Branching Out

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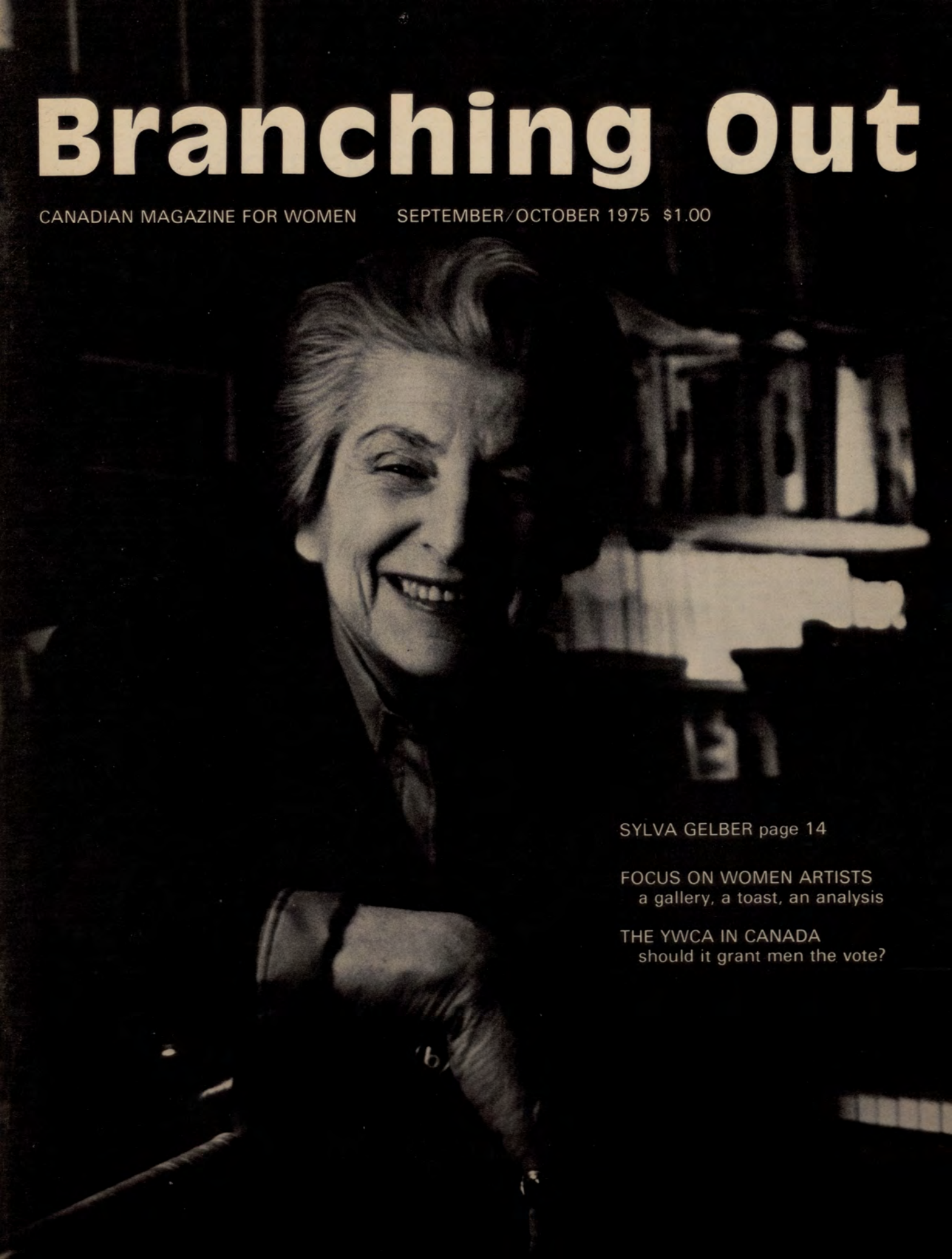

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letters

The recent IWY conference in Mexico City should provoke some discussion on what direction the women of North America are moving in, relative to the women of the rest of the world and particularly the developing nations.

When Third World women get together at such a conference and denounce North American feminism as a "defence of selfish vested interests of western women ... not of true interest to women in the Third World," I have trouble concurring with Betty Friedan and Bella Abzug that "manipulation by the male power structures" is the sinister force behind it all. I'm more inclined to believe that there must have been a fair amount of manipulation by the Western women's delegations, who seem to have spent a great deal of conference time insisting that "women's issues" should be considered separately from such economic and political issues as imperialism, colonialism, fascism, and zionism.

Feminists in Canada may find it disconcerting that the rhetoric and style of struggle of women in other countries do not mirror our own, and that "more room at the top for women" is no popular rallying cry in countries where the masses of people are hungry and without political power.

Perhaps we should seriously examine the role played by our own "representatives" to the Mexico City conference, particularly since the federal government, and not the women of Canada, picked the delegation. Our newspapers would have us believe that Sylva Gelber's U.N. delegation is leading the women of the world down the path of moderation and away from the propagandistic declarations of the Third World women's representatives. Before we give our tacit assent to Canada's activities at the Mexico City conference, we ought to look critically at our government's approach to women's problems as well as at its economic policies toward developing countries. There is obvious hypocrisy involved in the "women's rights" stance taken by Canada and the U.S. - both countries which reap large profits from investment in underdevelopment.

In considering these contradictions, we should also be aware of certain contradictions which exist in the North American women's movement. Why, for instance, do so many feminists continue to be engaged in small-scale discussion of sexuality and personal problems, thus ironically perpetuating one of the forms of women's traditional passivity? Why do parts of the movement (termed "radical") waste energy in lobbying for utopian, female-separatist solutions and promoting an irrational and reactionary anti-male ideology instead of working to build unity among oppressed groups? And why in Canada have women's groups allowed the government to move in and co-opt them, through piecemeal funding of selected, social service projects?

Until we get these things sorted out, our efforts to get ourselves organized will inevitably fail to reach the majority of women in matters affecting their real, daily lives.

Anne McLean, Beachburg, Ontario

In last issue's article "The Radical Tradition of Rosemary Brown," the plaudits are well earned and not to be denied.

However, when Sharon Batt refers to Sweden as "a society in which socialism evolved through the electoral process" and Cuba as "one that came to socialism through revolution," she is obviously drawing upon Rosemary's incomplete analysis. "To change the system and make it impossible to be poor," like Motherhood, poses no threat when travelling the NDP road of social democracy.

But, apparently what is not being recognized is that social democracy seeks to avoid the historic necessity to first destroy the capitalist structure before socialism can be established.

Here I am not referring to Premier David Barrett's brand, as recently described to his Campbell River audience: "IT TAKES SOCIALISM TO SAVE FREE ENTERPRISE." I am referring to the lessonsto be drawn from the Chilean experience. Many NDP'ers sincerely felt socialism had been won through the electoral process, only to discover that unless a people are organized to defend their gains with every means possible, Imperialism will inevitably use every method at its disposal to regain control, as happened on September 11, 1973 in Santiago.

Within that context, therefore, we can understand why Sweden's social democracy - NOT socialism, continues to function within its supportive capitalist system, while Cuba's socialist economy, following the seizure of power from a capitalist government, faces continued trade embargos.

It is to be hoped that Rosemary Brown's future formulations about socialism will derive from a more penetrating examination of history.

Claire Culhane, Burnaby, B.C.

I have just finished reading Both Sides Now, "Canada Day in South Africa", and while I sympathize totally with Marianne English's outrage at finding out (again) that Canada has a policy regarding the oppression of racial minorities that can only be called two-faced, I cannot agree with her suggestion that the Canadian government in its embassy, employ the higher priced white help that is available.

I feel the only moral thing Canada can do (which is probably the last thing Canada will do) is to hire blacks.... after all it IS their country and they ARE the most numerous ethnic population and, being the least paid and most unemployed, they need the jobs the most. We should insist that, as much as possible, the staff at the embassy be black (we might also, while we are at it, insist that more blacks be hired for some of those nice jobs with our government at home. And more native Indians. And more women.)

Having hired blacks in a predominantly black country we should then loudly demand that our embassy

pay them "five to ten times as much" as is ordinarily paid to blacks in South Africa, putting them on equal financial footing with the white South African help which is available.

It might not be untoward to suggest that since these people will be working with and for Canadians who are being paid a salary based on Canadian rates, they ought to be paid the same as it would cost to hire Canadian workers.

It won't happen, of course. Canada doesn't have the guts required to tell H.R. MacMillan that it isn't very nice to have his own boats come to BC to load BC forest products and take them to overseas markets (thus cutting the throat of BC secondary industry), with the boats registered outside Canada to avoid Canadian taxes, and with crews hired in Asia at wages that would be laughable if they weren't so disgustingly exploitative.

For years in this country the CPR considered blacks good enough to work as porters on the trains, but not good enough to sit down at the dining table of one of the CP hotels.

We are taught in school that Canada is a country with no history of slavery; we are taught that slaves from the United States went through hell on the "underground railway" so they could cross the river to Freedom. I suggest we stop kidding ourselves. We had slaves up here, and when the people arrived on the underground railway it didn't take them long to realize they were free only in that nobody had paid for them. They were not welcomed, not accepted, and are still not treated with true equality.

Canada IS a racist country. Ask any Indian. Ask any Chinese. Ask any of the Japanese who have yet to be paid for lands confiscated without reason during the panic of WW 2. Just look at our immigration policy...the Canadian government cannot throw stones at racist South Africa, they might break one of the walls of our own glass house.

Cam Hubert, Tahsis, B.C.

I really enjoyed the July/August issue. The photography was super, Canada Day in South Africa was political and honest and I spent a good few hours reading and thinking about things that I read.

The article on Rosemary Brown was a bit disappointing. I have the feeling that Rosemary is going to be my political candidate in the future and I would have liked a really thorough look at her politics. She just seems so great - a woman politician who is a socialist. I'd like to know more about her previous political commitments, how she feels about all sorts of issues, where her head is really at with respect to the women's movement. I guess the article was looking at these things but somehow when I finished reading I wanted to know still more.

I feel it was a big mistake on the part of the New Democratic Party to elect Ed Broadbent instead of Rosemary and I think women in Canada should exert a little pressure on the NDPers to clean up their act and become a real socialist party with some guts instead of just another vote-seeking outfit.

I hesitate to really commit myself to people without knowing them and I count on articles like yours to give new insights and an honest approach to a person. Please - more articles on women like Rosemary Brown. We need to know who the women we can respect and believe in really are.

Your editorial on dress dealt with something that has been giving me a great deal of trouble. Mary Alyce says "I had thought and hoped the women's movement was moving away from such superficial thinking" in reference to a certain disdain that she feels exists against women who polish their nails and go through all sorts of beauty trips.

Is dress really a superficial criterion? I know that I judge people by the way they dress. I consider it a reflection of their attitudes. If I see a woman with six tons of makeup on and piles of jewelry and the latest of French fashion, I just instinctively feel that she can't really share my political sentiments. I'm not sure if that's unfair or prejudging or superficial but it is how I react.

I truly believe that your politics and your life have to match. You can't verbally espouse one thing and then do another. Actions speak louder than words and you've got to live what you believe. Women who claim to "believe" and then contradict their claims by their actions have got to be suspected of committing grave inconsistencies. I don't think you can be a staunch feminist and wear expensive clothes and jewelry and makeup. All you are is a hypocrite.

I don't suggest that these women should be ostracized or ignored. I believe they are part of the growing movement but I don't think we should pretend that they are strong supporters. They do not have the strength to do what politically and philosophically they know they should.

When Mary Alyce asks if wearing makeup and having long polished fingernails invalidates her feminist principles I have to question whether she really has those principles or whether it is not her politics that are superficial.

I find I'm constantly fighting a clothes debate although my problems are a little different in that they relate to "professionalism." Am I serving my clients if I go to court with my pants and a blouse and look like I like to look? Or do I have to play the game and dress up? It's all so hard and confusing I was really glad to see your editorial which at least meant to me that I wasn't fighting a superficial struggle. There is an issue here. There is a conflict that has to be resolved and the editorial made me more able to define my feelings for myself.

Vicki Schmolka, Montreal

The editorial by Mary Alyce Heaton (July/August) expressed ideas which I have longed to express for quite a while. Many times during my recent enrollment in a Women's Studies course I sat apart from the group that was wearing jeans and boots. However, I returned each week to the class, primarily because the course was an excellent one from which I benefited. I also knew I had something to offer to the discussions.

Regardless of how I dress, I am convinced that my ideas and principles are valuable. I consider myself a feminist and know that my ideas on the women's movement were a part of me long before I painted my nails or wore makeup. My manner of dress is conservative - I wear what I consider fashionable for me.

Let's remember that feminists were around long before jeans and boots became fashionable. For many women in law, medicine or other professions, the blue jeans outfit is not practical. Yet, surely their energies and ideas are necessary and useful to the movement.

Johanne Caulfield, Montreal

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here and there

The May, 1975 issue of *Communique* is devoted to women in the arts in Canada and includes features about Joyce Wieland, Margaret Atwood, Jean Sutherland Boggs; an article on women writers by Marian Engel; a feature on Inuit women and their art; and overviews of women's participation in music, film, theatre, dance, crafts. Available for $2.50 each from Canadian Conference of the Arts Secretariat, 3 Church Street, Suite 47, Toronto, Ontario.

Katie Curtin, author of *Women in China* (reviewed on page 41), will be available for speaking engagements across the country in September and October. Topics that she is prepared to speak on include "Women in China" and "Marxism and Feminism." Contact Barbara Stewart, Promotion Department, Pathfinder Press, 25 Bulwer Street, Toronto, Ontario.

A national women's playwriting competition will be co-ordinated by the Playwrights Co-op. The aim of the competition is to introduce more women writers into the existing theatre structure. Submissions may be one act or full-length plays with women as major characters. Deadline for entries is January 31, 1976. Write to Connie Brissenden, Co-ordinator/Women Write for Theatre, c/o Playwrights Co-op, 344 Dupont Street, Toronto.

A 64-page booklet *Federal Services for Women* has been published by Information Canada. It includes descriptions of the various programs, services and grants that are of particular interest to women. It also outlines the various federal offices that are concerned with the development of policies and programs aimed at improving the status of women in Canada. Write to Information Canada, 171 Slater Street, Ottawa, K1A 0S9 (no cost).

The May issue of *Urban Reader* (Vancouver) focusses on women, with articles on health, finances, history and sports. There is also a guide to women's resources in Vancouver. Write to *Urban Reader*, Social Planning Department, Vancouver City Hall, 453 W. 12 Avenue, Vancouver. (It's free)

The Women's Auxiliary of the United Fishermen and Allied Workers Union in B.C. is preparing a booklet on the part played by women in the B.C. trade union movement. Research will be based on trade union files, personal recollections and archival material. Anyone having information about the contributions of women in this area is invited to contact Susan Radosevic, Women's History Project, United Fishermen and Allied Workers Union, 138 East Cordova Street, Vancouver, B.C.

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To Our Readers:

Branching Out has received a grant from the Secretary of State to produce an issue focussing on International Women's Year. This issue will be published in November, and we are already working on it. To produce the kind of retrospective we think is necessary, we need your help.

We have all seen and heard the official responses and reactions to IWY and its various programs and projects. *Branching Out* wants to focus on how you, the women affected by the programs and priorities, have reacted to IWY.

What projects in your community came about or were given added impetus because of IWY? We want to hear about all the projects - the day-care centres and the political action groups, the newsletters and the art exhibits, the women's centres and research projects. Did you find the projects were readily accepted because IWY publicity had made the community more aware of women's problems and rights? If you were lucky enough to get IWY funds, how did you use them? If you weren't that lucky, what reasons were given for turning your project down? What alternate sources of funds were you able to utilize? Many groups across the country rejected using government funds for any purposes, on the grounds strings were inevitably attached. How do you feel about this? Tell us about your successes and failures, and the reasons for each. What projects did you develop and not proceed with, and why? Were they too ambitious for your resources, too radical for your community, or did you decide they were just bad ideas? We'd also like to hear about any issues which you don't think were considered which should have been.

On a more personal level, how do you feel about the very idea of an international women's year? Are you encouraged or offended that the United Nations and governments around the world decided that women needed a special year and special attention? Was it a good idea to try to focus on the international aspect, or would you have preferred to see more provincial and local involvement? Did you discover much about women in other countries? Are you able to better relate to the problems of women in other countries now than you were in December 1974? Do women in Canada have the same problems and joys as women in other countries?

Has IWY helped you focus your personal concerns and problems? Whether you are struggling to establish an identity as a woman, for political or social action to change the status of women, or for liberation, was IWY a factor in whatever success you achieved? Did it give you courage or depression? Did you find the people around you more sympathetic to your wants, needs, ideas and hopes because their sensitivity had been heightened by IWY?

Have you considered the problems we may face in 1976? Many women are afraid the government and society will consider 1975 as the apothesis of action on women's issues, and that no more will be done. Do you share this feeling? What sort of things should be continued? Many of the recommendations of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women have yet to be implemented. Need they be? Are all those recommendations still valid, and should the women of Canada be putting their energy into seeing them implemented?

Fear exists that once 1975 is over, much of the energy and many of the ideas generated in the wake of IWY will be lost, because the media and the public will no longer be attuned to the idea that women's issues are news. Is this fear valid? If so, what can we do to counteract the letdown? If you have projects now, do you plan to continue them into the new year? If your project had IWY support, where will you find money next year?

Many conferences were held under IWY auspices. Do you feel they were of any use? If you went to any of them, what was your reaction? Do you feel that these conferences, and IWY generally, have fostered better communication between feminists and traditional women's groups? Is this communication beneficial? Was it necessary?

All that money, time and energy cannot have been spent to no effect. We want to know how the women of Canada feel about everything related to IWY. Please send your answers to these questions soon; the deadline is October 6, 1975. We will use as many of your ideas, comments and suggestions as possible when producing this issue of *Branching Out*. Help us make this last issue of 1975 reflect the reality of International Women's Year in Canada.

The Editors
Branching Out

both sides now

WOMEN AGAINST WOMEN

by Leslie Bella

The scene is a hospital, a government department or a garment factory. The workers are women, and on their coffee break they share a discussion of their problems. If the women have children, they will talk about the strains of combining motherhood with career, and of their problems finding good babysitters.

The second scene is a suburban living room. A small group of women is gathered for morning coffee while their children play together in the family room. The discussion, again, is about themselves and their children - their needs and their problems.

These two groups of women, the career women and the homemakers, tend to identify each other as the opposition. If they shared a coffee break one day, the hostility would bristle. The career woman would fiercely defend her right to take a job outside her home. The homemaker, just as fiercely, would defend her family's right to her services within her home. Both would fail to realize that they share a common problem - the low value we all, as women, place on work with small children. Homemakers expect no payment for their services. Babysitters accept payment at less than the minimum wage, and career women expect to find inexpensive care for their children. Government, reflecting the dominant values within our society, reinforces these values with its policies and programs.

The low status of homemaking skills haunts the woman who chooses to stay home. She has all the responsibilities that usually go with employment, but none of the rights. She works hard, but has no take-home pay except her family allowance. There is no such thing as overtime for the homemaker, and no time off. She has no right to a forty-hour week. Even in this day of homemaking aids, she may work fifty or sixty hours a week, trying to live up to the impossible standards set by the glossy magazines. Women themselves feel guilty if they hire a babysitter and take an afternoon "off". They arrange to swap children with a friend, and care for six children in one day so they may have the next day to themselves. How many factory workers would accept a double quota on Friday in return for Saturday off? The homemaker has no right to a holiday, for if the family can afford a trip, mother comes too. Her responsibility for the nutrition, cleanliness and good behavior of her family never ends.

The low status of child care work also haunts the career woman. Good child care should be expensive, and yet most career women receive no help from government. They have to seek out the most inexpensive day care arrangements for their children. The career woman then "rips off" her babysitter, paying around $1 an hour for care of her child. In Edmonton the city-supervised babysitters earn $4 per day per child placed. They can care for up to three children in addition to their own, although only five preschoolers are allowed per home. For the sum of $80 per week (less than the federal minimum wage of $2.65 per hour, or $106 for a forty-hour week) a foster day care mother cares for three small children plus her own; feeding, cleaning, training, entertaining, protecting and providing.

Workers in day care centres are slightly better paid. A supervisor in charge of twenty children, a job requiring two years' academic training and some experience in work with small children, is paid between $650 and $675 per month in Edmonton. That is around $8,000 a year, not a reasonable wage for a professional and responsible position. The supervisor's two assistants are paid less, and in one centre they were being paid less than summer students hired under Opportunities for Youth programs.

Fortunately for the woman who works outside her home, there are women who are willing to care for other people's children, and to be paid less than an adequate wage. But if day care services are to be expanded to meet the needs of working parents and their children, many more adults must be attracted to the day care field. Only with higher salaries will child care workers have the financial incentives to upgrade their skills through further training. Men will not be attracted to child care work until they know the salary will be adequate for the needs of their families. The day care field needs more capable, intelligent and caring adults; men and women skilled in work with children who can provide the stimulation and security they need. Only hefty government subsidies will ensure that all career women will be able to pay for quality child care.

Some women work outside their homes because they enjoy their jobs; they do their best to handle the guilt that society insists they should feel at leaving their families during working hours. Other women choose homemaking and find it creative and satisfying. They apologize for a "less than perfect" home, and express anxiety about "being out of touch with the world". Both groups of women achieve less than their full potential because of the low status of work with small children.

The group that suffers most, however, from our present attitudes are those mothers forced into the work force for financial reasons. Their income is needed to meet the family's financial commitments. These women at present have no freedom of choice, and have most to gain from the state's recognition of the value of the homemakers' contribution to society.

In some countries, not all of them rich, women with small children are paid a salary by the state if they wish to care for their children at home. All Canadian women and their children would benefit if women were paid by the state for their work with small children. Those who wished to be full-time homemakers would gain in dignity and status. Those who wished to take a job outside the home could use the state salary to purchase quality care for their children.

"Too much! It will cost too much!"

The protest from politicians and taxpayers would be resounding.

It would cost less than we think. The program could be developed from our existing family allowance program, and would replace the welfare programs that presently demean so many Canadian families. The program would be universal, but taxable, so the rich would benefit less. The program

cont. on p. 45

they buried my father in guelph

You called from the basement
"come down, katalina,
and see the toad", i asked
where you wanted to be buried
(i only asked because i was working
in the cemetery - it seemed natural)

warren, you guessed, beside your
mother and father. warren, where
years before i watched you and your
brothers dig silently into the dank
earth - a grave for your father -
tears visible even by lantern light.

Then suddenly you weren't there
anymore to tease with toads, to
wind that old pocket watch nightly
and lay it carefully out for morning.
Suddenly, when i was back in ottawa,
you weren't there anymore. and the
dog stayed outside from then until
they were rid of him.

