



WOMEN'S
EDUCATION
 DES FEMMES

**CCLOW's Commemorative
 Issue**

Volume 13 - No.1
 SPRING - 1999

Women's Education des femmes

Women's Education des femmes, a feminist connection to the world of learning and education, is published by the Canadian Congress for Learning Opportunities for Women.

CLOW gratefully acknowledges the financial support of the Women's Program, Status of Women Canada and the National Literacy Secretariat, Human Resources Development Canada.

National Office Staff

Executive Director
Joanne Lindsay

Administrative Co-ordinator
Maria Cordeiro

Summer Staff 1998
Sara Glencross
Donna Sampson

Translator
Anne Minguet

Production/Layout
Luciana Ricciutelli

Web site:
<http://www.nald.ca/cclow.htm>

CLOW 1998/99 Board of Directors

President, Cheryl Senecal

c.senecal@sk.sympatico.ca

Past President, Catherine O'Bryan

peiliteracy.alliance@pei.sympatico.ca

[sympatico.ca](mailto:peiliteracy.alliance@pei.sympatico.ca)

President-Elect, Catherine Cookson

ccookson@istar.ca

Treasurer, Betty Butterworth

bbutter@interlog.com

CLOW Representative to National Women's Reference Group on Labour

Market Issues Pat Webb

explorer@freenet.carleton.ca

Alberta Director, Betty Donaldson

edonalds@acs.ucalgary.ca

British Columbia Director, vacant Manitoba Director, Roberta Bishop

roberta@ptcs.mb.ca

New Brunswick Director, Barbara Guy

barbarag@nbnet.nb.ca

Newfoundland and Labrador Director, Gail Gosse

ggosse@northatlantic.nf.ca

Northwest Territories Director, vacant Nova Scotia Director, Suzanne Bailly

ac746@chebucto.ns.ca

Ontario Director, Jo-Anne Stead

jstead@magma.ca

Prince Edward Island Director, Doris Macdonald

DOMacDonald@scgw.sc
hollandc.pe.ca

Quebec Director, Linda Shohet

lshohet@dawsoncollege

qc.ca

Saskatchewan Director, vacant Yukon Director, Pam Evans

catevapv@yukoncollege

yk.ca

National Office Volunteers

Zainab Ahmed, Sara Glencross, Shelley D. Patterson, Theodora Polog, Carmela Pugliese, Donna Sampson, Katherine Tiller, Aberash Woldegiorgis

Editorial Committee

Christine Bennet-Clark, Betty Donaldson, Danielle Dumas, Barbara Guy, Joanne Lindsay, Marie Munro, Catherine O'Bryan



Mission Statement Founded in 1979, the Canadian Congress of Learning Opportunities for Women (CCLOW) is a national, voluntary, feminist, social justice organization with networks in every province and territory. CCLOW focuses on improving educational and learning opportunities to overcome discrimination based on gender, age, race, class, ethnicity, ability, and sexual orientation. CCLOW supports formal, non-formal, lifelong and experiential learning, and adult education based on feminist principles of equality. Its membership is committed to the empowerment of women through equality of access, planning, participation, and results in all our education and training sectors.

To advance women's equality, CCLOW carries out the following activities both locally and nationally, in collaboration with others:

- researches women's learning issues;
- advocates for the improvement of educational and learning programs;
- develops programs and learning resources, creates and implements innovative learning models, and supports the development of women-centred curriculum;
- organizes public education activities;
- distributes women-positive learning resource materials including literacy curriculum resources, research findings, and policy briefs;
- actively participates in coalition groups including the National Women's Reference Group on Labour Market Issues, the Fair Share Campaign, and the Gang of 23.

CCLOW further recognizes that equity in education and training must go hand in hand with pay equity, employment equity, the recognition of and respect for diversity, and the re-structuring of work and family life.

Canadian Congress for Learning Opportunities for Women

Table of Contents

Women's EDUCATION *des femmes*
CCLOW's Commemorative Issue
Spring 1999
Volume 13, Number 1

Editorial
Éditorial

CCLOW Moving Forward with a Mission for Woman-Centred Education

Checking the RearView Mirror and Going Forward: CCLOW faces a New Millenium

by Cheryl Senecal, Catherine Cookson, and Catherine O'Bryan

Creating an Open Space so That CCLOW Could Focus Upon the Future

by Betty Donaldson, Birgitt Bolton, and Larry Peterson

Women Moving Women: A Process Model

by Marie A. Gillen

An Editor Reflects ...

by Christina Starr

Claiming/Reclaiming Our Own learning and Our Own lives

Men's Studies, Women's Studies and Feminism

by Christine Overall

Interview: Greta Hofmann Nemiroff

by Susan McCrae Vander Voet

I Had a Little Trouble on the Way to a Ph.D.

by Sandra Monteath

Living and Learning: The Choice to Be Playful

by Lanie Melamed

Grounding Our Beliefs on Women and the Economy

by Diana Ellis

Personal Reflections on the Practice of Adult Education

by Cheryl Senecal

Briser le silence en milieu pedagogique

par Jeannine M. Quellette

Variation sur un theme : c'est las parole qui est d'or et le silence qui est d'argent

par Carole La Violette

Breaking All the Rules: Breaking Silence

by Colleen N. Race

Feelings After a Tragedy: Personal or Collective Impressions

Le senti après une tragedie: impressions personnelles ou collectives?

par Anne Marie Pharand

Defining Our Own Needs/Building Our Own Knowledge

Oublier sa culture s'integrer, ou faire un place aux cultures en education?

par Monique Ouellette

The University, Women's Studies, and Rural Women: Some Thoughts on Feminist pedagogy and Rural Outreach

by Beth Westfall

What Kind of Career Counselling do Women Need?

by Sue Berlove

Family Violence Prevention and Curriculum Development

by Suzanne Mulligan and Donna Mitchell

The Social Construction of Deaf Women

by Tanis Doe

Gaining Visibility: Older Women and Education

by Sharon Harold

Coming to Terms with "Visible Minority"

by Glenda Simms

Lady Bountiful: The White Woman Teacher in Multicultural Education

by Sheila Cavanagh and Helen Harper

Joy and Power Beyond the Home Sphere

"I Would Emphasize the Joy of Science": Interview with Ursula Franklin

by Jan Clarke

Literacy as Threat/Desire

by Kathleen Rockhill

Non Traditional Fields for Women: Against the Odds

by Sharon Goldberg

Art/Craft High/Low

by Ann MacGillivray

Celebrating Canadian Women: Prose and Poetry By and About Women

by Maureen Shaw

Poetry

Go Forward Not Backward, an excerpt, by Elizabeth Cox

Domestic Angel, by Sylvie Bourassa

Woman's Song, by Gert Beadle

Three Feet By Six, by Tanis MacDonald

Act of Contrition, by Mary Gurekas

Welfare Bum, by Sheila Baxter

Untitled, by Caitlin

Technology, by Jessica Millar and Rachal Beattie

Front Cover

Lily S. May (formerly known as Susan Barsel), Untitled, Linocut, 6" x 8", 1985.

Back Cover

From left to right, Catherine O'Bryan, Past President; Cheryl Senecal, President; Catherine Cookson, President-Elect 1998/99. Photo: Gaye Jackson.

Commemorating and Collabourating *An Editorial*

by **Barbara Guy and Betty Donaldson**

CLOW has persisted 20 years! To celebrate, the CLOW Board wants you to have this retrospective sample of publications from *Women's Education des femmes (WEdf)* between 1984-1996 and a few new items that prescribe the future.

It has not been easy to sustain the role of providing quality articles about issues of interest to women with perspectives that might not be published elsewhere. In doing so, however, authors such as those represented in this special Commemorative Issue are being given a voice and they, in turn, have helped educate others. In this editorial, we briefly summarize how the selections were made and some of the thoughts of the two co-editors of the committee that prepared this issue.

As always, this issue is a collabourative adventure. It includes the CLOW Board of Directors, Joanne Lindsay, Executive Director, and CLOW office staff as well as Luciana Ricciutelli, Editor of *Canadian Woman Studies/les cahiers de la femme*, who helped co-ordinate production of this issue. It includes a volunteer group of graduate students at the University of Calgary and CLOW Board and staff members who read every issue that was ever published and who made recommendations regarding a "long short list" from which the final selections were chosen. And, most importantly, it includes the authors, poets, and artists whose work is reprinted or printed in this issue.

Much effort was made to contact all the contributors included in this issue. It proved to be a daunting task and there are several we were not able to reach. We sincerely hope all will be honored that their work was included as relevant and important milestones of the CLOW journey and will see the reprint as recognition of that longevity.

The issue also includes information about the current status of the organization and current program or publication offerings. We attempted to include each region of Canada and the range of publication years of the magazine. We searched for representative articles about diversity, disability, abuse, employment problems, re-entry, creativity, identity, and abuse. We wanted the range of joy and frustration, empowerment and oppression, voices and silences, values and victimization that women experience.

We selected articles that cover the process and the goals. We sought balance between perspectives: articles about policy and about experience, for example. We tried very hard to make the Commemorative Issue reflect our growing consciousness of women's diversity, but we know that some voices are absent. The content is arranged within five

meta-themes: moving forward with a mission for women-centred education; claiming/reclaiming our own learning and our own lives; defining our own needs/building our own knowledge; joy and power beyond the home sphere.

Barbara Guy and Betty Donaldson co-edited this Commemorative Issue. Barbara Guy is the Board Director from New Brunswick and a consultant specializing in labour market analysis and human resource development planning. Betty Donaldson is the Alberta CLOW Director and a professor in the Faculty of Education at the University of Calgary. Her research interests include students in transition, women and education, and comparative policy analysis.

Barbara writes: I always appreciated the publication, but I read it under the constraints we feel at work. This time I read the issues that I chose to review - which were those most closely related to my field of interest - women and paid work-and the articles from the "long short list" at home in the evenings and in the cafes of my small town, escaping the day-long joy and frustration of home life and work to read about other women's joy, frustration, and work. I read about women working together to make better programs for women, women who monitored social policy to ensure that women's education and training issues were not lost, women's poetry and other art. Alice Walker in *Possessing the Secret of Joy* says that the "secret" is the joy of the struggle. I hope she's wrong, although I love the point she's making about awareness of "mission." If the struggle is a joy, imagine what it would be like for women to live in "realized" equality: with voice, joy and empowerment, and with the same opportunities, expectations and support for all.

Betty notes: As a woman professor teaching about women in education, I searched for publications by and about Canadian women. It is a search that is getting easier but for many years, *WEdf* was one of the very few resources. Even more valuable, it frequently offered articles about issues that were not discussed elsewhere. My graduate students, experienced teachers or re-entry students, responded well: the style and contents bridged gaps between more traditional scholarly articles and more accessible magazines. In our country, professional education practitioners to develop provincial perspectives and loyalties but a national organization such as CLOW provides overview opportunities. I grieved when publication ceased. An important thread in claiming a woman-centred education was broken. Next time we must rebuild a stronger web amongst the net workers.

The mission of CLOW provides and connects educators of adults with women-positive resources related to learning policies, research, practice and advocacy, and to lead in the development of such resources where gaps exist. This Commemorative Issue celebrates 20 years of such efforts, including the 12 years of magazine publication. It is a record of the late twentieth century and a milestone. Now, it is time to continue the journey, commenting, commemorating, and collaborating toward a better future.

Barbara Guy can be reached at barbarag@nbnet.nb.ca;
Betty Donaldson, at edonalds@ucalgary.ca



CCLOW's 1998/99 Board: Bottom row; left to right: Cheryl Senecal, President- Elect, November 1998; Catherine Q'Bryan, President; Pat Webb, Past-President. Top row; left to right, Roberta Bishop, Managing Director; Joanne Lindsay, Executive Director; Danielle Dumas, Northwest Territories; Catherine Cookson, British Columbia; Gail Gosse, Newfoundland; Betty Butterworth, Treasurer.

Éditorial

Commémoration et collaboration

Le CCPEF persévère depuis 20 ans! Pour célébrer l'événement, le conseil d'administration du CCPEF tient à présenter une rétrospective d'articles parus dans *Women's Education des femmes* de 1984 à 1996 et quelques nouveaux dossiers qui dictent l'avenir.

Il n'a pas été facile de maintenir la publication d'articles de qualité sur des questions intéressant les femmes et mettant en avant des opinions peut-être impubliables ailleurs. Ce faisant, toutefois, les auteurs, dont celles citées dans ce numéro commémoratif, ont pu s'exprimer et ont contribué, à leur tour, à l'éducation d'autres personnes. Dans cet éditorial, on résume la manière dont les articles ont été choisis et certaines réflexions des deux rédactrices du comité ayant préparé ce numéro.

Comme toujours, ce numéro est le résultat d'un effort collectif: le conseil d'administration du CCPEF, Joanne Lindsay, directrice générale, le personnel du bureau du CCPEF et Luciana Ricciutelli, rédactrice de *Canadian Woman Studies/les cahiers de la femme*, qui a participé à la coordination de la production de ce numéro, un groupe d'étudiantes diplômées de l'Université de Calgary, et les membres du conseil d'administration et du personnel qui ont lu tous les articles publiés au fil des ans et ont fait des recommandations à propos de la liste à partir de laquelle le choix définitif a été effectué. Mais n'oublions pas surtout les auteurs, poètes et artistes réimprimées ou imprimées pour la première fois dans ce numéro.

On a déployé d'incroyables efforts pour contacter toutes les collaboratrices citées dans ce numéro. Tâche gigantesque. Nous n'avons pas réussi à joindre certaines d'entre elles. Nous espérons, toutefois, qu'elles seront fières de se rendre compte que leurs écrits ont constitué une étape caractéristique et importante de l'itinéraire du CCPEF et comprendront que leurs textes ont été réimprimés en reconnaissance de cette longévité.

Le numéro comprend aussi des renseignements sur la situation actuelle de l'organisme et sur les publications et programmes que celui-ci offre. Nous avons essayé d'inclure chaque

région du Canada et toutes les années de publication du magazine. Nous avons cherché des articles types sur la diversité, les personnes handicapées, les problèmes de violence et d'emploi, ainsi que sur la réinsertion, l'identité et la créativité. Nous voulions illustrer l'éventail des expériences vécues par les femmes: joie et frustration, habilitation et oppression, affirmation et silences, valeurs et victimisation.

Nous avons choisi des articles traitant des démarches et des buts. Nous avons cherché à équilibrer les articles, entre ceux sur les politiques et ceux sur l'expérience par exemple. Nous nous sommes efforcées que le numéro commémoratif reflète la diversité, dont nous prenons tous les jours davantage conscience, mais nous savons toutefois qu'il y a des lacunes à ce propos. Le numéro est divisé en cinq grands thèmes: Une mission en marche: une éducation axée sur l'éducation des femmes; À la conquête et à la reconquête de notre apprentissage et de nos existences; Cerner nos besoins/Édifier notre savoir; Joie et pouvoir en dehors de la sphère familiale.

Barbara Guy et Betty Donaldson ont rédigé ensemble ce numéro commémoratif. Barbara Guy, originaire du Nouveau-Brunswick, est directrice du conseil d'administration et conseillère. Elle se spécialise dans l'analyse du marché du travail et la planification du développement des ressources humaines. Betty Donaldson est directrice du CCPEF de l'Alberta et professeur à la Faculté d'éducation de l'Université de Calgary. Dans le cadre de ses recherches, elle s'intéresse aux élèves en transition, à l'éducation des femmes et à l'analyse comparative des politiques.

Voici ce qu'écrit Barbara: J'ai toujours aimé le magazine, mais je le lisais à la course au travail. Cette fois-ci, j'ai lu les articles que j'ai choisis d'analyser, c'est-à-dire ceux portant principalement sur mes domaines d'intérêt (les femmes dans la main-d'oeuvre, rémunérée) et ceux de la liste. Je les ai lus chez moi le soir ou dans les cafés de ma petite ville, fuyant les joies et les frustrations de ma vie professionnelle et familiale, pour découvrir les joies, les frustrations et le travail d'autres femmes. J'ai lu des articles à propos de femmes qui s'unissent pour créer de meilleurs programmes pour les femmes, de femmes qui surveillent la politique sociale pour s'assurer que l'éducation et la formation des femmes ne sont pas oubliées, et j'ai admiré des poèmes et d'autres, oeuvres artistiques de femmes. Alice Walker affirme dans *Possessing the Secret of Joy* que le secret c'est la joie que procure la lutte. J'espère qu'elle se trompe, même si j'aime ce qu'elle dit à propos de la prise de conscience et de la mission. Si la lutte est source de joie, imaginons un instant ce qu'il en serait pour les femmes de vivre dans un monde équitable, dans lequel elles auraient voix au chapitre, éprouveraient de la joie et seraient habilitées, et où toutes auraient les mêmes chances, attentes et soutien.

Betty fait remarquer: En ma qualité d'enseignante spécialisée dans l'éducation des femmes, je suis toujours à la recherche de publications rédigées par des Canadiennes et portant sur des Canadiennes. Il est plus facile d'en trouver aujourd'hui, mais pendant de nombreuses années *WEdf* constituait l'une des rares ressources disponibles. De plus, le magazine comptait souvent des articles sur des sujets qui n'étaient pas abordés ailleurs. Mes étudiantes du troisième cycle, des professeurs chevronnées et les étudiantes qui reprenaient des études l'appréciaient, car, en raison de son style et de son contenu, il

comblait les lacunes entre les articles plus savants et les magazines de vulgarisation. Dans notre pays, l'enseignement supérieur professionnel attend que les praticiennes et praticiens recommandent des idées et des vérités à l'échelle provinciale, mais un organisme national comme le CCPEF donne des possibilités plus générales. J'ai été triste lorsque la publication a été interrompue, car le mouvement revendiquant une éducation axée sur les femmes perdait un atout clé. La prochaine fois, il faudra tisser une toile plus solide parmi les travailleuses du réseau.



*Jo-Anne Stead, Ontario
Director, CCLOW November
1998 Annual General Meeting.
Photo: Gaye Jackson*

La mission du CCPEF est de procurer aux éducatrices d'adultes, qu'il met aussi d'ailleurs en contact les unes avec les autres, des ressources sûres sur les femmes (politiques, recherches, méthodes et défense en matière d'apprentissage) et de voir à l'élaboration de ce genre de ressources lorsque des lacunes existent. Ce numéro commémoratif rend hommage à vingt ans d'efforts, pendant lesquels le magazine est paru pendant 12 ans. Il s'agit-là d'un record en cette fin de xxe siècle et d'une étape-clé. Le moment est venu de poursuivre notre route, de nous exprimer, de commémorer et de collaborer pour que demain soit encore meilleur.

Checking the Rear View Mirror and Going Forward *CLOW Faces a New Millennium*

by Cheryl Senecal, Catherine Cookson, and Catherine O'Bryan

We are conscious of the need for fundamental changes that will allow issues of women's education and training to be addressed in meaningful ways.

Just like Janus, the Roman deity with two faces, one looking forward and one behind, as the "three Presidents" of CLOW, we are mindful of the organization's rich herstory while, at the same time, conscious of the need for fundamental changes that will allow the issues of women's education and training to be addressed in meaningful and relevant ways for the new millennium.

The Changing Landscape

Since the conception of CLOW in 1979, a number of critical factors have contributed to changing the landscape of women's education and training in Canada.

First, over the past few years, there has been a gradual devolution of responsibility for training from the federal government to the provinces. As a consequence, provincial and territorial jurisdictions are in various stages of negotiation with the federal government to develop training agreements. This dramatic and unprecedented shift in the responsibility for training from one level of government to another has resulted in a great deal of confusion and uncertainty for women seeking access to training programs.

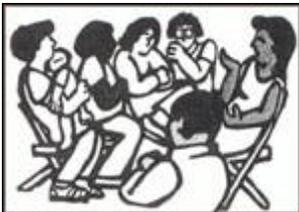
Second, unemployment benefits have been changed through a restructuring of the Employment Insurance Act. These changes, among other things, have limited the number of women who are eligible to receive a variety of Employment Insurance benefits, including access to training.

Third, there is a continuing shift towards privatized training that can produce short-term, measurable outcomes. This has resulted in dramatic loss of funding for the type of community-based training that has traditionally provided a more long-term and comprehensive approach to employment issues. As a consequence, many services designed to meet the needs of women, have collapsed.

In addition, a continued trend towards increased fiscal restraint and accountability at various levels of government has necessitated national women's organizations to diversify their funding sources. For CLOW, the shift towards project-based funding has been a

reality that we have attempted to grapple with, despite the fact that it has often left us feeling disheartened and debilitated.

Depuis trois ans, le CCPEF a pris des mesures énergiques pour faire face à la nouvelle réalité: restrictions financières du gouvernement, dévolution aux provinces de la responsabilité de la formation et perte de la base de nos membres. Comme la tendance est aujourd'hui à un système de financement se fondant sur les projets, le CCPEF a tenté de diversifier sa base de financement, mais en vain. De difficiles décisions ont été prises, qui ont déçues le personnel et les membres. En 1998, le conseil d'administration du CCPEF a dû se rendre à l'évidence : la fermeture du bureau national s'imposait. Douleoureuse réalité. Le conseil d'administration estime qu'il reste encore beaucoup à faire dans le domaine de l'éducation et de la formation des femmes au Canada. Pour revitaliser l'organisme, attirer des membres dynamiques et dévoués et redéfinir son mandat, le CCPEF a proposé la tenue d'un congrès des femmes en 1999. Il espère qu'après le Congrès, le CCPEF sera fort de nouvelles dirigeantes, d'une orientation claire et d'un nombre accru de membres.



As members of the CLOW Board, our attempts to understand and interpret this changing landscape has forced us to question and to reflect. We have suffered the despair of deciding to discontinue publishing our highly-acclaimed and much-loved magazine *Women's Education des femmes*. We have grappled with the chaos where it seems there is no clear direction. But, we have hopefully taken the steps necessary that will allow us to renew our hope, our energy, and our vision.

We have hopefully taken the steps necessary that will allow us to renew our hope, our energy, and our visions.

The Struggle to Renew Our Vision

Our attempts, as a Board, to transform CLOW began with diligence at the 1997 Board and Annual General Meetings. It was at this time that we first experienced "open space technology" as a mean of reinventing the organization to fit with the changing landscape. At this meeting, "champions" emerged who were committed to ensuring the survival of CLOW. Four areas of focus were identified including, technology as an operating tool, project-based funding, mission, and organizational structure/membership.

As a means of maintaining continuity, a decision was made to freeze the Board of Directors as a means of helping to achieve the goals we had established. As part of this work, a commitment was made by board members to make better and more consistent use of new electronic technology, such as e-mail and electronic conferencing.

All board members obtained e-mail capability and list-serves were established for the Board as well as for various committees and working groups. In retrospect, the increased use of technology allowed us to remain in more frequent contact and to operate the

business of our organization more expediently. However, it also came with some challenges and limitations, as we continued to deal with the consequences of only being able to bring board members together for one "face-to-face" meeting in the year.

In the on-going effort to diversify our funding base, CLOW explored new ways to work with partners as a means of meeting the learning needs of women while supporting the national office and the infrastructure of CLOW. Unfortunately, efforts to explore new working relationships and funding sources were not successful.

In addition, CLOW's mission statement was changed to reflect a refined focus on activities - to provide and connect educators of adults with women-positive resources related to policy, research, practice, and advocacy, and to lead in the development of such resources where gaps exist. This statement built on what CLOW has done in the past - conduct research, provide much needed resources for adult educators and create learning materials for women learners. However, the renewed mission statement was received with mixed reviews from members who continued to be concerned about losing some of the original goals, which had guided the organization over the past 20 years.

Board members also agreed that the current organizational structure had many limitations and needed to be re-modeled to meet the challenges of the changing landscape. A discussion paper was developed which outlined the essence of a regionally-based structure for CLOW. Consultations were held with members across the country. And, again there was a mixture of responses - some felt it was inevitable and basically the only viable option, while others were adamant that adopting a regional structure was only another step in our ongoing decline.

At the 1998 Board and Annual General Meetings of CLOW, we again struggled with what members told us. As a Board, we again used "open-space" technology as a means of listening to the voices within ourselves that compelled us to be honest and confront the critical question of CLOW's continued viability. As a result of these deliberations, the board members of CLOW took bold steps towards creating the opportunity for a revitalized organization, and passed the following motion:

Be it resolved, that in consultation with our legal counsel, CLOW board members focus our energy to:

- fulfill our current obligations to March 31, 1999, and then to undertake as our additional commitments to:
- close the national office
- plan a National Congress
- facilitate the Congress and through this process agree to accept the outcomes of the Congress, and
- flow-through on our fiduciary responsibilities to March 31, 2000.

We all understand the seriousness of our decision. However, while everyone wanted the work to continue, it became clear to us that the organization, as it currently functions, was floundering and could not continue. The ongoing reduction of staff has lessened our

ability to undertake vital projects and discussions. The changes to funding criteria by Status of Women Canada, our major funder, also influenced our decision to close the National office.

While the process of closing the national office is underway, the work of the organization needs to continue. Therefore, we are focusing our attention on the development, implementation, and evaluation of a National Congress, which will bring together women with an interest in women's education and training. From the Congress, the work of the organization has the potential to be revitalized, reorganized, and reconstituted in ways that will make it possible to keep issues about women's education and training on the agenda. Board members are prepared to guide the development of the Congress and to hand over the responsibilities of the organization to women who see innovative ways to proceed with the work. We are revitalized in our efforts to renew the organization through this mechanism. We are hopeful that some outstanding issues we have attempted to address over the past several years will be moved forward by a new generation of women who can bring greater diversity, energy, and passion to the work.

Creating a New Tradition

We know that CCLOW'S rich history has rooted us in solid ground. Since its conception, CCLOW has been recognized for being a progressive feminist organization that has worked to push the boundaries of traditional research and program delivery. It has made many valuable contributions to women throughout the country as learners and as teachers.

We are passionate about the possibilities that this Congress will hold for our future. It is an opportunity for women to come together who are interested in women's education and training and who are willing to participate in the process of developing a new structure in which to pursue these issues. We invite you to participate in the Congress and join us in "creating a new tradition."

Cheryl Senecal is the President of the Canadian Congress of Learning Opportunities for Women. Cathie Cookson is the President-Elect and Catherine O'Bryan is the Past-President.

Images of the Goddess

A 24 minute video documentary highlighting portions of the popular production of *Images of the Goddess* staged at the University of Calgary, January 1996. The performance includes 13 vignettes which illustrates the women's life cycles during the maiden, mid-life, and crone stages. This video is an excellent tool for women educators interested in generating discussion about fine art, educating girls and women, and gender differences.

For information about purchasing, renting, or previewing a copy, contact Barb Murray, University of Calgary; tel: (403) 220-3709, or email: bmurray@aoss.ucalgary.ca



Phyllis Serota, "Esmeralda and the Fish," oil on canvas, 36" x 48." Photo: Trevor Mills.

"The image of the woman holding the fish represents an intimate connection to my own creativity. Really touching the deepest part of myself brings me a sense of comfort. It is a great luxury to be able to sit in that chair and touch something so beautiful." (Reprinted from WEdf's Spring 1988 issue, Learning, Making, Teaching Art," Vol. 6, No.2).

Phyllis Serota is a painter living in Victoria, B.C.

Creating an Open Space So That CCLOW Could Focus Upon the Future

by Betty Donaldson, Birgitt Bolton, and Larry Peterson

It was time to adjust the navigation of the ship of state if we were to continue this feminist voyage.

In November 1997, the CCLOW Board of Directors added two days to the Fall meeting schedule so that a strategic directions workshop could be held in conjunction with the annual general meeting. The purpose was to clarify goals of the organization, now nearly a venerable twenty years. It was time to remove the encrustations of outworn barnacles of thought and adjust the navigation of the ship of state if we were to continue this feminist voyage. Prior to the meeting, the President's Advisory Council (PAC) had reviewed several proposals from various consultants and had decided upon the team of Larry Peterson and Birgitt Bolton; Betty Donaldson, Alberta Director but not a member of PAC, arrived as a naive player. This article briefly summarizes the perspectives of these three participants in that workshop; it does not necessarily include all the work done during those intensive days nor does it represent CCLOW policy. We hope it provides a sense of how the Board tried to establish new directions for the organization and what it was like to use this approach to effect change.

CCLOW was facing the Annual General Meeting of the Board of Directors in Bolton, Ontario with a great deal of trepidation. The organization that had been very effective throughout the 1980s had discontinued a major service (the magazine) at the board meeting a year ago. There was still upset about this decision. Further, the organization was aware that its guidelines for funding source would change by March 1998, and the board was unsure about the future because of impending financial constraints. CCLOW also was operating with an interim executive director who was holding things together after the previous executive director had left. This board meeting was clearly the one to determine if CCLOW had a future. Delegates arrived from across the Country, representing various groups and voices of women "back home." Some of the delegates were certain that this board meeting would be the one to decide that CCLOW had no future. It was a distinct possibility.

Les auteurs résument les importantes stratégies et lignes directrices dont il a été discuté lors de la réunion générale annuelle du CCPEF en novembre 1997. Le comité de direction avait pris la décision d'engager des conseillers associés, Birgitt Bolton et Larry Peterson, pour qu'ils aident le conseil d'administration pendant la durée de la réunion (22 jours). Birgitt et Larry ont présenté le cercle d'urgence des peuples autochtones qui, selon eux, peut servir aux organismes d'instrument de diagnostic et d'outil pour édifier une organisation saine. La conseillère et le conseiller ont également eu recours à un certain nombre d'exercices pour dépister un sens du commandement chez tous les membres du conseil et les inciter à partager leurs idées quant aux perspectives d'avenir du CCPEF.

Dix-sept sujets de discussion étaient prévus pour cette réunion (on peut se procurer le compte rendu des débats au bureau). Désormais, les possibilités d'action étaient les suivantes : système de financement se fondant sur des projets, restructuration de l'organisme, rédaction de la version préliminaire d'un énoncé des perspectives d'avenir et de mission et mise sur pied d'un système de communication en ligne. La rédaction de l'énoncé des perspectives d'avenir et de mission commença immédiatement. De plus, la nouvelle structure organisationnelle a été ébauchée sous forme de diagramme. Depuis la réunion, le Comité consultatif de la présidente poursuit l'élaboration des politiques. Cette publication commémorative en est l'un des résultats elle vise à jouer un rôle de charnière entre les aspirations d'hier, d'aujourd'hui et de demain, à communiquer avec les membres et à mobiliser des ressources.

Some of the delegates were certain that this meeting would be the one to decide that CLOW had no future. It was a distinct possibility.

The executive committee (President's Advisory Committee) had decided to hire consultants to see them through a pre-board meeting process to work through the issues of the organization and to explore possibilities for the future. Proposals were called for, interviews held, and a consulting team of Birgitt Bolton and Larry Peterson were hired. Both consultants are founders of the Open Space Institute of Canada and use Open Space Technology as their preferred means of process. (See their site <http://www.tmn.com.openspace/index/html> for further details.) As Catherine O'Bryan, president, said early into the process "we hired these consultants because they passed our shlick test." CLOW members had had an unpleasant experience with consultants before which they did not want repeated, especially at this meeting. There was also some uncertainty that one member of this consulting team was male. The group waited to see what would happen.

Birgitt and Larry began their two-and-one half-day process by introducing their use of the medicine wheel of indigenous peoples from around the world as a diagnostic tool for organizations and as a means of building healthy organization. They explained that the medicine wheel enables collectives of people to function and is simple to use focusing on leadership in the north, vision in the east, community in the south, and management in the

west. (When all four components are in balance, the organization is healthy. When an organization is unhealthy, it is easy to diagnose the root of the problem using the medicine wheel. In the centre of the medicine wheel is the purpose of the organization.) As they introduced the medicine wheel and use of it as a diagnostic and working means for CLOW, they outlined the agenda which included speaking time assessing CLOW from each of the four directions and thinking about whether there was a strong enough purpose for the organization to exist. The majority of the process would be conducted using Open Space Technology.

Prior to this exercise, however, it was important for the group to understand something about the cycle of organizations as well as to understand the impact of grief work on the organization. The first morning was spent looking at the past and at the present with the intention of letting it go, of honouring it. The consultants explained that all parts of the past and present, both good and bad must be acknowledged before looking at the future. Within this time, the group identified the assumptions they were able to operate from before, as well as looking at the assumptions in the changing context. It was clear to all that what was, was no longer. Time was given for a long lunch break so that individual members could do what they needed to do to let go of the past with CLOW in the form of some kind of personal ritual, so that they could come back after the break with clearer heads and hearts to explore the future.

Following the break, Larry and Birgitt started work with the medicine wheel looking at leadership in the north. They explained that nothing could move forward in an organization unless there were people willing to take risks and willing to access their courage. Both risk and courage are essential ingredients for leadership. Following a number of exercises, the group identified that leadership was within all of them. This insight allowed the group and the process to move to the east to explore vision. The exercise was not about creating a vision statement but about really looking at vision for CLOW. The group discovered a very common, very meaningful and deep vision for the future of CLOW. There was both surprise and delight as the members realized this shared commitment. They had never had the chance to step back and think about it before.

With both leadership and vision acknowledged as present, the consultants then identified that the next place of work was in the south, the place of community and healing. To access community and healing and to search for the issues and opportunities for the future of CLOW they "opened the space" for the balance of that day including the evening and all of the second day using Open Space Technology.

Larry explained that Open Space Technology was the best means of meeting when: an existing organization needs reenergizing; creative planning needs to be done quickly; challenges are present that need immediate action; communication needs to improve; a wide variety of issues need to be dealt with; opportunities for the future need to be explored; vision and structure need to be developed quickly; individual interests within a group appear to be quite diverse.

He also did a check with the group to be sure that specific outcomes were not

The group discovered a meaningful vision for the future of CLOW.

There was both surprise and delight as the members realized this shared commitment.

predetermined and that existing leadership was willing to make changes as a result of the event. If either of these conditions was not met, Open Space would not be used. Birgitt then began the Open Space meeting. There are several features to an Open Space meeting. Chairs are arranged in a circle to facilitate communication and there are no tables. The role of the facilitator is to open the space and to hold safe space open.

Birgitt acknowledged the potential for leadership in every person. She pointed to the blank wall stating that it represented the agenda and then made it clear that the agenda is created by the people in the room. She focused on passion and responsibility, the two keys to a successful meeting. Without passion, enthusiasm for an idea would soon wane, and without responsibility, there is risk that the ideas would never move forward.

Birgitt outlined the four principles and one law for conducting an Open Space meeting, to enable participants to stay focused on the event at hand and to acknowledge that the wisdom to resolve the issues is present in the room. The four principles:

1. Whoever comes is the right people.
2. Whatever happens is the only thing that could have.
3. Whenever it starts is the right time.
4. When it is over, it is over.

The Law of Mobility states that if persons find themselves in situations where they are neither learning anything or contributing anything, they are responsible for moving to another place, for example to another group meeting. The principles and law enable people to participate in ways that are more meaningful to them.

Having explained the process, Birgitt opened the meeting to let the group create the agenda, sign up for the topics of discussion that interest them and then she and Larry got out of the way. The group self-managed the discussions and produced a report at the end of every discussion that was immediately input into a computer and printed and posted on the wall for all to read as more discussion groups continued. Birgitt and Larry worked behind the scenes to enable the report entries and to save a copy of every report to be compiled as a "book of proceedings."

The 17 topics posted for this meeting (not in any order of priority) that were discussed were: human resources, CLOW and the private sector, development of a respected publication, partnerships and relationships with other organizations networking, organizational structure and membership, use of technology/on-line meetings, major functions of a national organization for women's learning, technology as an operating tool,

learning new technology, images of the "goddess," project-based funding, what is our mission - who will we serve and how, fund-raising, representation of all provinces and territories, marketing, advocacy on women's educational issues. (A book of proceedings is available from the office; it lists the topic, the leader, and participants and summaries of the discussion with follow-up action and needed resources.) Obviously there were more ideas than could realistically be developed but it was empowering to review the list of possibilities.

Birgitt gathered the group into a circle at the end of the second day for a closing of the "open space" signaling an end to that part of the process. Participants had the opportunity to make comments and comments were filled with enthusiasm about all that had been identified and discussed. All participants were clear and strong and excited about the future of CLOW. The relief and happiness in the room were palpable. The organization would be different, more streamlined in scope, but it still had important work to do.

The process was not done at this point, however! On the third morning Larry and Birgitt shifted the attention of the group to the west, the place of management. Every participant received her own copy of the "book of proceedings," was given time to read it and was given five votes to show the items amongst the various topics that she had energy for. Eventually, four topics were identified for CLOW to focus upon at this time. The opportunities identified for action now (again, not prioritized) were: project-based funding; restructure of the organization; draft a vision and mission statement; development of on-line communication.

