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ELLE DIT 1994



Welcome to *Elle Dit* for 1994. We want you to enjoy it, be challenged by it and fully also learn from it. We have such a fabulous variety of articles this year that there's sure to be something you'll love.



The variety means that there are articles that contradict each other, articles that say totally different things and articles that not all of us on the collective agree with. We believe that this diversity of voices is of fundamental importance to feminism. And that's what *Elle Dit* is about: giving a voice to as many wimmin as possible. So we have vox pops where we ask wimmin who may not have been involved with *Elle Dit* to voice their feelings, as well as including a quote from a womyn on every page. If you missed out on contributing this year, next year's *Elle Dit* awaits. Thanks to all those who did contribute this year: it's an incredibly big issue which is fantastic. We're chuffed. Hope you will be too.



ELLE DIT COLLECTIVE: Nikki Anderson, Sabina Nowak, Leslie Wilson, Sandy Pitcher, Kym Taylor, Etain Daniels, Natsha Yacoub, Laura Grenfell, Catherine Howell, Christina Soong, Libby King, Kerina West, Fiona de Witt, Tonia Nielsen, Julia Davey, Lorien Kaye.

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COVER: Michele Holden

TYPING: Sharon Middleton and most of the collective.

THANK YOU: Jesse Reynolds for computer help, David Mills for support and just being there, Catherine Follett for typing, proofing and helping beyond the call of duty, Monica Carroll for the same, Katrina Picozzi for the angry files, and especially to **Totally Wimmin Powered Student Radio** for speeding the long Sunday hours along, particularly Jo Daniell who made it all happen.

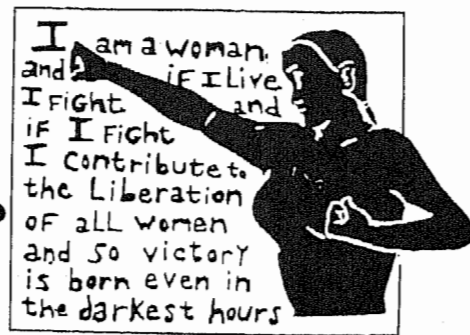
elle
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Feminism is an entire world view,
not just a laundry list of wimmin's issues.

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People call me a feminist when I express
sentiments that differentiate me from a doormat

elle
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the third wave?

elle
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Revolution is the festival of the oppressed

5

If you don't know yet

Feminism is the advocacy of the claims and rights of women, or so says the concise version of the O.E.D. - who am I to argue with that? It's rather an interesting concept and it is also something I have found myself thinking about increasingly in recent times. I have to confess that before my time at university (ie the beginning of this year) I had a fairly hazy understanding as to what feminism actually was and was probably quite sceptical about its purpose anyway - I certainly wouldn't have classified myself as a feminist. After all, historically women may have been discriminated against but they're not now ... are they? (Boy, was I ever naive) Well, surprisingly enough - yes! In many ways society still systematically discriminates against women and defines what women should be.

At this point I think I should say that this article is not intended for all of you people out there who already understand what I'm trying to say. I would, however, like to say that if you don't really know what feminism is about, or think that it is all a load of rubbish then read on - after all I spent a whole day of my precious holidays writing this article just for you!

Okay, so the general feminist idea is that we live in a society in which gender has been socially constructed into a hierarchical form which systematically institutionalises inequality between the sexes. Thus, as men have established this dominant position within society, women have traditionally been defined by what a man is (or by what a man is not) and by how men have perceived that women should be.

Consequently, it follows that as gender is socially constructed, products of our consciousness such as literature, art, history and language (just to name a few) are also socially constructed and that they come to have associations that

seem only natural. These "natural" associations then present men and the male way of thinking as being central, and women or the female way of viewing the world as being secondary. In short, the voice of women has been silenced by the dominance of male discourse within society. Therefore, our culture itself is a product of social construction based around notions of male-centredness from which women are presented as being a deviation from the norm.

This may all sound rather abstract, but believe me, we all experience this everyday of our lives just by the way that people talk, what people read and what is shown in the media - or conversely, what is not said, not read and what is not shown in the media - and this is just the tip of the iceberg! Such a male-dominated culture cannot help but define and limit the way we view the world in which we live. Thus, as our knowledge of the world is constrained in this way it becomes difficult to struggle against culture and ourselves in order to challenge modes of thinking which are dominant in society.

On top of this there are many more explicit examples which demonstrate women's oppression in a patriarchal society. We need to ask ourselves the question of why it is that on average women still receive a lower income than men, why women are still prevented, to a large extent, from maintaining powerful positions within society, why it is that a man's economic situation improves upon marriage while a woman's declines - in short, why it is that a woman is disadvantaged simply because she is a woman.

It is also helpful to consider feminism in the plural rather than in the singular, as it is apparent that many different forms of feminism exist as opposed to one specific or disinterested feminism.

For example, there are radical feminist, liberal feminists, Marxist feminists, socialist feminists and so on, all of whom have their own carefully preserved sense of identity. However, it is fairly safe to assume (although I don't want to oversimplify the issues here) that at the very least a feminist is someone who recognises that women suffer discrimination because of their sex, they have particular needs which remain unsatisfied, and that the satisfaction of these needs requires some sort of change in our social, economic and political order.

By all of this I do not mean to imply that all women are oppressed or that all men are oppressors - that would be ridiculous - but simply that women as a group have traditionally been placed in a position of relative powerlessness in their associations with men. So remember, there's more to the idea of feminism than most people probably realise - it's about being aware of the way that things are in the world, and trying to change them for the better. So be aware, because it really does matter!

Emma Wildman



Feminism is the most revolutionary idea there has ever been.

elle dit

Why Weight?

at adelaide uni

Body Image and Eating Disorders Awareness Week
24 - 30 October 1994

Monday 24

The video **Recovery** screened for those interested.

1.10pm
Cannon Poole Room
Adelaide University
Cost: coin donation-
NOWSA fund

Tuesday 25

Lea Rebane will be speaking on the way in which food is a symptom of many eating disorders rather than a cause. Questions and discussion to follow.

1pm, Little Theatre,
Adelaide Uni, Free

Wednesday 26

Screening of **Still Killing Us Softly**
1.10 pm
Irene Watson Room,
Adelaide Uni
Coin donation- NOWSA

Thursday 27

Why Weight? Awareness Week- Food and information. Reclaim the Night also featured.

1-2pm
Barr Smith Lawns,
Adelaide Uni.
Food available for purchase.

Friday 28

Screening of the **Famine Within**
1.10 pm
Margaret Murray Room,
Adelaide Uni
Coin donation- NOWSA fund

Women must come off the pedestal.
Men put us there to get us out of the way.

elle dit



Bisexual Feminism

Patriarchy is categories, hierarchies, dichotomies, labels. If asked to define dark, you would probably say, 'It's when there isn't any light' - or something like that. In doing so, you have immediately established a dichotomy (light/dark).

Our whole structure of language, thinking process and way of relating to the world is tied up in rigid categories of opposites - we see black/white but no shades of grey.

One of the most harmful and unreal of these categories is masculine/feminine, and the institutionalised sex roles that go along with that. Our images of femininity (graceful, nurturing, submissive) and masculinity (hulking, independent, dominant) are opposed, there is no sense of degrees of intensity, or middle ground. We are uncomfortable with evidence of middle ground - people who are born hermaphrodites, or even slightly undetermined almost always get this aspect 'surgically corrected' by puberty - society demands to be rid of anything confusing, challenging.

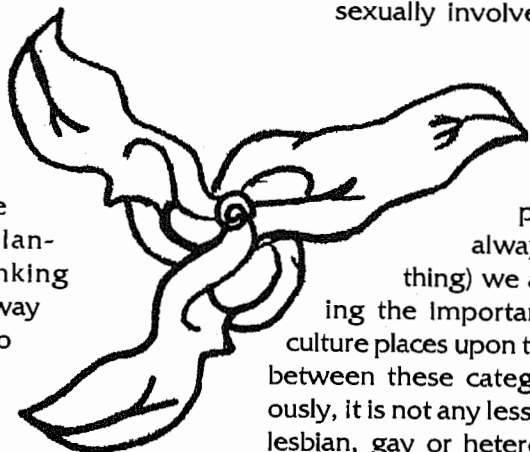
As a bisexual womyn, I am often in a unique position to view the polarised genders: if I had a dollar for every time someone told me that you can't love men and wimmin, that I was either one way or the

other, I would be one rich bisexual! Bisexuality is radical and it is feminism in action - we are acting out proof of the ridiculousness of the gender gap, by choosing to be sexually involved with men and wimmin, and masculine and feminine people (not always the same thing) we are challenging the importance that our culture places upon the difference between these categories. Obviously, it is not any less radical to be lesbian, gay or heterosexual, just different.

Accepting bisexuality (whether or not you are a self-identifying and/or practicing bisexual) means acknowledging that the femininity/masculinity barriers aren't realistic, and don't have to rule people's decision-making about who they can be and who they can fuck.

Serena Mawullsa

The Adelaide Bisexual Collective is a groovy collective of proud bisexuals and our wonderful friends. We put on great social dinners, and produce a darn fine newsletter. If this interests you, call Sabina on 352 5715 or send an SSAE to PO Box 3391, Rundle Mall, 5000.



red shorts/city cycling

a rare blue sky
i don red shorts
thighs bless the sun
caress the air
my hair flies back
feet press pedals
round down round down
smooth arc limbs turn
around round metal
and the metal cars pass
slow fast fast slow
come go window down
a round face yells
"Hey babe i want
that cute arse
wanna score? show me
more"
engine roars ... gone
retort not sought
slow fast fast slow
wolf-whistle horn-beep
i keep head down
frown ... cars pass
cars pass fast pace
rat-race another face
yells "hey wanna ride?
ride my cock it's hot"
vroom ... zoom past
fast guys safe in
speed and tin frame
"hey bitch don't complain
you ask for it if
you wear a pair
of red shorts cycling

Anna Brooks

Ecofeminism

Ecofeminism sees connectedness between the oppression of wimmin, the rape of the earth, and our culture's dishonouring of indigenous peoples and tribal ways of thought. To explain this let's look at the creation myth from Genesis.

The snake, in many cultures around the world, symbolises sex energy, and is sacred to the Goddess, as it crawls across the earth, the physical embodiment of the Goddess. The image of the snake, in a circle, swallowing its own tail has universally symbolized wholeness, light AND dark, male AND female, culture AND nature, flesh AND spirit. This wholeness is healing, as in this culture we are forced to choose between male and female, culture and nature, etc. and these half lives are unhealthy.

When the snake was thrown out of Eden, the message was that

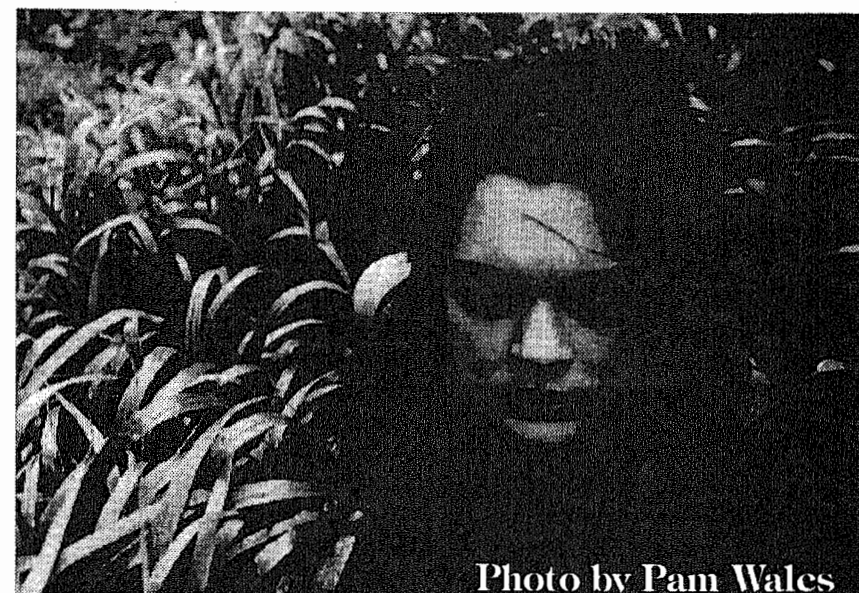


Photo by Pam Wales

Judaism/Christianity (and almost all other established religions) would not recognise and honour the sacredness of the earth, the sacredness of sexuality, and the female aspect of the divine (the Goddess).

The angel that was left to guard Eden is significant. Angels, according to folklore, have no genitals, are

white, pure, often have no physical substance, and have wings to fly far up, away from the Earth. They are spirit without flesh, light without dark, they have no sexuality and no connectedness to the earth.

Our culture sees womyness as being bound to the earth, as being sexual and animalistic, rather than logical or spiritual. We see these qualities as 'base', dirty in this sex-negative society. Eve, the womyn, was the one who 'gave in' to her baser nature, accepting the fruit from the snake. We have a scornful opinion of 'savages': indigenous cultures that have an earth based spirituality, that recognise snake-energy, and may still worship the Goddess.

Ecofeminism reclaims and honours that which Patriarchy scorns, seeing ourselves as part of the earth, and recognising and respecting her cycles, honouring and using our sex-energy - to make us more creative, whole beings, and getting back in touch with the feminine side of God.

Serena Mawullsa



The best part of one's life is her friendships

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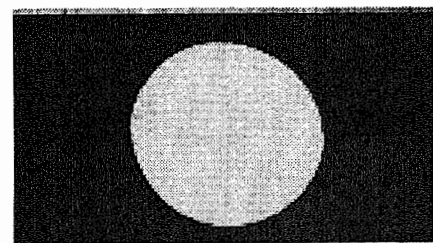
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Wimmin are the poetry of the world



Winners

On the October long weekend, a group of girls went to the annual Aboriginal and Islander Netball and Football Sports Carnival. This year the



carnival was held in Port Lincoln where 16 netball teams and 8 football teams competed. These teams came from Aboriginal communities all around the state and it was the first time that the championships were represented by a team from the University of Adelaide.

After five games, the team had won three and lost two, but lacked enough percentage points to qualify

for the finals. Considering the lack of preparation, the fact that not all of the girls play netball and that it was the first time they participated in this carnival, it can be hailed a success and a lot of fun. The girls ended up coming third in their division. The girls can



The team members: (back, L-R) Yvonne Clark, Melissa Haynes, Natalie Young-Bonney, Ghanelle Brennan. (front L-R) Joanne Croft, Eveanne Liddle, Katherine O'Donoghue.

feel proud that they represented the University well and competed strongly. If a team participates next year, it has a good foundation to improve and build on after this year's experience.

Congratulations to Melissa Haynes who was awarded the University of Adelaide's best player at the championships. Well done to all the women.

Can't keep us quiet

"That Models Inc should be liquidated." This was perhaps a flip-pant topic for the first ever grand final of the "Women's Debating competition, but it was certainly in keeping with the spirit of the organisation (other gems included "that life is nothing but a Minties moment" and "that we should go up the down escalator").

The women's debating competition was brought into being in 1994 by the hard work and commitment

of Harriet Glen and Victoria Bannon. Its ideals were simple - to encourage women to take up debating by creating a supportive atmosphere where first-time speakers would not feel intimidated. The debates were largely informal, and no winners or losers were announced.

It worked! As well as attracting some fledgeling debaters the competition also provided some fantastic arguments.



Whatever women do they must do twice as well as men to be thought half as good. Luckily this is not difficult.

elle dit

Women—Trek

Last Sunday was the final day for Womentrek 1994. This exciting and innovative recreational event was launched on July 23rd at Parliament House when the first group of women were farewelled by a large crowd of well-wishers. The Trek was undertaken to acknowledge and celebrate the Women's Suffrage Centenary in South Australia.

Over 700 women and girls of all ages, have walked, cycled, ridden in horse-driven buggies and on camels over the 1000 kilometre Heysen Trail from Parachilna George in the Flinders Ranges to Cape Jervis on the Fleurieu Peninsular.

Two women have walked the whole trail while others have done day, weekend, week long 'legs'. Some decided they like it so much that they went up each weekend to join the walk and then came back to work on Monday. Many became 'addicted' to this wonderful, 'portable', women's community camping in different sites each night across this section of the state.

As leader I was responsible for leading a section from Burra to Kapunda, a distance of about 140 kms

on the track - much shorter by the direct route - but we walked along the high-ways and byways and crossed green paddocks filled with wild flowers, climbed hills - neatly getting blown off - and traversed rocky ridges on the way. This took 8 days, including a 'rest day' at Huppatz Hut.

Some of the highlights for me were camping under a full moon by the trees on a road side near the Tothill Range; singing around the campsite at Peters Hill; wonderful talks and discussions with the women along the way; walking my way into fitness; the first shower for 8 days when I got home!!

The finishing ceremony at the Mt. Lofty Botanic Garden was a 'loud' and memorable occasion for all the women who had been part of the Trek. Singing and dancing as well as the final 'port bottling' were all part of the afternoon celebrations. I am sure that everyone who has been part of the event, either as leaders, support drivers, organisers, walkers, friends and family will always remember it with very fond memories as a wonderful women's event that took place in 1994.

Myra Betschild.

Women: Wimmin: Wombyn Adelaide Women's Conference: For Liberation July 1995

Have you ever organised a conference? Do you want to meet and have a good time organising workshops, panel discussions, contacting speakers, consulting and making a conference work? Do you have a special skill you'd like to share? Would you like to learn some new skills?

The theme of the conference is "Creating New Spaces". Its purpose is to contribute to the development of a women's politics capable of withstanding the pressure to conform to the malestream: it's about creating new alliances, sharing attitudes, sussing out possible actions: it's about having a good time.

Apart from the talkfest part of the conference, ideas about other activities range from a market, a dance, a pool competition, sporting events, poetry and prose readings ... in fact, whatever wimmin's talent lends itself to will be happening.

All women welcome to participate in organising meetings. They are held from 1.30 - 3 pm at the East End Coffee Shop, 150 Grenfell Street, City on the first Friday of the month. Next meeting is 4th November. Ring Marg on 270 4398 (evenings) if you want more information.

RIP THIS OUT AND RIP US OFF



Nip across to The Gallerie for lunch and you'll not only get heaps of good healthy food for your money (some not-so-healthy if you prefer) - but on presentation of this voucher, you can also rip us off for a free small cup of Coke* with any purchase of \$2.50 or more.

*From participating outlets. Valid until 22/10/94.

The Food Affair

THE GALLERIE
SHOPPING CENTRE

20 Gawler Place, off Rundle Mall opposite David Jones.

elle dit

God did create man before woman, because one must make a draft before the final masterpiece.



The Case for Girl Culture

I was brought up in the world of *Sweet Dreams*, right from when Amy kissed Paul who was dying of cancer in *PS I Love You* (#1)¹, to #97 or something, when the covers went all floppy and the storylines similarly lame. I dabbled in *Sweet Valley High* too (always, wondering what Jessica and Elizabeth's 'perfect size six' figures really looked like), but never really caught on to *Wildfires* (because the covers were hideous, although April, *The Most Beautiful Girl*, wore this great yellow silk shirt on her cover that I always really fancied).

I had Barbies galore. Cindy was a wimp with a wide face and small breasts; Ken was boring; personally I always identified with Skipper.² My Barbies were very sexual and wore g-strings that I fashioned from bits of wool when they

went out into the crevices of my bean bag to pick up men and each other.³

In Year Seven I turned the boys in my classroom on to *Dolly* and they never got past 'Dolly Doctor', fascinated by the minutiae of girls' periods and whether horse-riding could lose your virginity. As I never went horse-riding my interest lay in other directions. I used to cut out the pictures of the girl models and put them up on my wardrobe, next to my *TV-Week* pin-up of Chris Atkins in a Lacoste shirt with the collar turned up. His lips had worn away to the white of the paper the photo was printed on because I'd kissed them so much.

When I watched *The Pirate Movie* (and I did many times)⁴, I never forgot Kristy McNichol's line upon stripping down to her bloomers:

'The body's a seven Frederick, maybe an eight; but the mind is a ten.'

There was something about that woman.

Later I found out what it was. I read (again in the *TV-Week* I think) the 'horrified' recollections of a Hollywood 'top model', who had gone out for a meal with Kristy, only to have her fall on all fours and 'yap around biting my ankles like a dog'.

And hence, the *TV-Week* revealed, Kristy was a dyke.

Of course. It all made sense now.

If this text were not lesbian, it would not make sense - Nicole Brossard

There is a strong case that reading *Dolly* or *Sweet Valley High* or watching *The Pirate Movie* can make you a dyke. All those luscious babes with their flossed hair

and perfect skin. They were always smart and 'sassy' too. They had really great names like Misty and Shea and Angel - not unlike the names in the Yellow Pages under 'Escorts' really.

You wanted to be like them, you wanted to hang out with them and move in their rarefied social circles, you wanted to kiss them. Their lips would taste like 'Very Cherry' or 'Mighty Mint' or 'Luscious Raspberry' *Bonne Bell Kissing Potion*.⁵ Their skin would smell of vanilla or coconut *Reef Oil*.⁶ Basically they would be edible.

My particular subject-object of desire was Brooke Shields. I still feel a sinking disappointment in my heart everytime I read about her dreary heterosexual exploits. As if Richard Wilkins wasn't bad enough, I am now hit in the face with saccharine lovey-dovey photos of Brooke in a car with Andre (DR)Agassi (him driving of course, as well as being on a mobile phone while Brooke buries her long pink-fingernailed hands in his mangy hair). His indifference is shocking; AS IF JUST BEING IN AN ENCLOSED VEHICULAR SPACE WITH BROOKE ISN'T ENOUGH. But I shut my eyes and think back to the (g)olden days when she appeared on the cover of *Dolly*, starred in McCall's sewing brochures (which I used to collect from the haberdashery department at John Martins) and did photo sessions as a 'dauntingly self-possessed' 16 year old for Cleo (February 1982), sucking on artichoke leaves as the reporter interviewed her⁷, whilst getting paid to admit she was a virgin.⁸

For many years feminists attacked this sort of pop culture as sexist and oppressive to girls, fill-

ing them with neuroses about body image and role models only concerned with being objects. And sure, this was no doubt a large part of girl culture ideology. But in those post-Foucault reverse-discourse days, we are beginning to realise just how potentially subversive and empowering those images may be.⁹ Kristy, Brooke, April may have been about beauty and looking good, (and I for one went through the unfortunately typical obsession with body image and self-punishment which I have no illusions these types of media help foster and fester). But as Kristy said, what matters is that 'the brain's a ten'. I fell in love with these girls because they were independent, smart and confident, I identified with them. But I also desired them; identification working indeed through desire.

This reclaiming of girl culture has moved on to arguably more political ground, replacing the *i* in the girl with a *gr*(ow)l. Girls get angry, girls get riotous, girls get even. Girls will be grrls, and to be told you're acting girly is the highest compliment. Seemingly innocent rites of girlhood become central to the refiguring of a grll new world. As a London based group, *Girl Power International*, advise in their grllifesto,

The first strategy, the breaking of the Chocolate, involves handing out small gifts to girls at gigs and other public gatherings. Chocolate, traditionally a male tool for appeasing females, now becomes an instrument of destruction of the male hegemony - reprinted in Girl Frenzy #3 at 30.

Grll culture proliferates at a rate beyond even the churning out of new *Sweet Dreams*. Sadie Benning shoots grll-focused docs from her bedroom window with a Fischer-Price toy video

camera (and wins prizes at international film festivals); a few dykes get together over coffee (this being perhaps the quintessential grll act) to lament the lack of decent lesbian movies and *GO fish* is spawned; *Bikini Hell*, *Huggy Bear*, *Babes in Toyland*, *Bratsmobile*, *Heavens to Betsy*, *Tribe 8*, *7 Year Bitch*, other groups with a 'b' in them, *Yeastie Girlz*, *Voodoo Queens*, *Clag* and *Fur* counter boy's own b(r)ands with talent and humour; 'zine grlls follow the adventures of such grll superheroes as *Hothead Paisan*, *Tank Girl* and *Mann Slaughter*.¹⁰

Running though all of this is a noticeably strong dyke aesthetic; grlls may not all be lesbian, but they know where their loyalties lie. Grlls declare 'if your boyfriend's a jerk, dump him. Support your girlfriends'. Grlls don't mind if they're thought to be dykes, they know it's an act of autonomy.

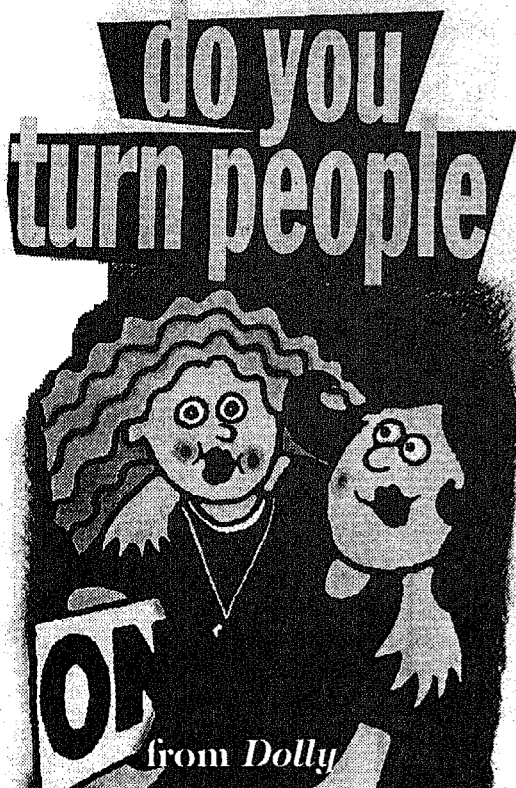
Yep girlfriend, (although if we are thinking of bands, not *Girlfriend*), sisters are doing for, and to, themselves. In fact, "Sisters Are Doing It For Themselves" was played during the recent *7:30 Report* on the Labor party conference endorsement of the quota for women. Joanie, Carmie, it's a take over. First "I Love Rock'n'Roll"¹¹ next the movement, tomorrow the world. Grll culture and grll power is a force to be reckoned with.

Sarah Zetlein

Or, Why Reading Dolly May Make You a Dyke

Women who set a low value on themselves make life hard for all women.

1. To date the only work of literature that has ever made me cry.
2. Barbie's younger sister.
3. My pre-pubescent perceptions about Barbie's sexuality have recently been confirmed by a Kuwaiti religious official, who has called for a ban on the sale of Barbies, saying the doll has nothing to do with childhood and could have a bad influence on children (reported in *The Advertiser*). I am living proof of this man's fears.
4. My other favourite film was *Blue Lagoon*. Chris Atkins and Brooke Shields at the same time!
5. I still have a tube of this from c1980, being too precious to use.
6. Another precious cultural artifact from the early '80s.
7. A piece of trivia I have stored in my subconscious for twelve years.
8. In her health and beauty book. Her status as virgin was written into her contract.
9. An academic example of the shift in perception of girl culture is the recently published study of girls' boarding school stories as an example of female autonomy (and, I would add, homoeroticism). *A World of Girls* by Rosemary Auchmuty (The Women's Press; London, 1992).
10. Although personally, I've always retained a soft (wet?) spot for Wonder Woman. Those saith hotpants, that lassoo!
11. Being of course the Joan Jett anthem so admirably covered by our Joan Kimer on *The Late Show*, with a recent repeat performance at the *Women, Power and Politics* conference. Susan Ryan was allegedly go-go girl, and the crowd went wild. Go Go Grlls!



One is not born a woman - one becomes one.