They put you here, in the middle
of guelph. in well groomed, properly
statued grounds. fountained and flowered.
Didn't she know, didn't you tell her
you wanted to be
in a small rough field in warren.

Kate O'Neil

Courting the YWCA

The fight for male sufferage in the women's Y

by Joyce McCart

There is a women's organization in Canada today which, while its roots are Victorian, more closely resembles Queen Elizabeth I in nature. Elizabeth knew what she wanted - most of the time, and so does this organization - most of the time. Elizabeth chose to serve her people by refusing to give in to the demands of the men around her, a technique used to good effect by the ladies of this organization. Elizabeth had a suitor whom she kept dandling around for ten years until the poor man died of frustration and disappointment. The organization in question has a suitor, too, although he has been kept dandling around for fifty years, and some of the signs indicate he may be pressing his suit for at least fifty more before he gets an answer he finds satisfactory. The organization? The YWCA of Canada. The suitor? The National Council of YMCA's.

Both the YMCA and the YWCA were founded in mid-nineteenth century to meet the needs of a population attempting to co-exist with England's industrial revolution. Both acknowledge the prayer group as their ancestor, a close relationship that is expressed today in the similarity of names. The public image of the Y's is one of counterpart organizations differing only in the sex of their memberships. Not so. The two organizations are fundamentally different, both in philosophy and in emphasis, and their differences date from the moment of their respective inceptions. The YMCA was founded by several young men in an effort to help themselves. The YWCA was founded by women in an effort to help other women. This difference has persisted to a greater or lesser degree to this day, the primary emphasis of the YWCA being on "service," the preference of the YMCA being for "programmes" - sometimes disparagingly referred to as "gym and swim" by the more outspoken of the YWCA ladies.

It is tempting to say that the YWCA was formed in direct reaction to the male presence and all it implied. It was the men of that time, after all, who owned the mines and factories responsible for the exploitation of young girls from the rural areas of England, and it was men who lured young ladies into the degradation of prostitution. "In London alone," pronounced a Victorian YWCA pamphlet, "A thousand girls are yearly crushed out of life from overtoil and grinding oppression while 15,000 are living in a state of semi-starvation. Ah, who can wonder that our streets swarm with the fallen and the lost, when SIN or STARVE is the dire alternative."

However, it is not quite true that men played no part save a negative one in the development of the YWCA. Since men alone had control over finances in Victorian times, the frequent appeals for funds to support the work of the ladies went to the gentlemen. At that time too, men had to supply the administrative assistance necessary to spend the money. "In the England of those days," writes Josephine Hardshaw in her history of the YWCA, "when gentlemen contributed funds, they also administered them. Consequently her (Mrs. Kinnaird's) husband was the treasurer, and it was over his siganture that letters and circulars were sent out to the community." In Canada, despite the comparative independence of North American women, the ladies still turned to the men for both money and guidance. In 1874 it was "Mr. Thane Miller of Cincinnati" who was instrumental in encouraging the ladies of Toronto to form a YWCA, and the support of the sterner sex was also evident when "with the advice of several gentlemen interested in our work and with their valuable assistance, two houses at the corner of Duke and George Streets were obtained at an annual rent of $900.00". And in 1892, it was the gentlemen who subscribed $18,000.00 in six weeks to the Ottawa YWCA's building fund.

The picture changed somewhat when women won the vote and the right to own property. While the YWCA in Canada continues to this day to accord graceful acceptance to male patronage, it has a companion tradition of sternly rejecting appeals for male membership. Even the $150,000.00 donated for a YWCA gymnasium in 1965 would have been insufficient to earn Colonel K. S. McLaughlin of Oshawa a membership in the YWCA (had he been foolish enough to want one). Votes taken over the years at YWCA Conventions have invariably resulted in a firm "no" to such aspirants. The YWCA was an independent woman, not without means of her own, and the control of both finance and policy was in the hands of the feminine sex. Until recent years, that is. And the era of nay-saying came to an end, not with a bang but a whimper.

It was in 1925 that the men of the YMCA first began to hear the strains of Mendelssohn's Wedding March. In that year, the first joint YMCA-YWCA was formed in Windsor, Ontario. By 1929, St. Catharines had also founded a joint organization and while the national body remained rigorously feminine itself, it encouraged the drift toward amalgamation by its increasing cooperation with the YMCA. In 1936, the YWCA of Canada and the National Council of YMCA's agreed that any new associations in small cities should be joint associations with one staff, a common board, and affiliation with both National Associations. But official policy regarding the exact relationship of the YM-YW's to the YWCA was not worked out in detail, and, as it turned out, the offspring of the YMCA and the YWCA had to wait until after World War II for the negotiations that would establish their status in the YWCA.

During the post-war years, it became apparent that two opposing forces were at work in the YWCA. As a result of her extensive war work, the YWCA of Canada emerged from World War II a strong and confident women's organization with little apparent desire to lean on the men of the YMCA. At the same time, amalgamation at the local level continued steadily, though not always amicably. (When the Board of the Moose Jaw YWCA agreed to amalgamate with the local YMCA, for instance, the Executive Director demonstrated her disapproval by promptly resigning.) Yet it was not until 1957, several years after the formation of joint YMCA-YWCA's in Barrie, Brampton, Brockville, Georgetown and Dartmouth, that the female parent felt constrained to recognize the local YM-YW's as the natural if not the legitimate children of the YWCA. Once the YWCA was forced to adopt a formal policy concerning the YM-YW's, she coped

with the situation with her customary flexibility and verve. "The YMCA-YWCA's can affiliate with the national YWCA" said (in effect) that cagey lady, "but don't send males as delegates to Convention, because only your women are members so far as the YWCA of Canada is concerned."

There seemed to be no awareness on the part of the men that the bloom was off the romance, however. In 1959, the YMCA gave enthusiastic approval to the Dunlop-Dewar report on the two organizations in the following words: "That the National Council of YMCA's of Canada accept the view that some form of union with the YWCA of Canada is inevitable and that we seek immediate discussion with the YWCA as to the form and time of such union."

Three years passed before the YWCA made a move that could be interpreted as a response to this proposal. Agreeing that membership should be extended to men who held the position of Executive Director in the YMCA-YWCA's, the YWCA moved to accept them as "technical" members. Which is to say, (and one can picture the chagrin of the men) members without a vote. The YW would not go further than that and the relationship between the two national organizations cooled to the point where the 1936 agreement regarding the opening of the new YM-YW's was quietly abandoned. The YWCA also rescinded their resolution accepting the Dewar-Dunlop report on the grounds that "there had been no significant trend toward amalgamation at the national level and that the presence of the resolution in the minutes was a potential source of irritation to the two National Bodies".

But the breakthrough was closer than anyone believed it to be at the time. Pressure was mounting within the YM-YW's for the vote to be given to their male executives. While the 1969 YWCA National Convention was devoted to the reaffirmation of the YWCA as a women's organization, by the end of the conference any man who happened to be president of a YMCA-YWCA, despite the accident of his sex, and by virtue of his office, possessed the right to a vote in the YWCA of Canada.

And so it was, that in 1973 the ladies looked up from several decades of cooperative activities to find that the privilege they had withheld for 100 years had insensibly come to be granted, and that the men now wanted more, much more, than the tokenism of the 1969 Convention. They wanted complete amalgamation of the YMCA and the YWCA and they wanted it now.

Although the YWCA had had a history of resistance to men becoming members of the organization, they were less adamant and therefore more vulnerable on the issue of amalgamation with the YMCA. This is because, with the advent of the joint YM-YW's at the local level, the possibility of amalgamation was being promoted from within the YWCA itself. In some respects at least, it was a *fait accompli*. The 1957 decision recognizing the right of the YM-YW's to be members of the National YWCA was, as one purist remarked darkly, "the opening wedge."

And so it seemed to be. During the sixties YM-YW's sprang up all over the country, and as their numbers increased, so did the awareness of the disadvantages of serving both a mistress and a master, particularly when the mistress refused the vote to all members of the opposite sex. With respect to the notable exception of the male president, the passing years saw an increasing number of men in the presidential office, even though it was the stated policy of the amalgamated Y's to alternate sexes in electing a president. Although the fact of the increasing male domination has been noted and filed for future reference by the YWCA, there has been no move to follow the lead of the American women who have disaffiliated the YM-YW's from the national organization.

The women of the Canadian YWCA are all too aware of the awkward position in which the joint Y's find themselves, and they are also aware that the YWCA itself created the situation by failing to adopt a firm membership policy twenty years ago. The women acknowledge the justice of the pressure for amalgamation, but at the same time are reluctant to merge the feminine identity with that of the YMCA. "It makes the men think we don't know what we want," sighs one YWCA past-president. "We know what we want all right, but the men simply won't take 'no' for an answer."

The truth of the matter is the YWCA is caught in a bind. If they grant the YM-YW's all they want (in most cases, complete amalgamation of the two organizations) they will endanger the extremely high position Canada holds in the World YWCA. At the moment, the positions on the National Board are occupied by women and women alone, and the top bracket in the World YWCA has traditionally been reserved for those organizations that are exclusively feminine in composition. At the bottom of the ladder is Category "X" where Canada would have to join Sweden should full amalgamation at the national level be allowed to take place. The old guard of the YWCA regard this alternative as unthinkable.

On the other hand, the amalgamated Y's, together with the women who believe that further amalgamation would be to the YWCA's credit, now have sufficient power to split the YWCA wide open if they don't get what they are after. The Ottawa YM-YW has taken a strong stand on this point for the benefit of those women contemplating action along the lines of the American YWCA. "The YM-YWCA's now hold enough voting power in the YWCA of Canada to prevent the change in constitution which would be necessary to disaffiliate the YMCA-YWCA's. If the YW members feel that the YM-YWCA's will voluntarily withdraw ... they should be warned that the Ottawa YM-YWCA will do its best to prevent such action, which we believe would be an abdication of our rights and responsibilities." The Canadian YWCA could not fail to emerge from such a conflict weakened and limping, as well as a good deal poorer.

The stormy Convention held in Banff in 1973 brought the issue into sharper focus. The men who were members of the amalgamated YM-YW's wanted the vote. The YWCA didn't want to give it to them. "Convention that year," conceded one YWCA matron, "was pretty hot." Argument followed argument and amendment succeeded amendment until the final decisions were lost in a welter of transcripts that it took a team of lawyers to unravel. Even then, so tangled was the tale, the lawyers' assessment had to be an interpretation of the "intent" of Convention, rather than a factual report of what had actually transpired. While accounts differ, what seems to have happened is that members of the Board of local YM-YW's who also happened to be men are now allowed to vote as delegates at national conventions. When the lawyers' interpretations were announced, some members were pleased with the progress that had been made, others felt that the concessions had not gone far enough, many were appalled at the damage that had been done. In any case, it was apparent that the opening wedge was doing its work.

It was during this period that (yet another) commission on cooperation was appointed to study the YMCA and YWCA's in Canada. Initially their mandate was simply that - to carry out a study of the differences and similarities of the two organizations. But this was later expanded to include the design of four alternative structures for future relationships between the two organizations. The study was a comprehensive one that did not balk at trying to formulate the women's extremely complex point of view. For the

YMCA the answer was simple enough - amalgamate and be done with it. For the YWCA, there was no simple answer, although the alternatives described by the committee were duly considered by YWCA's all across Canada. These were: 1) disengage. 2) maintain the status quo. 3) closer formal cooperation, but separate identities. 4) complete amalgamation - a new organization. On June 12, 1974, the matter was put to a vote.

The vote on the future of Canada's YWCA took place in Toronto. The men gathered at one location and duly voted to amalgamate. Then they waited, hat in hand, to discover the pleasure of the ladies because, oddly enough, it was the women's vote that would decide the outcome. Inevitably perhaps, man proposes, but woman disposes.

The women, who had retired to a different location were locked in a battle of monumental proportions. As could easily be predicted, the militant feminists ("who have a tendency," remarked one advocate of amalgamation, "to put their own interests ahead of those of the organization,") voted to disengage. Most of the YM-YW's voted for amalgamation. The moderates opted to cooperate, but retain their identity as a women's organization. The only alternative dismissed almost immediately was the status quo, indicating an attitude of impatience on all sides toward the present situation. The day passed in a succession of speeches and ballotings, and after all the speeches had been made and three ballots had been cast, the women finally opted for "closer cooperation, but separate identities". Not because this alternative presented a solution to their problems (indeed it exacerbated them since the proponents of amalgamation were voting for "eventual amalgamation" and the feminists were voting for "no commitment") but because option three was the only alternative that would leave the Canadian YWCA intact. The YMCA, and that troublesome child, the YM-YW, were left standing with their collective foot in the door.

It may be cause for wonderment why it is the men won't take "no" for an answer. Why would any man in his right mind want to be a member of the YWCA? Why should the YMCA, a powerful and successful organization in its own right want to amalgamate with the YWCA? "That's simple," commented the programme director of an Alberta YWCA. "They're after our property". The truth of this remark, as it happens, has credibility in its favour. The YWCA owns a great deal of property, most of it in the form of women's residences on prime real estate in downtown areas. "When the question of amalgamation came up in St. John's," she added by way of example, "The first thing the men wanted to talk about was selling the YWCA residence to raise money for the new amalgamated facilities. When we told them that the residence was needed in the downtown area to serve the women who now make use of it, one of the men remarked 'let them take the bus'. When we argued that such women do not simply 'take a bus', he said it was obvious such women didn't deserve a Y. I just can't believe such insensitivity."

Ironically, the very residences that the YMCA is reputed to covet as real estate, serve as a deterrent to amalgamation. The YWCA does not react kindly to any suggestion of abandoning their women's residences, and the evidence suggests that neither the YMCA nor the amalgamated associations put much emphasis on the provision of residential accommodation. The first recommendation of a 1965 YWCA research project on the "Serious Personal Problems of Young Women and Girls" urged "that local YMCA's or YMCA-YWCA's consider very seriously beforeclosingany existingresidences for young women". The project also strongly recommended that priority be given to residences when new YWCA's or YM-YW's opened in cities with a demonstrated need for women's housing. For the most part, YWCA's support these recommendations by a consistent refusal to give up their residences and by resolutely continuing to build more. But while the YWCA's who carried out early amalgamations maintained their women's residences even when faced with opposition, YWCA's amalgamated in more recent years are showing a tendency toward becoming family Y's with no associated residences. The YM has not built a residence for 17 years.

It is quite within the realm of possibility that the men of the YMCA may be casting covetous glances at the extensive network of volunteers commanded by the YWCA as well. Volunteers at the YMCA are much more likely to be part-time and business-oriented than full-time and service-oriented as is the case at the YW. By merging with the YWCA, the YMCA will acquire a dedicated pool of free, well-trained labour beyond the wildest dreams of the most successful businessman. Again this facet of the YWCA, while it may tempt takeover, is at the same time a defence against it. Volunteers are much more vocal and independent than paid employees, and the YWCA volunteer has more influence and responsibility than most. This is a trait of the YWCA that is a shade disturbing to their more conventional male counterparts, who would prefer fewer public stands on issues like South African politics, abortion, racism, and the rights of women. In a fully amalgamated Y, bringing the image of the YWCA volunteer into line with that of the YMCA might require that the women curb their tongues and relinquish some of their considerable power. As one YWCA volunteer pointed out to the Commission on Cooperation, the difference in philosophy on volunteer influence and responsibility is "far too deep and serious a difference to be appeased by a 'never mind, dear, when we're married everything will work out' approach. It needs to be talked out and fully understood beforehand."

One compelling argument for amalgamation in these days of diminishing private donations and increasing government support, is the possibility of duplicate services. But the similarity of services offered by the YMCA's and the YWCA's is more apparent than real - particularly in view of the overriding concern of the YWCA women about what would happen to the "women and girls" who have been their special care for over a hundred years. A 1972 YWCA document points out that "there has been a marked increase in the number of girls and young women who are unemployed, highly mobile, socially dislocated, ill and often penniless. Some have had or need psychiatric care; some have been in correctional institutions, suffer from family break-up, or require understanding and treatment as well as financial assistance and other services." In the summer of 1974, a crisis centre operating in Winnipeg that provided temporary housing for "women who are beaten or turned out of their homes by their husbands," filled a need so apparent that several Winnipeg agencies requested that the YWCA continue their programme and the City Council donated $1800.00 for the purpose. In the view of many YWCA women, these are the people who would be most affected, and adversely affected, by amalgamation.

And this is the fundamental question. Can the YMCA be trusted to ensure that the YWCA's women and girls will receive the same support in the years to come as they have in years past? Somewhat cynically perhaps, many think not. If the YMCA and YWCA tie the knot before this question is answered to the satisfaction of the women, there is little chance that the two organizations will contrive to live together happily ever after.

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photoessay
by Terri Terni

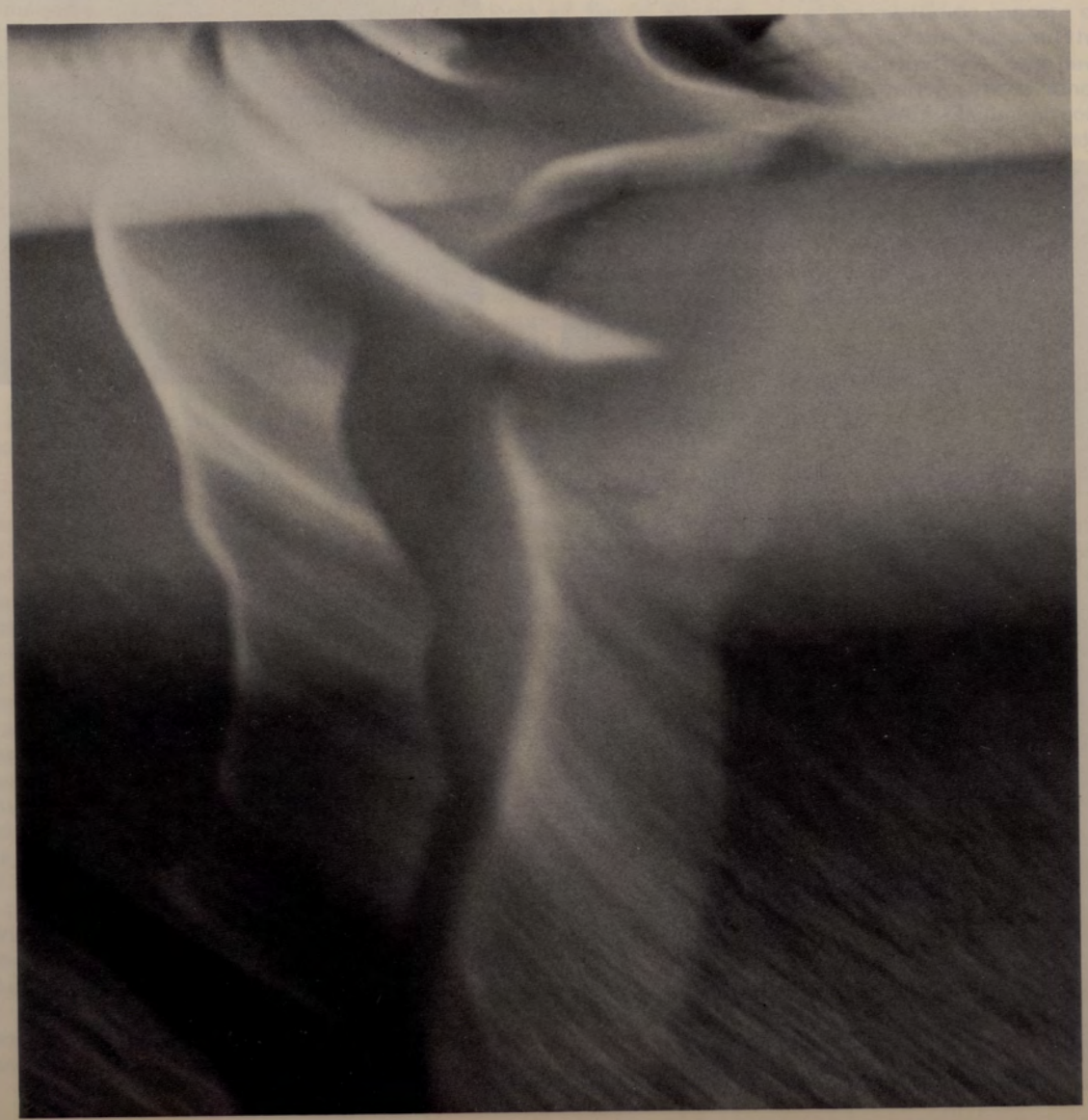
There are no blacks and whites
in my life
but many shades of grey,
each blending softly with
the next.

Images emerge from the greyness,

Captivating my mind

They pull me in and out,

twirling, spinning, careening, dancing...



My eyes seek
a place to rest.

The Public and Private Sylva Gelber

interview by Georgina Wyman and Vivian Frankel
photos by Vivian Frankel

For the past six years, Sylva Gelber has been Director of the Women's Bureau, Labour Canada. The Bureau exists to accelerate changes in attitudes, practices and legislation necessary before women can be fully integrated in the work force. The Bureau offers advice, does research, promotion and education, and provides consultation and advisory services on the problems of women in the labour force, but it does not administer legislation.

Georgina Wyman and Vivian Frankel interviewed Sylva Gelber in Ottawa in May 1975.

You have a reputation for maintaining a very dynamic lifestyle. Have you always led an active life?

Yes - I've always maintained hobbies in addition to my professional obligations. I started my professional life in the field of social work, and it didn't take me long to realize that if I submerged myself in my work, I was going to learn more and more about less and less. My hobbies have changed, but I've always had them. It's a question of maintaining an equilibrium and your sanity.

You've been an accomplished musician and singer.

"Accomplished" is a word I would question. I've been a ham in both those fields.

If you were to start again, which would you choose?

My ambition at twenty was to be in the theatre, in the arts. But I was always interested and involved in social and political goings-on. Looking back, I don't regret what's happened. I think I've had the best of most worlds.

What has been your most valid learning experience?

I suppose leaving school, although that sounds a little ironic. I did most of my learning after I left school. I got involved in the world of living. I had been born and brought up in a rather protected environment. I didn't know what real poverty meant. I didn't know what it meant to work. When I finally decided to get off on my own, I didn't even know how to go looking for a job.

What sort of encouragement did you get from your family? Although you say you were brought up in a protective environment, something must have made you very independent.

Well, I had a mother who was a very strong-minded woman. I don't think she was happy at my choice, but she gave me her full support. My mother and I were the only two women in a household made up of my father and four brothers, so we were a minority of two, and it was a question of mutual support. I got moral support from my mother of a kind that is probably unusual. My father was appalled by me. He never really understood this crazy daughter he had sired. I don't know what my brothers' real opinion of me was, but they've always given me full support, although I know I've taken steps in my life that they thought were foolish.

Did your father always expect that you would get married and have children?