The process then involved identifying how those items not chosen at this time would make it onto the agenda in the future, what the next steps were for the identified items including who would champion those items and work on them as well as identification of the resources needed. The stage was set for the strategic directions for CLOW to be implemented rather than simply remaining as an interesting document.

The vision and mission statement immediately evolved. The vision: women's social, political, and economic equality. The mission: to provide and connect educators of adults with women-centered resources related to policy research, practice, and advocacy, and to lead in the development of such resources where gaps exist. Also a first attempt to develop a new organizational structure was diagrammed. Since that meeting, PAC has continued the development of policy. This commemorative issue is one outcome: it attempts to bridge past, present, and future aspirations; to communicate with members and to recruit resources.

With the assistance of Birgitt and Larry in their use of Open Space Technology and the medicine wheel, great wisdom from the gathered group was enabled to emerge. CLOW was rebirthed with a new vision, a clear purpose, and actionable strategic directions. Some aspects of the future are still cloudy while others clearly present challenges. But, perhaps CLOW will continue to make worthwhile contributions in an emergent field of study: the education of adult women. During the twentieth century Canada has been a leader in struggles to provide girls and women with educational opportunities, appropriate to their

changed life expectancies and aspirations. The volunteer work and professional development activities of organizations such as CLOW suggest the journey toward the next century will be characterized by a more clear vision of equity.

The mission: to provide and connect educators of adults with women-centred resources related to policy research, practice, and advocacy, to lead in the development of such resources where gaps exist.

Birgitt Bolton has worked in and with organizations for over 20 years, specializing in organizational and community development and transformation. She is a founding member of the Open Space Institute of Canada and was Hamilton Woman of the Year in the workplace in 1996. Birgitt has worked with organizations in Canada and the U.S., including the Canadian Red Cross (Blood Services), Navigation Canada, Chedoke/McMaster Hospitals, and the Minnesota Department of Health.

Larry Peterson has facilitated over 120 Open Space events since his first workshop with Harrison Owen in 1990. For 25 years, he has assisted organizational transformation and spiritual performance in non-profit, church, government, and business organizations. He is a founder of Open Space Technology Canada, a workshop leader, and has written numerous articles. He can be reached through Larry Peterson and Associates in Transformation, 41 Appleton Avenue, Toronto, Ontario, M6E 3A4, tel: (416)651-6913, fax: (416)653-4829.

E. Lisbeth (Betty) Donaldson is the CLOW Alberta Director and Professor, Faculty of Education, University of Alberta. Her research interests are students in transition, women and education, and comparative analysis of policies about school violence. She may be contacted at edonalds@acs.ucalgary.ca.

Women Moving Women

A Process Model

by Marie A. Gillen

It also recognizes the fact that change does not usually happen in an orderly fashion.

This model developed out of a need to help women move toward a more authentic existence. It is two dimensional in form based on the belief that, the process of becoming critically aware of the need to change the way we see ourselves and others, and the change transformational process itself, both must be seen as interdependent functions, and be understood as the necessary shadow side of appropriating a newer perspective of moving toward something considered better.

The process involves both an unlearning and a relearning, two steps which are seen to be both separate yet intertwined. The model which is based on phases is intended to be flexible and easily adaptable to particular situations. While it suggests a smooth sequential ordering of events, it also recognizes and acknowledges the fact that change does not usually happen in an orderly fashion.

Le modèle présenté ici prend pour hypothèse que les femmes doivent apprendre à vivre une "existence plus authentique." Il est bidimensionnel, puisqu'il comprend deux processus clairement distincts, et pourtant inséparables: premièrement, amener les femmes à prendre conscience du besoin de changer la perception qu'elles ont de soi et d'autrui; deuxièmement, réaliser le processus de changement, de transformation. Il exige deux choses de la part des femmes: un dé-apprentissage des notions et des valeurs traditionnelles et un ré-apprentissage menant à de nouvelles attitudes.

Bien que le modèle complet soit composé de six étapes bien définies et structurées (4 étapes pour le modèle fondamental), il reste suffisamment souple pour s'adapter à toute une gamme de situations particulières. Voici les 4 phases du modèle fondamental:

Phase I: Création du climat. Les participantes se réunissent en groupe pour "nommer" les attitudes envers les femmes (tant les leurs que celles des autres). Elles doivent ensuite "juger" ces attitudes.

Phase II: Comment je me vois et comment je vois les autres. Les participantes doivent répondre par écrit à 3 questions:

- 1) Nommez quelques-unes de vos attitudes envers les femmes.
- 2) Indiquez ce qui a déterminé vos attitudes.

3) Dites quelle a été l'influence la plus positive dans votre vie.

Phase III: Comment je change et comment les autres changent. À partir d'une situation personnelle, les participantes indiquent les étapes par lesquelles elles passent quand elles vivent une période de transformation. Elles comparent leurs notes puis assistent à un exposé sur la dynamique de processus de transformation.

Phase IV : Étude de cas. Cette phase permet aux participantes de parler de problèmes fondamentalement importants pour elles, mais dans un cadre non émotionnel et donc non menaçant puisque la situation discutée leur est étrangère.

The Model

The complete model consists of six phases and a core model of four. The core model consists of those phases that are considered essential to the process; the complete model includes the core and those other phases which are considered important, although not essential, depending in large part on the objectives and intentions of the users, the needs of the target audience, and the time allotted for the task.

The four phases of the core model are as follows:

Phase I: Setting the Climate

Phase II: The Way I See Myself and Others;

Phase III: The Way Change Occurs in Me and Others

Phase V: Where Do I Go From Here?

The two extra phases that form the complete model are:

Phase IV: Case Study

Phase VI: What Have I Done? Am Doing? Hope To Do?

They are asked to identify those chains that perpetuate negative attitudes in women and keep them stuck in the past.

Phase I: Setting the Climate

This phase takes place in a large group session and involves a brainstorming. The participants are asked to name general attitudes about women, both their own and those of others. The participants are asked to make judgments, positive or negative, about these attitudes which are then recorded on charts.

The task of coming to grips with these judgments is a good climate-setting exercise. Such attitudes as selfish, money-grabbing, sex-objects, are not difficult to label as negative; either are the attitudes like kind, generous, or loving, difficult to list as positive; but such attitudes as emotional, aggressive, demanding, become difficult to categorize as either/or. The participants find themselves becoming critically aware of these words, the attitudes they convey, and what

these attitudes really mean. By relating these attitudes to particular situations, these words begin to take on different meanings; e.g., the word "demanding" might be judged as

negative, if it refers to getting more than one deserves. On the other hand, it might be considered a very positive attitude if it refers to an issue like demanding equal pay for equal work.

Phase II: The Way I See Myself and Others

This phase follows logically from the brainstorming exercise. The participants are given a paper and are asked to reflect on the following three questions:

1. What are some of your present attitudes toward women?
2. Identify all the influences in your life that helped form these attitudes?
3. What has been your most important positive influence?

The purpose of this exercise is to get the participants to reflect on present attitudes toward women and then to identify those factors/events/people in their lives that influenced the present vision they now hold.

Participants then form dyads. They take time to share and discuss their reflections and to identify common influences in their lives" that helped facilitate a positive attitude toward women. Then, in light of their own experience and their knowledge of other women, they are asked to look at the shadow-side of women's existence and to identify those chains-people, events, other influences, etc. - that perpetuate negative attitudes in women and which keep them stuck in the past. These observations/ideas are then shared in a large group.

The introduction of the terms, shadow-side and chains, implies the need to free women from some kind of bondage, the need to help them effect change in themselves and others.

Phase III: The Way Change Occurs in Me and Others

The purpose of this phase is to identify steps/events in the change process. The participants begin with a reflective exercise. They are asked to select one change situation in which they were personally involved, e.g. marriage, job transfer, weight-watchers to make a list of all the steps they took during this change process; and, to arrange these steps in chronological sequence. Following this, they were asked to compare these findings in small groups. The large group is then assembled for a lecture and the dynamics of perspective transformation (Mezirow 1981) are presented. Participants are encouraged to compare their findings with the information presented. This exercise is followed by a general discussion of the dynamics of change.

Phase IV: The Case Study

A case study is usually a powerful tool because it allows the participants to deal with important issues as outsiders thus removing the threatening aspect of being too personally involved. Since it allows the person to relate to a situation with a rational frame of mind, it is an appropriate instrument for this type of process.

The objective of this phase is to create an environment in which much of the information already presented in the first phase is brought together with the intention of high-lighting

issues, and suggesting solutions.

The content of the case study needs to be directed to the requirements of the particular group. It might be written by the program planners, a team from the workshop group, or it might be taken from material already prepared. Short stories, newspaper and magazine features, films and film strips are also good sources of case study material.

The case study takes place in small groups. Issues are raised; solutions are suggested. The sharing of this information takes place in a large group. This can be done in creative ways using role play, drawings, and panels.

Phase V: Where Do I Go From Here?

This phase involves a reflection period. "What is the most essential thing for me to do?" is the important question. Participants are encouraged to start personal journals. If appropriate, participants might share ideas in small groups. They should leave the workshop with some plan of action. This might take the form of an objective and a task analysis. It might involve a plan for more personal reflection on the topic; selected readings might be recommended; or a group action might be initiated.

Phase VI: What Have I Done? Am Doing? Hope to Do?

After a three/six-month period, participants can either meet again or be contacted by mail. They are asked to reflect on their actions over the past three/six months, to evaluate what they have done, and to make some future plans. Opportunity for sharing should be provided. If the follow-up is done by a meeting, this could take the form of small groups; if by mail, the sharing could take place by means of a newsletter. The development of a network system might also be suggested as a way to keep the process going.

The learning journey continues, hopefully, with a transformed perspective.

It allows the participants to deal with important issues thus removing the threatening aspect of being too personally involved.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The positive power of reflection is emphasized in this model. Women should be encouraged to explore opportunities for reflection. These might include learning to keep a journal, finding other people with whom they could share reflection, or structuring time for reflection by themselves on a regular basis. This latter might include a scheduled physical activity, such as jogging, walking, or swimming, followed by a period of reflection (Boyd and Fales, 1983).

The importance of the reflective ability is strongly supported in the literature on experiential learning. Kolb and Fry (1975) point out in their theory that learning is concerned with a four-stage cycle which includes four abilities, one of these being reflective observation:

The experiential learning model depicts learning as a process of conflict, confrontation, and resolution among four basic adaptive modes or ways of relating to the world: Concrete Experience vs. Abstract conceptualization, and Active Experimentation vs. Reflective Observation. (37)

Since there is evidence that learning, change, and growth are best facilitated by an integrated process that includes all four abilities, reflection should be encouraged. This ability is very often neglected in an action-oriented society because it takes time and is often perceived as an exercise that inhibits progress.

Not only could women learn to value and strengthen the reflective process in their lives, but they could learn to encourage and support the value of reflection in the lives of the people they instruct, guide, or counsel. Reflective learning is the key element in learning from experience (Boyd and Fales 1983). According to these authors:

The process of reflection is the core difference between whether a person repeats the same experience several times, becoming highly proficient at one behavior, or learns from experience in such a way that he or she is cognitively or affectively changed. Such a change involves essentially changing his or her meaning structures. (100)

At the present time, there appears to be a conscious search on the part of women to take the concepts of equality, respect, love, and trust out of the realm of abstract ideals and make them more a part of the daily ordinary exchange with each other and those outside their immediate environment. There seems to be a realization on their part that these forms of nurture can serve as powerful, emotionally fulfilling connectors between women whose lives are based on a shared vision. Women moving women is a powerful reality.

Reprinted from WEdf, December 1984, Volume 3, No.2.

Marie Gillen is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Adult Education at St. Francis Xavier University, in Antigonish, Nova Scotia.

**Go forward not backward
Seize time
Seize training opportunities
Teach yourselves
Set your own horizons
Take care
Take hold firmly of tools and
technology**

**Take part fiercely in the future
Take stock of the changing times
Be all that you can
And all that you want
A decade is over
Our day has begun**

Excerpted from a poem written by Elizabeth Cox of Papua New Guinea in celebration of the Tools and Technology Exhibit at the Third United Nations World Conference on Women, NGO Forum, held in Nairobi in 1985. Reprinted from WEdf Summer 1988, Volume 6, No.2.

References

Boyd, E. *Reflection as a Mode of Knowing: Case Studies of Counselors*. Diss. University of Toronto, 1980.

Boyd, E., and A. W. Fales. "Reflective Learning: Key to Learning from Experience." *Journal of Humanistic Psychology* 23.2 (1983): 99-117.

Kolb, D. A., and R. Fry. "Toward an Applied Theory of Experiential Learning." *Theories of Group Processes*. Ed. C. Cooper. London: John Wiley, 1975.

Mezirow, J. "A Critical Theory of Adult Learning and Education." *Adult Education* 32.1 (1981): 3-24.

An Editor Reflects ...

by Christina Starr

The one thing that stands out about my employment interview with CLOW in the fall of 1987 is that the chair that then-Executive Director Aisla Thomson was sitting on fell apart. As a new recruit to feminism and the women's movement, I didn't recognize the significance of this incident: that hard-working, over-taxed organizations compensate for insufficient funding with (among other things) second hand equipment and hand-me-down furniture. It didn't matter. Leaving CLOW'S offices that day, in an out-of-the-way semi-renovated Victorian house, sandwiched between doctors' offices on the first floor and a private apartment on the third, I hoped as much as I dared that I'd be offered the job.

That rickety chair could also have told me that a major responsibility of the work, described as Communications Coordinator and Editor of *Women's Education des femmes*,

would also become fund-raising, and that there'd be far too much to do and too little time in which to do it.

Nevertheless, I grew to love that work and, for nine and a half years, dedicated myself to producing and sustaining what I hoped was an informative, challenging and inclusive publication. I also grew to respect and admire the women in CLOW'S office and on the Board of Directors, and to feel extremely grateful to those who responded to my requests for material and who trusted their words, research and stories to my editorial eye. Together, we put out a fine publication.



Christina Starr and her nine-year-old daughter, Geneva. Photo: Szu Burgess

No other magazine in Canada, perhaps not even in North America, exclusively addressed the issues we did. We asked older women what they wanted to learn. We asked how violence affected a woman's ability to learn. We asked women with disabilities about obstacles to learning. We asked women and girls interested in science and technology whether they felt welcome there. We asked how racism interfered with education and how education might be used to unlearn racist conditioning. And so on. In each case women responded with stories, poems, opinions, and analysis that painted a diverse picture of women's unequal access to an education that is safe, empowering, relevant, and useful.

Women's access to education is still fraught with barriers, especially for those who face discrimination based on race, ability, ethnicity, sexuality, class, religion, gender, etc. The dissolution of Women's Education des femmes is no indication of the dissolution of inequality. If anything, it indicates less access to resources, to stories, to venues for the publication of research, to connection with other women. Though folding the magazine was a difficult decision for CLOW's Board of Directors, and seen at the time as financially necessary, it is often still hard to accept that something so useful and so valued by women in all parts of Canada should have to disappear. Its demise was a result of the conservative, budget-cutting, backlash times we're in, but its failure to rise again is in part due the divisiveness and sense of competition

CLOW's National Congress on Women in 1999

**A CONGRESS FOR WOMEN
November 4-7, 1999 in Toronto**

As a means of paving the way for the revitalization of the organization, CLOW is calling a Women's Congress. Its purpose is to provide a forum where committed women will transform CLOW into a different model of an organization - one which can respond more effectively to women's interests and needs around education and training as we move into the next decade. In the same way that CLOW was originally formed 20 years ago, we are now entering into a similar process to both

that can emerge when funds are scarce and survival is at stake.

I still believe in the importance of a publication addressing feminist issues in education, just as I'm sure every member of CCLOW's Board of Directors believes in the continuing importance of "a national voice for women's education and training in Canada." Unfortunately, work of a political nature is hard to maintain when the prevailing environment grows less and less sympathetic to the need. But it's precisely in such environments that we need to hang on to our sympathy for each other and to our solidarity, in its combined meanings of unity and firmness.

We are not living in a post-feminist era, if that term means an era in which feminism is no longer relevant. If anything, it grows more and more necessary to be vocal advocates if only because oppression and disadvantage are becoming less and less acknowledged. To do that without our organizations or publications is extremely difficult and perhaps what we are passed is the "golden era" of feminist organizing. But we must adapt, metamorphose if necessary, and arrive into the 21st century with a commitment to support all efforts towards equality, independent of governing priorities.

Christina Starr was the editor of Women's Education des femmes (WEdf) for over nine years.

honour our herstory and provide a foundation for the coming years.

A series of "themes" relating to women's education and training will be developed for the Congress:

- Violence
- Literacy and ESL
- Technology
- Older Women
- Child Care
- Labour Market Adjustment: Equity Approach
- Post-Secondary
- K to 12-13
- Young Women
- Community, Private and Workplace Training
- Gender-based Analysis

You are invited to participate in the work leading up to the Congress and to be a part of this important milestone on our herstory. To indicate your interest in participating, either contact us through your local Provincial/Territorial Director, whose addresses are listed on the inside front cover, or through our Website at

<http://www.nald.ca/cclow.htm>

Men's Studies, Women's Studies, and Feminism

by Christine Overall

Knowledge created by men, about men, and for men is the staple diet of education at all levels.

In this paper, I want to talk about women's studies in the university setting, their values and goals, their place in the university curriculum, and what they offer to students. I shall approach these topics by discussing the transition now under way (partial and incomplete though it is) from men's studies to women's studies, and the essential connection of women's studies with feminism.

What are men's studies? One is unlikely to see them offered, under that label, in a syllabus. But men's studies are what we have all been learning for most of our lives. Knowledge created by men, about men, and for men is the staple diet of education at all levels. Although generally referred to by such neutral, innocuous, and misleading labels as "knowledge," "learning," "education," and "scholarship," men's studies have nevertheless both a specific subject matter and a definitive point of view.

For example, in history we hear about men's decisions and exploits, about what men have been creating and destroying throughout our human past. In literature we read fiction, drama, and poetry written by men, with a majority of male personae, and imbued with themes of interest to men. In psychology and sociology we study male motivation, attitudes, and behavior. In philosophy we examine male-defined issues within the context of theories created by men. In politics we analyze men's political participation within male-dominated and male-oriented political institutions. And in science we observe, classify, and theorize about the natural world from the confines of male paradigms. In short, men's studies are defined by male attitudes, beliefs, behavior, and research.

Interestingly, men's studies are not entirely incompatible with the study of women - but only of some women, viewed within a predominantly male context, and seen from a male perspective. Within the worldview of men's studies, women can be, at most, only the objects of study, just one more among many possible classes of entities to be examined. No reference is made to the experience of women, to how the world is looked at, felt, and thought about by women. Instead, when they are discussed at all, women are seen as individuals, often as exceptional individuals, who have little in common by virtue of being female. Examinations of and references to women thus become a sort of addendum to existing disciplines.

Christine Overall, professeur adjointe de philosophie à Queen's University, nous parle des valeurs et des objectifs des Études de la femme, et de la place qu'elles occupent universitaires. Pour cela, elle considère la transition encore partielle et incomplète qui se fait actuellement entre les études conçues par et pour les femmes, et examine le lien essentiel entre le féminisme et les Études de la femme.

L'expression Études de l'homme est rarement utilisée. Pourtant, elle reflète une situation qui nous est depuis longtemps familière. L'histoire nous apprend les hauts faits d'hommes, nous parle de décisions d'hommes. En littérature, nous lisons des livres écrits par des hommes, avec des personnages masculins. En sciences, nous observons la nature définie par les paradigmes masculins.

Par opposition, les Études de la femme sont centrées sur la femme, c'est-à-dire sur la vie des femmes, sur leurs sentiments, leurs valeurs et leurs idées. Dans ce cadre, les enseignantes comme les étudiantes comprennent qu'en étudiant la femme, c'est elles-mêmes qu'elles étudient. Les études de la femme ne sont pas seulement des études sur la femme, mais véritablement des études conçues par les femmes et pour les femmes. Le féminisme est la théorie politique et éthique qui doit les sous-tendre.

In my own educational background there were many examples of this approach to the study of women: in a course on American literature, for instance, Emily Dickinson was the one female writer we studied. We referred to her as "Miss Dickinson," and analyzed her poetry in total isolation from the women-centred context of her writing. In psychology, we took note of the fact that women's motive to achieve seemed notably different from that of men; no one knew why, since the sex differences in motivation usually resulted in women being dropped from the studies. My history textbook contained "suffragettes," who chained themselves to fences to obtain the vote; but no one thought it odd that women had so recently, even grudgingly, been granted the right to minimal political participation. And in science - well, in science there were no women, as far as I could tell, except perhaps Marie Curie - always referred to as Madame Curie, to mark her association with her husband. But in any case, the absence of women did not matter, I learned, since science is value free: it doesn't matter who collects the facts, as long as facts are collected.

By contrast with men's studies, women's studies are most certainly not the dominant contemporary intellectual paradigm. Nor do they consist merely of the ad hoc addition of women to the curriculum and to the scholarly agenda. What, then, are women's studies? Are they not about women? Well, yes and no. Yes, women's studies are about women: about putting women, our lives, feelings, values, creations, and ideas at the very centre of our academic focus. In fact, so important is this focus on women that many of us feel that women's studies are, or ought to be, a distinct academic discipline within the university. But no, women's studies are not about women in the way that men's studies sometimes include women. That is, they do not just examine women as isolated, exceptional individuals who happen - through good fortune, male sponsorship, true grit, or all three -

to have been deemed worthy of notice by male scholars and teachers. And above all, they do not study women from a supposedly objective, value-free, neutral standpoint. Instead, women's studies permit women students and teachers to see that "them is us": that when we talk, read, or research about women we are talking, reading, and researching about ourselves.

Women's studies permit women students and teachers to see that "them is us": that when we talk, read, or research about women we are talking, reading, and researching about ourselves.

The now-classic example of this focus on women's experience is the work of Carol Gilligan, who saw that Lawrence Kohlberg's studies on human development virtually excluded women's intuitions and feelings about ethics. She felt that women's moral development and perspectives are different from those of men, and are worth studying in their own right.

Another example of putting women's experience front and centre in women's studies is the creation of entire courses on literature by and about women. In history we no longer assume that throughout the sweep of our human past women were doing nothing, or were just tending the fire and minding the children. We look at the wonderful variety of women's work, both past and present: at home, in agriculture, in industry, in the arts. And we also recognize that minding the children is itself an enormously creative and valuable activity. In science, we seek to challenge the values on which the scientific enterprise has been founded, and to reevaluate the norms that inform scientific research and writing. Women's studies also revolutionize our examination of culture and communication. We

become aware of the special forms - quilting, needle-work, and pottery, for example - that women's artistic expression has taken throughout the centuries. And all of the media - film, television, popular music, advertising, printed works - reveal in the images they convey both misogynist biases and some promise for reform.

In being about women in this experiential fashion, women's studies is also both for and by women. Students need not be mere passive receptacles of new knowledge, but can instead share in its creation. To be in women's studies as a student, a teacher, or a researcher, is to be in an area where those classic distinctions are open to change; to be part of a genuine and non-authoritarian community of scholars, in which we teach and learn from each other, and in which we can identify and act upon our common interests and concerns.

All that I have said so far implies that feminism is necessary to and inherent in women's studies: feminism is the political and ethical theory which must inform the study of women. While it is worthwhile to retain the term "women's studies" as the name of the unique field devoted to studies by, about, and for women, it is essential to remember that women's studies are also, in terms of their orientation, feminist studies. This is in part because women's studies take as their material women's experience of ourselves and of our world, just as feminism is founded upon the profound consciousness of women's experience. But feminism has two other characteristics crucial to women's studies. First, a feminist perspective makes us aware of the oppression of women, of the ways in which

women have been systematically excluded from male culture and institutions, and of the violence exerted to keep us in our place. Second, a feminist perspective entails a commitment to avoid perpetuating that oppression and to work towards its elimination. As we become more aware of the variety of experiences of women, we come to a better understanding of the nature and uses of power, of the methods by which women have been oppressed, and of the ways in which women have responded to and resisted that oppression. We also become aware of other forms of oppression: racism, classism, ageism, and heterosexism. And that understanding can produce the determination to challenge the systems that perpetuate oppression. Engaging in women's studies is, then, a potentially subversive activity; it is both an expression of political choice and a mode of self-determination. In becoming a student or a teacher or a researcher in women's studies, one is both taking power over one's own life and laying the foundation for change for and with other women. In no other area of academic study is the claim "knowledge is power" more obviously true. Women's studies permit us to recognize, to name, to understand, and ultimately to transform the conditions of our lives.

A feminist perspective makes us aware of the ways women have been systematically excluded from male culture and institutions, and of the violence exerted to keep us in our place.

It is evident from what I have said that I think the primary goal of women's studies should be to enlighten and advance women. Nevertheless, this does not mean that there is nothing for men in women's studies. To men who are tired of studying other men, women's studies offer the chance to come to some understanding of the women who are their mothers, sisters, daughters, friends, lovers, colleagues, partners, and associates. It also requires them to reexamine their own understanding of themselves and their roles, and thus to run the risk of having to give up old shibboleths. More generally, women's studies afford men the opportunity to share in a collective enterprise which can revolutionize their understanding of human society. And as women, we may be able to learn from the men who join us in women's studies. We may come to see that both women's experience and men's experiences can be valuable. Then, once the transformation made possible by women's studies is well under way, perhaps we can look to the day when we will be able to undertake genuinely human studies.

Reprinted from WEdf, Winter 1986, Volume 5, Number 2.

Christine Overall is a Professor of Philosophy and Associate Dean, Faculty of Arts and Sciences, at Queen's University in Kingston. Her research is in the area of applied ethics and feminist theory, and her most recent book is A Feminist I: Reflection from Academia (Broadview Press, 1998).

Women and Increased Learning Opportunities

Women and Increased Learning Opportunities

Public Education

CLOW maintains regular updates to its web site, using it to promote activities and publications sales, recruit volunteers, and generally raise awareness about current issues facing women in their education and training endeavours. Board and project activities: are conducted, for the most part, through internal listservs set up through our web provider, the National Adult Literacy Database, as part of our on-going Operation Online.

Visit our web site for up-to-date information on CLOW activities and projects:

<http://www.nald.ca/cclow.htm>

CLOW was an active participant in Toronto's Word on the Street, a day long festival and celebration of literacy and reading. CLOW staff participated in bi-weekly meetings of the Literacy Planning Group throughout the summer of 1998, culminating a the Literacy Tent activities during Word on the Street, held in Toronto on September 27th, 1998.

References

Boxer, Marilyn J. "For and About Women: The Theory and Practice of Women's Studies in the United States." *Feminist Theory: A Critique of Ideology*. Eds. Nannerl O. Keohane, Michelle Z. Rosaldo, and Barbara C. Gelpi. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982. 237-271.

Eichler, Margrit, and Jeanne Lapointe. "On the Treatment of the Sexes in Research." Ottawa: Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, 1985.

Hamilton, Roberta. "Feminists in the Academy: Intellectuals or Political Subversives?" *Queen's Quarterly* 92.1 (1985): 3-20.



Phyllis Serota,
"Aunt Molly," oil on
canvas, 44' x 60."
Photo: Trevor
Mills. Reprinted
from *WEdf Spring*
1988, Volume 6,
No.2.

Schuster, Marilyn, and Susan Van Dyne.
"Placing Women in the Liberal Arts: Stages of Curriculum Transformation."
Harvard Educational Review 54.4 (1984):
413- 428.

Spender, Dale, ed.
Men's Studies Modified: The Impact of Feminism on the Academic Disciplines. Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1981.

Interview

Greta Hofmann Nemiroff

by Susan McCrae Vander Voet

Greta Hofmann Nemiroff is a feminist educator and Director of the New School, Dawson College, in Montreal. She is a feminist writer and was Quebec Director of CCLOW for several years. She is interviewed here, for WEdf by Susan McCrae Vander Voet, an independent consultant and former Executive Director of CCLOW.

As a teacher of English at Concordia in about 1968, I made sure to include material on women.

Susan: How did you come to be interested in teaching women's studies?

Greta: When I was an English student, I always found myself writing papers on women characters and authors. As a teacher of English at Concordia in about 1968, I made sure to include material on women. But it wasn't really until another friend, a philosophy teacher and I got together to try and discuss some papers we were writing, between the demands of our three babies, that we realized we needed to be writing about ourselves, as women.

This led to the first women's studies course at Concordia in 1970, which might also have been the first formal course offered for credit, in Canada. We decided to hold it in the evening in order to attract older women, as well as the younger university students.

Susan: Did you notice any difference between the older and younger women in the course?

Greta: Oh, yes. Some of the older women had a much better sense of the material, because they had lived the reality of women's lives. Many of them were trying to return to work after raising families, or had found themselves alone with their children, either as widows, or separated, after many years of marriage. Many of them could see that marriage wasn't a guarantee of security.

The younger women, though, who hadn't experienced as much, would deny the problems initially. They were still ready to buy the myths about women, and believed in individual power. So they didn't develop a systemic sense of women's problems as readily.

Susan: How long have you been teaching women's studies?

Mme Greta Hofmann Nemiroff, éducatrice féministe, directrice de la New School au Collège Dawson de Montréal, écrivain, directrice du CCPEF au Québec pendant de nombreuses années, a consenti à passer une entrevue pour Wedf avec Mme Susan McCrae Vander Voet, conseillère indépendante et ancienne directrice générale du CCPEF.

Susan : À votre avis, quels sont les éléments les plus importants de l'éducation des jeunes femmes?

Greta : Il est essentiel de les aider à faire la part des choses entre ce qui est inné et ce qui ne l'est pas dans leur personnalité de femme, ainsi qu'à développer une conscience collective pour parvenir à une action collective. Elles doivent comprendre le relativisme de l'identité sexuelle. Il est important qu'elles apprennent à avoir foi en leurs propres instincts et sanctionnent la façon dont chacune expérimente le monde en tant que femme, par rapport à celle dont les femmes sont perçues dans la société. Ce genre d'éducation vise à les aider à déterminer en tant qu'individus leur attitude à propos de nombreuses questions, à se pencher sur les choix qui s'offrent à elles et à prendre publiquement position pour respecter leurs propres valeurs.



Greta: A few years at Concordia and Vanier College, in a more objective academic style, and since I arrived at the New School. The philosophy of education is much different here though. We start with topics of interest to the students and build a course around that, so the courses are constantly changing.

Susan: Can you give me an example of how this works?

Greta: A group of students decided they wanted to study some historical material on women, so I gave them some de Beauvoir to read. They were to write about what interested them in the chapter being discussed each week. At one point in the book, de Beauvoir makes just passing mention of virginity, and that week, seven out of ten students wrote about virginity. So we stopped right there and began extensive discussions about virginity as a male construct which served male interests. This evolved into a course on women's bodies and body images which has had a number of spin-offs in the school and in my own writing.

One year, a young man wanted to be involved in the course. The women did not feel they would be as free to discuss the issues with him present, so a separate part of the course was set up for young men, with both groups getting together for a time at the end. The young men discovered that the materials available on men's sexuality and roles was dismal. As a result of this experience, I was encouraged to edit a book of material on women and men.

It wasn't until another teacher and I got together to discuss some papers we were writing, between the demands of our three babies, that we realized we needed to be writing about ourselves, as women.

Susan: What do you feel are the most essential ingredients for young women's education?

Greta: It is critical to help them separate out what is a given and what is not, in their identity as women, and to develop a collective consciousness which will lead to collective action. They need to understand the relativity of gender identity. As Margaret Meade observed years ago, in every society, women and men do different kinds of work and, although the actual work they are responsible for varies from one society to another, the constant is that, whatever work women do, it is valued less than men's work.

It is important that they learn to trust their own instincts and to validate one another's experience of the world as women, compared to how women are described by society. And in this regard, they need to explore who has the power to define their reality. We also discuss race and culture in this context.

The objectives of this kind of education are to help them identify where they stand as individuals on a variety of issues; to examine the choices they have in their own lives; to assist them to develop a public stand in order to be consistent with their own values. The objective for young men is to sensitize them to women, and to turn them into feminists as well.

Susan: Do you feel that the women's movement has been successful in integrating young women and their concerns?

Greta: The women's movement is not really making a place for young women. Older feminists don't have patience with young women because they don't want to have to go over the issues which they have already resolved, but which younger women still need to explore for themselves.

I taught a course on Contemporary Women's Issues last year, and it happened to be a year when a lot of women's conferences were being held in Montreal. I arranged for many of my students to attend the conferences at reduced fees, in exchange for helping out. They were very often treated in inferior fashion and were frustrated by that part of the experience.

Susan: What should women's organizations do to include young women and to advance their interests?

Greta: In part, it is difficult to attract young women because they don't want to be there with their mothers, but a number of things could be done. Special conferences need to be organized for them, as they were during International Youth Year. At women's conferences, workshops and activities could be offered for them, but their fees would have to be subsidized.

Many organizations could be offering scholarships for young women-men's organizations do this all the time. Those of us with more experience need to make ourselves available as resource people and to assist younger women to organize around their own issues. We need to support their activities in any way we can. As a matter of course, women's organizations could be sending their information out to local schools, so students know what is available and happening in the women's community.

Domestic Angel

**Wedged between stove and deep
freeze, I dream domestic,
tend herbs and poetry, snip
sage and Sexton, pick
parsley and Plath. I draw
lists as long as spaghetti, cook
soups and poems from scraps
of cabbage and snatched lines. I slice
onions into pale halos, moon rings
as round as cherubims' mouths
singing, singing,
singing slick commercial jingles. They
feed
me lines as I feed one man's
needs, his growing appetite.**

**I set the table for a feast,
light candles for this
ritual. The small gold flames leap
from matchstick to wick, a blushing
wine heats the space within us.**

**Words melt on my tongue
like the memory of something
familiar, vanilla or mace, the lingering
tastes. I forget the price of
bliss is silence.**

Sylvie Bourassa
Montreal, Quebec

*(Reprinted from WEdf, Fall 1995,
Volume 11, No.4)*

Speaking and writing contests, apprenticeships and other activities of this sort would help. But basically, women's organizations need to begin treating young women as a priority.

Susan: What in particular, can an organization like CCLOW do to incorporate young women and represent their interests?

Greta: CCLOW would need to redefine its focus to some extent. It is in a difficult position, as a national organization concerned with education, because so much education falls within provincial jurisdiction. There is a whole spectrum of education out there, to which CCLOW has not yet addressed itself, that of children and adolescents.

However, more emphasis could be placed on the development of teaching materials. CCLOW could act as a clearing house for ideas, materials and methodologies for appropriate education for young women. Collecting and distributing materials to front-line feminist educators and teachers would provide a valuable service. Scholarships could be set up for young women, as well. CCLOW networks could sponsor special events for young women in their geographic area. There is a great deal which needs to be done.

Reprinted from WEdf; Spring 1986, Volume 4, Number 3.

I Had a Little Trouble on the Way to a Ph.D.

by Sandra Monteath

With my forehead resting on my hands and my elbows resting on my knees, I contemplate the abyss. I am using as my seat of contemplation a toilet in the women's room outside the third-floor examining room of the School of Graduate Studies at the University of Toronto. I have just defended my doctoral thesis on women's experience, knowledge, and education. Inside the examining room, the examining committee is voting whether to accept my thesis as it stands, with minor changes, or to send me away to make major revisions before giving me a second and final chance to defend it.

Before my eyes, like scenes at the end of a life, flash recollections from my long struggle to complete my doctorate.

I swear to myself, choosing a word particularly suited to my location. Through the lens of fatigue and anxiety, I see myself as having I given a very bad defense for what I know is a very good thesis. Before my eyes, like scenes at the end of a life, flash recollections from my long struggle to complete my doctorate. On the road to this Ph.D. I have had to deal with despair, financial difficulties, psychic dislocation from unsuitable employment, problems with my thesis topic and thesis supervisor, disease, and, just when I thought I was home free, the adolescent distress of my daughter. Was it all to come to this?

I began my doctoral studies in the Sociology of Education in the autumn of 1976. At the same time, I got married for the second time to a man who professed to adore me. Because I was doing well in both my life of thought and the life about which I thought, I felt more than happy. In my second year of doctoral studies, when I was three months pregnant, my husband assaulted me. I immediately abandoned my idea of doing a thesis on the hidden injuries of sex, as the topic was a little too close to home. But caught up as I was in what I have come to call "cultural stories about love and marriage," I remained in the relationship.

I spent the next eleven years struggling with an enveloping despair that ultimately incapacitated me not just for a life of thought but for life itself. For me, there was no life without thought. I managed to complete successfully the fourteen half-courses that I had to take towards my degree, but I never completed a thesis. My candidacy lapsed in 1983 when I was half way through writing a thesis on the language of instruction in practical skills.

Au cours de ma deuxième année d'études de doctorat, enceinte de trois mois, mon mari m'a agressée. Tout en continuant cette relation difficile pendant quelques années, j'ai réussi à terminer mes études de doctorat, mais ma soutenance de thèse a été repoussée car je n'ai pas fini cette dernière à temps.