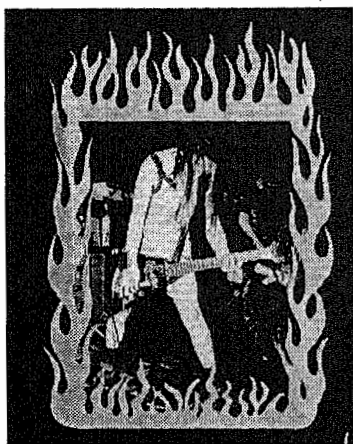
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FAIRY FLOSS

sometimes i see the world
as one giant fairytale
or as if i'm a comic
character
some tuff chick with a
firearm
explosives in neat little
lines
down the side of my leg
big fuckn boots
and a belt full of bullets
with a buckle saying:
don't fuckn mess with me!

or as if i'm a daisy
with milky white skin
and a bright glowing face
that pops its smiling self
up
when the sun shines
then wilts and melts in the
rain
and is soaked into the
earth
to pass through chambers
of chaos
and pop back up again
miraculously changed!
k.solo



Dropping out is not the answer; fucking-up is. Most women are already dropped out; they were never in. Dropping out gives control to those few who don't drop out; dropping out is exactly what the establishment leaders want; it plays into the hands of the enemy; it strengthens the system instead of undermining it; since it is based entirely on the non-participation, passivity, apathy and non-involvement of the mass of women. Dropping out, however, is an excellent policy for men, and SCUM will enthusiastically encourage it.
SCUM MANIFESTO.
VALERIE SOLANAS

GIRL DRUG

crazy, hazy bubblegum baby
barbie doll boobies
dressed in lime green tubes
sucking on big fat doobles
or sipping at a Quick Fuck
liqueur and drug cocktail
a party girl with pigtails
flipping and flopping
flaps in the wind
in the breeze
feel that cool air
feel the rush
prick, pain, rush
prick, pain, rush
all in a rhythm of its own
a deep, sensual rhythm
hidden in places
where few dare to go
pelvic regions of society
sub-sub-subcultures
and they sang
"girls are just the same in China as in London
or Paris"
there is no escape from the girl factor
it permeates your inner lining
and fixes itself onto your soul
it lodges itself like a nail in your heart
but you enjoy the pain
and you come back for more
k.solo



**GIRL'S OWN
PUNK ROCK SONG**

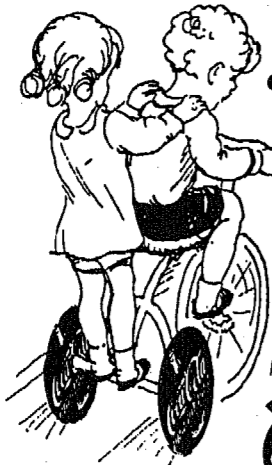
you boys
you boys who want your girls to be thin
you boys who think of nothing but
fucking
you'll fuck her
as long as she's anorexic
cos' you like 'em real thin
shaped like a coathanger
and they respond to your love of illness
by starving themselves
and throwing up what they already ate
but that's not enough for you
cos' you like tiny minds too
well...kiss my arse
gutless womanhater
product and mindless perpetuator of the
patriarchy
because my mind will eat you up
consume you in its enormity
and my body will scare you shitless
because i allow myself to have breasts
and curves
and a big fat arse
that'll squash'n'mash your murder-loving
cock
to bits
i'll mince you
i'll scare you to death
you'll be terrified to think
that it may have been a woman
you were handling and squeezing
pinching and kneading
yeah! the real McCoy
you won't see her on t.v
or in zines
but she's about
usually avoiding fuckers like you!
i know you'll cry and scream:
"Where's my woman?"
"How come i feel breasts?"
"How come i feel flesh?"
I want my woman to crumble under me
Tremble like a frightened little boy
Under my touch
Under my powerful phallus

ah yes! the thrill of the kill
divide and conquer
spread and enter
then there's you boys
who love your women so fat
you feed them
until they can no longer walk
let alone run away from you
and you love it
because you've got her where you wanted her
in your house
in your room
in your bed
tied up with your foul chains
gagged with the cloths of your sick expectations
well...fuck you
because my blubber
will burn through your dirty chains
my acid skin will melt your sheets
my skin will unravel,
every breathing pore will close over
and i will suffocate you with my flesh
and once i have burst forth
into the world outside
i will sculpt my own horizon
i will colour my own sunset
and love my body
not fight it
love my body and the brain inside it
so that
next time you try to dictate my shape
i will say:
eat my vomit
eat my shit
there is no perfect body
eat my vomit
eat my shit
there is no perfect body
k.solo.

Adelaide University Union Catering Department

17TH OCTOBER - 21ST OCTOBER

WIN A BIKE



Coca Cola
Entry in all
Catering
areas.
Buy a can
and get an
entry form.
One Bike
each week
for the next
three 233ks



MAYO
now open at 8.00 am
Back to
'old fashioned' service
*
New menu served on
'proper' crockery with
'proper' cutlery

CATACOMBS

Super Sandwiches
made-to-order
sandwiches and rolls



Under Union Hall

COFFEE SHOP

Coffee & Cake \$2.50
9 am - 11am



GRILL BAR

Hot breakfast from
8.30 am
- all day long!



OPENING TIMES

Mayo Refectory 8.00 am - 6.30 pm * Four Seasons 10.00 am - 2.30 pm

Grill Bar 8.30 am - 6.30 pm * Gallery Coffee Shop 9.00 am - 4.45 pm

Bistro 12.00 noon - 2.30 pm and 5.30 pm - 8.30 pm

Catacombs Coffee Lounge 8.00 am - 5.00 pm

Backstage Café 8.00 am - 7.00 pm

WHAT'S COOKING?

A woman without a man is like a
fish without a bicycle - Gloria Steinem

elle
dit

Now what you really need to do is learn to budget.

How much do you spend on entertainment?

How much do you spend on clothes?

How much on car repairs?

We have a fund to help people pay off their credit cards. The interest is a problem you know. How much do you have on credit?

We can help you pay your mortgage if you are suffering a lapse in employment. What are your monthly mortgage repayments?

I'm sorry, I don't quite understand. Do you have a drug problem?

Well what exactly are you doing with your money?

Don't you know the government will pay you Childcare Fee Relief and now there's the Childcare Cash Rebate? That's a hell of a lot of money the government is giving you. Years ago there never was a Sole Parent Pension and a lot more families stayed together. Don't you know about the Austudy Supplement? Then why are you studying a second degree? You're too smart to get yourself in this situation. Why don't you get a job? You've got a better chance than a lot of other people I see. Well, you must be doing something wrong with your applications.

You were sent here because you haven't had a fridge for three years but I don't really think we can give you one. You seem to think everything comes for nothing. You're costing this country a fortune.

Why don't you give something back for a change?

Cathy Sinclair

elle
dit

Nobody can argue about the rights of wimmin:
it's like arguing about earthquakes.



Helen and Adeli

H: 1) The fact that I can have children, that's very positive.

A: 1) Yes, that's a good thing, the best thing that's ever happened to me.

H: 2) Well there has to be a beginning doesn't there; it gives a start to anything. You have to be able to start somewhere.

A: 2) It's a voice isn't it; you have to be heard.

photos: Tonia Nellsen

Question 1: What's the best thing about being a woman?



Stephanie

1) I reckon that the way things are going at the moment you get the best of two worlds, you get to be sensitive and express yourself and at the same time you can kick butt.

2) Yep definitely. The only way you can get to the big corporations is to hit them where their money is, so if you can make their life harder, then they'll start listening to you, not before then.

3) I think no, but they're a bit more - they have a bit more of an idea of what's going on at the moment.

Question 2: Does direct action have a place in feminist campaigns?

Kym

1) Everything. Not being a guy. Not having to pretend you're something you're not all the time like guys do. Everything, everything's cool about being a woman. What do you mean what's the best thing, as if you can pull out something and say yeah that's the best thing.

2) Yeah definitely, because when companies put up billboards that exploit women or portray them in a negative way in the media, and they won't respond to women's groups and women pressuring them to remove such offensive material, then the only way really left for women to do something is to be just as public and vocal about the way it offends us and to show up the stereotypes and show up the double standards and therefore make our point and make women think.

3) In different ways, yeah. I wouldn't like to say that women were the greatest species or anything because I think they're not, but in some ways women are more capable and more with it than men.

Question 3: Are women better than men?



Michelle and Annabel

M: 1) Being able to shit on the men. If you're in a male dominated faculty and you do really well and you beat all the men, I think that's really satisfying. I like doing that.

A: 1) There's lots of good things about being a woman. Not being a man. Um...I don't know.

A: 2) It creates awareness like of the issues that women are trying to present in the community. People that don't even think about women's issues are confronted with them and they have to think about them.

M: 2) It's one of the best ways for the public to find out about these things. It's very dramatic and very drastic and a lot of people complain about it, and say 'oh these bloody feminists...' etc. but if this is going to make people think about feminist issues a bit more then I think it's achieving a purpose in that respect.



My mother told me that men are like seagulls - you should never look up to them.

Get mad and then

It is difficult to explain the concept of rape to someone who has never been raped. Unlike other crimes which evoke feelings of empathy, the response to rape is shock, horror and disgust. The disgust is natural. To sane people, the idea of forcing oneself upon another is so entirely socially unacceptable that it is disgusting. Unfortunately, some of this disgust becomes the property of the victim. This is particularly the case when the offender is not caught. Unable to transfer their feelings to a definitive character, friends and family express these feelings as sympathy for the victim. It is the belief of the writer at this time that sympathy is not a positive emotion to display, in terms of providing support for the victim.

Sympathy reinforces to the person involved that they are, indeed, a victim - someone who, through their own helplessness has been placed in a position of total vulnerability and robbed of any decision-making power in the sharing of the most intimate actions.

Sympathy occurs when individuals feel sorry for what has happened to another. Such an emotion is understandable and, in fact, the sane response when faced with the brutality of a crime such as rape. There are, however, different ways in which to express this emotion. For example, car stealing is a crime which is probably as common as sex stealing, yet the social repercussions are entirely different. The response to a car theft involves police,

insurance forms and public outcry about 'bloody young hooligans'. There is no shame associated with this crime. Nobody berates themselves 20 years later for leaving their spare keys in the glovebox.

Sex stealing, however, involves a much different set of circumstances. What is stolen is, without a doubt, of far more value than any car, regardless of its make. Each individual has their own value system of which their sexuality is a part and to steal from someone this value which has been an intrinsic part of them since their birth is to steal a part of their person. Perhaps it is because of this degree of seriousness that people feel unable to speak openly about the crime. As is the case when a friend experiences the death of someone close to them, people become unsure of how to act or what to say. This is a normal reaction from someone who cares about the person who has been hurt, but to use this reaction as an excuse to do nothing is completely unacceptable. This, however, is a common response, which leaves the victim with not only one hell of a problem to cope with but no one to share this problem with. It is the opinion of the writer that it is this lack of empathy displayed by those close to the victim that causes the bitterness so commonly displayed by victims of rape. Thus, rather than the experience itself souring one's attitude to life, I believe it is others' reactions to this experience that results in this sourness.

Rape is, at least in my humble opinion, the worst possible thing

get even

someone could do to another person, save perhaps torturing them to death. And then the victim doesn't have to live with the consequences. The above is, admittedly a hugely generalised and short-sighted statement, but in the point of the comment, is the attention rape attracts within the media. Bugger all.

Take for example my own case, for after all, it is the only one with which I am truly familiar.

Raped at knifepoint - vaginally, digitally (i.e. fingers), anally and orally. If you could give a ratings system to the whole ordeal, the oral rape was by far the worst. Sucking cock and swallowing is hardly a pleasurable experience at the best of times, but when you have a knife to your back and a hefty hand on your shoulder, the activity is far from romantic. No longer can you be a passive victim, trying to distance yourself and pretend it is happening to someone else. You find yourself trying your damndest to please the bastard so that he'll cum and leave you alone.

So, for this ordeal which has changed my entire outlook on life, *The Advertiser* awarded a 5-paragraph story on about page 12. No public outcry about the victimisation of women and their complete vulnerability to the brute force of sick men. Neither was there a public warning about the fucker at large.

In my eyes, what that bastard did to me was as good as murder. And there is absolutely no doubt in my mind that had my struggle been more fierce, murder is exactly what

he would have done - he soiled my body, my mind, my soul, why stop at my life?

And yet, the recognition of rape as a serious crime within our society is completely lacking. Men (this is a generalisation - I know that men get raped but the cases are much fewer and further between) will never, no matter how sympathetic to the cause, they will never know the sheer terror associated with the crime. Women who have not been

raped, although being sympathetic, tend to place some responsibility upon the victim - "I'd like to see someone try to do that to me", "Well, she did go home with him", "What was she doing there anyway?" ...

Wake up. The peril of women is completely unfair and its lack of public attention is a sad reflection on a society that things we women somehow deserve it.

Get mad and then get even.

NEW AGE PATRIARCH SHARES THE RESPONSIBILITY



Man is the only animal that strikes his womenfolk.

elle dit

Imagine the scene if robbery victims were asked to undergo the same cross-examination as women who have been raped.

Mr Smith, you were held up at gun point on the corner of First Avenue and Main Street?

- Yes

Did you struggle with the robber?

- No

Why not?

- He was armed.

Then you made a conscious decision to comply with his demands rather than resist?

- Yes

Have you ever given money away?

- Yes.

And you did so willingly?

- What are you getting at?

Well, lets put it this way, Mr Smith. You've given money away in the past. In fact you have quite a reputation for philanthropy. How can we be sure that you weren't contriving to have your money taken from

you?

- Listen if I wanted...

Never mind. What time did this alleged hold-up take place?

- About 11pm.

You were out on the street at 11pm? Doing what?

- Just walking.

Just walking? You know that it's dangerous being out on the street that late at night. Weren't you aware that you could have been held up?

- I hadn't thought about it.

What were you wearing?

- A suit.

An expensive suit?

- Well, I am a successful lawyer, you know.

So, in other words, Mr Smith, you were walking around the streets late at night in a suit that practically advertised that you might be a good target for easy money, isn't that so? I mean, if we didn't know better Mr Smith, we might even think that you were asking for this to happen.

(Taken from *Pictures of Women - Sexuality* by J. Root.)

I don't have buried anger against men, my anger is right on the surface.

elle dit



The Myths and Realities of Rape

A woman's greatest protection lies in her own strength, her confidence in herself, her respect for her own body and her life.

Myth: Women who are raped are scarred for life.

Reality: This myth is about how society regards women who have been raped, and how women then feel about themselves. Women who have been raped may be seen as "soiled", "damaged property", no longer "marriageable", or perhaps even forced to marry the man who raped them. Even though such attitudes are changing, women still may feel ashamed or guilty, and people and often blame them for what happened. This myth is hard to break because it is so deeply ingrained in women's minds. However, it can be broken. Women do survive rape physically and emotionally, and in the process can become stronger, more self respecting and aware.

Myth: Women enjoy being raped.

Reality: Rape is an integral part of male power. Rape is a terrifying demonstration of the lack of control women have over their own bodies. Obviously this is not enjoyable.

Myth: "Nice girls" do not get raped. Some women are safe.

Reality: Age, "attractiveness" and marital and social status are irrelevant. By merely existing a woman is under the threat of rape.

Myth: Most rapes occur at night in a deserted place (e.g. park, alley).

Reality: Almost half the rapes reported to us take place in either the woman's home or the rapist's home. Many occur during the day and many in well-lit public places.

Myth: Most rapes are penis/vaginal penetration only.

Reality: Oral and anal rape are common. The use of foreign objects e.g. bottles, candles, fingers, fists etc. is common. Various forms of rape (particularly in pack rape) often occur simultaneously.

For a sense of historical perspective on the lies about rape:

"Abducting young girls is not, indeed, a lawful act; but it is stupid after the event to make a fuss about it. The only sensible thing is to take no notice; for it is obvious that no young woman allows herself to be abducted if she does not wish to be." - Herodotus (the "Father of History" ...)

ON RAPE...

Don't go out without clothes - that encourages some men.

Don't go out with clothes - any clothes encourage some men.

Don't go out alone at night - that encourages men.

Don't go out alone at any time - any situation encourages some men.

Don't go out alone with a female friend - some men are encouraged by numbers.

Don't go out with a male friend - some male friends are capable of rape.

Don't stay at home - intruders and relatives can both rape.

Avoid childhood - some rapists are "turned on" by little girls.

Avoid old age - some rapists "prefer" aged women.

Don't have a father, grandfather, uncle or brother - these are the relatives who most often rape women.

Don't marry - rape is legal within marriage.

To be quite sure - don't exist.

RECLAIM THE NIGHT



The **Reclaim the Night** March

is our chance to

- oppose rape and other violence against women.
- tell the community that no woman ever deserves to be raped, abused or hurt, inside or outside her home.
- demonstrate our strength as we take over the city streets on the one night of the year that we can walk freely together - as we should be able to every night.

Come along - wear the suffrage colours of purple and yellow and bring your mother, sisters, children and lots of friends...

We'll be travelling at an easy pace. A minibus will be part of the march for those who need it.

For more information about the march, childcare or about singing workshops to be held in preparation for the march, ring 303 3488 or 373 5134

ALL WOMEN AND CHILDREN WELCOME

WE'LL SEE YOU THERE

WOMEN'S MARCH

W♀M

FOR AN END TO RAPE AND VIOLENCE

FRIDAY 28 OCTOBER
7pm VICTORIA SQUARE
MUSIC ♦ SPEECHES ♦ DANCE



The thing women have to learn is that nobody gives you power. You just take it.

elle dit

elle dit

Rape is nothing more or less than a conscious process of intimidation by which all men keep all women in a state of fear



To Pride

Adelaide University Pride, and Lesbian Wimmin

One of the problems that the sexual liberation movement has had to deal with since its inception, is the relationship between gay men and lesbian wimmin, and the aims and objectives they have in common. Pride made a commitment to being a coalitionist organization; that is, to building an organisation which represents gay men, lesbian wimmin and bisexual people. There are some issues that we need to deal with if we are to become such an organisation in reality, instead of simply on paper.

Pride has been accused in the past of being a 'boy's club'. I do not think that this is very accurate, but the fact remains that the majority of Pride members, particularly in leadership positions are men. (In fact there are no lesbian wimmin currently on the Pride executive!) This would not be an issue if Pride adequately dealt with

issues of discrimination against lesbians as well as it does with issues related to gay men, but it doesn't for a number of reasons.

Firstly, lesbians experience a kind of oppression that is very often different from gay men; not only is their sexuality seen as unacceptable, or at the least, deviant, they are also oppressed because of their gender in a world which is male-dominated. The sexuality of wimmin is defined by our institutions and the mass media as dependent on the sexuality of men, just as we are seen to be socially and emotionally dependent on them, and lesbians suffer from the attitudes of a society that does not acknowledge their existence except in pornography, which is here for the pleasure of men, let alone the free and open expression of their sexuality.

Lesbians have historically invested a great deal of their time and energy in the feminist movement, partly for the reasons already stated, and partly because the gay liberation movement has also been affected by male chauvinism. Rita Laporte, president of an American lesbian organization, wrote in 1968:

When you've accomplished your aims in the homophile movement, you can proudly point to the fact that now lesbians have full second class citizenship, along with all women. That's nowhere near enough for me. I was not only born a lesbian, I was born a feminist.

The convergence of lesbian liberation with the feminist movement was an obvious and logical di-

rection for it to take, and this has done both movements a great deal of good. The question arises therefore: Why attempt to alter the situation.

I am conscious of the fact that I am writing this article from the point of view of a non-lesbian woman, and so I cannot speak for the lesbian community. However lesbian wimmin on campus have made it clear that they are interested in becoming active in Pride, so I hope that they will continue to bring up the issues that they see as relevant. I believe in Pride's coalitionist aims for a few reasons, mainly because I believe that lesbians and gay men have a great deal in common and should be able to work together.

Radical feminism, which has been heavily influenced by lesbian wimmin, criticizes the ideology that connects sexuality to procreation, the structure of the nuclear family and patriarchal institutions. This criticism relates directly to the sexual liberation movement in general-homophobia stems in many ways from the same place as sexism. Gay liberation can learn a great deal from lesbian wimmin, and it is vital to remember that sexual liberation is for all people-gays, lesbians, straights, bisexuals, everybody. Pride can only be effective if it recognizes that sexual liberation covers a number of issues and our strength lies in connecting and acting on these issues. Gay men are in a different position to straight men to the extent that they have no personal stake in the oppression of wimmin, and have experienced the harmful nature of sexual oppression. On the other hand, it is in their interests to work for a re-definition of sexuality and sexual relationships.



or not to Pride

I think it says something about the status of wimmin at adelaide university that only one issue a year is devoted to wimmin, so much for affirmative action. I also think it says something about campus pollyticks and boys' politics in general (I can't take 'em seriously so I refuse to spell it seriously) that both this year's and next year's wimmin's officers are liberal feminists. So much for a wimmin's officer who will represent all wimmin's interests as claimed by the interests of radical wimmin & lesbians. By their analysis - sexuality is merely a matter of personal choice & we are all free & equal to act as we please in society - liberal feminist negate the experience of their more radical sisters. The word sister is used with tongue firmly down throat since liberal feminism serves to divide wimmin from each other as patriarchy wishes. A radical wimmin's officer would genuinely represent all wimmin. However it would be a terrific job to act as a radical wimmin's officer within the current liberal setup. As radical wimmin we are freer comparatively speaking if we organise independently which is what I am proposing. Some radical and lesbian wimmin on campus have been discussing for some time the possibility of organising our own group. This is necessary because neither pride nor wimmin on campus specifically address our interests. Some lesbians want to organise independently of gaymen. Some feel that a wimmin's group alone does not adequately represent their interests of concerns. For almost any other group of like-minded people on campus there is no need to justify the right to their own space or club. Groups which promote the use of guns are not required to answer for themselves to the peace group (more's the pity). Yet pride recently took the extraordinary step of calling a wimmin's forum presumably so lesbians could explain why they did not wish to be coalitionists. I should think herstory has demonstrated that clearly enough. If further proof is needed you have only to consider the hierarchical structure of the organisation and the incident where a lesbian was publicly insulted in the cafeteria by a pride member. What I am proposing is that radical wimmin and/or lesbians form our own group (not necessarily through clubs & associations) so that there will be a space for us to meet, socialise and organise independently. adelaide university is in dire need of such a group before all radical wimmin abandon the campus in disgust to the boys and the liberals.

PS While I'm not denying liberal feminists or gaymen the right of reply I'd like to point out that

- (1) their views are already dominant & highly publicised
- (2) I'm aware of arguments in favour of coalitionism and liberalism and reject them
- (3) I seldom read on dit

Having said all that I fully expect this article to be greeted by howls of protest (I can hear them even before I lay down my pen) at the audacity of a Radical Lesbian Feminist to exist, let alone enter the sacred grounds of adelaide university, let alone speak. What heresy!

I believe that Pride can only benefit from actively encouraging lesbian wimmin to become active members of our organization, and that this will take a great deal of effort on our part. Most of all, this means that Pride must encourage criticism and debate both with the lesbian community and amongst our own members. We must be public and honest about our aims, we must be prepared to invite and accept and, most of all, listen to and act upon constructive criticism and ideas for change and put them into practice, and we must be prepared to monitor and appraise our own actions and motivations.

Pride is sincere in its coalitionist aims, perhaps a bit unsure about how to put them into practice, and that means we must rely on the truth of the experiences of those who we wish to become part of the organization. The experience of lesbian wimmin within gay organizations has not always been one that inspires them with confidence, but it must be kept in mind that despite the different roads travelled, our aims are, in the end, the same. Pride, and indeed, the sexual liberation movement the world over, has taken on a big responsibility-it is important that we live up to it.

This article is meant to stimulate debate and criticism from everyone, inside or outside Pride. If you have something to say, please write to *On Dit*, to Pride or come to a Pride meeting- that's what we're after!

Paula de Angells Pride

'homophile' was the term used by early gay rights movements in the 1950's and '60's.

Pride is attending a screening of *Go Fish* at the Mercury Cinema on Thursday 20th October at 7:30pm, followed by drinks at Beans Bar (first round of beer or champagne on Pride). Everyone is welcome.

Jack is nimble, Jack is quick,
but Jill prefers the candlestick.

elle
dit

They put one man on the moon,
why can't they put them all there?

24
R

25
R

This article was printed in 1970 when Rat, an alternative New York newspaper was taken over by a coalition of women's groups. Passionate and articulate, it was written during a period some define as the turning point of Women's Liberation. Nearly a quarter of a century later, as second generation feminists, we can value the strength and commitment of these women who dared to create, develop and publish ideas which challenged those they has been taught. The Miss America Pageant may not be of specific relevance to young women in Australia but the guts of the issue is still the same today. A recent advert for the Miss Heaven beauty pageant wanted "attractive women...following up-to-the-minute fashion trends..." who are still expected to parade in bathers. More pervasive is the much discussed supermodel who, in place of Miss America, is judged by all those who turn the pages of glossy magazines.

NO MORE MISS AMERICA

THE TEN POINTS

We Protest:

1. The degrading Mindless-Boob-Girlie Symbol. The pageant contestants epitomize the role we are all forced to play as women. The parade down the runway blares the metaphor of the 4-H Club country fair, where the nervous animals are judged for teeth, fleece, etc., and where the best 'specimen' gets the blue ribbon. So are women in our society forced daily to compete for male approval, enslaved by ludicrous 'beauty' standards we ourselves are conditioned to take seriously.
2. Racism with Roses. Since its inception in 1921, The Pageant has not had one Black finalist, and this has not been for a lack of test-case contestants. There has never been Puerto Rican, Alaskan, Hawaiian, or Mexican-American. Nor has there ever been a true Miss America - an American Indian.
3. Miss America as Military Death Mascot. The highlight of her reign each year is a cheerleader-tour of American troops abroad - last year she went to Vietnam to pep-talk our husbands, fathers, sons and boyfriends into dying and killing with a better spirit. She personifies the 'unstained patriotic American womanhood our boys are fighting for'. The Living Bra and The Dead Soldier. We refuse to be used as mascots for murder.
4. The Consumer Con-Game. The Pageant is sponsored by Pepsi-Cola, Toni, and the Oldsmobile - Miss America is a walking commercial. Wind her up and she plugs your product on promotion tours and on TV - all in an 'honest objective' endorsement. What a skill.
5. Competition Rigged and Unrigged. We deplore the encouragement of an American myth that oppresses men as well as women: the win-or-you're-worthless competitive disease. The 'beauty contest' creates only one winner to be 'used' and forty-nine others who are 'useless'.
6. The Women as Pop Culture Obsolescent Theme. Spindle, mutilate and then discard tomorrow. What is so ignored as last year's Miss America? This only reflects

the gospel of our society, according to Saint Male: women must be young, plucky, malleable - hence age discrimination and the cult of youth. And we women are brainwashed into believing this ourselves!

7. The Unbeatable Madonna-Whore combination. Miss America and Playboy's centrefold are sisters over the skin. To win approval, we must be both sexy and wholesome, delicate but able to cope, demure yet titillatingly bitchy. Deviation of any sort brings, we are told, disaster: 'You won't get a man!!'

8. The Irrelevant Crown on the Throne of Mediocrity. Miss America represents what women are supposed to be: unoffensive, bland, apolitical. If you are tall, short, over or under what weight the Man prescribes you should be, forget it. Personality, articulateness, intelligence, commitment - unwise. Conformity is the key to the crown - and by extension, to success in our society.

9. Miss America as Dream Equivalent to - ? In this reputedly democratic society, where every little boy can supposedly grow up to be President, what can every little girl hope to grow to be? Miss America. That's where it's at. Real power to control our own lives is restricted to men, while women get patronizing pseudo-power, an ermine cloak and a bunch of flowers; men are judged by their actions, women by their appearance.

10. Miss America as Big Sister Watching You. The Pageant exercises Thought Control, attempts to sear the image into our minds, to further make women oppressed and men oppressors; to enslave us all the more in high-heeled, low-staus roles; to inculcate false values in young girls; to use women as beasts of buying; to seduce us to prostitute ourselves before our own oppression.

NO MORE MISS AMERICA!

Quoted in: *BAMN - Outlaw Manifestos and Ephemera 1965 - 70* ed. P. Stanstill and D.J. Mairowitz, Penguin Books Ltd., Harmondsworth 1971.



Women's Suffrage

One hundred years ago in South Australia, adult women were granted the right to vote and the right to stand for Parliament. South Australia was one of the first places in the world to grant women the right to vote and the very first to permanently grant them the right to stand for Parliament. Was 1894 South Australia experiencing a wave of pure radicalism? Sadly not.

Enfranchising women was achieved largely through the use of conventional and traditional arguments and vested political interests, with the right to stand for Parliament being almost accidental.

Contemporary ideas (that women should be in the home; that women are more civilised and responsible than men; that women should always care for others; that women must be the saviours of the world) were all extremely important influences on allowing women to be enfranchised. The reasons behind enfranchising women in South Australia in 1894 were overwhelmingly conservative and hardly had female liberation or self-determination as their

goal. Women were enfranchised so that their supposed intrinsic virtue could save South Australia from the 'moral degradation' that was occurring, which was largely a result of only having a male franchise and only having men in power.

Although South Australian

Was South Australia in 1894 experiencing a wave of radicalism? Sadly not.

women were granted the right to stand for Parliament in 1894, this option was dismally neglected by the community. South Australia was the last Australian state to elect a woman to its lower house - Joyce Steele in 1959 - and a second to last to elect a woman to its upper house - Jessie Cooper in 1959. South Australia let sixty-five years pass before it utilised the opportunity that had so long ago been presented.

