responsible for informing me of upcoming events, particularly those they wanted me to attend. This way the four of us knew where we stood and nobody laid blame for concerts missed or interviews ignored.

The breakthrough came when my eleven-year old son took the initiative and called me from school to ask if I'd drive classmates to the local museum for an outing. Each of us knew we wanted the other in our lives.

My daughter was somewhat more reticent about my buying her clothes. Although she wanted me to help select items, she feared her father's disapproval. Puzzling, I thought that I'd dressed the children for 13 years but now my choice of clothes wasn't sound.

"Don't buy them anything that isn't sensible," my husband would say sternly. "They need good, practical clothing and I'm not sure I have much faith in your judgment about their clothes."

So I started reassuring her by having her select patterns that she could share with her father. After he'd "approved", I'd make the outfit and she'd proudly carry it home. From there, we branched out full force into stores to confer and select new clothes. Her father didn't like jeans but she gradually began to accept my judgment as worthwhile and our last purchase was a long, denim skirt.

But the mutual acceptance of some working guidelines was the easiest part of redefining my role as parent. There remained that whole nebulous area of parenting which doesn't lend itself to any rules.

For me to relinquish control of my children's lives was difficult. At times I was sure I'd never be able to forfeit what power I'd had and I was also convinced that I couldn't handle that forfeiture anyway. I began to see my parental role for what it had been — an ego trip. My husband had controlled me, and I, in turn (and often in defense and retaliation), had controlled the children's lives. Now, I was faced with a large and ominous gap in my life. I felt cheated. Left out. No longer did they check everything out with me. No longer could I tell them what to wear, what time to be home, where they could and could not go, and what they could and could not do. In fact, I had to face up to and accept the fact that they rarely consulted me at all. But I still wanted to be consulted, if only in certain seemingly small parts of their lives.

One of the most difficult tasks for any parent is to recognize their offspring as individuals. Little persons with minds of their own, valid opinions and worthwhile ideas. Although I respect my children's independence and I encourage them to have confidence in their own opinions, that very independence is tough to handle now that I'm not with them so often. I still make presumptions and I still have expectations and when they fail to respond the way I think they should or fall short of my expectations, I'm despondent.

Visits frequently pose problems for all four of us. "Hey mom, I want to play badminton this weekend," my son said to me just prior to my picking him up one Friday. "Anyway, sometimes it's boring at your place. So can I stay home?" My first instincts were to tell him how hurt I was that he didn't want to see me that weekend, but I quickly reconsidered and felt I must view the request for what it was. He was making a choice — one that excluded me. I wasn't being personally rejected. After all, I'd advocated his right to speak up for his own interests. In a sense, he was only doing as he'd been told.

But now that independence hurt. I missed him. I was counting on his visit to fill a need for me and intellectually I knew I shouldn't be doing that. So he remained at home that weekend. He appreciated my flexibility and understanding and I respected his forthrightness.

We then began to work on sharing. Sharing was important because I felt they should recognize the value of sharing ideas with two parents, just to hear different points of view. What I didn't know was the amount of convincing I'd have to do just to make them aware of the value of sharing with me. They'd

never questioned this before but now that I wasn't there to share at their convenience, they'd become used to relying solely on their father for feedback. Now they had to make an extra effort to share with me.

I learned that I couldn't force them to use me as a sounding board, but what I did discover was that they recognized the value of my views just by being with me regularly. They heard me deal with friends, handle parts of my life and from hearing my responses and observing my attitudes they made a discovery of their own. They found out I had a flexibility to thinking and to living that was missing at home. More valuable was their realization that they could benefit from that flexibility.

Once again, a phone call helped me handle what I'd thought was an insurmountable hurdle. My eldest called me at the office and asked if we could have lunch "to talk about school and things." We'd begun to share.

About the time the children began sharing their lives with me again, I started to handle the guilt I'd felt about leaving them. I realized I hadn't deprived them of one parent. Instead, they now had two parents whose energies for them were more positive and more directed because the dinner-time fights had stopped and the marital squabbling was over. And, after about a year, the half-sleeping, half-waking nightmares that had plagued me began to ease off. I realized my phases of night misery were brought on by my inability to deal with my guilt, which probably dated back to my puritan heritage.

For the first time I listened to friends who pointed out that the children's lifestyle had certainly not deteriorated since my departure. In fact, they now had one home in a country setting and another in a city highrise; two parents who loved them; friends galore and none of the family fights that occurred in other homes.

Although I've accepted that their father can look after them perfectly well, there are still times when the old night miseries uncontrollably surface in broad daylight. These are the times when the children cry when we part, shout at me for daring to have a life of my own, or curse me for upsetting the status quo. Only now I can handle their anxieties. I can listen to their fears and help them work out their anguish. Because now I'm no longer just a parent, but a person and it's the person to whom I want them to relate. I encourage them to see me as a person first, then as a parent.

They're trying and so am I. I long for them every day. Because our time together is short, we talk a lot more than we did before. We touch and hold each other more, too. The respect and care we all share isn't taken so much for granted these days. We're building a new relationship now.

But it's still tough to accept that once they close the door behind them Sunday nights my visit is over. For two weeks I only exist for them at their convenience.

Patricia Preston teaches journalism at the Southern Alberta Institute of Technology in Calgary. She has also worked in Vancouver, Edmonton and Ottawa as a public school teacher and a reporter.

Day Care

View from the Top

an interview with Howard Clifford
by Leslie Bella

In Canada, day care is considered a welfare or social service and is, therefore, the responsibility of provincial governments. Since 1966 the Government of Canada, through the Canada Assistance Plan, has shared in the cost of providing subsidized day care services to families "in need or likely to be in need". The Canada Assistance Plan is intended to prevent people from becoming dependent on public welfare. Thus, subsidies are available to families with low incomes, including many single parent families, since the alternative for these families would be public welfare.

In 1971 Health and Welfare Canada hired Howard Clifford, one of the few men in the day care field, as Day Care Consultant.

Leslie Bella interviewed Clifford for *Branching Out* about the state of day care services across Canada.

Bella: *What does the Day Care Consultant for Health and Welfare do?*

Clifford: I'm a consultant to the provinces on behalf of Health and Welfare. This involves being invited out to the provinces to discuss their programs; day care programs are cost-shared between the federal and provincial governments, and we discuss those financial arrangements. Also, they are interested in my reaction to certain programs they have developed or are planning. They look to me for feedback.

What should a parent look for in a day care centre?

Well, there are certain standards in space, staff ratio and

"Down Here with Us Parents"

by Heather Brunelle as told to Elaine Butler

I

I was in university until December, in my first year in the honour's English program, and my day care situation at that time was good. I had a five year old in the Student Union day care centre and I had my seven year old, Holly, and my three year old, Bill, in what they call private-home day care centres. They're not centres, they're subsidized private homes.

The area of the city where I live is particularly bad for day care, especially the subsidized private home care. Usually parents in a neighbourhood who want to take in children apply to be subsidized. Here, nobody applies. They have never had anybody from this area except the two that I went out and scrounged up myself. Getting them took going from door to door, putting notices in people's mailboxes and ads in Safeways. The first woman I found was approved in a rush because I had been working with the social worker for a year and a half.

The woman was all right as a person, but she was an immaculate housekeeper who was doing it strictly for the money. She didn't want to go on a subsidized program because she didn't want a reported income that she'd have to pay income taxes on. So I had to pay her $300.00 a month which was almost as much as the kids and I were living on. After a month of that I said, I'm sorry, I'll have to drop out of school, I can't afford this anymore. So she went onto the subsidized program and the social worker came out every two weeks to a month and checked things out. Meanwhile the kids were being kept in her little basement all day long. It was an unfinished basement with an old TV. Bill flooded the basement two or three times because he unhooked the hose from the washing machine. If the kids had a nap they were made to sleep on the floor up-

equipment. There's no single model for day care, no single approach that's the right approach. There should be a mixture of background in the staff at the centre — interdisciplinary. Then, also, a single centre cannot be all things to all children. There should be a variety of centres, operating on a range of different models. Ideally, in any one community there would be a number of centres, each special in its own way, but taken together they would offer a range of choices to parents.

My basic philosophy about day care, though, is that it's a service that should treat the child as an individual, and *never* isolate him from his family, or from his community. Not an island.

If I were middle income and needing day care, one of the places I would look at very carefully would be Manitoba. Their centres have been quite successful in maintaining a socioeconomic mix. Personally, I sincerely believe that, although we have emphasized staff-child ratios and staff qualifications we have ignored the effects of children upon each other. Our children should be raised with children from a mixture of backgrounds, not segregated by income.

I know the federal government can't unilaterally solve the day care problem in Canada – it takes the provincial governments to do that. But what initiatives is Health and Welfare planning to give an extra boost to day care?

There is a new Social Service Act to be introduced in the House of Commons this spring that will be helpful to day care in some areas.

One of the changes it proposes will make more people eligible for a day care subsidy. You won't have to be quite as near to the welfare level to qualify. That will be really helpful if the provinces decide to accept it. And it's especially helpful

A graduate of one day care program was making more money on weekends than at her full-time job in day care.

to the one parent families, where there's one wage earner.

Another problem, though, is that already close to seventy percent of all children that use subsidized day care centres are from one parent families, and that's much higher than the proportion in the general population. They are families that are the more vulnerable ones but, on the other hand, if the proportion gets much higher you get a ghettoization effect. We are at the point where you have to be a one parent family with some kind of problem to get into a subsidized day care centre. That's not good for the program because you isolate all the children with some kind of difficult background and put them all together.

The other side to this is the middle income parent. Many centres would like to include the middle income families with two wage earners, but quite often these families are only middle income because there *are* two wage earners. These families don't get a subsidy, and yet the full cost of good day care is a big chunk of their income. The cost of day care is going up so rapidly, faster than salaries, that it becomes a very high proportion of the second salary in the family. In Ottawa it costs as much as $14 a day. Many families can't afford it, so are opting out of subsidized day care and sending their children to heaven knows where!

If a good part of the cost of day care goes into salaries, then how well paid are the staff in day care centres?

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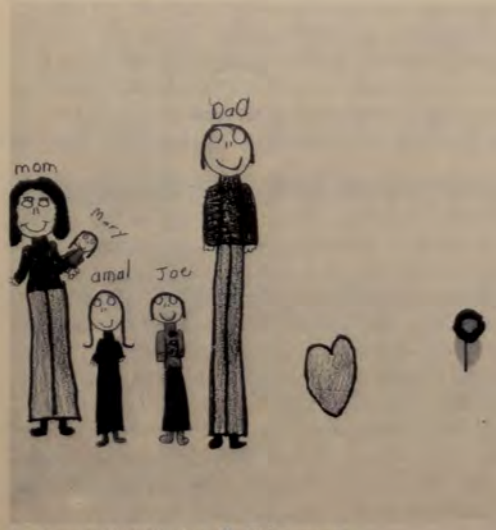
stairs in her kids' room because she didn't want the beds messed. She'd let the kids run out in the backyard, Bill too, and he took off down the alley a couple of times. She was an absent-minded type of person who really didn't have her priorities straight and I finally, out of desperation, had the lady next door go onto the private home program. That worked out just fine for me from January of last year until December, then all of a sudden she quit. I guess she had never had to deal with kids from the so-called broken home.

This has really thrown a wrench into my works. I'm looking at five years of sitting here on welfare because I can't get a babysitter, I can't get day care, I can't go to work.



by Amal Halaki, Age 7, Edmonton

If the kids had a nap they were made to sleep on the floor upstairs in her kids' room because she didn't want the beds messed.

II

A couple of years ago some other people and I tried to set up a cooperative day care centre here. I heard about it through a notice dropped in my mail box. There had been a meeting of at least 100 people in the gymnasium with the director of City Day Care. I went to the second meeting. There were about twelve people who were going to form core committees, all interested people who wanted to get involved in the day care centre. We broke down into assignments. Someone was going to be in charge of finding a facility and someone else was going to go around the community and find out exactly what services were needed. I volunteered to do the paper work, to find out the best way of going about getting a centre organized, as a cooperative or as a charitable organization. I had all the papers ready to fill out but we needed a place, a facility which you need before you can get the funds. But you need the funds before you can get the facility, if there's one available, which there wasn't. The woman who was looking for it finally just dropped out. She said she was moving and didn't need the centre any more. The group dwindled down to myself and three other ladies in my housing complex, one of whom came, brought some coffee, and left again. I decided I had a university career ahead of me, I couldn't take on this day care centre by myself. So it died right there. There have been very few efforts since then and I gather there were very few before that, you can't get organized. Yet I stumble across people in the neighbourhood who are just desperate for day care.

We've found that a certified teacher might be good in day care but more in spite of being a teacher than because of it.

That's a problem we have always had in the day care field. We expect a great deal from day care staff — special skills, training, patience and warmth; we almost expect them to be superhuman, and then we offer them minimum wage!

But in the last few years almost every province has set up training courses for workers in day care, for example child development courses in community colleges. The graduates of these programs have expected to get paid the same as other people graduating from two-year programs — social service aids and so on. In one situation we followed up on some of the more promising students and found that many of them were not actually working in day care. They had taken other jobs where the pay was higher. In one case one of the top students was still working in day care, but had another job on weekends to make ends meet. She was making more money on weekends than at her full-time job in day care.

On the other hand, salaries have gone up tremendously in the last five years. When you compare what day care workers get with the salaries of allied professions, day care salaries have probably made more rapid growth over the last few years. One thing that has helped has been that in some cases day care centres associated with municipalities have been unionized. We have noticed that these unionized centres tend to have salaries higher than the other centres in the area. This has acted as a sort of lever, pushing up salaries in day care centres generally.

Unionization itself, though, is a problem. Many centres have refused to become unionized. The staff is in a bind. They work closely with parents and don't want to damage that relationship. Parents, too, are in a bind, for they know the skills that the staff have and want to see them treated fairly; but they know that if salaries go up so also will the amount they have to pay each month for their child's day care.

Do you think we would get more dollars for day care if it were provided under some other auspice than social services, as part of the educational system, for example?

I think we'd get less!

Why?

First of all, I think that education has an extremely important contribution to make to day care. I think the program needs an educational component. On the other hand, precisely because the child is more than something cognitive, we provide total care. The school system itself has never lent itself to that kind of approach. A teacher's training doesn't prepare him for that kind of total care program. Most research shows that we need to have parental involvement in the day care program, at one level or another, to achieve some continuity between what's happening at the school and what's happening at the centre. We like to have the centre open, with a program that ties in a lot of community people, whereas the school, it's been said, tends to be an island. It's awfully difficult for the community to break into the school, although with the community school idea this is changing in some places. Day care has allowed a lot of community groups to come together with a

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III

I was walking down the street one day with my kids when I stumbled upon a woman who was willing to babysit for me. My daughter wanted to have her friend sleep over so the girl's mother wanted to meet me. I went in and got acquainted with the mother and the man who was living with her. We got to talking and they discovered I needed a babysitter. Right there, they volunteered. This guy is a prison guard who works funny shifts, has a CB radio and drinks a lot. This woman has five kids of her own and she babysits three or four other babies. She was going to take on my kids as well and charge me, well, she said $200.00 and he said $250.00.

Then, on the spur of the moment, they asked me if I would babysit that night for them so they could go to a drive-in movie. I thought this would really give me a chance to see how things operated around there, so I did. They came home around 11:00. The guy was wiped out of his mind and the woman wasn't doing too well either. They were arguing about this, that, and the other thing, and he kept shooting off his mouth about money and stuff. My kids haven't been exposed to that since my ex-husband and their jaws dropped. Holly got up to put her boots on and the guy grabbed her and threw her into the air. She was screaming in terror. He thought he was tickling her but he was digging his fingers into her ribs. I told him to put her down so he did and said, "Forget it, I can't handle it, this kid is ridiculous, forget the babysitting." He went on swearing, his wife was swearing at him and the kids were just sort of clinging to each other. Finally we got things settled down and the oldest boy called a cab. Debbie, the woman's littlest girl, was all ready to go with us and she said in a casual way to her mum, "Don't get hurt tonight, OK?"

Obviously you know what's going on down there.

I called the deal off, but there are three or four women i this city who are bringing their children to that woman's home. How many people are there in this city who are being grossly overcharged to have their children treated that way? And what choice do they have?

IV

Last summer Stanley Mansbridge, Alberta Deputy Minister of Social Services and Community Health, and Mel Finley, Program Planner for Social Services, requested public input to a set of proposed day care regulations. They're doing things like putting stronger lightbulbs in the bathroom, moving the kids' beds another six inches apart, and demanding trained staff. So the private day care centres, which are just scraping by now, are going to have to increase the fees even more. And they're going to have to shut down because the parents aren't going to be able to pay that kind of money.

by Tracey Webster, Age 9, Creemore, Ontario

multiplicity of backgrounds and expertise. I think that's primarily because day care has developed as a social service in Canada, and social service people have not seen themselves as the sole experts in the development of the child. When teachers talk about day care, they say that every day care center should be run by a qualified teacher — whereas we've found that a certified teacher might be good in day care, but more in spite of the fact that they are a teacher, rather than because they are a teacher.

That's all very interesting, but actually you didn't answer my question. I asked if you think we'd get more money through education.