En 1990, des difficultés financières m'ont assaillie alors que je me préparais à essayer à nouveau. J'ai été obligée d'accepter un emploi très insatisfaisant pour suffire à mes besoins et à ceux de ma fille. Je menais un double vie : employé modèle dans la journée; étudiante studieuse la nuit pour préparer une thèse sur la vécu de femmes en matière d'éducation. Comme j'ai remis en question publiquement mon directeur de thèse, je me suis retrouvée sans directeur et ai dû continuer avec un nouveau directeur et un nouveau comité. Au trois-quarts de la rédaction de la thèse, mes médecins ont diagnostiqué un cancer au sein. J'ai été opérée, mais comme je craignais que la chimiothérapie entravent mes travaux universitaires, j'ai décidé de repousser le traitement jusqu'à ce que j'aie soumis ma thèse. Je me suis préparée aussi bien que j'ai pu à l'examen oral, passant la nuit le précédant consoler ma fille qui s'était disputé avec son ami. J'étais épuisée et je savais que je n'avais pas très bien fait l'examen; toutefois, après ce qui me parut un siècle, les membres du comité sont sortis de la salle d'examen pour m'annoncer, dix-sept ans après que je l'eus commence, qu'ils me décernaient à l'unanimité un doctorat.

By the time I left the marriage in 1988, I had given up any thought of completing my degree. My pursuit of higher education seemed to have taken place in another life- time. However, in the autumn of 1989, I changed my mind. Maybe, I thought, this life of mine can still encompass some serious scholarship. Because I had also begun to write a book, I delayed for over a year doing much about my decision to complete my thesis.! Writing the book consumed me and transformed me. But by late 1990, I was ready to think thesis.

By late 1990, though, I was also having severe financial difficulties. In the summer of 1989, my ex-husband began defaulting on his support payments. I was determined not to lose the house that I had bought with my share of the assets from the marriage, and I hung on by borrowing and begging. A Canada Council grant that I received to aid in the writing of the book gave me a stay of execution... for a while. At the very moment that I realized I had to cut my losses and sell the house, the housing market collapsed. My house was on the market for nine months. In December 1990, I sold it at a price that, when I had paid back all the money that I had borrow and begged, left me with less than nothing.

By the time I left the marriage, I had given up any thought of completing my degree. My pursuit of higher education seemed to have taken place in another lifetime.

On New Year's Eve 1990, my thirteen-year-old daughter and I moved to a rented apartment. In January 1991, I began to contemplate the topic of my new thesis. I also began worrying how I was going to pay the rent. Then in March, when a bed under the bridge seemed imminent, I got a contract position working for an engineering consulting company. Everything about that company—the projects they undertook and the way they undertook them—was antithetical to everything I believed in. As a way of dealing with my sense of dislocation, I cultivated a split self. By day I appeared to care about engineering projects and their socio-economic impacts. By night I studied hard to write a proposal for a thesis on women's experience and education.

Yet even in the preparation of my thesis there were problems. All studies that have human participants are subject to an ethical review. All participants in a study must give their consent before it may proceed, and may withdraw their consent at any time. I did not have the consent of someone whose participation was essential to my

study. I therefore had to jettison several months' work and go back to the initial planning stages. I did so in the short evenings after a long day's work.

Just as I was putting the finishing touches on a proposal for a new topic, I made the mistake of publicly challenging the authority of the professor who was acting as my informal supervisor. I had been participating in a seminar series this professor was leading. He had told the students who were taking the seminars for credit that they could not say anything that was critical of a presentation. During my own presentation, I described this injunction as a kind of silencing, and asked my listeners to speak honestly about the flaws in my work. I said, playfully I thought, that I would not run to "Big Daddy" to complain. The professor was not amused. He removed himself as my supervisor on the morning of the very day on which I was to present and defend my thesis proposal to my committee.

Unlike the hiatus that had occurred during my marriage, this disruption of my academic career was only momentary. I got a new thesis supervisor in short order. She and the rest of my new thesis committee were pleased to accept my proposal, which they did in April 1992, a month to the day when the professor had rebuffed me for speaking my mind. Because I proposed to do a study that relied on bibliographic sources instead of a study that relied on empirical data from participants, an ethical review was not necessary.

Two weeks after my committee accepted my thesis proposal, my fourteen months of living a split life came to an end. I got laid off. Because of a recession, there was a dearth of jobs available, particularly for a middle-aged woman with a scholarly turn of mind. Thinking my best hope was for an academic position, I decided to write my thesis. I wrote as if possessed. By late autumn 1992, I was two-thirds done. At last I could see the finish line.

Suddenly, another obstacle appeared. For months, I had been concerned about a localized soreness in my left breast. For months my doctors assured me that the soreness was nothing serious. Then they realized that it was very serious. On November 18, when I had but two and a half short chapters of my thesis yet to complete, I had surgery for breast cancer. I was so determined to get my thesis finished that, after I had been admitted to hospital and while I was awaiting surgery, I revised one of the chapters. After the surgery, I declined to have chemotherapy in part because I was afraid that six months' worth of nausea and vomiting would entail yet another delay in the completion of my thesis, a delay from which it and I might never recover.

I finished writing my thesis in February 1993, just before I began five weeks of radiation therapy. I submitted the final draft to my thesis committee on February 26. My supervisor and I established May 7 as the day on which I would have my final oral examination. For at least a month before the exam, I wrote and rewrote the twenty-minute presentation that I was required to give; I rehearsed my presentation in front of my computer and in front of friends. My computer hummed at me; my friends asked questions. I canvassed my thesis committee members to get ideas of other questions that might be asked. I was well prepared for almost anything.

But I was not prepared for the vagaries of a teenaged girl's life. On the evening before my exam, I picked up my daughter from her gym. We arrived home a little after nine. I prepared a quick supper, and walked the dog. I sipped a glass of wine while I read a novel about women's splitting selves. Given the impending examination, I was as relaxed as it was possible to be.



Until late in the evening, my daughter remained in her bedroom, on the phone with her boyfriend. What I did not know was that they were fighting. When she emerged at eleven o'clock she was feeling truculent, and threw a comment at me that I felt questioned my ability both to defend my thesis and to get an academic position thereafter. When I reprimanded her she began to cry. Not because of our exchange, but because of what she and her boyfriend had been saying to each other. She wept inconsolably for two hours. Finally, at one o'clock, I announced that I had to go to bed. I had a Ph.D. oral examination on the morrow.

I slept fitfully until five o'clock, when I awakened in the grayness of early morning, feeling foggy-headed with fatigue. At seven o'clock, as I was just dropping back to sleep, my still teary, very weary daughter dropped a plastic sewing basket and all its contents onto the wooden floor in the room across from mine. I awoke with a start. I'd had as much rest as I was going to get.

With only four hours' uneasy sleep, I did not perform as brilliantly as I had hoped. My exhaustion, as much psychological as it was physical, made of each question an unfathomable enigma. My mind reached out for, but could not grasp, the meaning of the

words being spoken to me. Perhaps, I thought to myself, this is how my mother feels (she has Alzheimer's Disease).

And now, sitting on the toilet in contemplation of the seventeen years of struggle I'd had to get to complete my doctoral thesis, I am in despair. Should my tired defense of a highly original thesis result in its not being accepted, I think I can come to terms with the committee's decision. I am not so sure how I will handle the anger I shall indubitably feel towards my daughter. I consider flight. But I have left both my briefcase and my copy of the thesis in the examining room. I can hardly ask the secretary to fetch them for me. I must learn to face my failure and then I must learn to forgive my daughter.

As I exit from the women's room, the door to the examination room opens. The chairman comes out. Despair transmutes to hope. There is protocol determining who of the examining committee informs the candidate of the committee's decision. If the thesis is accepted with no more than one abstention or negative vote, the chairman does the honours. If the examination is adjourned, then both the chairman and the thesis supervisor inform the candidate. I look beside and behind the chair man for my supervisor. She is not there. "Congratulations, Doctor Monteath," says the chairman.

And now hope transmutes into disbelieving joy. As I enter the room, the committee stands and applauds. I have dreamed of this moment for years and years. One by one, my committee members and the other examiners, with the exception of the chairman, come to hug me. "It was unanimous," whispers my thesis supervisor. "It was hell," I think to myself.

It took me all the rest of that day and evening to realize that at last my dream of a Ph.D. had really, really, come true. When I did, I said to myself "Yes! Yes! Yes!" And I am still saying it.

We like to think that the life of thought can and should be a thing apart from our everyday experiences. It's not always possible.

Unless we conduct our studies with determined detachment, isolating and insulating ourselves from everydayness, life will interfere, even in the third-floor examining room in the School of Graduate Studies. That's what I found, anyway.

Reprinted from WEdf Spring 1994, Volume 11, Number 1.

Upon earning her Ph.D., Sandra Monteath discovered that there was no place in the academy for a middle-aged woman who had taken 18 years to get her degree. She subsequently did a TESLA certificate, and currently teaches ESL in Toronto on a catch-as-catch-can basis.

The book I wrote is called *Marriage and Metamorphosis: Telling Tales of a Woman's Life*. A feminist press is currently considering the manuscript for publication.

Woman's Song

**I want to go for broke.
I want to risk it all,
feel the day I'm in,
hear tomorrow call.**

**The kernel in the straw
is what I'm after,
I want to peel the orange
and crack the nut of laughter**

**I want the love in loving,
I want the salt in tears,
I want the sweat in striving,
I want no wasted years**

**I want to walk beside you,
matching you, stride for stride.
I want to be separate, together,
not half of a dream that died.**

Gert Beadle

*Reprinted from WEdf, Fall 1990,
Volume 8, Number 2.*

Living and Learning

The Choice to be Playful

by Lanie Melamed

You might ask, "What does play have to do with adults and learning?" Frankly I was not quite sure myself when I embarked on a study several years ago to find out. I was curious to know why playfulness was so misunderstood as a valued life skill for adults.

How does play fit into the story of women's lives? How does it work for them?

We already know that kids depend on play for learning about the world and for building healthy minds and bodies. We might even have read Schiller's words that "man only plays when in the full meaning of the word he is a man, and he is only completely a man when he plays." Could we say the same for women? How, I wondered, does play fit into the story of women's lives? Where do they find it, how does it work for them, and what difference does it make in the way they learn?

Theories of play since the time of Plato and Aristotle have been based on male experiences and preoccupations. Play is equated with games and competition, winning and losing; joke-telling is central. By contrast, the play experiences of women seem to involve small, often inconsequential happenings.

Over a two-year period I talked with over 68 women about their play experiences and conducted nine in-depth interviews. The subjects were white, middle-class, and middle-aged, 40 to 66 years old. The results might be very different had I chosen women who were racially, economically and/or culturally less privileged. Most of them worked part or full time at a relatively fulfilling job, and each of the women valued her playfulness and tried to make it a prominent feature of her life. I was fifty-five at the time, working toward a doctorate in adult education.

Il y a plusieurs années, j'ai entrepris une étude sur la gaieté car je voulais découvrir pourquoi on ne lui accordait que peu de valeur en tant qu'outil précieux dans la vie et dans le domaine de l'apprentissage. La gaieté permet d'aborder la vie avec un sentiment de plénitude, avec spontanéité et d'être "branchée". Le plaisir et le sérieux ne sont pas incompatibles. Si on a un peu d'humour, même en période de deuil, la douleur devient un peu plus supportable. Les femmes que j'ai interrogées m'ont affirmé que le fait de vieillir et d'être davantage en paix avec elles-mêmes leur a permis d'être plus gaies et de reléguer dans le passé concurrence et réussite.

Le système social dans lequel les femmes d'un certain âge de la classe moyenne ont été élevées a exercé une forte influence sur leur pouvoir de s'amuser et les a préparées aux travaux ménagers, à materner et à s'occuper physiquement et affectivement des autres. Il se peut que ce ne soit qu'au foyer ou dans la vie privée que nous trouvions l'amour, la tendresse et la gaieté qui font défaut dans la vie publique.

Une réflexion gaie nous aide dans notre façon de comprendre certaines choses, nous stimule par le biais de l'intuition ou des sens et, plus tard, donne un côté humoristique à notre discours. L'expérience devient une méthode clé pour s'instruire. Lorsque la gaieté nous pousse à penser par nous-mêmes ou à agir insolemment face à l'oppression, celle-ci prend des allures radicales. Pour maintenir un système patriarcal, obéissance et ordre sont nécessaires. Ceux et celles qui accordent de la valeur à l'ordre et au contrôle se sentent menacés par la joie et la spontanéité. Il faut rendre hommage à la joie et défendre l'enjouement car il fait partie intégrante de l'apprentissage et du travail sérieux que nous fournissons dans notre vie.

The study surely had its roots in my curiosity to understand my own playfulness - sometimes outrageously liberating, other times scary and off-putting to others. Other people would ask, "What do you mean by play?" At first I was not sure myself. Nine-and-a-half pages in the Oxford English Dictionary convinced me that the phenomenon would be impossible to pin down with a neat word or two. One plays the horses, watches a play, plays around, and plays hard to get. The easiest thing seemed to be to flip the question around and ask people what it meant to them. It was then I realized that men and women hold very different conceptions of play. Men talked largely in terms of activity, game, or sport. When pressed, they might mention sex. Most women responded with a story, describing a special moment and good feelings.

In my personal experience, frequently I felt unappreciated by co-workers for being playful and for breaking out into "inappropriate" behavior at "inopportune" times. Inclined to view life from its brighter side; I have tended to avoid boredom through playful diversion, and will risk appearing foolish for the potential pay-offs. When I'm functioning in a playful mode I feel good about myself, spontaneous, and authentic. When I am lucky enough to combine playfulness with my work, the work sings. Sharing the fun with other people makes everything better; good feelings are contagious. On a spiritual plane, there are transcendent feelings of hope, of joy and celebration, of saying "YES" to life.

Talking and thinking about play for hours on end was an energizing venture. Four interesting findings emerged from the answers the women gave me: (1) playfulness or the lack of it is an integral feature of their world-view; (2) the capacity for play may be enhanced as we grow older and more sure of ourselves; (3) women may have a particular capacity for play as a result of their preparation to function in the "non-serious," private sphere of life which includes their contact with children; and (4) play and learning can be

potential partners in an adventurous, energized, and transforming quest for knowledge.

I was surprised to learn that each of the women saw playfulness as an integral part of her life-style, as a way of seeing and being in the world. To be playful is to approach life with a sense of wholeness, spontaneity, and connectedness. Playfulness is an affirmation of life itself since we choose to invest ourselves fully, willing to face the risks and the challenges of the unknown. Each of the women had difficulty speaking of play without referring to other parts of her life. Despite describing themselves as cheerful, able to see the bright side of things and to laugh at life's absurdities, they also acknowledged sorrow, pain, and struggle as complementary emotions.

Fun and seriousness are not mutually exclusive. Risa, a therapist, talked about the incredible surge of energy she feels when she acknowledges her own suffering: "It's like saying yes to that suffering. To say yes because suffering is also to be alive." Another woman, anxious to support her friend during a period of grieving, was surprised to find them both laughing within ten minutes of their meeting. "I think now I realize that that was not taking away the pain of grieving or anything else. It was making it all bearable." It seems we can play at things which are deadly serious without diminishing ourselves or the situation.

"If I couldn't have the relief of seeing the funny things, the humour, the joy, then life would be too damn serious and I would dry up."

Concepts in society which tend to be viewed as opposites, i.e. glad/sad, work/play, mind/body, were viewed by the women in a more integrated way. In moving back and forth along a continuum in a cyclical or rhythmic manner, play can help to balance sadness and pain, and may even keep us from succumbing to despair. For sixty-six year old Brenda, taking things lightly is clearly a survival skill: "If I couldn't have the relief, the complement of seeing the funny things, the humour, the joy, then life would be too damn serious and I would dry up. I would become cynical and bitter, which I'm not. Joy is the mechanism by which you break the seriousness and the sadness that could overtake us."

None of the women felt a separation between the way they work and the way they play. Ideally, the two can be fused. Even housework can be fun if undertaken in the right frame of mind and at our own speed. Work ceases to be play when the focus is on product, accompanied by the pressure of time and the threat of external evaluation (which is unfortunately the case for most working women).

For the women in the study, becoming older, wiser, and more at peace with oneself made it easier to be playful, even to be a bit outrageous. As they aged, they found it easier to express their playfulness, to care less about what people thought about them, to affirm their right to be who they were. When we were younger, most of us experienced the pressure of having to achieve and compete, to do things correctly, or to follow other people's rules because we didn't trust our minds. Now there is an increased sense of self-worth and of permission to have fun. One woman said "I tried to do much more than was

possible when I was young. I put so much pressure on myself, not trusting there was a whole life there to unfold."¹

Becoming older, wiser, and more at peace with oneself made it easier to be playful, even to be a bit outrageous.

Over 50, Dana now laughs at the faux pas she commits instead of putting herself down for being clumsy or dumb. She admits she felt dumb a lot in her younger years. The greatest trade-off of having stiff joints at 56, says Risa, is that you can laugh at yourself and feel better about it. Ivy adds, "I no longer wonder about whether I can cut it. I don't think I'm afraid of success. I have a sense that I'm good, and that's not nagging me any more."

These women seemed to take themselves less seriously as older people now, realizing that for all their planning and worry, events are still unpredictable. "No matter how hard you try, it doesn't seem to make one bit of difference in the end!" said one mother in the study.

Freer of responsibilities and less accountable to others, they are able to let go of the need to control and to be controlled.

One of the powerful influences on older middle-class women's approach to play is having grown up in a social system that prepared them, more exclusively than young women today, for housework, mothering, and emotional and physical care-giving. As wives, mothers, and caretakers of others, women have been variously regarded as childish, silly, passive, foolish, and scatter-brained-men's playthings and sexual playmates. In effect, these so-called childlike characteristics became learned survival behaviors, in no way reflecting women's abilities to think and act with intelligence and competence. And it may be that only in the home or in private life do we find the love, nurture, and playfulness absent from the "public" marketplace. Male socialization has been serious and task-oriented, concerned with separation, power, and control; women's lives are seen as less ordered and predictable. Some feminists feel that the compensatory strengths developed by women as a result of being "other," i.e. marginal to the public sphere, are the very strengths and skills needed today to save the planet: attributes of care, connectedness, and concern.

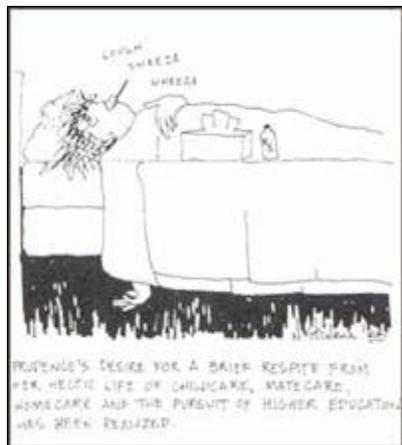
Because women do not conform to traditional male definitions of what is considered humorous or playful in our society, some have never considered themselves playful. The participants in my study said, "We don't play competitive games and we're rotten joke-tellers." Since most joke-telling is at the expense of women and other minorities, it's no wonder that we are not very enthusiastic about it as a pastime. Nor is taking centre stage in mixed company considered respectfully feminine. Our humour tends to be in the shape of informal story-telling that describes the foibles of our personal lives and which generally takes place in groups where we feel trusted and at ease. Feminist studies indicate that humour is experienced differently according to who has the power in an interaction, to whom the humour is directed, and what is "at stake" (see Wischnewski).

The way we learn can also be an expression of playful inclinations. One woman puts it this way: "There's something related to the stance of being a learner - that one approaches

one's experiences, one's life work, as learning. It is the same as approaching it as a player." When a playful attitude is not present, learning is diminished, and for some women, impossible. In describing the connection between play and the way they learned, the women in my study unanimously agreed that "play opens me up to learning." A playful approach has the potential to release censors which inhibit and control our thinking and feeling. This was expressed by the women as "releasing the steel bands around my body of knowledge," "opening doors," "opening up possibilities," or "enabling me to see things in new and different ways." One woman called play "the great lever which allows all of my intelligences to interact." For some of the women the risk in taking a playful stance was always preferable to what is predictable or routine. Ivy explained: "With a task, if I know how to do it, it gets boring. It has to be an adventure. I don't want to know how to get there. That's where the fun is. Your whole being is working. I don't like doing things that have been done before. I need the self-discovery notion in everything I do. If you add predictability, you lose me."

The human potential for joy is a valuable means of healing ourselves and our communities.

On a practical level, when play can be infused with learning we become more energized and involved intellectually and emotionally. "If it's not fun, it's not worth doing" was a sentiment often repeated by the women. When we engage in playful learning we temporarily suspend judgment, "go with the flow," and venture into the unknown, daring at times to rock the cultural boat. Playful thinking helps the way we come to know things, stimulating us first through intuition or the senses, later helping us to put hunches into words. Experience becomes trusted as an important source and method of knowing. Sharing and reflecting on experiences with friends and colleagues shapes our learning, deepens and expands what we know, and makes the whole process more enjoyable.



Competition and having to perform according to other people's standards alienates and inhibits us from expressing the best within us. The "best within us" is often submerged and unavailable, waiting to be released when we discover our "voices" and begin to believe in ourselves as members of a community of knowledge-makers. Until then, many of us perfect male-style procedures for achieving success whether this be in institutions of learning or at the workplace (Belenky et al.).

Affirming our playful selves is not always easy and may even be accomplished at great cost in the western world because of contradictory messages around play and fulfillment. We are promised the wonders of the good life when we drink the right beer, chew striped gum, or use sexy antiperspirant; at the same time, guilt is imposed on excessive pleasure and delight. In double-speak, "doing your own thing" may actually mean doing what everybody else does. When playfulness leads to

thinking for ourselves or acting defiantly in the face of oppression it becomes a radical act. Joyful, creative, and spontaneous behaviour can be threatening to those who value order, conformity, and control. The ability to freely imagine, to colour outside the lines, and to take action toward "what could be" may actually work to subvert "what is," or the status quo. Dale Spender notes the delight many women experience when they learn its okay, even empowering, to be angry and defiant. Canada's Raging Grannies are a case in point.²

Playful behaviour is circumspect. Obedience and order are necessary for the maintenance of the patriarchal system. Despite or because of the is, it is critical that women of all ages remember and stress the positive aspects of our culture. The human potential for joy and celebration is a valuable means of staying connected, and of healing ourselves and our communities in these despairing times. We need to cherish the creativity, the joys, the achievements, and the resourcefulness which women have demonstrated throughout our history. Reclaiming play as a contribution to the serious learning and work of our lives is a beginning. There are lessons to be learned from the older, wiser, and more outrageous among us.

Reprinted from WEdf, Winter 1991, Volume 8, Numbers 3/4. Noreen Stevens cartoon reprinted from WEdf, Summer 1988, Volume 6, Number 3.

Lanie Melamed did her graduate studies in Adult Education at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education. Her eclectic research interests are in the area of women's ways of knowing, feminist pedagogy, adult play, and educating for peace and social change. She teaches at Concordia University in Montreal.

¹A very funny novel about a woman who chooses freedom after 65 is Constance Beresford Howe's *The Book of Eve* (New York, Avon Books, 1973).

²For information on the Raging Grannies, who rage and sing about contemporary social injustices, write Jean McLaren, R.R. #2, Suite 22, Comp. B, Gabriola Island, B.C., VOR 1X0

References

Belenky, et. al. *Women's Ways of Knowing: : The Development of Self, Voice, and Mind.* New York: Basic Books, 1986.



CCLOW members in Vancouver's Annual Peace March, April 27th, 1986. Reprinted from WEdf, Fall 1986, Volume 5, Number 1.

Schiller, J. C. "Letters on the Esthetic Education of Man," in Lukacs, *Historie et conscience de class (Education de minuet, collection "arguments")*. Originally published in 1875.

Wischnewski, M. "Making Sense of Humour, Gender, and Power: Implications for Adult Learners." Diss. Ontario Institution for Studies in Education, University of Toronto, 1989.

Grounding Our Beliefs on Women and the Economy

by **Diana Ellis**

Policy planning still does not specifically name women as members of the community.

marginal.

Recent government trends encouraging the involvement of women in economic discussion lack a genuine commitment to make visible the contribution to the economy of women's work in the home, community, and labour force. Instead, pilot projects are designed to integrate women into the economic mainstream without looking at the mainstream role women already play, or understanding the supports women need for more active participation. Policy planning that talks about including community needs still does not specifically name women as members of the community, and some alternate models of economic development actually serve to keep women

The many reasons for continued exclusion of women from economic discussions are documented elsewhere (Women Against the Budget and Women's Research Centre). This article examines the tactic of working with community women to develop "grounding assumptions" about women and their place in the economy, which can be used to develop action strategies suitable to their needs.

À Vancouver, le Centre de recherches sur la condition féminine a travaillé en collaboration avec des femmes de la collectivité pour élaborer des hypothèses fondamentales sur les femmes et la place qu'elles occupent dans l'économie. Il s'agit de déclarations auxquelles elles sont parvenues en discutant et qui peuvent servir de point de départ pour mettre sur pied un plan d'action. Nous vous donnons quelques exemples de suppositions fondamentales et certains commentaires pour étayer nos

idées.

- 1. Les activités familiales et domestiques des femmes font partie intégrale de l'économie, bien qu'elles soient invisibles. S'occuper de son foyer signifie entre autres maintenir les membres de sa famille en bonne santé morale et physique. Ce soutien est considéré comme normal, plus d'ailleurs que tout autre travail qu'accomplissent les femmes.*
- 2. La famille est autant une entité économique qu'une entité sociale. Les politiques du gouvernement, dont l'imposition sur le revenu, les allocations familiales, les pensions de retraite et les prestations sociales montrent que la famille est considérée comme une entité économique.*
- 3. Le travail que les femmes fournissent pour maintenir le bien-être de leur famille et de leur foyer a une valeur économique. Une étude a évalué qu'au Canada, en 1981, le travail des femmes au foyer était équivalent à 35-40 per cent du produit national brut.*
- 4. Élever des enfants est une activité économique qui exerce une influence sur l'économie et que cette dernière influence. Après une grossesse, la participation d'une femme à la main-d'oeuvre dépend des revenus de la famille, des possibilités qu'elle a de trouver un emploi et de la disponibilité, du coût et de la qualité des soins qu'elle peut espérer pour son enfant.*
- 5. Tout le monde a le droit d'être indépendant financièrement. L'égalité des chances signifie que hommes et femmes devraient pouvoir accéder à l'indépendance financière de la même façon, soit grâce à une éducation appropriée, à une formation professionnelle et à des services de soutien, soins des enfants et agences d'embauche entre autres. Pour de plus amples renseignements veuillez vous adresser au Women's Research Centre, #101, 2245 West Broadway, Vancouver, C.B. V6K 2E4.*

Diana Ellis est conseillère indépendante sur des questions portant sur la condition féminine, ce qui comprend entre autres aider les femmes à s'organiser et animer des manifestations sociales. Elle est membre du Comité s'occupant des femmes dans l'économie du Centre de recherches sur les femmes depuis 1976, année de la fondation du Centre.

Women find it empowering to actually see and understand their role in the economy and the ongoing strategies they develop are grounded on their own stated needs and experience.

The Women's Research Centre, based in Vancouver, British Columbia, works with women's groups and individuals to assist them in getting information, analysis, and skills to take action on issues. The focus is action research. In 1976 the Centre, working with the Northern British Columbia Women's Task Force on Single Industry Towns, did community research resulting in a report, a conference, and the National Film Board documentary "No Life for a Woman." At the request of northern women the centre was further involved in a study, completed by community research teams in Fort Nelson (B.C.) and Whitehorse (Yukon Territory), of the impact of the potential construction of the Alaska Highway Gas Pipeline on women and their families (Women's Research Centre 1979). The community women participating in the research went on to become involved in various commissions and planning groups concerned about the development of mega-projects in their regions.

In 1986 the Women's Research Centre used its decade of experience to put together a kit on Women and the Economy (Women's Research Centre 1986). The kit contains articles, analysis, an annotated reading guide, and a set of grounding assumptions about

women's relationship to the economy. The grounding assumptions in this article are taken from the kit. We use them as handouts for discussion groups, as the basis for talks and workshops, and for helping other groups to develop their own grounding assumptions to reflect their particular community.

The Process

Grounding assumptions present a basic analysis of a situation and offer a useful place for discussion to start. They are statements that need not be broken down any further; statements that can begin comfortably with "We believe that " The process of developing them is simple. Women start by responding to the question, "What do we know about the economy, our community, and ourselves?" Some sample probes might be: "Let's describe what we do in the home, family, and community," "What happens in our town to make money and how does our work relate to that?", "What kind of work is exchanged between people for no money?", "How does money come into and leave our community?" Questions such as "How do we know this?", "What impact does it have?" are also asked throughout the discussion.

When the answers to these sorts of questions are compiled, the women ask themselves, "What are our assumptions about this?" and develop a set of basic statements of belief, sorting through the material of the first discussion to pull together common ideas and develop new understandings.

The basic statements they arrive at are their personal grounding assumptions on women and the economy. From this point, participants can identify strategies ranging from action research for community economic development strategies, to lobbying or forming

discussion groups.

One group in a small resource town found through discussion that they were not as anti-industry as they had thought, and a resulting strategy was the formation of a new advocacy relationship between the group on the one hand and the local industry, the government, and labor on the other.

The major benefits of the process are empowerment and grounding. Women find it empowering to actually see and understand their role in the economy and the ongoing strategies they develop are grounded on their own stated needs and experience.

What those needs and experience tell us is that without realistic action on child care, without appropriate access to training, without paying women a living wage, and without consideration of the depth of work women already do (and its impact on women's potential involvement in the labour force) economic development initiatives - no matter how innovative - will not work for the average Canadian woman.

The Assumptions

The following are grounding assumptions and background comment developed by the Women's Research Centre.

1. Women's work in the family and household is an integral but invisible part of the already existing economy.
 - Managing the household involves food budgeting and shopping, planning and cooking nutritious meals, cleaning up, preserving food and possibly planting/maintaining a garden. Women's home maintenance work includes planning and doing daily and seasonal cleaning, overseeing or doing repairs, making sure the home is comfortable for all who live in and visit it. Women also plan, budget, and shop for most goods in the home, including clothing, and do the washing, ironing, sewing, and mending of clothes.
 - Women's maintenance of health and relationships within the family and household includes supporting other family/household members in their work and social life, acting as an emotional buffer between other members and their work, community, and home, caring for family members when they are ill and preventing illness generally. This emotional support is taken for granted more than any other part of women's work.
 - The responsibility of caring for children includes feeding, clothing, cleaning, transporting, emotionally supporting and keeping children safe at all their developmental stages. Women are usually responsible for locating necessary child care or baby-sitting so they can participate in the labour force, go to appointments, or have an evening out.
2. A valid analysis of the economy must include an understanding of the sexual division

of labour in the family, household, and labour force.

- Women's involvement (entry, exit, reentry) with the paid labor force is directly affected by the birth and subsequent care, or arranging for the care, of children.
- The number of hours women are available to work for wages, participate in over-time, training, promotion, and relocation are influenced by their family and household responsibilities.
- The type of work women do in the paid labour force is part of a sexual division of labour.

3. Women's vulnerable position in the economy is based on the sexual division of labour.

- Women's vulnerable position in the economy is partly determined by her class position but even her class position is vulnerable since it often depends on her relationship to a man.
- Women's responsibility for the care of children (and the lack of affordable quality child care) means women working in the paid labour force who become pregnant have to make a decision about how and if they will continue working after their child is born. They may have to work part time or be under-employed, thus earning less than a living wage, becoming more prone to lay-offs and cut-backs.
- Many women with children choose or are forced to choose not to work for pay at all thus becoming dependent on the state or a partner's income.

4. All changes in the economy have different impacts on women and men.

- When an economic crisis such as a recession causes a drop in family income, women's household management and service work increases because stretching the household budget and managing of family stress is considered women's work.
- The introduction of micro technology to the workplace specifically changes the nature of the clerical and service work that is done, due to the sexual division of labour, largely by women.
- Resource development such as offshore oil, logging, and mineral extraction is often located away from settlements and family, thus the price of a paycheque for a man is often separation from family and community life.
- Wherever and however economic booms and crises occur, women are responsible for managing its impact in the home and, to a large extent, in the community as well.

5. The family is an economic as well as a social unit.

- Government policies such as taxation, family allowance, pension, and welfare are described as social policies but they also use the family as an economic unit. They are not static; they develop and change depending on government's socio-economic values, choices, and priorities.

6. The work women do to maintain family and household is of economic value.

- One study estimates that for Canada, in 1981, the value of household work equaled Nancy Reid between 35-40 per cent of the gross national product (GNP: the added accumulation of the value of goods and services produced in a community) (Wilson 62).

7. Raising children is an economic activity that influences and is influenced by the economy.

- When there is real choice to have children the decision is often based on a family's economic security.
- Women's continued participation in the labour force after childbirth depends on family income, the possibility of employment and the availability, affordability, and quality of child care.
- The quality of services affecting children, such as education, health, recreation, and economic opportunity, varies by region depending on the socio-economic priorities and policies at all government levels, and many families have to make choices about where they live based on those quality of service issues.

8. Everyone has the right to economic independence.

- The basic components of economic independence are adequate shelter, food, and an annual income above the poverty line. Equality of opportunity, a basic belief of Canadian society, implies that men and women have the same opportunities to use the tools needed to reach economic independence. These include appropriate education, job training, and support services such as affordable child care and employment.

We welcome discussion about the use of grounding assumptions, the process of developing them, and experiences in working with women on economic development.

Without appropriate access to child care, and without consideration of the depth of the work women already do, economic development initiatives will not work for the average Canadian woman.

Please call or write the Women's Research Centre, #101, 2245 West Broadway, Vancouver, British Columbia, V6K 2E4, (604) 734-0485.

Article reprinted from WEdf, Fall 1988, Volume 6, Number 4. Nancy Reid's graphic reprinted from WEdf Spring 1995, Volume 11, No.3.

Diana Ellis works as a consultant on planning, evaluation and action research for community groups and agencies. Her most recent publication is "Finding Our Way- A Participatory Evaluation Method for Family Resource Programs."

References

Northern British Columbia Women's Task Force. *Report on Single Industry Communities*. Vancouver: Women's Research Centre, 1977.

Wilson, S. J. *Women, the Family and the Economy*. Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1982.

Women Against the Budget and Women's Research Centre. "The Exclusion of Women from Economic Planning." *The Other Macdonald Report*. Eds. Drache and Cameron. Lorimer, 1985.

Women's Research Centre. *Women and the Economy Kit*. Vancouver: Women's Research Centre, 1986.

Women's Research Centre. *Beyond the Pipeline*. Vancouver: Women's Research Centre, 1979.

Nancy Reid



Personal Reflections on the Practice of Adult Education

by Cheryl Senecal

Many women adult educators experience isolation, frustration, and exhaustion as a result of working in an environment of backlash.

As an education and extension coordinator responsible for the development and delivery of a sexual harassment prevention education program, I have experienced challenges to my understanding of adult education theory and practice. Many women adult educators experience isolation, frustration, and exhaustion as a result of working in an environment of backlash, and it is imperative that we enter our "truths into the public record and onto an agenda for action" (Payeur, Taylor, and Warren iii). By naming our personal experiences of backlash, we become more able to break the cycle of resistance and denial that allows violence to continue and trivializes initiatives set up to address it.

There are deficiencies in the field of adult education that prevent the recognition and meaningful support of the adult educator's role, and hinder the legitimization of the personal and emotional dimensions of practice. As such, they undermine the learning process for both learners and educators and contribute to a sense of confusion, loneliness, and vulnerability in adult educators. The experiences I draw on come out of my work with the Saskatchewan Women's Secretariat's Sexual Harassment Prevention Program. The points I want to discuss are grouped into three areas representing the limitations, contradictions, and denials I have experienced as a practitioner.

Limitations

1. Adult education is not a panacea; the adult educator is not a magician. Addressing a threatening and controversial issue such as sexual harassment through education is only a part of the solution. Generations of socialization practices that reinforce sexist attitudes and violence against women cannot be corrected in a workshop series or a one day seminar. Though the ongoing work to change peoples' attitudes about issues of gender equity and sexuality has to start much earlier than when they enter the workplace, workplace education is most effective when it is done strategically, with management (and unions in unionized workplaces) developing and implementing effective policy, dealing appropriately with harassers, and providing complainants with support. Too often this does not happen. Too often education is viewed as the solution to the problem when in fact it plays a limited,

though important, role.

Les formatrices d'adultes qui travaillent dans le domaine social (ex : animer des ateliers sur le harcèlement sexuel) se heurtent souvent à des milieux hostiles. Elles trouvent rarement dans leur profession un appui solide et la dimension personnelle et affective de leur travail n'est pas reconnue.