I'm sure he always hoped it; he wasn't shy about saying so. But he wasn't any different from any other father in that regard.

Did you ever have to make a choice between career and family?

I can't consciously recall when I decided I wanted to be doing things as an alternative to marriage. However, I am of the generation that decided early on in our careers that we had a choice to make. We could either maintain our work in an interesting, constructive and creative field, and get our fulfillment from the actual work we were doing, or we could risk that and seek the trappings of recognition that went with seniority. I traded off for fulfillment and creative work. I never got recognition in terms of public service grading, for example. But I wouldn't trade off today, and I don'tever try to persuade anybody to trade off today. I should add that I was in a good position to make the choice I did, of course, because I had nobody to support. My high-minded ideals might have been rusted a little if I'd had children to look after.

Have you always been able to earn a living successfully?

It depends on what you call successfully. I was always able to manage on what I earned. I had a family that would have been able to catch me if I'd fallen on my face, and people tell me that was why I was able to be so independent. I wouldn't take support from the family, but psychologically I did know it was there. When I was abroad, I earned four pounds a month at my first job, about twenty dollars.

Out of that budget, I paid one pound to rent a piano. I was never a very practical individual, but I've managed.

How does your success affect you personally?

I don't know how you measure success. If you were with me in Kingston last week when I was on a panel with some women on public assistance, you wouldn't have called me very successful. They viewed me very much as the establishment, and regardless of my understanding of their problems, they weren't prepared to listen to me. If people won't listen to me, I'm not successful.

Why do you feel they regarded you that way?

I think they had good grounds for regarding me that way. I think our law at the present moment is geared in such a way that they are at a terrible disadvantage in contemporary society. I think we have failed them. I think society has failed them, and no matter how much I say so, the image I portray when I stand up in public is the establishment.

You asked whether success had changed me. My question is: "Have I succeeded?" I don't know.

In those terms you haven't. Perhaps in terms of rising in modern bureaucracy...

I haven't risen the ladder the way I wanted to. I haven't reached the top in the health insurance field in which I was involved for eighteen years in the Canadian government.

You had a goal in mind?

I would have liked to have headed that program I was involved in all those years, but because it was the health field, it had to be a professional man. The requirement that they hire a professional man is changing now;

they're taking on a non-professional man. A man who is not a doctor is going to head health insurance. Well, that's a revolution! But even if this had been the case then, I would have run into the next obstacle, that of being a woman.

I don't view my attainment of the job of director of a Women's Bureau as succeeding in the principles that I am trying to persuade Canadians are essential in our society. I am director of the Women's Bureau, and I have made the most I possibly could out of this position, but let's face it: it's a woman's position, and it's a woman holding the position. In health insurance I would have been tested, but I had no chance of reaching the top there.

Do you see society's views towards woman's role changing in recent years?

If you're asking me from a long-term point of view, I don't think we're going to change the deeply rooted views and traditions of hundreds of generations within one generation. But I've been director of the Women's Bureau now a little over six years, and the change has been tremendous. What has changed is the sensitivity to this subject - particularly in the larger, populated areas of the country - and that's the beginning of progress, the first step towards understanding. However, I think in our rural areas it's different. I've just come back from a visit to rural Saskatchewan, and I was shocked at the sense of alienation and the polarization of views on the subject of the status of women. But in the larger centres of population there is beginning to arise a sympathy and understanding of the relationship between the status of women and the question of human rights. Once we're able to persuade people that this is basically a human rights question, we're going to have a great army of people who have been supporting human rights beginning to take an interest. They haven't until now; they've viewed it as something apart.

How do you feel this sensitivity is manifesting itself?

Look at my list of invitations to speak, and I think you'll see what I mean. People would never have believed you six years ago if you'd told them that at your annual meeting you were going to invite the director of the Women's Bureau to speak on the status of women in society. I think my file of press clippings is indicative. I've never seen one of my colleagues anywhere in government with this kind of response from the press. I give a great part of the credit for this change to the press, and the media generally. It's true that the press has always been snide and wisecracked about us, but at the same time they've always been serious about us.

Was there any recent turning point when the status of women became a significant issue in Canada?

I think change began to occur when the Royal Commission on the Status of Women began having its hearings across the nation. For the first time there were brought before the commission, briefs and testimony of a professional type, outlining the serious situation which nobody, including women, really realized existed - the inequities in the law, the unfairness of the employment situation, all were coolly, objectively documented during those hearings.

What is your general view of the so-called "women's liberation movement"?

I call the women's movement a movement for change in society, to rectify inequities which have existed both in law and in practice in our society. Now, having said that, I think the women's movement has been successful in bringing to the fore the need for change. On basic principles I may differ with some of the positions taken. For example, I do not agree with much of the women's movement which is supporting the mechanism for change adopted in the United States. I don't think it's applicable to Canada.

You mean the affirmative action program?

Yes. I'm not saying I don't want affirmative action. But I am stating categorically that I do not want the mechanism used in the United States to be implemented in Canada. I don't think we need it - our problems are different. The mechanism in the United States stemmed mostly from the need to bring justice to some of the minority groups, and these groups in the United States have systematically been deprived of opportunities for education. But in Canada, generally speaking, our universities have been available to women for a number of decades. There are exceptions. I think women in Canada have, in the past, suffered discriminatory practices in our universities. Until they prove to me to the contrary, I will go on believing there were quotas in some of the faculties with regard to women. I do not believe these quotas are maintained today for the simple reason that sensitivity has reached a point where they don't dare.

Are you referring to the professional faculties?

I mean the faculties of medicine, possibly law, and I have my doubts about engineering. I can only have doubts about some of these areas though, because I haven't yet persuaded women to go into these fields.

But the problem in employment is not, in general, the problem that our women are not educated. The problem is that we have educated women, but when it comes to our top policy-making jobs, our social attitudes take over, and we don't put women in those positions. So we haven't the same problem here as in the United States, where the problem is one of educational deprivation.

Also in the United States, there has been an interpretation of the law which has had the effect of bringing people to the courts to challenge affirmative action on the grounds of human rights. I don't want any mechanism that can cause people to say I'm using discriminatory means to bring about remedies for past discrimination. That doesn't fit my philosophy.

Women deserve rights on their own. They don't have to attain rights by depriving somebody else of theirs. I think that if women who want to use that same mechanism in Canada study the manner in which it has been implemented in the United States closely, they'll agree with me. We've got to find a mechanism, but I don't think that's it.

Affirmative action has been used to correct inequities at the lower economic levels. Do you draw distinctions between the average working woman and the trained professional woman?

I think you've got to look at history. For example, in Britain, one hundred to one hundred and fifty years ago, when they started their reform movement for rights of women .... social change was spearheaded and supported by those who were not bogged down by social and financial obligations of such a nature that they wouldn't have had time to devote to that movement. Some of the greatest social reformers in Britain a century ago did come from the more comfortable classes.

So I'm not perturbed by the fact that the leadership today too may come from that class of women. But I think when I point out to you that some of our greatest difficulties also come from women in this group, you won't be too put off by the fact that the leadership stems from there. For example, the only opposition amongst women I have ever encountered with regard to day-care programs has been from the comfortable, middle-class women. So if you want to say our supporters are in that class, then so are our "enemies" - I don't think they're enemies, I think they're misguided.

You have worked in government. Do you feel that working in government is a viable way to bring about change?

Yes, I do. But we've got to get a different kind of person into government. We've got to get a type of person into government who isn't going to be overawed by the fact that he or she is in government. In my view, too many civil servants are not ready to interpret their

terms of reference broadly. They don't want to rock the boat, and they shouldn't. However, you can speak and act progressively, to a very great extent, even within the government context. But you must not step over into the political arena. Too many of our public servants are so worried about stepping into the public arena that they don't act fully within their legitimate area. For example, I am not a very disciplined human being, but I have never in all my years in public service got into any difficulty by stepping over that line. Yet I feel I have always been outspoken.

The position of director of the Women's Bureau, Department of Labour, was probably the first of the positions that are now springing up in governments at various levels, which are designed to devote themselves to the status of women.

That's correct. It's been in existence over twenty years.

Do you think there's a danger in creating this type of position?

Yes, I do.

In what way is it dangerous?

In the way we're going to get women into these positions, and you're going to say to them that they've succeeded. And I don't think it's success, to be at the top in a job that's got a female label.

Do you think women should be refusing those jobs?

No. I think we're in a temporary period when we've got to get a major push, and I don't think we'll have that push unless we do this. How extensive it should be is not for me to say. That's a matter of public policy. Maybe we've overstretched ourselves in that regard. But I came into the job at the Women's Bureau saying that the measure of my success there would be the speed with which I could put the Bureau out of business. I still think that. I haven't put it out of business, and I haven't got society to the point yet where we're ready to put it out of business. That's a measure of the slow pace of change.

How do you feel it could be put out of business?

By women in employment being in a normal worker category. We're still not. We don't see very much change.

Looking forward to your retirement and the future, what are your plans?

You're asking a tough question at a sensitive moment, as I'm about six months off retirement, and at a point in my career when I'm totally and fully immersed. My training in welfare and rehabilitation taught me that you train for your retirement years, but when it comes to yourself you don't do it. There is a wide variety of things I can do. I have only one real concern, and that is I have always worked in a structured environment. I don't know if I'm a good freelancer.

As you approach retirement, do you think there is really very specific discrimination against older women, say over fifty?

Well, let me ask you a very simple question. If a man at sixty-five is retired, and has lost his wife, and his children are on their own, and he decides he'd like the company of a woman his age, and goes off somewhere with her, no one thinks anything of it. If a woman does precisely the same thing, she's subjected to all kinds of gossip and talk. Now she might not mind; on the other hand she may. I think she will. She can't throw off the conditioning of her earlier years, where the social mores were those that have now suddenly changed, and where the traditions were very deeply rooted.

So a woman of sixty-five hasn't the same freedom as a man .... and I'm not even talking now of the economic factors. A lot of the avenues open to the man in exactly the same position are closed to her. There's no question about it.

Do you think society will ever pay much attention to that?

Well, I'm at that age now, and I'm not going to worry about my neighbours, so maybe the change is coming.

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ARE YOU INTERESTED IN BECOMING A HOUSEPARENT?

Alberta's department of social services and community health has group homes for emotionally disturbed or delinquent adolescents, as well as family homes for mentally handicapped children.

From time to time houseparents are needed to live in these government-owned and operated homes, with either three mentally handicapped children or up to six adolescents. The mentally handicapped children are usually between five and 16 years old, while the adolescents are between 12 and 16 years old.

Houseparents are expected to teach the children the skills of daily living, to supervise them, and to give them emotional support.

Houseparents are given complete maintenance of the children and, by way of contract for their services, a monthly sum of money. All household maintenance and equipment is provided by the department.

Where a couple are working as houseparents, one may find employment outside the home.

Anyone interested in learning more about what's involved in being a houseparent should contact:

COMMUNITY RESIDENCE CO-ORDINATOR
HOMES AND INSTITUTIONS
ALBERTA SOCIAL SERVICES & COMMUNITY HEALTH
5th Floor, Petroleum Plaza North, 9945 - 108 Street
Edmonton, Alberta T5K 2G8
Phone: 403-427-5957

Alberta
SOCIAL SERVICES
AND COMMUNITY HEALTH

Powerhouse

Montreal women's gallery

by Susan K. Poteet

Perhaps it's the name of the gallery - Powerhouse - or its feminist perspective, or the fact that the members are having so much fun running a gallery, but whatever the reason, Powerhouse Gallery is controversial. Feminism *is* threatening. Its very existence frightens many people, men and women alike. Their fear clouds their perception. If one mentions Powerhouse around Montreal, one is likely to hear all sorts of fevered judgments and questions: they're all lesbians, they're straight sell-outs to the male art scene, they're just having fun, why do we need a feminist gallery when there is no discrimination in the art world, what is Powerhouse doing for the real problems of Quebec, which are linguistic and cultural, not sexist.

Powerhouse seems to thrive in this environment of criticism. Criticism is at least notice, and no event at Powerhouse goes unnoticed, in the media or among artists. For two years the gallery has presented a variety of shows and events, culminating this spring in ART FEMME 75, Quebec's first women artists' show.

The beginnings of Powerhouse were humble and familiar. Two women artists put up a notice at The Flaming Apron, a feminist craft store, asking artists interested in a consciousness group to sign up. Twelve women were interested, and according to Stansje Plantenga, the group "worked" right from the first meeting. They began by going to each member's house, looking at her work and discussing it. For many it was the first time peers had seen and responded to their work. All were beginners, ignorant of what came after producing art, of the whole "art scene", galleries and the marketplace, which allows the artist, if she is lucky, to earn a living, to become known and accepted. Many of the women in the group were just gaining courage, with the support of other members of the group, to call themselves artists.

Riding on a wave of new found energy and enthusiasm, the group decided to do a show. They approached the major galleries in Montreal, but were turned down. Whether the reason was their feminism or their lack of professionalism is still much debated. Not to be discouraged, the group decided to rent its own space, at $95 per month without a lease, and do its own show. One gallery member recalls it was "just a month to month thing, sort of like when you first separate from your husband."

Powerhouse was launched in June 1973. While the critics were not too favorable, again questioning the lack of professionalism, there was terrific

Mutable Memories - A black-and-white photographic exhibit by Ann Pearson featuring at the opening, a multi-media show combining colour slides, sound, and dancers.

The multi-media show was very exciting, especially a work entitled *Keeping Still*, which included clock sounds, watch/clock colour slides, and the movement of four dancers. The artist says this piece grew out of a feeling that in multi media works, too much is thrown at the viewer, resulting in overstimulation, lack of depth, and mere exploitation of the medium. Beginning with the image of the timepiece (mutability) she established a slow and relatively quiet tempo - ticking sounds, slow changing watch images. The effect is actually one of stasis within change.

Ann Pearson's photographic exhibit also concerned itself with mutability - changing sky shapes, the changes of her own life. An especially moving group of photographs were taken at the Order of the Precious Blood of Jesus Convent, an aesthetically beautiful place peaceful but empty - the nuns are screened from view. These ironic photographs honor a mutable memory of the artist, her own four-year stay in a convent.

Two photographs from the series "Order of the Sacred Blood of Jesus Convent"

response from the people who visited the gallery. Other young women artists were attracted, and they added new energy to Powerhouse. New shows were mounted, new artists attracted, new energy generated. Indeed, this has been the pattern for two years. Some of the names and faces have changed, but the Powerhouse continues.

At the end of the first year, Powerhouse moved from its small space in Westmount to a large loft around "the old Main", a new and growing area for galleries. It was an adventurous step away from safe, middle-class Westmount to a working class, polyglot neighbourhood, again like leaving home. Three good shows, one after the other drew new and old friends to the gallery. The members of the gallery, always working co-operatively, began to plan a large show of Quebec's women artists for the spring of 1975. But the LIP grant that had kept the gallery solvent for six months had run out, and no new grants were forthcoming. Suddenly the agencies which make these decisions decided there were too many experimental galleries in Montreal. By January, the gallery was unable to pay the salary of Tanya Rosenberg, the director. She managed to stay on with the help of unemployment insurance and the occasional pass of the hat. International Women's Year organizers, meanwhile, were spending $5 million on "Why Not" buttons and male advertising agencies. During this critical period of six to eight months, the powerhouse effect was most clearly manifested. Without money or support, the gallery continued to produce good shows, and prepared for and produced ART FEMME 75. All labor was volunteered; the money was raised by those age-old techniques used by ladies aids in small towns all over Canada to keep churches in repair: the rummage sale, the bake sale, the craft sale, the community dance, the raffle, and any other petty hustle that could be dreamed up. This was a humbling time for gallery members, feminists, artists, critics, and dreamers, but there is a great deal to be said for the common experience of women. All these events were joyful; they hustled old clothes, baked goodies, worked side by side and came to know each other and laugh together; and all were successful. Like their sisters who keep church halls repaired in the face of growing alienation from religion, they kept Powerhouse alive. In May the gallery was awarded a $5,000 grant from IWY funds.

Powerhouse Gallery has grown this past year. As well as a large gallery and office which have the friendly atmosphere of a drop-in centre, there is now a large co-operative studio downstairs. At any time of the day or night, you will probably find something happening at the gallery. The phone rings constantly; brain storming sessions are producing plans for things like the hilarious Best-Dressed Woman Artist Contest, which was featured at the New Year's Eve fund-raising dance; the raffle of an expensive book on Goya; or the ill-starred parade which was supposed to announce ART FEMME to Montreal's art world.

Art Femme 75 - This show was conceived as a large exhibition of a selection of work by Quebec's women artists. The Saidye Bronfman Centre and the Musée d'Art Contemporain became involved, donating exhibit space, but Powerhouse provided all the labor in collecting, jurying, and returning the more than 1000 submissions. Gallery members worked for several months mounting this show which opened April 3, the day of Montreal's biggest snow storm of the season.

There were those who felt the tremendous effort necessary to mount the show was not worth it, especially as nerves frayed and tempers got thin. Critical response was cool or negative. It was difficult to respond to a show with such variety - every medium and most schools were represented. There was no thematic unity, although one might say such things as, "the female body was used, not romantically or as an object, but fragmented and used iconographically," "the male body was treated with loving humour." Some of the most exciting works were feminist in content, for example Isobel Dowler-Gow's *Bride Series*, constructions which employed plastic bag decoration of conventional bridal images, or Francoise Sullivan's *1975 Annee de la Femme*, whose medium was menstrual blood on canvas. My personal favorite was Bé van der Heide's *Mia May and Bé*, mixed media. The artist juxtaposes a photograph of a young liberated woman of the turn of the century, cigarette rakiskly held between her lips (Mia May) with a photo of herself as a young girl, looking solemnly at the camera, her cheeks daubed by the artist with clownish rouge patches. The artist is certainly questioning the content of liberation which concerns itself with cigarettes and rouge. It this the heritage we receive from our mothers, pass on to our daughters? The feeling of this work is however quite joyful, as if the artist's response is to laugh, perhaps the healthiest way to overcome the silliness of our recent heritage.

Art Femme 75 was of value in that it introduced a number of talented artists to a large viewing public. Its diversity, its lack of focus, warned the viewer of the danger of assuming that there is a "woman's art". While the subject matter may reflect the artist's environment (there is likely to be more homely imagery if you are at home), all artists struggle to give form to their experience; in ultimate terms one's sex is irrelevant.

Be van der Heide with *Mia May and Bé*

In two years of operation, there has been a slow development of expertise in gallery management. Each show is carefully planned, well advertised, and the gallery now has that "professional" look which it lacked in the beginning. Powerhouse is known and respected by a growing number of people in the art world. Gallery members know artists, critics, other galleries and museums, so a young artist wishing to mount her first show can find all the help she needs to become a professional, in a supportive, co-operative environment.

This is not a fairy tale, however, and the problems of the gallery will probably be as permanent as its triumphs. Five thousand dollars does not last forever. Despite the good will of gallery members, personality conflicts do not vanish. New members of the gallery tended to view the older members as knowledgable, whereas in fact, says Stansje Plantenga, "we were all really ignorant of how to run a gallery."

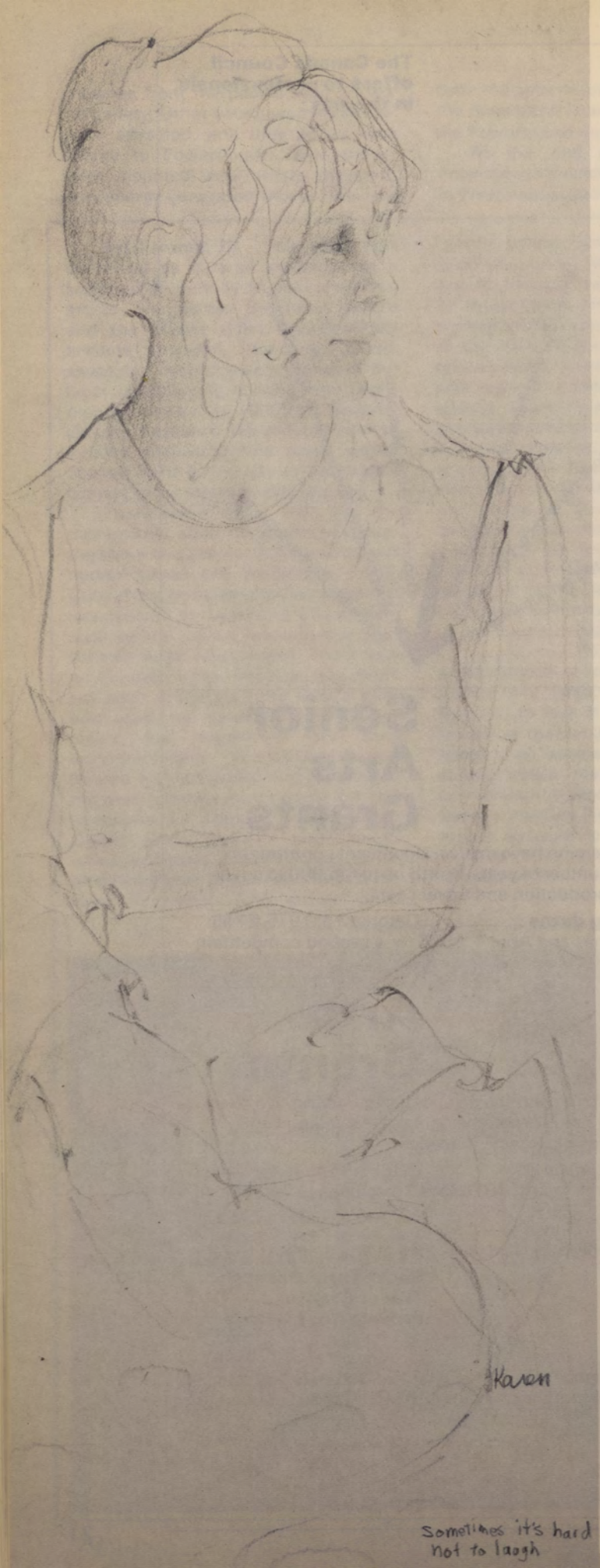
Tanya Rosenberg says: "When I came to Powerhouse, I had been a secretary for five and a half years. Here were these women who called themselves artists. I was very shy. I was looking for direction. I felt this coldness, this barrier. I thought, 'I'm not being understood.' But I knew I wanted to be a part of this, no matter how hard it was." Tanya stayed around, began to take responsibility, and was soon elected director of the gallery, an acknowledgement of her tremendous energy and organizational ability.

Prospective members are occasionally frightened off by their own timidity, intimidated by gallery members who appear to know the ropes. Within the membership a certain amount of friction remains, increasing in times of stress. Preparing for ART FEMME required thousands of hours of volunteer time, much of it spent in mundane and grubby activities like washing floors, painting walls, filing, typing - all those dreadful jobs that are classically women's work, but in a co-operative, the real question becomes who will stoop to mop the floor and who won't. Elitism becomes as heated an issue in the gallery as sexism in the home. "Quitting the gallery" is a refrain heard as often as "leaving home". And some artists do leave, after having learned to present and hang a show, how to advertise and sell their work. They leave to be replaced by other beginners with energy and enthusiasm, who are eager to work and learn.