No, we'd get less. There's a tremendous squeeze on education right across the country. Local school boards are having trouble coming up with money just to meet the demands of the regular grade school. Even the kindergarten child gets less priority than those in the regular school grades, so the education dollars couldn't really be stretched to include much in the way of day care. It is easier to get more funding for day care as a social service, because of the money from the senior levels of governments, than it would be if day care were considered as part of the local school system.

What are you doing personally to get more money for day care?

Within the Federal Government, of course, I'm an advocate for day care. Then, too, I spend a great deal of my time in the provinces talking to groups, and trying to raise the general level of consciousness about day care. It's the provincial money for day care that counts, because with a shared-cost program the federal government only puts in money to match the amount put in by the provincial governments.

Do you encourage groups that want to pressure their provincial governments to increase funding for day care?

Yes, that's right! I help them with information about day care, too, and by telling them who to talk to, giving them names to write to and so on.

What can we as parents do to push for more money for day care?

Most of all you have to be knowledgeable. If you are talking to bureaucrats, or to politicians, trying to push for more day care, you'll be much more effective if you know what you are talking about, and can show real evidence of the need for more and better day care. Not just emotional demands for more day care spaces, but a well documented case for more funding.

And the other very important thing is constructive use of the media. Media coverage given to the need for day care raised people's whole consciousness about day care. In fact, we wouldn't be as far along as we are today if it hadn't been for the support that the media have given to day care. Politicians can only move as far as public opinion will let them, and the media have helped, and will help, in raising the public awareness of day care needs.

Leslie Bella is a graduate student in political science at the University of Alberta. She has been active in urban reform in Edmonton for many years.

The proposals do only minimal things for the kids and parents. The staff requirements aren't much better. Instead of one person for 24 children, they have two people for 24 children. It's an improvement of sorts. The government requested response to these proposals, and that's where I got involved deeply in day care. That was before I had any real problems myself.

Earlier that year, before the provincial proposals were released, I had attended one of the workshops sponsored by the city Day Care Branch. The purpose of the workshops was to obtain public input on city recommendations for improvement of the day care situation. People at the workshops showed a lot of support for these improvements and many were interested in some sort of lobby for quality day care. The Edmonton Social Planning Council agreed to co-ordinate a short term concentrated effort by various people who had been fighting for years to improve the situation. Notice was sent to everyone who attended the workshops but it turned out I was the only parent who came who wasn't a day care worker, director or professional, since not enough notice was given to allow parents to get a sitter. So through the rest of the whole thing I was the representative parent.

This group, theCoalition for Improved Day Care, circulated a petition and gathered several thousand signatures which were presented to Helen Hunley, the Minister of Social Services and Community Health. She wouldn't meet with us. A brief was prepared by other members of the group in reply to the proposed government standards. We arranged to present this brief to Mansbridge and Finley in Mansbridge's office and then go immediately to a press conference.

At the meeting with Mansbridge there were myself, the director of a day care centre, a director of Early Childhood Education and an alderwoman. Unofficially we proposed that the government should look into subsidizing the private day care centres temporarily to allow them to hire staff, raise the standards, meet those new levels of quality, and then subsidize the parents who wanted to use the program and give them the choice of going to this or that centre. Subsidize the parents. That way you have enough money coming in to keep these higher quality day care centres going and you enable people to get out and get some training, so they can earn some money.

We didn't get anywhere with these people and we really tried. I was furious with this back and forth, nobody getting anywhere, Mansbridge coming back with these pat answers very smooth, a good politician. Finally when I got my chance I told him that we not only need better facilities we need more facilities. He got this shocked look on his face, put his hand to his chest, and said, "But that would require capital outlay." Of course it would. What does he expect?

After we left his office we went directly to a press conference at the Holiday Inn. CBC, ACCESS and others from the media were there. We got good response at the conference but nothing came of it, there was nothing printed in the papers or anything.

The provincial government never made a decision. A couple of months later they started a new task force but no one from the Coalition was asked for their input. Nothing has been heard from the city. I'm still sitting home with three kids and living on welfare.

Heather Brunelle is a single parent living in Edmonton. She has found day care places for two of her three children for September and hopes to return to university then. Her career interests are in education administration and civic politics.

Day Care

View from the Inside: An Ideal

by Lynn Scanlon
photos by Diana Palting

Quality day care has long been a controversial issue; its role in supporting a family system greatly misunderstood. In every Canadian community the government subsidized programs, offering quality programs for children, have extensive waiting lists which could, at a day's notice, fill twice as many centres. The priority system which has been set up to determine which families have greatest need for subsidized care necessarily favors the single working parent or student and, therefore, excludes many higher income families which supposedly can afford other alternatives. However, it is the large monthly tax payment of higher income families that help support these programs, and equally good alternatives are not readily available. Many of these two-parent families experience frustration and become bitter in their search for good day care arrangements. They know what a good centre has to offer the child and his family and understandably resent having to choose second best.

Because there are so few openings, only ten percent of the pre-school population requiring day care benefit from an organized program, including those children in the privately run profit-making centres. Until we recognize the deprivation experienced by children in some types of private care arrangements in contrast to the benefits realized by the children and families exposed to a quality program, day care will continue to be low on the list of society's priorities. Personally, I cannot think of a better preventive social service than good day care.

In government subsidized centres the staff-child ratio is higher than in private ones, usually 1:8 and often 1:6 in those centres that receive additional funding because of the integration of "special needs" children. The staff are trained in early childhood development or other related programs such as education, psychology or recreation and are carefully chosen to work as a team in a demanding situation.

The work *is* demanding, physically and emotionally. However, staff members often choose day care as an alternative to working within a public school system because of the autonomy allowed in planning an individualized program. To be effective in day care, the staff need to be dedicated to the political, educational and social concept of day care and must be prepared to work for lower salaries than those offered by the school board. A supervisory teacher in a playroom may earn in the region of $860.00 per month, her assistant $750.00 per month. Yet she is expected to plan and carry out an exciting all-day program geared to nurturance of the child's language, physical, emotional, social and intellectual skills. A further requirement is that she understand the diverse backgrounds of the children in her care.

A good day care centre is a happy place where the emotional climate is warm and inviting. It does not aim at providing a substitute for home care but a supplement. The staff want the children to master intellectual and physical tasks, to realize they are competent to learn, and to grow to trust themselves as well as others. The playrooms are arranged with separate areas for related activities. Throughout the day the

child keeps active painting, cutting, gluing, modelling clay, weighing, measuring and pouring water and sand, climbing, jumping, dancing, singing, building; but he also pauses to listen and observe. Creative play is dominant in the classrooms and is enhanced by the provision of well chosen equipment.

Sound nutrition is recognized as essential and a quality program aims at providing two thirds of the child's daily nutritional requirements. Menus are posted so parents can plan evening meals to complement the lunches. One of the most inviting aspects of our centre is the smell of freshly baked whole wheat bread wafting up the stairs. The children are always interested in what is going to be served at lunch and take delight in visiting "cook" first thing in the morning and checking out the smells.

For the emotionally or physically handicapped children who are integrated through a "special needs" program, individualized treatment programs are set up in consultation with specialists from other resource agencies, guidance clinics, and local hospitals. Introducing such a child to the centre can prove exhausting for the staff, but the joy expressed when the child masters a new task brings overwhelming rewards: a five-year-old blind child progresses from babbling to the experimentation with words; a little girl, who on admission a year ago was afraid of touching or being touched, is now loving and gregarious; a four-year-old boy whose frustration with his lack of speech led to aggressive behavior is now able, through play, to express himself.

Much time is spent with the child with special needs, or any child who is going through a troubled stage. Family oriented day care has a vital role to play in supporting a family through transitions and crises and can help relieve the tremendous pressures on all members of the family. Stresses within the family may be transferred to the child who, reacting to the situtation, often develops disturbing behavior patterns in order to protect himself. In addition to playroom staff who help him cope with the group situation, the centre may have one staff member who works exclusively with these children in individual play therapy sessions. She is responsible for skillfully directing the child's exploration of feelings and helping him discover more effective ways to behave. This may happen at the centre, at a staff member's home, or on a special field trip. Sometimes it involves working on number concepts or language skills and sometimes just plain old loving. Counselling is often available through the centre; if not, then parents can be referred to other agencies which offer this service.

Good day care emphasizes working *with* parents, sharing observations and expectations so that the child will not be confused by conflicting adult demands. The family centre provides an environment of mutual respect wherein staff and families can grow and communicate with each other. Many parents would rather develop their parenting skills in a relaxed setting than commit themselves to a regular class in parent-child communication, so staff take the opportunity to chat at the end of the day or when specific problems crop up.

This is what good day care *can* be but too seldom is. If parents would speak out more forcefully to demand good day care we could reach the ideal of quality programs, readily available, within each community.

Lynn Scanlon helped design the South Edmonton Day Care Centre and was its first director. Recently she became director of the Glengarry Day Care Centre in Edmonton. She took Early Childhood Education at the University of Alberta and has also taught drama in Edmonton and New Brunswick.

Diana Palting is a freelance photographer and a day care mother. She took the past year off from teaching photography to do graduate work in anthropology at the University of Alberta.

The Family at Supper
by Tara Eve Thomson, Age 6, Somerset, Manitoba

by Shelley Horz, Age 7, Edmonton

by Shane Lassey, Age 5, Edmonton

A small boy covering a doll in a cradle, and quietly rocking the "baby" to sleep, thinking thoughts that no one interferes with. The same boy, minutes later, raucously playing hide and seek with another child as they climb in and around a room divider that is designed, with punch-out pillows, to double as a climbing frame. Two children washing dishes in a big sudsy tub of water. Another little boy grinning with delight as he sits on the lap of a day care worker and listens to an animated reading of The Cat in the Hat. And a blind boy listening intently to the voices and sounds around him as he tries to form his own first words. Each person, child and day-care worker alike, developing their own special capabilities and interacting with others around them in a positive and nurturing way. Sometimes there are tears, sometimes anger. There is much laughter, much affection, and a great variety of activity. In this day care center child care is not just babysitting. Here each child is a unique and special person, whose development into a healthy, responsible, caring adult is the primary concern of all.

Diana Palting

Umbrella

fiction by Marilyn Julian
illustrations by Barbara Hartmann

The woman asked to see three pairs of shoes, each in a slightly different shade of brown, each with a slightly different height of heel. She was wearing a brown-tone dress of a light sleazy material, had brown hair, a brown sweater and a purse that was bulky and green. She was neither tall nor fat.

She tried on each pair of shoes, walked up and down the red carpet, then tried on the second pair of shoes again and walked in circles. Those were the shoes she bought.

She wore the new brown shoes and carried the old olive-green shoes in a bag.

As she stepped off the red carpet that demarcates the Shoe Department she caught sight of the full length mirror opposite in the Men's Clothing Department. She walked over to it, gazed at her reflection, then backed away. Scrambled in her thoughts may have been reminders: she had not eaten lunch, or there was someone she wished to meet. Certainly there was the problem of the purse, and the other problem of the old shoes.

When she neared the Exit doors she looked puzzled. The sky beyond them was dark and three people — an older man, a younger man, and a young child — stood with their backs to her at the doors. It was raining.

With an aimless stare on her face she pivoted then began walking towards the escalator.

She bought an umbrella at the counter near the escalator. A *navy blue* umbrella, $4.99, quite cheap. She had no more money. She left the bag with the old shoes on the umbrella counter and did not return when the salesclerk called out.

She walked quickly to the Exit doors, hoisted the navy blue umbrella and stepped out into the rain.

•••

I have seen many women behave this way in the afternoon. They are more or less between the ages of 21 and 49. Their faces are never ugly, but they are vague, distracted. Their eyes remain fixed for periods of time until you speak to them. Then what happens to their eyes I can only describe as being like the sudden opening of the glassy blue or green eyes of a walking doll. It is a sharp questioning as if they are coming back from a long sleep and you have said something fraudulent to them. Their eyes jerk and their speech is often jerky also. They will make one statement that is either a request or a demand, but sounds like neither because it is so flat, and follow it with inaudible mumblings — which are wry comments on something they alone are seeing. I gave up saying "Pardon?" long ago.

When I first noticed and started wondering about this kind of woman I was clerking in the Undergarment Department — Ladies Lingerie, L.L. We had some peeping Lilies — *voyeurs* — in the department, the kind of clerk who barges in to help you when your breasts are down. Women know how to get into brassieres, and these clerks always behave as if they are selling the latest kitchen stove to addle-brained females who need showing how to turn on the oven. I never did that, except by accident when I thought a fitting room empty. Several times I barged in on the kind of woman I'm describing. That's how I know they begin the afternoon stripped.

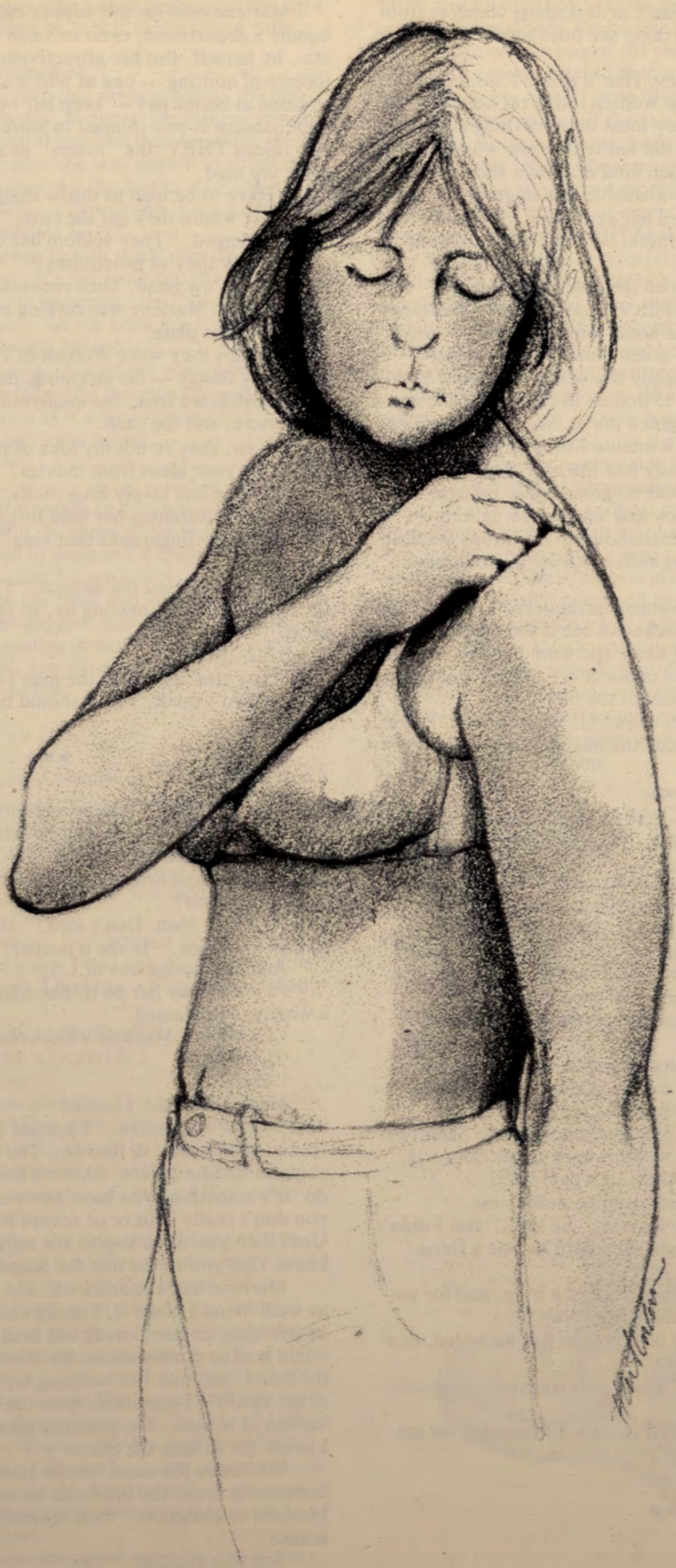
First they buy a new brassiere, a new pair of underpants, new pantyhose and a new slip. They do not ask to wear these. They pay for them and have them bagged.

The next time you see them, perhaps when you go for your break, you notice them leaving the Dress Department. Then you know for sure what colour they are changing to.

There's no sign of any purchases. Whatever they have bought they are now wearing.

How I know what happens is that after Undergarments I worked in Dresses. We would find worn underwear and used dresses stuffed in bags deposited under new clothing in bins and beneath racks. Lucy the Manageress I worked for shrugged: "It happens two or three times a week." It did. We tossed coins for the old clothing, some of good quality, as a sport. But Lucy had to take it to Lost and Found. I wouldn't have worn it, or risked trying to smuggle it out of the store. Security for employees is very tight. But I know that Lucy, after about a month, would check with L & F — she knew the girl at the Courtesy Desk well — and would claim whatever it was she had her eye on.

Wearing these women's cast-offs, dry-cleaned or not, would make my skin crawl, I'm sure. Sweaters I might consider.



Anyway, the kind of woman I'm describing wanders from Dresses to Accessories. Everything she buys must be the same colour as the dress.

Finally she arrives at Shoes. That's where I work now. I'm Manageress. I told how the woman today rid herself of her old shoes. If there's no bin, they must do something else.