The strength of domestic ideology was a strong influence on granting women the vote. It was believed that women should be able to influence the policy that governed their traditional sphere of the home. Caring for children was seen as a woman's role - and so it was thought reasonable that women should influence issues such as

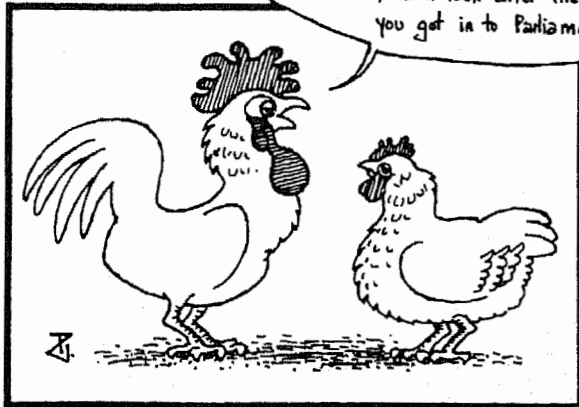
education policy. Granting women the vote was not radical, but a way of strengthening women's influence on their 'traditional spheres'. Women were not expected to expand their areas of influence too drastically (that is, not at all) but keep the home as their central point and

vote for candidates who would promote morality.

Enfranchising women was not designed to free them from the pressures of the carer role but to allow them to strengthen that traditional role. Even the women's groups campaigning for women suffrage in South Australia in 1894 heavily used and relied upon women's traditional gender roles to gather support for their cause.

The almost accidental right to stand for Parliament was actually suggested by opponents of the suffrage bill in an attempt to make the bill too radical and therefore prevent it from passing and granting women the vote. However, by this time the Premier of South Australia, Charles Cameron Kingston, had realised that enfranchising women would necessitate a redrawing of electoral boundaries, and hey, this would benefit his party. So, he became committed to the idea of votes for women and allowing women to stand for Parliament was not enough to deter him. What's more, many of the names on the petition to Parliament requesting female suffrage

I'm sorry my dear but you're too plain looking to get the vote. Besides, who'd look after the eggs if you get in to Parliament?



A society that can put men on the moon can put women in government

elle dit

The reasons

were in his electorate: thus many potential supporters could come his way. Other conservative members supported women's suffrage because they needed to counter the threat of the rising Labor Party and, believing women would vote conservatively, saw votes for women as a way of entrenching conservative political power. Votes for women in 1894 were not given for the genuine emancipation of women but largely to serve established political interests. Ah, progressive, altruistic politicians.

However, despite many of the reasons behind it, granting women the vote and the right to stand for Parliament in South Australia in 1894 was an achievement to be loudly applauded. Women should be in control of their own lives and government policy must allow them to do this. Since we live in a so-called liberal democracy, it is vital that women have the vote and sit in parliament as legislators. If we are going to have a system of government or any hierarchy power structures at all, they must include women simply because women exist. We make up half the population and yet have been marginalised to an incredible extent. To begin remedying the harm done to women as a group in the past, we must enter the power structures of society and change things.

But is it enough that women simply enter the institutions that have been previously dominated by men or, if we as a society are serious about changing things for the better, do the powerful institutions themselves need to be scrutinised and altered? Are the goals of feminism possible within the structure of society as it is currently?

Perhaps the powerful institutions that women need to move into are problematic in themselves and will only succeed in giving us men and women rulers when maybe we don't want or need rulers at all. We need truly radical change, perhaps a revolution is the only way, for desperately required social change to occur.

Etain Daniels



Catch at gossamer threads
of blue-black pain
that slide and whisper
-sibilant drag and suggestion -
over heated skin
sweat-slip
covering mind and heart with a
web
that tears sinew from soul

cup razor shards
crystal-brittle-bitter
that shriek and shrill and sharp
slice, drip hot scarlet through
fingers-flay-
hissing caress sickening torture
of screaming nerve ends.

grieve, while
transformations rack and shudder
frantic dismemberment!
until blood and pain flow with
tears
that redden vision
and taste sticky-salt-sweet
on scalded tongues

Katie Farrall

Feminism is women getting power over themselves, and society benefitting from that

elle dit

Changing Images

We have all seen the images.

Haunted faces. Wide, staring, vacuous eyes. Silently suffering; hopeless.

Female faces. Some darker than others, some thinner, some anguished, some angry, some crying, some dead.

The media, especially the female-oriented sector, splashes these images across glossy magazine pages, or in black and white newsprint, or on television documentaries; all in relation to the rituals and realities of many developing countries which subject women to oppression, mutilation, death.

Rituals such as female genital mutilation; such as widow-burning; such as female infanticide.

Realities such as high maternal mortality rates and an ever-increasing Third World population, and poverty, which affects the unemployed, uneducated, unacknowledged woman the most.

Magazine racks in newsagencies offer

hundreds of journals which carry these stories: the horrors of female genital mutilation in Ghana, with unnerving, heart-wrenching pictures of young girls, barely out of childhood, crying out in tortured anguish as their own mothers hold them down and assist in executing this form of female castration. Or perhaps an expose on dowry deaths in India: every year, in New Delhi alone, 500 young wives die from suicide or murder, all because of their in-laws' demands for more lucrative dowries from their families. Other magazines attempt to portray the lives of women in those nations where the women's world is confined to the restricting, latticed walls of a zenna, or continuously viewed through a heavy veil over their faces.

Not just magazines, but newspapers, current affairs shows and documentaries on radio and television have yielded a spate of articles and shows focusing on these issues, revealing the lamentable conditions of women in most Asian cultures. The media unequivocally decries the patriarchal structures and cultural ideologies of societies which continue to allow an entire class of

people to be oppressed, mutilated, killed, because of their sex.

But there is an ominous danger inherent when the intense focus of the media spotlights an issue. The media, for all its unbiased intentions and ambitions to merely 'inform' the public, cannot help but provide a one-dimensional view of a multi-faceted issue. Such unbalanced representations result in unforeseen ramifications: misconceptions about cultures and peoples transform into firmly established stereotypes, which in turn foster intolerances and, ultimately, prejudice.

Wouldn't that be a step backwards in this era of supposed multi-culturalism and internationalism?

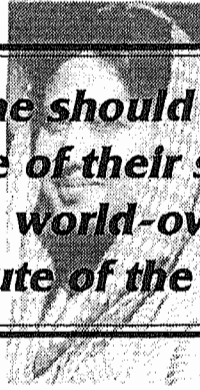
No one is denying that these atrocious crimes described are committed against thousands of women every day across the world; certainly public awareness about the tragic destinies of many women must be awakened. But along with this awareness, very often a certain, patronising arrogance

raises its head in condescension towards that which it does not fully understand.

I have read many an article, watched numerous television exposes, listened to eye-witness accounts on the radio, all about cultural rituals and ideologies which appear sadistically misogynist. Indeed, hard-core feminist rhetoric will describe these cultural institutions as patriarchal agents determined to fetter women. I have heard the shock, disgust and outrage of women in Australia in response to these reports. I have felt the revulsion and fury within myself.

But it is dangerous to assume such sinister motives implicate every tradition, custom, belief. The media has focused upon and magnified only one aspect of women's lives in the East, thus presenting Africa and Asia and the Middle East as a hotbed of female torture and oppression. Why are the positive aspects of female achievement in the East never revered by the media?

Why are women like Sirimavo Bandaranaike, Golda Meir, Indira Gandhi, Corazon Aquino, Beghum Khaleda Zia and Banazir Bhutto never held up as examples,



**No one should suffer
because of their sex, yet
it occurs world-over every
minute of the day**

not only for Eastern women, but for all women? (Other than Margaret Thatcher, not very many women have managed to break through to the forefront of Western politics.)

Why are Eastern feminists and their achievements never held up as examples to womankind, such as Indonesia's Kartini and her advocacy for female education; or India's Sarojini Naidu who campaigned against widow-burning and the complete lack of female rights; or Japan's Fusaye Ichikawa, who led the revolt against regulated prostitution which had entrapped thousands of Japanese women over the years?

Why doesn't the media highlight the increasing rate of female education in Eastern countries and the opening of birth-control clinics and the growing number of female employees in the organised sector of the Third World economy?

Most media writers and producers who focus on the issues affecting Third World women would consider themselves feminists, whether radical, liberal or post-structuralist.

Perhaps the discrepancy lies in using Western feminism as a standard of comparison as the "norm". Like the nineteenth century imperialist missionaries, with their zeal for religious conversion in colonised countries which already practiced their own religions, today's feminists often attempt to apply a Western-based recipe for female liberation to their Eastern counterparts, forgetting they are using Eastern ingredients. In many cases, this means denigrating the very cultures and social structures that have shaped and given significance to the lives of Oriental women.

No one should suffer because of their sex, yet it occurs world-over every minute of every day. However, outright condemnation of the cultural mechanisms which indirectly lead to such human rights' violations only widens the gap between East and West. The media may need to reconsider the issue of feminism in relation to developing nations: it is not a Western phenomenon being passed on the East, but rather, one that has always existed in the East, but in a different form.

Those images that we have all seen need to change: from the stereotyped Third World woman who is silently suffering, perceived as a voiceless, powerless victim depending upon others to speak out for her, to a Third World woman who is strong and resilient, raising her voice in protest and demand.

Amrita Dasvarma

Dowry Death:

Why do I let you beat me?
What passion do I lack that
forces not my limbs
your flailing fists?
Was I born incomplete?
Where is the voice that
should cry out against
the invisible seal
across my lips,
the tears that should
spurt from my dry,
downcast eyes?
Where is the resistance that should
flow through my acquiescent body and
usurp your despotic possession?

I am no victim, no sacrificial lamb,
no martyr.
I protest, rage, shout, rebel-
I act, offend, flout, impale
all who infringe upon my untrammelled space-

Except for you, my husband;
you who reach down from your pedestal
to kick at my offerings as your wife.
What has wrenched from me my right to be
human before wife-
person before wife-
self before wife?

The inculcation of traditional subservience
by an ancient thriving culture?
Or should I blame my mother,
and her mother,
and the mother before that
who taught me how to
obey, acquiesce, accept,
worship
by their own example?

Amrita Dasvarma

30 Like many thoughtful women, she had decided
women were far more interesting than men.

elle
dit

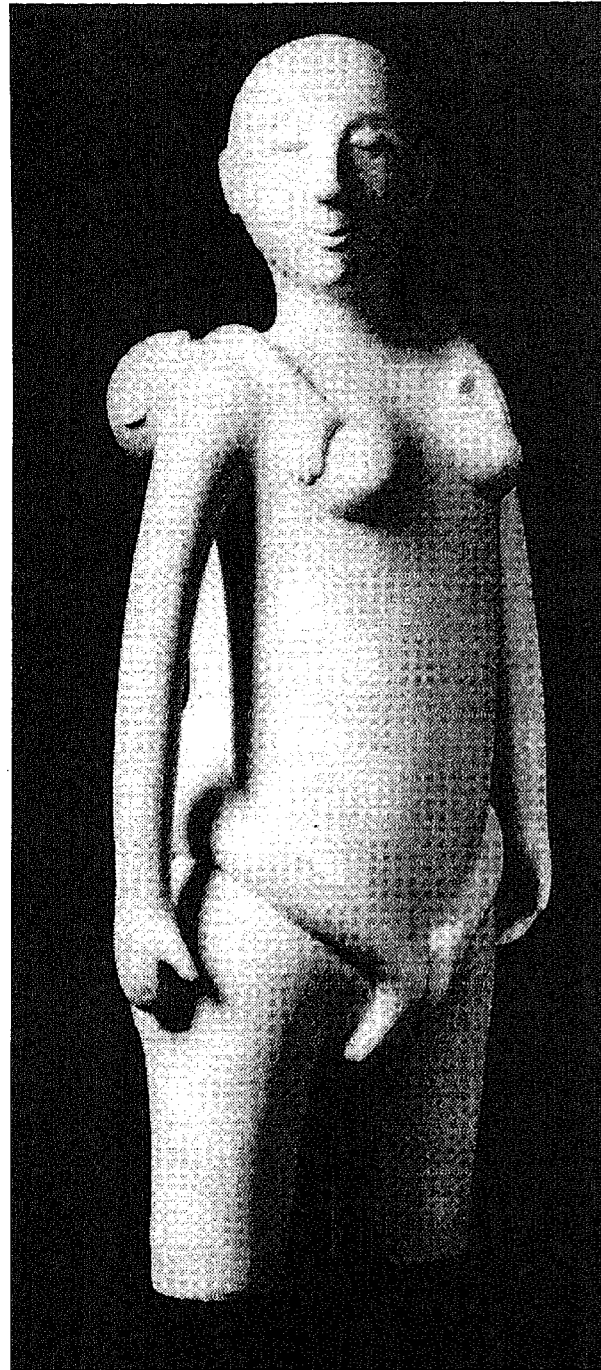
No woman should say "I am but a woman!"
But a woman! What more can you ask to be?

elle
dit

31

the body of womyn

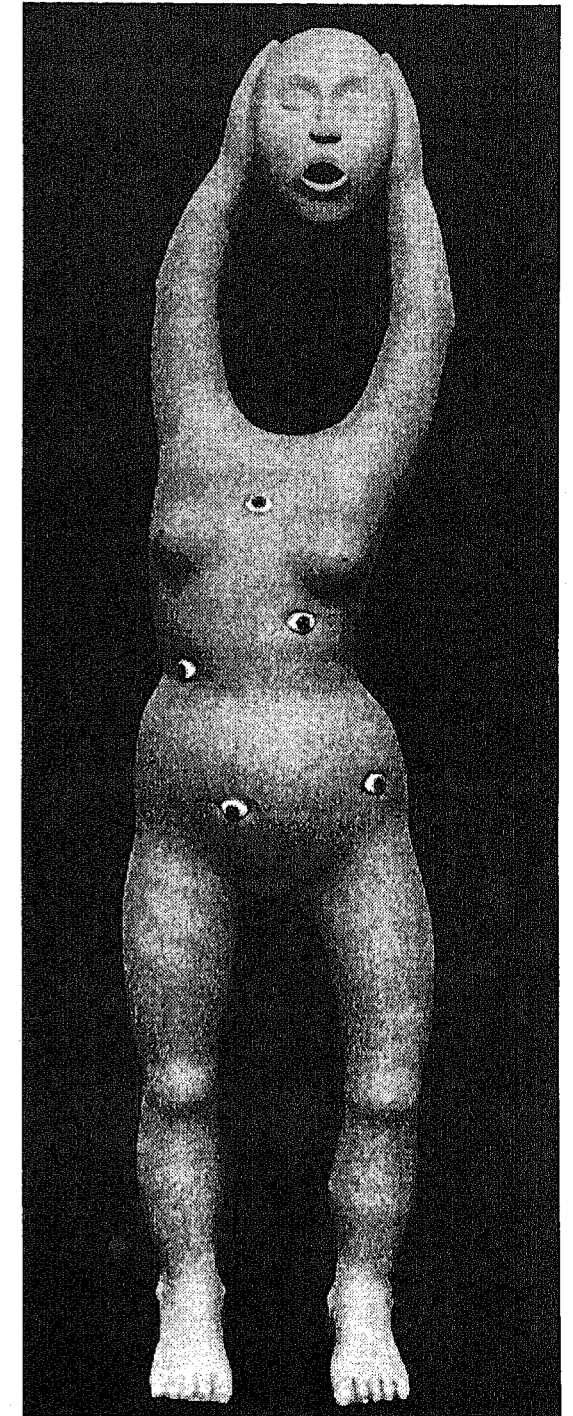
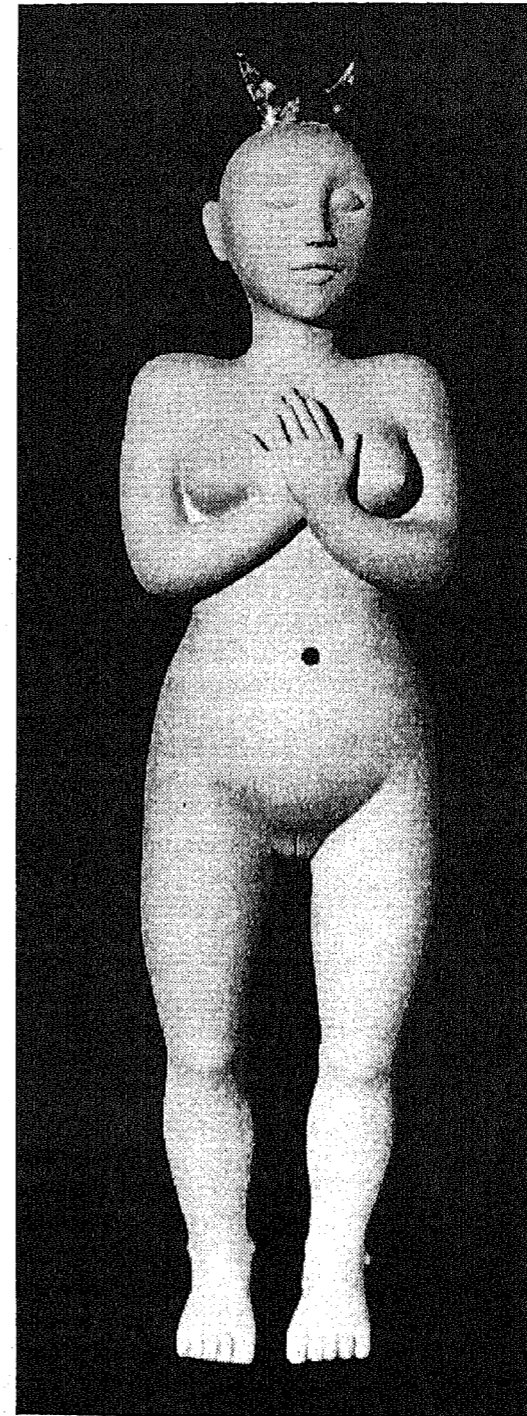
sculptures by liz williams



I started to make wimmin into my work in 1986, and they were shrines. My intention was to make female shrines because particularly in our culture, there aren't any. In most cultures that have influenced our society, images have tended to be male. Gradually I became more interested in the figure as the centre of my expression and I became interested in the womyn in her relationship to life. In a sense I idealised her role, made her independent and complete, even in relationship to the other figures—even the male and the child, who were evident in the body of work. The later work has a lot more to do with human frailty and obsession, but it's always harder to understand the work that I'm involved in now, than to look back and see what I've done.

My interest in the human being is finding a way to express what lies beneath the surface, and I'm struggling to find an expression for that. I think it's harder to do in sculpture and easier to do in painting.

I think the reason I make wimmin, in a way, it's self-referential. Art for a lot of people is about trying to make sense of things and because I'm a womyn, it's a fairly obvious image to explore through.



32
today i'm a waitress,
tomorrow i might be an astronaut

elle
dit

33
A woman past forty should make up her
mind to be young, not her face

elle
dit

Second Class Citizens

Women have always had a rough deal when it comes to equality between the sexes. Where drug use is concerned, women are certainly not released from the ever presence of double standards - In fact, it would appear that these contradictory standards and expectations are at work here as much as any other community. Although illicit drug use itself is deemed unacceptable behaviour by most of western society, it is even less acceptable for women.

In the early 1900s, it was a punishable offence for a woman to be seen smoking tobacco (or any substance) in public and until relatively late this century, women were not permitted into public bars and taverns as the 'atmosphere', one of bawdiness, relaxation and, indeed, fun was just not becoming to a lady. Everyone knows that ladies are happiest at home working on their needlepoint - or are they?

Although rules have relaxed somewhat since those times of major oppression, there are still many double-standards in regard to women and drugs. Women who set out to become heavily intoxicated are still regarded with disdain. Women who are "off their faces" often become objects of embarrassment or easy prey for men wishing to take advantage of the 'easy' situation. Females who are lacking some of their decision-making faculties, due to intoxication of some sort, are frequently used for the sexual gratification of the lower sector of the male gender. And there is no use complaining about it later, because you asked for it, didn't you? If women decide that they wish to step out of their constant role of responsibility and allow their thoughts to become a three-hour jumble sale, then they should be able to exercise that right in a safe,

secure environment. However, it would appear there is always a wolf lurking stealthily in every Red Riding Hood's forest.

Generally, men who indulge in too much of the good stuff and become blubbing blobs are a socially acceptable sight and are tolerated much more than a wobbling female babbling about something no one else understands. Men are just getting a feel for the party atmosphere, loosening up, enjoying themselves. Women are disgracing their friends, partners, families and selves.

The differing views on male and female intoxication could well find their roots in times of old - not that times have changed so considerably in terms of the point being made. Women have always been responsible for taking care of the children, ensuring that the boar roasting on the fire doesn't burn and seeing that the menfolk have a warm skin on which to lay their weary drunken heads when the ale store has run dry. If we, nurturers by allocation, also indulged our love of the drug, family life would have been one of immense chaos, small furry children would have run wild, the cave floor would likely have become a reeking pit of decaying animal carcasses and the population would have boomed due to increased (unwanted) pregnancy.

What the whole intoxication issue really comes down to is the age old attempt to take away a woman's right to control her own body. That means putting in it what she likes and taking out what she doesn't want. Historically and presently, it has been a burning male ambition to tether the female and exercise complete control over her every move and function. After thousands

Women and Drug Use

of years, we are only winning the tug-of-war by an arms length. An arm that can hold a wine glass, a pipe, a needle mark or a child.

Point four of the declaration of rights for drug users, which was written by the European Interest Group of Drug Users, a Europe-wide drug users organisation, states the following:-

4. Women: must have the right to choose whether or not to have children. They should also have the right to raise their children as the legal guardians and according to their own value systems. These basic rights should not be denied to drug users, nor to HIV+ persons. Ultimately, we ask for recognition of the fact that drug-using women can be perfectly capable mothers.

Our Western society deems women who choose to take (illicit) drugs as unfit for motherhood. However, if you are completely incapacitated by the three year course of benzodiazepines (Valium, etc.) that your trusted doctor has prescribed you for housewife related boredom, you are exempted from this category. And perhaps just as well, for the sake of millions of mothers and world-wide who are totally dependent on their daily tranquilliser to survive the few hours until their next one is due.

Medically prescribed drugs are accepted by our society which thrives so heartily on hypocrisy, however, if you occasionally or frequently feed your veins heroin, as many women (with children) choose to do, it means banishment to the corner reserved for social deviants. It also means lack of privileges, services and the respect that any woman who has endured childbirth should automatically be entitled to.

Harm reduction information for drug users very rarely offers advice on important issues such as ante-natal advice for women users, child care issues and the like. Many maternity wards treat drug-using mothers with disdain, often adding to the guilt and low self esteem that these women may already be carrying as a result of their disempowering situation. It is not often that those so quick to judge take the time to consider the reasons behind the action condemned. For many, it is not as easy as fronting up to a detox centre and committing yourself for an unrealistic amount of time. Not when there is washing to be done, families to be fed, rent to be paid and children to be collected from school.

Although it may not appear obvious to some, women face numerous problems when deciding to undertake detox. Admitting you have a drug habit can be ammunition enough for certain organisations to arrange foster care for your children, something which rarely happens if it is only the father who has the habit. Fathers often have a partner, mother or sister somewhere, who can take junior off their hands for a week or two while they 'straighten out' at the centre. And housework was never their responsibility in the first place.

Lack of child care facilities at detox centres is another obstacle which faces women users. Single mothers cannot usually afford to pay for child care and so opt not to seek help. This is purely because women are seen as the 'parent' and 'caregiver' and men as the 'breadwinner'. There is still a stigma attached to women who do not follow the socially prescribed role of being a 'good'

mother and 'good' housewife.

Many drug-using couples in heterosexual relationships have a set allocation of duties. The man gets the money, the man scores, the man mixes up the drugs. This leaves the women feeling dependent, not only on drugs but also on her partner. She loses her sense of empowerment and feels totally reliant upon her relationship. Even if she wants to leave, this possibility may not be considered as an option because it would also mean that access to drugs will become inhibited.

Women in relationships which promote the man as the breadwinner can find it themselves feeling extremely isolated and lonely. Trapped in their homes, often left to care for children or just to maintain the household and being denied the chance to earn a wage, can be both disempowering and frustrating. Some women in these situations and also in rural areas, turn to tranquillisers as an escape from their situation.

Society still perceives a woman's role to be that of upholding the family, but for many, poverty, violence, abuse and boredom don't meet their expectation of the 'ideal' family situation.

Frequently, in a heterosexual relationship, it is the male partner who will shoot up first, followed by his mates if they happen to be around for a taste. Women partners then have their shot, often from the same needle. With regard to the spread of HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis, the ramifications of such a process are obvious. It is also true that out of a shared deal, the man usually has the better part of half. The mentality behind this lies in the age old fallacy that because men generally boast a



34 Too much of a good thing can be wonderful

elle
dit

A liberated woman is one who feels confident in herself, and is happy in what she is doing

35

larger stature or put in a harder day's work, they need (deserve?) more. A similar attitude to the traditional family meal where the father always had the largest serve.

A European study found that women drug users have less power in society than male users and that women injectors also have a higher HIV infection risk than their male counterparts. While we are tossing around academia, for all its perceived credibility, in a study concocted in New York, women users were found to have become infected with HIV after a shorter period of injecting than men. This is likely due to order of injecting - taking their hit second, or after all the males have finished. The easiest way to avoid this is by *always* having your own, clean fit.

The study that found women injectors more susceptible to HIV also found that at least 20% of the women users acquired HIV by sexual transmission. Women in monogamous partnerships, even where sex is confined to that relationship, cannot afford to give the condoms a miss when their partners are users, yet sadly, many do not feel empowered enough to insist on safe sex, every time.

Some women users may also be subject to sexual exploitation from dealers and others involved in the procuring of drugs. They may find themselves having to offer sexual favours in order to gain credit from a dealer or to lessen a debt that they may have incurred. Women also enter into relationships with dealers simply to gain access to free or cheap drugs. Sexual abuse suffered during childhood is also an experience many women users share. According to Liz Chaiken, a drug and alcohol counsellor, significant proportions of women with drug problems that present to agencies have had incest or sexual assault experiences (*Connexions*; Vol. 9, No. 1).

The guilt and trauma felt by women in such circumstances is often the trigger for drug or alcohol use, as a means

of coping with the situation. A cybernetic pattern therefore emerges between low self esteem, sexual abuse and drug use and this becomes a cycle which is difficult to break. Especially when general practitioners enthusiastically prescribe tranquillisers and hypnotics for women suffering anxiety and depression, rather than attempting to unbury the root of the problem.

Unfortunately, it will be a distant day when we see equality for men and women as being the 'norm'. Where drug issues are concerned, that day is further away than can be imagined, given that you are discriminated against first because you are a drug user and second because you are a woman. The situation, however, is improving with increased education directed at women users, availability of injecting equipment from needle exchanges and free condoms supplied at health centres.

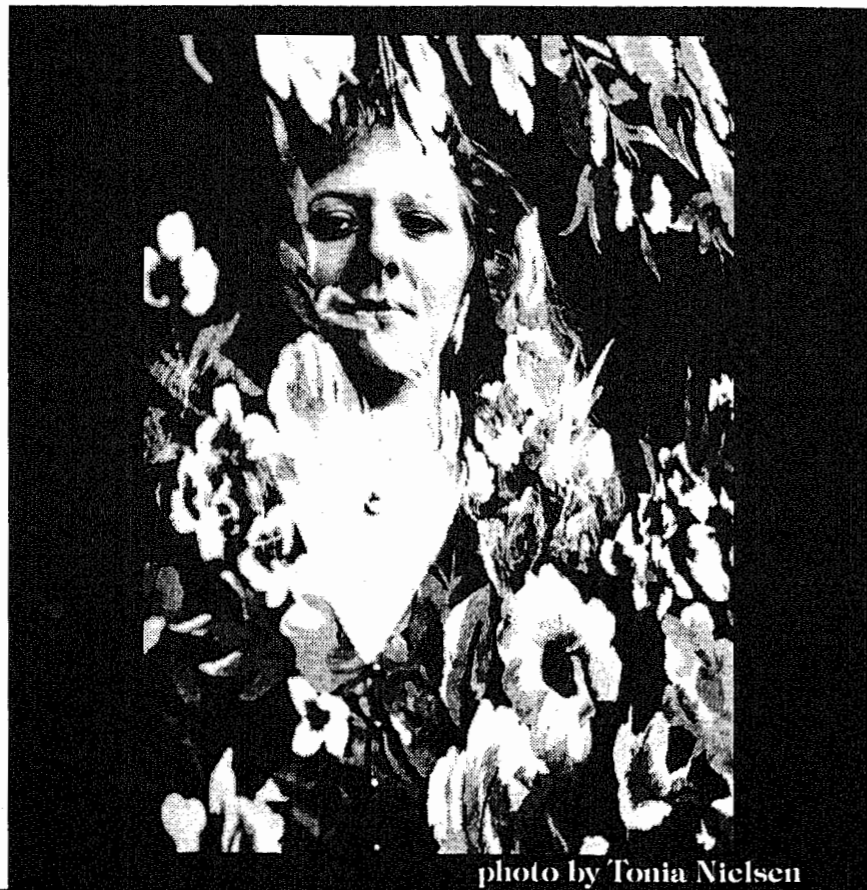


photo by Tonia Nielsen

Women's treatment needs differ from those of men and this issue needs to be addressed further. Detox programs should also look at 'women only' groups which would allow participants a more equal reign of speech and a less intimidating, more empowering environment. The focus needs to rest on giving women back their self esteem and confidence, through special assertiveness training, health issues and life management. And also recognising that the decision to use drugs lies with the individual, not the collective and that the label of social deviant should rest with those who cause harm to others or preferably discarded altogether.