Il est difficile de rester optimiste et énergique si l'isolement, la frustration et l'épuisement ne sont jamais admis ou compris; les éducatrices (j'en suis un exemple) réfrènent souvent leurs réactions épidermiques de peur d'être taxées de radicalisme, de sensibilité démesurée ou d'irrationalité ou de voir la question rejetée. Notre travail comporte souvent de grands risques et peut être débilitant. Or, une réaction émotive peut être mal interprétée : elle n'est pas en mesure de répondre aux exigences de la profession.

Voici quelques suggestions pour changer la pratique de l'éducation des adultes. Il faut reconnaître que l'éducation ne constitue qu'un volet de la solution pour résoudre une question d'ordre social, donner la possibilité aux formatrices et formateurs de se ressourcer physiquement, psychologiquement et spirituellement, établir des liens avec des organismes communautaires et des réseaux de soutien, tracer des liens plus étroits entre la théorie et la pratique en ce qui concerne l'éducation des adultes et continuer les recherches pour remettre en question l'optique masculine traditionnelle sur l'éducation des adultes.

2. *It is difficult for educators to remain optimistic and sufficiently energized to do their work effectively.* While the notion that the learning process is fundamentally learner centred may be one of the cornerstones of adult education theory and practice, the process is, in fact, very teacher dependent (Hart and Holton). The expectations of teachers to be accommodating and motivating can be extremely demanding and debilitating especially when little, if any, recognition is made of the need for rejuvenation. Hart and Holton suggest that "rejuvenation is assured if one mindfully attends to the activities associated with developing self-love, activities [which] require blocks of quality time often devoted to thinking about students and their learning" (253- 254). However, adult educators are rarely afforded the luxury of thinking about learners and their learning. In very practical terms, accommodating the adult educator's need for spiritual reflection would be viewed by the majority of administrators and co-workers as irrelevant to the job.
3. *Those who work within bureaucratic or organizational structures have little ability to respond to the emotional needs of adult educators working on the front lines.* Exceptions are possible if the situation is deemed an occupational health and safety issue, a legitimate health issue under an employee assistance plan (if one exists) or regular sick benefits plan, or if the manager or supervisor uses their personal prerogative to legitimize the emotional needs of their staff members. As well, those employed in similar positions on the front lines have little opportunity

to come together for support or feedback about the difficulties and challenges of their work and to counter the isolation they otherwise experience. In my time at the Sexual Harassment Prevention Program, I have discovered that there is no language to adequately describe my experiences of backlash. Communicating feelings of frustration and exhaustion to my co-workers has often been met with a combination of concern for my personal well-being and a sense of confusion about how to address the situation.

4. *The adult educator and the educational function they fulfill within an organization often operate in isolation from other key aspects of the issue being addressed.*
The adult educator is not often involved in the conceptualization of strategic plans or in other key aspects of the issue, which can limit her effectiveness in the field. Although I enter a workshop primarily as an educator, I am often viewed as fulfilling other roles including counsellor, policy expert, complaint investigator, or personal confidant. While I attempt to deal with participants' needs as effectively as possible, my limited ability to respond in a meaningful or informed way undermines my self-confidence.

Contradictions

1. *Attempts to create safe and respectful learning environments as a means of avoiding conflict are sometimes not successful.*
In one particular workshop where a significant amount of hostility and resistance to mandatory education had been expressed, the strategy of my co-worker and I was to have participants openly voice feelings of frustration and skepticism so that their concerns could be put on the agenda and, therefore, addressed more effectively. By early afternoon a spokesperson for approximately ten women informed us that they were leaving the workshop because they did not feel safe or respected. It was a shock to realize that our carefully thought-out educational process, done with the best of intentions and with sound adult education practice in mind, had achieved disastrous results.

In numerous workshops, the majority of our energy and attention as facilitators is directed at those who are most defensive and resistant to the process. In attempts to create safe learning environments for all participants, we sometimes create an artificial sense of comfort that actually excludes women. Is it any wonder that women are the most hesitant to speak during sessions where male participants are quick to dominate the discussion, equating employment equity to reverse discrimination and referring to sexual harassment education as "pink, fluffy stuff." Lewis suggests that women cease to speak "not because they cannot speak but because they are not heard" (194). This adds clarity to my own sense of trepidation in entering a workshop knowing that in all likelihood I am not safe to speak, but that the requirements of my job force me to

Expectations of teachers to be motivating can be extremely demanding and debilitating especially when little, if any, recognition is made of the need for rejuvenation.

regardless of whether I am listened to, believed, or respected.

2. *Sexual harassment is an emotional issue, but as an adult educator I purposely contain my emotions in order to prevent being labeled as radical, over-sensitive, or unreasonable and to avoid having the subject matter dismissed.* I also prepare myself psychologically for the worst scenarios and, as a means of dealing with hostility, sometimes detach myself from the actual experience and operate from within a protective "bubble." However, my ability to effectively facilitate the session and respond to the needs of all participants is reduced.

One particular workshop comes to mind. Statistics indicating the incidence of sexual harassment and highlighting the gender breakdown of recipients and perpetrators were challenged and referred to as lies and contrivances in order to exaggerate the issue. These statistics were viewed by some as yet another way women "bash men." Participants also stated that the bureaucracy and resources dedicated to addressing sexual harassment contribute to blowing the problem out of proportion, that the very people who are in place to help eradicate harassment, including me and my co-worker, are actually interested in seeing it continue as a means of justifying our jobs.

Women cease to speak "not because they cannot speak but because they are not heard." This adds clarity to my own sense of trepidation in entering a workshop knowing that I am not safe to speak.

Situations detailed throughout our workshop were treated as examples of women acting either irrationally or vindictively (i.e. women who complain of sexual harassment are either crazy or evil). Comments such as "Hi there baldy" or "Hello dick brains" were offered as examples of acceptable workplace banter. As facilitators, we persevered but were marginally successful. Verbally and non-verbally, it was communicated to us that this issue, the process, and our presence were resented.

I realized as the day progressed that I was talking to the walls because I couldn't bear to look participants in the face. I couldn't look at their sneers, their smirks, and their expressions of disgust and, for the others, I couldn't face the fact that I was failing them. Those who had come with a sincere interest in more fully understanding the issue of sexual harassment or those who needed to learn how to address situations they were personally enduring deserved much more than what I was able to provide. I felt especially guilty when they generously expressed their thanks and commented that we had done a "good job of holding our own against a tough group," or that we had been "severely tested and survived." But there is a high cost for survival.

On the drive home, my co-worker and I shared the fear that our "emotional state" could be misunderstood. Without recognizing that our work was often high risk

and debilitating - both spiritually and psychologically - our response could be interpreted as an indication that we were unable to handle the demand of our jobs.

3. *The mandatory nature of programs is contrary to voluntary participation, a common principle of adult education.* Where individuals are mandated to attend a workshop, I am often the target of their frustration, defensiveness, and anger. In some instances, a significant amount of my time and energy is spent attempting to deal with those who resent the fact of having to attend, and the learning experience is consequently compromised for both participants and facilitators.
4. *It is unlikely that a Sexual Harassment Prevention Program can generate enough revenue to cover costs.* The Sexual Harassment Prevention Program was created as a means of responding to the growing demand for information and education on the issue of sexual harassment in the workplace. This demand was primarily a result of two events: a union/ management agreement in the Government of Saskatchewan calling for the delivery of education on gender discrimination to all government employees, and changes to The Occupational Health and Safety Act which stipulate that employers must maintain work environments that are free from harassment.

But a budgetary stipulation that the endeavor be cost-recovery is attached to this particular program. Although there has been flexibility in the implementation, a considerable amount of time and energy is expended on creating and maintaining financial reporting mechanisms. This reduces the time and energy that could be spent addressing other aspects of the work more directly related to the mandate of the program. Social change work, such as a sexual harassment prevention program, involves a great deal of staff time and energy and rarely produces easily measurable or visible results. Is it reasonable to assume that a program of this nature can recover its costs?

Because of this requirement, decision-makers have a legitimate rationalization to cut the program. I do my work knowing that it is demanding and exhausting and at the same time that my productivity could be called into question at any moment. I also believe that the cost-recovery component inhibits the ability of administrators to deal with potential staff burn out because financial viability necessarily outweighs other concerns.

5. *While the Women's Secretariat presents a feminist analysis of issues, there is often a lack of feminist process.* Individuals' best intentions to be inclusive, collaborative, and consultative are often impeded by the bureaucratic structures within which public servants function. Traditional work relationships and structures continue to permeate the workplace and there is generally a lack of opportunity to explore alternatives. The decision-making process often does not include those who will be directly affected by those decisions, and there is a lack of time and energy to attend to the emotional needs of staff members. Furthermore, the Women's Secretariat remains somewhat marginalized from other

government departments and there is the sense that, as employees, our performance must be superior as a means of avoiding criticism and further marginalization within the bureaucracy.

Denials

1. *The emotional complexities of my work being credible, legitimate, and worthy of redress have often been denied.*

Using the work of Narayan I liken my experience as a woman adult educator in the area of sexual harassment prevention to being in a position of oppression (Narayan). Narayan argues that oppressed insiders have more immediate, subtle, and critical knowledge regarding their oppression and consequently treat their experiences more seriously. She identifies a number of ways in which outsiders may view the emotional description of personal experiences as excessive, silly, irrational, or manipulative, which increases an insider's sense of alienation, grief, and anger and also contributes to self-doubt and self-blame.

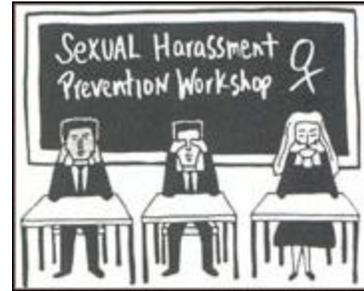
Outsiders may view the emotional description of personal experiences as irrational, which increases an insider's sense of alienation, and anger, and contributes to self-blame.

2. *As an adult educator, I have experienced my own denial of the emotional, psychological, and physical costs associated with doing social change work.* Doubting my feelings and questioning my analysis limits my ability to contextualize my work within a broader social and political framework and prevents me from making sense of my experience. The problem, then becomes one of being too sensitive to do my job. Ironically, this oversimplification is also commonly directed at recipients of harassment, such as "if you weren't so sensitive the problem would just go away," or "if you had only said something, this would have never happened."
3. *The relationship between the educator and the learner is not always benign or even mutually beneficial.* In the theory of adult education there is little emphasis on creating a safe and respectful learning environment for the educator; as a woman adult educator I am frequently at risk of being harassed by participants. And because there is such a backlash against a variety of equity-related issues, including the introduction of mandatory education regarding the prevention of sexual harassment, those of us working in the area are particularly vulnerable, especially those of us visibly connected to a feminist philosophy. Shore and Butler suggest that some adult educators "experience resistance in the very process of publicly naming and practicing from a feminist standpoint" (3). We who are the messengers of social change often become the target for expressions of frustration and anger with respect to that change.

Creating Opportunities for Reflection and Support

Nancy Reid

What are the common threads that surface from these experiences? How do I make this exercise more than a cleansing process, something that can be used to increase our understanding of adult education and ultimately to improve our practice?



My suggestions for addressing the deficiencies in adult education focus on the intersecting spheres of the workplace, the community, and the academy, I present them with the intention that some tangible changes, however small or seemingly insignificant, can be made to recognize the work of adult educators and to respond more effectively to the need for emotional and spiritual support.

The Workplace

- Education is only a part of the solution for addressing the issue of sexual harassment in the workplace.* For educators and administrators of educational programs, it is critical that a more realistic picture be presented of both the possibilities as well as the limitations associated with education as a tool for social change. There should be diversity in the educational options, some of which would be more suited to high risk work environments (such as the trades or male-dominated workplaces or where there has been a history of complaints) and others to low risk environments. As well, educational initiatives should be tailored towards specific segments of the organization. For example, education directed at management or supervisory personnel should not only focus on general awareness and prevention but on the specific responsibilities of senior personnel to demonstrate commitment, handle complaints, and act pro-actively against sexual harassment.
- It is critical that educators be provided opportunities within the workplace for physical, psychological, and spiritual rejuvenation.* The majority of adult educators with whom I have contact are creative in how they nurture themselves. But this takes place outside of the workplace, which negates the problem as a workplace issue. When working in an area particularly susceptible to backlash, conscious efforts must be made to systematically provide support for educators within the workplace, and also to celebrate our accomplishments.
- Educators should be included in other initiatives related to the issue they are addressing.* Adult educators are most effective when education is integrated into a comprehensive strategy and information is provided which allows them to be knowledgeable about all aspects of the issue. For example, educators could be

Because there is such a backlash those of us working in the area are particularly vulnerable, especially those of us visibly connected to a feminist philosophy.

more closely involved in deciding whether training should be mandatory or optional, developing effective educational programs to meet the needs of supervisor / managers or high-risk work environments, and incorporating the unique needs and perspectives of victims into the development of educational programs.

The Community

1. It is critical that some outlet be provided for educators to express emotions related to their work. Establishing community-based connections with existing adult education or women's organizations could be considered; CCLOW is a good example. Some jurisdictions have set up provincial organizations or networks comprised of all those working or interested in the areas of sexual harassment or gender equity.

The Academy

1. *The traditional view of adult education which describes the relationship of the educator and learner in gender neutral and mutually-beneficial terms should be challenged.* The teacher/learner relationship is not benign or inherently positive. The power dynamics in learning situations must be studied from the perspective of women educators and the research is especially relevant for those who work publicly from a feminist perspective.
2. *Stronger links must be forged between the academy and the practice of adult education.* The integration of practical work placements would create an opportunity for students of adult education to connect the theoretical with the practical. In support of this notion, Collins suggests that a "carefully mediated internship experience is the key to reflective practice" (91). I believe that my educational experience would have been more meaningful and my subsequent work as an adult educator more effective if I had been involved in a practicum experience. The relationship between the academy and the adult education community could be strengthened as a result of both parties being involved in the internship placement process.¹

Also, academic forums such as conferences and symposiums should be made more accessible to students and others in the community of adult education who have a desire to reflect on the complexities of practice. Those working in the academies would become more conscious of the dilemmas and challenges experienced by adult educators in the field, and practitioners would benefit from the knowledge and resources available in the academies. In light of the imminent funding cutbacks to post-secondary education and the increased pressure on universities to remain viable, stronger linkages must be maintained as a means of strengthening the relevancy between the theory and practice of adult education.

3. Work that expands the boundaries of a traditional male perspective in the literature, research, and theory of adult education must continue. In light of the fact that many of the changes made to adult education programs amount to tinkering (Burstow), it is critical that fundamental components of feminist content and process are integrated into academic course work. It is essential that, during this time of a feminist backlash and of unprecedented budget cuts, those who are studying to be adult educators have opportunities to explore the learning process from a feminist perspective. The academy has a fundamental responsibility to ensure that students of adult education are presented with a comprehensive view that integrates rather than marginalized the contributions and perspectives of women.

Conclusion

A common thread that has surfaced throughout my learning journey is the need to make sense of my experiences and of the broader context in which I study and practice as an adult educator. Respect for personal histories and building on the reality of lived personal experiences in a feminist-rooted approach to learning and research continues to inform my understanding of adult education.

The academy has a responsibility to ensure that students are presented with a view that integrates rather than marginalizes the contributions and perspectives of women.

The process of personal reflection has revealed the lack of recognition and support for the role of the adult educator and for the personal and emotional dimensions of practice. It has been my desire to contribute to a better understanding of adult education, and to create opportunities (in the workplace, the community, and the academy) to support and continue the work to have women's concerns and perspectives more fully integrated into the practice and theory of adult education.

Reprinted from WEdf, Winter 1996/97, Volume 12, Number 4. Nancy Reid's graphic was reprinted from the same issue.

Cheryl Senecal resides in Regina and is currently employed with Saskatchewan Women's Secretariat. She holds a Master of Adult Education, and this article is an edited version of the project she completed for her degree. She assumed the CLOW Presidency in fall 1998.

¹"Quality Circles," described by Willis as a reflective and dialogic process entered into by both students and academic educators "to investigate and enrich their practice as educators," and presently piloted at the University of South Australia, is one potential model for adult education academic environments (see Willis).

References

Burstow, B. "Problematizing Adult Education: A Feminist Perspective." *The Canadian Journal for the Study of Adult Education* 8.1 (1994).

Collins, M. *Adult Education as Vocation: A Critical Role for the Adult Education*. London: Routledge, 1991.

Hart, M., and D. Holton. "Beyond God the Father and Mother: Adult Education and Spirituality." *Adult Education and Theological Interpretations*. Eds. P. Jarvis and N. Walter. Malabar, FL: Krieger Publishing, 1993.

Lewis, M. G. *Without a Word: Teaching Beyond Women's Silence*. New York: Routledge, 1993.

Narayan, U. "Working Together Across Difference: Some Considerations on Emotions and Political Practice." *Hypatia* 3.2 (1988).

Payeur, G., M. Taylor, and C. Warren. "Feminisms in Adult Education: Fostering Visibility and Change for Women." *The Canadian Journal for the Study of Adult Education* 8.1 (1994).

Shore, S., and E. Butler. "Acts of Course." *Australian Journal of Adult and Community Education* 34.1 (1994).

Willis, P. "Using Quality Circles in University Education for Adult Educators." *The Canmore Proceedings (International Conference on Educating the Adult Educator: Role of the University)*. Ed. M. Collins. Saskatoon: College of Education, University of Saskatchewan, 1995.

Three Feet by Six (For the Names Project)

**With scraps of muslin and faded
corduroy
they asked me to capture
the warp and woof of his beating heart
the bite and whistle of his kiss
the falling arches of his voice**

**When the Quilt people called,
they read me the dimensions
three feet by six, use any material you
want
but be sure we can fold it up when the
exhibit moves on**

**Needle and thread are not enough.
My voice is not enough.
If a tree cries out in the forest,
does anyone hear it?
We are dying in the silence.**

**Sew a single drop of blood
pricked witch-like from your thumb
be careful not to burst the bubble
adhere it securely to the cotton
bite the thread away gently
be delicate, be bold
out of despair's yawning reach
the truth does not change**

**See the names stretched out
mile upon cotton mile
littered on the battlefield
this war fought in hospital rooms
demonstrations and free clinics
commemorated by stitch upon
endless stitch
we are armed with nothing but
our wish to be, and keep being.**

Thimble my hands.

I will sew until I do not need armour.

Tunis MacDonald

Toronto, Ontario

*Reprinted from WEdf, Winter 1993/94,
Volume 10, Numbers 3,4.*

Briser le silence en milieu pédagogique

par **Jeannine M. Ouellette**

Nous reconnaissons de plus en plus le droit absolu des femmes de vivre une vie sans violence et libre de contraintes.

Au fur et à mesure que nous dévoilons les visages cachés du vécu des femmes, la violence occupe une place de plus en plus dérangeante et indéniable. Le slogan lancé par les féministes dans les années soixante-dix, "le privé est politique" évoquait l'urgence et le besoin d'abattre le mur du silence qui avait maintenu jusque-là les femmes et les filles violentées dans un état d'isolement nourri par la peur des représailles et des jugements portés contre elles. Heureusement, dans le contexte social actuel, nous discutons plus ouvertement de la problématique de la violence masculine et nous reconnaissons de plus en plus le droit absolu des femmes de vivre une vie sans violence et libre de contraintes.

Nous constatons toutefois que plusieurs facettes de cette problématique n'ont pas encore été suffisamment explorées, notamment l'impact de la violence exercée contre les femmes dans le milieu pédagogique. Quels problèmes peuvent exister pour les femmes violentées lorsque celles-ci sont guidées par des hommes dans leurs projets d'apprentissage? Ainsi, cet article tente d'examiner quelques aspects de la relation professeur (homme)/étudiante (femme) afin de mettre en lumière certains problèmes vécus par des femmes qui ont été, ou sont victimes de violence masculine.

The impact of violence can be felt in a variety of ways by women in a learning situation: the environment itself may stir up painful memories; the attitudes of male professors may make a student feel like a victim; women be silent and submissive in the face of masculine authority as a result of their experiences with violence: the problem of sexual harassment by a professor may be compounded by the resemblance of this situation to incest.

Because of their experience of violence, women often internalize negative messages about their worth, their social status, and their rights as a person and a woman. In a

classroom, these messages often translate into a paralyzing fear of claiming the right to speak and to take up physical space, and contribute directly to the silencing of women. Among any women who are taking a course, some may be survivors of incest or of rape; others may be living with a partner who is violent. It is important to remember that these experiences cannot be deposited at the door of a classroom and they will influence, consciously or unconsciously, the manner in which a student learns.

In order that women regain their dignity, and have the opportunity to expand their capacity to learn, educational institutions must help break the cycle of silence and demystify masculine authority, partly by including knowledge by and about women in all curriculum. Knowledge itself must also be redefined as incomplete, dynamic and alive. University statistics show that women now make up the majority of the student population. For a healthy and constructive learning environment, we cannot continue to ignore the lived reality of women's lives.

L'étudiante adulte: l'importance d'une vision holistique

Dans le contexte d'une salle de classe, cela peut se traduire en une hésitation, voire en une peur, de réclamer son espace physique et le droit à la parole.

Toute femme joue un rôle dans la formation de sa personnalité et de son identité, mais plusieurs forces (historiques, sociologiques, familiales et culturelles) agissent également sur l'ensemble des femmes et exercent une forte influence sur la façon dont elles se perçoivent.

Chaque femme se compose donc de diverses "parties", qui rassemblées, lui confèrent son identité propre. Il ne faut pas négliger le fait que parmi ces diverses "parties", il peut y avoir des "parties blessées". Ces blessures peuvent lui avoir été infligées dans l'enfance, à l'adolescence ou à l'âge adulte. Elles se fondent au bagage personnel des femmes et contribuent à former leur concept de soi, en tant que femme, et en tant qu'apprenante (self-as-learner). Il est important de souligner que ce bagage n'est pas déposé à la porte d'une salle de classe et qu'il influence, de manière consciente ou inconsciente, les projets d'apprentissage des étudiantes adultes et leur rapport général au savoir.¹

On discute plus amplement de la violence faite aux femmes, mais hormis quelques exceptions, ce discours est relégué en marge de la société. Jusqu'à présent, peu d'efforts ont été déployés pour mesurer les conséquences et les répercussions de la violence dans toutes les sphères d'activités humaines (par exemple: le milieu de travail, le milieu d'apprentissage, le milieu religieux). Même les campus universitaires, qui, par définition, sont des lieux d'épanouissement intellectuel et de formation professionnelle, ne sont pas nécessairement des endroits où les femmes sont en sécurité. Le viol par une connaissance et le harcèlement sexuel représentent deux formes de violence dont les femmes sont victimes sur les campus, celles-ci risquant d'appauvrir la qualité des apprentissages et de

la vie en général des étudiantes.²

L'impact de la violence sur la situation pédagogique: le vécu des femmes passé sous silence

Les femmes qui survivent à la violence masculine doivent surmonter plusieurs barrières afin de se développer pleinement au niveau personnel, professionnel, intellectuel et social. À cause de leurs expériences de violence, elles ont tendance à intérioriser des messages négatifs vis-à-vis de leur valeur propre, de leur statut dans la société et de leurs droits en tant que femmes. Elles peuvent apprendre que les hommes représentent l'autorité dans une culture conditionnée par une société de type patriarcal. Ceci est confirmé lorsqu'elles sont victimes de violence physique, psychologique, émotionnelle ou sexuelle aux mains d'un homme qui abuse de son pouvoir et de sa force physique. Elles apprennent alors que les hommes qui détiennent l'autorité peuvent en abuser dans le but de les dominer ou de les faire taire. Elles apprennent également que leur parole de femme n'a pas beaucoup de poids dans un système judiciaire clément à l'égard des agresseurs.³ Dans le contexte d'une salle de classe, cela peut se traduire en une hésitation, voire en une peur, de réclamer son espace physique et le droit à la parole. Parfois, le milieu contribue directement au mutisme des femmes:

... all men can benefit in some way from belonging to the dominant group. In the context of our course this meant that the men were allowed to speak at length and did. Their speaking was seldom if every interrupted. When a woman and a man began speaking at the same time, the woman always deferred to the man. Women's speaking was often reinterpreted by the men through phrases such as "what she really means ..." (Lewis and Roger)

La voix autoritaire d'un professeur, dans un contexte condescendant, peut créer une malaise chez certaines femmes et raviver des sentiments d'insécurité personnelle. Le ton même de la voix peut parfois déclencher de mauvais souvenirs et un état de panique intérieure où la femme se sent menacée par l'autorité masculine.⁴

Cependant, chaque traumatisme est vécu différemment. Chaque victime apprend donc à maîtriser sa peur selon ses capacités et ses ressources et chemine sur la voie de la guérison à son propre rythme. Parmi les femmes qui suivent des cours, certaines peuvent être survivantes d'inceste ou d'un viol ou encore habiter avec un homme violent. Selon le contexte dans lequel elles vivent (ressources, support), elles en seront à des étapes différentes et elles réagiront au mécanisme de déclenchement en fonction de leur état psychologique et émotif actuel.

L'impact de la violence est également vécu au niveau de la pensée, comme le laissent entendre les résultats d'une recherche menée par Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger et Tarule et publiés en 1986 dans *Women's Ways of Knowing: The Development of Self, Voice, and Mind*. Les auteurs ont interviewé 135 femmes venant d'un milieu social différent et n'ayant ni la même éducation, ni la même culture pour mieux cerner les éléments qui caractérisent l'évolution intellectuelle des femmes adultes.

Selon Belenky et al., la manière dont les femmes accèdent à la connaissance découle en grande partie des expériences vécues au sein de leur famille d'origine. C'est à ce niveau que l'impact de la violence sur l'évolution intellectuelle prend toute sa signification. Belenky et al. ont noté que les femmes réduites au silence (de cinq positions épistémologiques possibles: le silence, la position bancaire, la position subjectiviste, la position méthodique et la position constructiviste) avaient toutes vécu dans des familles violentes dans le passé. Pendant leur enfance, ces femmes avaient appris que les mots étaient des armes dangereuses et que le silence était l'un, sinon l'unique moyen de protection dont elles disposaient. A l'âge adulte, ces femmes ne se perçoivent pas comme des personnes capables d'apprendre, ni par elles-mêmes, ni auprès des autres. Elles sont enfermées dans un mur de silence tant au niveau extérieur (échanges limités avec les autres) qu'au niveau intérieur (peu d'introspection).

Les femmes qui ont ainsi appris à se méfier de l'autorité masculine peuvent se heurter à des difficultés dans des situations pédagogiques où elles doivent exprimer leurs pensées et être évaluées par un professeur mâle. Leur participation au cours peut être limitée en fonction de leur peur d'être critiquées, voire ridiculisées, dans certains contextes. Certaines étudiantes choisissent le silence comme porte de sortie tel qu'en témoignent les propos suivants, recueillis dans le cadre d'un cours offert au niveau diplômé:

I haven't got the right language so I always feel like a dummy. I don't really want to talk because if I do they (the men) will realize how stupid I am.

I've talked a few times, but nothing I say seems to make a difference. What I say never gets taken up. It's like I hadn't said anything. So I've given up. Why bother?
(Lewis and Simon 466)

L'ambiguïté des rapports incestueux vécus dans la famille d'origine peut également générer des difficultés et une certaine confusion chez les femmes adultes au niveau de leurs rapports avec des hommes en position d'autorité. La relation de pouvoir, exercée pendant l'enfance, était teintée de séduction, de manipulation parfois subtile, parfois agressive. Il est également possible que de la tendresse se soit mêlée aux rapports incestueux, laissant la jeune fille pour le moins confuse face à son agresseur. Ainsi, même à l'âge adulte, les survivantes d'inceste peuvent vivre un malaise vis-à-vis du renforcement lorsque celui-ci provient d'un homme en position d'autorité. C'est le cas, par exemple, d'une situation où le rapport professeur/étudiante est marqué par le harcèlement sexuel.

Ces femmes
avaient
appris que
les mots
étaient des
armes
dangereuses
et que le
silence était
l'un, sinon
l'unique
moyen de
protection
dont elles
disposaient.

Le harcèlement sexuel est une réalité vécue en milieu universitaire qui peut profondément transformer les rapports entre les professeurs et les étudiantes et reproduire un type de relation violente semblable, à certains égards, aux rapports incestueux. Dans de telles situations, le climat d'apprentissage est malsain en raison du secret, de la menace, de la séduction et des promesses de renforcement qui caractérisent les échanges.

Ainsi, l'impact de la violence faite aux femmes peut être vécu à divers niveaux dans la situation pédagogique: 1) le milieu peut déclencher des souvenirs douloureux (surtout si une étudiante fut victime d'une agression sur le campus), 2) les comportements ou les attitudes des professeurs mâles peuvent ramener l'étudiante à un état de victime face à l'autorité masculine, 3) les expériences de violence ont enseigné aux femmes à garder le silence et à se soumettre à l'autorité masculine, et 4) il peut exister un malaise vis-à-vis du renforcement de la part d'un homme en position d'autorité, surtout si celui-ci exige des comportements rappelant les agressions sexuelles.

Briser le silence en milieu pédagogique: l'importance de démystifier l'autorité masculine

Les expériences de violence marquent de manière négative le développement cognitif et psychosocial des femmes à plusieurs niveaux. Par exemple, la confiance en soi peut être diminuée, le concept de soi déstabilisé, l'image de soi déformée et l'estime de soi appauvrie ... bref, la violence attaque la personne dans ce qu'elle a de plus vulnérable, sa valeur propre. Dans un cas de violence, la victime ne contrôle généralement pas la situation. Pour des raisons évidentes (la menace de mort, la douleur physique, la terreur psychologique), la victime de violence est privée de ses droits et, par conséquent, éprouve des difficultés à se protéger. Il peut en résulter un sentiment de méfiance à l'égard de sa capacité d'agir qui se matérialise à d'autres contextes, dont la situation d'apprentissage. Il devient essentiel que les victimes de violence réapprennent à se faire confiance.

Le milieu pédagogique peut jouer un rôle important à ce niveau en adoptant des méthodes d'enseignement qui invitent les apprenantes à jouer un rôle actif dans la démarche d'acquisition du savoir. Il faut d'abord reconnaître que dans une société patriarcale, les femmes ont été historiquement exclues des cercles de pouvoir et qu'elles n'ont pu par conséquent participer activement à l'élaboration des théories et aux définitions des concepts. Selon Claudie Solar, l'éducation est essentiellement organisée, gérée et contrôlée par des hommes, d'où l'importance pour les femmes d'interroger le savoir traditionnel: " ... le pouvoir définit le savoir. Le savoir du pouvoir est celui du groupe dominant, celui qui permet de maintenir sa domination et, par conséquent, de maintenir les dominés à leur place" (14-16).

Pour que les femmes retrouvent leur place et leur dignité, pour qu'elles puissent

augmenter leur capacité d'agir, il est essentiel que le savoir soit de type libérateur et non pas de type bancaire. les établissements d'enseignement doivent aider les femmes à briser le cycle du silence, lequel perpétue l'omission d'un savoir sur elles et par elles. Pour ce faire, l'approche pédagogique doit démystifier l'autorité masculine en endossant une définition du savoir comme étant inachevé, dynamique et vivant.

L'approche
pédagogique
doit
démystifier
l'autorité
masculine
en endossant
une définition
du savoir
comme
étant
inachevé,
dynamique
et vivant.

L'étudiante doit pouvoir étudier et apprendre dans un contexte qui permet une interaction entre le savoir théorique celui transmis par les professeur(e)s et les auteur(e)s - et le savoir d'expérience celui que l'étudiante possède déjà sur la matière à l'étude (Artaud). Selon Artaud, le processus de "re-création du savoir" est une méthodologie de l'enseignement qui a comme fondement le principe suivant: l'expérience de l'étudiante est le lieu où s'élabore un premier savoir et c'est également le lieu de la re-création du savoir. Le recours à l'expérience de l'étudiante se fait non pas dans le but de confirmer la théorie, mais dans celui de permettre une interaction réelle entre la théorie, l'expérience et la personnalité de l'étudiante. Il ne s'agit pas de remplacer le savoir théorique avec le savoir d'expérience. Il importe plutôt que l'étudiante puisse d'abord mettre à jour son propre savoir sur un sujet à l'étude pour ensuite consulter le savoir scientifique dans le but de confirmer, corriger ou compléter son savoir d'expérience. la possibilité de remettre en question le savoir transmis afin de permettre la découverte d'une autorité propre à soi

est d'une valeur inestimable auprès des femmes:

It can be argued ... that students need models of impeccable reasoning, that it is through imitating such models that students learn to reason. But none of the women we interviewed named this sort of learning as a powerful experience in their own lies. They did mention the deflation of authority as a powerful learning experience. (Belenky et al. 216)

Conclusion

Dans sa planification et sa mise en oeuvre, l'éducation doit respecter la vocation ontologique de l'être humain tout en tenant compte des conditions concrètes dans lesquelles chaque individu évolue. "La vocation de l'être humain est de devenir sujet, capable de connaître le monde et le transformer" (Arriola-Socol). Les femmes qui apprendront à aborder l'apprentissage, non pas dans un esprit de soumission mais bien dans un esprit de reconstruction, seront mieux outillées pour briser le cycle de dépendance sur l'autorité masculine. En brisant le cycle de la peur et du silence, elles pourront reprendre le contrôle de leur vie, y compris le contrôle de leur processus d'apprentissage. Les professeurs doivent relever le défi posé par une telle approche et le milieu universitaire doit reconnaître que l'omission du savoir sur les femmes perpétue le cycle de violence:

... physical and psychological abuse are part of a continuum and in so far as education encourages women to feel inadequate to certain tasks, to feel powerless - to lack faith in themselves - it contributes to the continuum. It locks the doors to escape as surely as the battering partner does. (Smithson 6)

Finalement, il est important de souligner que "prendre sa place" en tant que femme dans une société patriarcale est difficile en soi et la violence vient certainement amplifier cette difficulté. Présentement, les statistiques du milieu universitaire canadien suggèrent que les femmes représentent la majorité de la population étudiante. Parmi cette majorité se trouvent de nombreuses survivantes et de nombreuses victimes. Nous ne pouvons continuer à ignorer leur réalité. Nous devons collectivement identifier les moyens pour contrer la violence faite aux femmes et prendre des mesures pour aider les femmes qui, malgré les cicatrices et les blessures, traversent leur peur et investissent dans leur avenir.

From WEdf, Summer 1992, Volume 9, No.4. Jeannine M. Quелlette poursuit ses études en vue de l'obtention d'un doctorat en éducation à l'Université d'Ottawa.

¹Il faut noter que l'impact de la violence se fait déjà sentir en bas âge car un pourcentage important d'enfants en difficultés d'apprentissage ont été violentés dans leur famille d'origine.

²Une étude conduite à Cornell en 1986 a révélé qu'au niveau diplômé, 61 % des étudiantes qui ont participé au sondage, disent avoir été victimes de harcèlement sexuel tandis que 12 % ont évité de suivre un cours avec des professeurs qui avaient la réputation de harceler les étudiantes (Smithson).

³Plusieurs exemples récents illustrent cette tendance dans le système judiciaire dont les cas de Anita Hill et Clarence Thomas, de Patricia Bowman et William Kennedy Smith et le cas à l'Université Queen's (Kingston, Ontario) où Robert Van Oostrom fut trouvé non coupable d'agression sexuelle malgré le fait que trois femmes ont témoigné contre lui.

⁴Il faut bien comprendre que, dans le contexte pédagogique, l'autorité masculine est incarnée non seulement par le professeur mâle mais par les collègues mâles dans la salle de classe et les auteurs mâles à l'étude.

⁵La traduction des termes sont de l'auteur.

Références

Arriola-Socol, Merardo. "L'impact d'une expérience éducative sur la conscience critique." *Revue des sciences de l'éducation* 15.1 (1989): 83-101.

Artaud, Gérard. *La re-création du savoir*. Ottawa: Éditions de l'Univ. d'Ottawa, 1985.

Belenky, Mary F. et al. *Women's Ways of Knowing, 'The Development of Self, Voice, and Mind*. New York: Basic Books, 1986.

Lewis, Magda, and Roger I. Simon. "A Discourse Not Intended for Her: Learning and Teaching Within Patriarchy." *Harvard Educational Review* 56.4 (1986).

Smithson, Isaiah. "Introduction: Investigating Gender, Power and Pedagogy." *Gender in the Classroom, Power and Pedagogy*. Eds. S.L. Gabriel and I. Smithson. Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1990.

Solar, Claudie. "Le caractère masculin de l'éducation." *Revue des sciences de l'éducation*. 112 (1985): 227-294.