When she arrived today I did not realize she was one of THEM until I told her I had each kind of brown shoe she handed to me from the display available also in green *in her size*. I could have sworn I heard her eyes click. She said, "Get the brown," then mumbled, I think, "I don't have anything green to match green with."

Her bulky green purse sat on the chair next to her.

There's no sense arguing with THEM or saying anything at all to upset THEM. This one today was changing to brown. I knew before she left that the green purse was a problem.

The new brown shoes, slightly the wrong size, cost 30 dollars plus tax. The woman had 35 dollars in bills and some more money in loose change in her green purse. She pulled it all out and stared at it curiously. For a minute I thought she might change her mind. But she already had the new shoes slightly pinched on her feet, so there was no going back. I mean, I could have taken the shoes back and sold her something cheaper. I had even punched extra holes in the straps because I can't bear to see a pair of feet suffer, but I still could have taken the shoes back.

Mumbling inaudibly the woman surrendered the 30 dollars and enough extra for tax. I watched to see if she would head for PURSES & LUGGAGE. I knew she would not be able to buy a brown purse for 5 dollars in our Store. Also I wanted to see how she handled the problem of the old shoes.

Marlene at UMBRELLAS & etc. fell heir to them. When Marlene realized what was inside the bag she hurried over to me.

"Nothing doing," I told her.

"What'll I do with them?" she pleaded.

"Throw them in the garbage. She won't be back. She's one of THEM."

"Did you see the umbrella she bought?" Marlene gagged. "Navy blue, I don't carry anything brown that cheap."

"Treat for coffees she throws it away?"

Marlene's azure eyes widened. "You're on!" She raced back to her counter and snatched an expensive umbrella from her display. "I can't leave," she said breathily. "You go."

She thrust the umbrella and the customer's "forgotten" bag at me.

I did not need to go far outside before I spotted the navy blue umbrella floating open in a large puddle between two parked cars. I dashed across for it.

I waved it inside to catch Marlene's nod before handing it to the older man still standing with his back to the door. "I don't need it," I said. "You take it, it's paid for."

He had on his face a look of genuine bafflement.

"I saw that woman throw it away," he said. "But I didn't know if I should take it. Thought she might be one a those *Candid Camera* people."

He felt foolish for not going out to pick it up, and for not understanding why it had been thrown away.

"Thought too there might be a hole in it," he added, examining the tight cloth.

"It's perfectly good, sir," I said. "It was the wrong colour."

"Yeah? You don't say. Well thanks. I'm waiting for my wife. She'll geta kick outa this."

•••

Marlene paid for our supper coffees. She's very young to handle a department, even so small a one as UMBRELLAS & etc., by herself. But her attractiveness and her constant threats of quitting — one of which she carried out, only to be re-hired at better pay — keep her buoyant, even when her merchandise is mis-shipped to stores hundreds of miles away. She thinks THEY, the "losers" as she calls the strange women, are mad.

"Have to be mad to throw things away," she said. "Wonder where they get the cash."

I shrugged. "They seldom use charge, usually it's cash."

"Think they're prostitutes?"

I shook my head. Then reconsidered. I stared into my black coffee. Marlene was forking around bits of cottage cheese on her plate.

Perhaps they were Women of Pleasure. That would explain many things — the stripping, the change of colour, the vague distracted look, the anonymity of shopping in a department store, and the cash.

"Naw, they're not my idea of prostitutes," I said.

"Get your ideas from movies?" Marlene asked.

Marlene has lovely fingernails, painted a deep maroon today. I enjoy watching her hold forks and pick up coffee cups. I can't have my fingernails that long, I might stab a customer's feet.

Marlene chased the subject. "I'll bet someone picked her up. Some trick just passing by, so she threw the umbrella away."

"Maybe."

"You shoulda asked the man you gave the umbrella to."

"I didn't think. Yes. I should have."

•••

Still, I thought Marlene's theory wrong. Too simple. The kind of romantic realism women who are not prostitutes impose upon women they suspect are. Could THEY, those women, be mad and losers and Women of Pleasure and prostitutes all at once?

"There's Joan. Don't look!" Marlene said as I was about to swivel to look. "Is she a peeper?"

Joan is Manageress of L.L.

"I never saw her do it. She had Doreen transferred when a woman complained."

"I'd do it," Marlene whispered.

"Do what?"

"Peep."

Marlene smiled. I smiled.

"Yes," I admitted. "I peeped by accident once or twice. Had to, you know, to find out. The female anatomy does not come in standard sizes, no more than individual hands and feet do. It's something you have knowledge of, superficially, but you don't really believe or accept it until you see for yourself. Until then you think you're the only one who doesn't fit. You know, that you're the one the Standard Sizers missed."

Marlene had a dazed look. She hadn't been listening. Just as well. What I mean is, I really can't afford to start making admissions, or questioning out loud what I do for a living. It might lead to doubts about the Store. Often I pretend I own the Store, and that I'm working my way through Departments, at my family's suggestion, from the bottom up. It's a harmless fantasy, I'm sure. The pretense gives me a feeling of worth so I won't get to hate the place.

But today for some reason I could not let THEM drop. Something about the umbrella loosened my head. I jostled Marlene to attention. "You remember the Greek myths from school?"

She was puzzled. "Yes."

"There's one about a guy who keeps pushing a rock up a hill, and each time, just before he gets it to the top, it rolls down again."

"Yeah. He was being punished."

"In hell. Exactly. You take that woman today, the one with the shoes and the umbrella. Suppose she returns tomorrow, maybe to a different store, one like this. Suppose she has a fresh roll of bills, and because she was unable to complete the colour change today, tomorrow she has to start again."

Marlene shuddered. "That's depressing. Like a nightmare. What's she being punished for?"

I shrugged. "It's a science fiction story. She doesn't know. Or doesn't remember. It's her hang-up, changing colour every day. She has to become someone else." I let my fingers dance nervously, dangerously, on the table top beside my coffee cup. "The Store's the brains behind it."

Marlene set her fork down, shoved her plate away. Stretched. Ran her maroon fingertips through her natural blonde hair, then patted down as if adjusting her head.

"Do you have a hang-up?" she asked.

"Do you?"

A mouthed: *Yes*.

I lowered my eyes, not wanting to ask, but wanting to know. Marlene is so beautiful. Nothing could trouble her. Nothing serious? She's the kind of woman I'd choose for a friend, if she weren't my friend already by proximity.

She slid her elbow onto the table and cupped her hand up to her ear, knifing her finger-daggers through her hair. She leaned very near, her bust resting in her sumptuous spring dress on the top of the table. Her eyes seemed worried, hurt.

"My boobs," she whispered.

"What?"

"One's a C, the other's a D."

"A growth?"

'Sh!" She looked around suspiciously. "They grew that way. I didn't know they were like that until I went for a check-up last month. The doctor told me. I didn't know what he was talking about. I thought he was crazy. But the way he said it! He told me about this really weird case of his, a young girl who grew an A and a D. 'You think you have problems,' he said."

She made a motion with her free maroon finger at the corner of her eye. "I didn't know I had any problem until he said that. I'm so embarrassed. I feel like a freak. Please don't tell anyone."

"As if I would! You look perfectly all right to me."

"I pad the left one," she whispered.

"What did you do before?"

"Nothing. I didn't know about it. The bras didn't fit, but you know," she shrugged. "One of the first thin lies you hear from your mother is that nothing bought in the Store fits. You don't know why. You think manufacturers are careless."

"They are," I said, standing up. "They get their odd-ball ideas from the ancient Greeks."

We put our trays together and dumped off the garbage.

As we were hurrying along the aisles towards our departments I nudged Marlene. "Go through life being a substandard A, then you might have something to fret about."

"But you don't," she said sulkily. "You always look so trim. I wish I could wear pantsuits like yours."

"*Anything to make a sale*!" I snapped my fingers cheerfully in tune to our sales pep slogan, then veered off towards Shoes. For the next hour I glanced periodically over at UMBRELLAS & etc. while I attended with my staff to peoples' feet. Marlene was not smiling. She had a vague, stunned look on her face, as if she was in shock. Almost as if — yes, as if she was one of THEM, willing to throw everything away in order to become someone else.

I felt as if the day had mushroomed, as if the top of the Store had lifted off by several feet and was suspended up there spinning — my body the handle that was holding it up.

I still have the bag of old shoes. Marlene escaped them. Curiously enough I didn't throw them into the trash can between the doors when I gave that umbrella away. I tossed them casually into a corner of the stockroom before going to eat. I'm in the stockroom now, looking out. Out there is the whole Fashion Floor. Sales Manager of Fashion Floor is next step up. I intend to apply. In a moment. I've really liked Shoes best. It's at the bottom of everything. Everyone comes here eventually. Especially THEM. US.

No one would ever suspect: I get a magical feeling here. Marlene does not know. Notice, she did not ask. People's worries are their own. They shelter them, keep them protected inside, take them out periodically to brush them up, the way Marlene did today. They may keep them all their lives, precious little jewels of manufactured misery.

I have a hang-up, sure. (Watch me) But it does not cause me misery — only if anyone found out. It is magical. (Watch me) I slide along further into the stockroom as if I'm going casually to find the perfect size for an imperfect pair of feet. I pick up the bag of old green shoes from the corner as I go along. I carry it to the farthest recesses of my territory. When I am surely alone (Watch me) I remove the shoes from the bag, my fingers trembling, and . . . bring the worn shoes close up to my nose. Breathing deeply, sighing, my head spinning. Is this crazy? I would never tell anyone. Not even Marlene. (Watch me) There's no way to cure it. I get high on the nitty, magical gritty of human cruelty and stink.

I'm prepared now, I'm sure, to take the next step up — the family will be proud — I know almost perfectly now how very very little it takes to make *anyone* feel commercially inadequate, to keep the sales quotas mushrooming, like an umbrella, up and up and up.

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Bed and Breakfast

photo essay by Lauren Dale

"It's like being sentenced for a crime you haven't committed."

In Britain local authorities have the responsibility for giving temporary accomodation to homeless families with children. Homelessness has rocketed in the last ten years in London and the major cities because of property speculation and commercially determined redevelopment. The homeless, like squatters (people who move into vacant houses, often those left empty by the Council), are scapegoats for the housing crisis. In Lambeth, the London borough in which these photos were taken, the City Council houses those people it does accept as homeless in a hotel system called Bed and Breakfast. In doing so the Council supplies a massive subsidy to hotel owners while creating extremely crowded conditions.

Rising homelessness and continued cuts in public expenditure have given rise to a new repressive policy. Women made homeless as a consequence of domestic violence are told to go back home. People who were squatting are deliberately given the worst accomodation. They have no choice in where they are re-housed after staying in Bed and Breakfast. If they refuse their one allocation they are threatened with eviction.

Black families and women alone with children account for over 75% of London's registered homeless. Most of the women in these photos were in the same Bed and Breakfast hotel. The building appeared to be a regular hotel but it was entirely given over to homeless people. Such families are a surer guarantee of income for the hotel owners than a fluctuating tourist population.

We had made no appointment to see these women. We were total strangers, but the women are so lonely and isolated that they were glad to talk to anybody interested in their condition. Some were slightly nervous about the Council finding out they had "talked" and had allowed themselves to be photographed since their futures depend so heavily on the

One woman from a small village in Ireland said she had not known of the possibility of birth control until after her tenth child.

Council's goodwill in rehousing them.

It was the middle of a warm and sunny afternoon. The hotel is right across the street from a large park but none of the women had the energy to take their children there, even though they were crammed into one small room. Their initiative has been ground down to such a degree that some hadn't even bothered to get dressed.

Many of the women felt that their housing problems stemmed from being black or from having half-black children. Some mothers were very young — 17 or so — and had moved out of their parents' house when they became pregnant, either because of their parents' disapproval or because there was no space for a new baby. One young girl had been squatting until her baby was born, but the basement she had been in was just too damp, cold and unhealthy for a new baby.

Another woman seemed to be caught up in a pattern of damaging behavior that she was passing on to her three month old daughter. The day we visited was her seventeenth birthday. She told of going out drinking with her father a few days earlier, and then helping him to beat up a fellow who had once tried to "chat her up". When she fed her baby she propped the little girl up on the bed with pillows and balanced the bottle near her mouth. She refused to hold the baby to feed her because she said she must learn to be independent and tough.

The jolly looking woman sitting in an armchair was a squatter, an Irish woman with twelve children. She and her husband, a fiddler, came to London to escape "The Troubles". They had no wish to return to Northern Ireland even though the Council had offered to pay their fare back so that it wouldn't be responsible for rehousing the family. This woman had come from a very small village and said she had not known of the possibility of birth control until after her tenth child.

Probably the saddest story was told by a black African woman (most blacks in Lambeth are from the Carribean) with a half-caste baby girl. Back home she had fallen in love with a white English engineer working there. When her family discovered the relationship the couple were forbidden to see one another. To guarantee separation she was sent to England to marry a black man she had never met. When she left Africa she knew she was pregnant but told nobody, not even the baby's father. She has since lost track of this man, who changed the company he worked for and moved on to another country. In England she stayed with the man she was supposed to marry but refused to sleep with him or marry him. For months she hid the fact that she was pregnant until one day she began to hemorrhage and the man took her to see a doctor. When the doctor explained that she was pregnant the man threw her out. She ended up in Bed and Breakfast, renounced by her family, with nothing left in her life but her daughter.

Despite such sad stories — the unbearable living conditions and the lack of control they have over their own lives — the women retain a sense of humour and provide mutual support. All they ask of the future is a place of their own to live.

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In a Hutterite Colony

by Mary M. Young
illustration by Sheila Luck

> Everyone in a Hutterite colony loves a baby . . . Adult Hutterites, colony members, visitors and everyone who passes a very young child gives him cheerful attention. The baby is spoken to, picked up, tickled, played with.

This quotation from Hostetler and Huntington's book, *The Hutterites in North America*", tends, by itself, to produce a romanticized view of Hutteraite family life. But in fact, one must know something about their culture as a whole in order to fully understand the ways in which Hutterite children are socialized and to put this statement in its proper perspective.

Western Canada is now the home of the Hutterian Brethren but most Canadians of this region know very little about Hutterite life, although many myths abound! First of all, it is vital to recognize the over-riding importance of Hutterite religious beliefs in all their customs, institutions and values, from the economic structure of the colony, the patterns of authority, the relationship between male and female and the clothing styles, to recreational activities. All these, and more, are based on Hutterite interpretation of the Scriptures. Further, the persecution which has been the lot of the Hutterites since the sixteenth century until more recent times, has strengthened the religious base of their culture and made them deeply aware of potential threats to that foundation.

The Hutterian Brethren, along with the Amish and several groups of Mennonites, are the only survivors of the Anabaptist fervor of the Protestant Reformation. Radical in belief and practice, the Anabaptists rejected church membership achieved by infant baptism and withdrew into voluntary communities with churches "based on the concept of believers" or adult baptism. The intent was to re-establish the Christian Church according to their understanding of the principles set forth in the New Testament. In doing so, the Anabaptists challenged not only traditional religious hierarchies and religious reformers, but also the whole social, political and economic structure of medieval Europe.

In 1528 a small, peace-living group of Swiss Anabaptists travelling through Moravia placed all their material possessions in a common pool, thus instituting the practice of "community of goods". Subsequently the first *Bruderhof* (colony) was founded and later given its formal organization and discipline by Jakob Hutter, after whom the sect took its name. Continued persecution and martyrdom in various parts of Europe, interspersed with periods of peace and prosperity, ended with Hutterite migration to North America in the late nineteenth century.

Like ourselves, Hutterites have definite objectives in socializing children, but whereas we tend to emphasize self-fullfillment, individual achievement and self-responsibility as worthy goals, Hutterite practices are aimed at merging the individual identity with that of the colony. Hostetler's words sum up this philosophy well when he writes:

> Just as a grain of wheat loses its identity in the making of a loaf of bread, so the individual must lose his identity in one corporate body.

Communal living is believed to be ordained by God, therefore the individual will must yield to the greater will of the colony. At its most intense during the early years of life, the process by which this ideal is realized continues throughout the life of an individual Hutterite. Early socialization aims at preparing a child for baptism and adult life in the colony. After baptism socialization continues to reinforce Hutterite identity and prepares the person for death. The pattern which underlies both processes is believed to be divinely ordained.

A young infant learns very quickly that his or her needs are secondary to those of the group. As soon as the mother, who has been excused from her colony duties at the time of birth, returns to her normal routine after six weeks, the baby's life must adopt the rhythm of colony life. At mealtimes which take place in the communal dining room, at work periods and daily church services, according to Hostetler, "the baby is unceremoniously placed in his crib and his parents walk out". Nursing periods rarely last longer than ten minutes because of colony schedules and babies must make do with pacifiers. At the same time, a baby is taught to respond postively to everyone in the colony and enjoy being passed around from person to person. Thus, a "good" Hutterite baby is one who sleeps a lot, does not interfere with colony schedules and who happily accepts all colony members.

Hutterites believe that the emergence of vanity and selfishness is marked by the child's use of a comb and by hitting others, indicating that the time for administering discipline has arrived. All adults on the colony have a duty to discipline children who behave badly and punishment ranges from scolding, slapping and pinching to strapping. But because Hutterites believe that human nature is inherently sinful, a child is not held responsible for bad behaviour and hugs and kisses usually follow directly upon punishment. Thus Hutterites avoid inclucating guilt feelings in their children.