Most importantly, women need to stand up and speak their concerns about their status as drug users and show their discontent and unwillingness to be second class citizens in a society that claims to be a democracy.

Sonja-Jade Tomas

Give us a pint

Some of the most sexist remarks I've heard have been in pubs or, more correctly, sexism appears to be exacerbated at places where alcohol is consumed. Having worked in a hotel for two years, I have had a lot of time and opportunity to observe drunken people's behaviour. Some of it amusing, some of it violent, most of it downright strange. To get a broad overview of the situation, let's go back to the beginning.

Originally pubs were exclusively a male domain. In the 1890's, saloon bars started popping up in hotels for women to sit and natter in. Women were not allowed to purchase alcohol and only allowed to consume it if a male bought it for them. The front bar was taboo for women. It usually looked and smelt like a urinal (and generally still does), and was designed to be functional and a place devoid of domesticity (for men to escape their nagging wives at home). If you look at a pub closely, you'll generally notice that the men's toilets are off the front bar, whilst women's are off the saloon bar indicative of those early days. Civilisation has come pretty far since those archaic times. Women can drink in front bars, although regularly get hassled.

Whilst I feel that there are many more women who are comfortable frequenting pubs, the regular clientele is approximately 85% male for most city pubs (read more for suburban). Many of the female regulars are regarded with curiosity; for a male to be a regular is indicative of a healthy social life, whereas a woman regularly drinking at a pub appears to many as a social outcast. Alcohol consumption is an embedded element of mateship and the Australian male tradition. If a guy refuses a drink, he often is regarded as being a bit of a 'girl' (not that I see any problem in that, yet the term is used in a derogatory sense). Much of the culture of hotels re-

volves around mateship and rounds. Pub sports like darts and pool are male-dominated, women players are usually considered as novelties and not taken seriously.

Getting to specifics, when a bloke and a chick go to the bar together, the bartender usually addresses the bloke. If for instance, I walked into a bar with a guy and ordered a glass of wine and a pint, it would be fairly much guaranteed that the pint would be placed in front of my male friend and I would score the wine. If I ordered an echo of beer, I would be asked if I wanted a glass with it; whereas a guy would not be asked. Which reminds me of a piece of advice I received from my mother when I first started going out. She said she'd be very disappointed in me if she ever saw me drinking out of a stubby (what about a longneck mum?). Ladies drink champagne and fine wine, and if they wear a skirt to certain pubs on Friday evenings, get it for free.

I'd like to say that the situation is improving, but I do not believe that it is. Women who regularly frequent pubs are regarded as sluts, men who do are "good blokes". There is a strange attitude to women who work in pubs, either they're the stereotypical Benny Hill kind of daft woman with large breasts and no apparent brain who pander to the clientele's needs, or they're hard bitches who don't take shit from nobody. Either way, neither extreme conjures up favourable images, the silly women fit into a mould of women as decorative and domestic and the bitches kind of act like try-hard men.

It's the customers who I'm really interested in. There are many amusing incidents that come rushing to mind, although a more tell-tale one must be when a rather "full" woman was sitting at the bar one night. She was drinking stollis with her mates, and was suddenly

possessed with the idea that a complete stranger may want to look at her new bra. She was sitting at the bar with her top half off, flashing her lacy bra around with gay abandon to three lecherous guys who were buying her drinks. I didn't hear anyone calling her a stud. No, it was "that woman is a total slut", even worse people felt sorry for her. When guys drop their pants it's usually considered as a bit of fun by their peers. Why is this so? Aren't women allowed to have a few and a bit of fun? It's not feminine and it's definitely not 'nice'. This stereotype sucks really badly. Women who drink pints or echoes of beer, women who play pool and darts, women who enjoy being barflies; in fact any woman who enjoys going to the pub on a regular basis is labelled a slut and definitely cops a lot of shit about drinking. No one can convince me that it's because of health reasons that women are targeted. I understand fully that due to a smaller body frame women may not be able to drink as much, but that does not justify why women who drink are labelled as sluts.

Is a drunk chick any uglier than a drunk bloke? Many people would say yes, which illustrates the point that pubs are still considered a male domain by most. Women should have the right to be where we want whenever we want, and this includes smelly pubs. Cheers!

Tracy Skehan



I can't mate in captivity

elle
dit

Most women still need a room of their own and
the only way to find it may be outside their own home



Question 1: What's the best thing about being a woman?

photos: Tonia Neilsen



Cass:

- 1) Being able to have sex when you're drunk.
- 2) Oh sure, yes, I think that every new change in society that comes through obviously needs a much more radical group at one end to make sure that the whole of society actually catches up with a view that perhaps happens about twenty years down the track, but I don't think that any of the reforms we've had within the women's movement would have happened without lots of the radical things that happened over the last hundred years, which perhaps wouldn't be deemed as a socially acceptable thing to do but certainly have made a huge difference.
- 3) Well it depends in what context you're talking about, it really does, in a general respect I think they're equal.

Emma:

- 1) Not being a man.
- 2) Well I reckon you should go for it, because, you know, if you don't get it out in public where people can actually see it who's going to know?
- 3) For sure.

Question 2: Does direct action have a place in feminist campaigns?

Question 3: Are women better than men?



Paula:

- 1) In a lot of ways it's easier than being a man. Men seem to do things the hard way a lot. Not because they're stupid but because they think differently.
- 2) Very important, the same as any political campaign. Direct action is necessary. If you look at political campaigns over their history they end up having to use direct action because they're just not listened to until they do.
- 3) Different I would say. Better is probably not a good word, on the whole women are nicer than men, just more in touch with who they are, in a general sort of way.

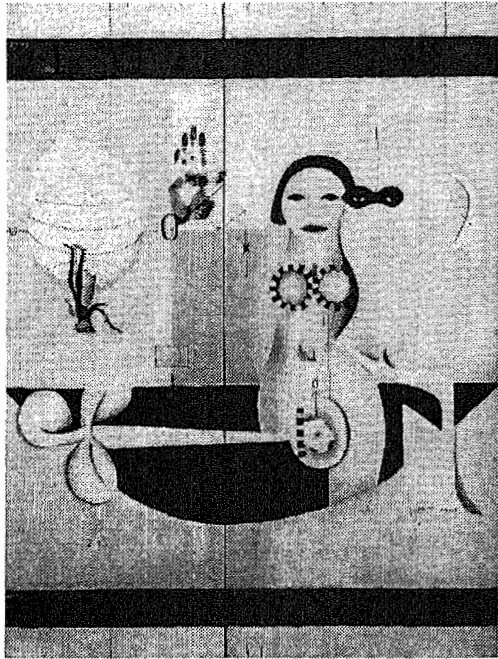
Cassie:

- 1) Going ahead you've got nothing to lose, breaking the barriers. For men, I think they've got to modify their behaviour, but for women its the reverse: just go after what we want.
- 2) I think women showing protest against things they believe in. I think, about those women who protested against the Berlei billboard and were let off by Pat O'Shane, I definately think that's a really good activity for women to be involved in: showing their disdain for the current way they're being treated. Definitely.



The New Look: To Die For

Skin and bone are the latest range in modelling. The super skinny look is now the 'norm' for models and, according to fashion and beauty editors, it is the desired look for all women. However, this shift in body image from early eighties athleticism to waif-like passivity has dire sociological and medical implications.



Model Kate Moss is the epitome of the nineties look, reminiscent of sixties model, Twiggy. Standing at 1.70 m and weighing 44 kilos, Moss is, without question, perilously thin. However, her face and body are the catalyst for the wave of gamine, nubile models who are increasingly peopling the pages of glossy magazines and having a marked effect on the way women look, dress and the way women feel about their bodies.

She is supposed to represent

all women, she is the idealism of beauty but this beauty ideal has undergone a severe masochistic change. This skewed view of beauty glamorises stick-figure, prepubescent, rail-thin and vacant looking models who represent an unattainable ideal for most women.

The controversy surrounding Moss and others like her has raised questions about the validity of the look and asks why western culture wants women to look and feel like prison camp victims. Australia has spent millions in aid to feed the starving victims of Rwanda, yet society constantly tells western women they must be thin to be accepted. A woman's worth is measured by her body.

This is beautiful in western culture and if you fall outside of this acceptable norm then in society's eyes you are marginalised, as all minority groups are, or you are not seen to exist are all, because that would mean facing reality. The fashion, beauty and dieting industries are based on nothing but illusions.

Our society is polarised between success and failure. To be fat is to be a failure which is why the diet industry is big business. Women's tortuous and guilty relationship with eating, weight and body image all stem from the pressures to conform to an unattainable goal. If we do strive to reach the ideal we are promised rewards such as a boyfriend, compliments and other female envy. Any copy of Cleo or Cosmopolitan will illustrate this.

The emphasis in these maga-

zines is on looking good for men and not for personal fulfilment. The female body has become the ultimate symbol of oppression because we are defined by our sex. To be accepted in society, we must conform to popularly held views of female behaviour and image. By denying ourselves food, we are denying ourselves so many opportunities. Our bodies have become our prisons, patriarchy has made certain that the imprisonment is for the term of our natural lives.

Although the image of the ideal beauty has changed over time, there is no doubt that there is one definite ideal - that of the perfect body. It is the common threat among all images that have bombarded women over the years and right now Kate Moss exemplifies that ideal.

Every year there is a new look. Women are constantly reinventing themselves to fit someone else's view of how women should behave and look. We are made to feel dissatisfied with who we are; buying a new outfit, make up or undergoing surgery is supposed to make us happy. What a farce.

Western culture has a very narrow view of beauty, so much so, that it has deleterious effects on the ways women perceive themselves. The strict cultural ideal does not allow for pot bellies, large thighs or pimples, while it does encourage starvation to achieve what other cultures consider ugly and unhealthy.

In John Berger's book, 'Ways of Seeing', he asserts that "... women are depicted in quite dif-

ferent ways to men - not because the feminine is different to the masculine - but because the ... spectator is always assumed to be masculine and the image of women is designed to flatter him."

This is why Moss is presented as weak and passive with a vacant glazed over stare. She forms a significant part of the backlash to women and the advances the women's movement has made over the past century. She is representative of what patriarchy would like all women to emulate - silent, weak, inactive and passive so that men can continue to dominate.

If women, particularly young girls, follow what Moss is telling them through the glossy photographs they too will end up painfully thin or dead and unable to fight for their rights or for jobs and make a positive stand for women.

How can women fight for their rights, let alone even stand up, when their bodies begin to eat away at muscle tissue, including the heart, just to survive.

Every year in America, 150,000 women die from anorexia. This number is not the sole result of media images but they certainly do compound the problem particularly when the average model, today, weighs 23% less than the average woman and the fact that the images that do confront us on every page of 'women's' magazines are constructed images.

The images we see have been retouched, airbrushed, artificially augmented, not to mention the make up and camera techniques. There is no place for veins, bruises, moles or birthmarks, the are all removed. Have a look next

time you pick up a Cleo.

Magazines such as Cleo do nothing to deconstruct the stereotypes of women that exist in society. Thus women will remain trapped by perfection. I do not suggest that magazines are responsible for creating the epidemics of Anorexia and Bulimia, however, they do contribute to women's poor self image. The focus is on the aesthetic appeal of women.

Women are still constructed as sexual objects, to be looked on and judged by others, particularly men. Berger simplifies this by saying that "... men act, women appear. Men look at women. Women watch themselves being looked at."

Kate Moss, as a symbol of beauty, should not be considered as real, rather she is a construct of what society would want us to believe is real. As Ros Coward states in her book, 'Female Sexual Desire', "... somewhere along the line most women know that the image is impossible and corresponds to the wishes of our culture rather than being actually attainable. We remain trapped by the image."

Women remain trapped by the possibility of perfection and being constantly bombarded by images of 'perfect' women. We believe the propaganda that accompanies diet and beauty enhancing advertisements.

All the multi-million dollar industries concerned with women's bodies use guilt to force women into buying products that will waste their money and only further worsen low self esteem and self worth when the products do not deliver the promises the advertisements make.

Guilt is an all-consuming emotion that has been used against women so that women fall into line and conform to the role patriarchy has forced us to play. As women who have the opportunity of attaining a higher education and as women who have let the women's movement down by accepting what we are given, it is time to reclaim our bodies as well as our minds. Women have been objectified for far too long and the result is that it is killing our sisters.

We do not need patriarchal society telling us what we should wear or how we must behave. We should not be made to feel guilty for wanting a career or for going back to work. What we should do is forget the diets that force us to worry about the outside of our bodies and concentrate on making our minds leaner and hungrier, not our bodies.

The images of women like photographs of Kate Moss are used against women, to enslave and entrap women into a vicious and destructive web of self-hate and masochism. Reject these false images and perhaps magazines will print images that are more real and credible.

Patricia Casbarra



Nature has made women with a bosom...
Who are we to argue with nature.

elle
dit

I don't have the time every day to put on makeup.
I need that time to clean my rifle.

elle
dit



The smarter sex

Have you ever noticed how the English language is biased against women? "Why?" do you ask. Probably due to the fact that it was created by man. For example, the word 'bitch'. It used to mean a female dog but now has a totally new meaning which all of us are aware of. 'Bimbo', on the other hand, is only addressed to blonde females and not blonde males. Why? The question remains unsolved. And how about the phrase 'queen control'. 'Queen' literally means wife of a ruler of a country, but queen control has an ugly meaning. And don't forget chairman, fireman, cowboy and mankind which are all sexist.

Enough about language. Let's continue with woman in society. Women have always been known to be the weaker sex. Due to lack of testosterone hormones, yes, they don't have as many muscles as men, but does that mean that they are weak in every sense? Everyone knows that it takes a lot of strength to deliver a baby

and researchers have found that if a man experiences labour pains, he would die due to lack of strength. Another issue to bring up would be the ever-so-famous phrase, "You can't do that because you're a girl and girls aren't allowed to do it." Well, what men can do, women can do better. And remember the phrase, "Behind every successful man there is a woman"? Is the opposite true? Don't think so.

To list all the discrimination women face would take forever. The list is endless because for as long as there will be men and women, there will always be the battle of the sexes. To keep you guys out there thinking (if you do think at all), have a thought about this:

Diamonds are a girl's best friend, while man's best friend is the dog.

Who do you think is the smarter sex? To end this piece of writing, bear in mind that all men might be created equal, but all women are created superior.

Woman as a Wife

Once upon a time there was everygirl. She had an everyfather who worked hard every day at the office. Everyfather usually came home and said, "I'm home. What's for dinner?"

Everygirl had an everymother who usually looked up from the kitchen and said "Hello, dear. Did you have a hard day?" Everymother worked hard cleaning, cooking, mending and all those sort of everywoman tasks. Everygirl was taught these tasks. Her everybrother played Cowboys and Indians outside.

Everygirl was given Brededoll for Christmas. Wouldn't you know, Father Christmas was an everywoman? Everygirl had wanted a spacesuit and a chemistry set.

The years flew for everygirl. She did typing and cooking at school with her everygirl schoolfriends and had a crush on Paul Newman and decided that she liked emeralds better than diamonds.

When she was 21, she became an everywoman like her mother. She met Mr Right. He popped the question and she, of course, said yes. Her everyfather gave her away at the wonderful white wedding. She gave away her name and became Mrs Right. Her brother, now an everyman Doctor, was very proud of her. He hoped she and his everywoman wife would be good friends. Mrs Right quit her job and settled down to being a good everywife. She became an efficient household accountant, an all-purpose, all-occasion cook, a neat, concerned house cleaner, an extra income earner when her everyhusband needed more money and a satisfying sexual object for him. Everywife did all this for all of her everywoman life. By then she knew why her everymother had cried at her wonderful white wedding. But it was too late.

Adapted from: "If I was a Lady".

How is it that the world has always belonged to men?

elle dit

Talented Young Men Sacrificed in the Name of Political Correctness

At the ALP National Conference in Hobart this September the ALP voted unanimously to adopt a rule change to ensure that a minimum of 35% of candidates for safe and



and insulting to women, an outrageous abandonment of the merit principle and quite clearly proof that the lesbian femin-nazis have grasped the ALP firmly by the testicles. Self professed True Believer as I am I would like to explain why I passionately support the 35% quota for women and why this rule change will not see talented young men sacrificed in the name of political correctness.

The horrible facts are that only 14% of our 837 State and Federal Members of Parliament are women. Now unless you are prepared to accept the proposition that only 14% of women are as capable and talented as male candidates, one must come to the conclusion that to have a parliamentary system which is so ludicrously male dominated is not an outcome dictated solely by talent. Women face structural and institutional barriers to preselection

for winnable seats and positions of influence within the party. Whilst social attitudes and expectations are changing they are not changing quickly enough. 100 years ago South Australian women won the right to vote and stand for election but since that time only 24 women have been elected to our State Parliament.

In response to this problem the ALP has not just said "gee isn't it terrible that women are being excluded from our democratic processes"; rather it has decided to take action in order to counteract the disadvantages that women in politics face.

The provision in the party's new rules that at least 35% of all candidates preselected must be women does not mean that women



without talent will be promoted ahead of men of merit simply because of their gender. When people like Chris Gallus suggest that the futures of talented young men in the ALP have been sacrificed in the name of political correctness what they are actually saying is that they don't believe that there are enough groovy women to fill the 35% quota. I strongly disagree, I know that there are heaps of hardworking, intelligent, capable,

innovative, inspiring and committed women in our community and I want to see them representing me in our Parliaments.

One thing is clear; this rule is not about sacrificing talented members of the ALP but about promoting them. The quota system ensures that the ALP draws from the full wealth of talent available and aims both to encourage women to put themselves forward for election and to force the factional leaders and powerbrokers who are predominantly male to begin to foster and support female members of the party.

The ALP's latest rule change is an historic, courageous and exciting one that illustrates the party's commitment to women's representation. The Labor Party has shown yet again that it is a party which is not only founded on principle but one which also operates according to those principles.

Kate Callaghan

LET IT ALL HANG OUT: LET IT SEEM BITCHY, CATTY, DYKEY, FRUSTRATED, CRAZY, SALONESQUE, MAN-HATING, LIBELLOUS, PURE, UNFAIR, ENVIOUS, INTUITIVE, LOWDOWN, STUPID, PETTY, LIBERATING; WE ARE THE WOMEN THAT MEN WARNED US ABOUT

elle dit

You men can't stand the truth: as soon as it embarasses your interests or your pleasure.

NOTES



Recovering from one of her two nose jobs. "It is painful," Cindy admits, but it's also very "more-ish".



IT'S THAT TIME OF YEAR AGAIN
SO WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO
ABOUT YOUR BIKINI LINE?



A new woman is born!



the **life**
makeover

drop a
**dress
size**
by saturday diet

NOTES

I love rock 'n' roll..

to coincide with her trip to Adelaide for the Wimmin, Power and Politics Conference, Joan Kirner spoke at the Exeter last Monday night for 'Politics in the Pub'. She addressed an absolutely packed Exeter beer garden on the topic of whether you can be Left and in the ALP; she seemed very convinced of this fact...

after the communal chorus of *I love Rock n Roll*, Sandy Pitcher, Etain Daniels and Nikki Anderson crowded around to chat with that womyn known simply as 'Joan'.....

ELLE DIT: There has been lots of jubilation about the quotas, but how hard was the actual fight within the party and how long has it been going on?

JK: It's been going a long while, it goes right back to Susan Ryan's experiences, but the thing that really made Carmen Lawrence, Kay Satchers and myself determined to make a change was when we lost government in 1992; we turned around to look for the young wimmin coming behind us, but found we'd lost half of our good wimmin because they'd been marginal seat holders and young wimmin are really pushing uphill to get into a winnable seat in a party. We thought if there was nothing else we should do, as wimmin who'd made it to the top, we had better start to change the rules. We started on a careful analysis of the data: What was the reality of the situation, if we wanted to get there in a decade, 50% we were looking at this

stage, how many guys would have to go, how many wimmin would have to be preselected, then we set our principles, and we anticipated the arguments. This merit argument drives you mad, but you have to keep arguing it. And then we went to the Unions, because you never get anything through a Labor party conference without the support of the Unions, then to the branches and then of course to the media. And that's where my role came in I suppose, because we had to show that it was a community issue, not just a few wimmin who'd made it an issue. So it was pretty hard, the ultimate crucial support was the Prime Minister's support. We lined him up and if he hadn't held fast it might have been harder.

ED: There has been a lot of patting on the back for Keating, in one sense this was reasonable, but in the other do you think it would have been a form of political suicide for him not to back such an obviously popular community issue?

JK: No, I don't. He didn't do it for political reasons. Well, not in that limited political sense. Paul has decided that there are some big issues that need to be addressed by Australian society. One's the Republic, one's reconciliation and we've managed to convince him that the role of wimmin in society is the third. He's getting better all the time in understanding it, and he's now quite firm in his understanding that it's actually part of economic and social justice; and once he understands a

thing, and grasps it, he has a great ability to paint the big picture, and to hang in there and call the other guys to account.

ED: Do you see the fact that the quotas are for winnable rather than safe seats, when it comes to the crunch and men are going to be missing out, it might be a way for some to argue wimmin out of the seats?

JK: Potentially, that's something we have to watch. But there's also the potential that if you're in a winnable seat and it becomes less winnable, if you're really good, you can argue to go to a safer seat. That normally happens with blokes, but doesn't normally happen with wimmin. What's happening with Mary Crawford in Queensland at the moment, is that she's saying 'You look after the blokes in the more marginal seats, by putting them in more winnable seats, why not me?' They're saying 'you're the only person Mary, you can win Ford, you stay in Ford'. Now what's happening is that those arguments are being shown up for what they are. So that's potentially a difficulty, but if we'd gone for wimmin in safe seats only, I just don't think we would have got sufficient wimmin, as there would have been too few seats.

ED: The quotas are part of the ongoing debate about legislation and grass-roots action for and participation of wimmin from lower socio-economic backgrounds. Quotas can be regarded as just an aid

for middle-class wimmin to get into politics, what do you think about that sort of argument, and what would you consider, in order to really implement change for wimmin of other classes?

JK: Well I'm a working class womyn, I came in as a working class wife, or the daughter of a working class family, if becoming a teacher means that you instantly transfer to the middle class, then I instantly transferred to the middle class. But there are wimmin out there in the Union movement, some excellent wimmin organisers, in textile, clothing and footwear, and health, who, if you describe Union organisers as working class, are working class people who've been excellent members, such as Kay Satchers, a shop assistant, so I don't think this argument that it's all middle class professional wimmin is in fact correct. Kay is not a middle class professional womyn, the fact that she looks it now has got nothing to do with where she comes from.

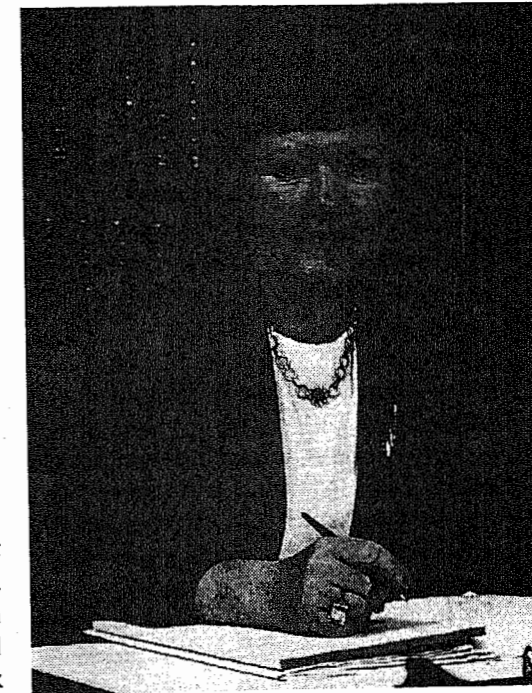
ED: There's no doubt that the ALP is very factionalised, but how strong is the wimmin's caucus within the ALP, and do you think that wimmin should honour their sisters above their faction?

JK: I don't think it works to have a wimmin's faction, but what does work is to have a wimmin's network, which includes all factions, and spreads out to influence back into the factions. I'm also keen to build up a very strong Left wimmin's network. We really do need a strong Left wimmin's network; that's basically the way we got

the quotas through, we had wimmin in the factional negotiations, we had wimmin in the Parliament, we had wimmin as ministers, like Carmen, and we had wimmin in the media; we had a network right around Australia who didn't let the issue drop.

ED: In student politics there is a lot of networking amongst wimmin, but later seem to be dictated to by their male faction. How difficult is it to stand outside your faction?

JK: Almost impossible, except if you're organised to actually impact as wimmin on the factions. We just had a preselection in Victoria and a deal was done about secretaries and assistant secretaries in the Party, which wimmin by and large objected to and we got it modified, but it does



take a lot of effort. It also takes wimmin like myself, who they really can't touch anymore, to actually be there as bulwarks for younger

wimmin who have something to lose, or win.

ED: At Wimmin Power and Politics you mentioned that the things that wimmin traditionally do, such as community activity and motherhood, aren't being recognised in politics; how do you see us changing community attitudes?

JK: I actually think that the community's attitude has changed, what we're not doing is tapping it. The reason that Carmen got a swing towards her in the Fremantle election, which is unheard of in a by-election, was because she was not only a womyn, but a feminist and a community based activist. She displayed the things that the electorate wants; I think what the Party has to realize, is that that's what the electorate wants. It's not a matter of changing the community, it's a matter of linking in with what the community wants. I'm quite sure my new found popularity is related to humanity, listening, common sense, all those things. They can't say to me 'you're not a normal womyn' because I am.

ED: What are your comments on the new agenda for boys, do you think this is indicative of the entire backlash against wimmin?

JK: I'm really excited about feminism, and where it stands at the moment. We've tried to be persuaded, by the media and others that the young ones were going to make it, so all the work we had done, you could forget.

But I actually think there is a third wave of feminism. First wave was the suffragists, getting the tools, the vote; secondly was my wave, the

put another dime..

equal opportunity wave, the sixties and seventies, and we changed a lot of things; sex discrimination act, education for girls, equal opportunity act, commissions, beauracracies. But the third wave, which you young people are a part of, have to be interested in equal power, now that's a very different thing to equal opportunity. And yet nobody gives you power, you have to take it. And you mightn't take it the way blokes do, but you have to take it. Now I've got a different definition of power to a lot of the boys, my view about power is this: that if you enhance the power of other people, you actually enhance the power of the whole society, it's not a winner-loser thing, so that's the first thing about changing power. The other thing that's important about this third wave for feminism is that you're actually going to move from the argument that wimmin are victims of society, to the argument that wimmin are going to be distributors in society. I think those things are really going to change the way society operates, providing we have

the young ones to do it.

ED: How do we instil a want of power in girls and wimmin, as it is normally seen as something undesirable, especially as the power we know is aggressive male power.

JK: The culture of power is very male, what they see on television is very male. I think you have to take models like Cheryl (Kernot), Carmen and myself and say it can be done differently. You couldn't argue that we aren't powerful in some ways, not necessarily successful, but powerful. You can also look at Mary Roblson, the President of Ireland who's doing it differently. Some of these fantastic wimmin overseas, are here at the conference; so I should think you have to look for different models. People often say I'm a good role model, I don't really like the term role model very much, but I have no problem with the way that I or Carmen operate, being analysed as a model, because it does demonstrate you can exercise power in other ways.