Variation sur un thème

C'est la parole qui est d'or et le silence qui est d'argent

par Carole La Violette

Il me paraît invraisemblable que je me retrouve bouché devant ma tâche de vous raconter ce que j'ai appris en suivant des cours sur la condition des femmes. Ce n'est pas parce que je n'ai rien à dire mais plutôt parce que j'ai trop à dire. Les mots, les phrases, les idées se font la guerre dans ma tête. Le regain de ma parole me semble récent et les sensations que j'éprouve sont intenses. J'aurais envie de vous crier "je suis intelligente", comme je l'ai fait dans le métro, et j'ose croire que j'aurais résumé en quelques mots l'amour-propre que j'ai acquis. Mais j'aurais aussi envie de vous chuchoter le sentiment de bien-être et de paix que je vis à la pensée que j'exploite enfin mes multiples talents.

J'avais besoin de me dépenser, de m'exprimer et de me partager. En faisant partie du monde des affaires, à titre de secrétaire, je n'arrivais pas à le faire.

Il faut que je me souvienne que ce sont les subtilités dans ma vie qui sont la preuve de ma croissance. j'aimerais vous faire à croire que j'ai grandi de quelques centimètres à l'âge de 23 ans mais ce serait un mensonge. Mais je peux, en toute vérité, vous dire que l'image que j'ai de moi-même a pris de l'ampleur, bien au-delà de quelques centimètres. Aujourd'hui, je me sens grande. Aujourd'hui, à 25 ans, je me sens jeune. C'est drôle à 23 ans, je me sentais vieille. Est-ce possible de vieillir et devenir plus jeune?

La réponse est affirmative et mon cœur me le confirme. L'espoir qu'il contient me fait vivre des journées pleine d'énergie. je me retrouve à présent à inscrire mes rendez-vous dans un agenda parce que j'ai beaucoup à faire. Ce petit livre me rappelle que je dois gérer mon temps parce que j'ai beaucoup à faire dans l'espace de ma vie. Ce carnet m'informe que j'ai une vie!

Il y a quelques années, c'était tout autre. Je me sentais dépassée. J'étais tantôt envahie d'un sentiment de panique et tantôt agacée par un malaise général. Mais je n'arrivais pas à

savoir le pourquoi de ces états d'être. En reprenant mes études, j'ai vite compris que c'était une question d'énergie. J'avais besoin de me dépenser, de m'exprimer et de me partager. En faisant partie du monde des affaires, à titre de secrétaire, je n'arrivais pas à le faire. Le silence dans lequel je vivais m'avait rendu confuse, triste, peureuse et immobile. J'avais l'impression de me dépenser, mais à petits feux et sans direction. Ma vie ne m'appartenait pas. Je la voyais se faufiler parmi les responsabilités, les craintes et les larmes. Je me retrouvais dans un tel état quand une amie m'a décrit l'école que je fréquente. Je ne savais pas que je voulais reprendre mes études. Quand elle eut fini sa description, je lui ai dit "si j'avais 65 ans, j'irais à cette école." Même aujourd'hui, cette phrase me résonne dans les oreilles car elle me fait voir qu'effectivement, à l'époque, je sentais que ma vie avait déjà eu lieu! Par contre, je restais convaincue que je n'avais pas vécu ... que quelqu'un d'autre avait fait usage de ma vie, sans me consulter.

In taking Women's Studies, I learned to look at myself in a mirror. In doing so, I found out that my experience as a woman resembles that of many others. I gained solidarity and lost my sad loneliness.

I returned to school after working as a secretary for seven years. I've since become more and more aware of the powerlessness I felt in the workplace. My past education served as a great contributor to this state of being. What can one say of an educational system that asks me to choose my life at 14 years old? What can one think of an educational system that teaches me how to take dictation and how to walk ... the feminine way? At 14, I was trained as a future secretary. I believed business letters could replace my speech.

A growing sense of alienation finally compelled me to ask myself, "who am I doing this for?" The reflection of the tears on my cheeks told me it was the beginning of painful self-discoveries.

L'éducation que j'ai reçue s'est bien occupée de ma formation en tant que femme et secrétaire. A l'âge de 14 ans, en secondaire III, le système éducatif me proposait 3 choix. L'un d'entre eux menait aux études collégiales. Les deux autres, "l'option professionnelle" et "l'option commerciale," s'occupaient d'entraîner des futurs mécaniciens et des futures secrétaires. En dépit de mes bonnes notes en éducation physique, mon intérêt marqué pour les langues et mon envie de la parole, je me suis assidûment installée devant la machine à écrire. J'avais décidé que les lettres d'affaires parleraient pour moi.

Ma formation a été plus que complète. On m'a enseigné à prendre de la dictée et comment m'asseoir. Ma transformation a été évidente: j'ai épilé mes sourcils, j'ai appris comment me maquiller et comment marcher de façon féminine!

Que dire de la perte de mon pouvoir personnel face à ces changements? On a omis de me parler de bonnes conditions de travail, de négociations salariales, de promotions à envisager, d'harcèlement sexuel, et j'en passe. Mais à quoi peut-on s'attendre d'un système

éducatif qui me demande de choisir ma vie à 14 ans?

Aujourd'hui, je fais toujours partie du monde des affaires. Mais c'est moi qui détiens la plus grande partie des parts. Je suis présidente, trésorière, comptable... de ma vie. Je suis en affaires à mon compte. Je fais de moins en moins de fausse publicité parce que j'ai moins peur de me présenter telle que je suis. Mon produit, c'est moi, et la qualité améliorée de ma vie en est la preuve.

Et de plus, je me suis faite des ami(e)s qui ne croient pas au silence, qui se considèrent également chefs de leurs entreprises et qui me servent de soutien moral. Je souffre moins de tristesse et d'angoisse. J'ai des points de repères.

Les amitiés qu j'ai nouées pendant que je travaillais sont rares. La plupart des autres femmes que je côtoyais quotidiennement au travail étaient plus âgées que moi. Mais même avec celles de mon âge, je me sentais alién. J'en avais marre d'échanger des recettes, des bouts de vies sans en arriver à échanger des numéros de téléphone. Le contact humain se limitait à quelques entretiens etc., toujours, durant les heures d'affaires. Pas question d'amitiés profondes.

Je me suis faite des ami(e)s qui ne croient pas au silence, qui se considèrent également chefs de leurs entreprises et qui me servent de soutien moral.

Au début de mes études, en septembre 1982, je continuais de me sentir isolée et aliénée. Cette fois, le sentiment s'est dissipé. Grâce à la nature de l'école que je fréquente, j'ai pu commencé à me rapiécer. On a pris soin de m'aider à recoller mon âme et ma tête. J'ai appris à me regarder dans un miroir. Les premières fois, tout ce que je voyais me rendait triste et confuse. Mais avec la parole et l'aide de mes amies, j'ai commencé à faire le bilan de ma vie. j'ai pleuré. Mais cette fois, je pleurais parce que le bilan indiquait plus de gains que de pertes. Je voyais de mes propres yeux, lavés, que la colonne de ressources, de talents était bien longue. Le total inspirait l'énergie, l'action, l'abondance, l'amour propre. Témoignant de cette belle découverte, je me suis mise à gérer cette force qu'est ma vie.

Aujourd'hui, en classe, je lis, j'écris et je discute de multiples points communs avec d'autres femmes. les mots de Simone de Beauvoir, de son livre *Le Deuxième Sexe*, me touchent et m'inspirent. Les déclarations de Robin Morgan me hantent. Je me forge une nouvelle bibliothèque. J'ai des héroïnes. Je parle de la relation entre les femmes et la beauté, la relation entre les stéréotypes et l'amour et

l'importance des rites de passage. J'échange mes découvertes avec d'autres femmes qui se découvrent autant de trésors.

J'en suis maintenant à ma dernière session au CEGEP. Je travaille avec appétit depuis que j'ai compris l'importance de me laisser inspirer par mes visions de grandeur et de succès. Il n'y a pas longtemps, j'envisageais mon succès autrement. Il embrassait la tradition, la sécurité, la voie usuelle de bien des femmes: il dépendait d'un autre. Je cherchais à rencontrer un homme. Aujourd'hui je me rends compte que plus j'accède à mon succès

personnel, moins mon bonheur dépend d'un autre. Ma confiance en moi grandit. Et tenant compte des réalités de la condition des femmes, je me dois d'entretenir ma confiance.

Il y a les statistiques de crève-coeur. Celles qui m'informent que la femme détenant un bac en administration commande le même salaire que l'homme qui possède un diplôme d'études secondaires! Ou, en d'autres mots, une femme gagne \$0.59 pour le dollar que gagne un homme pour le même travail. Ou encore, il y a le fait que les 2/3 des femmes canadiennes, âgées de 65 ans et plus, souffrent de pauvreté extrême, pour ne rien dire de la solitude, l'isolement et la honte qu'accompagnent cette situation.

Oh! oui, j'amasse des faits et des statistiques qui font hurler. Je deviens parfois déprimée



parce que mon âme déborde d'amertume et de désespoir. Parfois je soupçonne fortement que je vis que pour défendre mes droits de femme. Mais, comme on dit, il y a du pain sur la planche" quand on admet que les hommes détiennent le pouvoir. Que dire du fait que dans un comité administratif typique siège une femme par rapport à 15-20 hommes? Et ce, malgré la population grandissante d'étudiantes au niveau universitaire.

Je m'occupe d'emmagasiner le plus d'information possible sur mon statut en tant que femme. Ce n'est pas parce que je suis masochiste, quoique ce que j'apprends me fait mal, mais plutôt

parce que je crois à ma force et à ma tendresse. J'accumule les faits qui, à l'heure actuelle, gouvernent ma vie afin de les mettre sous microscope et les disséquer parce que je cherche des solutions. Je crois aux révolutions personnelles et aux révolutions collectives. Je reconnais, de jour en jour, l'influence et la force que contiennent les mots. C'est pourquoi j'admire et je remercie l'intelligence de mes soeurs qui ont travaillé fort à faire changer la terminologie de la loi sur le viol. Grâce à elles, le viol n'est plus un acte sexuel mais bel et bien un acte de violence. La nuance, exposée au microscope, devient un monde! Grâce à leurs débats, mon amour propre s'étend. Parfois j'en déborde. Ces moments, de plus en plus fréquents, se manifestent par mon envie de rire et de faire rire. Mes ami(e)s, de plus en plus nombreux, jouissent de mes talents de comédienne. En riant avec moi, ils/elles me font le plus beau cadeau. Ils/elles entretiennent ma jeunesse et mon espoir!

Reprinted from WEdf, March 1984, Volume 2, Number 3. Noreen Stevens is a Winnipeg-based illustrator and graphic designer. Reprinted from WEdf Summer 1988, Volume 6, No.3

Breaking All the Rules

Breaking Silence

by Colleen N. Race

He said: "I'm going to teach you. I'm going to teach you how to be a young lady." He taught me how to masturbate him. I was three years old. And he taught me not to tell.

He taught me how to masturbate him. I was three years old. And he taught me not to tell.

I am moving away from that man next door; I cannot wait to get away; I cannot wait to start school; everything will be new, again. One field trip afternoon, the husband of my teacher caught me alone in a bathroom, and he taught me some even newer games. He peed on Primary. ABCD EFG H - I Don't Remember Grade One. He taught me fear and shame. He taught me well; I don't remember Grade Two. (Only the faded ink on those brittle report cards tells me I was an A+ student. Obviously, there are worries about any child with a row of D's; personally, I worry more about children who have row after row of nice neat A's.)

By Grade Three, I am perfect. I am less terrified of death than I am of being less than perfect. Every morning, I listen perfectly to the words: "O Canada, in all thy sons command." I cannot sing. I dare not sing. Two of my brothers are preparing their ways to incest me: one by coercion, one by seduction. I am taught by my family not to trust anyone outside the family; this I already know.

And only I know I cannot trust anyone inside my family. I go to school, and I go home. I am, literally, studying and applying my Boolean math at both ends. And in between, I make a pained escape into books. I want to hide forever. But the teenaged boy next door finds me; he is sure to find me - I am eight years old, and I am on my knees in the dirt. I am on my knees in the dirt because that is where he shoved me. "Open your mouth. Open wider you bitch; you like it." Over the course of a year, he would teach me to obey, but he could not teach me to like it. My family and I are moving away, moving again. I am nine years old.

I move on to the next school. I decide that, even with all the inherent dangers, it is still and always the safest move to become "teacher's pet": I am reading "at a level years above my age"; my comprehension and my spelling skills are "exceptional" (I can, in fact, comprehend and spell words and phrases I dare not put to paper: fellatio, cunnilingus, insertion of clothespins and bicycle pumps); I have "a wonderful imagination."

Lorsque j'avais trois ans, mon voisin m'a appris à le masturber et à garder le silence. Je ne me souviens pas de ma première année à l'école. Le mari de mon institutrice m'a appris à avoir peur et honte. Je ne me souviens pas non plus de ma deuxième année, mais d'après mes bulletins trimestriels j'étais en tête de classe. À partir de la troisième année, j'ai essayé d'être parfaite. Deux de mes frères eurent des rapports incestueux avec moi.

Je me réfugiais dans les livres, mais l'adolescent de la porte d'à côté me trouva. Je n'avais que huit ans. Je me mis à fumer et à boire du café et décidais de devenir écrivain. En quatrième année, un autre adolescent m'a appris à "le faire comme il faut". À l'école, mon niveau en lecture était tel qu'on me fit passer directement en sixième année.

À la fin de la onzième année, j'abandonnais mes études et trouvais un emploi à plein temps. Je me suis mariée et mon mari était alcoolique et me maltraitait. Je subis le viol le plus brutal pendant ma grossesse. Je me mis à écrire et à faire des économies pour prendre des cours par correspondance, mais j'appris que je ne pouvais être plus instruite que mon mauvais mari. Je laissais enfin ma colère s'exprimer et demandais le divorce.

Après des années de thérapie, je commence à guérir. J'ai terminé la douzième année par correspondance et j'ai l'impression que je commence à apprendre quelque chose.

Phyllis Ferber



I take up smoking cigarettes and drinking coffee and deciding to become a writer rather naturally followed suit. I am still nine years old, going on thirty. Books and words. My measure of peace. As a writer, I understand one must know all the rules before one can break the rules, and one must know why. Why. Why doesn't anyone see? Why doesn't someone stop it? Anybody. Somebody?

We move again. My mother fights to keep me in the same school though we are "out of district." She wins; it is not my mother's fault I am lost. I space a lot. I am not present, even when I am. On the way to and from school, I walk in front of a lot of moving cars. Perhaps I really had died, and gone to hell, and someone just forgot to tell me. Just another cruel joke.

Over the course of a year, he would teach me to obey, but he could not teach me to like it.

Grade Four. Friday morning, school assembly. "Our Father, who are in Heaven." Where are thou, Our Mother, in those fine words? For another teenaged boy has taught me it takes two to go forth and multiply, a male and a female, to "do it right." I was ten years old. And it hurt. I cannot forgive his trespasses. Ten would rather steal and lie and break the golden rule like my hymen and die, than have anyone including God know she knows how to do it right.

Grade Five: was horrible. Just joking. Nothing happened. I skipped it right to Grade Six. The school wishes to accelerate me, again, into

Grade Eight. My mother, instinctively, and wisely, refuses. I am already at least two years younger than most of my classmates, and older than most will ever be. At age eleven, I am incested, again, this time by two cousins. My grades at school improve, though I tend to daydream a lot.

I am tired. I sleep too much. The nightmares began long ago. I sleep too little. The nightmares never stop. I wake up in Grade Eight. Geometry: childhood, and a childhood of sexual abuse, are transverse lines on different planes, i.e., at no point do the lines ever intersect. And the shortest distance between two points is NOT a straight line - if one can avoid the bully by taking the longest way 'round, and the punishment for coming late to class.

I wake up in "Health" Education. Definition of a bully: the boy who hurts you "because he really likes you." I was very "well liked." Sexual abuse and incest are not discussed in Health Education; it's only the 1970s. The lecture on reproduction and menstruation, however, is co-ed. How controversial. My menstrual cycle begins; I fall out of my desk at school once, twice, even three times a month. Even my body is betrayal. I go to sleep in Grade Eight Math: I am Boolean Theory. And, I already know that freedom of choice is inversely proportional to gender. (I applied, with two other girls, to the elementary Industrial Arts Program. We were refused by the principal: "You girls will distract the boys, and it's against policy." I concede; it is against school policy to be a girl. I am having too many panic attacks in the halls and at home to take on another fight anyway.)

I move on to the halls of high school. Grade Nine: was horrible; really.

My teachers all call me "precocious." I wonder why. My boyfriend is the twenty-three year old guy who stops me on the way to and from school for sex-on-demand. My eldest brother has introduced me to marijuana, and thinks it's wonderful that I'm so sexually active, and suggests, as he strokes my hair, that I move on soon to the wonders of the birth control pill. My promiscuous period begins. I skip a lot of classes. I pass Grade Nine with flying colors.

I am not tired. I am hungry. I sleep all the time; I refuse to eat. I am sent home from school occasionally because I "look anemic." The term "anorexia nervosa" has apparently not been discovered yet. I am fifteen, and I am in Grade Eleven. I am different. In every way, I am different. (Did everybody but me wait until they were seven before they started

school?) I am suddenly sixteen.

I go to school, I go to work, I go home, I go to work, I go on dates, I go to school. I like the schoolwork itself, but I am afraid of the place and the people; I like the work itself, and I especially like the paycheques, but I am afraid of the people and the place; I date, but I only date men ten or twenty years older than myself; I like to be at home, as little as possible.

My eldest brother thinks it's wonderful that I'm so sexually active, and suggests, as he strokes my hair, that I move on soon to the wonders of the birth control pill.

I do my algebra homework sitting alone in the hallway at school. In class, the boy sitting directly across from me is constantly demanding my notebook with my answers. "Give me your book" or else. Or else he'll shove me in a corner and stick his tongue in my mouth. Or else he'll toss lit matches in my hair again today at recess. I fling my damn book across the aisle at him, and I am flung into the guidance counsellor's office. I am told I am in trouble, because I "threw a temper," and I am told I must see the counsellor weekly until the end of the school year; I am asked to begin by relating my family history. Yeah, right. I could see the inkblot on the wall. I am not asked why I threw the book. I didn't go back to the office. Grade Eleven ended. I didn't go back to school. I went to work full-time instead.

Out in the "real world" I am taught: "It don't pay to say NO." I hear: "Date me, or your hours are cut back." Pushed against the cash register, I still hear the hard cock: "put out right here, or you don't work again." I space. I quit, again. Walking to and from work, I hear: "Hey, is twenty bucks enough for a blow-job?!" and I think, to myself: if it were, I'd have been rich by age nine. I hear another car horn: "Two hundred dollars baby, right now!" I admit, I wondered how long he would take at it, and calculating from a minimum wage of \$1.85 per hour, it was tempting, very tempting, but I did not get in to find out if it paid to say YES. I got married instead. (No, it does not pay to say yes.)

My husband was both alcoholic and abusive. (I will point out that those are two separate problems, though they are often found together in the same person.) I married in 1980, and during the nine years of marriage, my husband subjected me to emotional, psychological, physical, and primarily sexual abuse (the most brutal rape inflicted upon me during my pregnancy). The operative word in what I have just said, is subjected. He owned me, controlled me, and abused me. He taught, and reviewed, all the rules: fear, shame guilt, depression, non-existent self-esteem, and not to tell.

I begin my writing career. I work with past and future tense. I am very tense. But my work is very intense, and I am very persistent. I am finally published. My prose and my poetry; my veiled pain. Pain does not pay. Neither does a career in literary writing. I am going to have a child to support. I know I need my grade twelve and a paying career to go with motherhood. I save for the correspondence courses. Too late, I find out there is The Unwritten Eleventh Commandment: Thou shalt not have a higher education than thy

abusive spouse. The quadratic equation, in a no-win situation, is: "no more fucking algebra you stupid woman; do the fucking dishes and then come to bed now." (Think about it; I cannot Do, Then, and still come to bed Now. So I'll opt to do the dishes and he'll screw me at the sink.) This formula is also known as "curricula interruptus" and is known to be a 100 per cent effective method of control. Finally, yes, he taught me anger. My anger. I petitioned for divorce in 1989.

Act of Contrition

**Anger is stronger than love
more desperate than desire
me if it kills you**

**Hot and sweaty in moist ecstasy
bold but understated power
less than rape.**

**Hunger is weaker than truth
when sins are recited in cubicles
memorizations absolved
for a mere prayer.**

**Bread-baskets clickety-clanking
sounds of silent abnegation
reverberate
for a mere psychoanalysis.**

**Yet, hate is longer than forgive
me while I wash the ring around
your collar
scrubbing to remove my innocent
breath**

**No quality control
No inspector no. 6**

**My panties have been dusted
with the body and blood forever.**

**Mary Gurekas
Pointe Claire, QC**

*Reprinted from WEdf, Winter 1996/
97, Volume 12, No.4*

Three years of intense therapy later, I can say I have successfully been through the following: a sixteen-week course on domestic abuse (Breathe Colleen); an eight-week course on childhood sexual abuse (breathe) and incest (keep breathing); a sixteen-week course on self-defense (Stay present; how do you feel?); an eight-week course on first-aid (Have I eaten today? Have I slept this week? What do I need right now?); and I am enrolled in a lifelong course on the healing process (Take your time; take off the veils).

I write freely in the safety of a pen name. I can also say, with unveiled pride and a measure of job, that at the age of thirty, upon almost half a lifetime of leaving high school: I completed the correspondence courses, and I hold my Grade Twelve Diploma. Now, I am beginning to learn...

Reprinted from WEdf, Summer 1992, Volume 9, Number 4.

*Colleen N. Race is a pseudonym; all names and places have been omitted to protect her identity. Colleen is a published free-lance writer and is the single mother of one child. She is presently continuing her education at the post-secondary level (by correspondence courses, of course) toward a third career in the library field. 1998 update: Colleen has now reclaimed her dream of becoming a songwriter. She is the lyricist of Safe Passage, a nine-song benefit recording for Tamara's House: Services for Sexual Abuse Survivors. Safe Passage is available through the internet at the following address:
www.flatlandmusic.com*

Feelings After a Tragedy Personal or Collective Impressions?

by Anne-Marie Pharand

I now know why it took me so long to identify myself with the feminist movement. I know why I still feel shy about my social and political activities. And that's because it has not been long since I realized how much pain and sorrow are part of the awareness process I am going through. It is only now that feelings of anger, rebellion, anguish, and distress are rising up in me.

December 6, 1989. Late afternoon. A classroom at the École polytechnique of the University of Montreal. A young man enters the room, armed with a gun. He separates the women from the men and shoots at the women, accusing them of being feminists.

Fourteen women died! Ten women and three men were wounded. How many more are suffering?

Later on that day, I was listening to the very sad reports on the news. I could hardly believe what I was hearing, seeing on the screen, so intense was my pain. I wanted to erase this tragedy, I wanted to deny the evidence that men can still be so violent against us, so easily. I felt as much a victim as the wounded. I felt that somebody was out to get me as well.

Little by little, my grief was replaced by a feeling of anger when I realized that the francophone media, and the journalists, whether from the TV, the radio, or the newspapers, the social workers, the male psychiatrists, the criminologists, were all denying the obvious.

Almost all of them were arrogant in their attitude and words. They talked about the victims; they were hesitant to clearly state they were women. Several of them would not even link this massacre with violence against women.

It took a long time to recognize the event was anti-feminist in its nature and to admit men are not ready yet to renounce their old privileges. As for me, reality is obvious: the victims were women longing to live in an educated environment traditionally reserved for men.

I was overcome by rebellious feelings when male student leaders from l'École polytechnique spoke during a march organized by the women of Concordia University and the Comité de défense des femmes de Montréal.

The voices of the women who wanted to denounce the fate of women were stifled, they were accused of taking advantage of the event, and forced back into silence. The media talked about a "touching" silence. In fact, the women were gagged, despised!

At the funeral, I saw scores of men around the altar who took over the ceremony and advocated in their speeches that men and women be equal in our society. This in the Church which itself refuses to apply this principle by rejecting women from the priesthood and by denying them any real power in its structures.

It is insulting and offensive! For the rest of the month, we all felt depressed, my friends, my sisters, my neighbours. We all cried in despair.

This tragedy did not put an end to injustice toward women, but it created a stir. Two months later, some journalists recognized that their coverage had overshadowed the sexist nature of the event and the violence prevailing against women. A special fund was established by the Montreal Assault Prevention Centre to help finance self-defense courses for women as well as workshops for female students and other groups at risk. The Foundation commemorative du génie canadien and the École polytechnique are granting scholarships to encourage women to study engineering.

The Student Association of l'école polytechnique initiated an awareness campaign to promote non-violence as well as arms contrail.

A woman in my neighbourhood organized a one-day debate about violence in our society, in our schools, in male-female relationships. MediaWatch launched a petition demanding that stricter rules be applied to advertising and media content of the communication industry in terms of gender-bias and violence.

It took a long time to recognize the event was anti-feminist and to admit men are not ready yet to renounce their old privileges.

A feminist publisher, Les éditions du remue-ménage, just published Polytechnique 6 décembre, an anthology of texts, letters, and articles, thanks to the generosity of some men and women who do not want this tragedy to be forgotten.

Women in Quebec will not forget this painful event, and are thankful to all their Canadian sisters, and their sisters around the world for expressing their sorrow and their indignation.

Others have written effectively about the massacre of December 6th: forceful analyses, enlightening comments, constructive reports. I know I have forgotten many key aspects which would have given you a more precise picture of the situation.

But I am overflowing with emotions, and today I am more concerned about sharing these with you. Later, I might be able to tell you why I have joined the women's movement, and decided to be part of it until the day I die.

Le senti après une tragédie

Impressions personnelles ou collectives?

par Anne-Marie Pharand

Je sais maintenant en partie pourquoi j'ai mis tant de temps avant de m'identifier au mouvement féministe. je sais pourquoi je suis encore timide dans mes actions sociales et politiques. Voyez-vous, c'est que je reconnais depuis peu combien la souffrance fait partie de ma démarche de conscientisation. je commence tout juste à laisser monter en moi la souffrance mais aussi la colère, la révolte, l'angoisse, la détresse.

Le 6 décembre 1989, en fin d'après-midi, dans une classe de l'école polytechnique de l'Université de Montréal, un jeune homme entre avec une arme semi-automatique. Il sépare les filles des garçons et tire sur les femmes en les accusant d'être féministes. Quatorze d'entre elles sont mortes! Dix femmes et trois hommes sont blessés! Combien d'autres souffrent?

Plus tard dans la soirée, j'écoute le lugubre récit au bulletin des nouvelles. J'ai peine à croire ce que j'entends, ce que je vois, tellement j'ai mal. Je veux nier que ce drame ait eu lieu, nier que les hommes puissent encore si facilement exercer leur violence sur nous. Je me sens tout autant victime que les blessées. Je sens moi aussi qu'on veut ma peau.

Petit à petit la douleur fait place à la colère lorsque je constate le déni généralisé manifesté par les médias francophones; par ces journalistes de la télévision, de la radio et des journaux et ces hommes psychiatres, travailleurs sociaux, criminologues qu'ils interrogent. Presque tous présentent une arrogance effrontée dont témoignent leurs attitudes corporelles et leur discours. Ils parlent des victimes; ils hésitent à spécifier clairement qu'il s'agit de femmes. Plusieurs refusent d'admettre le lien entre cette tuerie et la violence faite aux femmes. On met un temps fou à reconnaître le caractère anti-féministe de l'événement et le profond refus des hommes à renoncer à leurs privilèges ancestraux. La réalité me paraît évidente: les victimes sont des femmes qui aspiraient à évoluer dans un milieu d'élites traditionnellement réservé aux hommes.

Je veux nier
que ce drame
ait eu lieu,
nier que les
hommes
puissent
encore si
facilement
exercer leur
violence
sur nous.

La révolte m'envahit cette fois lorsque des leaders étudiants masculins de Poly prennent la parole lors d'une marche organisée par le collectif des femmes de l'Université de Concordia et le Comité de défense des femmes de Montréal. On étouffe la voix de celles qui veulent dénoncer le sort fait aux femmes, on les accuse de récupérer l'événement et on leur impose le silence. Les médias ont parlé d'un silence "touchant." C'était du bâillonnement! C'était du mépris!

Aux funérailles, j'ai vu des dizaines d'hommes autour de l'autel dominer la cérémonie et présenter un discours qui prônait l'égalité des femmes et des hommes dans la société alors que l'église refuse d'actualiser ce principe dans ses fonctions sacerdotales et dans ses structures de pouvoir et de décisions. C'était ajouter l'insulte à l'outrage!

Pendant le reste du mois, la dépression pèse sur moi, sur mes amies, mes soeurs, mes voisines. Nous pleurons toutes de désespoir. Cet événement probant n'a pas fait cesser les injustices à l'égard des femmes, mais il a suscité un remous. Les journalistes ont reconnu deux mois après la tragédie avoir occulté le caractère sexiste et la violence faite aux femmes dans leur couverture médiatique. Un fond spécial a été créé par le Centre de prévention des agressions de Montréal pour aider au financement de cours d'autodéfense pour les femmes et d'ateliers pour les étudiantes et d'autres groupes vulnérables. La Fondation commémorative du génie canadien et l'école polytechnique offrent des bourses d'études pour encourager la participation des femmes en génie. Une campagne de sensibilisation pour promouvoir la non-violence et le contrôle des armes est lancée par l'Association étudiante de Poly. Une femme dans mon quartier organise une journée table ronde pour réfléchir à la violence dans la société, à l'école, dans les rapports hommes-femmes. Évaluation-Médias a lancé une pétition pour exiger une réglementation plus sévère du contenu médiatique et publicitaire de l'Industrie des communications à l'égard du sexisme et de la violence. Les Éditions du remue-ménage, maison d'édition féministe, vient de publier un recueil de textes, de lettres et d'articles intitulé Polytechnique 6 décembre grâce à la généreuse contribution de femmes et d'hommes qui ne veulent pas que ce drame soit oublié.

Les Québécoises garderont vivant ce douloureux souvenir et remercient toutes leurs soeurs canadiennes et du monde entier qui leur ont exprimé leur peine et leur indignation.



Photo: Tradeswomen Magazine. Reprinted from WEdf, Summer 1987, Volume 5, Number 1.

Building Knowledge

Oublier sa culture pour s'intégrer, ou faire une place aux "autres" cultures en éducation?

par Monique Ouellette

"Les "autres" sont venus dans "notre" pays, ils ont choisi de vivre ici: à Rome, il faut vivre comme les Romains. C'est à eux de s'intégrer, et pourtant, c'est nous qui faisons toutes les concessions, tous les efforts; eux n'en font aucun! Qu'ils mettent un peu de bonne volonté, qu'ils s'adaptent et arrêtent de vivre dans le passé!"

Cette récrimination à l'endroit des personnes immigrantes ou réfugiées est courante et souvent dite sur le ton de l'exaspération. Ceux qui la formulent reprochent à ces "autres", venus d'ailleurs, de ne pas "s'intégrer" assez vite à la société d'accueil et voudraient ne plus être constamment interpellés dans leurs propres façons d'agir et de penser. Bien évidemment, la réalité correspond peu à ce découpage à la hache de la situation que vivent les intéressés. Leur "choix" de vivre ici est généralement dicté principalement par l'obligation ou la nécessité: on quitte rarement son pays par caprice, et on "choisi" souvent son futur pays comme on peut.

Prétendre que les personnes venues d'ailleurs ne font aucun effort pour s'adapter, c'est ignorer tout du processus d'immigration.

Une situation complexe et difficile

Prétendre que les personnes venues d'ailleurs ne font aucun effort pour s'adapter, c'est ignorer tout du processus d'immigration. C'est oublier que leur adaptation a commencé avec la décision même d'immigrer, que tout, ici, peut être différent de ce qu'ils avaient connu auparavant. À son arrivée en novembre à Mirabel, un aîné vietnamien a fondu en larmes à la vue des arbres dénudés et du paysage grisâtre; lui qui avait connu la verdure et les fleurs toute l'année croyait tout aussi durable cette grisaille d'une si grande tristesse. Les différences des saisons, cet hiver si dur, ces quel point les changements de saison leur manquait et avec quel plaisir ils les retrouvaient, au retour. Les personnes venues de climats très doux n'ont pas l'espoir de retrouver leur verdure permanente.

The old adage "When in Rome do as the Romans" governs much public opinion towards immigrants and refugees. Many people believe it is the responsibility of those new to this country to integrate themselves into Canadian society and that, if they continue to "stand out" or demand representation of their own cultures, they are making little or no effort to adapt.

Such perspectives completely ignore the daily even hourly, effort made by those who leave the land of their birth, their family, their language and religion to settle somewhere else, the choice of which is often very limited. Efforts at adapting begin the minute the decision to immigrate is made and continue after arrival through the daily struggle to survive in a foreign culture, language and religious base, with customs, attitudes, and social expectations that are completely unfamiliar. To understand a little of what this is like, try for half an hour to talk to people around you without every looking them in the eye or, in the course of a conversation, never answer "no" to a question. You will find you revert to your familiar habits and customs in a second, without thinking about what you are doing, but in another culture you will have made a serious mistake.

Adult education and English/French language training programs are a fertile ground to promote the integration of cultures with each other, rather than the obliteration of one by the other. Projects and exercises that focus on the immigrant's or refugee's experience in Canada, on comparisons between their native cultures and that which they find here, could be used to promote the acceptance and respect of other cultures. And Canadian culture could ultimately be improved by the true integration of other cultures with our own.

L'effort d'adaptation à la vie quotidienne est, lui aussi, extrêmement exigeant. Dès l'instant où elle ouvre les yeux, le matin, la personne venue d'ailleurs se retrouve dans un décor différent de celui qu'elle avait connu dans son pays d'origine. Le lit, la chambre dans laquelle elle est couchée; la maison dans laquelle elle se sent enfermée, elle qui pouvait

vivre beaucoup plus à l'extérieur; l'école des enfants; les obligations légales; des habitudes aussi banales que l'achat de nourriture ou la gestion des ordures ménagères, tout est à réapprendre, tout demande une adaptation de chaque instant.

Mais l'adaptation la plus difficile et la plus pénible reste sans aucun doute celle qui a trait aux relations humaines. Comment dit-on bonjour? À qui? Sur quel ton? En plus de devoir apprendre la langue, il faut encore apprendre les codes sociaux des gens d'ici. On peut commencer à saisir un peu - si peu! - leurs difficultés si on s'exerce à utiliser leurs codes plutôt que les nôtres. Ainsi, essayez pendant une demi-heure de parler aux personnes autour de vous sans jamais les regarder dans les yeux, comme le font des personnes originaires du Sénégal: regardez en haut, en bas, à droite, à gauche, mais jamais dans les yeux, parce qu'il est extrêmement impoli et impudent de la faire. Ou encore, essayez, dans le cours d'une conversation normale, de ne jamais répondre par un "non" à une question, parce qu'un "non" aurait pour effet d'interrompre la communication avec votre interlocuteur.

Une personne venue ici à l'âge adulte transporte avec elle tout un bagage de valeurs et de culture qui sont profondément ancrées en elle, qui fondent son identité, qui sont sa richesse la plus intime.

Si vous faites l'exercice honnêtement, vous constaterez certainement combien il est contraignant. Le naturel revient vite au galop : vous regarderez la personne en face, vous élèverez la voix, un "non" vous échappera sans même que vous ne vous en rendiez compte. Les personnes venues d'ailleurs vivent précisément la situation inverse, à tout instant. Le fait de savoir qu'un comportement est interdit - ou, au contraire, exigé - n'entraîne pas automatiquement la moins celle de comprendre tout un système de valeurs qui vous est étranger.

Et c'est sans compter la nature même des rapports humains, différente elle aussi de celle que ces personnes connaissaient: elles peuvent se sentir tout à fait dépersonnalisées par les rapports fonctionnels que nous établissons ici, et auxquels la majorité d'entre elles n'est peut-être pas habituée. Il leur faut se familiariser avec ce nouveau genre de rapports, et apprendre les nouveaux codes en même temps qu'elles apprennent à vivre géographiquement et matériellement dans un nouveau pays, qu'elles apprennent une langue nouvelle, qu'elles doivent se reconstituer un réseau d'amis, suivre leurs enfants qui changent plus vite qu'elles au contact de leur nouveau milieu, qu'elles se préoccupent de la famille restée au pays, qu'elles se cherchent du travail sans savoir comment une telle

recherche se fait dans ce pays, qu'elles tentent de faire valoir des qualifications qui ne sont pas reconnues, qu'elles souffrent de l'isolement. La nouveauté à laquelle elles doivent s'adapter n'en finit plus, sans compter les problèmes d'insécurité matérielle ou la discrimination à laquelle elles peuvent se heurter.

De fait, les immigrants changent au contact de leur nouvelle réalité, et adoptent des façons de faire et d'agir qu'ils ignoraient ou refusaient dans son pays d'origine. Mais une personne venue ici à l'âge adulte transporte avec elle tout un bagage de valeurs et de culture qui sont profondément ancrées en elle, qui fondent son identité, qui sont sa richesse la plus intime.