Powerhouse Gallery would be interested in hearing about other co-operative ventures, particularly in the field of the arts. We can all learn from each other. Write to 3738 St. Dominique St., Montreal, P.Q. ***

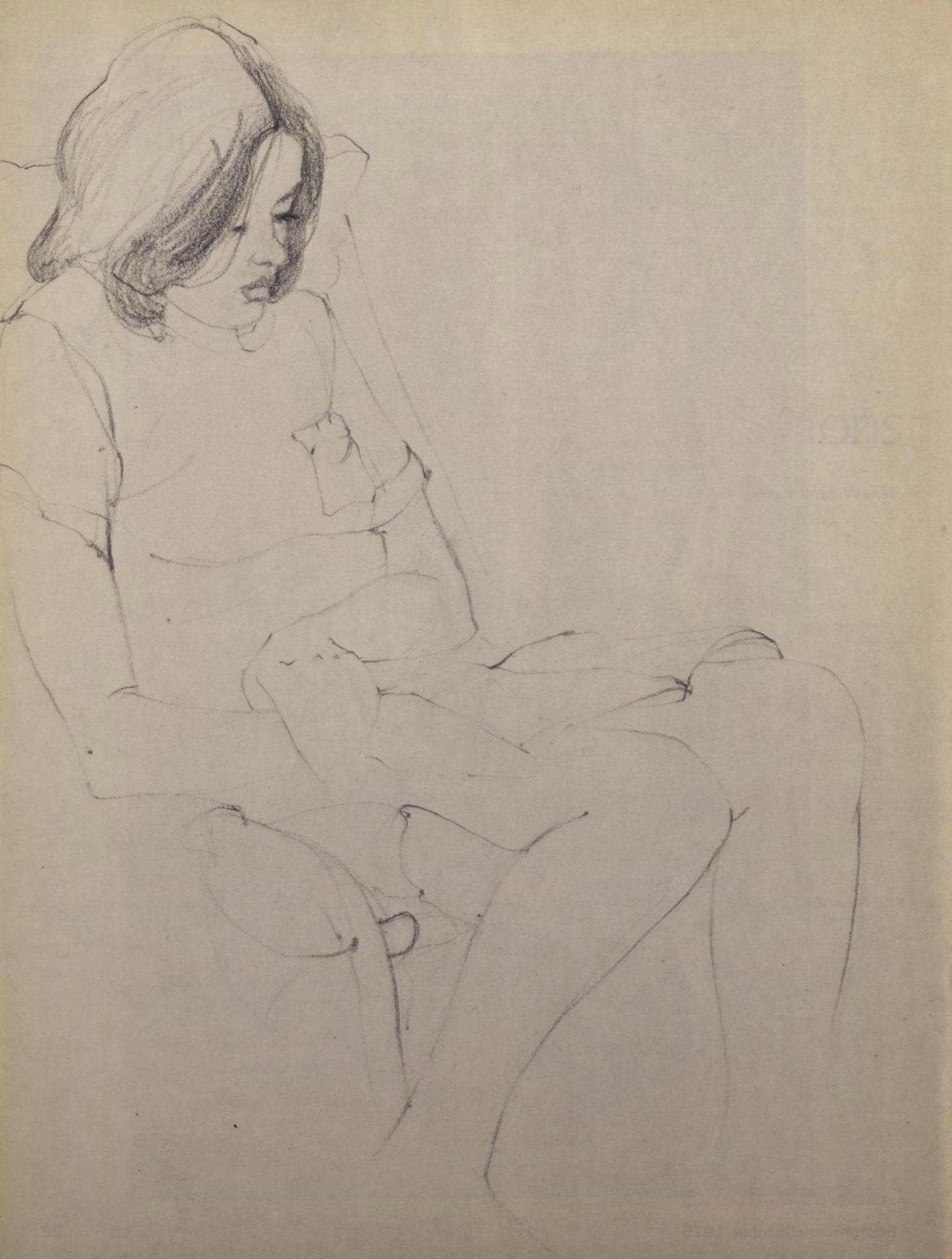
Reflections

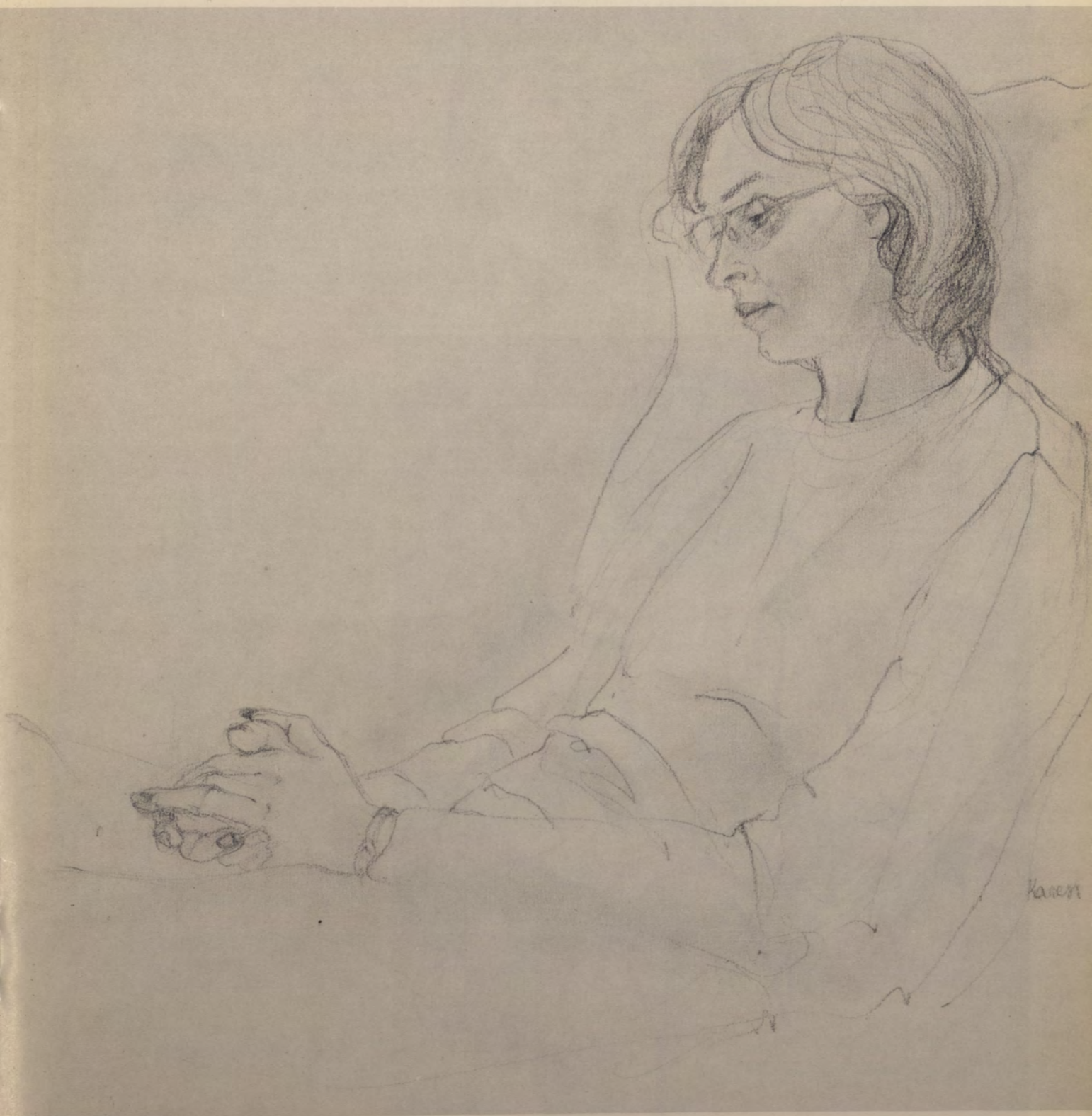
drawing series by Karen Wakal



Branching Out


Karen Wakal '74

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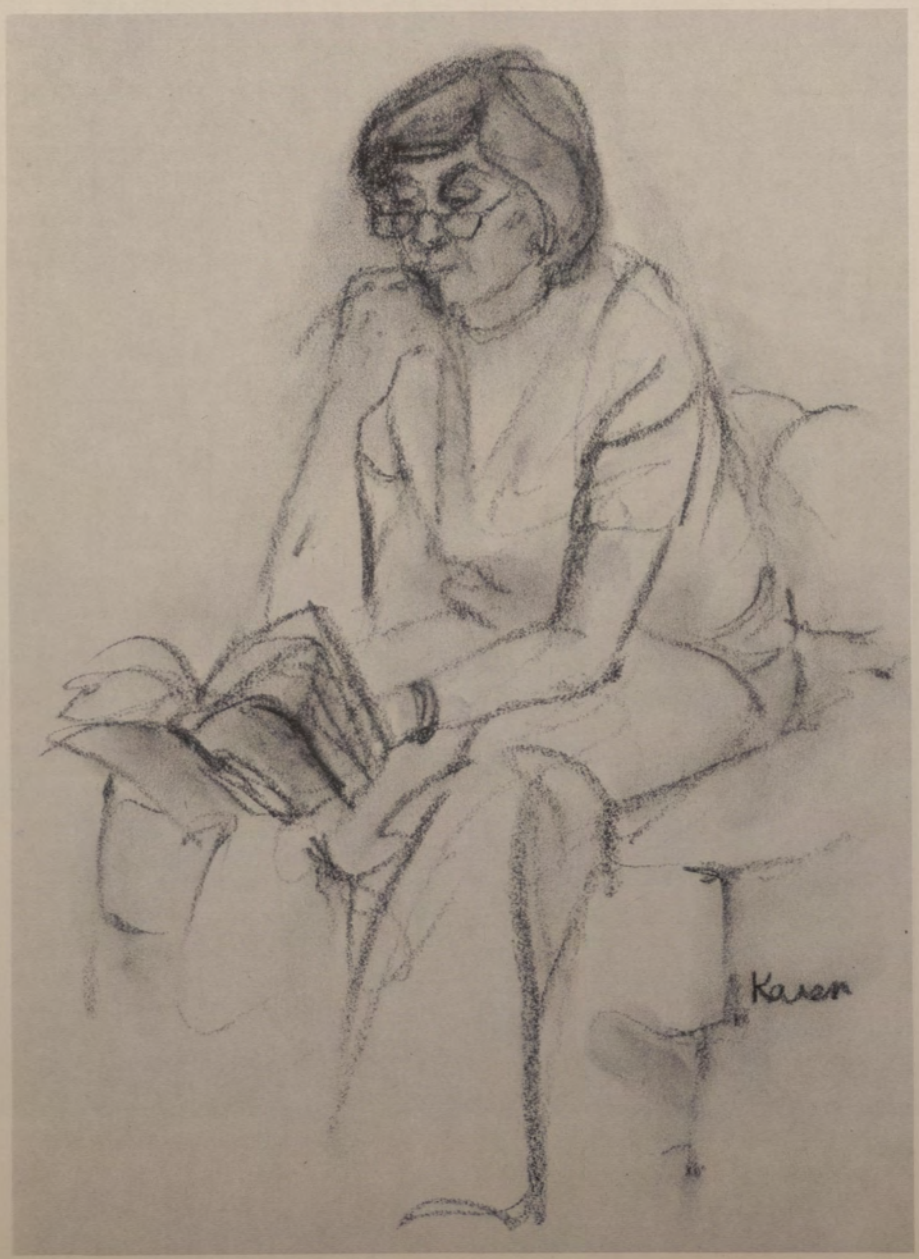
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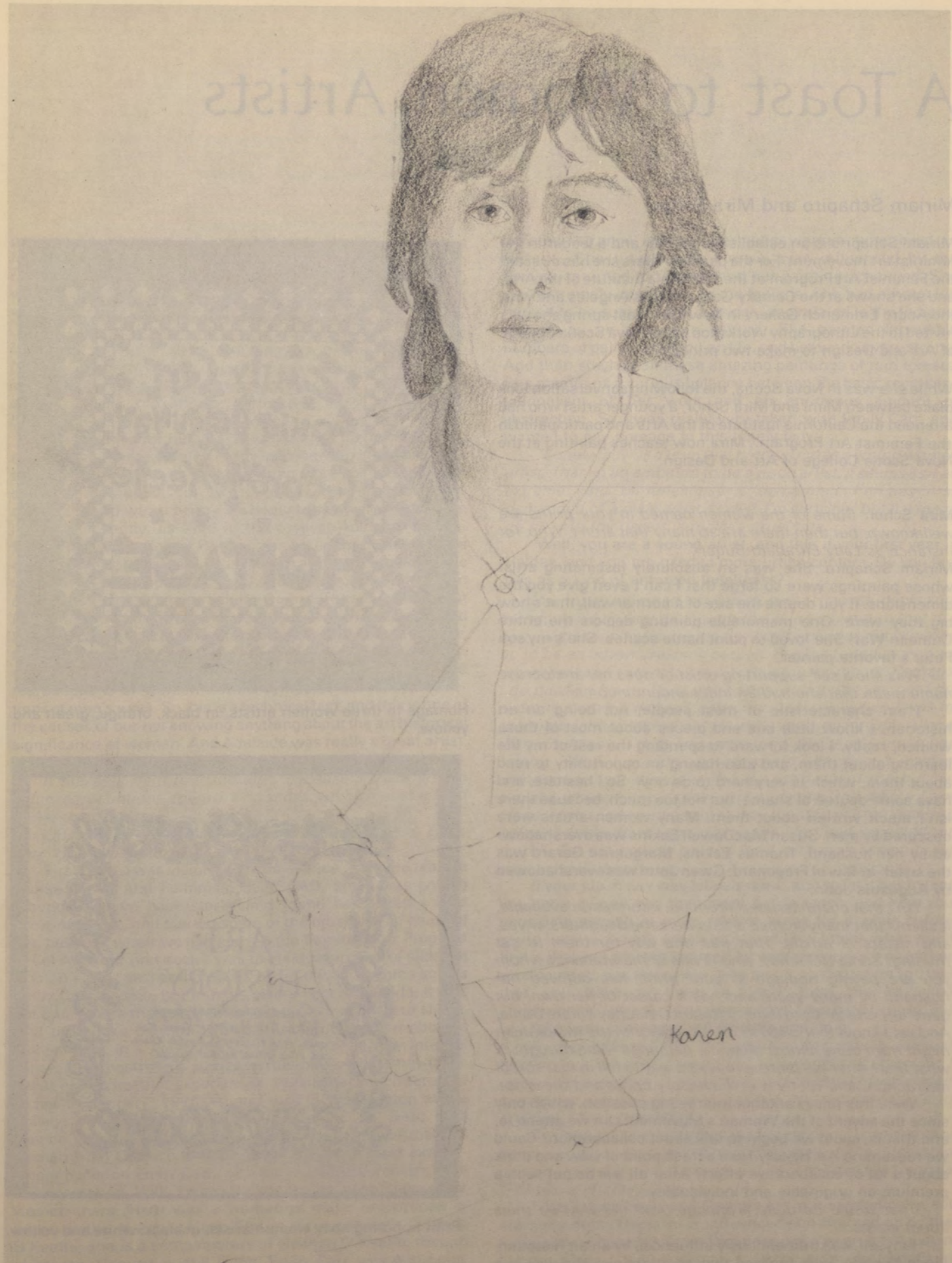

Karen

A Toast to Women Artists

Miriam Schapiro and Mira Schor

Miriam Schapiro is an established painter and a leader in the feminist art movement. For the past few years she has directed the Feminist Art Program at the California Institute of the Arts, and she shows at the Comsky Gallery in Los Angeles and with the Andre Emmerich Gallery in New York. Last spring she was invited to the Lithography Workshop at the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design to make two prints.

While she was in Nova Scotia, the following conversation took place between Mimi and Mira Schor, a younger artist who had attended the California Institute of the Arts and participated in the Feminist Art Program. Mira now teaches painting at the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design.

Mira Schor: *Some of the women named in your prints are well-known, but then there are so many that aren't. Who, for instance, is Lady Elizabeth Butler?*

Miriam Schapiro: She was an absolutely fascinating artist whose paintings were so large that I can't even give you the dimensions. If you double the size of a normal wall, that's how big they were. One memorable painting depicts the entire Crimean War! She loved to paint battle scenes. She's my son Peter's favorite painter.

Was she a self-supporting artist or does her aristocratic name mean that she had an independent income?

I am characteristic of most people; not being an art historian, I know little bits and pieces about most of these women, really, I look forward to spending the rest of my life learning about them, and also having an opportunity to read about them, which is very hard to do now. So I hesitate, and have some degree of shame, but not too much, because there isn't much written about them. Many women artists were obscured by men. Susan MacDowell Eakins was overshadowed by her husband, Thomas Eakins; Marguerite Gerard was the sister-in-law of Fragonard; Gwen John was overshadowed by Augustus John.

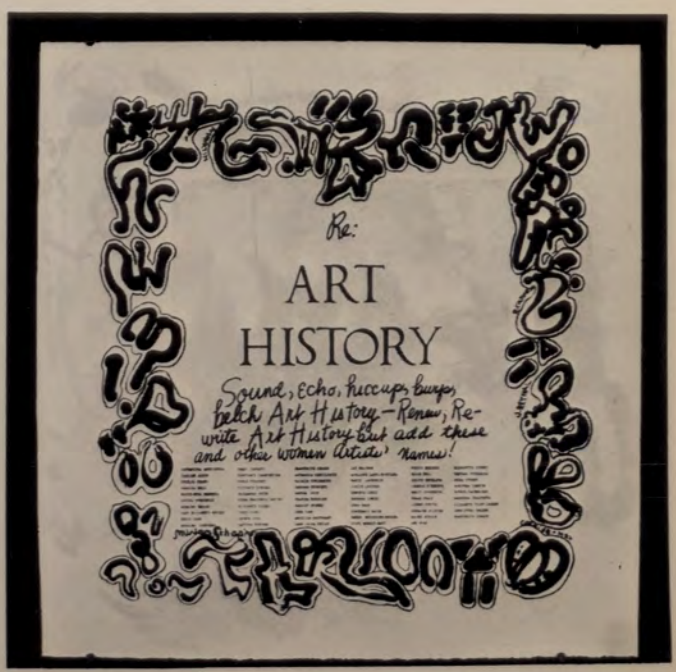
Isn't that characteristic? From the information available, it seems that many women artists were the daughters, wives, and sisters of artists. That was one way for them to get training. Sonia Delaunay, who is one of the women to whom you are paying homage in your print, has outlived her husband by many years and has a career of her own, but generally one tends to think of Robert Delaunay before Sonia. And yet I know that often in the same month the two of them might have done almost identical paintings. Who thought of what first? After all, there is really no way to tell in that sort of interaction. And yet he is in the history books and she is not.

Well, this raises another interesting question, which only since the advent of the Women's Movement can we attend to, and that is, could we begin to talk about collaboration? Could we reexamine Art History from a fresh point of view and think about a lot of collaborative effort? After all, we do put such a premium on originality and individuality....

That would be quite a change from the way we think about artists.

I myself was tremendously influenced by an art historian, Linda Nochlin, who realized that as a feminist she was in a

Homage to three women artists, in black, orange, green and yellow.



Print honoring sixty women arists, in black, white and yellow.

position to question all assumptions. Having become a feminist, she forced herself to look at the history of art through radical eyes. So in that very famous article, which I suppose all women artists should read, "Why have there been no great women artists?", she asks that very question.

Actually, it's sort of sad, because although she does bring up a lot of names of artists that many people may never have heard of, one would have hoped the answer would have been, look, there were great women artists, but they were shoved aside. Instead, the answer is there couldn't have been, because the training was denied them.

I disagree with her. As she explains, there were good reasons why there weren't many women who became artists in history. But I think as we are getting more comfortable with our own idea about our own importance - remember how overshadowed we've been - we begin to see women artists in history differently, as I did in the case of Adelaide Labille-Guiard last week. Robert Hughes, the art editor of Time, chose to make four color reproductions for his article on the Romantic Show at the Metropolitan. He chose to reproduce three men and one woman, Adelaide Labille-Guiard. That in itself is most unusual. I don't think people are aware of the fact that by and large you rarely see a woman artist's work reproduced in color, therefore we don't know about them. In terms of Art History, even ten years ago, you saw very few black and white reproductions of women's work compared to the reproductions of men's work. So this is a technical fact, and this is one of the causes of our not knowing anything about the art historical significance of women. And Adelaide was really a great artist, a great portraitist.

It makes it hard to teach also, because if there are no color reproductions, there are no slides, which makes it hard to get things going.

One thing I am curious about is your interest in Emily Carr. How did that begin?

First of all, I was visiting Canada in June, 1974, to teach a course in Art and Feminism at NSCAD, and I was poking around in some book stores and found her books. I read *Growing Pains*, and started some of the others. I had heard of her, because when we had started the Feminist Art Program at Cal Arts, our first desire was to build an archive of slides of women artists past and present. Naturally, I had come across Emily Carr's name, but frankly, before I got to Canada, it was not much more than a name connected to three or four slides. And the books did not give me much information about a painter - yes, in a superficial way, but not really in an internal sense. She mostly tells stories, rather pleasant, homey tales, about environmental experiences. I really became interested in her in January, 1975, when I was in Washington at the College Art Association annual conference. I went to a women's panel called Women Artists on Women Artists. A woman from California, Gilah Hirsh, gave the most extraordinary paper on Emily Carr, with the most extraordinary slide documentation. Well, I was knocked out, as were all the other women there. Here was a woman of major proportions in terms of the history of art. She is on a par with Georgia O'Keeffe, she is a contemporary of Georgia O'Keeffe, though of course, Georgia is still living. Emily Carr was a curious, isolated, strange, almost hermetic woman who lived in Victoria. She travelled to Europe, was influenced by the Fauves, returned to Victoria and her paintings changed. She was extremely impressed by the Indians. She had always felt herself to be some sort of outsider, and related to the Indians' culture as an outsider's culture. She painted incredible numbers of paintings of Indian life, and her work is very strong. And then she has all these amazing paintings of rain forests. She maintains a curious balance between the basic representationalism of her work and an enormous amount of abstraction. So I was really very taken with Emily Carr, and wanted to pay homage to this lonely lady.

"Lonely lady" is a term that bothers me as a young woman artist. That, in an ambition to be a good artist, it seems as if an extreme kind of loneliness is demanded. Perhaps it is demanded of a male artist as well, I'm sure it is, but having to go off into the desert is really a cruel fate.