ED: Do you yourself have any particular wimmin mentors or role models?

JK: One of my heroines is Jean Blackburn, who is a senior person in Adelaide ranks, and an economist and educator of considerable repute. And what she taught me was, one, the stories I didn't know about the feminists of the '20s and '30s and it's very important for wimmin like myself to pass onto wimmin like you, the kind of untold stories of our history. The second thing she showed me was that if you want to be suc-

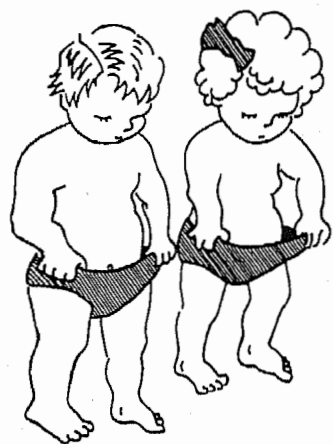
cessful in society, you have to understand economics. You don't have to have economics dominate your life, but you must be able to integrate environment, economics and social justice.

ED: I heard you were once a member of the communist party..

JK: No, I had a heap of friends who were in the communist party, who either haven't joined a political party, or are active in, say, civil libertarian movements and stuff. In fact my father worked for the Australian Defence Industry, and when my best friend at school was a member of the communist party, and her father was a member of the communist party, I came home one night and dad said, "Are you really good friends with June?" and I said, "Yes" "Oh that's interesting" he said, "I got a visit from the security police today wanting to check on your new found friendship with June" and I said, "Oh really, what did you say to them?" and he said, "I told them to get lost." I said, "Good"!

ED: On the Republic, there's been talk of the Bill of Rights, how important do you see that for wimmin?

JK: I'd very much like to see equality for wimmin in the constitution. A Bill of Rights is pretty hard to get, in the sense that you get this real tension between the individual and the collective, and everytime Bill of Rights comes up, you get the kind of debate we had on whether we should sign the UN declaration on the rights of the child. So one of the things, when we were doing the centenary stuff, people started talk-



"OH! THAT EXPLAINS THE DIFFERENCE IN OUR WAGES"

The best man for the job,
is very often a womyn.

elle
dit

in the jukebox baby.

ing about a Charter, rather than a constitutional bill, which would actually have rights and responsibilities in it. I think they are really quite complicated things. Our experience with referenda is that they're damn hard to get through, almost impossible, especially for a Bill of Rights, so I'd like to see some simpler things, like prior ownership of land for Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders, recognition of Aboriginal people as part of our society, and equality for wimmin, separation of church and state, some of the most basic things ought to be in our constitution. A lot of people would like a preamble, which actually says who we are and what we are as a Nation, something like the American Declaration of Independence, which by the way is not in, but separate from, their constitution. I think we could do with something that actually says who we are.

ED: As wimmin we could argue that abortion laws which make the punishment imprisonment are against our rights..

JK: Yes, but what I'm saying is we don't need a Bill of Rights for that, I think we could insert that particular right. The three rights we really need in the constitution are those on sexual preference, the right of equality of wimmin and the right of prior ownership of Aboriginal people, for recognition. I think you'd probably get all three of those through.

ED: So it does become a matter of what is going to get passed?

JK: Yes. And what I keep saying to the Prime Minister is that we really

need to get these discussions with the people, because we won't get a change unless we do, and the exciting thing is that people are ready for change; much more ready for change than 10 years ago, so if we could just get a decent process, we'd be in business.

ED: Republic is definitely out there and it's being spoken about..it hasn't been seen as something specifically for wimmin, but with people like you and Glenda Jackson pointing it out, hopefully that will change.

JK: Yes, I hope so; but gee she's got some great one-liners: "why did you join the Labour party Glenda?"... "Thatcherism"!

ED: Have you any intentions to move into Federal politics at all?

JK: No, I decided that one political career was enough, in Parliament. I was very keen for Carmen to go into it. I've actually been involved in politics, active politics, since 1969 and I just thought another 5, 10 years in parliamentary politics would not be

the best use of the things I've learnt. I mean if I was still in the Opposition, I wouldn't be sitting here with you, because I wouldn't have the time. So I think I've made the right decision, I think Carmen's made the right decision, she's only been in Parliament 6 years or so, half the time I have, and although she was very active in WEL [wimmin's electoral lobby] in the seventies, she went back into normal life and then came back into politics, so I think I've made the right decision, and besides, we've got this rule and you can all get in now!

ED: Can we just ask for predictions for Australia's first womyn Prime Minister, or Head of State?

JK: I'd love to see Carmen as our first Prime Minister, but I'd don't think we should put that on her. A lot depends on the timing etc. But if not...it won't be Bronwyn and I think it will be Labor and I think we have to make sure that this next group of wimmin coming in has a number of wimmin with clear potential.



lead me not into temptation,
I can get there myself

elle
dit

49

Why I Hate Oprah

It's not the screaming housewives from Oregon. It's not the desperation of 'my hair is bigger than your hair'. It's not even the wonder diets or the shock of the fundamentallst go-go dancer or the do-it-yourself burger recipes or the alien birth blackmail stories.

It's something worse.

What I hate about Oprah is the smiling, nodding, goddamned sincerity of it all. The *Oprah Winfrey Show* has what its competitors Donahue and Sally Jessy Raphael lack: the overwhelming aura of niceness. Oprah's role as talk-show host is equivalent to that of the narrator in *Peter and the Wolf*, but with shiny gold jewellery and a slightly more developed social conscience. By comparison, Sally Jessy's voice is a little too abrasive and her show, like Donahue's, has edged further and further towards a Ripley's Believe-It-Or-Not approach (the "Oh my GOD" format). By contrast, Oprah has played down this aspect and concentrated on the Old Faithful bugbears of the Family, the Fuck, the Food and the Finance.

Oprah is also a living example of the new Afro-American wealth. This is perhaps one of the most interesting aspects of her show. Oprah frequently features successful 'buppies' (black yuppies!) as panel guests - and presumably as positive social role-models. It seems, at least in urban America, that middle-class Afro-Americans are now 'accepted' by white middle-class Americans. That's in contrast to the continuing racism against those Afro-Americans who are working class. It's a situation comparable to Australia, where racism against Italian and Greek im-



migrants has subsided now that those communities are established and moving up the social scale. Money brings respectability. The people you don't see in Oprah are Asian and Spanish-speaking migrants - the new and impoverished urban working class. Oprah isn't about to smash established class and race prejudices.

What Oprah Winfrey does is to bring a more personal aspect to the vicious Circus Maximus of the talk show. Personal aspect? Well, she institutes in her show the careful construction of the Oprah mythology. Let's face it, in the cult of personality stakes Queen Elizabeth 1st had nothing on Oprah. Like no other

talk show host, Oprah has 'welcomed' viewers into her life. If she doesn't exactly rate as hip, Oprah scores big time on the smoothness scale, in manufacturing a reality more finely cut, sliced and diced than a Demtel Rap-Tou. With clever use of 'behind the scenes' footage, a supposedly off-the-cuff (and therefore 'real') atmosphere is created. We are promised that we're seeing "the other side" to the show. To this



end we meet people who have inspired our heroine, such as poet Maya Angelou and singer Patti Labelle. We see the places where she holidays, we meet her crew, her friends and her husband. We've even seen shots of Oprah prior to her make-up do. Most of all,

we've shared the story of her battle with her weight. All these things combine to create the image of a woman who is 'more than an image'.

That's something else Oprah has over her main competitor Phil Donahue - the very fact that she is a woman. In the eye of society, as reflected in the media, women as a group (and men as a group, for that matter) are endowed with certain 'innate' characteristics. In fact, talk shows gorge themselves sick on this sentimental essentialism. Specifi-

cally, women are presented as being more caring, more sensitive, more nurturing. In my view, Oprah has successfully played up to this image: from lowering her voice when introducing ad breaks to a more involved, confidential attitude towards interviewees and panel (C'mon, tell Oprah all about it.) For "Oprah" read "Momma". Most of all, the fact that her audience is overwhelmingly female means that Oprah can get away with this "I'm a woman too, we're all girls together" line.

In short, what Oprah has done is to create an acceptable image of the All-American Woman. Yes, she's a successful career woman, and as such a real groundbreaking role-model for other women.

However, she's also deeply conservative: God-fearing; anti-drugs, pro-nuclear family. Importantly, she's got that anchor of respectability Murphy Brown hasn't: the Hubby.

People often argue that the equally (in)famous Madonna is totally in control of the images that she presents in the media. They say that she plays with images but is not controlled by them. I would question that view. The point about the media is that it is not the message itself that is important but the way in which it is received. The creators of the message cannot control how it will be read and understood. However, society functions using a shifting system of cultural codings - a system of ideas, prejudices, superstitions and stereotypes; and the media communicates to its audience by tapping in to that established system. Thus once someone decides to participate in the media they have already made concessions and already absorbed "acceptable" codes of imaging and representation. Ultimately, Oprah Winfrey is a pawn of the traditional images of "womanhood" she invokes.

It is outside the scope of this article to suggest ways in which women might subvert or make war on the stereotypes framed in the gleaming eye of the telly. I have tried instead to just point out some ironies and inconsistencies in the Oprah philosophy. So next time you settle in with the Tim Tams for a hard afternoon's viewing, ask yourself why it is you're watching Oprah. Is it because you relate to it so well (Helloooooo, Philadelphia!). Is it because nothing on God's earth could force you to sit through *Rafferty's Rules*, or do you just like her hair?

Catherine Howell

1. 'Buppies' is not my term. It's used in "March of the buppies", *The Face*, no. 31, April, 1991

i am lesbian

i am what my parents most feared
 i am what you tried to wipe from her-story
 i am the love that dares to speak
 i am what yr children run from
 i am what you'd like to silence
 i am what you laugh at, ridicule, ignore
 i am lezzo, queer, dyke
 i am an expression of resistance
 i am dying of aids in a hospital ward
 i am kissing my lover in a shopping mall
 fucking her in the park
 i am what you legislate against
 i am out of control
 i am out
 i am angry
 i am violent
 i am visible
 i am defiant
 i am what makes you cringe
 i am behind you in the dole queue, supermarket,
 bank
 i am what you're blind to
 i am playing pool in some smoky back room bar
 i am sleeping with yr wife/girlfriend/mother/
 daughter
 i am a mechanic
 nurse
 kindergarten teacher
 headmistress
 netball coach
 tv presenter
 librarian
 actor
 poet
 i am sitting across the room from you
 i am sick of having yr culture shoved at me
 i am 7, 15, 23, 38, 45, 59, 69, 78, 92, 114
 i am yr next door neighbour
 i am not yr good womyn, young lady, sweet heart,
 luv or dear
 i am fed up with yr conceit & destruction
 i am misrepresented on tv shows
 i am acting up in san francisco
 i am lesbian

THE EIGHTIES ARE BACK...

The Australian weekly paper, *Campus Review*, is a pretty dull read, designed to keep academics in touch with their profession. In an effort to boost advertising and readership, 'A Special CAMPUS REVIEW Report' on Postgraduate education in Australia and New Zealand was compiled and accompanied the September 8-14 issue. The articles and assertions in that little survey are worth analysing, but we'll save that for another time. What annoyed me most when I first skimmed through the supplement was the advertisement for 'postgrad education at Adelaide'.

In case you are fortunate enough not to have seen this sad ad, let me describe it for you. A blond, well-built, young Anglo-Celtic man is doing a fair imitation of the Rocky Horror Picture Show's well-known

'pelvic thrust'. He is dressed conservatively in nice trousers, nice shirt, nice tie and academic gown. He clutches his testamur (the piece of paper that they give you at graduation) upright in one of his clenched-with-joy fists. He is clearly STOKED at the thought of postgrad study at Adelaide. He is the Aryan Wunderkind, a young man that Alex Keaton (Michael J. Fox's yuppie character on *Family Ties*) would be proud of. Heck, I'll bet he's a member of the ALP Right. The photo was taken against the background of the Cloisters. Four large, smooth, strong pillars aiming skywards. Now it is a pretty cheap shot to deconstruct an image for its phallicism (after all, anything that's longer than it is wide can be dubbed 'phallic') but it's so much fun... So bear with me.

Before we go any further let me make it clear that this article is not a personal attack on the young man in the picture. He is probably a very nice person. What is not very nice is the way an image has been created from his appearance that ignores the variety of people who undertake many differing courses of postgraduate study. It is a real shame that Graduate Studies got this ad so wrong. The impression the ad gives is that postgraduate education is strictly vocational, related primarily to commerce or business or maybe very 'clean' high-tech industry. Postgrad education means that you (the white male middle class student) will be able to dress conservatively and make lots of cash. Sorry to shatter Grad Studies' illusions, but the eighties are over. The State Bank collapsed, Bondy's in jail and John Elliot's not far behind. This ad ignores the lessons of contemporary Australian history and seems stuck in a time-warped attitude that higher education is about learning how to sell for selling's sake. Not quite guys. Although this ad is not explicitly about the wonders of doing an M.Comm., that is its subtext, whether by accident or design. It is striking to compare it with an ad that appeared in the same lift-out from New Zealand's Massey University that was advertising the MBA program they offer. Another caveat: there is nothing wrong with doing an MBA or a similar business-oriented course, but that's not all that you can do as a postgrad at Adelaide, this is a point that the advertisement fails to make. An ad that was more

Yes! I'm doing my postgrad education at Adelaide.

At the University of Adelaide they know that getting the right academic program is probably the single most important investment you can make.

At Adelaide for your postgraduate education, you'll find the right choice.

Adelaide offers both teaching and research for the highest quality of education and reputation for excellence.

Adelaide gives you the chance to build a bright future.

If you'd like to find out how to do your postgraduate education at the University of Adelaide, contact:

The Registrar, Graduate Studies
The University of Adelaide
Adelaide, South Australia 5005
Telephone (08) 303 5882 Facsimile (08) 231 2311
(Email: etob@registry.adelaide.edu.au)

International applications welcome.
Director of Graduate Studies
Institutional Development
Tel: (08) 303 5882

WHO IS THE ARYAN WUNDERKIND???

AN MBA: BETTER THAN SEX

UNIVERSITY OF ADELAIDE
SOUTH AUSTRALIA



I have a brain and a uterus, and I use both.

elle dit

AND THEY'RE WOMEN-FREE

successful in its representation of postgrad study is the one from Lincoln University (another NZ uni). The caption 'learning is a life

long experience' is a neat motherhood statement, but also credits the person contemplating postgrad education with aspirations beyond their bank balance.

David Green thought an MBA was out of the question. Until we told him about all the options.

Multi-Modal MBA Programme
You know the adjectives used to describe the MBA? Well, we've added a new one: 'flexible'. The Multi-Modal MBA is designed to give you the best of both worlds. You can choose to study full-time or part-time, and you can choose to study on-campus or off-campus. This means you can fit your MBA around your work and lifestyle.

Full-time MBA
If you want to complete your MBA in the shortest time possible, the full-time MBA is the way to go. You'll spend three years studying full-time, and you'll graduate with your MBA in three years.

Executive MBA
If you're a busy professional, the Executive MBA is the perfect choice for you. You'll study part-time, and you'll be able to continue working while you study. The Executive MBA is designed to give you the skills and knowledge you need to advance your career.

Modular MBA
If you want to study at your own pace, the Modular MBA is the way to go. You'll study in modules, and you can complete your MBA in as little as 18 months.

Lincoln University
The University of Lincoln is a leading provider of postgraduate education. We offer a wide range of postgraduate courses, and we're committed to providing you with the highest quality of education.

'Learning is a life long experience. I'm planning my postgraduate studies at Lincoln University.'

Lincoln University is a leading provider of postgraduate education. We offer a wide range of postgraduate courses, and we're committed to providing you with the highest quality of education.

LINCOLN UNIVERSITY

The Simpsons. (At least, that's what I think I remember doing.)
Katharine Thornton

— London, Without Her

She flew over Piccadilly Circus. Bjork was in her ears and deep spirit in her heart. As she danced up Regent Street, past the sign to Carnaby Street, she thought of oceans and the tears. She wondered whether love was always like this, left on the other side, and inaccessible. The very love which swelled her veins and caught her throat was now languishing somewhere between here and home. She nodded to Eurostudents flogging their English lessons at Oxford Circus, she went underground and stared at walls of colour before being moved on by a spindly black man in a baggy blue uniform for loitering. He had too many grey hairs and bloodshot eyes. She thought she ought to go to Chinatown, it would ground her. Bok-choy and bandy-legged guys scratching. She window shopped for sticky buns, lotus seed and red bean. She trailed through racks of Mandarin newspapers and smelt the gun-powder tea. She sat with pigeons in Leicester Square and fed the tourists. She tried to imagine Royal Galas at the Odeon, but all she saw were wire billboard stripes, no stars. She cantered to St Martins-in-the-Fields where someone pressed a Democratic flyer in her hand and Bach would be live that evening, but she still could not get used to the empty-stepped South African embassy. Trafalgar Square was glassy and a lone man was coming to Jesus as Spaniards bought Italian ices. Not a crucifix in sight. She thought how nice London would be if the sun shone more often, like this. She lay down on the cool flanks of a lion, Bjork's keyboards descending chords, and wished with all her tiny might that she could somehow know.

Sarah Zetlein

elle dit

The only job for which no woman is or can be qualified is sperm donor.



Women & NUS

NUS Women's Convenors Report

National Union of Students (NUS) is an organisation which presents the interests of students to the State and Federal Government. When you begin the University year you pay an amount to your student organisation of which \$4.30 is given to NUS; this makes you all affiliate members of NUS

NUS exists and represents on two levels. Firstly there is the National NUS Branch, then there is the State NUS Branch. Several Departments exist within NUS South Australia. The department pertinent to this special edition of *Elle Dit* is the NUS SA Women's Department.

The Women's Convenor position involves distributing material from the National NUS Office (based in Melbourne) across South Australian campuses. This material is decided upon by the NUS National Women's Committee which meets four times a year. Regular meetings are held with campus Women's Officers and committee members to orchestrate these campaigns cross campus. My position enables me to represent you on committees such as United Nations Status of Women, Coalition for Women's Right to choose and Australian Women's Education Coalition.

Our most recent campaign was the Safety On Campus Week 1st-5th August, initiated by NUSSA. The Yellow Ribbon Campaign was the most prominent event of this week. Students had the opportunity to place a yellow ribbon on a board displayed on their campus if they knew of a woman who had been sexually assaulted or raped. We aimed to raise awareness on these vitally important issues which are usually ignored and deemed as a personal issue occurring in the private sphere. The statistics highlight that sexual assault and

rape primarily occur in the private sphere but it is commonly believed that these statistics are not indicative of the unreported cases of abuse within the home.

We decided to show the public in Rundle Mall the frightening number of ribbons collected on campuses in South Australia. We also provided a board for the public to place ribbons. In the hour and a half we were there, over a hundred ribbons were placed by men and women who passed the display. This simple yet extremely powerful display will be shown in several local shopping centres; all the boards will be collected and displayed in the Mall at 3.00 pm Friday, 28th October in conjunction with "Reclaim the Night". These boards will encourage women to attend the rally which enables women to actively express their concern with the violence women and children experience in today's heteropatriarchy.

Also occurring on campuses was the re-launch of *Thursdays in Black*, so, please wear black on Thursday and purchase a badge from the Students' Association to support the fight demanding a world without rape and violence.

The NUSSA Women's Department has also been actively involved in lobbying and rallying the state and federal governments regarding the provision of safe, accessible and affordable abortion for women. In order to gain access to abortion, a woman requires a medical certificate saying that she is mentally unfit and physically unable to care for a child. This act exists under Criminal Law Legislation. For many women, the struggle to gain access to abortion continues due to lack of services and financial difficulties. It is important that the government recognises these issues and provides more services so that all women have a choice over their own bodies.

The most recent event organised by the NUS Women's Department was the Student Conference "The Getting of Wisdom: the political skills of the next

generation", held at the University of Adelaide. Originally designed to incorporate ideas and issues from the "Women, Power and Politics" conference it was restructured when it was apparent that many women would not attend due to the concession prices being too expensive. Thus we structured the the conference to focus on issues pertinent to students.

A dinner prior to the conference was held on Tuesday 11th, October with speakers Dale Spender and Eleanor Ramsay, Pro-Vice Chancellor (Equity) of the University of South Australia. This was a huge success with the speakers discussing femocrat and intellectual feminism, the establishment of Women's Studies and the need for women, especially student women, to access information technology. Women must not be left behind in this predominantly male area and instead we should access the internet and electronic mail as they provide endless opportunities for women via information available nationally and internationally.

Wednesday's programme was equally successful with speakers from all areas: politics - Anne Levy, Law - Robyn Layton, QC, Unions - Jude Elton, Community Activist - Deborah McCulloch, Women's Electoral Lobby, Student Politicians - Sabina Nowak (SAUA WSC member), Women in the Curriculum - Professor Caroline MacMillan and the final address by well known feminist author, lawyer and researcher - Jocelyne Scutt.

It is a rather exhaustive list of campaigns, rallies and petitions in which we have been actively involved this year. All Women's Officers and committee members have had high participation and enthusiasm rates on campus. This level of commitment will continue to the end of the year with the other events occurring cross-campus.

If you are interested in attending any meetings or would like more information please contact me at NUS SA on 410 0114.

Mel Wheeler
NUS SA Women's Convenor

Women's Standing Committee

Sandy Pitcher
Women's Officer

Julia Davey
WSC
Union Board

Natasha Yacoub
1995 On Dit Editor
WSC

Kym Taylor
WSC
ESC
SAUA Council

Sabina Nowak
Union Board
WSC



• WSC is made up of the Women's Officer and four general members elected at the SAUA elections.

• We are going to be meeting fortnightly, and the meetings are completely open to all interested women (just contact the SAUA for details).

• NOWSA (National Organisation of Women's Students in Australia) annual conference is in Melbourne 1995. The WSC is planning to raise money in badge and T-shirt sales, food stalls and other groovy ideas (yet to be determined). Let us know any money earning scams.

• Look out for heaps of new events happening in 1995. Blue Stocking Week, International Women's Day, Women and the Law Week are all coming up next year, and we're planning to have heaps of educational awareness events as well as fun women's only celebrations.

• Look out for the new women's information board in the cloisters with up to date information about women's events on and off campus.

I never married because I have three pets at home that answer the same purpose as a husband

elle dit

A woman's work is never done - by men.

Not a tutu bird

Talking to Andrea Rienets is entering a "no bull-shit" zone. She is passionate about her work and fights against the constraints society's structure imposes on us and will not compromise herself, or her work, to fit into a pigeonhole. Her gigs are early evening, smoke-free and "safe": audience members are asked to introduce themselves to their neighbours so there is a feeling of sharing an experience rather than mere voyeurism. Though her rambling and storytelling was born out of a lack of confidence as a performer, they're now one of her strengths, and her wit and one-liners are often praised by reviewers. Although she comes across as confident and strong, she confesses to the usual insecurity and fears.

Her background in the arts is as extensive as it is varied. She was taught classical piano, taught herself guitar and studied opera singing and jazz drumming at college. She has worked as an actor, a drummer, (with group *Temple Dance*) and a sound engineer. When she came to Adelaide in 1989 her first job was working on the Festival as a sound engineer. She is a voice teacher and conducts voice workshops, a performer, a music and theatre composer (she also free-lances for groups like *Vitalstatistix*) and musical director of contemporary choir *Before You Were Blonde*. Her's is definitely a full-time job.

Andrea appears on stage with a computer which is weird when you see her perform for the first time. She worked with a band when she performed at the *Fringe Festival* but prefers working with her computer because her busy lifestyle doesn't al-

low her band rehearsal time and the computer gives her freedom to interact more with audiences. Although she's concentrating on feeling more comfortable with her computer she says, "I feel a bit dicky with the computer, it's a bit like karaoke!"

Her heart is with contemporary popular music. "I'm really embarrassed to say it but the books that I bought when I was teaching myself guitar were John Denver...so (my music is) the folksy, sorta moochy stuff...I was a big *Countdown* kid." She also has a track on the CD *Not Just a Pretty Face* which is a compilation of South Australian women artists.

Andrea prefers looking at problems as challenges and says that a lot of what she has done has been a reaction to the dictates that are offered. "However, because she is such a full-on performer, (and person!) some people, like Peter Goers, are unsure as to how to take her. (Goers wrote a scathing review on her Fringe show implying that she was arrogant and egotistical.) I want to impress on you that she is unmistakably sincere and professional under her banter.

"The information I keep getting back from the mainstream music industry is that they don't know where to put me...it's like, well that's your problem, it's not mine! Rock music in one of the most conservative industries around and the shame of it is that it thinks it's so radical, but it's conservative in that it's... homophobic, it's racist a lot." Have you encountered any sexism. "With the language on feminism now, sexism is so subtle. It's along the lines

of 'you're a difficult woman if you expect to come in here and lay down some terms and negotiate.' There's a lot of double language...they invite you into a vulnerable position and stuff around."

"You don't assume that people know what to do with you...let's not pretend we're mates here, let's not set each other up in this fake-friendship...let's put it on paper. Let's do business. Let's keep it really clear and let's know what the expectations are and let's honour them - both ways. So I'm learning fast about that, 'cos every time I do something I evaluate it; what worked, what do I want more of, and what do I want less of."

I ask Andrea whether she feels that the women who are successful in the music industry have to be very strong. "Yeah...what I really hope for myself is that what that doesn't translate to be is hard; that to succeed you need to be hard. Again, I think that's about the definition of strength...it's about flexibility and it's about standing ground that respects other people and acts from personal integrity...the women that survive are the women that are really connected with the path that they are on and that's a strength, that's a spiritual strength, and to resist being hard is a spiritual practice."

One of the things Andrea feels very strongly about is working with a supportive team. "A lot of people in the music business aren't there for the performers because they're not there for themselves...it's interesting - to work with people you've got to work on that relationship...in some ways the music is almost sec-



ondary; it comes out of the care and the protectiveness (sic) you give each other."

"I really love working with women...my experience with women, which is not rosy by any means, is that there is an acceptance on some level, at some time, that there needs to be a communication. That is not my experience with men. There's often a sense that wanting clear, detailed communication means that I'm a worrier or pushy, and given that the music industry is almost completely male, that's the agenda: don't be neurotic; don't be emotional; get on with the job."

However, Andrea says that al-

though the music industry is male-dominated, she doesn't feel dominated. "I don't live with a daily sense of being dominated by men. I'm an independent artist who negotiates a product in a market place. But I'm learning how to set the boundaries of where I invite people into my work. I no longer open wide the door and say 'come in, let's be a partnership.' I've stopped waiting for the white knight to come and take me to a far better place - pretty ironic for a lesbian, eh?"

One of Andrea's most popular songs is "Tutu Bird" which is about how she (and women) are told that they are too fat, too loud, too ugly, too skinny, too emotional and so on, and how you have to strive to be free of all this. "When I was writing this song I knew I was opening up something really deep. I was on holidays in Port Elliot for three days and I just sat in my room and did it...I'm a bit loathe to talk about it, I mean it's my story, all the information's there - about being breech-birth - being yanked out and being born in Shepparton (who's) nickname is 'ugly town.' The picture is (of) that savage bird of prey...this primal force...it's the most shameful thing to see a wild spirit

trapped." Can this be related to the things society imposes on women? "Yeah, like the cage of the word 'feminine' and what it means to be 'feminine,' instead of the power of The Feminine which is the power to heal and the power to cut through the bull-shit."

One of Andrea's recent coups was supporting Janis Ian who she has long admired. "She's a lovely woman...there's a vibration in her songs that really moves me." As a 16 year old, Andrea went to a Janis Ian gig and inspired by her, decided that that was what she wanted to do. "I felt very deeply: I'm going to do that...here at 31, fifteen years later, I got the support!" Although there were problems on the night and Andrea refers to it as a learning experience, the feedback on her performance is definitely positive.

Right now Andrea has more than enough to keep her busy. Beside her choir, teaching and free-lancing commitments, recently Andrea has also had a series of gigs called *Open Chequebook concerts*. Her aim is to raise enough money to produce her debut CD early next year. Studio musicians will be used and Micheal Turrell (of SAs *Indie* CDs) will be producing it. She's also writing an original piece called *Blush* for the *Comeout Festival* in 1995. *Blush* will be like a "film score without visuals" and will involve 30-voice choir *Before You Were Blonde* performing live. "The concept of the word *Blush* is that it's about things that are so evocative in your own experience that you blush...also the different edges of that - moments that are shameful, not just the embarrassment, but also the shameful and the sexual blush - all the different ways we blush."