Toddlers do not accompany their mothers to the kitchens but are left at home in the care of babysitters, older girls or an older woman. In summer they are encouraged to leave their parents, and they roam freely through the colony to join other groups for play and attention.

At about three years of age, the child's status sinks to the lowest point in his entire life. Children enter the kindergarten which is designed to wean them away from their families, to

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integrate them with their peer group, to teach them respect for the authority of the colony and acceptance of a limited sphere of action. Noisy behaviour and loud crying are not tolerated and threats, even though they are empty, are liberally used to keep kindergarten children in line. The quality of food served to them and the fact that adults and older children do not want them around emphasize the low status of children of this age.

Children arrive at kindergarten before breakfast and often remain until after supper at six o'clock in the evening. During these hours they are exposed to a restricted and unvaried environment. Therefore, it is at this time of life that the influence of the colony is most keenly felt. But while the pre-school child suffers apparent rejection by its parents and the colony at large, it is also learning the basis for full adult membership.

At six years of age the Hutterite child enters English school, German school and Sunday school. Through the latter two institutions in particular, the child learns to bow to the authority of parents (primarily that of father), teachers (principally the German School teacher) and adults generally and to accept without question Hutterite traditions and teachings. As Hostetler notes: "Self-discipline is not taught but rather obedience to those in authority who will supervise, punish and protect". However, at certain times of the day the child may play unsupervised with peers or work cooperatively with his or her siblings. At this time also, training for sex roles is intensified.

In the Hutterite view, divine order makes a sharp, unambiguous definition of sex roles where man is expected to be the leader in righteousness of example while woman must be submissive and obedient to man. Thus, play patterns, work and training activities differ for boys and girls and take place in different environments. Girls tend to stay close to the centre of the colony and "play" at domesticity. On the other hand, boys are encouraged to roam throughout the colony in their play activities. Further, while boys may play alone, girls are always part of the peer play-group which tolerates little nonconformity to its norms.

The only change in a girl's restricted environment comes if she is loaned to another colony for baby-sitting duties. In a sense this anticipates the practice of "marrying out", where a girl moves to the home of her husband in another colony. Boys do not take part in such exchanges because it is considered more important that they stay close to their fathers and others with whom they will be working for the rest of their lives.

Early training prepares both sexes for future roles, where men protect, guide and administer the economic and spiritual life of the colony, and women look after their families, have no vote, and therefore no formal involvement in colony administration.

When a young person is fifteen years old, formal schooling ceases, but practical training for work and colony life continues. At this point, parents become more closely identified with their children and assume more responsibility for their behaviour. Within the family unit, siblings become more supportive of each other and will often perform small tasks and favours for one another. During these transitional years, young people are eager to show they they are becoming responsible members of the colony. The end of this stage is reached when young Hutterites feel spiritually ready for baptism, after which they become full colony members. When this happens, the goal of Hutterite child rearing has been achieved.

There are three basic themes in Hutterite socialization that are apparent from this overview. First is the role of the nuclear family in child rearing and in colony life in general. In the Hutterite view, the family is the source of potential new members of the colony and is responsible for the care of them until the colony takes over the major task of training. The family is also expected to assume such functions when the colony cannot perform them easily or efficiently, but it cannot regard them as a private endeavour. Children are seen as the gifts of God and belong to the colony, not to their parents. Thus a father can be requested by the colony to punish a naughty child at home or in the presence of the council. So it is the family which supports the colony and not the colony which supports the family, a view which is contrary to that held by Canadian society at large regarding the importance of the nuclear family unit.

A second theme is related to the matter of punishment and reward. As I noted previously, children are believed to have a natural tendency towards sin, and punishment is part of the Hutterite

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plan to diminish this predilection. While the individual learns obedience and renunciation of the self through discipline, he or she is also rewarded directly for "good" behaviour. In this conditioning process it is the *behaviour* which is the focus of discipline not the child and, once punishment is over, the child does not have to carry a further burden of guilt and atonement. Thus, Hutterite children are not called "bad", are never deprived of self-respect and training is carried out with a lack of personal condemnation.

Lastly, a child's peer group has a continuous significance throughout life. The efforts of individuals result in rewards for the group and group punishment may follow individual mischief. On the other hand, fear of rejection by the peer group encourages conformity to its rules. In these ways it contributes immeasurably to the socialization of the individual. In this respect, Hutterite peer groups resemble those in Canadian society at large, but for the Hutterite child there is no choice of groups and only girls, at marriage, exchange one peer group for another. Thus the role of age groups is much greater and their influence more extensive than those found outside the colony system.

In conclusion, Hutterite "parenting" is primarily the responsibility of the entire colony, although the relationships formed within the nuclear family are both loving and important for the individual. But the nuclear family is less exclusive and less demanding in emotional terms than in Canadian society generally, perhaps because it forms a continuing thread in the fabric of colony life. In the larger society where mobility and separation are common, the nuclear family loses its importance as children mature.

In encouraging the abandonment of individual desires, the drive for individual fulfillment and the surrender of self, the Hutterite colony offers instead the security of a place in a divinely ordained social structure which is the only hope of salvation.

"Everyone in a Hutterite colony loves a baby . . .". Yes, this is true and children are not only loved but highly valued by their families and the colony at large. Above all, children are the inheritors of Hutterite tradition and must be taught to accept it unquestioningly. This training may seem harsh and repressive to those who live outside the Hutterite way, but it accomplishes two things that are of primary importance to Hutterite parents. The first is the hope of spiritual salvation for each child and second is the maintenance of colony life which is, in Hutterite eyes, the will of God.

Mary Young returned to academic studies as a mature student, wife and mother and received her PhD in anthropology in 1974. She is presently teaching in the Department of Anthropology and the Department of Religious Studies at the University of Alberta. She is particularly interested in the study of religious minority groups in western Canada.

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On a Kibbutz

by Wendy Yellen

In its ideal state, the kibbutz movement in Israel carries within it the values of equality and shared labour. Pioneers of the movement struggled for equality between the sexes, the freeing of women from traditional roles and communal living for children outside the nuclear family. Fattened on regimens of potatoes and bread, young Eastern European women reclaimed malaria ridden swamps, built roads and dug ditches alongside the men. Today, in marked contrast to the first generation, the original values are on the decline. The status of the nuclear family has gained a new prominence in the kibbutz social structure.

A grandmother who, over tea, shares her memories of back-straining work as a pioneering kibbutznik may have a granddaughter who has left the kibbutz for the city. Many young women now fail to find satisfaction or stimulation in the narrow range of kibbutz jobs in which women are found. During my five months as a volunteer worker on a kibbutz, I observed that women were usually involved in domestic services and education. Have the original ideals been abandoned — specifically, has this new emphasis on the nuclear family led to a regression back to strongly defined sexual roles?

My experience of kibbutz life arose from discussions with and writings by people within Hashomer Hatzair Movement, originally the most radical, socialistic, and atheistic of the kibbutz movements. Interviews were conducted in Kibbutz Amir in the Eastern Galilee. Formerly a swamp, it rests between two ranges of mountains, one stark and brown, pale grey at sunset; the other snow-topped and descending into soft, rich greens and muted pinks. The grounds of the kibbutz are a jungle of eucalyptus, date palms, citrus trees, jasmine and laurels.

The women I spoke with included pioneers, young marrieds, North Americans resettled in Isreal, and kibbutz-born women who had lived within and without the kibbutz system. They were all interested and willing to talk about the raising of their children and their own position in the kibbutz. I was interested to find that afternoons and early evenings were almost exclusively devoted to families and children — these daily contact patterns were, in fact, a key to the understanding of the position of women in the kibbutz today.

Parents are allowed a half-hour every morning to visit

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their children. If the weather is nice, the children may be taken for a walk outside or they may visit with the parents at home. I noticed that invariably the mother would be present during this short but important family time. It seemed that her physical location on the kibbutz as well as her more flexible hours made her a natural candidate for this visit. When questioned about the mother's presence, many women responded that while they trusted their husbands alone with their children they still preferred to be present themselves. They anticipated the visit eagerly despite the inconvenience of a fragmented work-day and the pressure of limited time.

The four-to-nine p.m. period was reserved for children visiting their parents at home. The time was clearly of and for the children and the parents were eager to extend themselves fully for these few hours. The wishes and needs of the children were acknowledged and met — voices were lowered during favorite television programs, full attention was given to any request and the parents were obviously enjoying their children.

I noticed little if any stern expression of authority or unpleasantness between parents and their children. Here were adults whose focus was on the needs, wants and desires of their offspring. It was a time to be together, to learn and to talk.

I found that in every home there was an appreciation of the child as an individual person — a quality which I had never noticed in the homes of my American peers. At the same time, some mothers did not want their children to become accustomed to receiving their undivided attention. There was concern that it was unnatural to devote time so fully to a child and that children must learn to share their parents' attention with others.

Women were regarded as natural teachers and were thus expected to substitute in the children's houses when the need arose. Although some women were opposed to this automatic placement, they were expected to comply as part of their obligation as mothers.

After the visit, one of the parents would return at eight or nine p.m. to the children's house to ready their child for bed. waiting until the child was asleep before returning home. This often meant interrupting an older child's playtime and then waiting in the children's house while the child readjusted to the confusion of three sets of parents putting their children to bed in the same room.

Saturday afternoon on a kibbutz is vibrant with color and motion as kids ride in baskets on their parent's bicycles or are carted about in small, brightly painted wagons. While fathers rarely took their children for the morning visit, one would see fathers as often as mothers with their children on a sunny late afternoon, playing, walking and telling stories.

I could detect no personal prestige correlated to actual economic contribution to the kibbutz except parasites who are an exception and ostracized. The work positions of women, while basic to the operation of the kibbutz do not directly contribute to its economic well-being. This lack of important economic contribution by a majority of the women seemed to contradict the ideals of the kibbutz, as well as echoing the rigid patterns of other societies. Dan Leon, in *The Kibbutz,* writes, "The determination to free the woman from her traditional role as dependent on the master of the house or breadwinner and from exclusive subjugation to the household and children was one of the sources of communal education." This would mean real equality by allowing women to do equal work and to become equal members of society, sharing in obligations and privileges. "Yet the realization of this dream has probably been accompanied by deeper problems and a deeper consciousness of the disparity between the hope and the reality than in any other aspect of kibbutz society."

Studies done by kibbutz movements point to definite division of labour according to sex, with the social and political segments of society showing less pronounced, but still evident, division. The original basis of kibbutz economics was agriculture and a return to cultivating the land. Most kibbutzim have since expanded into industry. Yet on this kibbutz not one female kibbutznik worked in the fields and only a few in the recent past. During my stay only one woman has requested to work in the fields and she was refused.

I found this pattern very disheartening, particularly in view of my idealistic expectations. One must, however, remember that the kibbutz community is small and very limited in job possibilities for both men and women. The kibbutz economy, based as it is on agriculture and industry, does not interest many of the younger women and perhaps does not even satisfy many of the men. For the women who hold positions outside the kibbutz, the choice of a wide variety of jobs existed. Yet such women lost touch with the pulse of the kibbutz and consequently may have felt estranged from it.

Each kibbutz has its own distinct and separate problems. On some of the older kibbutzim, a lack of middle generation and a rapidly rising birth rate create several problems: a sharply defined generation gap; an older generation which, due to health and age, can work fewer hours; too many children for too few qualified teachers; and limited choice of professional options for young women. There is a resulting lack of personnel in the children's houses and a lack of continuity and competence vis a vis the children. It seemed that the women are regarded as natural Metapelots (teachers) and are thus expected to fill positions and substitute on days when the need arose, which it often does. Although some women were opposed to this automatic placement, they were expected to comply as part of their obligation as mothers.

I noticed that most of the women were in work which lent itself to flexibility in terms to substitute in the chil- by other women, thus freeing them to substitute in the children's houses. In the pilot study *Kibbutz, A New Society?,* Yona Golan found that women working in agriculture were

Communal Childrearing

unable to rise in position because they were so often required to substitute in services. This contributed to an endless cycle of women filling the ranks in the kitchen, in the children's houses and in the laundry. Nikki Stiller poses the question in "Midstream": "Is low status attached to women's work or does the work have low status because women do it?" What becomes of their professional and intellectual integrity when their workdays are so freely interrupted? I observed that men were rarely, if ever, called upon to substitute in the children's houses.

By virtue of the low economic priorities of the services in which women work, little energy was expended towards improvement and fund allotment in those areas. Not enough importance was given to improving the physical setup or introducing mechanization to increase efficiency and production. One woman's solution to the tedium of her position as head laundress for four-hundred people was to research every aspect to it — from the mixing of chemical mixtures to water temperatures. Another found that dining room work could be made interesting through changes of seating arrangements, styles of serving, and pride in work done with style. Certainly, the most tedious of these tasks should be shared equally between men and women.

One woman's solution to the tedium of her position as head laundress for four-hundred people was to research every aspect of it, from the mixing of chemicals to water temperatures.

In one study of the Hashomer Hatzair Movement, the vast majority of women questioned were dissatisfied with their jobs while an equally high percentage of men expressed satisfaction. With such apparent discontent among women in terms of work, one could understand a deeper attachment to children and family — a clue, perhaps, to the movement towards a traditional family life.

Women in some movements had a seven hour work load which is intended to allow an extra hour with the children. Many women felt that because they worked fewer hours than their husbands they should be responsible for the housework. While these tasks were reduced to a minimum (communal meals, compact houses, one couple per home) there were many tasks to be fulfilled. I had expected to see housework shared; I saw women assume final responsibility for it. If the children were hungry, they appealed to the mother; the women organized the house; the men occasionally washed the dishes after a meal. One woman explained that in responding to a questionnaire as a child, she had been ashamed to answer that it was her mother who did the housework. She admitted the same was true in her own household and seemed embarassed by her admission. I realized that the culture carried within it the ideals of equality and shared labour; it was the living of it which presented the difficulty.

One would think that women's heightened awareness of their personhood and integrity in recent years would have provoked some dissension on the kibbutz. I spoke to only one person — an immigrant who had spent several years on the kibbutz — who was troubled by the discrepancy between theory and day-to-day life. Otherwise, I was never aware of people organizing to reform these conditions. Even the rumblings about bringing the children home to sleep received less energy than one might expect given the frequency that dissatisfaction was expressed.

The refugees and rebels who established the first kibbutzim were forced to create a new home using tools and methods with which they were totally unfamiliar. Perhaps it was difficult for them to conceive of integrating a full family life with the physical creation of their homeland. After the early struggles, it may have seemed natural to return to former attitudes which had temporarily been cast aside.

As one woman caustically remarked, "We were made equal, but equal as what? As men." Another observed that kibbutz women were expected to be duplicates of their male counterparts rather than individuals with separate but significant skills, needs and interests. While the odd woman ventured into the fields, the men had failed to integrate themselves into the area of services and education.

The potential of the kibbutz is still alive. As it exists today the kibbutz offers economic security which frees the individual from financial problems and the assurance of child care and education frees time for the pursuit of individual interests and growth. But creative and stimulating work must be sought by and for women to fully complement the advantages of the communal lifestyle. Women must be free to contribute to the kibbutz in a manner which suits their individual needs and interests. Finally and most importantly, kibbutz women must vigorously appraise their own position within the kibbutz structure and decide whether the ideals of the movement merit their wholehearted pursuit.

Wendy Yellen has been on the Kibbutz Amir since October 1976. At the end of November she entered a work-study program on the Kibbutz through which she will learn Hebrew and other aspects of Jewish culture. She is a native of New York.

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Reflections of a First-time Parent

by Susan McMaster

I thought I'd write a poem for her. You know, something meaningful and weighty about the existential importance of life and birth. After all, what could be more significant than bringing a new life into the world?

When she was born, though, I didn't seem to have time. I was too busy learning how to bathe her, feed her, talk to her. We were too interested in getting to know each other and learning to play together. We had important things to do, like watching the buses go by outside our window.

Instead of the poem, I sang to her. Old lullabies my mother used to sing to me, nonsense songs, pop songs, anything. And I made up a lot of songs. At four in the morning with Aven screaming in my arms, I'd sing to keep myself from exploding with rage and frustration. At bedtime I'd make up lullabies to soothe her to sleep. In the day I'd compose silly nonsense songs. She couldn't know what the words meant, but I guess my face told her what I thought because we'd giggle happily at each other.

It was six or eight weeks after the birth when I suddenly realized I didn't need to write a significant poem. Those songs were my gift to her. Those lullabies and nonsense verses were a far better offering than any ponderous ode could ever be, because they expressed, simply, how we felt about each other.

Motherhood is like that. Nothing turns out quite the way you thought it would.

For example, I didn't expect to have difficulty with the pregnancy. I took my mother's warnings about edema (swelling) and varicose veins lightly. I'd always been healthy and strong. I expected to continue my life exactly as I had before. Things were different now than in my mom's day, I thought — many women work right up to the day of the birth. It wasn't until a canoe trip and a two-mile walk in the blinding heat sent me to bed with albumin in my urine that I slowed down. This is a signal of a condition called toxemia which can mean serious trouble for mother and child. It's caused, among other things, by over-exertion.