Well, you are a young artist, and this if your first year in Halifax, and you are used to more urban centers. Do you feel this as a kind of enforced loneliness?

No, not an enforced loneliness, since I have students and friends, but I do feel as though this is an adventure that my early years didn't prepare me for. I certainly was not brought up to be an adventuresome person. But I've found more and more that I don't seem to have a choice in the matter. Perhaps I do have a choice, I just don't know about that yet, but I do seem to be on a difficult path. For instance, when I was in graduate school, a lot of people were applying for jobs. All the men would say, "I'd go anywhere for a job." And I remember saying, "Well, I wouldn't go anywhere," because a woman alone doesn't go anywhere. This is a good place to be, but it is a place where I didn't really know anyone and where I am alone. I can see how this may well be the start of a ten year trek before I settle down, and it isn't the life I had expected for myself. I'm not entirely trained for it, although I seem to be dealing with it fairly well. So, it is a kind of loneliness.

If your life in any way follows mine, and so far it has in that you got a degree and then went out to teach, and now you anticipate staying in more remote areas for a while before going back to a more urban artistic milieu, I think what you'll find is that you prepare yourself for very giant risks. You gather your courage, you learn how to be alone, so that when you feel that you have to make a break from the so-called "hinterlands", you go. You may not even have a job to go to, but you take your courage in your hands and do it.

I never realized that the preparations would demand becoming a rambler. I could not picture myself that way. I certainly came from a protective nest and yet I find myself compelled. I'm just going to have to go from one place to another. I have no choice.

To get back to your prints: in the first print, I can see very definitely, a connection to Sonia Delaunay, in the interest in patterning and quilting. But I'm not so sure I can see Georgia O'Keeffe and Emily Carr.

I don't think Emily and Georgia are in it aesthetically, you are quite right. The print is influenced and charged up by the feeling that I have for Sonia Delaunay, who as an artist just in pattern alone I feel closer to. I derive a lot of strength in

knowing about Emily Carr, and certainly have an appreciation of the range and magnitude of her work, spanning five decades. And Georgia O'Keeffe is a woman who fascinates me simply because she is so God-damned gutsy and tough, and she changes. I've always felt embarrassed when people say I'm mercurial and superficial and all I do is change. But my changes are always so profound. I never do anything lightly, and for strength in that I've always looked to Georgia O'Keeffe, who also gets deeply involved with something for three or four years and then feels that she has to go on.

And who changes at the age of eighty which is rather incredible.

I was with a woman in Los Angeles two weeks ago who said that she had entertained Georgia, who had come up from Abiquiu and had asked this friend of mine to gather for her the most interesting potters so that she could pick their brains. Her eyesight is failing and she wants to try making pots. She's 90 years old!

I think that need to work is what keeps someone alive.

Doesn't that make you feel good?

Oh, yes, I find it enormously encouraging.

Don't you think we've hit on the real crux of the matter? Here you are, a young painter, you need a model, you need someone out there of whom you can say, "That's the way it's done."

At first I did find the encouragement in other voices. I didn't know too much about women artists, but I did find it in Paul Klee, in Letters to a Young Poet, *by Rilke. Now one knows about women as well. But there is a bittersweet aspect about it, because the women I've been most encouraged by are Georgia O'Keeffe, and Agnes Martin, and both of them are extremely tough women, tougher than I think I am, and both of them are leading extremely solitary lives. The price that they've paid for their knowledge seems enormous. It seems greater than the price someone like Klee paid for whatever knowledge he gained. The fate doesn't seem so easy for a woman artist. I don't know whether that is going to change.*

I know many women artists who have lived with men and who have been able to practice their art. It isn't natural to say that, if you are ambitious, if you are a woman, if you are an artist, you are destined to lead a solitary life. It may turn out that your fate is different than that.

One hopes so. I don't know what those women artists wanted for themselves when they were young, but I certainly know that I would like to combine being an artist with having a child. I think that is part of a woman's life. I have a friend, a painter named Yvonne Jacquette, who startled a class of young women artists by saying that her real creative urge refined itself and became twice as powerful when she had a child. Then she really had to think about what she was going to do, her time became more precious, her art became that much more precious. She really felt strongly about it.

She is absolutely right. I made up my mind that for the first few years after my son was born I was going to have only four hours a day in my studio, and they meant so much to me. My spiritual life was compressed into those four hours. And then I came back refreshed, renewed, I came back to my baby like a human being again. So the whole duality of your existence is so real, so terrific. I think you can do it without having a baby, I think you can do it with a baby. What bothers me is people who say once you have a baby you can't be an artist. I think that is very unfair.

I think it is difficult. You need support, you need help. But I do feel the child-bearing aspect of a woman's life is very important, because I think that to be a full person you need to be touched in some way. You can't be invulnerable, and my perception of women who have had children is that they have been touched, somebody has made demands on them, the woman has had to break out of her shell of being a child herself. It is a kind of responsibility and vulnerability which I think is very important to the growth of an artist as well.

I would like to know how you feel about working in the Lithography Workshop here at NSCAD. The other evening, I overheard one of the young men who was working with you trying to describe Womanhouse *to a woman, and I thought, oh my, Mimi has really done a job on him. Can you tell me about that?*

Well, of course, after you become a feminist, it just sort of osmoses out of you. I like working here. I personally am the kind of human being that finds it difficult to work in a goldfish bowl, and I must say, that is a limitation of some kind, but I try to make the best resolution possible and to be just simply glad that this workshop is such a congenial place to work in. I've worked once before in a rather celebrated workshop and it was quite different. You run into fairly typical experience in print workshops, which is a kind of power play, the printers versus the artist.

Which is, in your case, also a man versus a woman, since most workshops are still populated by men, with few exceptions.

That didn't happen here. John Hutcheson, who is a Tamarind Master Printer, and his assistants, leave the options open to the artist, and they were responsive to my needs. And I think it is to everyone's credit that they feel perfectly comfortable having me make my radical statements, since, after all, they are not feminists.

Perhaps they have learnt a little more about feminism. And your print is very light-hearted.

It is light hearted. It's like raising a glass of wine and saying here's to you Emily Carr, and Sonia Delaunay, and Georgia O'Keeffe, I toast you. It's that kind of print.

***

Creative Genius: Unique to Men?

by Grethe Holmen

Why have there not been any great women artists? Where are the female geniuses - the female Shakespeare, Mozart and Rembrandt?

These are natural questions, for if there have been any, we have not heard of them. But that must be because women are incapable of creating great works of art. They can reproduce, but they cannot create. In this way the matter has been settled, not once but many times. Yet scattered around the world are many works of art by women, since Sappho's day there have been many women writers, and according to the biographical handbook *Women Composers* (Otto Ebel, 1902), up to 1900 there had been just under three hundred women composers of symphonies, operas, cantatas, et cetera.

I shall not attempt to guess how much of this has been considered "great art". But how many of the men we come across in the histories and dictionaries of art have been considered "great"? If today, with the contemporary way of judging art, we were to determine what is and what is not great art, these bulky books would probably shrink considerably, and many of the remaining artists would not be considered "great".

Moreover, who has decided, throughout history, what has been classified as great, important or less important art? Who dares to say that objective and artistic points of view have always decided whether an artist should be accepted or not? And with some knowledge of the circumstances, who dares say women artists were not specially obstructed?

In the past, a girl with artistic talent was immediately regarded with some scepticism. These talents had no value on the marriage market. A little poetizing for the desk drawer, some porcelain painting, singing or dancing for visitors - all these might be fascinating, and might bring some glory to the family, but more than that was alarming. Artistic ambition was to be put out of her head entirely. The reason was not that she, as an artist, would have to go through internal and external struggle, but that it was not socially acceptable for ladies to have artistic ambition.

Those who persisted in their art were forced to become secretive. Writers were in a favorable position, for pen and paper were easily obtained. It is certain however that these women felt the prejudice of their time; this is obvious from the male pseudonyms that almost all women writers assumed, if they were lucky enough to have their work published.

Those who wished to express themselves in music were not so fortunate. They needed music paper and an instrument, and were not able to keep their work secret, for an instrument produces sound. The family had to put up with the noise, and contend with the disapproval of a society which found it strange that a woman would want to compose. In spite of these obstacles, a few hundred women were able to publish their compositions, again with male pseudonyms. Women who painted or drew were perhaps worst off, for they needed canvas, brushes and color, and needed more of them frequently.

Common to all these women was the problem of getting peace and room for their work. To have a place where one can think, work and concentrate has always been impossible for most people, but the difficulties were, and still are, greater for women. Most women were financially dependent on a father or a husband, and even if they had the financial independence to get a room outside the home, it would have taken an enormous amount of strength and courage to carry it through.

Another problem was the lack of artistic training available to women. They were not generally admitted to the schools of music or art, or to the universities, and they were still less allowed to participate in the competitions and exhibitions which might have brought some recognition of their work. In many art schools women were not allowed in classes where the model was nude. The music schools which admitted women were generally tolerant of them, for it was felt that singing and playing the piano were accomplishments in a woman.

At the academies, it was of course men who decided which students were to have the opportunities of exhibitions, distinctions, and encouragements, and to compete for awards. Medals and distinctions do not guarantee that those who get them are important artists. But external recognition has always been, and still is, a dominating and frustrating part of an artist's job, particularly if he or she has to live by it. With the working conditions offered women artists, one can only wonder that they went through with it, and that their numbers increased.

The obstacles described here, and many others, have been created by society, i.e. by men. But after all, aren't men more artistically creative than women? An answer is often expressed categorically: men are creative artists, women reproductive artists.

Are there any biological facts which prove this to be so? The Danish biologist Anders Munk says about this that any working hypothesis which in this case indicates anything as a definite biological truth, can be rejected. As to biological differences of sex - including the question of different abilities in connection with artistic creativity - nothing is known except that what is biologically determined in a human being does not limit our possibilities. It is known that women are made to bear children and suckle them. That women should have an inborn maternal feeling telling her she *must* have children or become frustrated, is one of the postulates which, in his book *Humanismens Biologi* (Biology of Humanism) Professor Munk calls a "postulate of inevitability", and it is completely false. Similarly, traditional female characteristics are probably due to the pattern of sex roles, which in turn are the result of indoctrination. It is known that indoctrination is an enormous power in human life.

But if we discuss psychological-sexual differences in creative artists, we must go to creativity research, a relatively new field. The psychologist Ellen Bach, author of *Om Kreativitet* (On the concept of creativity) fixes the formal part of creativity research at 1950, when the psychologist Guilford used the term in a lecture. From that time the subject has aroused the interest of psychologists, and several reports have been written. This

cont. on p. 44

The Fraser River

by Donna Rae
illustration by Jean Hutton

What were those words? Melicent read them again.

> When she bent her head she looked old and I thought, 'O Christophine, do not grow old. You are the only friend I have, do not go away from me into being old.'

Impatiently Melicent pushed the book away from her. It flopped to the ground. A soft thud. Tedious passage, she thought. The blurb had promised exotic romance, lush Creole heiress, charming English lord. What a lie. Into being old. What did that mean, 'into being old'? What old person ever goes away? And she was too weary to trek down the hill for another novel. It was unfair - nearly seventy years of age - cigarettes, anything - and it was three blocks over and four blocks down the steep decline. Wilford had said she would love it, "their retirement home on the banks of the Fraser River". Sometimes she did. But the hill. She had taken so many taxi-cabs since Wilford had been gone. Not that he would ever know, and was it so terrible? The last time she had walked the hill, she had had a strange dizzy spell. Brief, but disturbing.

She leaned back in her reclining lawn chair, lit a cigarette and sipped lemonade. Gradually she became more content. The warm air cradled her. As she had no book she might doze. Three days. There was time; she still had three days. Three more days of this blissful solitude. The setting sun at her back was hazy, but still powerful. The Fraser River emitted a moist fragrance tinged with decay. Oddly soothing. A meadowlark seemed to break open the air nearby with its seeking, exultant cry. Her mother-in-law had called her 'meadowlark'. "Our Melicent-meadowlark. Just the useful creature we need on a farm." Melicent could not comprehend sarcasm. She dropped the thought. But it reminded her of the river that curved around the family farm. Battle River, it was called, and she thought of it as hers. Nothing half as big as the Fraser, of course, but of an aquamarine both brilliant and opaque - brushed over an eerie whitewash. The thought of it made her ache with joy sometimes. She felt the same ache when she thought of one or the other of her five children. (Not so much recently, however. Lately she had been more concerned with herself.) The Fraser was the more powerful river, engorged with sediment, and yellow. Only a few more miles, though, and it was finished. It would leave the land and spill itself into the sea. The thought saddened Melicent. The Fraser seemed placid from where she sat and she enjoyed watching it; but she was wary of thoughts of that gross expanse, that nullity which was the sea.

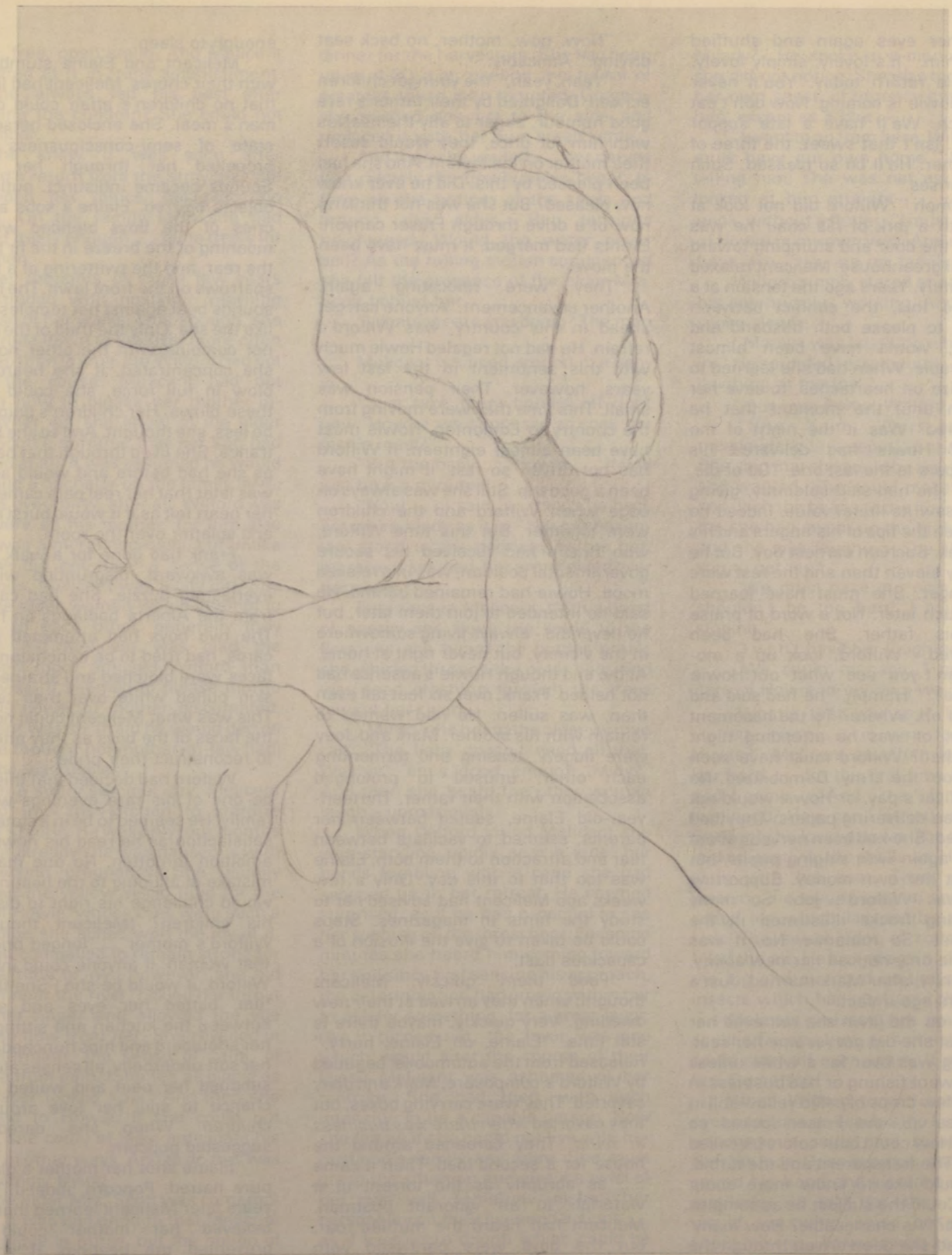
Abruptly, with nothing to alert her to danger, the garage door clanged shut. As Melicent lifted startled eyes toward it, her body folded in on itself with dismay. So - he was back. J. Wilford Scott. She thought of him sometimes by this business name. They had printed stationery. She was Mrs. J. Wilford Scott. With a jerky movement she leaned over and smothered her cigarette in the soft earth. Before she had straightened, she felt her husband's grotesquely extended shadow cover her small person. She kept her eyes raised while her hand fumbled in the grass and for a moment the setting sun extinguished the figure striding toward her. Then she saw his smile. He was grinning widely. Her heart flopped at the sight. She remembered a dead fish she had seen floating, belly up, yellowish-white, tinged with a faint stench of decay, rocking in the shadows of her Battle River. How many days after that had Wilford left her for the first time? Not many. His smile at the river had been more profound than his smile now. Why had he not told her then he was joining the army? She did not know. Now, however, after forty-odd years, she knew his smile. This one meant he had 'found her out'.

Melicent's look of dismay at having her husband return unexpectedly and find her smoking, when she had told him she was giving it up for him, after the doctor had ordered him to stop - her look of dismay that he caught her lounging and smoking changed when she saw his smile. Her face collapsed. It seemed to run together as colors do in a cheap garment, leaving it faded and soft. Lines could be seen on her face which were rarely noticed because of her animated discourse. For the thousandth time in her life with this man, she was incredulous; she wondered as one might wonder at an alien Hindu practice, how one person could be so pleased when he saw he had hurt another.

"Caught you, eh, my little miss," he chortled. "Caught you lounging and smoking like the la-dee-da ladies on Kingsway Road. Are you going to call for a sherry too, eh? Are you going to do that now?" He slapped his thighs with pleasure.

By then Melicent was on her feet. Her drink spilled itself into the earth, but the glass did not break. She altered her facial expression; she braced herself to respond to his joke. Then with rapid, shuffling steps, that would seem to a stranger like a parody of juvenile delight, she minced toward him. "I want to give you," she cried, "a great big hug, a great big hug of welcome." She batted her eyes, winked, even lisped a little. She poured a rapid flow of words around him. "I don't care if we're on the back lawn for all the world to see. I'm going to give you a big hug and a kiss right here. How do you like that. Not bad for two seventy-year-olds who have been married so long, eh. Romantic." Melicent liked the word 'romantic'. "I've missed you terribly." She rattled on about the yardwork which had been kept up faithfully and the grass on the incline which had been hand-clipped, and that it was really marvellous, marvellous, he had been able to return three days early.

Indulgently Mr. J. Wilford Scott eased his wife back into the house. Kissing in public. He was not going to make a fool of himself by kissing in public, even if she did not mind. Nonetheless she could see him soaking up her sugared words. She could see the tensions of his lonely two months and long drive begin to dissipate. Her effusiveness was welcome for a change. They both knew he could dam up the flow whenever he wished. Right now he wanted her, she knew; he wanted to float on this holy river of



goodwill, relax in the cradle of his home. His summer job seemed to have tired him more this year than it had since he retired.

Melicent gushed no less than usual, but she hardly heard what she was saying. Long years of performances had given her a polish seldom matched on any stage. It was a bad day for Wilford to return, a very bad day. She expected Howie ..... a late supper. Other than alluding to the bank of lawn between their property and their neighbours, Melicent was even too distracted to throw in those little malicious lines which helped to give her some sense of balance in the midst of her outpourings. Soon she would be forced to tell him about Howie.

As usual J. Wilford Scott ignored the reference to his bank.

Now in the kitchen Melicent pattered from stove to table, from table to stove. The hand-clipped bank was nothing to him, she thought. That was it. Her mouth looked resentful for a moment, and then she decided. She

batted her eyes again and shuffled toward him. "It's lovely, simply lovely, you could return today. You'll never guess. Howie is coming. Now don't eat too much. We'll have a late supper together. Isn't that sweet, the three of us together. He'll be so pleased. Such fun surprises."

"Humph." Wilford did not look at her. With a jerk of his chair he was through the door and stumping toward his small greenhouse. Melicent relaxed immediately. Years ago the tension at a time like this, the conflict between wanting to please both husband and children, would have been almost unendurable. When had she learned to economize on heartaches, to save her agitation until the moment that he reappeared? Was it the night of the blizzard? Howie had delivered his newspapers to the last one. "Do or die, mother," he had said solemnly, giving the old saw its literal value. Indeed he had frozen the tips of his fingers and his left cheek. Such an earnest boy. But he was only eleven then and the rest were all younger. She must have learned later, much later. Not a word of praise from his father. She had been bewildered. "Wilford, look up a moment, can't you see what our Howie has done?" "Humph," he had said and stumped off. Where? To the basement probably, or was he attending night school then? Wilford must have been home from the army. Demobilized. No more officer's pay, or Howie would not have been delivering papers. They had all worked. She had been nervous about starting again with singing pupils, but had kept her own money. Supporting them was Wilford's job. So many enchanting frocks illustrated in the magazines. So romantic. No, it was later. She only noticed her new ability, her serenity, after Mark married. Just a few years ago in fact.

Out on the lawn she retrieved her glass, but she did not resume her seat. Lounging was over for a while unless Wilford went fishing or had business in town. A few drops of pallid yellow still in the glass ..... the Fraser looked so serene. How could both colors be called yellow? The transparent and the turbid. She would like to know more about colors. Could the subject be as complex as music? As changeable? How many times had she been driven through the Fraser canyon - terrified - the water boiling, writhing, banging onto stone, whipping down the canyon toward the sea.

"Not so fast, Wilford, please, oh please!" Was it the turbulence of the scene or Wilford's driving? She had no rights when Wilford was behind the wheel. He could do anything. She had no control.

"Now, now, mother, no back seat driving." Amicably.

"Yeah, yeah," the younger children echoed. Delighted by their father's rare good humour, eager to ally themselves with him for once, they would desert their mother on the instant. And she had been pleased by this. Did he ever know how pleased? But she was not thinking now of a drive through Fraser canyon. Events had merged. It must have been the move.

They were relocating again. Another advancement. 'Anyone can get ahead in this country' was Wilford's refrain. He had not regaled Howie much with this sentiment in the last few years, however. Their pension was small. This time they were moving from the country to Edmonton. Howie must have been almost eighteen. If Wilford had not driven so fast, it might have been a good trip. Still she was always on edge when Wilford and the children were together. But this time Wilford, who finally had received his secure governmental position, was in a relaxed mood. Howie had remained behind. He said he intended to join them later, but he never did - always living somewhere in the vicinity, but never right at home. At the end though Howie's absence had not helped. Frank, over six feet tall even then, was sullen. He had wanted to remain with his brother. Mark and Joey were fidgety, teasing and tormenting each other, unused to prolonged association with their father. Thirteen-year-old Elaine, seated between her parents, seemed to vacillate between fear and attraction to them both. Elaine was too thin to this day. Only a few weeks ago Melicent had advised her to study the hints in magazines. Steps could be taken to give the illusion of a capacious bust.