This is one woman to look out for!

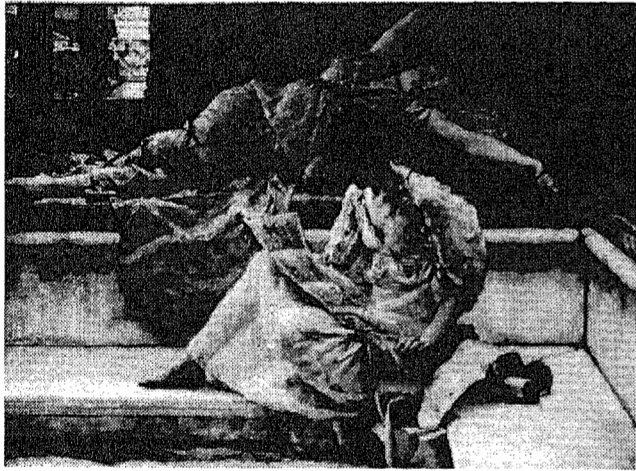
Christina Soong

Bigamy is having one husband too many.
Monogamy is the same.

elle
dit

I've got a woman's ability to stick to a job and get on
with it when everyone else walks off and leaves it

The Core of Her the Female Bestseller in the Twentieth Century Desire



We are living in an era when the term 'bestseller' is used for novels before they have a chance to prove their profit-making ability: no wonder, then, that the growing interest surrounding the market for these so-called bestsellers shows no sign of abating.

Narrowing the term 'bestseller' down to 'female bestseller' still leaves much to be covered, as millions of female bestsellers are sold every year — from the contemporary romances spiced up with mystery and adventure to the "bodice-ripping" yarns of historical novels. The question to be asked is simply *why* are these novels — often so formula-adherent that they read just like the last one you read except his name is now *x* and her name is now *y* and they are frolicking madly at *z* — still so insanely popular? The female bestseller has been around for nearly a century and was preceded by more of the same in the form of the Gothic novel and the 'domestic' novel.

Perhaps *why* is not the question that the publishers are asking, for fear that their license to print money will vanish in a puff of common sense if/when women wake up to the pulp that they so eagerly devour. *How* to exploit the market appears to be the publishers' preferred query; so much so that a company such as Harlequin Enterprises has devoted much of its profit and time into digging further into the female psyche as they attempt to both persuade new consumers to buy their

romance series, and to maintain their current audience. Unfortunately, Harlequin's forays into the female psyche do not extend beyond an attempt to discover where their displays will attract most attention and which time during mid-morning, talk-show-infested television will guarantee the most viewers. In reality (in this case, the corporate world), Harlequin have little reason to survey women on issues any deeper than these, because the huge profits from their novels show that the company is providing a product with which the consumer is more than happy; in fact, Harlequin rarely has a book returned. This is where I would expect some difficulty to arise: considering the enormous changes that women have experienced this century, the format of the female bestseller and romances such as Harlequin have not shadowed this change. In short, I believe that women have moved on, and even though 'popular fiction' has stopped short of changing, it is still as popular as ever.

Fortunately, there has been a number of literary critics who have not felt it beneath them to delve into the deeper issues which Harlequin avoids: what is it within the content of the female bestseller which would encourage a woman to read what is essentially the same story over and over again? What archetypes are used that seem to communicate so well with the bestseller's female market? Is reading a female bestseller escapism, merely a reliable form of entertainment, or is it a cathartic wish-fulfilment process?

The Formula

John Cawelti places the female bestseller somewhat apart from the likes of Harlequin romances, defending that there is "no such thing as a formula for bestselling novels", but admitting that there is a certain type novel which consistently enjoys the status of bestseller and so features as "bestselling formulaic type". Surely this is appears as merely wordplay, especially since the plots of bestsellers can be generalised with ease — and sufficiently generalised to allow forms of satire to exist. Indeed, it is the formulaic nature of these novels which contributes to their success in the marketplace, as the

type of novel they are is displayed prominently via the series or the author. Formula romances focus on promotion of a series rather than individual novels; rarely is the author's name and/or the title of the romance displayed in advertisements, but the series name is used and, naturally, the name of Harlequin dominates. Buying a Harlequin romance is like ordering a steak in a restaurant: you're able to opt for rare, medium or well-done and then get pretty much what you expected unless the chef happens to be exceptional — but remember, Harlequin doesn't aim to be exceptional. The difference with female bestsellers is that they rely on the author's name rather than any one publishing house or any one plot attraction, so the author's name is a primary focus with the novel's promotion.

The Cover

With what has become mandatory uniform for bestsellers, they appear on large cardboard display racks with a cover boasting the AUTHOR'S NAME and, if there is enough space, the title. The likes of Danielle Steele, Barbara Taylor Bradford and Jackle Collins take great delight in this format, and in the same way that the series name works for selling formula romance, the author's name sells the bestseller. When a woman buys a Danielle Steele novel she knows exactly what reading experience she is purchasing because she has purchased it, or one like it, before. With a formula romance, the rules are a little different and allow for more interesting — and delightfully tacky — covers. Following in the footsteps of the covers of Gothic novels (which invariably feature a young, frightened girl in flowing gown escaping towering, menacing castle, possibly in a thunderstorm), the covers of the formula romance feature a portrait depicting the events inside. Of course, this means 99% of Harlequin covers show a woman sinking into the arms of her chosen man — both white, middle-aged, middle-class and *clothed*, thank you.

The Content

Female bestsellers and formula romances, without fail as far as I am aware, centre around the experiences of women; consistently written from the 'heroine's' point of view. Even with a great amount of displacement in time and location, the content is not usually unsettling because of the link between the novel's 'voice' and the reader. Bestsellers may be located continents away and five hundred years ago but the author will always permit the heroine a certain contemporary flair which would presumably have been unheard of, and which provides the link between content and reader. With this link preventing the novel from becoming too difficult to relate

to, the novel can then utilise the advantage offered by a displaced time and location as a forum for repressed desires and wish-fulfilment.

The women in these novels do not offer the reader any new role model but rather adhere to the same archetypes which have proven successful. Thankfully there has been some change in this department since bestsellers have been hitting the shelves: as Carol Thurston points out, the "female persona is no longer split between two archetypal female characters: the plain-naïve-domestic-selfless-passive-chaste heroine and the beautiful-sophisticated-worldly-selfish-assertive-sexually active Other Woman". What is appearing in bestsellers today are heroines who are initially autonomous and sexually self-aware, although most do still maintain a firm grip on the goal of their life — to marry the man of their choice.

The Criticism

Make no mistakes — there is *plenty* of criticism for this type of formula/formulaic women's fiction. Tania Modleski humorously explains that "whereas the old (and some of the new) heroines have to protect themselves against the seductions of the hero, feminist critics seem to be strenuously disassociating themselves from the seductiveness of the feminine texts". Women's criticism of the female bestseller and formula romance has been treated with everything from dismissiveness to anger (usually aimed at the reader) with a good deal of mockery thrown in, which seems in itself to be an adequate summary of how women consider themselves to have been treated by men. Although these novels may not be the cream of women's literary crop, they have quite successfully elbowed their way into a prominent position, and do deserve some serious attention.

Alethea Leslie

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58 Taking joy in life is a woman's best cosmetic.

elle
dit

Any girl can be glamorous.
All you have to do is stand still and look stupid.

59

Every **Thursday** women march in the Plaza De Mayo, Argentina, holding placards of loved ones who are missing, demanding that justice be done...

Every **Friday** women in **Black** march in Israel-Palestine demanding an end to the occupation...

Every **Thursday** people around the world are invited to wear Black in solidarity with victims of terror, demanding a world without rape and violence...

The World Council of Churches has called on women and men to wear **Black on Thursdays** as a protest against rape and violence - the by products of war and conflict.

The systematic rape of women in refugee camps in former Yugoslavia is part of Serbia's military strategy, part of an ethnic cleansing programme. A second line of violence is the way these victims are being asked to testify about their rapes

In Queensland, this world wide campaign was launched on Thursday, 10th June 1993. It is being promoted by WITH WOMEN - an Ecumenical Network.

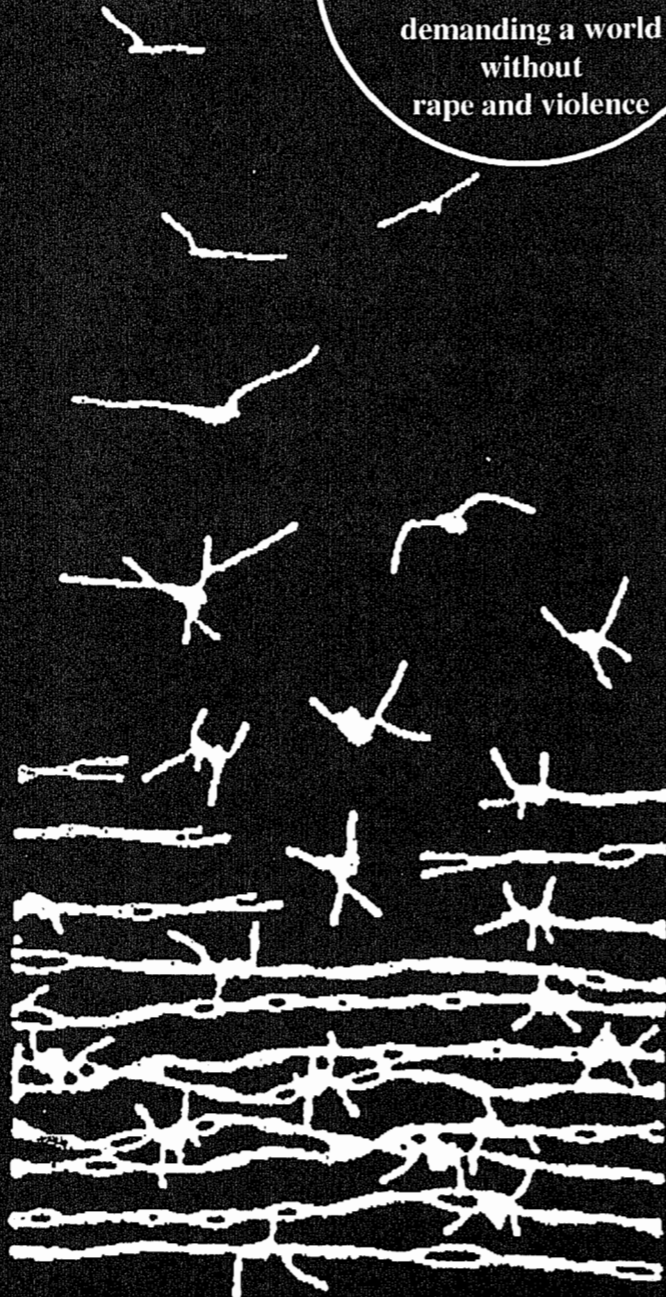
In South Australia this campaign is being widely supported by student and community groups.

While we feel it is important to join in protest against rape and violence across the world, we feel that it is also important to focus on issues of rape and violence within our own society.

Badges are available from the Women's Officer in the Students' Association.

Thursdays in Black

demanding a world
without
rape and violence



RUNNING THE BATH

Sitting propped up amongst White Musk bubbles, it suddenly dawned on me that I only had baths when I broke up with my girlfriends.

It seems like I've been running baths quite often lately.

Do you know that you can watch yourself cry in the bath? If it is anything like mine, your belly quivers as your face gushes. If she was really something, the tears roll down your breasts (the very breasts she will never again touch - unless of course you have the post-relationship fuck which always seems to end in another bath) and plop forlornly onto the bubbles.



Whilst in the bath you can read the overdue library books which had been piling up on your bedside table as you spent fewer and fewer nights at home in your single bed, and even less of them alert enough to be reading. Detective fiction is particularly helpful here. Depending on the severity of the ending, you can project alternatively the murderous, investigative or heroic plots inscribed between the pages onto your now ex (but of course you'll remain *friends*, you'd just hate to ruin a really good *friendship*).

Music is crucial. Do not - and this is most important - do not play any tape that you may have listened to in her presence, even if it was just the Madonna tape you used to play in the car on the way to Beans on a Friday. Turn on the radio and take pot-luck. Get really annoyed that every fucking song is about love. Then note that they generally feature boys groaning about love's labour lost to the accompaniment of throbbing guitars and an anxious-sounding drummer. If Juliana Hatfield comes on, sing the chorus line EVERYBODY WANTS ME BUT YOU with her very, very loudly. If it's Me'Shell, sing IF THAT'S YOUR BOYFRIEND HE WASN'T LAST NIGHT with her inflection of sarcasm and feel good about it even if it bears no resemblance to your (now defunct) love life. Believe in your own innate sexiness which will no doubt bubble to the surface again soon (once your toes have lost their bath wrinkliness). Revel in all songs which are cynical but if things are getting really bad, ABC-FM is always a good bet because as a rule there are no words. Or if it's opera, they are often in Italian. Which is fine. Let it wash over you with the White Musk bubbles. This won't work if you speak Italian. Because when you understand what is going on in an opera, they are usually extremely depressing, particularly in the relationship stakes.

When your belly has ceased to quiver and your toes are convoluting from wrinkliness; stand up, blast the shower, and get out. Slather yourself in lots of moisturiser. Use eye gel, lip balm, your best pyjamas. Yes, you'll start wearing pyjamas again to bed but this can be a good thing. Even buy yourself a new pair. Take your phone to bed and ring your mates. This is therapeutic for two reasons. You get their sympathy and you have the satisfaction of knowing that if she is by any chance trying to ring you, you'll be engaged, unobtainable and necessarily very popular. Don't ring her. Forget her phone number immediately. Note that this last one can be difficult when she's sharing a house with your mates. Avoid this type of relationship right from the beginning.

Go to sleep, even if it is clutching your pillow (which still bears traces of her perfume, hair and cigarettes). Vow to wash your sheets in the morning but secretly enjoy this final nostalgic and melancholic indulgence. Plan the rest of your life lying there in the dark. Sleep.

PS. You may wake up in the middle of the night in a real panic. But you really loved her, she made you laugh, what was wrong with you, is she lying awake too? Of course there is only one thing you can do.

Get up, find your bubbles and your chamomile tea, and start running the bath.

PPS. And if you still can't sleep, write a story.

Sarah Zetlein

Complacency is a far more dangerous attitude than outrage

elle
dit

The logic of the heart is absurd.



Question 1: What's the best thing about being a woman?



Rebecca:

- 1) It's not so much being a woman, it's just being yourself.
- 2) You've just got to get the point across, but generally it probably won't because the people that are putting all of these posters up they're going to become really offended by what's been going on and they're going to react in a more violent way, if you come out being violent towards them then they're going to get their backs up. So I think doing it is alright but the thing is it's the reaction that you get from it that isn't.

Sue:

- 1) Companionship with other women. I think you can relate to women in a different way than you can relate to men, and the way that men relate to each other. I just get a lot more out of relationships with women than I do with men.
- 2) Yeah definitely. I think direct action is a way of gaining empowerment for individuals within a group, and I feel politically it's a good way of working with people and just feeling like you're getting some control back from society in general.
- 3) Oh god, that's going to get me into trouble. Yeah, probably. No, that's probably not fair. No, I think there are a lot of difficulties in the roles that men and women have to fulfill and that makes it sort of difficult. I think there is still some work to be done on creating more equal roles for men and women, how they can relate to each other.



Question 2: Does direct action have a place in feminist campaigns?



Natasha:

- 1) Just everything. There's too many things, there's really too many things. Everything's cool about being a woman. Not having a penis is a very big advantage I'd say. Never really wanted a penis. I was always pretty glad I never had a penis. It's not just not having a penis. Also, being witty. I could be quite offensive here. Having a brain, sensitivity, showing your emotions.
- 2) Very, very big, very important part.
- 3) What a question is that? Of course, of course.

Question 3: Are women better than men?

Paula and Yvonne

P: 1) Well I think you look at life differently, in many aspects, you just have a totally different perspective of the world.

Y: 1) That you can live on either side of the fence really, I think men are very bound by their sexuality, whereas women are not, they can actually traverse, be female and male sometimes.

P: 2) Yes, if it makes people sit up and perhaps even think about it a bit, if it had never crossed their minds before and that's confronted them well then they have to think about it, whether they reject it or accept it is another story, but they've had to think about it.

Y: 2) I think it's useful, but within a boundary. If you go overboard then you're just doing exactly the same thing that men are doing to women. So you've got to use it as a message and a teaching tool but not to use it so it becomes victimising itself.

Both: 3) No.

I love it, I love it; and who shall dare
To chide me for loving that old arm chair?

elle
dit

Funny wimmin are everywhere you look...
we are just waiting for a break in the conversation

63

Jocelynn Scutt:

Feminism, Ms Marple and the Sexual Gerrymander

Jocelynn Scutt, noted feminist lawyer and writer, who was visiting the "Women, Power and Politics" Conference not only helped to set up the NUS conference: "The Getting of Political Wisdom" but also later in the afternoon shared her views with Sandy Pitcher, Laura Grenfell and Kate Juttner.

ED: What actually made you a feminist?

Jocelynn Scutt: Well, I think that it was mainly my family background. The first word I consciously ever remember being said in our household was "career" - my mother told me about the need to have a career from the time that I was very young.

I can remember one incident when I was three or four, and my sister was five or six and we were discussing "Jack and Jill went up the hill" and the fact that it was an extremely sexist poem and although we didn't use the language of sexism we knew that was what we were talking about. The fact that they both fall down the hill, that presumably both get hurt, and yet she has to minister to all Jack's needs, and we were outraged at this. So I am afraid that I was a feminist from a very early age - luckily for me!

ED: Who's influenced you most?

JS: Probably there are some very strong wimmin in my family - both my grandmothers - my paternal grandmother and maternal grandmother. My mother's mother was very active politically and was a delegate to the first ever Labor

women's conference held in 1912 and she was a very well read person, and we talked about a number of issues - politics and so on.

Both of my parents were articulate sorts of people and we used to have debates around the dinner table,



which I think is very important for anybody who is growing up because it made us realise that we had a right to participate in discussion - we were never treated as if we were children and that we should be quiet because children were seen and not heard.

ED: What particular "brand" of feminist are you, and what does feminism really mean to you?

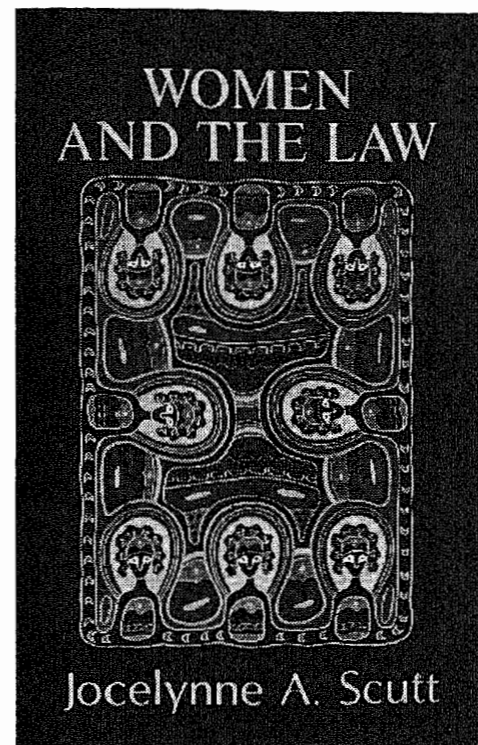
JS: Feminism means the right of wimmin to participate equally in all aspects of society and to have our views regarded as important, as serious, and as central to the way the world operates.

I think that feminist philosophy and feminist politics - the way that feminism analyses the world is more

relevant to the operation of the world than any other ideology, because it does explain power differentials between wimmin and men and I think too, it actually explains power differentials between other disadvantaged groups too, and the dominant grouping. I think that the subjection of wimmin has been replicated in the subjection of other peoples, like people being relegated to a subjected position in terms of their race or their ethnicity and so on. In fact when the Americans had slaves in America and they were looking for a legal construct - a legal relation - to relate to the slaves, they looked to the marriage construct: the marriage contract was actually the basis of the slave contract in the United States.

ED: There is no particular brand of feminism that you would say you belong to?

JS: I would say that my philosophy would be more along the lines of Radical Feminism than any other form of feminism. I would say that Socialist Feminism has some aspects to recommend it, but my own view is that it doesn't go far enough, because I think we do have to look beyond economic subjection of wimmin because the subjection of wimmin does not relate only to economic positions. Economic issues are vital to the way that wimmin are treated in society, but to give you a quick example ... if a womyn is being beaten by her husband we would accept that part of the reason she remains in that relationship is because of her



economic equality vis-a-vis him.

However, it is way beyond economic reasons that wimmin are locked into those sorts of positions - that goes to social issues, cultural issues, and the notions of the "ark syndrome" that we must go everywhere two by two. In my own work on violence against wimmin it has become very clear that wimmin can be locked into a violent relationship even if they don't have children, and even if they have quite well paying professional positions in the community. It is not only about economics or having children, it is about cultural attitudes towards wimmin and towards the notion that a womyn has to be together with a man otherwise she is nothing.

ED: You've studied at lots of universities, in Michigan and Cambridge and in Western Australia. Were you particularly active around these campuses when you were a student, and what kind of activism

were you particularly involved in?

JS: I went straight into law school at the University of Western Australia, and that was at the time of the demonstrations against Vietnam. I can remember very clearly being involved in Prosh and the law school float. I was very involved in it once when we were protesting against the Vietnam War, and I was dressed up as a member of the Viet Cong whipping an American GI - not a real one of course (*ED-Damn*).

The I went to the University of Michigan. That was the first time that I really became aware that one could become involved in collective action in a feminist sense. I thought before then that one had to

change the world all alone. When I went to the Uni of Michigan they had a really strong wimmin law students' group - that was in 1973 - and they worked to get rid of sexist language in the law school, and they had a group that was active against sexual harassment, and that, I think, was where I became very aware of feminist collective political action.

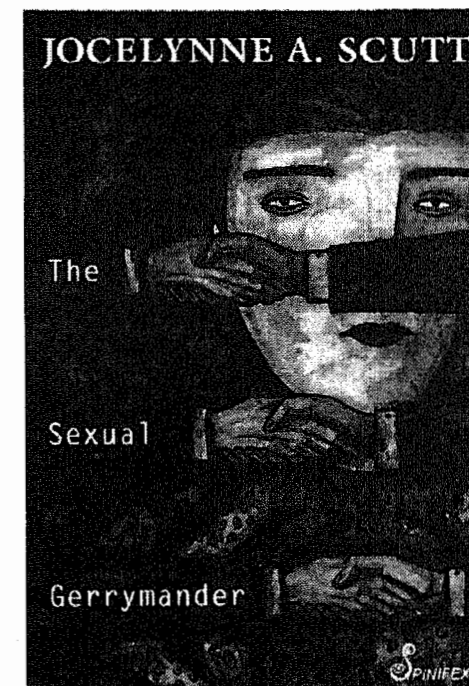
ED: You've written many books and actually written novels and text books. What do you regard as your favourite work at the moment?

JS: Well, hard to say, really. I really like *The Sexual Gerrymander - Women and the Economics of Power*, because it's a collection of essays that I have done over the past 15 - 20 years. It's quite interesting to look back at your own development. When I go back

to the speeches, I see that in the early speeches that I did in criminal assault at home and other forms of domestic violence, I actually talked about spouse assault, or wimmin-bashing, or about domestic violence. Now I would never really use straight term domestic violence now. That was in 1978 - it was in 1982 when I and another womyn, Dawn Rohan, who used to live in Adelaide, decided that we had to have a more explicit term to talk about the reality of the criminal nature of this assault against wimmin. So we decided to call it criminal assault in the home and other forms of domestic violence. When you go back to essays you've done earlier, you can see your own development alongside of the developments in the legal and social system and also whether there has been any change or not.

ED: Tell us about your alter-ego Melissa Chan.

JS: Well, it came to me, I have thought for a long time that one has



I am strong

elle
dit

I am invincible

65

to get through to people about the values of feminism and the importance of feminism and the persuasiveness that is feminism in a multiplicity of ways, and one can do this through writing - through non-fiction and also fiction. In the end there will be some people who will not read a non-fiction book and who will be much more likely to read fiction. Crime fiction has always been fiction, and it just occurred to me that the feminist issues that we are all concerned about can be central to tales of mystery, murder and deception, and therefore I just thought I'd try my hand.

ED: Crime fiction has always been an area that has been a sort of non-feminist area.

JS: Well, it really depends, doesn't it? Because you can have a feminist detective that doesn't espouse feminist ideals. On the other hand, it's not all that usual to be a feminist detective. When Ms Marple was invented by Agatha Christie, I could suspect one would say that she's not exactly a raving feminist. Yet in a way she's a strong person because she has no desire to cover up the fact that she is a spinster, and that she thinks that being a spinster is a legitimate way to conduct oneself in the world - then she detects and she invariably determines who the murderer is, when she is sitting down knitting, and say this isn't exactly a feminist activity, on the other hand there are a lot of wimmin who do gardening and are extremely strong feminists and would be offended if one said, "Well, it's hardly feminist to be out in the garden." So I hope that having a feminist detective, though as I say you needn't have a feminist one, is an indicator that a womyn can take on roles that ordinary wimmin wouldn't be expected to fulfil.

There is a diversity among how wimmin feel feminist detectives ought to be, or can be depicted, and there would be a very strong group of feminist detective writers who would say that it is very important to have a feminist detective who is the kickboxing type, who has the gun, who shoves it in the belly, and gives a kick to the groin. Whereas Franchesca Myles, who's my detective, doesn't engage in that sort of activity - she engages in more cerebral activity, which I think is legitimate too. I'm not against having a kick-boxer, it's just that I don't have a kickboxer in mine. She could turn into a kick-boxing whiz - who knows? I found her drinking a cup of coffee the other day, which is strange because she drinks herbal teas, but she just started drinking a cup of coffee, and I'm afraid there was nothing I could do to stop her.

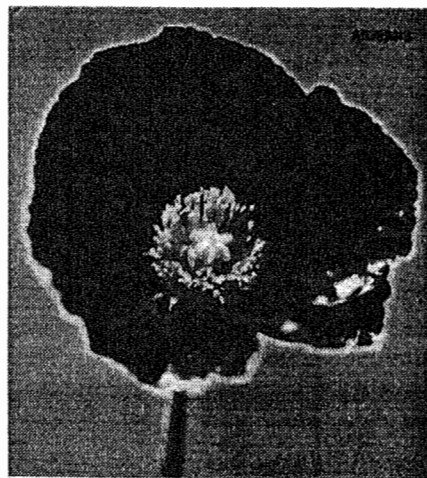
ED: To change the topic once again, you did an associateship with Lionel Murphy in 1982-83 during the Tasmanian dams time which was very controversial and quite extraordinary. Would you like to talk about how it's influenced you (if it has at all?)

JS: I was actually at the bar in Sydney when I had the opportunity to be Lionel Murphy's associate - there was no doubt in mind that I would take the opportunity.

I certainly didn't lose anything by going to work for him and I gained a great deal. He was really a very interesting person, he had a great sense of humour, he was one of the few men I know who would actually talk about women's issues, about feminist issues, as if it was relevant and as if what I was talking about was important, quite lengthy times. There were times when we'd been talking for a long time that he would say to me, "I think you're going a

bit far," and I would actually have to assess where I was and am I going too far or not, and then I would decide that, "No, I'm not going too far - I'm right, you're wrong." He was a very stimulating person, and he was interested in a whole lot of economic issues and that affected the way that I developed in terms of being so interested in economic issues.

The interview had to stop there as Jocelyne had to catch her plane. We continued talking about Melissa Chan, (Chan is an acronym of Jocelyne's grandmothers' and aunts' first names), and first/second/third wave feminism, and a few law things (a pretty typical law student thing to do - guilty as charged!) After the stress and the exhaustion of the conference and interview, Sandy and Laura both forgot to get their brand new Jocelyne Scutt books autographed. Well, we're just glad we met such an inspiring womyn. Never underestimate how willing feminist wimmin may be to share their knowledge.