I wasn't prepared, either, for the lazy, self-centred sense of waiting that grew on me along with my belly. I gave up working because the edema was getting worse, but I didn't even *want* to work. As the foetus grew I stopped caring about anything else. Everything, it seemed, could wait. The baby and my own health were all that mattered.

Most surprising to me were my feelings after the birth. Ian and I had waited seven years after marriage before having a child. We didn't want to miss the experience but we were decidely ambivalent. I was especially worried that the baby would interrupt my career just as it seemed to be taking off. Besides, I'd never felt very adult. Who was *I* to become that most responsible of persons, a mother?

When, after 2½ hours of hard labour, she actually emerged from my womb, all that changed. It's hard to describe how I felt at the birth without falling into cliché. Several mothers I know had tried to explain their emotions but I thought them sentimental. There's no way around it though

photo by Brian Toller

Before, I had thought it would be quite possible, maybe even desirable, to raise a child alone.

— that messy pink body, no hair to speak of, toothless gums and wildly waving hands seemed to me beautiful, amazing and precious. She took the breast greedily and easily, and I knew I'd be able to care for her.

Another surprise — how funny she is. It's like having a live-in comedian. Have you ever seen a baby who's just splashed herself in the face by accident?

Friends and books had prepared me to feel tenderness towards her, but no one had told me about the anger. One night, she wouldn't stop crying. I was exhausted; I had no milk left; I didn't know what to do. I reached into her crib, but just before I touched her I was filled with a stomach-wrenching rage.

I had been prepared to feel tenderness towards her, but no one had told me about the anger.

When I came to, a few seconds later, I was halfway across the room. The strength of my emotion had thrown me backward so quickly, I didn't remember moving. I imagine it was an instinctive defensive motion. If I'd picked her up I'm sure I'd have thrown her against the wall. It took only seconds to recover my feelings of tenderness for her, but my heart continued to pound and my breath came fast for quite a while.

Since then I've talked to other mothers with young babies and to some older women. Without exception each has felt that strength of anger at least once. My mother told me she almost killed my brother, in a similar fury. Another woman remembered hitting the wall with her fist until it was bruised and swollen. Now I can understand child-battering more easily. I doubt that anything can prevent those feelings, but if women talked more to each other about them, it might be easier to control and forgive oneself.

As a new mother I have had to reconsider some of my feminist ideas. About my career, for example. It doesn't seem so important anymore to conquer the world tomorrow. I'm willing to take more time now, and to see how I can work spending time with the baby in with the other things I'm doing.

Aven has made me reconsider the concept of family. Both sets of parents and most of our brothers and sisters live in Ottawa. I'd always enjoyed their company, but more as friends in the last few years than as relatives. Then, with Aven's birth, all these people became aunts, uncles, cousins, grandparents, and suddenly I felt tied to the past and the present more than ever before. There was an extra depth of closeness to our relationships with each other. Besides, their experience, support and approval make caring for Aven much easier and more fun.

I also realize I would not want to raise her without a full-time, committed father in the house. Before this, I had thought it would be quite possible, maybe even desirable, to raise a child alone. I have friends who don't want to get married, but who want a child. That used to seem perfectly reasonable to me, but now I'm not so sure. The physical and emotional strain of caring for a child are greater than I would have guessed. Because there are two of us we have emotional and financial support. We can share each other's delight in her development, we can relieve each other of work, and we have financial freedom because only one of us needs to be bringing in an income.

On the other hand, spending several months looking after Aven has reminded me of the dangers that lie in wait for homebodies. I forget to eat or take care of myself. I neglect my appearance and conversation. I spend spare time sleeping or reading bad novels. I've begun to talk in gurgles and squeaks.

As a result, I've decided it's absolutely necessary for me to maintain some real contact with the outside world even while the baby is young. Fortunately, Ian and I have spent several years working out a division of labour in which we decided that housework, car work, financial work and so on are inherently neither his job nor mine. I've worked while Ian's gone to school, we've lived in a co-op where housework was shared equally, Ian's gone to university and done the housework while I worked to support us. I usually do the bills and the laundry and Ian makes supper and does the dishes. This has made it easier for us to divide the extra work caused by the baby and to consider options like taking turns working so neither becomes too housebound and isolated. For example, after Aven was born, Ian stayed home for two weeks to take care of both of us. He does an equal amount of diapering, feeding and so on, and we alternate waking up at night if she's unhappy.

This summer I'll be employed in Toronto, so we plan to move there for four months. Ian is taking a leave of absence to look after Aven, something he's anticipating very much. And I'm looking forward to working again, dressing up, getting out of the house. (Although I can't suppress a small twinge because Ian will be spending all that time with 'my' child — probably the best possible reason for me to let go a bit.) In fact Ian's dream is for me to find a fantastic full-time job so he can quit working and look after his daughter. It won't work out quite like that because I want to spend lots of time with Aven too, but we are going to try to alternate being at home.

My career may even be helped by Aven since I'm a writer and she gives me plenty to write about. Even if it's *not* super significant, but just something to be shared, for fun, by me and my daughter — and maybe, someday, my grandaughter.

Hello, Hello

I wish I was a fly, a-sitting on a wall,
I'd watch you pass by, and out to you I'd call.
I'd say hello, hello, tell me who are you?
I'd say hello, hello, tell me what you do.
I'd say hello, hello, tell me what is your name?
I'd say, I'm just a fly, but I like you just the same.

I wish I was a cow, standing in the grass,
I'd stand right by the fence, and call out as you'd pass,
I'd call out to you with my great loud moo,
I'd say hello, hello, how do you do?
I'd say, I am a cow, tell me who are you?

I wish I was a cat, curled up in a chair,
I'd wake up from my snoozing, to see if you were there.
I'd call out to you with a purr and a meow,
I'd say hello, hello, how're you feeling now?
I'd call out to you, with a purr, purr, purr,
I'd say, I'm a sleepy cat, and you're a sleepy girl.

Song for Aven, September 5, 1976

Susan McMaster is a graduate student in Journalism at Carleton University, and a contributing editor to Branching Out. She gave birth to Aven in August, 1976.

PREGNANT LANDSCAPE

December-August

photos by John Tappin

Starting in the first month of Sue McMaster's pregnancy (story on previous two pages), Ottawa sculptor John Tappin, assisted by Ian and several artists and students, made plaster casts of her body each month for nine months. Using vacuum-forming techniques, John intends to make clear plexiglass positives from the casts and mount them to form a large sculpture. The baby's name, Aven, comes from the alpine flower Mountain Avens, and John may incorporate the image of a Mountain Avens into the sculpture.

The casts have also been the inspiration for two wooden sculptures "Shoulders", and "Pregnant breasts, two months".

John Tappin is Aven's godfather. His artistic work with wood, plexiglass, slides and lights has been shown in Ottawa and many other cities and has been recognized by Canada Council and the Ontario Arts Council.

Open Letter to Niles Newton

by Eunice Scarfe

Dear Dr. Newton,

I've been meaning to write you for some time (three years actually) and say how stimulating it was to read "Sex and your Child" in *The Family Book of Child Care** given me just days after our daughter was born. In your introduction to the article you say, "Fortunately there is a good deal of careful research which can give parents a pretty good idea of the differences to expect between boys and girls and what to do about them." I think I was aware that there were differences between boys and girls, but I didn't know I was supposed to do something about them. The advice you offered really made me sit up and take notice, admittedly somewhat difficult while nursing a sleeping baby in a prone position. I do wonder, however, if you could clarify a few of the points you made in your article for me?

I wasn't quite sure how to interpret some of the statistics you cited. For example, at one point you say that a boy is "likely to have one-third more 'vital capacity' and be one and a half times as strong as his sister — which may be one reason for his more intense drive for achievement, activity and adventure." I wasn't quite sure what 'vital capacity' was, but that's not the question really. What I do wonder is whether this means that the girl with the highest vital capacity is still always lower than the boy with the lowest vital capacity? Or might a girl with a really high vital capacity be maybe just a little higher than the lowest boy? And were the children studied all the same height or age or weight or religion or what? Of course, it's obvious that boys achieve more which proves they have more 'vital capacity' doesn't it, so I suppose these details really don't matter. Also, when you said that the higher vital capacity might be one reason for the more intense drive, I wasn't sure whether you were quoting the people who did the vital capacity research or whether that was your own conclusion. I suppose it doesn't matter really. It certainly can't affect the facts.

Although you say that "tests of general intelligence do not show one sex to be brighter than the other . . . a boy's chances of outstanding success in the world are immeasurably greater than those of a girl's." I assume here that 'success' means the usual thing about money and status or power? You argue that this is so because most of the world's recognized mental geniuses, great leaders, founders of higher religions, and presidents of the United States have been men. Do you mean to imply then that there are possibly *unrecognized* mental geniuses who are women and founders of *lower* religions which include women and *ordinary* leaders, if not great ones, who are women? If so, at least women play a part at some level. Every time I've seen this proof before, women have been excluded altogether. If I understand your argument, am I to conclude that because a thing is actually so, it is necessarily so and because a thing has always been so, it will continue to be so? Frankly the prospect seems grim, but then maybe I've misunderstood the logic here.

Girls will, you argue, experience discrimination on the basis of their sex in educational and employment opportunities, career advancement, and salary. You argue that it is "the big job as parents of a girl to prepare her for the discrimination she will experience in such a way that she will react constructively rather than with bitterness." Later on you say that I should prepare my daughter to "react to discrimination with increased sympathy and kindness rather than with emotional upset and feelings of inferiority." I am not quite sure what you mean by constructively. I can see two possible examples of constructive response to one's lot as a woman. It is possible to see both the women's movement begun in the sixties and the "Total Woman" appearing in the seventies as responses to discrimination. But which do you think would be more constructive? Perhaps the answer to that lies in your recommendation that women respond to discrimination with increased sympathy and kindness. Now I assume that "increased sympathy and kindness" is to be shown towards other women. They are obviously the ones who need it, aren't they? To the best of my knowledge, "Total Woman" women don't concern themselves with other women at all. Is it possible then to conclude that the constructive, sympathetic and kind response to discrimination which you prescribe means encouraging my daughter to become a feminist? I wish you'd say something more about this because to the best of my knowledge no "how to parent" book says anything about what to do in case

**The Family Book of Child Care* by Dr. Niles Newton, Harper and Row, 1957.*

of this eventuality and I'd really like to know now.

You suggest that I should give my daughter a "happy and beloved childhood in which she is accepted as a wonderfully important human being" in order to prevent feelings of inferiority as she sees her brother growing up. I really want to work at this because I think already my three year old daughter is seeing some things I rather wish she hadn't. She said to me one day, "I'm pretending I'm a man so I can be a bus driver." And she sounded really excited by the thought of it. When we were trying to fix the handle on the pressure cooker she said, "I'll get your tool case, Mommy, so Daddy can fix it." She knows that all of the fathers of her friends in the playgroup leave for the university every day. Once when she was only 2½ she asked me if mommies ever went to the university too. Is it possible she is sensing some kind of imbalance in the things she sees already? You say making her feel happy and beloved will offset any bitterness which might arise. She's happy reading. Maybe I should do more of that with her. But so many of the books have boy heroes, and boys leading adventures, and boys achieving clever things that reading might tend to make her more unhappy, don't you think? Clothes seem to make her happy. Perhaps I should buy her another long dress like the Sesame Street one she has. Yes, that would make her happy indeed.

I noticed that you didn't mention giving my son an especially "happy and beloved childhood". I think that this is only reasonable. After all, you claim that my son's "superiority in science, mathematics and all matters mechanical soon becomes evident". Psychologists tell us, you say, that a boy's opinion of himself increases with age, "the older he gets the more he thinks of himself and the poorer opinion he has of girls". And research which you cite indicates that "at least one out of every four American women may grow up wishing to be a man, and many others are far from satisfied." Now if all this is true, and I'm sure that if scientists have done research on the subject that it *is* true, making my daughter feel happy and beloved is more important than doing the same for my son. If my son is inevitably going to have a high opinion of himself, why exhaust myself adding more fuel to the fire, shall we say. You also made me see that it's not quite safe. You say my husband is apt to be jealous if I play up the devotion of my son. Making my son feel beloved might just result in a jealous husband, is that right?

You advise me to help my little girl think of motherhood as a unique and wonderful privilege given only to women. Isn't fatherhood conversely a unique and wonderful privilege given only to men? But you say nothing about preparing boys for assuming the role. Is it because they already have so many privileges, or is it because you're not quite sure they are as capable as women in being parents? I used to think that a father could be as adequate a primary care giver of a child in every respect as a mother. But now I'm not so sure. I read Burton White's book *The First Three Years of Life* recently. He's supposed to know everything about what happens to people during their first three years because he's spent more money and time on the subject than anyone else, and he's done it all at Harvard. Incidentally, he's produced four children. In his section of "The role of the father" he sounds terribly tentative about the father being as effective a care giver as the mother. He says,

> All things being equal, I *think* mothers will *probably* do better at the task of (providing excellent early childhood experiences) than others. But if anyone could do as good a job as a mother in providing beneficial early childhood experiences, I would *guess* that it would be the father. In general . . . I see nothing that a mother does (except breast-feeding) that a father could not do . . . In summary, I would say fathers could *probably* do the job not only as well as the mother, but in some instances even better. (Italics mine).

Don't you think he sounds rather uncertain about the whole question? He says that he bases this on "extensive research we have done on this topic over the last several years". Why on earth is he so uncertain then? It would be interesting to know what kind of research he has done on the subject, since the sample of fathers in the position of primary care giver must be rather small. And I wonder why he says that "in some instances" the father could probably do the job even better than the mother. I would like to know what those instances were. I wonder whether he thinks men need to be told, yet again, that they can do a job better than a woman.

Penelope Leach also made me think twice about my assumption that fathers could be effective care givers. She wrote a Penguin paperback called *Babyhood* which is one of the most readable and informative descriptions of the first two years of life I've seen. But she does insist on referring to the infant exclusively as "he". She says in her introduction, "Apologies to all parents of girls. In the interest of clarity a book of this kind has to reserve 'she' and 'her' to refer to the mother, and this means calling all babies 'he'." That certainly implies that the father is not going to enter into it much, doesn't it? What a pity that the authors of two of the most recent books on childrearing, plus yourself, seem to discount the father's right and ability to be fully involved. Who am I to question?

I have another question to you about helping my daughter think of motherhood as a unique privilege, so unique that she won't want to do anything else. How would my daughter occupy herself for a lifetime with raising only two children? She'd really have to space them out, wouldn't she? I realize you have seen the problem, because you dedicate the book to "couples who are making bigger families popular again". I couldn't agree more that if we're going to comfort our little girls by making them see motherhood as the highest (to say nothing of the only) career open to them, we of course have got to make bigger families desirable. I just wonder whether you think that dedicating a book to couples producing larger families is enough to produce results. I see particularlly that statistics tell us the birth rate is declining, and that the average number of children produced by a couple is approximately 2.2. (I really can see why bigger families would be desirable, if only to get away from the two tenths of a child). I'm a little worried about my daughter reading someone like Paul Ehrlich or meeting someone from Zero Population Growth. Do you have any

advice for that eventuality? And what if she remains single? Or married and childless? Isn't there something else I should be doing in case something like this happens? You say that I should talk to my daughter about wonderful mothers as often as I mention wonderful businessmen. I must admit I don't very often talk about wonderful businessmen at all, but do you think it would be a good idea next time to talk about wonderful business people? I suppose not actually. It sounds a bit funny.

One of the things I liked best about this chapter of your book was that you mercifully kept it brief. I've seen some people start talking about biologically determined characteristics and culturally conditioned characteristics when discussing differences between boys and girls. Anytime people start using series of words with more than two syllables you can guess it's something that you can skim over. I figure that boys and girls are different, and we only have to look around us and at history to prove it, and I'm glad you felt the same. I've heard people talk about the need to observe the differences in the way mothers play with little boys or play with little girls in order to discover whether the mother's behaviour towards the play activity differs between her play with boys and her play with girls. What those people need is some good old-fashioned common sense sex education, don't you think? You can do too much research you know.

And speaking of research, I'm glad you didn't analyze the research you mentioned when discussing sex differences. Some writers launch into an analysis of when the research was done, and on how large a sample, and how the sample was chosen, and by whom, and whether the research was duplicated, and what variables existed, and under what conditions the research was done, and what theoretical framework influenced the staff of researchers. I really don't think that's necessary, do you? Muriel Beadle's book, however, *A Child's Mind,* is one of the worst offenders I've ever seen in this respect. She does nothing but discuss research done in the last thirty years or so, and never gets around to telling you what to *do*. She does a fantastic job of analyzing research for the lay person mind you, and seems to get an absolute delight out of galloping around the country telling you that the research done in Texas was duplicated in Toronto with vastly differing results and then proceeds to give you some of the reasons for the discrepancy. (I must admit I got a secret delight out of reading how some of the scientists either invalidated their own research or contradicted their results, but I don't really think she should have printed that information. I can make you slightly skeptical.) By the time you finish her book you've been exposed to an incredible number of fascinating research projects and questions you'd never thought of asking, but there are so many ideas given you never get a very certain feeling of which is the right one. The book is entertaining to read, don't get me wrong, but it's not very useful. I think experts in child rearing should write books to give you advice about how to raise your child and be done with it. Most of these child rearing books are geared to women anyway, aren't they, and if what you say is true, women would find discussions of scientific research difficult to follow. It just occurred to me that most of the research must be done by men. I seems funny that they can be trusted to spend hours with children studying them, but apparently are not to be trusted rearing them.