Lui demander d'abandonner son bagage culturel, c'est lui demander de renier à la fois son passé et son avenir, sans lui offrir de présent qui la valorise.

Éliminer les "autres" cultures ou s'instruire à leur contact

Les récriminations dont nous parlions plus haut sont le fait de celui qui voit la paille dans l'oeil de l' « autre » et non la poutre dans le sien. Car si les gens venus d'ailleurs doivent connaître notre culture et s'y adapter, le processus inverse dépasse rarement le niveau folklorique: les Canadiennes et Canadiens de plus *vieille souche* apprennent peu de choses des réalités culturelles de ceux qu'ils accueillent. Ils accepteront bien leur nourriture ou leur musique, mais feront généralement peu d'efforts pour les connaître leurs enfants. L'immigrante, l'immigrant demeure "l'autre" qui doit changer pour s'adapter à "nous", et même, doit être reconnaissant d'avoir cette "chance" de devenir comme "nous" ...

De fait, ces personnes demandent aux immigrantes, aux immigrants non de s'adapter pour s'intégrer, comme elles le prétendent, mais de s'assimiler à la culture dominante: abandonner leur culture pour devenir comme "nous". Dans une perspective véritablement interculturelle, l'intégration se veut plus nuancée: elle suppose une adaptation mutuelle des cultures, un échange qui entraîne un ajustement des valeurs et des comportements que l'on choisit parce qu'ils répondent à la vision de la vie et des rapports humains. Une telle intégration suppose donc une connaissance plus qu'épidermique de l'autre et de ses valeurs, de sa culture.

Les aspects d'autres cultures qui relèvent d'attitudes, de comportements ou de valeurs, peuvent remettre en question nos propres attitudes, comportements ou valeurs, et nous ne sommes pas toujours prêts à nous laisser interpellé sur ce plan. Nous avons tendance à en voir l'aspect menaçant et à fermer les yeux sur ce qu'ils peuvent avoir d'enrichissant. Prenons un exemple.

Dans nos sociétés nord-américaines, nous établissons souvent des contacts purement fonctionnels avec les gens. Ne vous est-il pas compte que vous n'aviez aucun souvenir de la personne à la caisse: était-elle jeune ou moins jeune, grande ou petite, rondelette ou mince, etc. Vous seriez tout à fait incapable de la décrire même de façon très sommaire: vous ne l'avez pas remarquée, parce que vous n'avez été attentif qu'à sa fonction. Et si elle l'a bien remplie, si elle a mis la bonne marchandise dans les sacs et vous a remis la monnaie exacte, vous l'avez oubliée sitôt sa fonction terminée.

D'autres sociétés ont l'habitude de contacts plus personnalisés et les immigrantes, les immigrants qui en sont issus ressentent durement la dépersonnalisation que des rapports uniquement fonctionnels leur impose. Dans des contextes éducatifs, en particulier, il est important de prendre le temps d'établir d'abord ces rapports personnels, de traiter les gens comme des personnes: les saluer, leur faire parler de ce qu'ils vivent, de leur expérience, échanger avec eux sur un plan humain avant d'aller au but fonctionnel de la rencontre. Ils se sentent alors respectés comme personnes et entrent ensuite plus facilement dans la relation pédagogique recherchée par les éducatrices, les éducateurs.

Dans une perspective interculturelle, l'intégration suppose une adaptation mutuelle des cultures, un échange qui entraîne un ajustement des valeurs que l'on choisit parce qu'ils répondent à la vision de la vie et des rapports humains.

L'éducation et les cultures

L'éducation des adultes se veut basée sur la réalité que vivent les personnes en formation, pour les aider à la comprendre et à la changer. Dans cette optique, elle peut être mise à profit pour faire connaître la situation que vivent les personnes venues d'ailleurs et leur donner l'occasion de faire connaître leurs cultures d'origine de façon systématique, en dépassant les clichés ou le folklore. Dans ce but, ces cultures peuvent servir de thèmes de travail, comme elles peuvent servir de thèmes de projets. Prenons ici à deux exemples très intéressants, l'un, canadien, et l'autre, italien.

À Toronto, un groupe travaillant avec des femmes immigrantes a élaboré avec elles un outil de formation (Barndt et al. 1982) centré sur les démarches à faire dans la recherche d'emploi et sur la formation des femmes. L'outil présente des "photos-romans" préparés à partir de leur expérience et qui servent de base pour discuter des difficultés qu'elles éprouvent dans ces démarches. Voilà une façon de faire connaître.

Le second (Omenetto et Favaro 1986) a été produit à Milan par un groupe d'Érythréennes qui désiraient faire connaître autour d'elles leur réalité tant dans leur pays d'origine qu'à Milan même. Par le biais de textes et de photos, le livre présente les raisons de

l'immigration de ces femmes, leurs formes d'insertion, leurs traditions; trois chapitres montrent leurs lieux de rencontres à Milan (la fête, l'école, la réunion) et des moments et des gestes du quotidien (la cuisine, le repas, le rite du café, la couture, la coiffure).

L'intention de ces deux travaux était d'utiliser des situations de la vie de ces femmes, dans le premier cas, pour faire comprendre leurs difficultés dans le pays d'accueil lorsque vient le temps de chercher du travail et, dans le second cas, pour faire connaître leur communauté à une population majoritaire, généralement insensible et indifférente aux autres cultures. L'aspect pédagogique est évident et les deux livres servent à comprendre les réalités, les valeurs et aussi le courage de ces femmes venues d'ailleurs.

D'autres projets du même ordre sont possibles dans les classes d'adultes. Trois thèmes peuvent en particulier y être explorés¹ : la transmission de leur culture à leurs enfants et à leurs petits-enfants, la connaissance des cultures et le travail.

La transmission de la culture

Si des adultes venus d'ailleurs souhaitent transmettre la richesse de leur culture d'origine à leurs enfants et à leurs petits-enfants, le changement de contexte peut rendre difficile la communication avec des jeunes sollicités par d'autres façons de voir la vie, de faire les choses. Les moyens peuvent manquer pour leur transmettre le sens de ce qui fonde leur identité.

Les classes de français, notamment, peuvent avoir comme projet de consigner les aspects de leur culture qu'ils jugent importants, en expliquant leurs difficultés, leurs malaises, mais aussi la joie qu'ils leur procurent. Des récits pour des jeunes, des livres de contes, des dessins, des "photos-romans", des vidéos, ou encore des saynettes, des pièces de théâtre... différents moyens

- la relation parent-enfant dans mon pays d'origine et dans mon pays d'adoption: le rôle des parents et celui des enfants;
- ma langue maternelle et mes enfants et mes petits-enfants: ce que je ressens devant le fait qu'ils ne la parlent plus, ou ne pourraient plus la parler;
- la français et mes enfants et mes petits-enfants: j'apprends le français pour pouvoir leur parler;
- comment nous vivons dans notre pays, et comment nous vivons ici;
- un conte ou une légende de chaque culture représentée dans la classe;
- des dictons et des proverbes de plusieurs cultures autour d'un même thème: les valeurs sous-jacentes;
- l'histoire (la géographie) de mon pays (ma ville, mon village) d'origine.

Il est important d de traiter les gens comme des personnes: les saluer, leur faire parler de ce qu'ils vivent, de leur expérience, échanger avec eux sur un plan humain avant d'aller au but fonctionnel de la rencontre.

La connaissance des cultures

Dans le cadre de projets, des adultes peuvent aussi viser à faire connaître leur culture d'origine dans leur milieu, de façon qu'on connaisse mieux les personnes qui en sont issues. Ces projets peuvent être axés sur des aspects qu'ils jugent eux-mêmes importants. Voici des exemples de thèmes:

- comment on élève les enfants dans mon pays d'origine et dans mon pays d'adoption;
- la fête de Jour de l'an, les fêtes familiales ou nationales, dans différentes cultures: comment elles sont vécues au pays et comment on les vit ici;
- la fête religieuse la plus importante dans ma culture: comment je la vivais dans mon pays d'origine et comment je la vis ici;
- ma religion: comment je la vivais dans mon pays d'origine et comment je la vis ici;

- la santé et la maladie, dans mon pays d'origine et ici;
- le symbolisme des bêtes, dans différentes cultures, et les valeurs qui leur sont attribuées;
- les plus beaux poèmes, dans ma langue d'origine, et ceux d'ici que je connais et que j'aime le plus.

Le travail

Contrairement à de nombreux préjugés au sujet des immigrantes, des immigrants, ceux-ci ont un très grand désir de travailler; mais ils connaissent souvent bien peu le marché du travail d'ici et beaucoup ignorent comment s'y prendre pour chercher un emploi. De plus, ils peuvent avoir une perception du travail différente de celle de la majorité. Des projets sur le travail et l'emploi peuvent les aider à discuter des situations qu'ils vivent et à faire connaître leurs difficultés:

- travailler, mon plus ardent désir; trouver un emploi, ma plus grande difficulté!
- comment le travail est envisagé dans ma culture d'origine; son importance; son but; comment on s'y prépare;
- les attentes des employeurs et les nôtres, dans ma culture d'origine, et ici;
- les démarches pour trouver un emploi dans mon pays d'origine et dans mon pays d'adoption.

D'autres thèmes, comme l'école, peuvent aussi être utilisés: l'école des enfants, là-bas et ici, mais aussi, l'école des adultes ici. Ce thème peut aider les formatrices, les formateurs à comprendre la façon dont les étudiants voient la formation à laquelle ils participent, leurs attentes, leurs difficultés, de même que leur perception du rôle de leur formatrice, leur formateur.

Une place aux "autres" cultures

Les travaux ainsi produits par les étudiantes, les étudiants adultes peuvent faire l'objet de publications ou de présentations publiques et être utilisées pour l'éducation interculturelle des une connaissance concrète, démystification et réaliste entraînera un plus grand respect pour les personnes issues de ces cultures. Celles-ci ne seront plus vues comme "bizarres", ou leurs comportements, comme des curiosités, parce qu'on en comprendra les raisons, on saura les valeurs qui les guident et les font agir.

Banalisation culturelle, que tout cela? Danger de balkanisation de la culture "de vieille souche" par le biais d'une forme détournée de multiculturalisme? Pas de tout. Plutôt: une reconnaissance que notre propre culture, si bonne soit-elle, n'est pas parfaite et peut s'améliorer au contact d'autres cultures, d'autres valeurs. Reconnaissance, aussi, de la richesse humaine que nous apportent les personnes venues d'ailleurs et qui, nous l'avons vu, font un effort constant pour connaître notre culture, pour s'adapter à la réalité canadienne.

La culture de "vieille souche" s'est déjà enrichie, au fil des ans, de l'apport de plusieurs autres, elle continue de s'alimenter à des sources nombreuses et diverses. L'éducation des adultes peut favoriser leur expression, contribuant, par là, à une meilleure connaissance et un plus grand respect de tous, et au rapprochement entre des communautés qui ne se perçoivent souvent qu'à travers des stéréotypes et du folklore. Et elle peut aider à jeter des ponts entre les parents immigrants et leurs enfants, que la culture nord-américaine avale rapidement, les éloignant de leurs racines profondes.

L'oubli de sa culture d'origine n'est pas gage d'intégration: on ne s'intègre pas en se reniant soi-même. L'éducation des adultes doit plutôt encourager un examen lucide des cultures en présence, une réflexion en profondeur au sujet de leurs richesses complémentaires, et un effort sincère pour atteindre la synthèse de leurs meilleurs éléments.

Reprinted from WEdf; Fall 1996, Volume 12, Number 3.

Monique Quелlette est consultante en éducation des adultes et ex-Présidente de l'Institut interculturel de Montréal.

¹*Nous reprenons ici, pour l'essentiel, une proposition que nous avons faite au nom de l'Institut interculturel de Montréal, dans le cadre du programme Montréal en harmonie, organisé par la Ville de Montréal en 1994.*

Références

Barndt, D., F. Cristall, et D. Marino. *Getting There: Producing Photo stories with Immigrant Women*. Toronto: Between the Lines, 1982.

Omenette, C., et G. Favaro. *Donne migranti Eritree a Milano: una storia per immagini e parole*. Milan: Mazzotta, 1986.

The University, Women's Studies, and Rural Women *Some Thoughts on Feminist Pedagogy and Rural Outreach*

by Beth Westfall

Universities preserve, reflect, and promulgate the dominant culture; they are the repository for the official version of our history, the "great works" that are judged to be expressions of our civilization. They are, by nature, exclusionary. In Canada, the first university (Laval) was founded on the basis of a seminary; many of our institutions have similar religious origins and are firmly rooted in the Judeo-Christian tradition. They are also "white," reflecting European culture; other cultures are at best the objects of intellectual analysis and anthropological studies. They are also male. And they are urban.

"What we have at present is a man-centred university, a breeding ground not of humanism, but of masculine privilege."

Women have not always found a place within the Canadian universities. When Mount Allison University granted a B.Sc. to Grace Annie Lockhart in 1875, it was the first university in the British Empire to graduate a woman. McGill only opened its doors to women as a result of financial incentive in 1884. And Emma Baker became the first woman to obtain a doctoral degree from a Canadian university when she obtained a Ph.D. in Philosophy from the University of Toronto in 1903. Even those women who braved the inhospitable climate of the male-dominated university were not assured an education that met their needs. As Rich states:

What we have at present is a man-centred university, a breeding ground not of humanism, but of masculine privilege. As women have gradually and reluctantly been admitted into the mainstream of higher education, they have been made participants in a system that prepares men to take up roles of power in a man-centred society, that asks questions and teaches "facts" generated by a male intellectual tradition, and that both subtly and openly confirms men as the leaders and shapers of human destiny both within and outside of academia. (1)

Les universités protègent la culture qui prédomine et en sont le reflet. La majorité d'entre elles sont ancrées dans la tradition judéo-chrétienne; elles sont blanches, masculines et citadines. Récemment, il y a eu un mouvement pour insérer des programmes d'étude sur la femme. Bien que ce mouvement soit condescendant, il n'en reste pas moins qu'il donne aux femmes la possibilité d'accorder une certaine valeur à leur propre expérience et d'y avoir recours comme source de savoir. Toutefois, parmi

les conditions nécessaires pour mettre sur pied des programmes d'étude sur la femme, beaucoup ne s'appliquent pas aux femmes des campagnes. Une femme qui vit dans une ferme ne se rend pas compte qu'il existe des garderies, des moyens de transport et des bibliothèques dont elle pourrait tirer parti. Il lui est aussi difficile de connaître cette force et cette solidarité, indissociables de l'apprentissage en commun. Quelques institutions ont créé des cours sur les études de la femme pour les étudiantes n'habitant pas en ville. Mais, dans la plupart des cas, les méthodes d'éducation à distance ne permettent aucune interaction et ne procurent pas aux femmes le soutien dont elles ont besoin pour s'acheminer vers une découverte de leur propre vécu. Les éducatrices féministes devraient s'efforcer de mettre au point des moyens pour que les femmes des campagnes soient en mesure de revendiquer leur propre histoire. En atteignant ces femmes, les féministes au sein des universités peuvent participer au développement communautaire et à l'édification de réseaux.

There has been a move in most universities towards what could be described as "minority studies," focusing on blacks, or natives of the Third World, or women. While marginal and perhaps even patronizing, these new disciplines have provided a forum for the validation of the experience of those outside the mainstream culture. For women, the women's studies classroom has become the place where they learn to hear their own voice. Their experience is the legitimate material of learning. In this setting, they no longer have to suppress their own knowledge as invalid and parrot a mainstream view that excludes their ways of knowing, of expressing, of being.

It is not only the content of the women's studies program that is uniquely tailored to the learning of women. The methodology of the feminist classroom is also characteristically non-hierarchical, participatory and supportive. If the material for women's studies is women's experience, then every woman in the classroom becomes an expert, a resource. Her contribution becomes as valid, as valuable, as that of anyone else. The teacher, then, assumes the role of facilitator, of midwife, as the participants give birth to an interpretation of their private experience as women in male society.

In the feminist classroom, participants are invited to move away from the view that "the experts know, and if I study hard what they have said, I'll learn the right answer" to a consciousness and comprehension of their own experience in a social and political context. The process of feminist education has much in common with the "Pedagogy of the Oppressed" advocated by Paulo Freire for the raising of critical consciousness among the dispossessed of Central America.

The collaborative, non-hierarchical structure of the feminist classroom is particularly suited to women's ways of learning. The characteristically tentative nature of many women's participation in the classroom can be re-interpreted as cooperative and seeking collaboration, rather than hesitant and lacking conviction. Carol Gilligan's studies in the collaborative, interactive nature of women's cognitive development provide reinforcement for a methodology that encourages women to view discussion as the cooperative development of ideas rather than as competition from the floor (2).

The tentative nature of many women's participation in the classroom can be re-interpreted as cooperative and seeking collaboration, rather than hesitant and lacking conviction.

If Canadian universities have, to some extent at least, accepted the challenge of feminist scholarship, how well have they addressed the particular needs of that doubly excluded group, rural women? Half the population of Canada lives in towns under 100,000; in the Prairies, nearly 25 per cent of the population live on farms. Many of the conditions on which women's studies programs are predicated do not apply to rural women.

Of particular significance to farm women who are seeking self-fulfillment is a sense of disloyalty to their men, who are also seen as excluded and unheard in Canadian society. Rural women do not in general accept their right to pursue self-development: the level of consciousness and confidence assumed in the women's studies classroom is less firmly established among them. Because rural society as a whole is endangered rural women are inclined to identify with their men, who are both oppressors and oppressed. There is an ambivalence about the Canadian women's movement among the very sector of society which, at the beginning of the century, could be said to have given it birth.

A rural woman who does identify with the women's movement finds herself without the physical, psychological, and academic supports that would make it possible for her to pursue women's studies. The forum to exchange ideas, voice experience, foster growth does not exist outside the urban setting. A farm woman cannot assume that child care is available to her, nor transportation to school, nor the physical space to read, discuss, and process new ideas. She does not have the access to library resources that her urban sisters enjoy. Most important of all she is alone. She cannot share that sense of strength and solidarity that women feel when they come together to discover the commonality of their experience.

What have the universities done to address the needs of rural women? Very little. A handful of institutions have made women's studies courses available to isolated non-urban students. In British Columbia, Simon Fraser University offers women's studies courses by correspondence, as does Athabasca University in Alberta. Carleton University has developed a "talking head" video version of an introductory course in women's studies. In Newfoundland, Memorial University has offered women's studies through a combination of print, video, and teleconferencing. Some other universities have sporadically made women's studies courses available off-campus.

There are, however, serious discrepancies between distance education technology and the objectives of women's studies courses. The development of the capacity to transmit information to remote locations has revolutionized post-secondary education and made it available to people who previously had no access to university courses. What it does not permit, without significant modification, is the collaboration of the students in the learning process as equal partners with each other and the instructor.

A rural woman who does identify with the women's movement finds herself without the psychological, and academic supports that make it possible for her to pursue women's studies.

The print medium is, of course, fundamental to any academic course. Reading is a vital part of developing the cognitive frame work within which one's personal experience assumes meaning. Video presentation can be a stimulating way to transmit information and challenge patterns of thinking. What neither of these technologies permit is interaction; they cannot be made responsive. Consequently, they reinforce the old learning hierarchies: "I must learn what the experts say about my experience" is only a small step forward from "My experience is not valid here." This "banking" methodology whereby information is deposited by the teacher into the essentially passive learners is completely incompatible with feminist pedagogy. A further difficulty with the distance delivery of women's studies courses is the lack of any provision for the affective impact of the material and its relation to personal experience. Eruptions of pain, anger, and grief are a common inevitable component of women's studies. Women must be permitted to process the re-discovery of their suppressed experience and to deal with the emotive explosion this often produces. Anger and pain are unlikely to be converted into constructive energy when they are confronted alone. Women

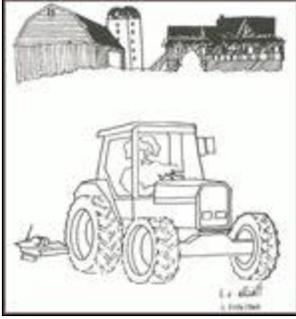
experiencing emotional release in a supportive group of their peers feel cleansed and strengthened by the experience. Women facing pain alone will avoid it, and turn their anger against themselves.



Women in the fields, 1916. Provincial Archives of Manitoba

In Atlantic Canada, attempts have been made to use teleconferencing networks to link women in isolated locations with each other and with the instructor. Clearly, there are advantages to this. The telephone is a communication tool that most women are comfortable with. There is the possibility of making students responsible for segments of the curriculum, breaking down the teacher-learner hierarchy. Some interaction is possible between all participants who are therefore able to collaborate more actively in the learning process. This approach does little, however, to

overcome the lack of private space and time that any student needs, or the non-supportive environment in which these women live.



The role of the universities, and women's studies programs in particular, among rural women must be examined carefully. Are we offering a new tyranny of the experts, which will serve further to alienate women from their own experience and stifle their voices? Are we imposing another alien value system on rural women which no more reflects their reality than did the one it replaces?

The universities do have a responsibility to teach rural women not what their experience is or what it means but how to tap into that experience and find ways of expressing it. Feminism has become in many ways as elitist and exclusionary as the patriarchal system it seeks to replace by reflecting the reality and the consciousness of a segment of society sufficiently privileged and secure to question current social and academic structures. Feminist educators should use their strength to develop ways in which rural women can also be empowered to reclaim their own history. By reaching out to rural women, university-based feminism can provide assistance in community development, in organization, in building networks. Rather than interpreting experience for rural women, the universities should be assisting them to build the supports the need to rediscover and articulate their own reality.

Reprinted from WEdf, 7989, Volume 7, No.1.

Beth Westfall has been involved in education of the geographically isolated for the past 75 years. She is currently the Director of Extension at Brandon University in Manitoba.

References

Gilligan, Carol. *In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982.

Rich, Adrienne. "Towards a Woman-Centered University." *On Lies, Secrets, and Silence: Selected Prose 1966-1978*. New York. W.W. Norton 1979.

What Kind of Career Counselling do Women Need?

by Sue Berlove

In 1976 I accidentally fell into the world of career development. All my career training and work experience to date had been geared to personal counselling, psychotherapy, and adolescent treatment. With no knowledge of the career planning field or skills, with only a graduate degree in Counselling and Human Relations, I was offered a career counselling position at Times Change Women's Employment Service.

Learning to be a career counsellor can be a trying experience, because there aren't many places that teach the necessary skills and theory. Like most newcomers to the field, I had to learn on the job, reading, talking to other counsellors, listening to what my clients wanted, trying various techniques and evaluating their effectiveness.

Perhaps it was a function of my learning style (I prefer to learn through risking and doing) that it took me a few years to feel really comfortable and competent in my work. But I think more likely my professional development path reflects the underlying dilemma most career counsellors face: What is the career counsellor supposed to do when faced with a client who is asking "What should I do with my life?" The question always seems awesome and my response in the beginning felt inadequate.

"I don't know what you should do. Why don't you know what you want to do? It's a big task. Why are you asking me?"

In the early years at Times Change Women's Employment Service I felt anxious and overwhelmed at times. I would be thinking, "I don't know what you should do. Why don't you know what you want to do? It's a big task. Why are you asking me?" At other times I felt I should know. If only I could listen, put it all together and give them their answer on a silver platter! I wondered if testing was a better response than the self-assessment approach we were using; at least it gave answers.

Gradually I began to unravel the career counsellor's dilemma for myself and find answers to these difficult questions: What should I be doing for women at career crossroads? What role should I play? What expertise can I offer? What kind of career counselling will give women good solid answers to their important career/life planning

questions?

What emerged was an approach which I believe addresses these questions and speaks to the needs of my women clients. My work is an adaptation of Richard Bolles' self-assessment materials and philosophy, modified by my knowledge of psychodynamics and feminism. As well, my work has been shaped by my personal learning and more

specifically by my attempts to include mothering as part of my own life plan.

Sue Berlove raconte comment elle est arrivée, par un concours de circonstances, à travailler comme conseillère professionnelle. Elle décrit comment elle a mis au point une méthode particulière pour aider les femmes à explorer diverses possibilités de carrière. Pour elle, tout bon service de conseiller professionnels pour les femmes doit tendre à cinq grands objectifs: 1. encourager les femmes à devenir indépendantes; 2. leur donner les compétences nécessaires pour qu'elles préparent et réalisent un changement de carrière; 3. tenir compte des enfants à élever; 4. aider les femmes à avoir davantage confiance en elles-mêmes et à découvrir leurs talents; 5. donner aux femmes le droit de rêver.

Assessing my approach for effectiveness has led me to conclude that I make several assumptions about what kind of career counselling women need. This article is a discussion of those assumptions and it addresses major personal needs of many women who seek career counselling; the needs for independence, self-esteem, the development of planning skills, to deal with life-style issues such as child bearing and to provide encouragement to dream.

Career Counselling Fosters Independence

When a woman tells me that she hasn't a clue what she wants to do with her life, I no longer feel I must give her answers. I have learned that the primary responsibility of a career counsellor is to empower the individual to make her own choices, to help her feel she is capable of answering her own questions.

Self-assessment is a style of career counselling which fosters this kind of independence because it is based on self-inquiry. Because she is given homework which she completes on her own, it gives a woman the concrete feedback she needs to answer her own questions. Thus, she begins to believe she is capable; the process itself makes her feel confident.

In this context the counsellor's role is to structure the experience, to assess the problem areas for the client, and to find the right questions to ask her. The questioning process falls roughly into four areas of self knowledge:

1. What are your skills? And which ones do you want to use?
2. Your interests: What kinds of people and activities excite you? What are your enthusiasms?
3. Values: Why do you work? What is it you want to commit yourself to? What type of contribution do you want to make to the world you live in?
4. Environment: What kinds of people are you comfortable with? Where would you best fit in?

The key to developing independence is to gear the questioning process to the individual. I

find that, when I ask the right question in an appropriate way, the individual's energy comes to the surface. Her willingness to tackle the question (what counsellors generally call "motivation") becomes apparent and her desire to take charge has been sparked. As she has been asked questions which are important to her, she actively involves herself in finding the answers.

I have used vocational testing sparingly in my practice because it can short circuit this essential questioning process. I react particularly critically to mechanized vocational testing packages because in addition to cutting off the questioning process, they foster a peculiar type of dependency. People receive answers to their career questions, but they don't usually know where the answers come from. Because the answers are not their own, they do not feel empowered by them. Instead, they have subtly been discouraged from actively taking stock of their situation, and "fed" expert answers in the form of computer print outs and impersonal career assessments.

Career Counselling Must Teach Women the Skills Necessary to Plan and Carry Out Future Career Moves

People receive answers to their career questions, but they don't usually know where the answers come from. Because the answers are not their own, they do not feel empowered by them.

I begin teaching women career planning skills by helping them to grasp the concept of career planning itself. As Richard Bolles says, career planning is essentially an information gathering process. We begin by gathering information about the individual through self assessment, and develop a picture of preferences, values, the underlying criteria for evaluating career moves. Once this is done, she goes out into the world to learn what is happening in areas of the job market which interest her. Through this process then, making a career plan boils down to gaining knowledge and applying it to a decision-making process.

Starting with an overview that the client can understand, we work together at developing more practical tools. The first of these tools involves helping women understand the self-inquiry process as they do the specific homework assignments. I explain the various components of the self-assessment, helping them to see how they will join together. As we go along I help them identify their blind spots, the areas that present difficulties for them. I use my understanding of psychodynamics to help them gain insight into why this aspect of the self-assessment may be more difficult for them to

do.

The second set of skills I teach are the research skills that one requires in order to learn about the world of work. There are numerous kinds of written resources that can be gold mines of information for the career changer. But, I have found that most people don't know how to find valuable career reference materials or current information on career trends in a specific field of interest. Teaching women how to find this kind of information in libraries is essential if we expect them to find their way down new career paths.

Library research is only one form of investigation used to track down occupational information. The other very important way to learn about the world of work is to use a technique that Richard Bolles popularized in *What Colour is Your Parachute?* - the informational interview. This is a process of information gathering where the career changer goes out into work situations and talks to individuals about their jobs in order to get a first hand look at what a job is really like. In this way a woman gets the chance to explore alternatives, to discover the day to day reality of various work environments and to evaluate them against her own criteria for career satisfaction.

I teach women techniques for conducting informational interviews and for evaluating the information they receive. This involves clarifying the objectives of such interviews (particularly distinguishing them from manipulative job search tactics or job interviews), identifying lines of questioning that will draw out the information they need, and reassuring more timid individuals of their right to ask people for time and information.

Once women have developed interviewing skills, they need to learn to evaluate the information gained, using the personal criteria they identified in the self-assessment process. "Going out" into the workplace to research and "coming back" to one's internal sense of direction is an important process that is repeated several times. Like a pendulum women need to learn to go outside themselves for information within themselves without losing their balance and inner motivation. Research is the art of tracking down information through talking with people and reading. Although I have stressed "occupational" information as the goal of career research, women seeking career change need other kinds of information as well: What are my daycare options? What kinds of financial supports are available to me? Teaching research skills and supporting women through the research phase of their counseling will give them the opportunity to gather all the relevant information they need in order to make a career decision.

The sum of all these skills adds up to an ability to navigate through a sea of career choices without losing sight of who you are and what you need for career satisfaction. As a woman's needs and values change, she can go back to using the self-assessment process. As her job situation becomes less challenging for her, women who have been counseled in this way will have the skills to research the alternatives once again. This ability, once gained, is seldom lost and can give women the courage to face the lifelong task of maintaining career fulfillment.

Career Counselling Must Help Women Address the Issue of Childbearing

Traditional career counseling has explored career choice outside of family context. Questions about having and raising children are not normally asked of people who want to examine occupational alternatives. This leads me to conclude that most career counselling is based on male assumptions that work is something done outside the home, that it is a breadwinning function, that it is separate from family life.

The implications for women receiving such counselling are astounding to me: They are forced to segregate work and family life in their minds. They are pressured into

conforming to male life cycles, which can put them on the defensive about whether or not to have children and when. Childbearing is not seen as part of career development, but rather an obstacle to it. So women who want to have children end up feeling discouraged and put down about life goals that are important to them.

Most career counselling is based on male assumptions that work is something done outside the home, that it is a breadwinning function, that it is separate from family life.

When career counselling examines women's lifestyle issues, the message women receive is positive. They are asked to consider: Do you expect to have children? When do you want to do this? Have you thought about how you will handle life style changes which will occur? We discuss anticipated changes and look at ways other women have handled those changes. Personal needs and values are explored in an effort to paint a picture of an ideal lifestyle.

Regardless of the exact questions, an interest in lifestyle and childbearing concerns is crucial to supporting women at career cross-roads. The approach implies that career development for women is different than for men; it is unique and has its own considerations that must be addressed. If the differences are acknowledged, career counseling can help women to find answers to difficult questions rather than reacting defensively.

In my own practice and in my personal life, I have found that women with children seek career paths where they can balance family life with paid work. The kind of balance they are seeking varies with the age and needs of their children and their own personal need to seek challenges outside the family sphere.

The clients who need the most help in the lifestyle area are: women who are thinking about having children, women pregnant with a first child and worried about their careers, and re-entry women who, after having shifted away from the work place are wanting to shift the balance back towards paid work.

Women often talk about such situations in extreme terms, such as taking leaves of absence, staying at home to raise a family, reentering the labor force after having been "out." Increasingly, I am seeing among women of childbearing age, a trend to "balancing," or the subtle shifting of priorities as their families expand, children grow, people's needs change. Counseling with an eye to the subtle changes in women's life style helps them to see their choices more creatively. It also helps them to understand that the desire for balance is not the same as being ambivalent about working for pay.

Career Counselling Uses Skills Assessment to Build Self-Esteem and Develop a Feeling of Competence

Doing a skill assessment with a client offers the individual a very positive experience, because most people discover that they have many more talents than they originally recognized. When they see what skills they have acquired, they feel better about

themselves and more confident about their ability to perform work for pay. How does a skill assessment manage to produce such an effect? *Skills assessment re-defines how people become competent.*

When women are asked to reflect on the variety of places they may have acquired skills, the myth that skills are acquired only on the job is destroyed. It is replaced by a powerful attitude that can help women succeed.

All the assessments I do with women begin by reviewing past life experiences, looking at four important areas of a person's life: paid work, unpaid work, leisure, and training. Initially, we examine the various activities in order to assess just what skills were being learned or utilized.

For women who have made significant contributions in voluntary capacities while opting out of the paid workforce, this exercise has a big impact: they learn that skills can be acquired in a variety of situations; paid work is only one arena for skill development. Women who are under-employed, unhappily employed, or temporarily employed in unsatisfying work realize that some important skills acquisition is most likely taking place in one of the other areas of their lives.

When women are asked to reflect on the variety of places they may have acquired skills, the myth that skills are competencies acquired only on the job is destroyed. It is replaced by a powerful attitude that can help women succeed: people develop competencies in many different ways, and those competencies can be brought to paid jobs.

Skills assessment defines a skill as an ability rather than some kind of technical expertise. Women frequently approach a skill assessment

with the belief that they have no skills. Usually what they mean is that they have no "marketable skills," or more specifically, that they don't have the set of technical skills (or body of knowledge) that is required to perform a particular job.

From a career development point of view "transferable" skills are far more important to the individual than "specific content" skills. Transferable skills are the general skills that form the foundation for any kind of specific vocational training. They are natural abilities, gifts and talents that, when refined through a training experience, can lead to suitable and meaningful employment. For this reason, in a skill assessment, the individual woman is asked to analyze her life experience in order to identify her natural talents or abilities. She discovers initially what she is good at, and later what talents she would prefer using in a paid job situation. The emphasis is not on marketability, but rather on reclaiming her own strengths and seeing how her preferred strengths suggest a career direction.

I don't mean to imply here that we avoid questions of technical expertise or marketability altogether, but they raise specific questions to be dealt with after occupational research is completed. When a woman is deciding how to refine her talents, she will tackle the training question. When she is ready to seek a job she will deal with the marketable skills questions as a marketing problem and write the appropriate resume.

Skills assessment invites active ownership and authorship of skills. I direct people to use active language in describing their skills. Since a skill is something one does, we are looking for verbs, for active language that underscores the doing. For example, I would discourage a woman from describing a skill in these terms: "I was part of a group of people who organized an event." I would ask her to describe her own active participation in that group in search of her own skill. Then she might say, "I researched the possible places where we could hold our conference."

I would also discourage her from using nouns or roles (I am a secretary) to describe her abilities. Taking a title or role and breaking it down into specific functions she performs (e.g. answering phones, attending to administrative details, scheduling) lends clarity to identifying the specific strengths which she possesses.

In addition to active language, I have also found personal authorship to be empowering for the client. Having the client choose the exact words and phrases to describe skills is important to accurately reflect her own sense of competence. This process can be painstakingly difficult, especially for clients who are weak in verbal skills. But women are more assured about their skills after they have described them in their own words.

Eventually a prospective employer will ask a woman what she does well. If she has done a thorough self-assessment, she will be able to describe her talents more easily and confidently in her own words.

Career Counselling Gives Women Permission to Dream

A career dream is a picture of someone wanting to accomplish something that is special or important to her. It is a vision of fulfillment, success on her own terms; some involvement that brings great pleasure, excitement, or nourishment to the individual dreamer. This type of dream is at the heart of career counselling; it is the basis of a personal vision which women need to develop.

When a career counsellor gives a woman permission to dream out loud, she is being invited to consider her career options with her real self in mind. At the psychological level we have to wade through all those messages that discourage her from becoming who she really is. Don't be selfish. Be realistic. Consider others first. Don't be impulsive. Don't aspire to greatness. Don't compete. Don't want for yourself. We have to replace those messages with encouragement to dream.

Barbara Sher (Wishcraft), likens people who are encouraged to become what they really want to be to a plant growing in fertile soil; the encouragement fosters growth, we are saying to those women it's OK to want, to need fulfillment to be who you really are. It can be a great affirmation when set against the great wave of social pressure that says "adapt, stay just where you are."

She discovers what talents she would prefer using in a paid job situation. The emphasis is not on marketability, but rather on reclaiming her own strengths and seeing how her strengths suggest a career direction.

Barbara Sher has reaffirmed my belief that dreaming, contrary to popular opinion, is realistic. Within each person's dream is a driving force, a kind of deep personal need to succeed at something. When people are encouraged to find and realize their dreams they can gain access to inner energy. They are more likely to stay motivated to cope with the "inner" (psychological) and "outer" (social) obstacles that they will bump up against in pursuit of a dream. Part of working with a woman's career dreams is working with her discouragement. Because, on the flip side of every dream is the fear that it can't be done.