Taking a Stand

Jocelyne A Scutt

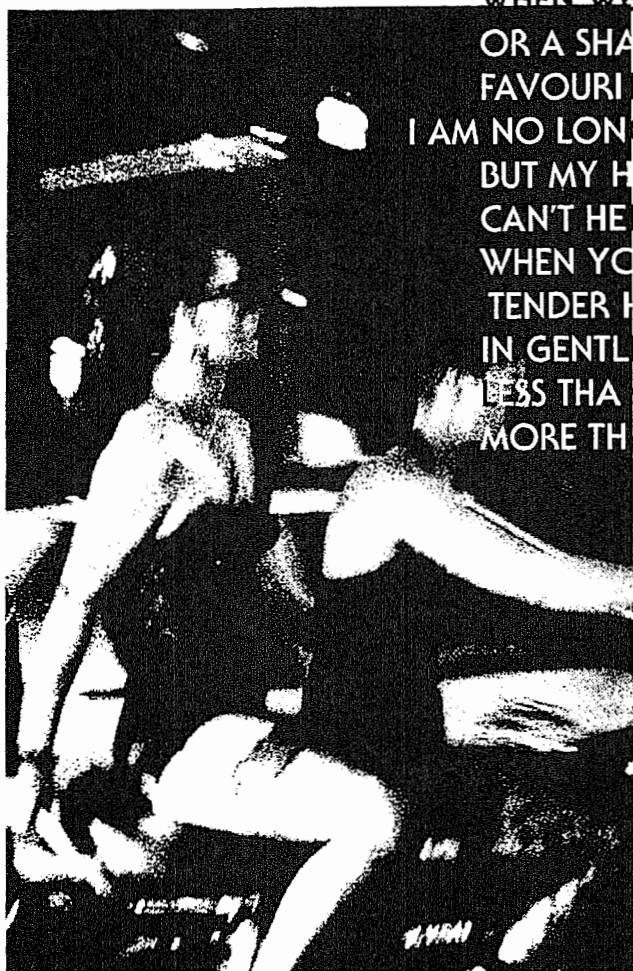
stanley st

gay pride in stanley st i didn't realize we fell in love in the spring
i miss the wet heat of yr mouth in yr arms last nite i imagined
you inside me moneyed indifference "the queer shrugs the chip
off her shoulder" i wake to chainsaw coming down the street
and think about fascism after the kids have gone a solitary black
cat investigates the yard she knew i was an intruder she could
smell the guilt sexist creeps on the bus i remember why i like to
cycle fresh fish along the river and no men



MORE OR LESS

I AM NO LONGER IN LOVE WITH YOU
BUT MY BODY
CAN'T HELP REACTING
WHEN YOUR FINGERTIPS
(THAT KNOW EVERY PORE TO THE CORE)
BRUSH MY ARM
OR TOUCH MY HAIR
IN PLATONIC AFFECTION
I AM NO LONGER IN LOVE WITH YOU
BUT MY EYES
CAN'T HELP STRAYING
TO SEEK YOURS OUT
(IN RECIPROCATED UNDERSTANDING)
WHEN WE HEAR A FUNNY JOKE
OR A SHARED MUSICAL
FAVOURITE
I AM NO LONGER IN LOVE WITH YOU
BUT MY HEART
CAN'T HELP SOFTENING
WHEN YOU SMILE
TENDER HALF-SMILE I KNOW SO WELL)
IN GENTLE BENEDICTION:
LESS THAN A LOVER
MORE THAN A FRIEND.



Men in Wimmin's Studies

Is this the natural order of things, Mr. Darwin?

When I walked into the Wimmin's Studies (WS) department for the first tute of the semester, I was, I must admit, rather shocked and surprised to see a guy sitting amongst the group. It's not that I have a real problem with men learning about feminism, I think that's great, but I'm just not sure I want them in my tutes.

Harsh call you may say, others will be sympathising with me.

A friend, in this same tute group, and myself had a bit of a chat about this new experience, and realised we had much of the same, if somewhat confused, opinion: yes we did want guys learning about feminism, because they really do need to be part of the whole learning process; I mean we're not just talking about wimmin when we talk about feminism, we're talking about changing the perceptions of gender in society and that calls for men changing their views too. But at the same time, having men in a Wimmin's Studies tute really does change the dynamics of the group. It's not that we want to rant and rave and bitch about every man we know (all of the time), but sometimes you really do need to express ideas that you wouldn't feel comfortable expressing in the presence of a man. There is also the idea, that a man's opinion isn't really necessary on whatever's being

discussed, as we get quite enough of that already.

Another woman I know is very adamant about the fact that WS should be a wimmin-only space. She feels that WS is one of the only areas at uni where wimmin can really determine their own agenda, and men should not be a part of that.

There are however some men who aren't in there to try and take over, but who turn to WS for similar reasons as us: the fact that wimmin are excluded from other disciplines.

One of the guys I spoke to in my tute said he was a little anxious coming into the WS department for the first time, but really wanted to do a feminist subject; after touching on feminism in politics, he felt he was missing out on something. (darn right; pity more guys don't recognise their lack of knowledge!)

Perhaps then the answer is to have separate tutes for men? Staffing would never allow for such small groups and more importantly, men

would then be missing out on our wise words, plus they would not hear of our experiences, and as we know, experience is vital to feminist discourse.

It is impossible to exclude men from WS as this would not comply with equal opportunity legislation, and besides, there are a great many wimmin who do not have a problem with having men involved in their courses, and some who actively encourage their male friends to go out and learn. In speaking to one of the WS' lecturers I found out that there had not yet been any incidences of conflict within the department or between the department and any wimmin students in having men participate in WS subjects. Usually it can be accommodated, that any wimmin who do not want to have tutes with men can register for a tute that is wimmin only.

I guess the conclusion I've reached, and I was very undecided, is that for us to change society as we know it, men need to be educated in the ways of feminism. One of the best forums for them to learn is in the WS department. Yet it needs to be recognised that there are many wimmin who would not want tutes with men, and therefore, there must be the facilities to deal with this.

nikki anderson



Hands off, Creep

Sexual Harassment - What comes into your mind when you hear that phrase? Million dollar law-suits about fake penises on office desks? Middle aged men on TV discussing how short a woman's skirt can be before she's 'asking for it'? Until a year ago this was all that I connected it with. I naïvely thought it would never happen to me.

I got a job as a kitchen hand in a small restaurant and right from the start I was in a bad position. It was male-dominated, which was intimidating on its own. If you've ever worked in a kitchen you'll know that

repeated a few times during every single shift. And starting conversations with me about sleazy subjects such as my bedding preferences. I did not find him attractive in the slightest, and certainly didn't want this attention. But I also knew that he had no friends or family and I suspected that underneath he was a very lonely person. This in turn made me feel sorry for him and I disregarded his remarks. At first, I tried to brush them off, putting them down to a bad sense of humour. I tried to deny that there was anything wrong with what he was doing. I



it's fast-paced, high-pressure work in a confined area. In this particular kitchen, the chefs were all male except for one, who actually was sacked about 4 months after I started working there. There seemed already to be a strong doubt that I would be able to keep up with the other (male) kitchen hands. It was never said to me in as many words, but I could easily sense that most of them thought I either wasn't tough enough/I wouldn't like getting my hands dirty/or some other pathetic cliché.

Even though these underlying doubts made me uncomfortable, I felt as though I could deal with it. As I got to know the kitchen staff, and they got to know me, I gradually became more at ease and confident. Except for one - Greg. He was the second chef and was often in charge. He would make remarks to me and even though he would try to disguise them as "jokes", they still made me feel extremely uncomfortable. Things like asking "Will you marry me?"

convinced myself that I was over-reacting instead of trusting my gut-instincts. I first realised that something was wrong when I happened to mention one of these remarks to my boyfriend who reacted angrily. The incidents that followed began to form a pattern. First he asked me to drive him home after a shift. Then the continued sleazy comment. But the real turning point was when a simple play-fight between all the kitchen staff got out of hand. Greg ended up wiping a handful of whipped cream down the entire front of my apron. I felt intruded upon and violated and

even dirty and revolted. There was no way that I could explain it away as a joke - it was blatantly obvious to me that he was taking advantage of his position, that I had no reason to put up with this unwanted attention and that I had to do something about it. I made a conscious decision that the next time he made a remark or did anything offensive that I would ask him to stop. But when I did so, he just mimicked me and refused to take me seriously. I just didn't know what else to do after that. The few people that I'd told, as I was too embarrassed to tell my parents, tried to convince me to contact an authority, but for some reason I still felt as if I would be taking extreme measures and wouldn't be taken seriously. In retrospect, I wish that I had taken their advice.

Girls growing up in society today should be made aware of the reality of sexual harassment. It's not a rare occurrence. It happens every day, everywhere in the world in all variety of work places.

Millions of women do exactly the same thing as I did - they blame themselves, they feel sorry for the harasser, they think that to contact an authority is over-reacting. It's time that women and girls are taught that they have the right and the duty to object to such offensive and degrading behaviour. We must overpass the long-standing assumption that people should just "take it in their stride" or "learn to take a joke". I'm not pretending it's easy, but I am prepared to stand up and say that I don't deserve it.

Lucy Guster

Liturgy

Watching you at Mass is so sexy:
You drink the wine and eat the bread
Eyes shutting and I'm praying:
Drink my blood, eat my flesh
Partake of me.
She sings, voice high on air
A faint smile wets your lips,
Mine go dry.
You shake his hand, brushing cheeks
And I tell you,
Peace is not with me.
Then, it is over, I go to leave
And see your ankle, pale and naked
And Oh God! Upon it,
I would break perfume.

Sarah Zetlein

photo by Tonia Nielsen

No country can advance unless its women advance

elle
dit

Women's virtue is man's greatest invention

elle
dit

femmos galore...

wimmin, power and politics

Wimmin, Power and Politics Conference; Adelaide Oct. 8-11

Last weekend saw the highlight of the Suffrage Centenary: The Wimmin, Power and Politics Conference, an international conference, the aims of which were to discuss the empowering of wimmin, in both the personal and political sense, the world over.

Many of you may not have heard about the conference, and even if you had, probably dismissed it as far too expensive. With one of its aims outlined as including wimmin of all walks of life, it seems rather strange that tickets for the four days cost \$400, concession \$100, plus a very limited amount of concession tickets. Despite this, there were easily 900 delegates at the conference, held in the plush settings of the Convention Centre. There were also a number of wimmin protesting the cost and lack of concession tickets, as well as a rally on Sunday. I was fortunate enough to gain entry on a shared ticket, and went along on Saturday morning.

Mary Beasley, head of the Suffrage Centenary Committee opened the event with a brief history of the suffragists; Dean Brown gave his address, highlighting the many 'firsts' for and of wimmin from South Australia, although one must ask how many can be attributed to a government of his Party. The Prime Minister's address followed, with Keating mentioning the sad state of our history in that the details of Suffrage are less well known to most Australians than Ned Kelly or Phar Lap. He spoke

of the recently passed quotas, refuting the argument that political selection was based on merit, saying that if this was the case, Parliament would surely be made up of more than the current 20% wimmin. DI Laidlaw, the Minister for the Status of Wimmin, said that although it seemed strange to be thanking men such as Paul Keating for wimmin's rights, we must. Perhaps it would be more appropriate to thank all the wimmin who actually fought for the quotas and pushed them as imperative to male members of the ALP.

Glenda Jackson, British Labour MP, gave the keynote address, stating very emphatically, that what prompted her into politics was 'Thatcherism'. When asked how she copes working in such a male dominated arena, her response is, "I am a womyn, therefore I have worked in male dominated arenas all my life."

Quoting the UN report on the status of wimmin, she said that although wimmin make up over 50% of the world's population, they do two thirds of the world's work, earn one tenth of the world's wages and own one one-thousandth of the world's property. In Britain there have been only 176 wimmin in Parliament over the past 75 years, 10 of which have held cabinet positions, yet none with the portfolios of Trade Industry, Foreign Affairs, or Defence. At present there are 61 female MPs, that is only 10% wimmin.

Jackson went on to talk about the quotas, saying that for all the years men have been short listed simply

for their gender, no one saw any problems, so to call a 35% preselection quota tokenistic is hypocritical. She asserted that the processes of selection and election are not the same for wimmin and men, and to deny other factors, such as blatant sexism and power difference between men and wimmin, is ridiculous. On the topic of preparation for political life, she said that few men touch the many bases that most wimmin do: as nurse, gardener, educator, activist, chauffeur, business manager, community worker, handyperson etc, and that wimmin's experiences in other areas of life, ie not Party politics, must be valued. Jackson pointed out the cultural traditions of (gendered) behaviour in our society, saying that all political parties have to look at what expectations and treatment they have of men and wimmin within their ranks, and that they must look into how they can better facilitate wimmin in their Party.

She referred back to the fact that although wimmin make the world go around (in terms of work), they have and exert little control over how it is run; and not until wimmin make up half of the seats in legislative assemblies around the world, will we be adequately represented.

Another session I attended was by Dalee Sambo, an Alaskan indigenous womyn, who spoke of Wimmin and Cultural Rights.

Sambo defined culture as what provides meaning to any particular group of people. For indigenous people this constitutes identity,

which means traditional language, way of life, customs and religion and often an inseparable link with their environment.

Sambo regards wimmin as central figures in the promotion of culture, especially in respect to language and customs, and says that issues which face wimmin transcend all boundaries and will always impact on a people. For example an Indian Act in Canada read that if an indigenous womyn married outside her own people, she no longer has rights to them. This is an attempt to try and break up a culture through gender discrimination.

She pointed out that equality cannot be achieved without a cultural context, as each culture has a dignity which must be recognized and respected. This is not however to be used as an excuse for sexism within a culture, as some cultures have rights which are disrespectful of wimmin, and these cultural values must be scrutinized, as they may be being used specifically to dominate wimmin. Some sexist behaviour is however learned from 'western' culture. For example the Inuit Indians have always had a

gendered segregation of tasks, but these were always regarded of equal value, until the men were introduced to our western value system; so this is a problem to be redressed now.

Sambo's main concern was for indigenous people to be given the right to exist as separate peoples, to use their own language and education systems to ensure the continuity of culture. And also for gov-

ernments to ensure respect and recognition for indigenous peoples, to disallow ethnocide and assimilation and to allow native peoples the ownership and control of their own land.

nikki anderson

There were several sessions which impacted upon me personally as these women focused on their own

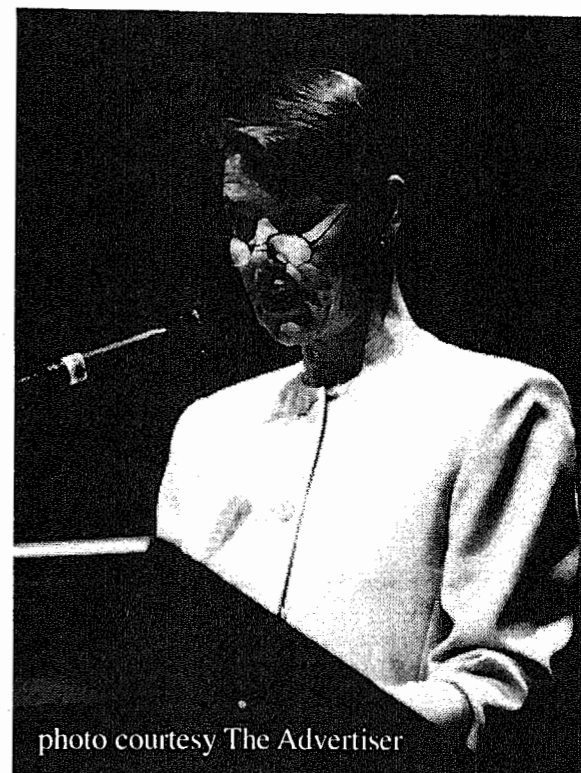


photo courtesy The Advertiser

experiences, struggles and achievements; the main focus being the need for all to continue the fight.

Pat O'Shane was to speak on Sunday. However it was announced to the conference that due to personal reasons she was unable to attend. An indigenous woman rightfully demanded that the committee find another speaker to ensure that an indigenous session was conducted.

This was achieved with speakers Val Power and Marj Tripp facilitating an excellent session discussing their experiences, fight for education, the importance of networking within this conference and their role within the government. One of their goals was to achieve out of the 35% of the ALP's Affirmative Action Policy 10 Aboriginal women and support of this was unanimous. For an hour they

talked about their own personal experiences, sang and basically created a room full of positive energy inspiring all those present.

Ms Pathma Tamby Dorai focused on "Women In Industrial Relations". The stories of the atrocities which occur in the developing countries were frightening. Economic growth was rapidly occurring but as she said "economic growth-on whose backs". Given the interest in these countries by Australia, Pathma referred to the appalling conditions endured by a majority of women and children. These women and children are continually exploited by employers and yet it is life threatening to join a trade union. Cheap employment attracts investors and

Pathma questioned the role of Australia in propagating this treatment. Once again she asked: "economic growth-on whose backs?"

mel wheeler

With the minimum amount of gushing as possible, Joan Kirner was inspirational. After hearing her speak a strong sense of empowerment and ability to make a difference sur-

72 Dip me in honey and throw me to the lesbians.

elle
dit

73 Equality is a meaningless abstraction unless it is founded on economic security and economic strength.

rounded the audience. She actually received two standing ovations after her presentation on "The Politics of Learning"!!

On politics Joan was clear. We must assert and believe that wimmin matter as much as men, and that we have the right to determine our own lives. Wimmin's experiences do matter, and we must share these without ridicule. Wimmin must speak of power and ambition without apologies.

Joan emphasized the importance for her of education as a means of change and she argued that parents must be seen as partners with teachers rather than consumers. For young wimmin, the message was strong. Joan believes that there is no such thing as being non-political. A decision to stay away from politics is to actively entrench the status-quo.

Whilst not directly buying the first wave / second wave / third wave feminism debate, Joan believes the fight for the vote and access has been won, as has equal opportunity. Now is the time that wimmin must fight for equal shares of power, in the spheres of influence and the spheres of power.

Wimmin must seize the open moment

Jocelyne Scutt (feminist author, lawyer) based her presentation around wimmin in the Republic and the Constitution, and was the only speaker to do so. Jocelyne strongly believes that wimmin must actively address republican issues and make our voices heard. Unfortunately the Women, Power and Politics Conference allowed minimal discussion on this vital area.

Jocelyne's points were logical, concise and powerful. Wimmin and Aborigines must reconstitute the Constitution - we must refuse to be left out of any discussions. We must be pro-active and we must agitate for change. The Constitution as it stands does not represent all Australians. Wimmin and Aborigines voices were not heard when the document was formed - it is not even an Act of the Australian parliament.

Historically wimmin and Aborigines have been deprived of many basic rights supposedly granted to all Australians in the Constitution. What guarantee was trial by jury,

when until the referendum in the 1960's, that jury contains only white, property owning males? The freedom of religion provisions included only "white" religions and wimmin's religious freedom did not extend to serving as priests or other positions of "power" in the church.

The monarchy as it stands is unjust. The laws and rules determining who Australia's head of state will be are inherently racist, sexist, class based and discriminate on the basis of religion. Australia's Head of State can never be an Aborigine, and must be of Anglican faith whilst Australia remains a Constitutional monarchy. The Racial Discrimination Act, the Sex Discrimination Act and the freedom of religion provision of the Constitution are all breached in the rules that determine our Head of State.

"Unless women are fully involved and take control of the debate and the process, the 'new' Constitutional debate is not new at all: it will be a repeat of nineteenth century 'dominant group' ignorance of women and women's rights"

sandy pitcher



If the wimmin's movement can be summed up in one phrase, it is 'the right to choose'.

elle
dit

WOMEN'S TALK

what men dub tattle gossip women's talk is really revolutionary activity and would be taken seriously by men (and many women too) if men were doing the talking

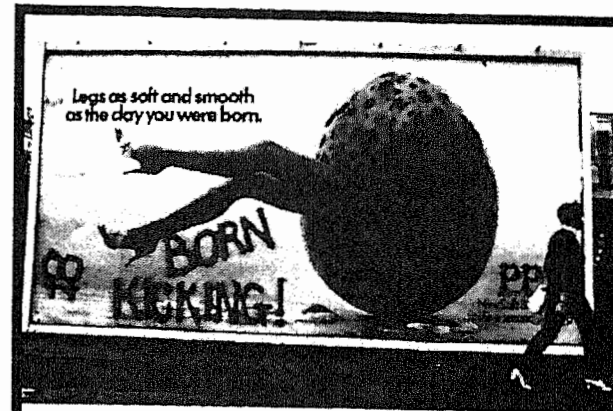
women's talk is women together probing the privatised pain isolation exclusion trivialisation in their everyday lives if situations were reversed men would react with identical symptoms to what women feel in their gut - worthlessness self deprecation depression

what men call prattle babble chatter jabber blather gabbing hot air small talk rubbish gibberish verbosity clearly shows how language reflects the deep misogyny that's penetrated our lives and become common sport but from this day forward spare me I'm sick of all that

men denigrate our talk at their peril but that's because they're in ignorance of its power our power those precious few of us who see ourselves as powerful serious and deadly.

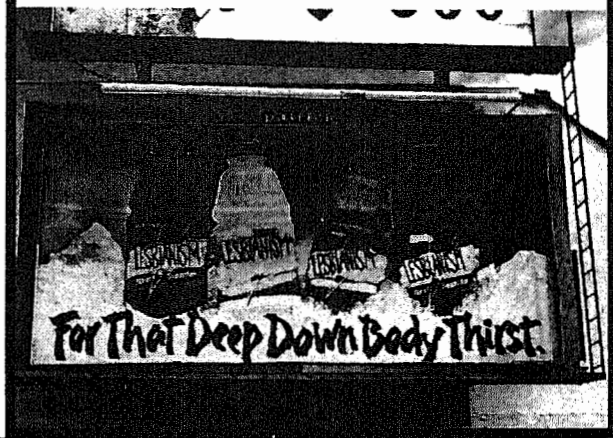
Astra

All you men better start shakin', Today's pigs are tomorrow's bacon.



STRIKE BACK

IF YOU SEE AN AD OR A BILLBOARD OR A WINDOW DISPLAY THAT DEGRADES WOMEN SHOW YOUR OUTRAGE IN ANY WAY YOU SEE FIT. BRICKS OR PAINT OR STICKERS ARE QUITE EFFECTIVE (AT LEAST FOR A WHILE). WOMEN ARE NOT SEX COMMODITIES. VENT YOUR ANGER. STRIKE BACK.



elle
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75

write for rights!

Amnesty International is a world-wide organisation, with millions of supporters, which works to protect basic human rights (in accordance with their mandate which is based on the United Nations International Declaration of Human Rights). It seeks for the release of "prisoners of conscience," who are women and men detained anywhere for their beliefs, colour, sex, ethnic origin, language or religion, who have neither used nor advocated violence. It opposes such punishments as the death penalty and torture.

The Women's Network addresses human rights violations pertaining to women. The list of such gross human rights violations against women is endless. Many are targeted because they are strong - because they are political activists, community organisers, or persist in demanding that their rights and those of their relatives are respected.

Women's network



Others are targeted because they are seen as vulnerable - young women who can easily be sexually abused or humiliated, frightened mothers who will do anything to protect their children, pregnant women fearful for their unborn babies, women who can be used to get at men, or refugee women who are isolated and vulnerable in unfamiliar surroundings.

Opposite there is an example of one of a recent case, should you want to actively do something. The addresses are included for you to write letters away (using the provided guidelines if you're not sure of the format in which to write your letter).

Go! Do it!
Natasha Yacoub

amnesty international

MEXICO

Rape/Torture/Fear for Safety. Maria Teresa, Cristina and Maria Mendez Santiz aged 20, 18, and 16 respectively.

On 4th June, 1994, these women were reportedly tortured and then raped by members of the Mexican Army. Amnesty International fears for their safety as they were reportedly threatened with death if they told anyone about the rape and torture.

The three women and their mother were returning to their community after selling their produce in Chiapas, when the three daughters were detained by soldiers at a roadblock and taken to a nearby building. There they were allegedly tortured and threatened with death to force them to confess to participating in the Zapatista National Liberation Army. They were then reportedly raped by some thirty soldiers.

Background Information

On 1st January, 1994, hundreds of armed peasants calling themselves the Zapatista National Liberation Army, took control of several towns. There was heavy fighting for several days. On 12th January the

government declared a ceasefire, although there were reports of continuing land attacks by the armed forces during the following days. An Amnesty delegation visiting the area confirmed reports of human rights abuses including the 'extrajudicial execution' of at least five rebels and the torture of rebel and civilian detainees at the hands of security forces.

Monitoring human rights violations in Chiapas has been made difficult by the remoteness of these communities, the fact that most of the indigenous populations in the area speak little or no Spanish, and the continuous threats against the local population by members of the army and the landowners. Chiapas has long been the scene of continuing human rights violations by the security forces in the context of land disputes and allegations of electoral fraud.

Recommended Action

Please send faxes and airmail letters:

- Expressing concern at the reported rape of Maria Teresa, Cristina and Maria Mendez Santiz, all Zapata indigenous women from Altamirano municipality, state of Chiapas, by members of the Mexican Army.

- Urging an immediate and thorough investigation into their rape and torture and the death threats they received, and that those found responsible be brought to justice;

- Requesting that all necessary measures be taken to ensure the physical safety of these three women, their relatives, and the whole community of Santa Rosita Sibaquill, municipality of Altamirano.

Appeals to:

1) Lic. Carlos Salinas de Gortari
Presidente de la Republica
Palacio Nacional
06067 Mexico D.F., Mexico.
Faxes: +52 5 271 1764.
Begin: Dear President.

2) Dr Jorge Carpizo McGregor
Secretario de Gobernacion
Secretaria de Gobernacion
Bucarelli 99, 1 er piso
Colonia Juarez
06669 Mexico DF, Mexico.
Faxes: +52 592 0014.
Begin: Dear Minister.

3) Lic Humberto Benitez Trevino
Procurador General de la Republica
Procuraduria General de la Republica
Paseo de la Reforma y
Violeta

Colonia Guerrero
06300 Mexico DF, Mexico
Faxes: +52 5 526 8506.
Begin: Dear Attorney General

Copies to:

1) National Human Rights Commission Sres.
Commission Nacional de Derechos Humanos
Periferio Sur 3469
Col San Jeronimo Lidice
10200 Mexico DF, Mexico
2) Embassy of Mexico
14 Perth Avenue
Yarralumla, ACT, 2600.

Anything he can do
She can do better...

elle
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elle
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No she can't.
Yes she can!

76

77

Singing in a boy's world

Margaret Urlich, on a spiritual high after completing a long stint in Jesus Christ Superstar has just completed her third album in a decade. Kerina West recently spoke to her about musicals and how to survive as a woman in the music industry.

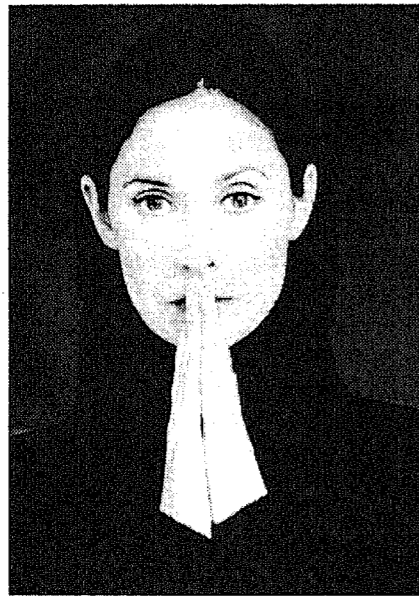
Many readers will be familiar with Margaret Urlich from her Top 40 success several years ago. Her recent absence from the rock and roll world has been due to eight months in her home country of New Zealand, playing the role of Mary in Jesus Christ Superstar. "It was really good, it's the first musical that I've done so it was nice working with an ensemble," she replied. The theatre lifestyle gave her plenty of time to herself. "At the same time I was writing as well. It worked out really well because I had my days off, and I wrote my whole album then with my producer Robin Smith."

The glamorous world of the stage did have its down sides, according to Margaret. "It's very heavily choreographed which I found a bit boring on the one hand, but on the other hand it really made me appreciate being creative. I couldn't wait to do some more writing and be creative!" Has this taste of musicals given her the hunger for another role? "It was good to do it once because I know that I can do it now," she explains. "The theatre, and rock and roll industries are very different, and different types of people are attracted by them. It was a good experience but to be honest I like doing my own thing, I find it more satisfying."

November 4 sees the release of Margaret's new single "All By Myself" and is the first song to be taken from her third album. *The Deepest Blue* is set for release next January, and making the album was a casual affair. "We kept a lot of the vocals and the music from the demo stage so it was pretty painless. We were very well prepared when we

went into the studio so there were no real problems." Efficiency is extremely important to Margaret in terms of recording material. "I don't like wasting time anyway - studios aren't the nicest places to be because usually there is no natural light and not much fresh air. It was pretty relaxed."