I have just one question to ask you. Have you ever read the short story called "X"? It was published in *MS* magazine a few years back. It's about these parents who insist on calling their child "X" (can you imagine?) and raising it as an "X". That meant they wouldn't let anyone know if it was a boy or a girl. Anyone who wanted to do something so dumb probably couldn't tell the difference is what I think. People didn't even know whether to say "Gee, what a sweet cute little darling" or "Wow, what a big husky boy" when they first saw "X". How would you feel if you were actually a girl, but because your parents insisted on disguising the fact, someone said you looked husky and strong. You'd never even have a chance to grow up feminine, would you? The whole thing led to all sorts of confusion. Some people were so bewildered (and angry) at trying to buy clothing gifts for an infant when they didn't even know whether it was a boy or a girl that they didn't buy anything at all.

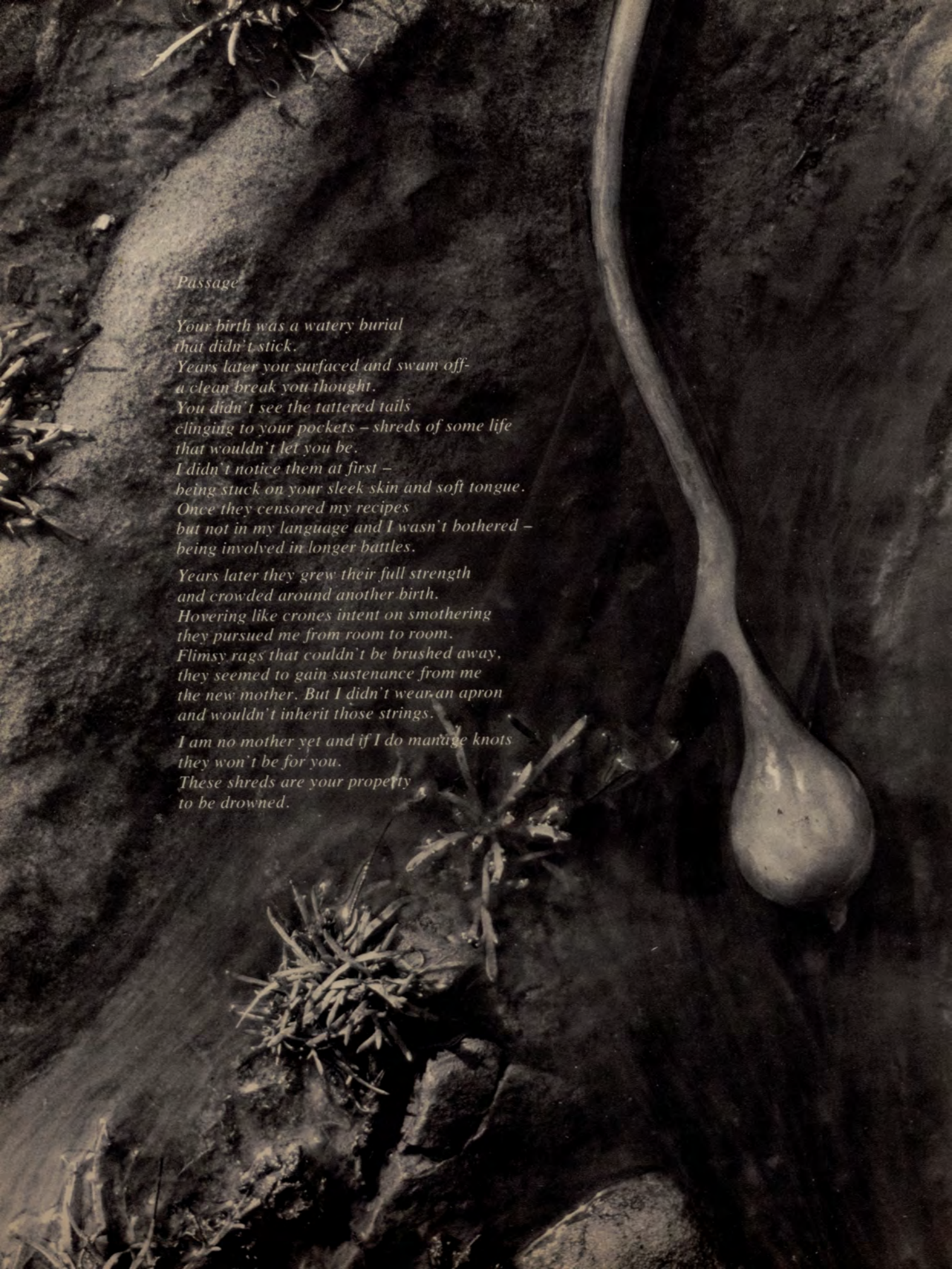
Well, thanks again for your article. Sure sorry it took me so long to say so.

Yours sincerely,

P.S. I just saw the 1976 edition of Dr. Spock and he says he brought it out to help eliminate the sexist biases of his earlier books. What on earth is he talking about??

Eunice Scarfe helped organize the Ellen Forbes Bingham Memorial Parenting Library at the University of Alberta Hospital. She has taught in England and Edmonton and has a daughter, Sarah, soon to be three.

Dr. Niles Newton teaches at Northwestern University. In addition to The Family Book of Child Care she has written a book entitled Maternal Emotions and she has authored and co-authored various articles on breastfeeding.



Passage

Your birth was a watery burial
that didn't stick.
Years later you surfaced and swam off-
a clean break you thought.
You didn't see the tattered tails
clinging to your pockets – shreds of some life
that wouldn't let you be.
I didn't notice them at first –
being stuck on your sleek skin and soft tongue.
Once they censored my recipes
but not in my language and I wasn't bothered –
being involved in longer battles.

Years later they grew their full strength
and crowded around another birth.
Hovering like crones intent on smothering
they pursued me from room to room.
Flimsy rags that couldn't be brushed away,
they seemed to gain sustenance from me
the new mother. But I didn't wear an apron
and wouldn't inherit those strings.

I am no mother yet and if I do manage knots
they won't be for you.
These shreds are your property
to be drowned.

A Mother's Poems by Heather Cadsby

Stones

My quiet daughter saves pebbles.
She lines them up
like merit badges on her desk.
These treasures are as closed as she is
– the perfect collector's item.
Sometimes she arranges them
in a circle around her
like a fortress to keep out fate.
Sometimes they lie clumped by her pillow
imposing peace on restless dreams.

These stones also serve as calling cards.
They are opening remarks
and a foot in the door.
Silently she offers them for viewing
and makes herself known.
They keep her life ajar.

First Son

When did he start climbing up my talent?
I never noticed his foot on a rung
but now it's quite clear something's up.

I know he can't snatch it like a plum from my plate
or coax it away like extra money. Still
I don't want him this close. It makes me nervous.

He's starting to talk of his birth
as though I hadn't been there:
he says colours inside are better
than what we have here.
I want his memory.
My birth has been lost in my mother.

Last night he told me
the poet's a very keen person.
What does that mean? He may have
more news than I have. I'd be smart
to steer him to sailing or farm work
while his hold is still shaky.

It's not that he could steal it.
I'm stuck with it like square hands
or a curse. It's just that
the ladder's unsteady
and I can't see the top.

photo by Diana Palting

Heather Cadsby has a B.A. from McMaster University and is presently conducting poetry workshops for the North York Board of Education at the primary school level. Her poetry has been published in various Canadian literary magazines.

books

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A REAL PERSON
by Karen Lawrence

The True Story of Ida Johnson,
by Sharon Riis.
The Women's Press, 1976,
$3.25, paper.

I am in a small town somewhere. The streets and buildings are seedy-looking, run-down. I have a date with Ida Johnson. She is living in a very small house covered with aluminum siding. I meet her in the kitchen, where she is smoking and doing her nails. She is sort of unattractive – short, tough, bad teeth. We talk for a few minutes. I ask her if she wants to go out and she says where. I say uptown to a dance or a bar or someplace. She shrugs and says she'll go but she feels funny going on a date with a woman. I put my hand on her leg and she gets this funny smile. We hitchhike uptown and have a few beers. Ida goes home early because she's bored.

Sharon Riis has dedicated her novel, *The True Story of Ida Johnson,* "to the careful reader". The words create in me a kind of tension, an apprehension which I experience more fully on my dream-date with Ida: will we get along, will I please her, or will it be a fiasco? And when I reread the novel, I feel Riis observing me, me observing myself. Do I qualify as a careful reader, am I picking up the clues, will I be able to make a precise and insightful statement about the novel? The dream compels me to document my reading accurately.

True Story is really the story of two women: Ida, who evolves from a dissatisfied 14 year-old housewife into a dissatisfied almost-30 year-old waitress; and Lucy, Ida's friend since childhood, a 'Canadian classic' Indian woman whose search for salvation is interwoven with Ida's account. The action of the book takes place in a single day, in the Claresholm Esso cafe where Ida works.

Much discussion about the novel has centred around its narrative style; but a reader of modern fiction should

photo by Cherie Westmoreland

not experience much difficulty with Riis' style, which owes something to both William Faulkner and Sheila Watson. Riis mixes modes in her book. The first person narrator is almost exclusively Ida. Though Lucy speaks from this point of view on two occasions, she should have been given this voice more often or not all. The limited omniscient narrator describes both Ida and Lucy; it is this voice that sounds most like its counterpart in *The Double Hook,* although in *True Story* the verbal bones are more fleshed out, less spare and symbolic. And where Watson lets one voice flow into another, Riis almost always uses the space on the page to make the voices discrete. A somewhat pretentious 'editorial' narrator appears throughout the novel, conveying factual (?) information and making philosophical statements. (I found several of these statements obtrusive and ambiguous. When we read on page 100 about the "credibility of the will", it is uncertain whether the will's 'capacity for belief' or its 'quality of inspiring belief' is in question. Since the evanescent nature of the will is persistently explored in the novel, the reader deserves the most precise, careful expression possible.)

Generally, Riis manipulates her narrative modes deftly. Ida's voice has a *true* sound — her utterances are 'common Canadian' elevated to art:

> When we got married it was fairly dull. I was fairly lonely there as Derek didn't like hanging around with just me so he'd go off somewheres and I'd watch the TV and eat. Actually I got pretty fat then. In the beginning I'd just tell myself it's the baby but of course I knew and Derek would say pig at me and I'd try to diet say on tomatoes and coffee then just eat about six loaves of bread and jam like crazy I'd get so funny about it.

Ida's speech as she relates her life story gives the book its tang, its realism. She is the average reader of *True Story* magazine — at turns shrewd materialist, cool observer, dumb waitress.

Or is she? For Lucy, ". . . There was something about Ida that caught her off guard: a certain gleam behind the eye, a sureness sometimes in her touch. It was as though she feigned stupidity. But for what reason?" A man who tries to pick up Ida realizes "She was not what she seemed"; yet later when she asks what he likes about her he replies, "I have fallen irrevocably in love with your colossal stupidity."

The truth about the 'real' Ida is central to the work: the novel's 'big questions' concern truth and the reality of the will. (Riis' not-so-subtle comment about the first question appears at the beginning of the story: "The truth of the matter is: there is none.") Several characters in the book respond to Ida as a stereotype, and she remarks cynically

> Anyway. I made six thousand bucks in two months being 'a real person' to twelve of those limp-pricked ranch guests. The reason I say that is just that seven of them actually called me that. A real person, I mean. "Ida," they said, "*you* are a real person." Hell, who isn't you know but I wasn't going to say nothing.

Lucy the Seeker of Truth asks all the right metaphysical questions, and each one is answered by Ida's logic, the logic of the believer-in-nothing. "Coyotes lie," (Lucy) might say. "If you believe in lies you're dead." "Jeez," Ida would counter, "you got to lie to stay out of trouble sometimes." Ida's cosmic commentary — "What does it mat-

ter?", "Who cares?", "Why not?", "So what?" — is like a chant, which culminates in the last lines of the book. "Was all that stuff back there true?" asks Lucy. Ida laughs. "What's the matter sweetheart? You miss the point or something?"

The truth about Ida is not to be deduced from the events in the story (there are three different versions of a central event, the trailer accident), nor from the other characters' observations about her. Who can we trust? The narrator? Well, the narrator summarizes, analyzes and pontificates about Ida's motives, and in the end speaks with no more authority than a caseworker. Ida? Well, she probably tells as much truth about herself as anyone else. By the end of the novel we are made to feel that the truth about Ida (about anyone), which haunts Lucy so, isn't really the point: it is this stance that jars the reader.

We all know that fiction is literally false, but we read it pretending it is true. E.M. Forster wrote that what is important in fiction is "the power of the writer to bounce the reader into accepting what he says". Sharon Riis does not bounce us. She has abdicated her power to the narrator, who messes things up badly. The narrator insists upon dissecting the nature of the will, especially by presenting Lucy as a will-directed character. We are told that Lucy seeks someone "with a will to match her own" — Ida. But Ida is unclear about the whole issue, no matter what the narrator says about her. Ida says "Lucy used to tell me I could do anything I wanted if I decided and at that time I believed her as it seemed a very clear-cut thing but as time went on I seemed to get rather clouded and things happened to me that I never decided about once." Yet a few pages later we read "I never did one thing that I, myself, didn't decide. For months and months I just did what I wanted. Yeah I still remember that. I still remember how fantastic it was."

This attempt to speak for Ida is directly connected to the narrator's most profound error: presenting Ida as a realized being. The final portrait of Ida is supposed to wrap up the book's description as a feminist novel. It doesn't. A feminist novel can either describe how bad things are for a woman in a sexist environment, and portray that woman's struggle for personal freedom, or it can draw a picture of a woman whose consciousness has been 'raised' and who is a successful, potent, self-actualized individual. *True Story* does neither, and the narrator's attempt to make it so undercuts the novel's significance.

Lucy discovers 'the real Ida' when she enters Ida's apartment.

> The room is surreal. It gives a startling sense of order and incredible beauty. Everything fits but Ida and yet it has come from her. Lucy feels disoriented and foolish. She knows nothing. It represents a mind so finely-drawn and self-possessed, so lacking in *ressentiment*, that it seems, somehow, inhuman. Its very perfection provides the Final Solution. None but the holy could live in a room like this; none but the whole. The terrible strength of it would eat them alive.

No, Lucy. This is *not* the Final Solution. Ida Johnson is not living in a zen state, a place of wholeness, a holy equilibrium between self and cosmos. Her concerns are limited to the primacy of her own needs. She accepts no responsibility for her own actions — "There never seemed to be much choice in the matter so how could I be blamed for any of it I ask you?" When Lucy says of Ida "I knew you'd made it in your own particular way . . . There were no loose ends for you", I think she is speaking to the fact that Ida has few attachments, especially to people. Ida has little if any connection to her feelings. She has a "knack for insulating herself against pain. She might deaden the senses with fact or she might just deaden the senses". She is more upset when she cuts her hair than when she slits the throats of her husband and babies and immolates them. In terms of her treatment as a woman (the narrator notes her "subjugation" by her husband), there is no 'click' of realization or illumination for Ida, nor is there growth in the emotional or spiritual sense. "I've got this idea that everybody's exactly the same from beginning to end no matter what happens large or small. At any rate I'm that way myself. I feel today exactly like I ever did." Finally, Ida experiences neither "affirmation nor energy". As she concludes her life story she says "I've been waiting around here ever since. Just waiting." In holiness, in wholeness, there is not waiting — being is at rest.

My message to Riis: if I have failed you as a careful reader, you have failed me as a careful writer. At its best your work has the clarity, depth and brilliance of a well-cut gem; in other places your story does not face up to the basic issues it is speaking to. In the end, you play Ida false. She may be a 'real person', but honey, a saviour she ain't.

Karen Lawrence recently completed a collection of poems entitled Nekuia: The Inanna Poems.

THE OLD OPPRESSION AND THE NEW ANDROGYNY
by Yvonne M. Klein

Our Blood, by Andrea Dworkin, Fitzhenry & Whiteside, $6.95.
Androgyny: Toward a new theory of sexuality, by June Singer. Anchor/Doubleday, 1976, $9.95, paper.

Over the last couple of years, Andrea Dworkin has produced two extraordinary books. The first, *Womanhating*, is a kind of extended meditation on the theme of violence against women, both historical violence in the form of witch-burnings and foot-binding and the continuing violence of pornography and rape. The second, more recent, volume, *Our Blood*, is a collection of addresses made to various feminist groups in the United States. Much of the ground covered in *Womanhating* is assumed in *Our Blood* but, probably because the contents of the second book were originally delivered to audiences of women, its effect is, if anything, even more compelling, uncompromising, and challenging than that of the first.

Andrea Dworkin is able, as too few of us have been in recent years, to hold on to her anger, to use it as the caustic agent to eat away at the mystifications and explanations of this or that atrocity against women in order to get at the continuing truth which lies beneath each beating, each rape, each act of degradation: that under patriarchy, women have been systematically violated to uphold a system of sexual superiority which, over the centuries, has become the same as sexual identity so that, when threatened, men react savagely, not merely to protect privilege, but to defend themselves against what they perceive as an attack on life itself.