Feed them quickly, Melicent thought, when they arrived at their new dwelling. Very quickly, maybe there is still time. "Elaine, oh Elaine, hurry." Released from the automobile, beguiled by Wilford's composure, Mark and Joey cavorted. They were carrying boxes, but they cavorted *when there was business at hand*. They careened around the house for a second load. Then it came ..... as abruptly as the torrent of a waterfall to an ignorant boatman. Melicent had heard the muffled roar, but the boys were paralysed with astonishment. The belt slashed out ..... first one and then the other. Frank, head down, carried boxes back and forth, his neck engorged with rage, his hands stiff and white. His father had not beaten him in over a year, but she knew that he would take a walk after supper. The stiff-spined army pace which he had learned from his father would carry him for miles before he would feel relaxed enough to sleep.

Melicent and Elaine stumbled on with their chores. Melicent had learned that no children's affair could delay a man's meal. She enclosed herself in a state of semi-consciousness which propelled her through her duties. Sounds became indistinct, outlines of objects blurred. Elaine's sobs and the cries of the boys blended with the moaning of the breeze in the fir trees at the rear, and the twittering of a flock of sparrows on the front lawn. The merged sounds beat against her temples. It was like the sea. Only the thud of the belt did not combine with the other noises. If she concentrated, if she heard every blow in full force, she could absorb these blows. Her children's pain would be less, she thought. And so she had her trance. She lived through that half hour as she had before and would again. It was later that her real pain came, when her heart felt as if it would burst its cage and splatter over the room.

Frank had gone for a walk. Elaine was awkward, disgruntled with her everlasting puzzle. She had carried it from the Alberta badlands on her lap. The two boys had attempted to play cards, had tried to be nonchalant. Their faces were blotched and strained; their skin pulled white over their temples. This was what Melicent could not bear, the faces of the boys as they attempted to reconstruct their pride.

Wilford had decided that this would be one of his rare evenings with the family. He seemed to be in a state of fine satisfaction as he read his newspaper, ambition forgotten. No one made the mistake of alluding to the beating. Who would challenge his right to discipline his children? (Melicent thought of Wilford's mother ..... longed briefly for that woman. If anyone could influence Wilford, it would be she.) She flattered him, batted her eyes and shuffled between the kitchen and sitting-room, her shoulders and hips hunched around her soft underbelly, all senses alert. She subdued her pain and waited for the chance to spill her love around the children. When she dared, she suggested popcorn.

Elaine shot her mother a glance of pure hatred. Popcorn, indeed. Twenty years later Melicent learned that Elaine believed her mother could have prevented the beatings if she had wanted to. Popcorn ..... smoothing things over again - her father at least, Elaine said years later, had had integrity.

"Fine," boomed Wilford, "just what we need, mother. Wouldn't that just hit the spot for our first night here? Why are you all so glum?" Playfully he ruffled the boys' hair. Patronizing, happy, he hustled them all into the kitchen. He had

a fine, free, open smile. And Melicent wondered at it in frank astonishment. Had he always felt his best after whipping the children? She could not remember.

She knew it was soon after Wilford's return from the army that she developed her mince, her placating grovel. On the family farm she had walked freely enough ..... quite freely for a woman.

Her thoughts of those few years were tinged with nostalgic yearning because of her walks. True enough, she had strode down to the river more often to weep than to sing, but Wilford had not been the cause. Melicent had not known how to please her mother-in-law. What did she know of the elder Mrs. Scott's surprise that her son had married at all. It was assumed he would continue a bachelor on the family farm; he was over thirty, after all. Wilford was as severe as his mother; for him also work was a moral necessity, but unlike her, he did not have a sense of the ludicrous. Melicent was a city girl. She and the older woman would attempt to adjust to each other; generally they would fail. Melicent was glad the situation more amused Wilford than otherwise. It seemed to please him to see his powerful mother discomfited. Melicent was so afraid he would decide (as she thought her mother-in-law had) that she was useless.

On a sultry summer day, Melicent slipped into the kitchen to sterilize Howie's bottle. He was only four months old, but already she was nauseous with her second pregnancy. She usually retained the yellow viscid fluid for the sake of Howie, whose eyes were such a deep blue she ached with the joy of it. She felt compelled to remain strong for him. A time or two however, she hid herself near the river, tickled her throat with her finger and allowed the vile liquid to flow from her. She revelled in the aftermath, the sense of calm, of release from pain. (She felt as placid as the Fraser looked now.) And then she returned to Howie. If she could not nurse, she could at least anticipate his wants in other ways. And to do this was increasingly trying.

The elder Mrs. Scott was contemptuous. It was bad enough that Melicent was unable to nurse, but the notion of sterilizing bottles filled her with outrage. It was a waste of time, fuel, and space on the kitchen range. As Melicent entered the kitchen that August day, she was relieved to see the fire had been built up high. There would be no question, she thought, of fuel being wasted. Pots and mason jars for canning string beans occupied most of the space. If she hurried, there would be time before it was necessary to prepare dinner for the harvesters. She had been up at 4:30 a.m. peeling the tubful of potatoes these men required. Gingerly she pushed one pot to the side and replaced it with her own small kettle.

And then she waited ..... her nerves taut. Slowly the tiny bubbles began to form on the bottom of the kettle and around the sides. Her tensions heightened. Would the water never boil? As the rolling motion commenced she felt the presence of the elder Mrs. Scott behind her.

"Whatever are you doing? The men ....."

Melicent whipped around in a panic.

"Just take them bottles off right now. How're we supposed to cook the men's meal?"

"But the baby ..... Howie ..... it will just take a minute."

"Now ..... I said ..... they'll be back 'for we're ready as it is." Her mother-in-law stood in the doorway before her, massive it seemed, her arms folded over her chest.

Fury rose in Melicent. With a burst of energy she flung the kettle to the floor. As she heard the bottles break, she whirled through the outer door, and was soon crashing through the trees toward her river.

"Milly," she heard the older woman call. "The baby doesn't need all that. Washin' 'em's good enough. Milly?" And then she heard the other woman laugh - uproariously.

When Wilford found Melicent she was standing rigidly near a pine, her hands fumbling with a cone she had scooped up in her retreat. He seemed surprised, as if he had expected to see her sobbing on the forest floor. For some minutes she heard him coming toward her and since first sensing his approach, the determination had grown within her to ask for something, for a great favor. (As it turned out, the favor was one which would alter the course of their lives.) Melicent was ashamed of her tantrum. She had tried, with such intensity, to be a capable person. Now she felt as if she could not live with her husband's family any more. She must grasp the situation and give it a twist of her own will, somehow implant her personality on their lives and actions ..... as if lives were dough which could be molded and shaped. She had done what she had been trained all her life to avoid; she had created a scene. She knew that before terror of her husband and mother-in-law could engulf her, she must make a demand herself. She was rigid with her decision, and, for the first time since she had known him, unconscious of her husband's state of mind.

Wilford strode toward her. "Well, Milady?" He spoke in a monotone but she did not notice. She was too giddy of her own sense of urgency even to see him, except as a blur.

"I want to go from here, Wilford. We must have our own home." She was telling him; she was not asking. She looked at him straight ..... without a wink, without a flutter. "I must take care of Howie in my own way. And now we'll have two. *They* are my family."

Wilford simply stared ahead of him, his jaw muscles working. And then he spoke slowly.

"Mother was laughing when I went in." He sounded incredulous. "She was laughing at me too."

"Our own home, Wilford."

"She said, 'Our Melicent-meadowlark is weepin' in the woods.' She said that she could be arty herself, if she wanted. She could make a rhyme and dash the beans to the floor. She told me she had swept up the broken glass, and she was laughing. She liked it ..... you to get mad."

"We must have our own home. It shouldn't be too hard. I could teach singing."

"I won't have her laughing at me."

"We could manage. I must take care of Howie in my own way."

"What's that you say? The baby *.....that infant .....* is your family ..... Howie?" Melicent saw him looking at her hard ..... for the first time since he had come. "And the farm? My livelihood? How can I let you ask this?" Suddenly he looked down. The dead fish rocked gently in the shallows. He tapped at it with his boot. Then, with no warning, he swung around and gave a rotted log which lay nearby a mighty kick. The sweet odor of rotten wood filled the air. He kicked again, dislodged the log and stomped on the scurrying insects which had sheltered there.

Melicent pressed her point. "We could save and buy, or homestead. We could start all over again. It would be fun. Romantic."

When Wilford turned around his eyes had gone as dead as the fish, but an unconscious smile had spread itself over his face. Upon seeing his smile, she seized his hand and kissed it in abject gratitude. He told her, then, that he would see what could be arranged about moving. His voice was as soft as a purr. Still smiling, he put his arm around her and assisted her back to the house.

Melicent had a few days of joy such as she had never experienced before. She exulted. She felt an inkling of what is commonly called power. Wilford must really love her, she thought. It was so new, this feeling, and unexpected, that she did all she could to disguise it. She

cont. on p. 47

music

ROCK SLIDE SURVIVORS: BAEZ, COLLINS AND TYSON

by Beverley Ross
illustration by Barbara Hartmann

Joan Baez: "Diamonds and Rust" A & M SP 45 27
Judy Collins: "Judith" Electra 7ES 1032
Sylvia Tyson: "Woman's World" Capitol SKAC 6430

They appeared in the '60's, their voices as pure as their devotion to traditional folk forms and political activism. The women of this folk scene, though outnumbered by their male counterparts, were nevertheless staunchly supported. But when the rock revolution shattered the simplicity and idealism of their style, it was only the first ladies of folk - Joan Baez, Judy Collins, Mary Travers, and in Canada, Sylvia Tyson, who survived.

That change occurred a decade ago and today, on the other side of the "rock slide" survivors of all kinds are casting about for new musical directions. It seems significant that Judy Collins, Joan Baez and Sylvia Tyson should each release an album about the same time and, moreover, that each album should represent some kind of change for the artist.

The new Baez "Diamonds and Rust" is going to surprise anyone who may previously have admired her integrity but was somewhat bored by the sameness of sound from album to album. The liner notes do not exaggerate when they state that the title track is "the beginning of a new musical direction and awareness for Joan, who understood what this song meant long before anyone else could imagine where it would lead her." An intensely personal examination of a dying relationship, this song's honesty and conversational quality are reminiscent of Joni Mitchell. Mitchell in fact appears on the most remarkable track of the album, a non-lyrical number, "Dida," which includes another influence: the *"cum"* jazz sound of Tom Scott who worked closely with Joni Mitchell on "Court and Spark." Together with "Children and All That Jazz," another track that features Tom Scott and pianist Humpton Hawes, "Dida" represents a stylistic avenue that Baez has never entered before. But her enthusiasm and the excitement she is capable of generating is apparent on both tracks.

Certainly this is the most personal Baez work to date: there isn't a directly political track on the album and somehow, there seems to be much more warmth. Apparently Baez has opened up to innovation and spontaneity and has shared her discoveries with her musicians. Where former arrangements were fairly standard, these are more wide-ranging and expressive in style and instrumentation. Again from the liner notes: "None of the musicians could believe they were at a Joan Baez session. They had freedom and an opportunity to express their own art."

Something exciting is happening to Joan Baez and her art. And anyone who has accused her of being humorless should listen to her superb imitation of Dylan on "Simple Twist of Fate," her first ever "rock and roll" number.

"Judith" is not as significant a departure for Judy Collins. She was among the first of the folk artists to show a change. For some years she has been choosing her material from untraditional sources: whether Broadway musicals or the work of undiscovered song writers. On many of her albums, she has worked closely with arranger-conductor Joshua Rifkin who has lent her style an unmistakable classical touch. Here, she uses two new arrangers: Arif Mardin (who also produced the album) and Jonathan Tunick. Their skill has resulted in what one has come to expect from a Collins album - each song is an individual picture in a gallery, its colors brilliant and chosen with care.

New for Collins are the two rock numbers "Angel Spread Your Wings" and "Salt of the Earth" an old Rolling Stones song and two '30's tunes which, with the wistfulness that is Collins' special gift, seem to be an echo of their era. The rock songs are less successful but they do lead Collins into some vocal over-dubbing and background harmonies which hopefully she'll continue to explore.

The weakness here is again what you come to expect from a Collins' album: that is the occasional lack of vocal accuracy which has yet to interfere with the appreciation of a song and seems to be improving.

Collins plays piano on many of the tracks in her even flowing style. My favorite is "Houses," perhaps the most

shimmering of her many beautiful compositions

You have many houses
One for every season
Mountains in your windows
Violets in your hands ....

Rooms that face the ocean
Moonlight on your bed
Mermaids swift as dolphins
Paint the air with diamonds
You are like a seagull
As you sail.

"Houses"
By Judy Collins
Copyright 1975
The Wildflowers Company

Sylvia Tyson is half of Canada's foremost duo and her career has been tied closely to that of her husband, Ian Tyson. Recently, however, she has begun to perform as a solo and to further assert her individuality through her CBC radio series "Touch the Earth". A solo album was inevitable and has arrived in the form of "Women's World." Before you cringe at the title and suspect the efforts of limited vision, realize that in fact this is a collection of songs of considerable scope. It is one woman's view of the world, since all the songs are her own, but that world is full of well-created characters (Ellen and her ex-husband in "Bluebird Cafe"), personal truths ("I find it's not so hard/ to be without you/ As it is to be with you when you're down") and touches of beauty:

Yesterday's dreams
like birds in the winter.
Have gathered together
And flown to the sun.

"Yesterday's Dreams"
by Sylvia Tyson
© 1975 Newtonville Music Inc.

There are songs for the country and western market, songs that are close to her folk music roots, as well as a bluesy late-night number "Time for a Change" all of which reveal Tyson as both a versatile writer and performer.

She is backed by many of Canada's better-known musicians: Al Cherney, Keith Jollimore, Red Shea, Doug Riley and Ian Tyson, who also produced the album. Unfortunately, compared to the Collins and Baez albums, the string arrangements here, by Milan Kymlicka, are sticky sweet and unimaginative. I want to believe that this is *not* because it is a Canadian product....

"Woman's World" is significant on another level as well. In it, Sylvia Tyson seems to be at the point where many of us find ourselves sooner or later - that situation where we have more or less equal realization of both our strengths and weaknesses and where we are tempted by the variety of roles that are available to us:

My friends all say that I'm lucky
And I guess my friends should know
I'm a woman in a man's world
With a woman's world to go to when
she's low

"Woman's World"
by Sylvia Tyson
© 1968 Newtonville Music Inc.

However we choose to deal with the situation it is heartening to realize that these three women have managed to survive and grow by believing increasingly in the strength of their own personal experience. ***

books

HOUSETRAPS

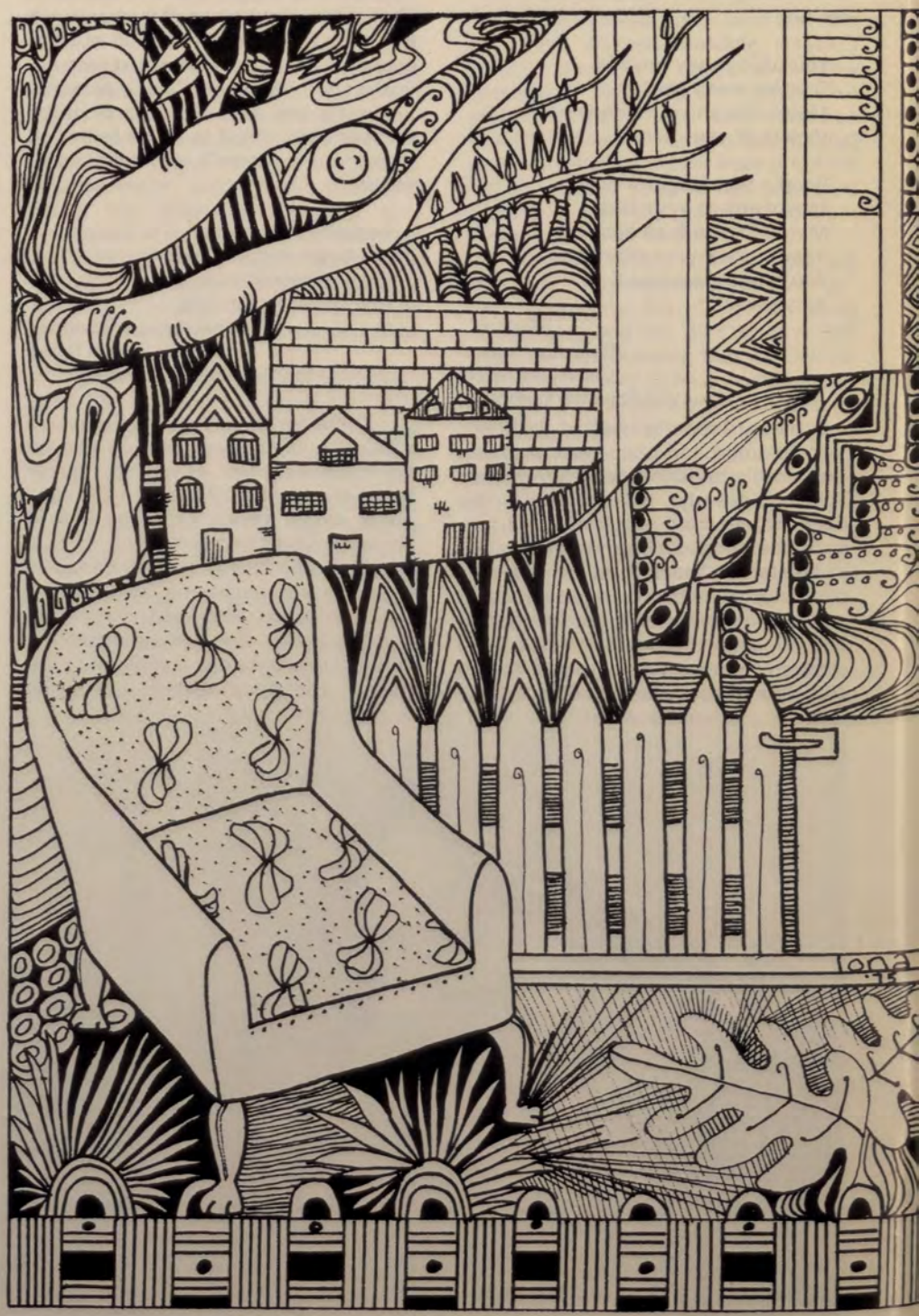
review by Eloah F. Giacomelli
drawing by Iona MacAllister

Theme for Diverse Instruments, by Jane Rule. Talonbooks, Vancouver, 1975, 185 pages, $4.95.

Whether visible or invisible, real or imaginary, there are always the four walls with their doors and windows - locked, unlocked, open, shut, ajar, doors and windows which people at times even smash open in an attempt to find an entrance or an exit. And then there are always the houses - well-padded, protective cushions; stifling, limiting cells or prisons; conventional, lifeless status symbols; much-needed temporary retreats; or portable psychic spaces people might learn to carry along with them. Houses cluttered with furniture and objects that weigh people down but to which they often cling for dear life, because the fear of what might happen to them without the familiar props is even greater than the fear of being buried alive under their weight.

In *Theme for Diverse Instruments*, a recent collection of 13 stories by Canadian writer Jane Rule, characters are very much aware of houses and walls and doors. Five of these stories have the word "house" in their titles; one has the word "gate". But in all of them, with the exception of "A Walk by Himself", houses as symbols are a recurrent theme.

The cover painting, "Dream with House, Bed and Scraper", by Vancouver painter Judith Lodge, suggests the possibility of conjuring up some private, portable space - our psychic space - whenever or wherever needed to keep out or to keep in. Floating in an open, indigo-blue space, Lodge's house with its prismatic colors is unpeopled and uncluttered, the furniture just one large bed neatly covered with a multicolored quilt. Dreams are portable and can cross borders. In the story "Invention for Shelagh", the young woman "who writes on her walls on strips of newsprints" carries her space with her. She takes those strips down, types what she has written and then carries it with her in her 7,000 mile journey: "Shelagh takes down her walls and brings them to England. We sit in our rented house there and listen to her walls. That is how Shelagh makes home with us."



Reading Rule's stories, the reader is reminded of Ivy Compton-Burnett, a writer obsessed with houses, late Victorian houses, stifling, destructive, claustrophobic; peopled with parents, children, relatives, servants, tutors, masters, governesses, all of them feeding on and tyrannizing over each other. Rule's houses, of course, are nothing like that. First, her characters live in mid-twentieth-century North America where horizontal and vertical mobility are a way of life. Transience is the hallmark of the fabric of our society. As the narrator in the title story put it:

> Our tradition is transience, in war or peace. Family seats on this continent turn into old people's homes, private schools, power generators, and superhighways even before our mothers have hysterectomies, our fathers heart attacks, ourselves commissions or children. We move in and out of houses even more rapidly than presidents and first ladies move in and out of the White House.

Second, Rule's characters are not as helplessly trapped as those created by Compton-Burnett, thanks to this very mobility and transience that characterize North American society. Rule's characters can break away from the confining, destructive limits of their physical or imaginary houses, and they often do so. "Nothing keeps you here," says the doctor to the narrator-protagonist in "If There Is No Gate" - a woman undergoing treatment for a mental breakdown. "There are no walls. There is no gate," the doctor states emphatically. The protagonist, however, as she packs her suitcases to leave, wonders about "not what kept me in but what kept me out."

People are always erecting walls, real or imaginary, like the little boy in "My Father's House" who is playing games with his younger sister on the site where their father is building a house. So far only the foundation has been laid, but to the little boy the foundation is "the vast reality of the small, accurate blueprint his father had shown him." The sister, disobeying her brother's instructions, walked through the wall of the dining-room, a wall that exists only in the blueprint. Because of this act of transgression, she is now her brother's prisoner. The boy himself, despite his young age, has already experienced the confinement of walls, to which everybody seems doomed, regardless of age or sex: "Do you ever think, he asked, peering down at her, that you're inside a house?.... I mean, Dickey said, sort of built in and people don't know?"

Men, as every woman knows, always take up much more physical and phychic space than women do. Some women, however, might end up by preferring the smaller space, as is the case, for instance, of the two women in "Middle Children" who live together as lovers. They can easily find their needed psychic space anywhere. As a matter of fact, they choose to live in a big house whose rooms they rent out to male students, even though financially they can well afford the entire house for themselves. Others, like the seemingly independent, self-sufficient, successful woman in "Brother and Sister", seem to find their psychic space only within some large physical space. "A big house for someone who mostly lived alone" her brother muses. A big house which she fills with her presence. The brother feels "the threat of little objects. Not exactly a cluttered room, just unexpected things, like that dinner plate table and those painted rocks."