This fear is as real as the hopefulness of the dream itself. One of the trademarks of my work is that I try to prepare every client I work with for the reality of discouragement. I tell people that they most likely will feel discouraged at some point. They may encounter something in the world or within themselves that makes them feel like giving up; or they might feel negative or critical of the career counselling process. I invite them to discuss such feelings as they arise.

I have found that talking about the discouragement is as powerful as talking about dreams. It allows a woman to see just how she has kept herself from achieving her career dream. It allows her to find the

strength to meet obstacles in the future, and, most importantly, it gives her the opportunity to tell me how I can support and help her when she begins to feel like it is impossible.

Dreaming is difficult for women. It goes against so much of our socialization. We are all familiar with the various statistics and stereotypes that describe women's traditional place in the workforce, the result of this socialization process. Women work in job ghettos, they are secretaries, clerks, teachers, social service workers, sales clerks, bank tellers, waitresses. They are less likely to climb corporate ladders or to become electricians, plumbers, or welders. They frequently work in part-time positions with no benefits or job security.

For society, the problem of women's position in the labour force will require massive changes: legislative reforms, institutional change (e.g. how daycare and training are provided), a great change in attitudes and social norms. In our work as career counsellors with individuals, we see the causal ties of the current statistics and social norms.

Welfare Bum

**A welfare bum they called her
as she struggled to raise three kids.**

**She baked, she served,
she tried so hard to make a little money.**

**The house she cleaned at the top of the
hill
only earned her twenty dollars.**

**Just 35, she looked so old
her face so lined and wrinkled.**

**She worked and worked, that welfare
bum
and raised those tiny children.**

**I believe the time has come for society to
honour such "welfare bums."**

Sheila Baxter
Vancouver, B.C.

Reprinted from WEdf, 1989, Vol. 7, No.2.

Although the career counsellor is not an agent of social change, she is a facilitator of a kind of individual change which can lead to social change. She helps women to see beyond the limited self-definition which society imposes. She helps them to dream beyond the stereotyped images of women's work. She helps individual women to fight the social expectation that her need for fulfillment is not important. She encourages her to contemplate being a successful, ambitious, and powerful individual who can make an impact on the world.

Giving women permission to dream is the vital link between a limited self-concept which society imposes and the development of personal visions which can expand society's notions of women's capabilities. That is why it is such an important dimension to career planning. When we support a woman's dream, we are helping her and all women to find a way to make career satisfaction a real possibility.

*Reprinted from WEdf, Winter 1985,
Vol. 4. 2*

Sue Berlove is a career counselor in private practice in the Toronto area.

Family Violence Prevention and Curriculum Development

by Suzanne Mulligan and Dr. Donna Mitchell

Many children think that what is happening to them is "normal" and happens to all of their friends.

We know that child abuse and violence against adolescent and adult women is a serious societal problem. If we are ever going to effectively address this problem, it must be through prevention, and there are several key components which any successful prevention program must incorporate.

Firstly, awareness of the issue of child abuse and woman abuse must be raised. Many children think that what is happening to them is "normal" and happens to all of their friends. We have heard numerous examples from adults who were abused as children and from children who witness violence in their home that they needed someone else to confirm that the abusive behavior was, in fact, not "normal." Secondly, it must be possible to talk about the issue in an atmosphere that values the self-worth of the victim and does not blame her or him. Examples and models of constructive and positive ways of handling conflict must be available, thereby enabling the student to change, and hand in hand with these models must come information about resources for both victims and potential helpers. Finally, a prevention program must also pass on the encouragement to know that we as individuals have the right and ability to make choices about how we act, who we choose as friends, and what we do with our lives. The end result of any successful prevention program is empowerment to break the cycle.

The Community Child Abuse Council has been working for over 15 years to deal with these issues. The Council has broad community representation from over twenty agencies and organizations including hospitals, government, child and adolescent services, women's shelters, public health services, and local school boards. The mandate of the Council is to reduce the incidence of child abuse and the impact on children of wife assault and other forms of family violence by developing and implementing prevention programs, increasing public awareness with regard to child abuse and family violence, and advocating on behalf of the victims of abuse.

En 1986, une étude, effectuée par le Conseil communautaire sur les enfants maltraités de Hamilton-Wentworth, concluait meilleur moyen de prévenir la violence était d'élaborer un programme d'études. Le Programme de prévention de la violence familiale qu'a mis sur pied le Conseil est d'inspiration populaire, modèle en permanence en fonction des besoins véritables des élèves, du corps enseignant, des

parents et de l'administration. L'objectif : intégrer un programme de prévention de la violence familiale dans le programme études des enseignantes et enseignants et dans la structure de l'école. En s'appuyant sur leur domaine de spécialisation pour s'instruire sur la violence familiale, les enseignantes et enseignants acquièrent un sentiment de sécurité et de compétence et font comprendre aux élèves qu'il ne s'agit pas d'un sujet séparé ou "spécial". L'éducation joue un rôle clé pour prévenir la violence faite aux femmes et aux enfants, et les écoles doivent servir d'outils pédagogiques, car c'est ce qu'elles sont après tout.

Violence Prevention in the Curriculum

The school environment can provide an alternate reality that challenges beliefs from home such as that "violence is a way to solve problems," or "I am unlovable."

In 1986, the Council initiated a study of a variety of prevention efforts throughout Canada and the u.s. to determine the most effective method of prevention for our community. After a year of research, the Task Force concluded "that the most comprehensive approach to prevention programming would appear to be through curriculum development." Apart from the family, school is the one institution that influences nearly all children in our society. The time children spend in school is recognized by experts such as Dr. Pat Kincaid from the Ministry of Education and Dr. Peter Jaffe from the London Court Clinic as that which needs to be spent on violence prevention curriculum and experiences.

Dr. Jaffe notes, "It would be a challenge to find any book written on the topic of family violence that does not end with an appeal to school systems for prevention programs." He suggests three specific areas as a basis for such programs: "These areas relate to teacher training, curriculum development and student involvement in addressing family violence." In a recent report to the Standing committee on Health and Welfare, Dr. Jaffe recommended that the federal government work with the provinces to promote strong and consistent violence prevention education in schools.

Traditionally, schools have assumed responsibility for preparing young people for their roles in society. The Ontario Ministry of Education states that its overall purpose is "helping individual learners to achieve their potential in physical, intellectual, emotional, social, cultural, and moral development." Within this broad mandate is a commitment to the whole child and to the development of students' social competence, feelings of well-being, and self-confidence. For students who are victims of family violence, the school environment can provide an alternate reality that challenges beliefs from home such as that "violence is a way to solve problems," or "I am unlovable."

There have already been numerous attempts to conduct prevention programs in the schools but most programs in existence suffer from major flaws. Most have been developed outside the school environment, many by shelters and women's coalitions, for

example. Often the lessons emphasize only one issue and are not linked to what the teacher is doing either through curriculum or classroom experiences. These programs may be used in the short term by a highly motivated teacher but have poor staying power, and there is no continuous program that extends across the school years.

The approach for the development of the Family Violence Prevention Program in Hamilton-Wentworth is grass-roots, working with school staff in their own environment. The emerging program is continually shaped by the real needs of students, teachers, administrators, and parents. It is being developed at three levels: primary/junior (including kindergarten to Grade 6); intermediate (including Grade 9 through to OAC-Ontario Academic Credits, formerly Grade 13).

The initial development occurred at the Intermediate level during the 1990-91 school year. Working closely with the staff, our aim was to experience and fully understand their concerns, challenges, and needs in order to carry out a family violence prevention program and integrate it into the teacher's curriculum and into the fabric of the school. Disclosure of abuse, for example, was one of the issues for which staff expressed much concern. They were anxious about how they would react to a child who was telling a story of abuse, and how they could be helpful when they might be feeling shock, disgust, and anger. Teachers had real fears of revictimizing these children by saying or doing the wrong things.

Critical Learnings

The work during the 1990-91 school year produced a number of significant discoveries. In particular, we defined six areas in which children need to be given knowledge, skills, and attitudes in order to prevent family violence through their own empowerment: Family Violence Awareness (raising awareness that there is violence in some families, that violence is condoned in society, that there are not appropriate or allowable victims); Personal Safety (understanding that some situations are not safe, that problem-solving strategies which avoid harm can be developed, that there are community resources available for assistance); Communications Skills (development of congruent expression of verbal and non-verbal messages, development of assertiveness, active listening, and conflict resolution skills); Healthy Relationships (gaining an awareness of the components of a healthy relationship, using social skills to develop healthy relationships); Self-Esteem (helping students to recognize and appreciate their own worth); and Prevention of Stereotyping (recognizing stereotyping and its effects, learning to value individual uniqueness). These critical learning's provide a foundation for the development of a program that can begin in kindergarten and build to OAC.

Staff Teamwork

The school planning process is an important ingredient for success. Teachers tend to work in isolation, rarely inviting another teacher into their classroom. In planning the first family violence unit, teachers came together to share concerns about the topic and identify their own learning needs. As they began to consider how they would communicate these issues to their students, they brainstormed strategies, shared ideas and resources, and many ended up working in pairs to present certain content.

One of the strongest features of our approach is that the family violence learnings are integrated with mandated curriculum. So that, for example, a math class might learn about grids and percentages by charting the frequency of wife assault in Canada. Although initially teachers may have discomfort about their understanding of family violence, they are experts

in their own subject area. Using these areas provides teachers with a sense of security and competence that enables them to take risks in planning a program for the prevention of family violence. The integration with mandated curriculum also assists teachers in evaluating students' learning during the unit and removes any appearance that what is happening is superficial or unimportant learning.

Statement of Rights



I am an important and worthwhile human being.

I deserve to be treated with respect.

I have power over my own life and can make good decisions for myself.

I can decide, with the help of trusted adults, what is best for me.

I am not alone. I can ask others for help.

I am worth working and changing for.

I deserve a safe and happy life.

Student Acceptance

Students who have participated in the Family Violence Units at the intermediate level have evaluated their experiences very positively. Most students appreciate the opportunity to discuss the issue and most know of someone who has experienced some form of violence. Parents too have been supportive, and the most frequent comment has been that the program should occur earlier in the students' education.

Teachers have found that students learn a great deal during the family violence units. For some, it becomes an opportunity to disclose that they have experienced abuse or have witnessed wife assault. One necessary component in the planning for this program is ensuring that mechanisms are in place for children to tell their stories in a safe setting in

order to get help.

Conclusion

Our school-based program helps school staff and students identify issues and needs and reach out to appropriate community contacts. It is well documented that since the beginning of our initiatives, requests for information and speakers from the Council have risen dramatically. A strong link is made between the community and schools.

Family violence prevention curriculum is not mandated. The Boards and teachers themselves have identified this issue as a high priority. They are giving up lunch hours and other planning time to accommodate program development. Staff volunteer to be involved in the program and, in our experience, staff who were initially reluctant to get involved have come on board, resulting in a strong school-based team.

The Family Violence Prevention Project is one example of an innovative and ambitious program. In the course of planning and discussion, there has emerged, at least, a common understanding of the nature and prevalence of the problem. Education is a crucial factor in any strategy for change and, while schools are the focus of this particular project, the elimination of violence against women and children will require the education of all members of society.

Reprinted from WEdf, Winter 1992/93, Volume 10, Number, Cartoon reprinted from WEdf, Fall 1988, Volume 6, No.4.



Suzanne Mulligan is the Executive Director of the Community Child Abuse Council of Hamilton-Wentworth, Ontario. Dr. Donna Mitchell has been with the Council as Curriculum Design and Coordinator since the inception, and shares the development of curriculum for elementary and secondary levels with Joan Fisher.

The Social Construction of Deaf Women

by **Tanis Doe**

The Deaf child by default becomes either a boy without hearing or a neutered Deaf child, but rarely a girl who is deaf.

In almost all English literature the "Deaf" are referred to without gender. In textbooks and media, Deaf people are referred to as "the Deaf," the Deaf Community, members of Deaf culture, Deaf students, Deaf adults, children with hearing impairments, clients who are deaf, Deaf consumers, Deaf trainees, Deaf employees, or Deaf people. While several of these terms suggest a broader identity than just a person who cannot hear, none of them give any indication of gender. Thus the Deaf child by default becomes either a boy without hearing or a neutered Deaf child, but rarely a girl who is deaf.

In almost every case, being Deaf serves as a master status which eclipses other social categories and this construction is a particular outcome of education and schooling. Most of the factors which influence the status of a Deaf adult as a member of a minority are learned or socialized at school. For example, linguistic capacity, attitudes towards Deafness, behavioral patterns, historical awareness of Deaf culture, and association with voluntary organizations generally have their roots at a school for the Deaf or in a classroom for Deaf students.

School as a "Total Institution"

A school is a very significant place for learning roles for future life. Systemic and authorized education of any population is powerful, but residential schooling has significantly more influence in shaping a person because of the intensity of structured and unstructured contact with others in one location. Educational professionals often have the intention of "rehabilitating" the Deaf person or teaching the Deaf person how to be "hearing-like" or "Deaf-like." The unwritten curriculum of the school no doubt includes gender roles in very significant ways, but the focus of attention is almost exclusively on the students as a "Deaf" child.

Dans presque toute la littérature anglaise, les "sourds" semblent ne pas avoir de sexe. L'enfant sourd devient soit un petit garçon dépourvu d'ouïe ou un enfant sourd castré, mais rarement une petite fille sourde.

La plupart des facteurs qui exercent une influence sur la situation d'un adulte sourd sont acquis à l'école. Le pensionnat joue en particulier un rôle clé en raison de l'intensité des contacts avec les autres en un même lieu. Dans les écoles pour sourds, la socialisation de l'enfant sourd se fait dans une communauté de sourds. La majorité des

sourds choisissent à l'âge adulte d'être membres à part entière de la culture des mal entendants, plutôt que membres marginaux de la culture des entendants. Cela s'applique aussi aux femmes, qui souvent trouvent plus une identité dans leur surdité, que dans leur état de femmes.

Les malentendantes sont - elles par conséquent moins sujettes au sexisme et à la socialisation des sexes? Si, dans l'ensemble, les femmes sourdes semblent moins conscientes du sexisme existant, leurs chances et leurs réussites sur le plan professionnel sont moindres que celles des hommes atteints de surdité. Des femmes sourdes racontent les agressions sexuelles ou la violence dont elles ont fait l'objet, admettent que leurs objectifs ou leur choix de cours ont été rejetés. De toute évidence, un système d'éducation axé sur la surdité, mais qui ne respecte pas les deux sexes, ne répond pas aux besoins des femmes présentes dans ce système. La force et les possibilités des enfants sourds devraient être exploitées dans le système d'éducation de façon que tous les élèves atteignent leur plein potentiel, en tant qu'êtres humains, indépendamment de leur sexe, et non pas seulement en tant que personnes mal entendantes.

In schools for the Deaf and in research about Deaf children, deafness seems to bring together people who would otherwise be different across class, gender, culture, and race. Donald Evans and William Falk have described, through an ethnography of a school, how the "total institution" of a school creates a significant influence over Deaf students: "Few people outside the residential school will have linguistic or symbolic access to the child, to his (her) definitions of reality. Black and white, rich and poor, male and female, are all thrown together in one place. For these children, the school serves as a comprehensive or total institution that provides the construction of their first self" (Evans and Falk).

An important part of this "total institution" is the dormitory. "In the dormitory, away from the structured control of the classrooms, Deaf children are introduced to the social life of Deaf people. This unique pattern of transmission lies at the heart of the culture" (Padden and Humphries). This transmission of values takes place not only because students are part of a physical facility but because they are restricted in their access to other information and people. Hans Furth once described the Deaf as suffering from information deprivation because they were less exposed to incidental learning that takes place out of school, access to television, and adult voices. He argued that the "content of Deaf education is meagre... the time teaching them to talk replaces the regular standard curricula." Evans and Falk continue this argument: "In deafness one is isolated and cut off from the wider society- and this includes parents, siblings, television, media, and on and on... Students have colonized into a language community. They accept the 'total institution' as home where a shared language community and friends are to be found" (Evans and Falk 208).

Although Deaf men and women may be socialized with both gender and cultural attributes, many will consciously choose to be full members of Deaf culture instead of marginal members of hearing culture.

The school becomes the primary socializing agent for young Deaf boys and girls. Among the education they receive are social roles and actual models for what hearing adults and Deaf adults and men and women are supposed to be. Although in school Deaf men and women may be socialized with both gender and cultural attributes, many will select to identify primarily with characteristics which provide the most comfort; that is, Deaf people consciously choose to be full members of Deaf culture instead of marginal members of hearing culture (Glickman). For most women who are Deaf, the Deaf community is accessible and supportive where other Deaf women and men can be peers. In the larger population of women who are predominantly hearing, they are unlikely to share a language, despite sharing gender. As a result, Deaf women identify far more strongly with being deaf than with being female (Holcomb and Wood).

Perception of Gender Roles

Considering how important education is to the welfare of Deaf women, I initiated a research project to compare the means of gender socialization among Deaf women and their hearing sisters (Doe). One of the difficulties in conducting this research is that there is no standard sign for "gender" (although man-woman is used by some members of the Deaf community). When asked to define what they

thought gender meant, what sex-roles were, most Deaf women gave physical definitions of role differences including strength, body hair, and shape. When asked to describe deaf-hearing differences, Deaf women and hearing women explained behaviour and attitudes as differentiating factors.

This research concluded that Deaf women identified primarily as Deaf and felt that other Deaf women would too. They considered their experiences of discrimination to be primarily because of being deaf, whereas their hearing sisters felt discrimination was primarily sex-based. Deaf women showed less awareness of sexism than their hearing sisters while their sisters showed less awareness of Deaf cultural issues. Deaf women were able to identify being Deaf as a positive and strong identity and saw being women in more negative and weaker roles.

While it is likely that role confusion could have a negative impact on women as they develop into adults, there is some debate as to the negative or positive outcomes of what can be seen as reduced sex stereotyping among women with disabilities. "From a feminist perspective, we might see the failure of the culture to leave its heavy sex-typing brand on the disabled girl as liberation. Is independence and self-sufficiency the product of avoidance; is it the outcome of marginalizing the disabled girl or of repressing her sexuality?" (Fine and Asch 132). It is unclear whether Deaf women have escaped sexual typing or are just less aware of it. Some research shows significant differences in attitudes between hearing and Deaf men and women about vocational goals and behaviours, while others show similar patterns.

Deaf women showed less awareness of sexism than their hearing sisters. Deaf women were able to identify being Deaf as a positive and strong identity and saw being women in more negative and weaker roles.

Linda Stauffer and Greg Long looked at attitudes towards vocational options for men and women among both Deaf and hearing men and women. They found that "Deaf young men and women graduating from high school still hold substantially more conservative attitudes towards sex roles than do their hearing peers" (Stauffer and Long). Other research indicated there was little motivation for Deaf women to be anything more than wives or mothers until later in life. Only after marrying and raising children did Deaf women consider careers or post-secondary education (Becker and Jauregui).

Impact of Sexism

If both men and women who are deaf experience education in the same schooling, and if gender socialization in these schools is less pronounced, one might think that Deaf women and men would have comparable vocational outcomes. Being deaf is in and of itself enough to create barriers to achievement of educational and vocational goals. Some Deaf advocates argue that it is not deafness but society which reduces opportunities; nevertheless being deaf is enough to reduce opportunities in a generalized sense. This is true for both men and women and, though the impact of gender on Deaf people has not been thoroughly researched, there is evidence to suggest that there are differential outcomes for men and women.

Research on sex stereotyping indicates that Deaf women experience a double whammy: "The combination of ineffective vocational counselling and isolation from the contemporary world of work leads to fewer choices and the resulting lower remuneration and higher unemployment. Therefore, while the Deaf individual suffers discrimination and limitations of job possibilities, the Deaf female endures a situation defined both by her deafness and her femaleness" (Cook and Rosett 341). Scott Brown suggests that sex is the most important predictor of variance in income. Even taking into consideration the graduate and non-graduates and higher degree recipients, Deaf women earned less than Deaf men across the board (Brown).

Looking back at the 1880-1940 era of education of the Deaf, jobs for the Deaf were traditionally vocational in nature, including metalwork, woodworking, and printing (predominately occupations for men) and key-punch, which was one of the only occupational options for Deaf women. It was very common for hearing men to be in manual blue collar occupations and hearing women in white or pink collar occupations, such as secretarial jobs, nursing, and teaching, which valued high verbal skills. While it is clear that all Deaf children were restricted in their options due to inadequate education and low expectations, the choices for Deaf women were far less broad than those of Deaf men. This challenges the idea that Deaf men and women are simply deaf, with no impact of gender on their lives.

Stereotypes, myths, and expectations based on disability, deafness, or gender are applied to Deaf women in compounded ways. Deaf women deal with the stereotypes of submissiveness, inferiority, and dependence as women as well as the labels associated with being a Deaf person. "Deaf women internalize these social expectations and have difficulties dealing with the role expectations of men in the Deaf community, especially if their personal views differ from cultural views on sex roles" (Rosen). Deaf women tell personal stories of sexual discrimination, sexual assault or violence, about having their vocational goals rejected or their academic course selections disallowed. In research about issues of importance to Deaf high school students, Larry Stewart categorized mental health issues including: reproduction issues, rape, sexually transmitted diseases, and sexual abuse (Stewart). Despite the fact that these issues are more clearly related to gender relations than to deafness, the results were not broken down by sex of respondent.

In research addressing disability and gender, one of the findings has been the desexualization of women with disabilities. In addition to the expectation that women with disabilities be asexual or non-sexual, there is a concomitant understanding that their gender roles are not enforceable. Thus the traditional roles of mother, lover, homemaker, caregiver are not expected of disabled women. This may not be entirely true for Deaf women, due to the controversy about whether Deaf people can be categorized as people with disabilities. But the difficulty of not being expected to fulfill traditional roles can result in a sense of rolelessness and confusion for women as they mature. "The lack of approved social roles for disabled women derives from a constellation of confounding forces. Disabled women (like racial or ethnic minority women) experience a major disadvantage in relation to their relevant single minority reference groups: disabled men and non-disabled women" (Fine and Asch 7). Women with disabilities and Deaf women must deal with the social expectations that are attached to being female and deaf or disabled.

The Power of the School

The school system has a significant influence over both gender and disability related expectations. Research on general school effectiveness suggests that teacher background characteristics are related to student outcomes. The relationship between a teacher's race and student outcomes is dependent upon the predominant race of the student body. In a predominately Black school, being a Black teacher is associated with higher student outcomes, while the reverse is true in predominantly white schools.

One of the significant differences among Deaf children with Deaf parents is their feeling of self-worth, pride in being Deaf, and connection to the Deaf community. The positive role models that most of the women in my research had were those who shared a communication mode. Hearing women named mothers and other adults as role models while Deaf women named peers or teachers at schools. One might hypothesize that once deafness becomes a less problematic issue, identity issues of class, race, sexual orientation, and status might supersede issues of "hearing loss." Conversely, it might be found that the positive associations with deafness will strengthen the focus on being deaf to the exclusion of other identities.

In addition to the expectation that women with disabilities be asexual or non-sexual, there is a concomitant understanding that their traditional roles of mother, lover, homemaker, caregiver are not expected.

Deaf children are certainly deaf, and my research indicates that Deaf adults, in particular Deaf women, identify more strongly with being Deaf than with being female. However, they are still women. Men and women, deaf or not, experience differential outcomes and may have different needs which are not met by an educational system intended to "treat" their deafness. More qualitative research is needed to look at the meaning of gender and sex roles for Deaf people within the Deaf community and outside of it.

The school has incredible power and potential in the development of Deaf children, both to maintain the culture and values of Deaf people and to normalize or integrate Deaf children into mainstream society. This power must be harnessed to ensure that Deaf men and women can fulfill their full potential as gendered people and not only as Deaf people. This should be done intentionally, openly, and with effort; it should be done with Deaf women and men as active participants of their own construction.

Reprinted from WEdf, Summer 1996, Volume 12, Number 2.

At the time of publication, Tanis Doe, Ph.D., a Canadian researcher with disabilities, was working in California. This paper is based on her doctoral dissertation conducted in Alberta and British Columbia.

Women and Literacy Part I: Making Connections

CCLOW's latest literacy publication, **Making Connections: Literacy and EAL Curriculum from a Feminist Perspective**, was launched in September 1996, and reprinted in August 1997. In a follow-up project, supported by the National Literacy Secretariat and Status of Women Canada, workshop facilitators from across Canada came together to plan the delivery of workshops for literacy practitioners. This series of workshops enabled participants to develop ideas and strategies for using the *Making Connections* curriculum in their literacy and adult education programs. Three supplemental documents emerged from the workshop process.

References

- Becker, Gaylene, and Joanne Jauregui. "The Invisible Isolation of Deaf Women: Its Effect on Social Awareness." *Journal of Sociology and Social Welfare* 8 July 1981.
- Brown, Scott Campbell. "Predictors of Income Variance Among a Group of Deaf Former College Students." *Rehabilitation of the Deaf* 20 (1987).
- Cook, Linda, and Allison Rosett. "The Sex Role Attitudes of Deaf Adolescent Women and Their Implications for Vocational Choice." *American Annals of the Deaf* 120 (June 1975).
- Doe, Tanis. "Exploring the Meaning of Gender with Deaf Women and Their Hearing Sisters." Diss. University of Alberta, 1993.

The first document provides details of facilitators' reflections on the workshops they delivered. The second supplemental document outlines how users of the curriculum materials might incorporate a culture-based and/or anti-racism approach into the curriculum or into the delivery of future workshops. The third supplemental document compiles "Guided Reflections" from the facilitators themselves, who reflected on their own personal experiences as well as the evaluative responses from participants in their workshops, who had been asked to evaluate both the process and the content of each workshop.

These documents will be available on CCLOW's web site:

<http://www.nald.ca/cclow.htm>

Evans, Donald, and William Falk. *Learning to be Deaf*. Berlin: Mouton de Grayter, 1986.

Fine, Michelle, and Adrienne Asch, eds. *Women with Disabilities: Essays in Psychology, Culture, and Politics*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1988.

Furth, Hans. *Thinking with Language: Psychological Implications of Deafness*. New York: Free Press, 1966.

Glickman, Neil. "Cultural Identity Deafness and Mental Health." *Journal of the American Deafness and Rehabilitation Association* 20 (1986).

Holcomb, Mabs, and Sharon Wood. *Deaf Women: A Parade Through the Decades*. Berkeley, CA: Dawn Sign Press, 1989.

Padden, C., and Tom Humphries. *Deaf in America: Voices from a Culture*. Cambridge, MA: Oxford University Press, 1988.

Rosen, Roslyn. "Mental Health Needs of Deaf Women." *Mental Health in Deafness Experimental issue* 1 (1977).

Stauffer, Linda, and Greg Long. "A Comparison of Sex Role Attitudes of Hearing and Deaf Young Men and Women." *Journal of the American Deafness and Rehabilitation Association* 24 (1990).

Stewart, Larry. "Mental Health Issues in Post Secondary Education with Deaf Students." *Post Secondary Education for Deaf Students*. Ed. Jerome Schein. Edmonton: University of Alberta, 1991.

Gaining Visibility

Older Women and Education

by Sharon Harold

Aging women are still the "invisible majority" of elderly in Canada, despite their increasing numbers.

During the past three years of studying and working in the area of education for older adults, I have become aware of the general "invisibility" of older women, although in fact, they are the fastest growing sector of the Canadian population and far outnumber older men. By the twenty-first century, there will be anywhere from 3.75 to 4 million women 65 and over in Canada - about 14-15 per cent of the total population (Statistics Canada 1985). Due to our greater longevity, women outnumber men increasingly as we age.¹

A huge proportion of older women in Canada are living in poverty - between 60 and 78 per cent (Gee and Kimball 1987). Inflation and the lack of affordable housing make the problem of poverty for Canada's aging women all the more devastating (Task Force on Older Women 1983). The increasing number of older women and their high rates of poverty, unemployment and health risks are a challenge to governments to develop resources and services that will contribute to their well-being. However, many of the problems women face in the later years have less to do with aging itself, than with the inequities women experience throughout their lives. We have to re-think what it means to be "old" and to be "female" in our culture. Until we do, aging and old age will be predominantly a "women's issue" (Gee and Kimball 1987; McDaniel 1989; Roebuck 1983).

The Invisible Majority

Aging women are still the "invisible majority" of elderly in Canada, despite their increasing numbers. Until the 1970s, older women had gone virtually unrecognized in academic literature in gerontology, sociology, and women's studies. Aging research has paid little attention to sex differences, and research on sex differences has rarely included the later years (Gatz et al. 1984). Research on aging and sex differences have ignored the reality of older women's lives, ignoring in turn how sexism and the social construction of old age has contributed to older women's low morale, diminished self-esteem, and lack of confidence.

Les recherches que Sharon Harold a effectuées sur les femmes d'un certain âge lui ont fait prendre conscience que ces femmes étaient absentes des recherches en sciences sociales et des services sociaux. Bien que ces femmes représentent le segment démographique dont l'effectif augmente le plus rapidement (les femmes d'un certain âge sont beaucoup plus nombreuses que les hommes d'un certain âge), on ne s'est pas préoccupé jusqu'à présent de leurs besoins et de leurs problèmes.

Certaines des difficultés qu'éprouvent les femmes d'un certain âge, dont la pauvreté, le chômage et le fait d'être tenues à l'écart, relèvent moins de leur âge que des inégalités qu'elles ont connues toute leur vie en tant que problèmes de la vieillesse sont étrangement semblables à ceux auxquels se heurtent les femmes et plongent leurs racines dans notre société ou le sexisme et le manque de respect des vieux et vieilles sont bien ancrés.

Il n'existe presque pas de programmes éducatifs conçus spécifiquement à l'intention des femmes d'un certain âge. Les programmes pour les personnes du troisième âge mettent davantage l'accent sur les besoins récréatifs de ce groupe d'âge, au lieu de s'attacher à leurs besoins concrets, dont perfectionnement professionnelle et acquisition de compétences. Sharon Harold propose un programme pour se pencher sur les besoins en matière d'éducation des femmes d'un certain âge.

The social sciences have been dominated by a male middle-class bias, and this has served to invalidate the unique experiences and perspectives of women. Studies on aging have usually considered older men and women as a homogenous, asexual group, as Dulude (188) has stated,

The ultimate irony, for women, is that after a lifetime of having a multitude of mythical qualities and failings attributed to them because of their sex, they are suddenly told that these differences between the sexes no longer exist. (204)

Feminism has begun to correct this bias, but most research on women has concentrated on younger and middle-aged women, just as most active feminist lobbying has focussed on issues as they affect women's early and middle adult years. No doubt, changes made now will positively affect the lives of future older women, but the process is a slow and indirect one.

McDaniel (1989) has suggested that combining the sociology of aging with the sociology of women will result in more and better research on older women, while the increasing pressure from women, especially "greying" feminists, will force policy-makers to consider the needs of older women.

Aging and Sexism

Growing old returns individuals to the "private" world of domesticity and isolates them from the social and economic relations of the "public" world.

Age and sex, being the two dominant ways of organizing people in most societies, are used to define appropriate roles, behaviors, and attitudes, as well as to bestow privileges, positions, and sanctions upon individuals. Many of the "problems" of older age are uncannily similar to the "problems" of women, and are rooted in our ageist and sexist society. Depression and loneliness are all too characteristic of many women's experiences in their later years.

In a broader social context, growing old returns individuals to the "private" world of domesticity and isolates them from the social and economic relations of the "public" world. In this sense, ageism encountered by elderly men may simply introduce them to the fact that they are now treated "more like women": as increasingly dependent, vulnerable, and marginal. Aging is, for the most part, a "feminized state" (Roebuck 1983), characterized by low status, economic vulnerability, and social exclusion.

Education Provision for Older Women

Current educational opportunities for older women are almost nonexistent. The majority of social, recreational, and educational programs designed for later life are based on a personal growth concept that is highly individualistic and directed toward the "expressive" needs of seniors. These programs are normally provided through seniors' centres, continuing education departments and community centres, and offer hobby, fitness, artistic, and literary activities. In themselves, these programs provide an opportunity for social and personal development but fall short of being instrumental in significantly altering the well-being of aging women or changing either personal or societal concepts about old age and old women. Although studies have indicated that older women prefer expressive activities as opposed to instrumental ones (like career advancement), the reasons for this are not entirely clear. We know that for many elderly women, education has not figured positively or prominently in their lives. Older women have been socialized to have low expectations of what is available to them in the way of educational programming. And older women often have low expectations of themselves - they experience feelings of being "too old," "too dumb," or of it being "too late."

Educational gerontologists support an approach to "senior" education which focuses on helping seniors to make the transition into later life. Consequently, older adult education is geared either to leisure-oriented, expressive activities or to programs designed to help the elderly cope with late-life transitions related to health, family, and retirement.

Older women, for the most part, do not participate in women's self-help groups or feminist-related educational activities (Borkman 1982), although their feminist numbers are growing. They are more often found in seniors' advocacy groups or health-related organizations. Volunteer work figures prominently in the lives of aging women where the

care giving role - a familiar one - is continued. However, given the current and difficult situations that older women find themselves in, the need for resource development through education is crucial. There are many active, informed, and educated older women involved in seniors' advocacy groups and many of the concerns they are voicing are concerns of older women, although they are voiced under the neutral banner of "seniors' rights." Given the current political climate of anti-feminism, perhaps this is a wise, if perhaps unconscious, strategy. The danger is that as the most highly serviced of any age group, older women are viewed as the beneficiaries and consumers of costly social programs.

Until older women strike at the heart of the discrimination against them, in the form of negative valuing and lack of recognition for their past and potential contributions to society, little change can be expected. The role of education in directing and encouraging these changes may be a slow but inevitably powerful one if we begin to develop truly educational opportunities for older women.

Opening up Our Future

Older women deserve a tremendous amount of respect and appreciation, particularly from those of us who stand on the threshold of our own middle and old age. Never has a generation of women experienced the degree of change and upheaval in their social and personal lives as has the current cohort of women who are now in their 60s, 70s, and 80s and older. These are not "disadvantaged" women, but women whose accomplishments, talents, perseverance, and strengths have gone unnoticed, often unappreciated and undervalued.

Recommendations

Educational programs for older women:

- Programs assisting midlife and older women in developing vocational skills and career advancement.
- Appropriate and accessible personal, academic, and career counselling.
- Educational opportunities for developing individual and collective strategies to counteract ageism and sexism.
- Programs designed to assist with transitions related to the aging process, including health, relationships, finances, and retirement.
- Education to develop management, organization, and leadership skills for personal advancement and for public and political advocacy roles.
- Funded outreach and recruitment incentives to involve isolated and hard-to-reach groups of older women in community education programs.

Programmes éducatifs dont ont besoin les femmes d'un certain âge:

- Des programmes permettant aux femmes d'âge mûr et aux femmes plus âgées d'acquérir des compétences professionnelles et de progresser dans leur carrière.
- Des services de counselling individuels, scolaires et professionnels pertinents et accessibles.
- Des occasions d'apprentissage pour élaborer des stratégies individuelles et collectives de façon à neutraliser le sexisme et l'attitude négative à l'égard des personnes vieillissantes.
- Des programmes visant à aider les femmes à procéder à une transition due au vieillissement, dont santé, relations, finances et retraite.
- Cours d'éducation pour perfectionner les compétences des femmes en matière de gestion, d'organisation et de leadership de façon qu'elles puissent se perfectionner et jouer publiquement et politiquement un rôle de défense.

The situations that many older women find themselves in are often the result of social forces beyond their control. Educational opportunities have not kept pace with the demands and challenges they have faced and continue to face in negotiating phenomenal personal and social transitions during the later period of their lives. In exploring these issues with our mothers, grand-mothers, and older friends, younger women have much to learn. Unless we ask, their knowledge will be buried in silence. It is all too easy for us to forget that old age is the common territory of everyone and that the current generation of elderly women are the pioneers of what will inevitably be our inherited homeland. As we help to open doors to their present lives, we are, in turn, opening the doors to our own future.

Sharon Harold is currently finishing her Masters in Adult Education at the University of British Columbia, with a focus on the social construction of aging, gender issues in aging, and the development of theoretical approaches in educational gerontology. She is currently editing a book with James Thornton called Education in the Third Age: Canadian and Japanese Perspectives. She is the mother of four school-aged children.

¹134 to 100 at the age 65-74; 164 to 100 at the 75-84, and over 200 to 100 after the age of 85 (Stone and Fletcher 1986).

Education for Public Awareness

- Presentation through the media of positive images of older women to dispel negative stereotypes.
- Education of employers about the abilities and potential of older women as persons with multiple and transferable skills, and incentives for employers to hire older women.
- Incorporation of age and gender issues into disciplines such as social sciences, economics, history etc.
- Research on income, housing, transportation, and employment issues related to age and gender.