Touring the country is another major part of Margaret's plans. Entering the music industry at 19, after ten years in the business she is no stranger to travelling. "I'm used to it - it's part of my job," she explains. "You've got to pace yourself, if you don't you get really worn



out. I put a lot of physical energy into my show, but I get a lot back from it. It gives me a chance to express myself, so I'm really lucky."

Positive feedback from recent shows fuels her desire to continue touring. "The response has been really good to the new material which is surprising because sometimes audiences, unless they've heard material before, aren't that receptive to new songs." This was something she wanted to gauge before starting her major tour. "I'll do a proper album tour

in January, but so far we've been playing shows in Sydney and Melbourne and we're coming to Adelaide soon to warm up the band and get it going. We've done two weeks so far and it's sounding great!"

Managing to survive and become successful in the fickle music business is quite an achievement. Does it take a lot of strength to survive as a woman in the male dominated music industry? "Yes definitely," Margaret states without hesitation. Sometimes she has found this male domination to be a problem. "I think it is harder for women because it is very much a buddy system within the industry because a lot of men are managers and agents and they all know each other. If you don't know them then it is really hard to break through that and some of them don't relate very well to women." However this to some extent has been a positive force in Margaret's life. "Being involved in a career in a difficult environment really makes you a lot stronger. If it was easy I probably wouldn't be as good as a performer as I am now."

One major gripe she has with regard to the treatment of female artists is with radio. "Radio will only play a couple of women at a time which is stupid," she states. "If Annie Lennox or Mariah Carey or someone from overseas has a record out, they won't play any other women and it really limits local women." With her strength and determination to succeed, Margaret sees this as a challenge. "Like I say, because it is hard it only makes me more determined."

Margaret is optimistic for the future of women in the music industry. "Compared to my mother's generation things are changing very fast for women, and I think men are a bit confused about the whole thing. I think eventually it will work out okay. Maybe the next generation will have it a bit easier, at least I hope so." So do we Margaret!

Acting out Herstory

The University of Adelaide Theatre Guild presents a new production of the 1986 Festival Fringe smash hit, *Ring The Bell Softly, There's Crepe On The Door*. To mark the celebrations of the 1994 Centenary of Women's Suffrage in South Australia, Anne Brookman has produced an exciting newly updated script.

Ring The Bell Softly, There's Crepe On The Door is directed by Julianne English, a member of the original Fringe production in 1986. It introduces thirteen women from South Australia's past who sing, dance and reminisce about their lives to inspire our own. The play features Mary Mackillop, social reformer and educator, Catherine Helen Spence, Elizabeth Woolcock, the only woman hung in South Australia, and director and actress Miss Patricia Hackett. All created significant lives for themselves in times when women were denied a public face.

The cast includes Katrina Picozzi as Nellie Koller, a distinguished vaudeville performer whose gimmick was to impersonate males.

Katrina is currently studying at the University of Adelaide so as to obtain her Bachelor of Art and Music degrees; she is majoring in both vocal performance and Women's Studies. Katrina began performing at school with the Pembroke Girls' Choir, for which she became a principal soloist and leader of the choir. She also enjoyed principle roles in their musicals: *Hello Dolly* and *Guys and Dolls*. Since those formative years, Katrina has performed extensively with the Elder Conservatorium Vocal School and also performances

with the Gilbert and Sullivan Society, as well as being a member of the State Opera Chorus for the last two years.

The character of Nellie Koller is ideal for Katrina as it has depth to show her talents in both vocal and theatrical performance. Katrina feels that her character is "a woman who was very private in that her personal life

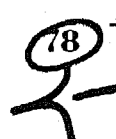


photo by Lisa Tomasetti

was only a shadow of the life that she portrayed on stage".

Ring The Bell Softly, There's Crepe On The Door can be seen at Unlon Hall, University of Adelaide. The season is from 26th - 29th October and 2nd - 5th November. Performances start at 8 pm with a matinee at 2 pm on 29th October. Tickets are available from all BASS outlets for \$14 and \$9 concessions. For group discounts and further information, please contact Jenny Evans at the Theatre Guild on (08) 303 5999.

desire
 lying still
 each holds the other
 your head, my breasts
 my heart, your breath
 smoldering
 tide ebbing
 until
 breathing quickens
 faces meet
 you fan the flames
 tease, caress, tantalize
 need, want, desire
 desire like an ache
 between my legs
 for your touch
 to come



Boobs are back in the '90s,
 I'm so glad I didn't throw my old ones out.

elle
 dit



Social science affirms that a woman's
 place in society marks the level of civilisation.



Signs of Murder
Jean Bedford
Angus and Robertson
rrp \$14.95

Anna Southwood stars as a secret detective in her third novel by Jean Bedford. *Signs of Murder* is an Australian mystery novel set in Sydney. The scene is set when Fiona Galloway, a deaf social worker receives threatening notes and things look a bit fishy. From then on in, Anna the private eye, is bombarded with a series of seemingly unconnected clues which she has to piece together. *Signs of Murder* is written in a

typically Australian manner, thus bringing the plot closer to home. I found it very easy to read, finishing it off in one sitting. The plot is not really challenging, nor are the characters (bar Anna Southwood). Basically *Signs of Murder* reminds me of a sophisticated Trixie Belden novel. I enjoyed Bedford's, albeit simple, writing style for the easy going pace. Bedford has some interesting things to say about women, the two main characters, Anna and Fiona are quite strong women facing a lot of prejudice from their male counterparts. Yet she doesn't seem to follow it up in any sense. Bedford also has some good things to say about the deaf community as a whole. Although I found *Signs of Murder* a bit lacking in depth, it was certainly entertaining. Whilst not up to Agatha Christie standard, Bedford can certainly spin a yarn. It's worth a read, although not on your own in a dark empty house.

Tracy Skehan

The Sculptress
Minette Walters
Pan MacMillan
rrp \$11.95

I was quite prepared for a corny crime novel with a predictable plot. My preconceptions were far from true. The super sleuth of *The Sculptress* is Roz, a novelist who is investigating a murder case where Olive Martin (the sculptress herself) is accused of slaughtering her mother and sister. Olive is supposedly the most horrifying and terrifying woman that anyone has ever set eyes upon. On the other hand, Roz believes in Olive's innocence, despite Olive's adamant that she did, in fact, do it. She is the unpopular obese product of a failed marriage, and the reader discovers secrets about her past revealing her human side. Where I'm not going to tell you the whole plot, I'll say that it involves two straying husbands, an

Tracy Skehan

unusual homosexual relationship, inquisitive neighbours, dodgy lawyers and organised crime. It also involves a man named Hal (as all good crime novels tend to), which is probably the only corny bit in *The Sculptress*. The story has a fair number of twists and can be difficult to follow if you do not have your wits about you, although the ending is nice and happy. *The Sculptress* differs from most crime fiction I've read, as the accused is a woman, as is the star. Walters delves into the emotional side of the characters a fair bit, yet does not lose the suspense and mystery of the story line whilst doing so. Walters also raises issues regarding religion, body image and family interaction in narrative passages throughout *The Sculptress*. I really enjoyed this book, it held my interest, and I did not have the faintest idea as to who really did it until the end.

Even Cowgirls
k.d. Lang
Warner

I think it's excellent that k.d. lang (along with her co-writer Ben Mink) wrote the soundtrack to *Even Cowgirls Get the Blues* (the movie adapted from Tom Robbins classic novel). The CD kind of follows Sissy Hankshaw and her enormous thumb's adventures and love with Bonanza Jellybean. It seems fit that k.d. lang, legendary

dyke and vegetarian that she is, should write the soundtrack to this bizarre love story. All background information aside, this is a winner of a CD. k.d lang's rich and melodious vocals are as versatile as they are diverse in style. *Even Cowgirls get the Blues* ranges from blues to country in sound. Featuring the funky "Just keep me moving" and the beautiful "Hush sweet lover". *Even Cowgirls...* is

broad ranging in sound. In a different vein from her two previous CDs *Absolute Torch* and *Twang* and *Ingénue*, it features more of a laid back country sound (obviously to complement the film). Many people label k.d.lang through her sexuality, without really listening to her music. *Even Cowgirls get the Blues* proves what has already been proven before; that k.d. lang has an outstanding and beautiful voice. So for all you

homophobes out there, you're really missing out on something brilliant.

Tracy Skehan.



GO Fish
Mercury Cinemas

Once there was a bunch of funky dykes in New York who decided to make a movie about a bunch of funky dykes in Chicago because they were mighty fed up with the lack of a decent lesbian movie. Dating was a big part of life for this bunch of funky dykes and what was the point of asking a girl out to the movies if you weren't going to enjoy the film, and if you

certainly weren't going to see any satisfying lesbian sex?

Well now funky dykes all over the world can movie-date with confidence 'cos *GO fish* is on the screen. *GO fish* has achieved a sort of cult status - you've probably heard of it if you listen to JJJ (months ago, the old Adelaide time-delay on culture dilemma). It is rumoured that the more enlightened moms and dads in the USA were taking their kids to see it, 'cos it's so

much 'fun'. I wonder what little junior thought of the nipple rings and fisting scene.

This film really is a gem. At last 'Gen X' (or should that be Jen X?) cinema verite which does not consciously endeavour to be 'hip' and so succeeds despite its character's best efforts at self-professed geekiness. At last some real looking lesbians on screen. At last a respectful peacen to the ritual of the lesbian crew-cut.

GO fish will no doubt most

appeal to the type of audience it represents - twenty-something, uni-going lesbians who are familiar with the ins and outs of contemporary lesbian culture and politics. But it really is a great film that anyone interested in fresh, funny and clever low-budget moviemaking, and anyone who has stressses out about what to wear before a date, should see. And ask her to go out with you, the 'sex scene' really works...

Sarah Zeteln

Women and Film: the Hidden Gender
Mercury Cinema

"Women and Film, the Hidden Gender" was a series of films, written and directed by women, put on by the Women's Suffrage Centenary Committee, held over four nights.

The films spanned a 18 year period, and generally the films were uninspiring, perhaps not as 90's as they were cracked up to be. The prevailing theme seemed to be reflective of how women get fucked over in society. Sorry babes, we already know that.

This women is not a car, (written and directed by Margaret Dodd) was all a bit phallic for me. it was a true account of how revheads are, but fucking and feeling up a car as if it were a women's body somehow didn't appeal to me.

Perhaps one of the highlights of the nights I saw

were the indigenous films. *Nice Coloured Girls*, by Tracy Moffat, followed three Aboriginal women around on a night out on the town. It was great to see them fuck over a fat hairy, white guy and milking him for what he's worth and then leaving him, a drunken mess in the corner.

Only the Brave (Ana Kokkinus & Mira Robertson) was a very powerful film, it was one of the few that had me glued to the screen. Still however, the ending was disappointing, again reflecting how women are constantly being fucked over and turning out the losers.

Sexy Girls, Sexy Appliances written & directed by Emma-Kate Crogan, explored the use of everyday household appliances and chores as sexually enticing toys, that only women know how to use. After all, sitting on a washing machine can be fun.

Forums such as these are few and far between. There is a need for more women to be recognised in a lot of areas including the mass media. It is important and inspiring to have events like women in film, but we really need something that relates to where women in the 90's are at, NOW. There seems to be a lacking in femo films

of empowering storylines, women should be the last to remind women of their lack of power in society. If we as women wish to strive for the status that we deserve, we must them use mediums such as film to achieve this, in a positive and inspiring way.

Julla Davey
Teresa Crowe

misogynists

you complain boys are disadvantaged now
with single sex education
today i read about the boy who tortured
an old lady til she died
the papers ponder this exception
which isn't
it's normal for men to prey on us
but when we name the hate
you call us sexist and anti-life
reverse yr sado-riuals
and label us neurotic
you aliens



The earliest Chinese ideograph for 'male' was also a synonym for selfish



Man: You're just a feminist because you're ugly.
Womyn: No, I'm a feminist because you're a man.



r — e — v — i — e — w — s

The Commode of Errors

Reincarnated Bills

Yet another version of a Shakespearian play.

The Comedy of Errors revolves around two sets of twin brothers losing each other in a boat misadventure. The mess and mixups that follow, whilst one of each set look for their dear long-lost brothers, make for a very entertaining play, one of the better Shakespearian comedy productions. It was well suited to the cast, and the director, Glen Johns, managed to bring out some great performances by the young women.

The adaptation of the script, with a 'kick-a-Vic' attitude and the appearance of a few Crows no doubt was to suck up to a more true-blue Adelaidean "I'm an Aussie"

that, this *Comedy of Errors* combined a classic production with slapstick and fart jokes aplenty. Most times this was done quite well, other times I just groaned at the mere thought of another fart joke. Although Dromio of Adelaide (Suzanne Smith) managed to maintain an amazingly high energy level bumbling and bouncing constantly all over the stage. Her twin brother Dromio of Melbourne (Kate Sulan), although less bouyant as her counterpart, still managed to give a great dimwit experience.

But wait there's more, Vanessa Russo, the wearer of the red nose, among other things, could challenge Tim Shaw Demtel extrodinare for an advertising showdown, as well as combining more serious (I don't know whether this is possible given the whole genre of the

reminded me all too much of a spoilt brat I used to know who did Kraft and Dairy Vale custard commercials.

Cassie Ridd (Luciana) annoyed me less, and her acting ability will be sure to improve with age and experience.

Given the youthfulness of the cast this is not surprising that inexperience would transpire.

All in all I did enjoy the

performance despite the obvious set-ups and fart jokes, and the inexperience of the young cast becoming apparant from time to time.

The Comedy of Errors performed by the Reincarnated Bills, is playing at the Odeon Theatre on October 19, 20, 21 and 22 at 7:30pm, tickets \$19/\$12. Dress the same and get two for one.

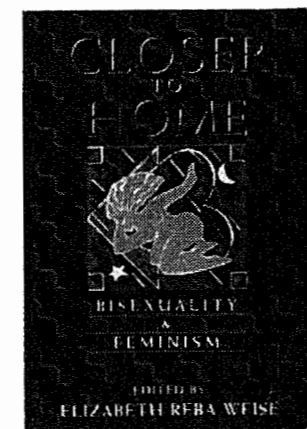
Julia Davey

Closer To Home: Bisexuality and Feminism.

Edited by Elisabeth Reba Weise, Seal Press, rrp \$29.95

As its name suggests, *Closer To Home* is a diverse anthology of non-fiction writings by bisexual feminist wimmin. The many wimmin have many different histories/herstories, lifestyles, beliefs, attitudes and approaches to the topic. Some women have come out of lesbian closets, others straight closets while a few have always identified as bi. Feminisms covered include radical, liberal, socialist/anarchist, spiritual, ecofeminist, race/ethnicity inspired feminism, and others that defy labels. Stories range from the personal, drawing strongly from their own experiences or from the more theoretical (dare I say objective) perspectives.

The important thing I found about *Closer To Home* was that although the wimmin contributors are all strong feminist wimmin,



there is no right or wrong feminist doctrine coming through. Several women disagree or contradict each other, but that is one of the anthology's strengths. The pieces bring forth different opinions and the reader is left to sift through and discern who and what they agree with (and perhaps even be challenged.)

I believe that *Closer To Home* is relevant to all feminists, feminist supporters or people curious about feminism. Check out your local wimmin's bookshop or library for a copy, if it isn't in stock, they will be able to order it in.

Sabina Nowak

As I Was Then



It seems a long time since I was at boarding school, then always surrounded by people, cherishing privacy. After eleven o'clock at night, actions slowed, people fell asleep, quietness began to dominate the building, voices were muffled by distance and I could almost believe I was the only person awake, listen softly to the albums relentlessly played then, as though Robert Smith and Morrissey held truth in their lyrics, understood the angst of being my age and feeling as though no one, no one could possibly be as misfitted as I. There were times, in a group of others, that I would become overwhelmed by shyness, paralysing my voice so that I could not even trust it to produce words that would be audible, coherent. And sickly feeling so far away from the level of conversation around me, I was frightened.

As midnight approached and the slow minutes of the night seemed luxurious, I would be at my desk, perhaps writing, arranging words into phrases that recorded me in my mental shape as I was then, or quiet, letting thoughts trail slowly through consciousness, room dark except for the tiny point of red glow emitted by the stereo. And outside my window, at the bottom of the hill, on the opposite side of the lake, ran the train tracks. Every evening at the late hour a train could be heard passing through, a rumbling hum, beautiful, that would soon dissolve. In reality, a freight train, I romantically imagined it holding passengers. Passengers asleep in reclining chairs, or stumbling towards bathrooms, making their way by the cheap grey light of the carriages.

Despite the dreariness within the train compartments, the passengers were to be envied, in contrast to me, static, they had a destination - Melbourne, glamour capital of everything currently confined to my dreams. Long streets lined with painted shopfronts, chalkboards advertising bands, 'Monkey Grip', Deep in Space', lanes where junkies died, forgotten. Everything removed from my own existence. The train's hum could almost sound like a gentle roar, a complete sound, comforting in its man-made character, of civilisation and cities, the link, carrying passengers through sleeping country, still, stationary, towards destinations that evoked glamour in their unknown possibilities. Hearing the train pass by, pass me by, left behind, brought on the tugging feelings of homesickness - a kind of empty loneliness, spreading through like a craving. Homesick in the sense I missed not belonging to anyone, anything, anywhere. As though all security, my identity, was confined to the space marked out by my desk, by the glow from the stereo and the journal pages my writing filled.


Georgie Neill



audience. I could have handled it if one hadn't been Modra, wanting to thrill me.

The all women cast brought a special something to the script. From big red noses to Dawn Futon advertisments to, I don't know why the fuck they did

performance) characters with a comical edge. Astrid Pill, whose mannerisms and style suited Antiphilus of Adelaide perfectly, gave a great performance. But no production is complete without a few prima donnas. Sita Marshall (Adriana)

82  One can never consent to creep when one feels the ambition to soar

elle dit

I would venture to guess that Anon, who wrote so many poems, was a woman.

elle dit

83 

Push the little Daisies

I find technology ... challenging. No ... to be completely honest ... I'm damn scared of it at times. And who could blame me? Approaching a piece of technology that is new to me is not unlike trying to convince my family that we live in a patriarchal society. You know from the very start that you're heading straight for the proverbial brick wall with head down and eyes closed.

But in the last six months my feelings toward technology have undergone a huge shift. Technology, I realised, is not the demon: it's those who misuse the technology. Their agendas are the problem. Their attitudes are the problem. I feel totally empowered and inspired when I learn a new skill or experience something of value from my use of technology. And I'm so angry about the fact that, as a youngling I was fed on such strong stereotypes about what men and wimmin do by nature! And I experience techno fear because of that. Wimmin, I am told, are computer illiterate by nature. Well, I believe you like I believe Freud's theory on hysteria.

And so the male network has now developed a huge pimple. It's called the internet and currently contains a lot of the pus belonging to its host. I'm not sure what your opinion is on squeezing pimples, but this is one bubble that I want to burst.

74 men to one woman in the Mac Media bulletin board. And they give free accounts to wimmin. So why is this ratio so imbalanced? Because for many wimmin, the Internet is not a place where they feel confident and powerful.

I feel enormously excited about new ways of obtaining and passing on information, because information is one of life's fundamentals.

I don't want this to sound like an advertisement for the Internet. We all come to these things if and when we are ready. But I am compelled to provide this information because of the way my mind is expanding lately. It's almost as though it's turned into a big unbreakable rubber band. But the reality is that wimmin do get sexually harrassed on the Internet. How shitty is it that one not

only has to put up with it in day to day life, but there is no essence in virtual life either.

So if you like communication and you believe in its virtues, get onto the Net, because wimmin still experience exclusion in a world where they constitute 52% of the population. On the Internet wimmin scarcely even exist in the first place. This is a scary thing indeed.

This is no way to detract from the existence of the few very strong groups of wimmin. There wimmin need help and support, and I can't bare the thought of the Net becoming a male-defined world in the same way the State has.

Shit, I just had a frightening thought. If the Net does become like the State, I may be in future be accused of some form of liberal feminist politics. I can't let this happen.

The Net is just a baby. It's like an unchartered desert at the moment ... and it's time for wimmin to spit in the desert and watch their own flowers grow.

Katrina Picozzi

which wave are you riding on?

First, second, third? Is this the way you're used to defining the history of feminism? If so, think about the wimmin who had been fighting for the rights of wimmin for centuries before the struggle of wimmin was historically recognised: wimmin such as Jean d'Arc, Rosa Luxembourg, Virginia Woolf and the countless others who have been excluded by the male historians throughout time, who considered these wimmin's efforts as unworthy of documentation and not representative of the population.

Consider also the many wimmin who have fought in between the generally considered waves of first: suffragists, second: wimmin's liberationists of the sixties and seventies, and third: now - us. Emma Goldman is one such womyn, not fitting into thisconventional time frame. She was around at the time of the suffrage movement in America, however took no part in it, and was actively against it (believing wimmin should not strive for the kind of equality men think they have) yet she was a committed feminist, well ahead of her time in regard to issues such as contraception and the girlcotting of marriage, as part of wimmin's self-determination.

It can be argued that to try and portray the wimmin's movement as one ongoing 'event' over centuries is impossible, as no social movement can sustain itself throughout time, therefore by highlighting times of wimmin's history, that really have meant social change, such as suffrage, we represent the real feminist struggles and events. However I would argue to do so is to deny us our herstory; by seeing the past only in terms of 'important' events, we are subscribing to a very male form of history. History as we have learnt it, is dominated by important things such as war and revolution, which are supposed to be representative of everyone's experience, yet have traditionally been the games

of men. Certainly these events have defined wimmin's lives, for our past is intrinsically linked to that of men, yet wimmin's experiences during such times have often been very different to those of men. For example, war time has often been quite a liberating experience for some wimmin, as it has provided a movement from the home into the workforce, and with less men around it meant they could exercise greater control over their own lives. Yet this was made possible by to male war.) This idea of wimmin's and men's time being separate, yet intrinsically linked, is expressed by Ernst Bloch in the word 'nonsynchronism', and taken up by Gerda Lerner in the assertion that, the idea of women's time is necessary to the recording of wimmin's history. Lerner sees that wimmin's time is imperative for the (re)claiming of a wimmin's history.

There has been much said about the importance of claiming our own feminist/wimmin's language. This is seen clearly through the lack of terms in any language to express wimmin's experience. When Louisa Lawson spoke in the 1890's of 'this state of things', she meant of course domestic violence and rape in marriage, two relatively new terms for describing treatment of

**a womyn writing thinks
back through her mothers
-virginia woolf**

wimmin, which has been around for centuries. Is it not ironic, that in societies of such supposedly advanced communication, such basic expressions of wimmin's experience are lacking? There has also been much said, and indeed done, about the rewriting of the past from the perspective of wimmin, and the debate over the terminology of time-framing wimmin's, and particularly feminist, herstory really opens the argument, as

to who is defining our actions. To reference the events and experiences and stories of our (female) past, on traditional, and unquestionably male historical methods and expectations, is, in my view, counterproductive to what we are trying to achieve. Surely what we want is to record the experiences of all wimmin.

Back to my original question of 'first, second, third?'. In only looking at the 'really important' events of our feminist past, we are not only taking on a male value system for determining what is worthy of being called history, but we are also silencing the voices of so many wimmin who don't fit into the time frames 1880-1914, 1960-74 and the '90's (or the so called important events of those times.)

For Joan Kirner to say that her time was the second wave, the sixties and seventies, is almost to deny that she has any role in 'this generation's feminism', (which is clearly not the case, considering the events of the last few weeks). Yet in my belief, feminism is not generational, just as time is not generational; 'this generation's feminism' is directly linked to what our mother's and grandmother's generations did in their struggle for wimmin's rights, for the past, the present and indeed the future are absolutely defined and determined by the happenings of them all.

Therefore I do not call myself a third waver; to consider that there are only two generations of wimmin before me that contributed enough to our herstory to receive titles (ie first-wave, second wave) is simply unjust to all wimmin who have ever attended a protest, told or written their stories, not got married or thought a feminist thought.

nikki anderson

WHAT DO WE WANT?

LEGALISATION OF CANNABIS
FOR
PERSONAL USE
POSSESSION
CULTIVATION
MEDICAL USE AND TO USES
A FIBRE FROM INDUSTRIAL
ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENTAL
LEGALISATION OF BONGS AS A
HARM REDUCTION MEASURE

WHEN DO WE WANT IT?

NOW

BRING YOUR FRIENDS BANNERS AND ATTITUDES!
CONTACT YOUR M.P. AND JOIN
HELP END MARIJUANA PROHIBITION
HEMP PO BOX 1019 KENT TOWN 5071



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Stop Press! Centre now open Wednesday evenings 4pm to 6pm.

84

Women have the feeling that since they didn't make the rules, the rules have nothing to do with them.

elle dit

elle dit

..i don't give a crap about the breasts you like..

85

THE NINETIES - A POST FEMINIST ERA?

IF WE'RE TO BELIEVE THE MEDIA
- AND WHAT'S NOT TO BELIEVE?

RADICAL FEMINISM IS
OUT

PASSÉ

NO MORE

BELONGING TO THE SIXTIES

THE ERA OF

BRA BURNING AND HAIRY ARMPITS AND LESBIANS IN OVERALLS

OOPS...

SORRY TO BURST YOUR BUBBLE

FELLAS

- BUT WE DON'T GO AWAY SO

QUICKLY

WHEN BOYS MINE US

OUR BODIES OUR RESOURCES

WHEN THEY THINK THEY CAN FUCK

US

SENSELESS

SCARE US WITH THEIR

POWER THEIR DICKS

'YOU LET ME VIOLATE YOU DESECRATE YOU PENETRATE YOU'

BEATEN DOWN GIRLS

GIGGLE NERVOUSLY

BUT NOT ALL OF US

TREMBLE

THE BELLAS OF THE WORLD LAUGH IN THEIR FACES

CLEAR OF VISION AND

UNAFRAID

POST-FEMINISM

IN YOUR DREAMS

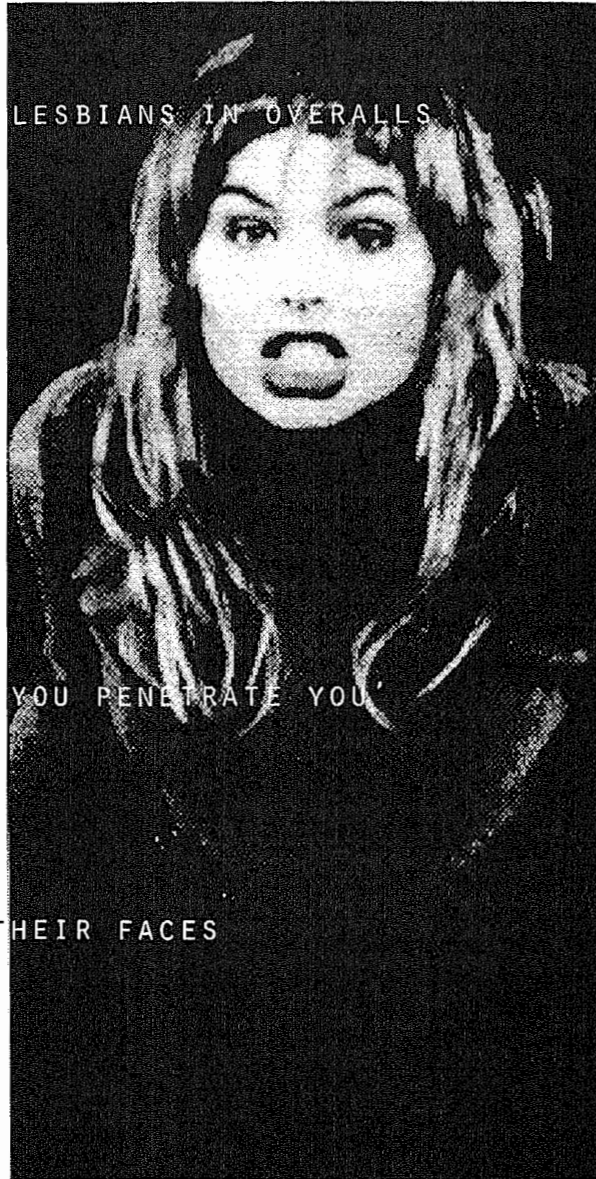
MATE

AS I SAID BEFORE

WIMMIN

DON'T GO AWAY SO

QUICKLY



LESLIE WILSON



A lesbian is the rage of all women
condensed to the point of explosion.

elle
dit