A number of these essays were originally presented to various chapters of NOW and in them the author is particularly concerned to confront the question of reformist feminism, to reject as a feminist goal the achievement of sexual "equality." She argues that to opt for mere sexual equality in an inherently oppressive system is an immoral choice since it involves one in the decision to become the oppressor rather than the oppressed. (Whether this decision is in fact a practical option for more than a handful of women or whether it is one that even these can exercise outside of a protected environment is, of course, another question.) Instead, she maintains, the revolutionary centre of feminism is its demand for the abolition of all sex roles and of their institutional expression. Here she is not talking merely of the kind of sex-typing which

requires little girls to play with dolls and dream of being nurses and little boys to play with trucks and hope to become firemen. She is in fact talking about our cultural definitions of sexuality which prescribe for women a passive, receptive, ultimately masochistic role and identify masculinity with action and aggression. She is talking about the ways both sexes have learnt to make themselves attractive to the other. She is talking about the very way we make love.

In each of these essays, Andrea Dworkin presses beyond the evident reform to the underlying structure. In her essay, "The Rape Atrocity and the Boy Next Door," for example, she underlines the necessity for the kind of action taken by every rape crisis centre, but then reminds us that there must be a more adequate response to the fact of rape than consoling the victim. She urges women to combat rape by refusing to participate in the dating system which provides the scenario for much overt and subtle rape, since it assumes that a woman, in exchange for a dinner, a drink, a movie, will attempt passively to please whatever man asks her out and that he will attempt to score, as much out of personal pride as out of sexual desire. She calls upon men to dissociate themselves from rapists by rigourously renouncing behaviour which contributes to a climate in which rape is acceptable. She demands that men who do not support the right to rape cease discussing the details of their sexual intimacies with other men, cease telling misogynist jokes, cease supporting pornography in which rape is a staple stimulus, in short, that they give up being "one of the boys" in the fraternity of male bonding.

Andrea Dworkin's is a hard, even terrifying vision, one that demands we move beyond an evident "reality" which is structured on our own oppression to act upon the core of truth that lies within us and which we often fear to be the voice of madness. She reminds us that to fail to make every effort to root out from our very being each vestige of masochism, passivity, and fear is to condemn ourselves, our daughters, and all women who come after us to yet more centuries of degradation and shame. In recent years, the feminist movement has tended to settle for the smaller gains, settled, because though small, these gains have been so hardly won. *Our Blood* demands that we lift our sights and recognize the vast distance which unfolds between where we are and where we have to go.

Our Blood has been, in effect, buried by the publisher; it remains unadvertised, unreviewed, and largely underdistributed. In view of the author's politics of the limp penis, this resistance is hardly surprising. In contrast, June Singer's far more orthodox book, Androgyny, has been highly touted. *Androgyny,* is rather a trendy book. Its author calls upon Jungian pyschology and Eastern religion to support her conception of androgyny as the New Age sexuality, but, when her theory is examined closely, we discover that Singer is hardly talking about androgyny at all.

The concept of androgyny is exciting to feminists when it imagines a new human possibility: a personality structure independent of cultural assumptions based on gender, so that mere possession of a vagina or a penis predicates nothing in particular in the way of social or sexual behaviour. By this definition, the end of phallic-centred sexuality envisioned by Dworkin would result in a type of androgyny. But in Singer's view, sexuality is *polar:* the old male-female contraries not only exist, but must continue to exist. The only new development is that men and women may variously feel more or less "masculine" or "feminine" in different relationships or at different stages of their lives.

Stripped of its psychological and religious mystifications, Singer's "new theory of sexuality" is considerably less than revolutionary. When she demonstrates the application of the mystical, alchemical tradition of androgyny to contemporary life problems in a series of case histories at the end of her book, her observations are both banal and cloyingly inspirational. Shuck off the straitjacket of culturally conditioned sex-roles, discover the androgyne within and you will be happier, healthier, more creative. She has the disconcerting habit of writing from a perspective which apparently assumes that patriarchal society has magically withered away. "It is important to realize," she informs us with total sincerity, "that until the last half of the twentieth century . . . the tradition still obtained whereby men were the ones who did the major physical, commercial and professional work in the world, while women were sheltered from all of that and did their own work about the home, rearing children, or working in the adjunctive, helping and nurturing professions." I presume, from here choice of tense, that she believes that in the second half of the twentieth century all that has changed, and that we are all now liberated to spend our major energy pursuing a rich, free, androgynous sexual existence in what she likes to call The Age of Aquarius.

Androgyny is currently popular — national magazines devote cover stories to the New Androgyny, rock stars perform in modified drag, the whole notion has become immensely vulgarized. When we compare *Our Blood* and *Androgyny,* it is easy to see why the definition of androgyny implicit in Singer's book has become so popular: it is safe. A concept of androgyny based on the real existence of principles labelled "male" and "female" and defined in essence as "active" and "passive" is comforting. No changes really need to be made; we need only to relax a little. Male and female are separate and equal — both are needed to create. If, as a woman, you are feeling "masculine," go with it — the revolution is over, you can do what you like and your essential femininity will surface once again. If, as a man, you are feeling "feminine," relax and enjoy — succumbing to the feminine will make you more effective at the office. The cosmic dance of Male and Female carries on and if there is a gender confusion with the abstract principle, that is all in the mind and a little meditation will clear it up.

To Dworkin, the revolution is not only not over, it has barely begun. If she looks to the past, it is not to discover an intellectual tradition which demands the eternal existence of masculine and feminine but to uncover the record of millenia of savage oppression by a dominant male gender class of an inferior female gender class. "Active" and "passive," "aggressive" and "receptive" are the categories which inform our oppression and, as *Our Blood* reiterates, we forget it at our peril.

Yvonne Klein is a Montreal writer. She teaches English at Dawson College.

PSYCHE MEETS DAYDREAM DAUGHTER
by Christa Van Daele

One Who Became Lost, by Marilyn Bowering. Fiddlehead Poetry Books, 1976, $3.00, paper.

Daydream Daughter, by Catherine Firestone, MacClelland and Stewart, 1976, $4.95, paper.

A modest enough looking book, cheaply produced in a limited edition, Marilyn Bowering's *One Who Became Lost* offers strong and unexpected pleasures. Bowering, born in 1949, is a young poet who is well on her way to realizing some important themes. She writes compellingly from a Jungian world of light and shadow; her work is strongly coloured and sexual, full of

passionate utterances and animal sounds, the language of the psyche wrestling with itself. Not that all of the poems are great — I find some of the unrelieved interiority of the poems pretty obscure — but an admirable beginner's collection just the same.

The poet wakens constantly to the sound of something calling her. It is a gong beckoning, in some places, or, more typically, a powerful masculine figure that is clearly perceived as the animus. The animus comes as a black bull, as a tribal kinsman; registering the universal impulse toward incest, it also comes as the poet's immediate brother. The task, as the poet sets it out for herself, is explorative and necessarily dangerous. Warily, the poetic voice fights to distinguish the true messengers from the false, the nurturant from the life destroying. When the poet's spiritual peril becomes unbearably great, she threatens to break, and pleads with the messengers of her dreams to show themselves truly. Some of the best poems in the collection tend to group around this finely expressed dramatic conflict:

> The next day, I met the kinsman of my dream
> and listened to him describe the end of his hopes;
> how he had changed his life
> and now he was happy
> But I listened and thought, "Nothing will ever make me give up my dreams",
> and it is true, and I may die because of it,
> surely I will die because of it.

Marilyn Bowering is particularly expert in the use of the longer, loose narrative line, an unusual and forgotten skill in contemporary poetic practice. Narration generally takes place simply and directly. The straight from the shoulder delivery of "Peddar Bay," for example, reminds one of Diane Wakoski's ability to trace the slow genesis of an intensely grasped feeling, build in concept and meaning without taking away from the locus of feeling, and wind smoothly back down the germinal impulse that prompted the poem. An effortless, easy syntax, disciplined by the poet's good ear, affords a rhythm that strikes me as persuasively moving and organic:

> Then we had to go back
> and it was like a dream, with old death and new around us,
> and I began to think there was no way off the island.

Overall, Bowering's confident command over her language, her impressive realization of a stable poetic voice throughout the collection, makes me look forward to future and more widely available volumes of her work.

As is sometimes the case in the fickle fortunes of poetry publishing, the promising poets seem to wind up between Fred Cogswell's Fiddlehead covers while distressingly Philistine offerings come to us *via* the commercial houses. A really noteworthy example is a recent McClelland & Stewart publication by Catherine Firestone. Cloyingly titled *Daydream Daughter* (1976), I find the Firestone collection tiresome from first to last. Next to a glowing Karsh portrait on the back of the book, an M & S copywriter informs us that here is a poet with "a dedication to pure poetry . . . sustained by a solid, precise, and well-executed craft." Hmm, I gasp, sucking in my breath with anticipation, yes, pure poetry is the very thing we want; and solid craft — well, you just can't beat it. In a tide of forgiveness, I forget the *faux pas* of the suave portrait and settle right down to a serious reading of the first poem.

Which is called, aptly, "Daydream Daughter." The thesis, perhaps, a proposition to chew on:

> Daydream daughter
> opens unseen horizons
> for those who are willing
> to be weaned on the unknown . . .

But what on earth? *Opens unseen horizons*? A little lugubrious, no? Or wooden, at least? The lead poem, which presumably has been put there to set the tone of the collection, ends as tritely ("so shall the real only be/the untimed, mimed mood/to release from restriction/the self-willed fantasy") as it began. All we're left with are a few clever clumps (could these be the "flashes of brilliance" that the cover blurb refers to?) of the internally rhymed words that rapidly become a hallmark of the Firestone "craft" in the balance of the book.

But let's not tarry here. On to the remaining seventy-three poems, a good deal of which could have (should have) been cut. "Cache of Heat," "Breech-Loaded Vamp," "Our Sib's Ribs," "If as You Pulled Off My Purpled Stockings" — Firestone really shows a Wallace Stevens flair with titles. One wants to go with some of these poems — the rubbing of words that the poet so obviously enjoys, the concrete linguistic textures of tongue-twisting consonants, puns, and hyphenated words that figure predominately throughout. I see the fun of it, all right. But Catherine Firestone plays a fence-sitting kind of game, aiming for some of the genuine rewards of concrete poetry (clarity, semantic purity, density) while selling herself down the river of a sticky romantic aesthetic in witless attempts like "Beauty Into Being." The final poem is a pointless

melange of whispers, rain, petals, lavender scents — and it's how a collection called *Daydream Daughter* deserves to end.

Christa Van Daele is a Toronto freelance writer and an editor with the Women's Press.

FRAGMENTS OF OUR COLLECTIVE PAST

by Laurie Bagley

Woman of Labrador, by Elizabeth Goudie, Peter Martin Associates, 1975, $4.95, paper, $10.00, cloth.
My Ninety Years, by Martha Louise Black. Hurtig Publishers, 1976, $5.75, paper.
Different Drummers, by Antoinette May. Les Femmes, 1976, $5.50, paper.
She Never Was Afraid, by Louise Watson. Progress Books, 1976, $3.95, paper.
A Walk Through Yesterday, Jessie L. Beattie, McClelland & Stewart, 1976, $12.95, cloth.

These books contain the life stories of ten women whose interests and accomplishments range from aviation to the arts to organizing labour unions. Some became famous for their lifestyles, as well as their achievements; others led more private lives and are relatively unknown today. While some raised hell, others raised children (not necessarily the same thing). Diverse as their histories are, all are of interest to us as women because they are fragments of our collective past.

In her autobiography *Woman of Labrador*, Elizabeth Goudie recalls the way of life of the people who struggled to survive in the Labrador wilderness early in this century. It was a life of constant danger, extreme privation, and awful loneliness, especially for the women. While Jim Goudie tended his trapline during the long winter months, Elizabeth remained with the children in their isolated cabin. "I would amuse myself," she tells us, "by looking out at the bay and watching the wolves walking back and forth." Such was her entertainment; her work included fishing and hunting, preparing food, making clothing and boots, driving away wild animals, nursing her eight children through fevers and frostbite, and building part of the cabin itself. She recounts the most hair-raising experiences in a simple, conversational tone, all the more effective because of her tendency to understatement. The photos, maps, bibliography, and introduction by editor David Zimmerly contribute to the value of this book as a factual historical document. But it is even more valuable as a record of the courage, generosity, and sheer perseverance of Labrador women such as Elizabeth Goudie.

Unlike Elizabeth, born to a pioneer life, Martha Louise Black spent her early years in leisure and luxury. She was thirty years old, married and a mother, when word reached Chicago that gold had been discovered in the Klondike. Martha and her brother joined hordes of other adventurers in the great Gold Rush of 1898. Although she found no gold, Martha believed that she had found her destiny in the beautiful, wild country of the Yukon. She settled in Dawson City, where she managed a sawmill and dazzled society with her social graces and her wardrobe (she ordered a Paris original each year).

Eventually Martha married George Black, a Dawson lawyer who became Commissioner of Yukon Territory and later an MP. When he fell ill in 1935, his wife ran for Parliament in his place, becoming the second woman to sit in the Canadian Parliament. Although editor Flo Whynard refers to this as "blazing a political trail," Martha herself calls it "keeping the seat warm for George." She was, in later years, a quite conventional woman. Her self-concern and social snobbery sometimes make her memoirs boring or irritating, but her vivid descriptions of the Yukon and its early settlers are fascinating reading.

Different Drummers is Antoinette May's collective biography of six women who were anything but conventional. Because of their courage in challenging the conventions of their times, they have left to us who follow a "heritage of new options." The most famous among them are actress Sarah Bernhardt, dancer Isadora Duncan, and Amelia Earhart, aviator. Less well known are Helena Blavatsky, the "Mother of Mysticism," Victoria Woodhull, candidate for the United States presidency on a platform of free love, and Ernestine Schumann-Heink, who overcame the handicaps of poverty, lack of beauty, and seven children to become the most famous opera singer of her time. May writes entertaining, exciting profiles of all these women. Obviously she admires them, yet she maintains her objectivity and balanced perspective, combining biographical data with personal anecdotes so skillfully that her subjects come vividly to life.

Louise Watson is less successful in evoking the personality of Annie Buller, subject of *She Never Was Afraid*. This biography is strong on historical and political background, weak on information about its subject's private life. Perhaps that was inevitable, though, for Annie was primarily a "party person." She was a founder of the Communist Part of Canada and a tireless writer and editor on behalf of the working class press. As the only woman labour organizer in Canada, Annie was instrumental in 1929 in setting up a union for the exploited women of the Canadian needle trades. In 1931 her support for the striking Saskatchewan miners at Estevan cost her a prison term. She was a true working class heroine, a woman whose life and achievements deserve to be better known. This biography although seriously flawed by its author's lack of objectivity and frequent lapses into Communist rhetoric (for instance, Watson refers to Russia as a "bastion of peace, progress, and happiness"), is nonetheless a worthwhile account of a dedicated and effective political activist.

A Walk Through Yesterday is the autobiography and sixteenth book of Jessie L. Beattie. Although she has had various careers as a teacher, dramatist, librarian, and social worker, her first love has always been writing. Her works include, besides some poetry and biography, three books that have helped to publicize the injustices done to Blacks, Japanese-Canadians, and native people. (Unfortunately, she is less aware of the oppression of women.) She devotes a disproportionate amount of space in this slow-paced, old-fashioned book to memories of her childhood, glossing over her later experiences to avoid possible embarrassment to people who played vital roles in her adult life. Her discretion may be admirable, but her book is the poorer for it.

The most lovingly remembered character in the autobiography is the author's sister Jean. When illness or tragedy struck any member of the family, Jean always provided support, cheerfully neglecting her own special talents and interests to do so. Jessie pictures her as a sort of domestic saint, and perhaps she was. Certainly she was the person most responsible for the happy childhood that Jessie recalls so nostalgically. Whether the preservation of a strong family unit was worth the sacrifice of one of its members is a question the author never asks.

Laurie Bagley is a mother, housewife and part-time freelance writer now living in Winnipeg. She was one of the founders and original co-editors of Room of One's Own.

And more books

A Harvest Yet to Reap, Researched and compiled by Linda Rasmussen, Lorna Rasmussen, Candace Savage, and Anne Wheeler. The Women's Press, 1976, $8.95, paper.

Miss Katherine Stinson, air pilot, Calgary Glenbow-Alberta Institute photo

Those who saw *Great Grand Mother,* a half-hour film by Anne Wheeler and Lorna Rasmussen, will need little introduction to this documentary and pictoral history of Canadian prairie women, which is compiled from the letters, diaries, and reminiscences brought together for the film.

And those who grew up on the Canadian prairies should need no introduction to the wonderful, strong women described here. They came, many of them, led by stories of prosperity perpetrated by the CPR with the purpose of settling the prairies (and settling down the men). They worked harder than we can imagine, under exceedingly primitive conditions, did their share and more to build viable farms from struggling homesteads. Yet they were not able to claim the free homestead land for themselves; they had no rights to their own homes; they were not even recognized as the legal parents of their own children.

Out of these conditions, out of their loneliness and their hard lives, prairie women got together. Women's clubs of every shade grew up, among them the United Farm Women in Alberta, Saskatchewan's Women Grain Growers, and the ubiquitous Women's Christian Temperance Union, whose discussions extended beyond child care, homemaking, and demon rum to embrace politics and legal reform.