For the housewife in "A Television Drama," her home in an expensive fashionable neighborhood is a safe, comfortable prison to keep out the real world, a world she only experiences second-hand on her television screen. The wars, the bombs, the violence she sees on the screen during the news hour are "real to her, terribly real." And so she cannot believe in the reality of the scene she has witnessed from her window: a bank robber, chased by policemen, dying in her own garden. To this lonely housewife, "it seemed unlikely that anyone would kill anyone else on this street, where every child had his own bedroom and most men either studies or basement workshops to retreat into". Because men always assume that women want this kind of house, the husband in "House" simply cannot understand why his wife is not interested in having one: "Other women want to buy houses. Other women *want* their kids to have a yard to play in. They like to reupholster their *own* furniture". His wife, however, wants an island.

Stories like "Brother and Sister" and "My Father's House" show Rule at her best as a fine short-story writer. Both focus on the deep, tender relationship between a brother and a sister - adults in one, children in the other. This relationship acts like a mirror that reflects in an oblique way some revealing truth about one of the characters: the climax in each story coincides with the moment of self-revelation. In "Brother and Sister," the brother, who cannot face the fact of his weakness and failure, knows the extent of his own pain only after he sees it reflected in his sister. In "My Father's House," the six-year-old girl, whom the two boys accept as their playmate, realizes that she will have to assert herself if they are going to pay any real attention to her. Even in the picture in her coloring book, she keeps thinking, there is no girl and so, "if she was going to be in the picture, she'd have to draw herself in".

Rule's narrative approach in these two stories is rigorously impersonal and detached. The carefully selected, sharply delineated details are relevant and essential; the prose is uncluttered, lean, elegant; the tone is low-keyed; action is substantially presented by dialogue - everything is tightly-knit in the most economical and effective way. The writer's preference for the detached point of view works very well in her short stories. This detachment can be sustained in the short story, a genre which focuses on one single event. In the novel, however, it poses difficulties. In her novel *Against the Season*, for instance, Rule's unrelenting detachment keeps the reader away from her characters, whom he never really gets to know because the writer does not allow the reader to get any closer.

Not all the stories in this collection have the same tightly-knit, flawless fabric of the two just discussed. "My Country Wrong", for example, which

focuses on two days in the life of a woman homosexual in San Francisco at Christmastime, seems an excerpt from a novel rather than a short story. The same can be said of "Invention for Shelagh," which offers fragments of images of three women involved in a relationship. Throughout this story the reader feels just like a person who has been left out of a conversation.

In the title story Rule departs from her usual objective, detached approach and creates a successful archetypal portrait of an 83 year old domineering, magnetic woman - a six foot tall "Amazonian mother," "an absolute female patriarch." To her children she seems immortal: "....and we swallow her, hook, line, and sinker, to burst full grown again, some sort of transvirgin Athena, out of a redwood tree, which we call virgin timber, for all its phallic surprise". The story approaches a mythopoetic level - a welcome experiment in Canadian fiction, and one hopes the writer will return to this kind of imaginative restatement of experience that she so successfully attempted in "Theme for Diverse Instruments".

Although women and the problems they have to face in a male-oriented society are at the centre of Rule's fiction, she has not fallen into the trap of using fiction as a tool or weapon to promote women's rights and expose the wrongs they have suffered. Rule can write about such facts as growing up female and homosexuality without turning herself into a pamphleteer. Her work displays self-discipline and a serious concern with the art of fiction: this recent collection of stories shows that she has been experimenting with language, form, point of view, content. The narrator in the title story voices some crucial problems of writing:

> We are trying to let all flowers bloom, but, of course, prose is not a flower bed, a space, but time, one thin line of it, an Indian file of syllables which can explore the field only moment by moment. Or fence it? The *we* is the fence, defining our limits. Some of us are climbing it, trying to get out. But point of view is a concentration camp of time, not space, and nobody can go until we are released."

Readers should bear this in mind while reading Rule's stories.

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review by Jennifer Bowerman

Women in China by Katie Curtin. Pathfinder Press 1975 paperback $1.75

Soviet Women by William M. Mandel. Anchor Press, Doubleday, 1975, paperback $3.50

Of all the socialist countries, probably Russia and China have received most publicity in recent years. But while reports from China have tended to become more and more positive, the image of the Soviet Union has declined as the increasing bureaucratization of that society has been more publicized.

It is interesting to note that these two books, *Women in China*, by a feminist socialist, Katie Curtin, and *Soviet Women*, by an American who has lectured extensively on Soviet studies, William Mandel, are a reversal of this trend. Katie Curtin treats the Chinese revolution and the position of women in China quite unsympathetically, whereas Mandel is very sympathetic to the position of women in Russia, and indeed, to Russian society generally.

Both books start with an historical review of the positions of women in Russia and China before the revolutions. Curtin opens with an examination of women in old China. She demonstrates that a woman's role in life was to bear male children, to perpetuate the family name, and to aid in work. Indeed, women's degraded marital status is best summed up by the following proverb: "A woman married is like a pony bought - to be ridden or whipped at the master's pleasure." Some individual women, it is true, were able to make their mark in Chinese history, but on the whole the lot of women was one of subjection and suffering, as demonstrated by the following poem quoted by Curtin:

> How sad it is to be a woman!
> Nothing on earth is held so cheap
> Boys stand leaning at the door
> Like Gods fallen out of heaven
> Their hearts brave the Four Oceans,
> The wind and dust of a thousand miles.
> No-one is glad when a girl is born;
> By her the family sets no store.
>
> Fu Hsuan

Likewise, Mandel begins with an examination of the positionof women in Tzarist Russia. Like the Chinese peasant women, Russian peasant women were brutally oppressed. He examines the beginnings of the feminist movement in Russia; he recounts tales of great bravery by countless individual Russian women. But with the great Marxist revolution, the demands of the early upper-class feminists became subordinate to the general principles and expediencies of the revolution.

Working-class women demanded more than suffrage. They demanded and received employment rights equal to those of men, equal pay for equal work, universal paid late-pregnancy and early-maternity leave. Overnight, the status of women in Russia became by far the world's most advanced.

With the end of the civil war in China in 1949, the status of Chinese women also changed. They were given the right to vote; prostitution and infanticide were prohibited, and virtually eliminated in practice; new marriage laws gave women rights to property, inheritance, and free choice in marriage, divorce and the custody of children. As well, women began to enter the work force in large numbers, and child-care facilities began to be organized on a mass scale.

Perhaps the results of the socialist revolutions can be best seen now, and Mandel's statistics on Russian women are certainly very impressive. He shows that women's contribution to the work force is equal to that of men. One of three judges is a woman, and in medicine, which Mandel says is the highest ranking profession in the public mind, "women make up seven of every ten positions." In engineering, teaching and science, women are on a par with men. Even in politics, women make up a third of the deputies. However, in the topmost ranks of the Communist Party, which is, of course, the real source of power in the Soviet Union, women are almost invisible. Mandel tends to gloss over this point.

Katie Curtin admits the gains that women have made in China, both in the professions and the work force, but notes that discrimination still exists, and that clearly defined sexual roles such as child care and teaching are accepted rather than fought. Although in the factories women receive equal pay for equal work, she says that in the rural communes women receive fewer work points than men because they are judged to be weaker. As well, they have to do housework, which is unpaid.

Even Mandel admits that the gains made by Soviet women come to a full stop at the entrance to every home. Both women and men in the Soviet Union regard child care and domestic duties as the exclusive domain of women. However, Russian women have the right of divorce and abortion, thus to a large degree they have control over their own lives.

The right to divorce is denied to most women in China. Birth control and abortion are widely available, but exist to serve the state as a means of population control, rather than to recognize women's rights to control their own bodies. It is perhaps these points that are central to Curtin's criticisms of the Chinese system. For her, women in China have no freedom to determine their sexuality nor to express it in any but approved forms. She says: "The price women must pay for the right to have sex is marriage, and the acceptance of the role of domestic labourer. Organized social pressure against divorce and legal sanctions against sex outside marriage act to keep women in many marriages that in a less restrictive society would be regarded as oppressive."

For me, Curtin's criticisms reflect the major hang-up of twentieth century North America, our hang-up with sex. I seriously question whether it is realistic or fair to judge one culture according to the sexual mores of another. Almost every visitor to China has remarked on the lack of overt sexuality, on the almost puritanical climate with regard to sex. At the same time, such visitors have also remarked on the apparent fulfillment of people generally, including women. Ruth Sidel, in her book *Women and Child Care in China: A Firsthand Report*, is one such example.

Thus I am unable to accept as serious Curtin's criticism of the lack of sexuality of women in China. To judge one society according to the ideal tenets of another is to deliberately underestimate the achievements that have been made. China has jumped from being a feudal society racked by famine, plague and oppression, to a major industrialized nation where every citizen is assured of warmth, food, shelter and dignity. In such a society, sex surely has its place, albeit as a natural and private function. Our western attitudes, so drastically shaped by commercial exploitation, should never be used as standards for another culture.

China and Russia have both made vast gains in the past seventy years. Women in both these countries are many times more equal than we are in the west. To recognize that full equality has not been achieved is merely to recognize that the process of becoming is perpetual. ***

film

THE PASSENGER

review by N'eema Lakin-Dainow

Director - Michelangelo Antonioni
Producer - Carlo Ponti
Cast - Jack Nicholson, Maria Schneider, Jenny Runacre, Ian Hendry, Stephen Berkoff, Ambroise Bia, Jose Maria Cafarel, Chuck Mulvehill.

The films of Michelangelo Antonioni explore the quintessential themes of the twentieth century; isolation, alienation, and existential crisis. His cinematic world is that of the spiritual and moral void; despair in the midst of the affluence produced by the technological society. The characters in his films are the embodiment of this existential despair. Individuation and redefinition are an impossibility. The Antonioni hero/heroine exists in a perpetual state of futility, the desire for individual reaffirmation and self-direction constrained by an inability to achieve these goals. In the tradition of European directors, each character becomes just one more element in a statement that is above all Antonioni's.

Although Antonioni has been making films in his native Italy since 1943, he did not achieve general commercial success in North America until the release of *Blow Up*, his first English language film, in 1966. *The Passenger* is his third English film (the other was *Zabriski Point*, 1969) and only his fourth feature film in color.

The Passenger's protagonist, David Locke, (Jack Nicholson) is a television journalist, attempting to complete a documentary about an unspecified North African country. Locke is consistently frustrated in his attempts to locate a particular group of guerilla fighters in the Sahara. Unable to make contact with a guide, unschooled in the local language, and unfamiliar with the desolate desert landscape, Locke gives up his pursuit. In total resignation, he abandons any attempt to make contact with the group.

Upon returning to his hotel, he discovers that a man with whom he has become friendly, and who coincidently resembles him, has died in the adjoining room. Locke switches identities, and begins a second journey. The dead man's appointment book leads him to a German airport, where he discovers that his former associate was engaged in arms sales to various African guerilla groups.

In this journey to nowhere, Locke is joined by a nameless young architecture student (Maria Schneider), who befriends him and becomes an accomplice in this escape from his past.

However, this new identity also proves elusive. Many of his attempts to contact the arms purchasers under his new identity take place in landscapes which embody elements of his past life. It is only in a London church, when still partially a captive of the past, and unsure of his new identity, that Locke is able to make his sole contact with the rebel representatives. After the first meeting, Locke is unable to make further contact with the arms purchasers. Pursued by agents of the government the rebels are attempting to overthrow, as well as by his wife (Jenny Runacre) and a former associate (Ian Hendry), Locke once again becomes involved in an odyssey with no purpose.

While *The Passenger* is a direct thematic and structural descendant of all Antonioni's films, it owes particular allegiance to the developmental strain in Antonioni's later work. As Andrew Sarris has stated, in *Blow Up*, Antonioni for the first time acknowledges his own divided sensibility, half mod and half Marxist. In *The Passenger*, as in *Blow Up* and *Zabriski Point*, Antonioni converts this confession into a personal statement concerning the existential crisis in modern technological society.

Thus, David Locke is a traditional Antonioni subject; the victim of what Sarris has termed Antonie nnui. As in *Zabriski Point*, the desolate desert landscape mirrors the lack of interpersonal and spiritual sustenance in the life of David Locke. For Locke, all the traditional guidelines for success, both in interpersonal relationships and career achievement, are outmoded and irrelevant. Yet, he is unable to change his present condition. Thus, he arranges his own death, and assumes a new identity. However, meaning remains elusive and his role undefined.

The women in *The Passenger* also have antecedents in Antonioni's previous films. However, unlike the female protagonists of Antonioni's earlier films such as *L'Avventura* (1959), *La Notte* (1960), *L'Eclisse* (1962) and *Red Desert* (1964), they are comparable to the women in *Blow Up* and *Zabriski Point*, who, as Rosen states in *Popcorn Venus*, have been excised from the center of activity. Antonioni's concentration is focused upon the spiritual and political agonies and aspirations of the male protagonist. Jenny Runacre designated only as "the wife", and Maria Schneider as "the girl" are juxtaposed and observed solely from Locke's, i.e. Antonioni's, point of view.

Locke's flight from the meaningless, ritualistic and complacent English upper middle class includes flight from and rejection of his wife as symbolic of that class and type of existence.

Locke's wife is first glimpsed smoking a cigarette and watching a retrospective of his work on television. She appears bored and impatient with the pieties being spoken on screen. Her independence, intelligence, and willingness to challenge his ideas and assumptions are evident in a flashback sequence where Locke has just finished interviewing an African dictator. The dictator, surrounded by armed guards, asserts that there are no rebel groups operating in his country, nor are there challenges to his rule. Locke refuses to question this assertion; his wife is outraged and angered by his timidity.

When Locke returns to London, prior to making the first contact under his new identity, he stops at his home and views his wife through the doorway peephole. He then quickly turns and leaves.

In another instance, after arriving in a church during a marriage ceremony, he reconsiders his new identity. He then remembers occasions of his own semi-crazed behavior; making a huge bonfire in July, in order to anger, and thereby achieve a response from, his wife. These thoughts appear to reaffirm his decision to abandon his former life.

Antonioni's implication in these sequences is quite clear. Locke's wife is to be viewed as representative of the

oppressive conditions he is attempting to flee. The audience can therefore view Locke's actions towards her as justifiable and understandable.

This is further underscored by her sexual encounter with another man shortly after the announcement of her husband's supposed death. Her role as a modern version of the "shrew" is sealed. Her pursuit of Locke across several continents is presented as merely a selfish desire to determine his whereabouts, thereby satisfying her curiousity and enabling her to plan her life accordingly.

Inadvertently, she becomes an accomplice to Locke's destruction. The trail she leaves while in his pursuit is followed by the North African agents who eventually murder him. Like Vanessa Redgrave in *Blow Up*, her independence and determination engage both Locke and Antonioni's hostility, because she is outside what Rosen terms "the male sphere of control". Her punishment is to be the indirect agent of her husband's spiritual and physical death.

In contrast Maria Schneider, in the role of "the girl", is cast spiritually if not physically in the traditional mold of the Antonioni heroine. She is passive, where Locke's wife is assertive; supportive instead of combative; and youthfully, almost childishly, pretty as opposed to the middle-aged attractiveness of Jenny Runacre. Schneider is obedient, yet distant; a totally undemanding woman.

In the tradition of many European heroines, particularly those in the films of the French New Wave of the 1960s, Schneider plays to perfection the existential heroine. In this role, she is restless and bored, intelligent but inarticulate, passive and sexually compliant. As such a character, her main purpose is to reflect Locke's and therefore, Antonioni's, feelings of futility and despair, while not diverting attention to herself through a well defined and articulated personality. Therefore not even the slightest attempt is made to explore the reasons for her wandering, her abandoned career, or her restlessness and ennui. She says merely that she is a former architecture student turned "bodyguard", i.e. protecting Locke from his wife and former associates.

The contrasting image of the two women is neatly juxtaposed in a sequence in which Locke's wife is frantically telephoning the local police, in an attempt to locate her husband, precisely as Schneider rescues Locke, the urgency underscored by the squeal of car tires.

As stated previously, geographic terrain and architecture are often used in the films of Antonioni to reflect both a society and individuals. In *The Passenger*, Schneider is identified with the organic, chaotic buildings of the eccentric architect, Gaudi, whereas Runacre is originally viewed in the setting of a solid, uncluttered London apartment.

The use of diverse and beautiful architectural and landscape settings, as well as the sensitive implementation of color and striking cinematography, all contribute to the visual beauty of *The Passenger*. The film is a cinematic masterpiece in terms of technique and camera work. Particular mention has been made of Antonioni's striking seven minute single shot sequence which encompasses Locke's death.

However, in terms of thematically exploring the concepts of human alienation and the nature of meaning in modern society, once again a director has opted for a male emphasis and definition, in which women play a secondary role, defined solely in terms of their relationship with a male protagonist.

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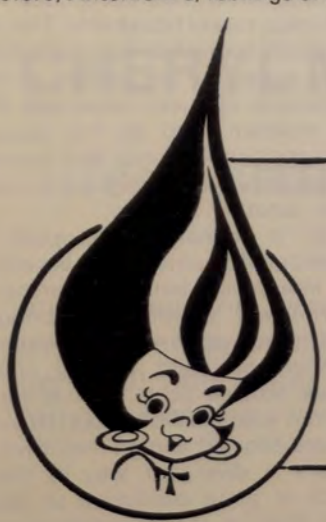

CREATIVE GENIUS

cont. from p. 31

research also extends to artistic creativity.

In 1960 Dr. Phyllis Greenacre published an article, "Woman As Artist". She collected material for this work from her own analytic practice, and has tried to widen her knowledge of the subject by reading biographical material on women artists.

Dr. Greenacre points out various circumstances which, to her mind, prove that both biological and psychological sexual differences come into play with regard to women's difficulties in becoming creative artists. She writes that in artistically talented human beings, there is often the inward struggle between the artist and what she calls the "ordinary citizen", and there may be a question of literal escape from one identity to the other. She believes this conflict may be especially disturbing to artistic creativity in women, because they feel an obligation to bear and raise children.

Dr. Greenacre also points out that when children are three or four years old, they become aware of their sex. If children do not get through this stage in a satisfactorily harmonious way, a blocking may occur. This blocking may result in neurotic problems which, as the child grows up, may be destructive to his or her creativity. Of course this applies to both sexes. But Dr. Greenacre, for reasons which are outside the scope of this article, believes women to be much more vulnerable in this regard.

Finally she mentions the theory that unsolved conflicts of one kind or another may cause the confusion which often marks creative artists of both sexes, in sexual and other fields.

Psychologist Peter Stringer made a study of male and female art students in London in 1967. He concludes that the results do not show that deviation from and intensification of sex roles are conditions of artistic creativity in men and women, but that // it is an indispensable qualification, the proportional shortage of women artists to have asserted themselves may be due to the hypothesis that western women are not able to bear deviation from the sexual role. Stringer means that public opinion puts such pressure on these women that they chose to try to adapt themselves to the pattern. MacKinnon writes that the male creative artist has not identified himself with his masculine role as much as his less creative colleague, but is, on the contrary, able to give vent to his feminine interests and impulses.

Marya Mannes says that every human being is a composite of masculine and feminine elements, and the distribution of them varies from one person to another. While it is assumed that normal women are or should be 100 per cent feminine, the truth is that a woman may be 30 to 40 per cent masculine and still function biologically as a woman. The woman with a large share of masculine components must also function at other levels, whether her introvert or extrovert world, or her sex life, which is not the same as bearing children. Such women may love men, but they do not cease to exist as individuals; they may love doing housework, but do not sacrifice themselves to it; they may bear children, but do not dedicate their lives to them; and they may be what is called feminine without expecting adoration. These women are denied the intense delight and feeling of security in submission, but by being free and standing alone they experience something which has been denied the majority of their sisters, says Mannes. This is, of course, a somewhat popular and general way of expression, for masculine and feminine qualities cannot be converted to figures, but it does give a good picture of the problem.

Mannes adds that women who simply *must* work creatively have to learn to accept themselves and the losses that inevitably follow in the wake of their gains. What in this connection is characteristic of creative women applies also to men who are unable to compete, sensitive men who, without being considered effiminate, have more feminine components than is considered normal. Creative artists of both sexes must learn to accept themselves as they are, not try to be as society would like them to be.

This demand is more difficult for women to live up to than men. It takes independence and respect of one's own opinions not to care about public opinion, and women have always been told that being independent and sure of oneself is unwomanly. Again we find ourselves in a sexual pattern which results from indoctrination.

Biologically, women are made to bear and suckle children. But apart from this, how has it been decided what is feminine and what masculine? That is simply a long story of the struggle of one sex to retain power over the other. It was once believed that in the male sperm was a spiritual and creative element, and the man was thus considered the active part, both spiritually and sexually. The woman was passive, merely the receiver, and consequently only able to bear and raise children. The Swedish author Asta Akenvall believes these sexual theories are the real cause of the prejudice that women are incapable of creative work. This prejudice extends unbroken from Aristotle and his contemporaries who, around 300 B.C., proclaimed that woman is an imperfect man, without the ability to think. Today this prejudice is shown in the false assumption of what is feminine with regard to nature, capacities and talents. These assumptions are created by human beings who, through generations, have been so well indoctrinated that the sex pattern has in many cases become a mental barrier for people of both sexes.

Women must behave as ladies are expected to. Unorthodox behaviour in a girl is judged more harshly than in a boy. According to her nature she is supposed to be submissive, self-effacing, patient, serving, passive, humble and emotional - but of course she wants to express this only to her family, or possibly as a nurse. She has no inclination to intellectual work, nor has she ambition, but neither does she have self-consciousness, initiative or independence.

These are merely some of the "ideals" psychologists find women trying to live up to. They are the basis of Dr. Greenacre's conflict between the artist and the "ordinary citizen". Of course there are only a few women who have had the courage and personality to show they were not "true" women - it was easier to suppress one's inclinations, and to lie to oneself and others.

What, then, is creativity? Bach notes that a definition has not been agreed upon, and she herself defines it as the ability of an individual to advance new and original products and ideas. Guilford says that ease, flexibility and originality are some characteristics of creative persons, and that to creative work belong recognition, production and valuation. It appears then that creativity does not go with the female sex role, which has been fitted to the traditional role of housewife. The time a housewife has at her disposal is cut into many pieces by the chores of which housework consists, especially if she has children, and so her power of concentration weakens. But peace and concentration are necessary to creative work - another obstacle.