Thus, it was on the prairies that women first obtained the vote in Canada. Prairie women were the first, not only in Canada but in the British Empire, to be elected to legislatures and appointed to the judiciary.

A Harvest Yet to Reap makes a good start at telling their story.

Jeanette Rothrock

Jeanette Rothrock is director of the publications office at the University of Alberta. She graduated with a degree in history from the University of Saskatchewan.

Stories from Pangnirtung, Illustrated by Germaine Arnaktauyok. Hurtig Publishers, 1976, $5.95, cloth.

Still remembered is a time when the North belonged to the Inuit. They moved freely through their land, claiming from it for their needs, according to the season. As now, it was a time of cold. But starvation did not wait for storms to pass, or ice to form or break. Man hunted incessantly, while women, just as determinedly, transformed the kill into clothing, food, *kamootiks,* kayaks and tents. Without a man, a woman would starve. Without a woman, man could not live. This obligatory symbiosis has passed. No one any longer hunts or sews to survive. Little remains of the old ways, except in the memories of the aged. Eleven Inuit, relics of a time which would seemingly endure ages but disappeared overnight, have recorded fragments of these lost times in this small book, *Stories from Pangnirtung.*

Except that these are indeed precious memories, the collection itself is not noteworthy. The eleven aged spokespeople seem not to have been selected for their stories, but merely because they were living in Pangnirtung. Many of the stories ramble in a disconcerting way, detailing insignificant childhood adventures, scarcely elucidating the style of life. The stories have suffered in their translation from the spoken native tongue to English. Sentence after sentence of weak prose is strung together, occasionally losing the reader in convoluted sentence patterns. These stories were originally tape recorded; more editing was necessary to reduce the natural oral repetitiveness.

Punctuating the stories are several fanciful prints by Germaine Arnaktauyok. The artistic animation of her scenes enlivens the book and reinforces the Inuit sense of loss: the necessity that propelled them in their heroic survival no longer exists.

The Inuit's life style has been documented before. In these stories the reader is gently reminded that the changes have been drastic and often damaging. Repeatedly the realities of the former harsh life are recalled with longing. "We had a better way to live than what we are living now. Life was magnificent."

Susan Kay Warters

Susan Kay Warters teaches freshman composition at the University of Calgary.

Living in Step, by Ruth Roosevelt and Jeannette Lofas. Stein and Day (Canadian Distribution, McGraw-Hill Ryerson, Ltd.), 1976, $9.25, cloth. *Living in Step* points out the traps families living in step-relationships almost inevitably fall into and offers practical advice for either avoiding or escaping them. Different sections treat the problems of stepmothers and stepfathers, remarried parents and, importantly, their children. If you are living "in step," you will certainly recognize yourself. If new at it, you will probably come away from the book with insight into both your own feelings and those of the rest of your family. If you have become so adept at "living in step" that your friends ask you for advice, the book will still provide the catharsis that comes from recognizing yourself. Roosevelt's and Lofas' work has the added advantage of direct and engaging prose; only occasionally is it marred by maudlin fictionalized scenes between parent and step-parent.

The Self-Help Guide to Divorce, Children, Welfare, by Penelope Jahn and Charles Campbell. Anansi, 1976, $3.95, paper. This guide designed for those too poor to spend months in legal battles, outlines in a straightforward way the legal issues surrounding marital breakdown (under what circumstances, for example, can a woman leave her husband without "deserting" him), the functions and technicalities of legal separations, intelligent ways of arriving at agreements about support and child custody and the role of courts in determining both. A final section on welfare defines different welfare programs and outlines the conditions of eligibility, the application procedures and what you can expect from your field worker.

How to Get It Together When Your Parents are Coming Apart, by Arlene Richards and Irene Willis. David McKay Company (Distribution in Canada, The General Publishing Group), 1976, $8.95. This simply written book is directed at the children of quarreling or divorced parents. It attempts to analyze different "battle" situations, parents' positions and children's own feelings — particularly the sense of guilt children often have over their parents' failures —, in terms the child will understand. Most of the points are made through examples of children in actual situations and their responses, destructive and constructive. The book is particularly helpful in its insistence that a child lives *his* life, not his parents'. A guide at the end provides suggestions about where a child can turn for help outside of his or her home.

films

Marguerite on Eliza

by Judith Mirus

The first three months of '77 saw the release across Canada of Eliza's Horoscope, *one of the more interesting and rewarding Canadian efforts and certainly one of the best English-Canadian films to date. In addition, it is, shall I say, distinctly a "woman's film," if rather unexpectedly so because it was written, produced and directed by a man, Gordon Sheppard. The associate producer, editor and distributor is Marguerite Corriveau, who was in Edmonton recently and spoke with me about the film and her intimate association with it.*

Ms. Corriveau graduated in Communication Arts, specifically Film Studies, from Loyola in Montreal and not long afterwards joined the crew of Eliza, first as assistant editor. The last 5 years of her life have been spent almost exclusively on Eliza, and she has taken charge finally of all post production work. Besides teaching an occasional course in public speaking for a fashion agency, she has nearly completed a technical book on final editing and production processes.

Is "Eliza" a film about astrology and spiritualism?

No, not really. It uses astrology. And if you mean spiritualism in the sense of mediums and clairvoyants and that sort of thing, no not at all. Astrology in the film is much more in the nature of the oracle at Delphi, the archetypal high priestess who can answer questions about the future. Eliza consults the astrologer in that sense; she wishes to know her future. She wishes to have a baby, first of all, therefore wants to find the love of her life to have the baby with him. She sets out to find him by asking the astrologer to help her. She gets a prediction and tries to make it come true but she misinterprets the prediction and goes looking for the wrong things. Ultimately, what the film is about is psychological growth, how the girl starts out as a girl and becomes a woman.

Have you read *Women's Mysteries* by Esther Harding? It's a terrific book that looks at many myths that deal with women, the female essence. There are many passages that very aptly describe exactly what Eliza does, the destructive nature of a woman who is looking for something, who's obsessed with finding love. She hasn't yet learned that it's something you have to give and that as long as you're trying to get it, what you're doing is destroying it. Eliza destroys because she is obsessed with finding this man according to her interpretation of the prediction. Meanwhile, he's there all along . . .

Tommy?

Yes. He's not rich in the material sense, he's rich in the spiritual sense, through his Indian heritage, but she doesn't see that. There are reasons — she comes from a poor background so you can understand why she's obsessed with wealth. Finally she does understand, but if it had happened earlier she might have saved Tommy, he might not have gone off and tried to blow up his bridge.

He's a character juxtaposed to Eliza?

Yes, if you wish. For me she's the true realist. She lives in what I think is the real world, the psychological world. If we could take away the actions on the surface, we'd find some of them have nothing to do with what's really happening between people. That's the level at which she's living through her fantasies, through her dreams and her desires and through her encounters with people. She's extremely naive and extremely pure in the sense that she doesn't judge things before she gets into them. Some people find her too naive, but I don't think so. I've known a lot of 18 year old girls who'd do exactly what Eliza does, if not more, never thinking twice. I think that's fine. We're taught so much not to do things, don't do this or that, you'll get hurt and that's bad. It starts with the Ten Commandments and the seven of the Church if you're Catholic, 17 rules right off the bat that you're not supposed to break. No one tells you that if you break any one of

them you're going to learn something. It's the ancient Adam and Eve story of original sin: knowledge is what they gained but the price was expulsion from Paradise. but then, according to Jung, paradise was simply the unconscious . . . Anyway, that's the world Eliza's living in, though not necessarily consciously. She simply lives it.

She's pursuing the psychological world and only becomes conscious of that world later.

At the end.

Why is it important – or is it – that Eliza is a woman?

Yes, it's a very feminine film because it deals with the feminine way of apprehending things. I think we live in a much too masculine world. It's important that women become liberated because the conscious aspect of a woman, her nature, is Eros — the feminine, the affectionate, the sexual and procreative, the intuitive — and her unconscious is masculine — reason, Logos, etc. But we live in a world where the feminine is given less and less value; it exists, it's never going to die out because it's the most life-renewing and creative force, but it has lost its value. Women, in becoming liberated, it seems to me, in many cases forget that they must maintain above all their feminine nature and that liberation only means they're now capable of also living their unconscious, masculine side, which is terribly important. At the same time men should be liberated to live their unconscious . . . *Eliza's Horoscope* deals with the feminine; it is an intuitive, emotional film. People who try to apprehend it intellectually get hung up. If you look at it the way women do, if you let yourself get into it and flow with it, you're not asking questions all the time, you're doing a synthesis — it comes together.

Marguerite Corriveau

Elizabeth Moorman as Eliza

Women are seen in many ways: Rose, the old woman, the wise woman, the Godhead; Eliza, the young girl who's going through a process, who must encounter her animus in order to finally become a woman. There is Lila, who is older, a prostitute, who wishes also to be a mother. She wants to appropriate Eliza. It's a negative thing; rather than somehow balancing herself, fulfilling herself, she wants to possess. There's wisdom in Lila; she can understand but it's difficult for her to give up. And then there's Tommy's grandmother, the old Indian woman who, in a sense, is the counterpart to Rose. She is Tommy's mentor and spiritual guide.

Astrology at its most serious is an archetype as well — the circle within the circle, the inner self. It doesn't give you any answers, it just tells you what your potential is and the negative parts to be circumvented. I'm an Aquarius — we're supposed to be procrastinators. Knowing it doesn't mean I'm not going to be one, but at least I can make an effort to balance off the negative aspect.

It's not a head-film?

Well, you can easily think it is, but it isn't; at its best, it's a head-film in the right side of the brain, the intuitive side.

The posters for the film describe it as a "celebration of spiritual orgasm". What do you mean by "spiritual orgasm"?

Oh, an explosion of the spirit is the quickest, easiest way to say it. An orgasm is a point of unity, right? a point of love-explosion. All orgasms are spiritual, only most people don't necessarily think of them that way; they

figure they're just the body doing its number. For me all orgasms are spiritual but in this sense; it's both that orgasm should be spiritual but it's also that the spirit can have an orgasm, what Robert Graves called "union with the absolute".

Have you seen Maya Deren's films?

No. I would love to see her work; I've read about it. But I wasn't involved with underground films for very long. You know *Eliza's Horoscope* is extremely experimental but it's an above-ground film. I think it's important to do that above-ground. Underground is limited; it can be self-indulgent and cryptic by not trying to go beyond techniques. If you attempt to experiment with film in an above-ground fashion, then at least you risk getting your ideas into the public consciousness. But it's an incredibly slow process.

As you're finding out. What about your own films? You made three?

Yes, two of them were very experimental and then the third one was a documentary. At that point I was fascinated by old age, so it was a poetic documentary on an old man who was living on campus. Mostly it was a learning process; if I had to do it again, good god what I'd cut. I did terrific interviews with him, but only on tape; I should have filmed them. The reason I didn't was because we had a set amount of footage. I can't interview that way; you've got to be able to let your footage run when you start interviewing, especially someone like this old man. Instead I filmed silently with voice-overs. I worked on all aspects of the film — I ended up cutting my own negative and three or four soundtracks, then going to the lab to do the mix-cutting and the final answer print. It was rudimentary but I did learn everything.

What about the others, particularly the one to do with yin and yang?

That one they wouldn't show at the Communications Department's open house for student films — it was restricted. I won the 16mm award that year basically because of that film and because of the work I'd started on the documentary which was just called *Bert, 1884 or 1886* (that was his birthdate). The former film was an expression of the principle of yin/yang. Two bodies intertwined to the rhythm of a score by Toro Takemitsu called "Eclipse". Accompanying these two bodies dressed in black and white were two instruments of music playing against and around each other. It was all intercut with images of flowing water. For everybody but me the water was an obvious sexual symbol. In fact, what I'd originally wanted wasn't water but something else I couldn't get just because it was winter. My third film, which lasted two minutes, was called *Mousehole* and had masked figures in it. *Mousehole* actually came from Dostoevsky's short story and was an attempt to explore the pure inner self. So I was into much of what *Eliza's Horoscope* is about long before I actually started work on the film. Not in the same sense, but many of the themes were dormant, so coming to *Eliza* and meeting Gordon was a terrific experience.

What's it like – the immediate experience of making a film?

It's very intimate, much like making love. From what I've seen it's the best mind-approach to take when you're working with actors and actresses and your crew. Treat them as though they are your lovers. You have to do it in a physical sense by using affection and in the mental sense by truly wanting to love them and having them feel that. Actors and actresses are in an extremely vulnerable position. It's hard to always leave yourself open and vulnerable, and that's what the best of them do. They can be very easily hurt or destroyed by someone who has no sense of propriety as far as their feelings are concerned. So it is important that they feel loved. It may sound childish, but I don't think it is at all . . . it's simply the process. It's what is difficult about directing. You don't have a pen in your hand where you can just write the words; you've got people. You don't want to manipulate them; and yet part of directing is manipulating, getting people to do what should be done in order for the vision to be rendered. You want to use them, but you want them to want to be used. In other words, I could very well say that for everything I did on *Eliza's Horoscope* I was used, but . . .

You complied, it was a choice.

Yes, I wanted to be used to my maximum and my best because I believed in what was being done. If I'm use-less, well, what's the point in being there? An artist is the servant of a vision, not its creator.

Judith Mirus is a graduate student in comparative literature at the University of Alberta and is vice-president of the National Film Theatre/Edmonton.

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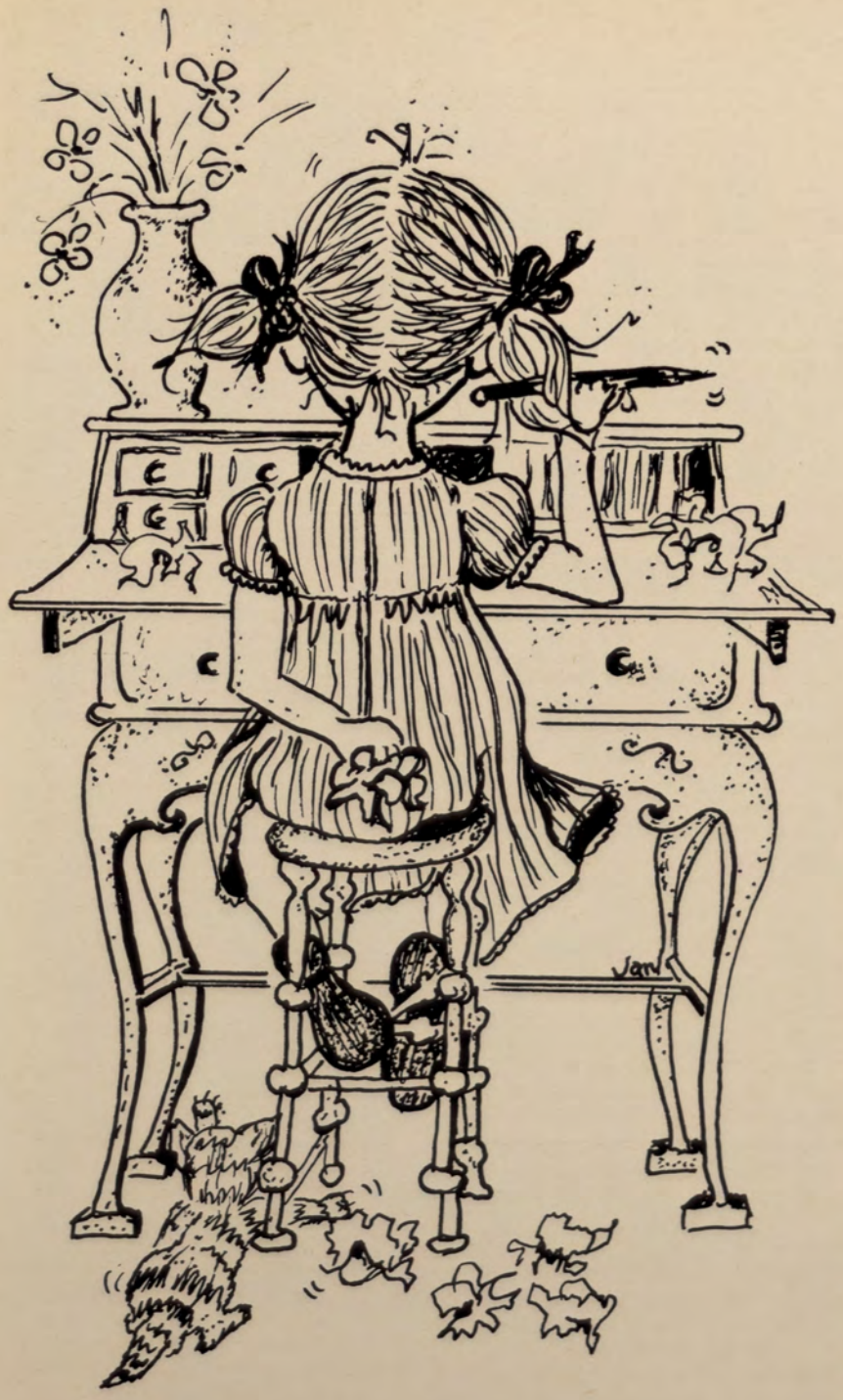

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