It is generally accepted that behaviour of a human being is a result of the interaction between person and environment, and that the upbringing a child receives often determines whether the child will be creative. Recent studies seem to indicate that children who are treated as individuals and are allowed to plan their own lives acquire a divergent way of thinking which is more conducive to creative work than is the convergent way of thinking. The latter is indoctrinated in children who are protected, supervised,

and brought up to do what is normal. Patterns of upbringing are governed by cultural norms, and as the girls' pattern has always had stricter rules, it is conceivable that women have been obstructed in this way too.

As Ellen Bach points out, there is a need for long-term investigations of creativity. In the studies already made, the importance of environmental cultural factors in creative behaviour has not been considered to a satisfactory degree. However, it is not possible to know anything about the abilities of human beings until they have had the opportunity to use them for a long time, and these opportunities must be more than theoretical. Psychological, social and financial opportunities must exist so that peace and concentration to work may develop the abilities and make them flourish. Then we may be lucky enough to see the work of female geniuses, for geniuses are made, not born.

If all these opportunities are not present, only the women who have the courage not to care about sexual patterns and other mental obstacles, and who of course have the necessary strength, will assert themselves. In all others the talent will die. Actually, it is an admirable and fantastic thing that there have been so many creative women artists. An uncanny feeling remains that still more have been buried with gifts that never came to fruition. Maybe they were never even discovered to be there.

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WOMEN AGAINST WOMEN
cont. from p. 6

would benefit both the working poor and those not able to work, both the single parent and the married couple; we would be nearer to the elimination of poverty than at any time in Canada's history.

Many of Canada's poor are women and their children, and we will only achieve these changes if all women, both homemakers and career women, stop carping at each other's lifestyles and focus on the problem we all share. Once united, we might improve the status of homemaking in Canada, and benefit all Canadian women and their children. ***

FALL SESSION EXTENSION COURSES

WRITING A STORYBOOK FOR YOUR CHILD

This workshop course opens with the presentation and discussion of writing and illustrating techniques used in the creation of storybooks for children.
Date: Eight Thursdays commencing September 25, 1975, 7:15-8:45 p.m.
Fee: $18.00

HISTORY OF PIONEER WOMEN: THEIR LIVES AND WORK

This course will acquaint the participant with the history of the pioneer woman of the prairie provinces during the period 1880 to 1930. The daily struggles of both rural and urban women will be examined.
Date: Eight Wednesdays commencing October 8, 1975, 1:30-3:30 p.m.
Fee: $20.00

THE SELF IMAGE OF WOMEN

This course will provide an opportunity for participants to gain an understanding of the development of women's self-image. Topics include sex roles, female sexuality, mental health, group identity, attitudes toward marriage and child-rearing, toward work and achievement.
Date: Ten Fridays commencing October 3, 1975, 9:30-11:30 a.m.
Fee: $25.00

For more information contact the Extension Department, Corbett Hall, University of Alberta - Telephone 432-3116.

COMMENTARY

the name game

by Caryl Brandt

The way people are named implies something about the relationships that exist in society. In fact, one of the techniques used by cultural anthropologists to discover the structure of power in a society is looking at how people and things are named, and who has the power to do the naming.

Children choose to use either their father's name or their mother's in Ghana, and freely switch from one to the other. In many Latin American countries, surnames include a lengthy record of family history. Traditionally, married women in Canada take their husband's name.

But a woman who establishes herself in her own name may find it impractical and even detrimental to her career development to change her name upon marriage.

One woman who hadn't hesitated to keep her own name explained: "That's who I am - the name I was born with. I just can't imagine changing now that I'm just beginning to know and be myself." Another woman who kept her own name explained that by mutual agreement, she wouldn't use her husband's name, and he wouldn't use hers.

Whether choosing to lose identity or not, many women lose touch with former friends after marriage because they can no longer be found by their own names. Could this tendency in our society towards "Mrs. John Smith" be harmful psychologically - not to women who are confident, but precisely to women who are not confident about their own identity and seize upon this substitute?

For some there are valid reasons for changing. One woman who chose to change her name explained: "I had decided that I wanted to change my name because my father is a very prominent practitioner. I didn't want to be identified with him when I started to practise law, so I took my husband's name - to lose identity rather than gain a new identity."

Another woman who chose to take her husband's name argues that her identity is a richer, more complicated reality than just what her name is. And for her, identity is caught up in her first names rather than "her father's surname."

What *is* important is knowing the options and consciously making a choice.

A fair amount of research suggests that Canadian law does not require that a woman change her name upon marriage: that is, no law states that she must. To keep her "maiden name", her own name, is lawful; all a woman has to do is continue to use her own name consistently, even after marriage.

Some provinces still insist that once a woman uses her husband's name for any purpose, from opening a bank account to changing her driver's licence, she has legally adopted his name. Then she is required to go through a formal change of name to return to her own name. This is a matter of money, about twenty-five dollars for the change of name certificate, plus fifteen dollars for publication of the change. And in some provinces it is also a matter of getting the spouse's consent - even if the husband has long since left the scene, as long as a woman remains married, she is not allowed to change back without his consent.

Provincial laws vary, and many are being amended to bring the matter of names into better perspective. A phone call to the local legal aid society or women's centre can probably provide current information about the situation in a province.

But April Katz, a law practitioner in Manitoba, points out: "There is no reason that you cannot commence to use your maiden name, or your single name, or your prior name, for any purposes. There is nothing illegal about having an alias. Everybody thinks of an alias as something terrible and wrong, but there is nothing the matter with an alias unless you use this name for fraudulent purposes."

Intent to defraud is only one of the legal concerns; relationships in society are also significant. Our highly organized and structured systems require some sort of indication that a couple is a social unit. Why? Because application of some laws varies, depending upon whether one is married or not. For example, under some dower acts, a spouse of a married person has specific rights with respect to the homestead and personal property, but an unmarried person or common-law spouse does not. So if the surname is not the same, some other indication of the marriage relationship is needed.

Keeping, using or returning to your own name is relatively simple legally; but socially, breaking tradition may be difficult.

A lack of knowledge about women's rights as well as a reluctance on the part of companies to change their usual way of dealing with women can make business transactions frustrating. A request for a service (for example, a library card,) in a married woman's former name, is suspect. Determination may be necessary to obtain credit cards or register a land title in a woman's own name.

Some documents can make such dealings easier. Pocket sized copies of both your birth certificate and marriage certificate, both available from the vital statistics bureau in your province, may prove useful. A commissioner of oaths, for little or no cost, can draw up an affidavit or statutory declaration stating that you are married, to whom and when, that you are keeping your own name, and that you are responsible for your own business transactions. Such a document may be all that is needed to reassure reluctant businesses and government staff of both your rights and your intentions. Reassuring family and friends may be more difficult.

Although many people are no longer critical of common-law relationships, some people, particularly parents, may be upset that the surnames leave doubt in the community about your marital status.

Further social implications arise when children are born. Provincial laws vary, and some seem ambiguous, but at present most insist that the child take the father's surname if the couple is legally married. In fact, when Alberta recently amended its laws to allow registration of a hyphenated name at birth, it specifically disallowed a child's taking the mother's surname, "in the interest of decency and public policy." Provincial laws attempt to protect children from a "stigma of illegitimacy" because the matter doesn't end with the name on the birth certificate. If a child is registered at school under a name that is different from that of the father, social pressures from the school, community or classmates can still be unpleasant.

People in Canada are experimenting: some have tried a hyphenated surname; some have tried picking an entirely new name; and a growing number of Canadian women are choosing to keep the name with which they were christened.

As Canadians become more aware that a married woman can legally keep her own name, the public will no longer automatically assume that a married couple will have only one name - his.

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was more eager than ever to appease the elder Mrs. Scott and, because of an accompanying confidence, more capable of doing so. They laughed together. She was even more solicitous of her husband's well being than she had been previously. She did not croon to her baby now, she carolled to him with joy.

Wilford watched all this warily. And Melicent saw her husband watching her. As he demonstrated no other change, she was pleased by this attention and wanted Howie to receive some of it too. She displayed the baby before his father more than was necessary. She dandled him, sang to him and lingered over the nursing. Although her breasts were useless here, she unbuttoned a few of her bodice buttons and felt almost voluptuous. She was delighted by the picture that she and the baby must make.

One evening when Melicent had prolonged the 10:00 o'clock feeding even more than had become her custom ..... conscious of her breasts ..... conscious of her husband's eyes ..... she suddenly hugged the baby to her and turned to Wilford. He was frowning.

"You spend a lot of time with the baby, don't you." To her surprise, his voice was thick.

"You'll never be sorry because we move, Wilford. I promise. I'll make it up to you. We'll be happy."

"As long as you get your own way, eh."

"But you said ....."

"We'll see whose will breaks first." But again suddenly he was smiling. His being seemed flooded with joy. Ignoring what he had said, Melicent smiled gaily in response. She laid Howie carefully in his cradle and tucked the covers around him, but she felt that no matter how much Wilford wanted her, she could not leave Howie for the night without changing his diaper. Finally, gladly, she went to Wilford. 'But it's not a question of will,' she thought to herself.

It was the next day Wilford placed his enlistment papers before Melicent. Although it was not her will, something did break within her then, and it did not happen all at once. At first she merely expostulated that, of course, when she had asked for a change, she did not mean he should place himself in jeopardy. No, this was not what she meant at all. Not at all. Guilt, fear for him, confusion began to overwhelm her. She felt herself becoming hysterical. His action had been too quick and with no forewarning. Then she saw his smile. It had an aura of warmth, of familiarity about it. It was the same smile of the night before, and of the river. She responded to it without question. But there was no embrace. It seemed minutes to her, while the smile stayed fixed, before she recognized it for what it was. Wilford's smile was of triumph. The time was August, 1938.

How long had it been since she had seen Wilford with this particular smile? Melicent swirled the few drops of lemonade in the glass and then poured them out. Well, at least not since they had had to be so careful with money again. 'I'll enjoy myself anyway,' she thought as she picked up her book and returned to the house. Her mince had long since become mechanical, now it was exaggerated. Her feet felt stiff. Momentarily, she was distressed. Was she going to feel really dizzy again? But the vertigo passed.

The front bell clanged. It reverberated throughout the house like a warning. But it did not produce its usual shock in Melicent. She had wanted a softer tone, but had lost to Wilford's desire to be prepared in any section of the house or yard for the intrusion of visitors. When the bell rang, Melicent was emerging from the washroom, where she had taken a couple of illicit puffs of a cigarette. She felt tired. She was too weary even to protest that Howie had used the front bell again, after she had told him repeatedly that he should feel free to let himself in at the rear door. But it was not as if she did not know why he stood at the front, like a caller, waiting to learn whether or not he would be welcome. Melicent was surprised that this knowledge did not cause the old familiar heartache which she had come to regard as a condition of life. She greeted Howie as she had greeted Wilford. "You'll be so glad to learn that Daddy has come home. Now all of us can be together. We'll learn about Daddy's summer and have a cosy party, just the three of us. But please Howie ..... come into the kitchen while I prepare just a few things. It won't be an elaborate meal, oh no, just a snack. I'm sure Daddy will be in soon. He's in his greenhouse checking over his precious plants."

"Have you told him I was coming, Mother?" Howie asked staunchly.

"Why, yes, of course, he's a bit tired, poor dear, from his long trip and will want to go to bed early ..... but he'll be really pleased to see you."

"I'll bet," Howie replied sulkily. He was a slight man, a bachelor, who always seemed to have an element of appeal in his eyes.

"Now Howie, don't you start that, not yet. You have no reason."

"Why didn't you telephone, Mother? I shouldn't be here his first night home." Howie was anxious now. They both knew Wilford had heard the bell.

And so they waited.

Melicent pattered from kitchen table to stove. She chatted about Howie's job prospects. He had changed work so often in the past few years that she would not bring a sense of urgency into her voice.

Howie was not to be distracted. His anxiety seemed to rise with every passing second. He appeared coiled, ready to jump to his feet with a greeting when his father appeared. I wish he'd come in, Melicent thought. She fluttered more rapidly with her preparations. And then suddenly she looked over at Howie and felt vaguely bewildered. Why was he so tense, she asked herself. He was a grown man now, almost forty. Why should he be waiting with trepidation for an old man who had helped him so little? Suddenly she was weary of them both. Let Wilford come if he wanted to, or not at all. She thought with surprise, 'I do not care.'

Melicent sat down. "Let's eat, Howie," she said. "The food is ready."

"But we can't. Father."

"Yes we can." She passed the bread to Howie.

Wilford, the stench of compost still on his hands, looked confused when he entered and found them half finished with their meal. He blustered, but Melicent merely said, with no apology and no defiance either, "Wilford, the food is getting cold. You should wash up and come and eat." She expected him to create a scene, at least to scream at them. 'Let him,' she thought, 'it will be just noise.' She continued to eat. Wilford emitted a few disconnected grunts and then did as he was told. He looked hungry and tired.

During the remainder of the meal Howie responded, first to this one and then to the other; turning, writhing, banging into stone, whipping down his own canyon toward the sea. As usual, Wilford did not notice his son's gyrations. Melicent just barely was aware. 'Mother birds push their fledglings from the nest,' she repeated to herself. To her disgust, Wilford had been telling her this for years. But now, she too wanted it. 'What a relief,' she thought, 'what peace.' Soon, she knew, Wilford would rise abruptly ..... maybe right in the middle of something Howie was saying ..... and take himself off to bed. She did not care. Howie would be hurt and ashamed. Well, he would be obliged to care for himself now. He, also, would leave soon. Then, she could have another cigarette ..... a leisurely smoke by herself.

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people in this issue

LESLIE BELLA

Leslie Bella grew up in Birmingham, England, and has lived in Canada for ten years. She received a B.A. in Architectural Studies while in Newcastle, and has a graduate degree in Social Work from the University of British Columbia. She is president of URGE (Urban Reform Group of Edmonton). This fall she will begin teaching Recreation and Leisure at the University of Alberta.

N'EEMA LAKIN-DAINOW

N'eema Lakin-Dainow is a graduate student in Communications Studies at Simon Fraser University. She is specializing in the area of film, and is currently writing a master's thesis on the role of women in the films of D.W. Griffith. She has organized several film series concerning the role of women in film, and has led seminars on this subject. She is a filmmaker herself, and had an animated film selected for showing in the 1974 Canadian Student Film Festival.

VIVIAN FRANKEL

Vivian Frankel is an Ottawa freelance photographer. Recently she took a series of photographs that appeared in the Information Canada publication "Federal Services for Women." She also prepared a travelling slide show for International Women's Year. She is working on a book entitled *Status 75* for the International Women's Year Secretariat.

GEORGINA WYMAN

Georgina Wyman lives in Ottawa where she works as a researcher. She has a wide variety of interests pertaining to the status of women.

TERRI TERNI

Terri Terni received her B.A. in psychology from Chestnut Hill College in Pennsylvania. She is continuing her studies in personality and perception through the medium of photography. She has been living in Edmonton for the past three years.

DONNA RAE

Donna Rae is currently teaching in Edmonton. She has written poetry but is presently more interested in the short story form.

GRETHE HOLMEN

Grethe Holmen was a journalist in Denmark until 1969. She wrote a biography on Clara Schumann which was published in 1970. Since then she has done extensive research on the subject of women painters, composers and writers in the 16th and 17th centuries. She has a long-standing interest in matters concerning women, and has been an active member of several Danish organizations that deal with women's issues. She was also a member of the Danish Consumer's Council and participated in a Committee formed to make recommendations on the censorship of films. She visits Canada frequently.

CARYL BRANDT

Caryl Brandt graduated in TV arts from Northern Alberta Institute of Technology in 1969. She worked as a public relations officer for the federal government, specializing in audio-visual services, and subsequently spent three years in television production with CBC Winnipeg. She is now a freelance film director and radio broadcaster.

ELOAH F. GIACOMELLI

Eloah F. Giacomelli was born and raised in Brazil. She has taught in Brazil at both the high school and university levels. In 1969 she immigrated to Canada, and spent her first year teaching at the Université de Moncton, New Brunswick. She lived for a year in Ontario before moving to Vancouver, B.C., where she now teaches at one of the community colleges. Her translations from the Portuguese have appeared in many North American periodicals, among them *Mundus Artium, Prism International, The Malahat Review, The Antigonish Review, Poet Lore* and *Branching Out*. She is now a Canadian citizen.

KATE O'NEIL

Kate O'Neil lives in London, Ontario where she and her husband operate a funeral home. She writes a regular column for "Canadian Funeral Director" and edits the area monthly Canadian Author's Association newsletter, CRAMP. Her poetry has been published in various Canadian newspapers and little magazines. She also paints and does cartoons.

KAREN WAKAL

Karen Wakal has lived in Calgary most of her life and has had formal art training at the Alberta College of Art. She is presently studying independently and working on a freelance basis.

JOYCE MCCART

Joyce McCart grew up in Vancouver where she worked in offices for eight years before enrolling in university in 1962. She graduated with a degree in Philosophy from Simon Fraser University and attended graduate school at the University of Calgary. She then joined her husband in forming a biological consulting firm. She has been general manager of the company for the past two-and-a-half years. She and her family raise sheep and hay on a quarter section just outside Crossfield, Alberta.

JENNIFER BOWERMAN

Jennifer Bowerman is an education officer with the Alberta Human Rights Commission. She has a B.Sc. from the University of London and an M.A. in sociology from the University of Saskatchewan. She is interested in women and socialism.

SUSAN POTEET

Susan Poteet teaches women's studies at Dawson College in Montreal. She is also a freelance writer, specializing in art and literary criticism. This year she organized a series of poetry readings at Powerhouse Gallery.

BEVERLEY ROSS

Beverley Ross is a songwriter and musician who lives in Edmonton. She recently completed her B.A. in music and English literature at the University of Alberta.

LAST ISSUE

Erica Lazi, whose photograph of Kem Murch and Erna Van Daele appeared in the last issue, is manager of Beta Photos Company Ltd. in London, Ontario. She immigrated to Canada from Hungary in 1956, and has since studied fine arts in Canada and the United States.

Other photographs in the article "Straightjackets" were by Joris Van Daele.

Ann Dea has recently been appointed to the Federal Advisory Council on the Status of Women. The ACSW is composed of thirty people from across Canada who have been appointed to advise the federal government on issues which interest and concern women, and to recommend actions which it considers necessary to improve the position of women in society.

Its specific terms of reference include:

undertaking research on matters relevant to the status of women and also suggesting research topics that can be carried out by business, universities and voluntary associations;

establishing programs to correct attitudes and prejudices that adversely affect women;

consulting with women's bureaus, and provincial and voluntary organizations concerned with the status of women;

proposing legislation, policies and practices that will improve the status of women in Canada.

Ann Dea would like to hear from Alberta women about their concerns. She can be reached at 10316-133 Street in Edmonton (Phone 403-452-1245).

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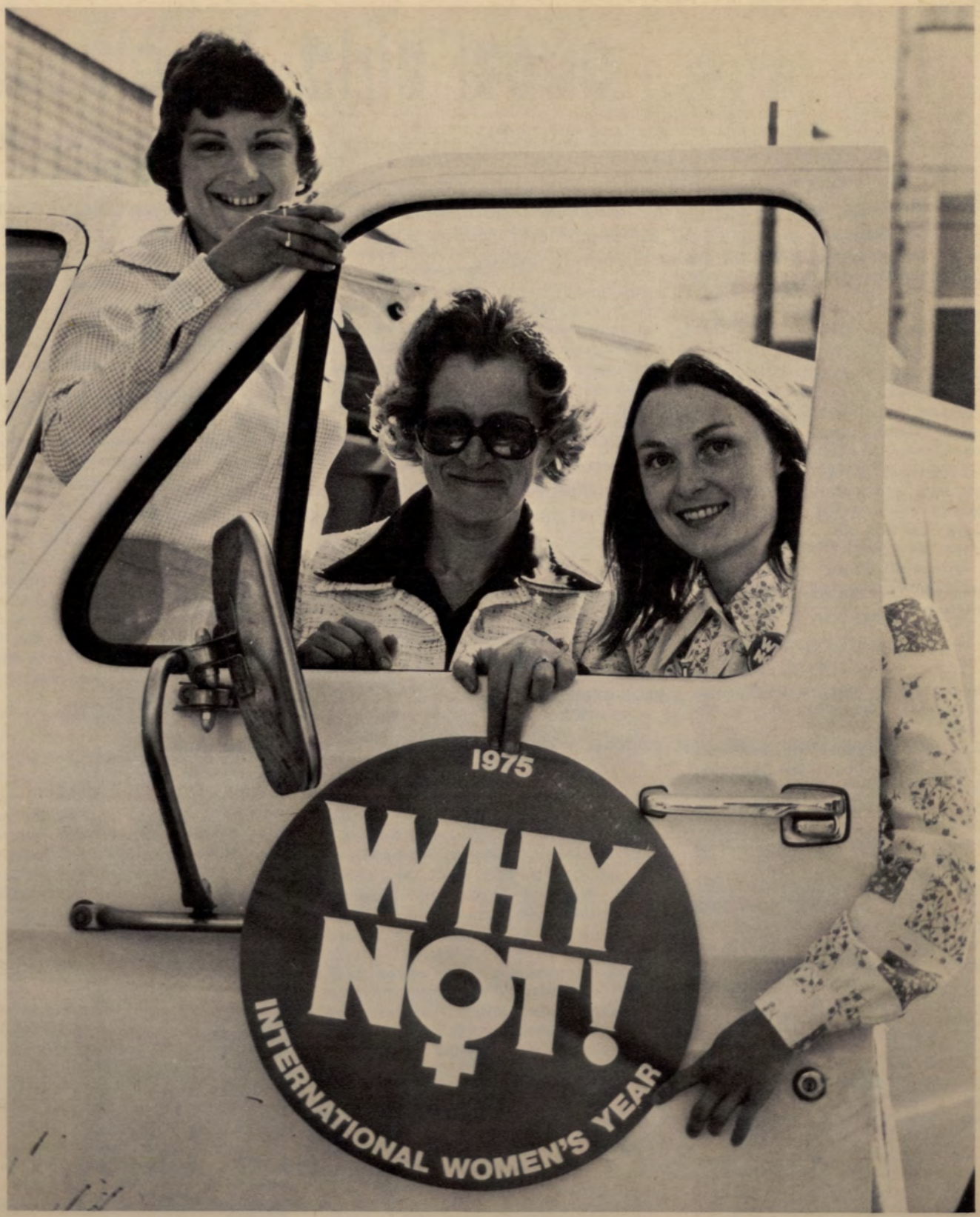

Members of the IWY Secretariat staff in Alberta are available for slide and film presentations, seminars, lectures and workshops. Coordinator Inger-Lis Gordon (centre) is available for engagements until the end of October. Field officers Shelagh Bannister and Patricia Marcinek have been travelling throughout Alberta in a van since mid-May. They will continue to visit communities in the province until the 30th of September. For information about presentations or for free literature, write to 4019 Vance Place, N.W., Calgary, Alberta. Phone 286-5011

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