Policy and Funding Issues

- Advocacy at all levels of government to develop and promote equitable policy in employment, health care, pensions, domestic relationships, and education for older women.
- Educational funding, through scholarships, apprenticeships, and subsidies for older re-entry women.
- Financial support for developing co-operative enterprises, community networks, and shared resource exchange.
- Recognition and support of caregivers and caregiving roles for and by older women through funding, respite services, education, and compensation.
- Promotion and funding of research on women's aging through grants and scholarships.

Campagne visant à sensibiliser le public

- Présentation par l'intermédiaire des médias d'images positives des femmes d'un certain âge et les inciter à embaucher des femmes d'un certain âge.
- Traiter dans les matières scolaires, comme les sciences sociales, l'économie, l'histoire, etc., des questions portant sur l'âge et les deux sexes.
- Procéder à des recherches sur des questions relatives au revenu, au logement, au transport et à l'emploi par rapport à l'âge et au sexe.

Mesures et subventions à envisager

- Faire pression à tous les niveaux de gouvernement pour promouvoir une politique équitable à l'égard des femmes d'un certain âge dans tous les domaines.
- Dans le domaine de l'éducation, octroi de subventions par le biais de bourses, de stage d'apprentissage et de subsides pour les femmes réintégrant le marché du travail.

- Appui financier pour mettre sur pied des entreprises coopératives, des réseaux communautaires et des échanges de ressources.
- Reconnaître et appuyer les personnes qui prodiguent des soins aux femmes d'un certain âge.
- Grâce à des subventions et des bourses, promotion et financement des recherches effectuées sur le vieillissement des femmes.

Coming to Terms with "Visible Minority"

by **Glenda Simms**

Recently I began to pay closer attention to the large numbers of Canadians who, like myself, are opposed to being labelled "visible minorities." I now wonder if the problem of "self identification," which is reputedly preventing both government and private sector employers from adequately implementing employment equity programs lies partially in the use of the label "visible minority" and partially in the lack of political will to address some of the most serious social and institutional barriers of the Canadian society. Those of us who have raised these concerns find the "visible minority" label demeaning, anonymous, and psychologically distressing.

As a black Canadian woman I object to the term on a number of grounds. Firstly, it denies my identity. I am not a "visible minority." I define myself as a black woman who was born in Jamaica and is now a proud first class citizen of Canada. Secondly, it undermines my ability to define myself and forces me to accept an externally imposed definition. This is psychologically unacceptable. It is an assault on my psyche, and is part of the historical process of denying my inherent human right to seek the essence of selfhood within my being and in the context of my personal history.

I have no idea of the genesis of the term "visible minority." I became aware of its acceptance at the official governmental level when the document *Equality Now*, the report of the Special Committee on Visible Minorities in Canadian Society, was released in March 1984. In this document the term "visible minority" was sanctioned as the appropriate label for 1,864,000 or 7 per cent of the Canadian population. Included in this definition are Aboriginal peoples, and those with origins in Africa, China, India, Pakistan, Japan, Korea, Southeast Asia, Latin America, the Pacific Islands, the West Indies, the Philippines, and the Arabic countries.

I define myself as a black woman who was born in Jamaica and is now a proud citizen of Canada.

As a black woman I am very aware of the political and social uses of labeling. Back a few years, my people were part of the nigger/nigra/negro continuum. Later on they were the "darkies"; still later they were rendered "coloured." In the turbulent sixties and seventies they become "black." Contemporary writings inform us that they are "people of colour," Afro-Americans, or the most visible of the "visible minorities."

Le terme "minorité visible" est avilissant. Il marginalise et dégrade une grande partie de la population canadienne qui a servi ce pays et continue de le faire de mille et une façons constructives. Il faut se demander si en employant de tels termes on obscurcit pas les vrais problèmes que représentent le racisme et l'injustice et si, en englobant des peuples aussi divers en un seul groupe, on vise à atteindre l'égalité de tous ou seulement à établir un "hiérarchie des opprimés." Pourquoi la société canadienne éprouve-t-elle des difficultés à créer un climat où tous ses citoyens et citoyennes trouvent la justice?

Notre société change à un rythme accéléré et le défi qui se pose est de prêter attention aux filles et aux fils de "minorités visibles." Il y a des Canadiens qui n'ont jamais connu d'autres pays et s'attendent à vivre dans un système juste. Il est primordial que la société canadienne se concentre moins sur des définitions empreintes d'exotisme et davantage sur les inégalités sociales et économiques qui poussent tant de Canadiens et Canadienne à chercher réparation pour les torts qu'ils et elles ont subi au cours de l'histoire de notre pays.

In spite of the variety of labels and regardless of the social and political reason for the changing definitions, it is undeniable that the Canadians who are now marginalized have paid their dues to our society. These people descended from ancestors who helped to break the frontiers of Eastern, Central, and Western Canada, who worked on the railroads, fished in the coastal waters, ploughed and gathered in beet fields, potato plots, and fruit vineyards, farmed in obscure communities in some of the harshest climatic conditions, and gave unconditional love to generations of "white" Canadian children. In more recent times many of the "visible minorities" have come to Canada as students, domestic workers, professionals, skilled trades people, sponsored spouses and relatives, and as refugees. In short, these people are old and new Canadians and they have served and they continue to serve this country in very positive ways.

It is undeniable that the Canadians who are now marginalized have paid their dues to our society.

Given this perspective the questions that need to be answered include the following: Why does Canadian society find it difficult to create a climate in which all its citizens find justice? Why is it necessary to have employment equity programs for women, the disabled, Native Canadians, and the so-called "visible minorities"? Does the definition of so many Canadians as "visible minorities" obscure the real problems of injustice and racism in Canadian society? Does the targeting of such diverse peoples as one group result in equity or does it create a "hierarchy of the oppressed"? Who are truly the most disadvantaged people in Canadian society?

I have no answers to these questions. What I do know however is that Canadian society is changing at a very rapid rate. Whether we live in isolated northern communities, in rural townships, or in teeming urban centers such as Toronto, Montreal, Vancouver, or Winnipeg, we cannot escape the following documented facts: more and more Native peoples are becoming urban dwellers; one in three Canadians are neither English nor French; one in four Canadians fill the category of "visible minority"; immigration rates will rise in line with the government's plans and projections; and the majority of new immigrants will be from Asia, Latin America, and South America.

Given these facts it is important for the society to concentrate less on exotic definitions and more on solutions to the social and economic inequities that cause so many Canadians to seek redress to historical wrongs. The challenge is to pay attention to the sons and daughters of the "visible minorities." These are the youth of tomorrow and they are Canadians who know no other land. They expect justice; they will demand justice; they will fight for justice. They will challenge this society in ways that it has never before been challenged.

Let us plan for the future and come to terms with injustice rather than spend too much effort in the creation of new and meaningless categories of Canadian citizens.

Glenda Simms



Reprinted from WEdf, March 1990, Volume 7, Number 4.

Glenda Simms is past president of the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women. She is a founding member and a continuing Board member of the National Organization of Immigrant and Visible Minority Women of Canada.

Lady Bountiful

The White Woman Teacher in Multicultural Education

by Helen Harper and Sheila Cavanagh

This paper concerns the construction of white female teacher identity in the current discourse on multicultural education. Specifically, the paper delineates an image of the white woman teacher referred to more generally in the work of Honor Ford Smith as "Lady Bountiful." We begin with a brief discussion distinguishing multicultural and anti-racist education.

"Lady Bountiful" is the white lady missionary or teacher that emerged during the time of British imperialism.

Multicultural education, in its liberal guise, began in the United States, Britain, and Canada in response to racial tensions and unrest. It was developed to create what Cameron McCarthy calls a "curricular truce." While acknowledging that multicultural education is not a unified practice, part of what is assumed under this rubric is that cultural diversity is both a condition to be celebrated and a source of conflict. Within this frame, conflict is said to develop because of the ignorance and negative attitudes of individuals towards cultural difference, so it becomes paramount to change attitudes through information and cultural sensitization (Mukherjee). School strategies and approaches have focused primarily on supplementing curricular content with information about and from minority cultures and on changing (white) teacher and student prejudices.

Quite unlike multicultural education, anti-racist education locates the "problem" not within culture or cultural diversity per se but with the differences or values attached to particular cultures and cultural practices. In other words, the issue is not culture, but racism and ethnocentrism. Anti-racist education demands an "engagement with the politics of power" (Britzman). In part, this means paying attention to how practices, histories, and identities are produced and translated into the everyday, into "common sense," into what seems natural or normal. For example, consider what is marked and unmarked in the term "writer," "woman writer," "black woman writer," or "doctor," and "lady doctor." Whiteness and maleness are assumed within the term "writer" and "doctor" and do not need to be marked. Whiteness is the invisible norm and it "colonizes the definitions of other norms class, gender, heterosexuality, nationality, and so on - it also masks whiteness as itself a category" (Dryer 45).

Cet article montre les hypothèses qui sous-tendent l'image donnée des enseignantes blanches dans un système d'éducation multiculturel.

L'article dépeint plus précisément le portrait de l'enseignante blanche, appelée par Honor Ford Smith dans ses écrits "La généreuse bienfaitrice" - la dame blanche missionnaire ou enseignante qui a vu le jour à l'époque de l'impérialisme britannique et dont la tâche était de « civiliser » les colonies. La façon dont est représenté l'enseignante blanche dans les textes scolaires reflète le rôle de cette bienfaitrice. On incite l'enseignante blanche à « canadieniser » ses élèves et à apprendre à "connaître" leur culture, tandis que la culture blanche dominante et axée sur l'Europe reste une donnée invisible.

Les relations entre l'enseignante blanche et ses élèves immigrants ou minoritaires doivent être à nouveau analysées de manière anti-racistes, de façon à modifier les rapports de pouvoir dominants au lieu de les reproduire..

In many versions of multicultural education the specificity of whiteness is not named. Rather, information about non-white, non-Anglo-Saxon people becomes the focus. This focus, or "supplement" to existing curriculum, does not question schooling practices which render Eurocentric teachings as central (and normative) and other teachings as marginal (and problematic). Such an approach means that "other" cultures are represented only on special occasions - Hanukkah or Passover, Chinese New Years, Black History month.

This kind of curricular reform serves to keep invisible the authority and power of dominant groups and turn non-dominant groups into the exotic. As Richard Dryer notes: "Looking with such passion and single-mindedness at non-dominant groups has had the effect of reproducing the sense of the oddness, differentness, exceptionality of these groups, the feeling that they are departures from the norm. Meanwhile the norm had carried on as if it is the natural, inevitable, ordinary way of being human" (Dryer 44). Thus the minority student and her culture become, to use Deborah Britzman's term, "a special event." White Anglo-Saxon Protestant students and teachers remain outside of race, culture, and ethnicity.

To avoid a multicultural focus that centers on the exotic "other," some educators have made efforts to emphasize differences among all students usually by an examination of ethnic rather than racial backgrounds. Such an approach to multiculturalism depends upon a "proliferation of particularisms" (Laclou 87). That is to say, we all embody particular differences and these many differences should be celebrated. The notion that "we are all different" and therefore "we are all the same" ignores how power operates to determine the difference some differences make. The processes and practices by which certain differences are normalized, minimized, or ignored is not explored and thus the power and invisibility of dominant groups is assured.

To make visible the norm of whiteness and how white identities are constructed, conferred, and normalized is of tremendous importance in exposing white, Eurocentric assumptions about the world. This exposure will help to create the possibility for change. With this in mind we now turn to an examination of the production of white "lady" teacher identity in the context of multicultural education.

Lady Bountiful

"Lady Bountiful" is a representation of the white lady missionary or white lady teacher that emerged during the time of British imperialism. It is an image in which "notions of imperial destiny and class and racial superiority were grafted onto the traditional views of refined English motherhood to produce a concept of the English woman as an invincible global civilizing agent" (Wave). She was seen as having a unique duty to bring civilization to the "uncivilized." In the early 1800s, her role was to educate British working-class women in religion, morality, and hygiene. Exported to the colonies, the ideal of femininity became the white woman, an embodiment of chastity and purity who acted as a "civilizing" force.

Her ability to act as the civilizing force, to be the white teacher-mother in the service of the Empire, is dependent upon her need to be at the centre, knowing and helping her charges.

According to Honor Ford Smith, this image and role carries with it the imperative "to know" and the incredible arrogance of that imperative. Lady Bountiful, to be bountiful, must know and feel what is wrong and be able to fix it. She needs to be at the centre but at the same time her needs - her own "self" - remain absent. Her ability to act as the civilizing force, to be the white teacher-mother in the service of the Empire, is dependent upon her need to be at the centre, knowing and helping her charges. If Lady Bountiful doesn't know, can't feel, can't be in control, then she will feel guilt as well as the fear that she is unmotherly or unladylike or unchristian (Ford Smith).

Examples of Lady Bountiful abound, in historical documents, in popular culture, and especially in texts concerning English as a second language. Until relatively recently in Canada, it was charitable organizations and religious denominations that offered English instruction to immigrant families. The teachers were often the wives or daughters of ministers of church elders. Evident in the earlier part of the century, at a time when there was a large influx of immigrants from Eastern and Southern Europe, the task of these

ladies was to assimilate or "Canadianize" their students.

It was at this same time that the term "New Canadians" came into the lexicon and that in literature and speeches teachers were sometimes referred to as "cultural missionaries" (Jaesen).

In *Multiculturalism: A Handbook for Teachers*, a text co-printed by the Canadian Secretary of State and the Nova Scotia Teachers Union, the encoding of Lady Bountiful and minority students is particularly salient: "In a multicultural, multi-social, multi-ethnic

society such as ours, it is essential that those who presume to teach should know and understand adequately the cultures of those they are likely to teach... Quite often, a major cause of difficulty for teachers in understanding children of culturally different backgrounds is that they are in ignorance of the life these children lead outside school - except insofar as they may read or hear about it in its more sordid aspects through press reports of local crime and delinquency... The knowledge of students and their environment, their aspirations, their frustrations, and their dreams, is the first requisite of the teacher... All the students need support, security, understanding, and empathy, but those who are different culturally need them most of all" (McCreath 59-60). Lady Bountiful is produced in this appeal. In her "bountifulness" she will emphatically get to know her minority/immigrant students - to hear their frustration and their dreams, to sympathize with and support these "more needy" children.

"In a multicultural, multi-social, multi-ethnic society such as ours, it is essential that those who presume to teach should know and understand adequately the cultures of those they are likely to teach."

In *Teaching to Diversity*, a 1993 text that earned an award from the Federation of Women Teacher's Association of Ontario, Mary Meyers offers a construct of Lady Bountiful. In this case she is rather inadequate. As depicted in an illustration taken from the book, a confused and frazzled looking white woman is surrounded by a series of ethnic categories: Greek, Portuguese, Korean, Hindustani, Italian, Spanish, Farsi, Bengali, Egyptian, Ukrainian, Chinese, Somali, Latvian, Vietnamese, and Russian. Beside the picture the following question is posed: "Am I supposed to speak all these languages???" The white woman teacher is graphically represented outside of race, ethnicity, and culture. Evidently she does not have a personal history of immigration. She does not know how to manage the ethnic identities emerging in the context of her classroom and so is in need of support and guidance.

Meyers argues that the white woman teacher must collect information about culture. She must learn "facts" about "immigrant" culture such as "your students' special days, religions, and cultures" (Meyers 3) and languages. The teacher must learn basic facts about the immigrant child's personal history including information about

geography, culture, family situation, skills in the first language, personality, etc.

Under the category Family Situation, the following questions are suggested: "Are parents alive and are they together with the children? Are or have the siblings been separated? How long and where? Have all the siblings had schooling? In which languages? Has the family joined friends or relatives in the new country? What is the family's immigration status? Is there someone in the home who can speak English? Is anyone in the house employed? Does the family have knowledge of its ethnic associations in our city? Has the child witnessed or been the victim of any trauma before or during the move to our country? Is the family here for business, for example, a three-year term? Has a parent or family member had previous experience with North American culture?" (Meyers 4-5).

The production of knowledge about a child's family situation is important for considering

the child's personal history, but lends itself to a form of disciplinary practice which resembles the traditional work of white Canadian women in the area of social and moral reform. In the early twentieth century reform was organized around a series of issues which included attention to prostitution, prohibition, divorce, illegitimacy, poverty, and the "Indians and the Chinese" (Valverde). English-Canadian women worked to "raise the moral tone" of society, to purify the nation state of Canada (Valverde 17). Constructions of Lady Bountiful intersect with ideas about white women and social and moral reform. Lady Bountiful "collects" culture in the form of facts about immigrants. Social and moral reformers also collect "facts" about immigrants to Canadianize the foreign other.

Such facts are provided in the 1992 text Multicultural Education of Children and Adolescents by Leroy G. Baruth and M. Lee Manning. The table of contents reads: Chapter 1) Our Increasingly Multicultural Society; Chapter 2) Understanding Native-American Children; Chapter 3) Understanding African-American Children; Chapter 4) Understanding Asian-American Children; Chapter 5) Understanding Hispanic-American Children. The notion that one can understand and know the "other" is all within the capabilities of Lady Bountiful, particularly if the "other" is neatly totalized in chapters in a book. Identities of minority groups becomes stable, fixed, and knowable while whiteness is rendered invisible.

The imperative to "know" minority students and the language and image in which it is couched operates to keep invisible white privilege and the hegemony of dominant culture.

The Baruth and Manning text has its Canadian counterpart in the recently published *Children of the Canadian Mosaic* (Ashworth). The text, which is already on the curriculum for teacher training courses in Ontario, provides chapters describing the history of Native, Métis, Black, Chinese, Jewish, Ukrainian, Doukhobor, and Japanese children as well as street or poor children in Canada. The histories of white, middle-class Anglo-Saxon children in Canada are not named and become the invisible norm, separated from the "mosaic." This kind of depiction insures that the historical relationship between and among dominant and non-dominant children can be easily ignored.

It is important that teachers acquaint themselves with their students and their families. What we are suggesting is that the imperative to "know" minority students and the language and image in which it is couched operates to keep invisible white privilege and the hegemony of dominant culture. This serves only to reinforce the marginality of non-dominant groups. Lady Bountiful, in her more current day representation, may not overtly contain any colonizing aim or intent but the effect is nonetheless similar.



Teaching to Diversity, by Mary Myers, pg.20

It is predictable that for Lady Bountiful, and more generally, for white academics operating within the multicultural frame, a crisis point occurs when people of non-dominant cultures will not surrender their knowledge, their cultural practices, or their artifacts. Without this knowledge the role of Lady Bountiful cannot be enacted. It becomes imperative that the margin speak to the centre. As captured in the book *When Cultures Clash: Case Studies in Multiculturalism* (1984), there can be an almost aggressive insistence that this happen. After indicating the need to find community support for implementing multiculturalism, the author writes: "There are many other resources yet

untapped. Not the least of these is the membership of minorities themselves (many of whom are recent immigrants), whose task is to adjust to the Canadian way of life while sharing aspects of their own identity. In the same sense that newcomers have an obligation to their new homeland they should be expected to share freely of their background as a means of enriching this land culturally" (Friesen 16).

Nobel Peace Prize winner Rigoberta Menchu depicts the determination to keep her identity and culture from academics, who would have it otherwise. She writes at the end of her book (*I Rigoberta Menchu*): "Of course I'd need a lot of time to tell you all about my people, but it's not easy to understand just like that. And I think I've given some idea of that in my account. Nevertheless, I'm still keeping my Indian identity a secret. I'm still keeping secret what I think no one should know. Not even anthropologists or intellectuals, no matter how many books they have, can find out all our secrets" (247).

Conclusion

It is time in the anti-racist education of white students and teachers to turn the gaze inward. Instead of probing to find out about the "other," we must think about how our personal and collective histories and identities are produced in educational texts in relation to that of minority and immigrant children. As we have shown, constructions of white women teachers, such as Lady Bountiful, organize ways of thinking about gender, race, and ethnicity that serve to reproduce rather than challenge dominant relations of power. By analyzing this construct we hope the possibility exists to rewrite "Lady Bountiful," among other images, in texts of our lives and those of all our students.

Reprinted from WEdf, Fall 1994, Volume 11, Number 2.

Sheila Cavanagh is completing a Doctoral degree in the Graduate Programme in Sociology at York University. Her thesis concerns the role of white women teachers in multicultural education and English as a Second Language (ESL) program development. She is researching the history of women teachers as represented in the Federation of

Women Teachers of Ontario magazine.

Helen Harper is completing her Ph.D. thesis in the Department of Curriculum at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education. This fall she will be teaching in the Faculty of Education, University of Western Ontario. Her work is focused on issues of identity, representation, and pedagogy.

References

Ashworth, M. *Children of the Canadian Mosaic: A Brief History to 1950*. Toronto: OISE Press, 1993.

Baruth, L., and L. Manning. *Multicultural Education of Children and Adolescents*. Needham Heights, MA: Allyn and Bacon Press, 1992.

Brah, A. "Difference, Diversity, and Differentiation." *"Race," Culture and Difference*. Eds. James Donald and All Rattansi. London: Sage Publications, 1992. 126-148.

Britzman, D. et al. "Slips That Show and Tell: Fashioning Multicultural as a Problem of Representation." *Race, Identity and Representation in Education*. Eds. Cameron McCarthy and Warren Crichlow. New York: Routledge 1993, 188-200.

Coelho, E, et al. *Immigrant Students in North York Schools: Intermediate and Senior Divisions*. North York: North York Board of Education.

Dryer, R. "White." *Screen* 29.4 (1988): 44- 64.

Ford Smith, H. "ReMaking White ladies: The Construction of Gendered Whiteness in the Caribbean." Pres. at OISE, 1993.

Friesen, J. *When Cultures Clash: Case Studies in Multiculturalism*. Calgary: Detselig Enterprises Ltd., 1985.

Gilman, S. "Black Bodies, White Bodies: Toward an Iconography of Female Sexuality in late Nineteenth-Century Art, Medicine, and Literature." *"Race," Culture and Difference*. Eds. J. Donald and A. Rattansi. London: Sage Publications, 1992.

Jaesen, C. *"Multiculturalism and Public Education." Precepts, Policy and Process: Perspectives in Contemporary Canadian Education*. Eds. H. Stevenson and J. Wilson. London, ON: Alexander Blake Associates, 1977.

Kehoe, J. *Multicultural Canada: Considerations for Schools, Teachers, and Curriculum*. Toronto: OISE Press, 1984.

Laclou, E. "Universalism, Particularism, and the Question of Identity." October 61

(1992): 83-90.

Meyers, M. *Teaching to Diversity: Teaching and Learning in the Multi-Ethnic Classroom*. Toronto: Irwin Publishing, 1993.

McCarthy, C. "Beyond the Poverty of Theory in Race Relations: Nonsynchrony and Difference." *Beyond Silenced Voices: Class, Race, and Gender in United States Schools*. Eds. Lois Wise and Michelle Fine. Albany: SUNY Press, 1993.

McCreath, P. *Multiculturalism: A Handbook for Teachers*. Halifax: Nova Scotia Teachers Union and the Secretary of State, Government of Canada, 1981.

Menchu, R. I. *Rigoberta Menchu*. London: Verso, 1991.

Mukherjee, A. "From Racists to Anti-Racist Education: A Synoptic View." Handout prepared for the Toronto Board of Education, 1988.

Perry, T., and J. Fraser. *Freedom's Plow: Teaching in the Multicultural Classroom*. London: Routledge, 1993.

Valverde, M. *The Age of Light, Soap, and Water: Moral Reform in English Canada, 1885-1925*. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1991.

Wave, V. *Beyond the Pale: White Women, Racism and History*. London: Verso, 1992.

West, C. *The New Cultural Politics of Difference.* "Race, Identity and Representation." Eds. Cameron McCarthy and Warren Crichlow. New York: Routledge, 1993.

Women and Literacy Part II: But I'm Not a Therapist

**Watch for a new resource,
sponsored by CLOW and
funded by the National
Literacy Secretariat,
*But I'm Not a Therapist***

But I'm Not a Therapist examines in-depth, the links for women between literacy learning and trauma. It is based on a national research study that revealed the wide range of impacts that trauma has on adult learning. A large percentage of the women who come to adult literacy programs have experienced or are currently experiencing violence in their lives. This experience of violence negatively impacts on their ability to improve their literacy skills. Literacy programs and other educational programs have not integrated this reality into their work. This research makes it clear that without an acknowledgement of the impacts of trauma on learning, women, rather than getting a chance to succeed and improve their literacy skills, get only a chance to fail, to confirm to them selves that they really can NOT learn.

This book is directed to all those involved in the adult literacy field. It will also be of interest to other educators of adults and social activists. It is full of clear examples that will be much in demand by anyone involved in teaching.

The researcher and author, Dr. Jenny Horsman, is a community educator/researcher with a feminist perspective. Based in Toronto, she carries out research, writing, curriculum development, training and facilitation projects in literacy and workplace training.

**If you believe that women's lives are
as important as men's lives, this book
is for you.**

The Illusion of Inclusion Women in Post-Secondary Education

Edited by
Jacqueline Stalker
and Susan Prentice

**The myth of an inclusive post-
secondary education system is exposed!**

Order your copy now!

Published by
Fernwood Publishing, 1998
ISBN 1-895686-17-2

"I Would Emphasize the Joy of Science"

An Interview with Ursula Franklin

by Jan Clarke

I would emphasize the joy of science, the pleasure of doing it, the sheer shared fun when suddenly something works or becomes clear.

Ursula Franklin is well known for her interest in the social impact of technology. In her distinguished career as an experimental physicist and professor at the University of Toronto, she has influenced many women in their careers in science and technology. As a convinced pacifist, she has encouraged all women to become "citizen scientists," that is, to gain a general knowledge of scientific and technical information in order to understand issues which interest them both personally and politically.

WEdf Guest Editor Jan Clarke interviewed Ursula Franklin when Ursula visited Queen's University in Kingston as a Scholar-in-Residence with the Art Conservation department. The interview took place in the relaxed setting of the Scholar's apartment where a lively discussion between Ursula Franklin and a small group of interested students and faculty covered topics ranging from math and science education, to art conservation, archaeology, metallurgy, and scientific research.

Heather Jamieson, an adjunct professor of geology at Queen's University, joined Ursula and Jan in the following discussion of math and science education for girls and young women.

Jan: What are your views on encouraging girls and young women in math and science? Are there any topics which you think particularly interest girls?

Ursula: If I were to teach science in school, I would not necessarily encourage the girls, but discourage the boys. So often math teachers mention that boys are so competitive and so on. I would just send those competitive boys to the library. I'd say, "If you want to be competitive, why don't you do it in the library?" If they want to organize everybody, like a sports team, they can do their problems in the library until they respect other people's contributions, and realize it's not all a question of who gets what fraction of the mark!

Notre rédactrice invitée, Jan Clarke, a fait passer une entrevue à l'Université Queen's de Kingston à Ursula Franklin, scientifique et éducatrice bien connue en raison de l'intérêt qu'elle porte aux répercussions sociales de la technologie. La géologue Heather Jamieson s'est jointe à elles pour discuter de l'enseignement des sciences et des maths aux filles.

Ursula pousse les enseignant(e)s à mettre l'accent sur "les joies des sciences" et "le plaisir ressenti de concert quand quelque chose marche". Mais elle nous met en garde : dans notre enthousiasme à vouloir compter plus de femmes dans les sciences, nous mettons peut-être trop l'accent sur l'enseignement des maths sous prétexte que c'est bon pour les filles. Nous risquons de fabriquer des "pousse-boutons" au lieu de former des femmes qui comprennent plus à fond les sciences et leurs répercussions sur nos vies.

Ursula fait aussi remarquer que le milieu scolaire n'est pas le seul endroit où l'on peut acquérir des connaissances scientifiques et mathématiques. Elle cite entre autres un exemple tiré de sa propre expérience: elle explique des points scientifiques très compliqués à des femmes qui désirent participer à des audiences publiques.

En pratique, Ursula recommande que les enseignant(e)s prennent conscience qu'il n'existe pas de différence entre les capacités des garçons et celles des filles, mais seulement des différences d'intérêt dans l'ensemble de la population étudiante. Les éducateurs et éducatrices devraient traiter les maths et les sciences comme une autre matière et mettre l'accent sur les joies de la découverte, plutôt que sur les notes et la concurrence. Elle fait remarquer, toutefois, qu'il ne faut pas sous-estimer la responsabilité sociale qui est liée à l'enquête scientifique.

I would very much look at the structure, the purpose, the way problems are phrased and the sorts of things that go into the teaching of science and math. I would emphasize the joy of science, the pleasure of doing it, the sheer shared fun when suddenly something works or becomes clear.



When teaching math and science in school, teachers have to be careful not to come across like one of the characters in Mordecai Richler's Jacob Two-Two books. I'm referring to Jacob's aunt who lives with the children while the parents are away. She is called Aunt Good-For-You by Jacob and his sisters, because everything she does from breakfast on is prefaced by telling the children "It's good for you." Math and science in school is often taught as if by Aunt Good-For-You. Nothing is done just for the enjoyment of it. You stay with math because it's good for you, you'll get a better job, you'll get to college. Not because it's nice stuff.

Math and science is often taught by Aunt Good-For-You. You stay with math because it's good for you, you'll get a better job, you'll get to college. Not because it's nice stuff.

Jan: I know I studied science because I thoroughly enjoyed it. But one thing I find myself particularly concerned about now is the need for girls and women to try to understand our technological society, in the citizen scientist role perhaps.

Ursula: Yes, though one has to distinguish between doing science and understanding science. I discussed understanding technology with people in the Faculty of Education here at Queen's. They said that one of their main roles is to teach kids to understand modern technology. I feel that they may be training button-pushers which has nothing to do with students understanding science or technology. Instead, it's pushing a button and saying "Aha!", rather than discovering for themselves. The education system has to figure out what is really required to teach science well. Is it to be housebroken with respect to technology, so that you don't jump up and down because you plug something in and it goes "bzzzzz"? Or is it really to cultivate the ability to do engineering, to design something, to practice that science? I think these are two very separate things.

There will be a lot of befuddlement if everybody has to understand science and draw some consequence from it. For instance, then you would say that anybody who drives a car ought to understand how an internal combustion engine works. If this were so most problems of urban congestion would be solved, because there would be such a nice limited number of cars on the road. Instead, to get a driver's license, you are tested on the rules of the road so you can safely drive a car without being a hazard to yourself or others.

What educators often want to "produce" are people who are technologically housebroken-able to drive their equivalent of a car in this technological society without saying "why on earth am I doing this?" One has to question what is intended by saying that girls need to retain their math and science in school. Is it for careers? Is it to contribute to a house-broken labour force that doesn't ask inappropriate questions? Or is it genuinely the wish to contribute to civic participation in a technological society? These are all different things, and they are taught differently.

Jan: My concern is that often girls drop science and math so early that they don't have the choice of any of these three options. If you like, they don't even get the basic rules.

Ursula: I'm not sure of that. Schools are not the only place to learn. I have worked with citizen groups on quite sophisticated issues, and haven't encountered any subject that I couldn't not only explain, but get understood to the point that "Mavis" would go to the library and take part in the research. In fact, many of these women become so skilled that some experts get apprehensive of them in public hearings. The whole area of public inquiry is very interesting. For example, two women who spearheaded the inquiry into uranium mining and the pollution of ground water in Nova Scotia were two professors of English. None of the initial advocacy group participants were scientists; many had dropped their math or chemistry in school. There's also a friend of mine who's an

authority on alternate energy and energy pricing, and who appeared before the National Energy Board in very technical debates. She is a woman who has taught history at high schools all her life. So the notion that the bus to science comes only around once, and if you don't get math by the age of thirteen you will never be able to understand it, is mistaken. There has to be more motivation for girls in school than to pass their math and science courses "just in case "

Jan: Do you think some of the women who are active as environmental advocates could be helpful within the school system, as far as giving girls a different view of science and technology?

Ursula: Yes. But that still reinforces the notion that you have to do it in school. I really doubt that anybody remembers anything they learned in Grade 10. Do you remember?

Jan: No, I don't think so.

Heather: But, the bus schedule is not that convenient if you are a motivated person who wants to learn as an adult. You can't do a science or engineering degree at Queen's by taking evening courses and it's very hard to do part-time study at all because there are few evening courses in advanced science. That means a restricted education for women who want to return to university to study science as mature students, but who also have other responsibilities such as a family, a job, or both.

Ursula: But our reaction ought to be to say, "School isn't the one and only place to learn science." What you learn in school may, in fact, be out of date by the time you want to use it. Why not open a large number of opportunities for women so they can acquire the knowledge they would like in a given area? We must not treat them as little kids by saying, "You first have to do your long additions before we'll talk to you about science." I have always felt that one should, in every setting, encourage kids to learn as much as they can, but avoid the Aunt Good-For-You attitude. In my generation this approach was still used to advocate such things as learning Latin, as a way to make learning other languages easier. Latin would sharpen our minds.

Jan: What do you suggest to avoid the Aunt Good-For-You attitude?

Ursula: The pleasure of math! The pleasure of playing with numbers. Teachers might bring in more of the human element, such as the story of the German mathematician Gauss, who was a child at a time when a slate and chalk were used. The teacher tried to keep his class of students occupied for an hour or so by asking them to add up all the numbers from one to hundred. Gauss, reportedly a somewhat sullen and grumpy child, came to the teacher after a short time with the right answer. At which point he got a sound spanking because the teacher thought he had asked his older friends for the answer beforehand. But Gauss persisted he hadn't done that. Eventually the teacher asked him to explain and, of course, what Gauss had done was added $99+1$, $98+2$, $97+3$, etc., to quickly arrive at the correct number of hundreds. Any child you tell this story to, at the right stage in their learning, will say "Isn't that neat. I wish I'd thought of that." The pleasure of playing with numbers, that's what kids often miss in encounters with math.

The notion that if you don't get math by the age of thirteen you will never be able to understand it, is mistaken. There has to be more motivation for girls in school than to pass their math and science courses "just in case "

Heather: Having given a lot of thought to encouraging young women to go on in science and math, I've reflected on my own experience in school and read some of the current research on the problem. I've realized that you're exactly right. The fun of science has to be included, which requires excellent teachers. And if you're thinking about science as a profession, it has to be demystified and made available to those who aren't already exposed to it in their families. In the Canadian studies I've looked at, most of the people who choose science as a career have a parent who is a scientist or engineer. In 99 per cent of cases it's the father.

Jan: Does that apply to you as well?

Heather: Yes, my father was an engineer. It was quite an influence.

Another thing that comes up in women's studies courses when I talk about women in science, is the influence of an all-girls class. At Queen's there are several women scientists on faculty who were educated in all-girls convents (which by the way, they don't remember with much pleasure). But I wonder now if these all-girls schools made quite a difference to them. I went to a regular school in a small mining town and I was in a very small class. By some demographic quirk there were no boys of academic consequence in that class and so I measured myself against other girls, and I wonder

if that has made a difference to me too.

Jan: I have great reservations about all-girls schools because my experience with them in England was not positive. I worry that it's stepping backwards, rather than changing the way science is presented to girls.

Ursula: When I began to teach engineering twenty years ago, my first female students all came from all-girls schools in the separate school system. What makes the difference in these schools is that math is treated like everything else. For example, like music. Some people make a career in music, but nobody is expected to do so. You just teach music to all, be it for enjoyment or a career.

I was so intrigued by my first female engineering students that I made friends with the woman most often mentioned when I asked my students about their schooling. Sister Mary Benedict was often either one of their teachers, or their teacher's teacher. The interesting thing about her was her attitude. She was surprised to hear that other educational institutions would think there was a problem with girls and math. Her attitude was that even though some kids may have a talent for, say, art or French, it is the purpose of the educational institution to encourage a certain level of literacy and fluency in all fields. Then students can begin to see where their vocation might be. Nobody is excused from French, and nobody is excused from math. The students are expected to do as well as they can, at the same time it is clear that their interests will be different. This is the attitude we need to have in our schools, to say that there is essentially no difference in the

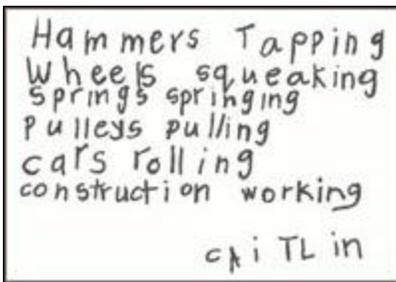
inherent abilities of girls and boys but different interests among all students.

Heather: Before we leave you again to your Scholar's peace and quiet, I would like your reaction to something I find rather distressing. Apparently, in the last few years of grade school, students have started to see scientists as evil and socially irresponsible. Engineers are still considered people who wear hard hats and drive trains, and for some reason biology is considered a more socially responsible and acceptable career area. But I'm very disturbed by this perception of science as evil.

Ursula: As a very convinced pacifist, I've always spoken to my students about the responsibility that scientists carry with their knowledge. If students going to university are suspicious of what's at the end of their studies in science, that's understandable, but one must openly discuss it. The constructive use of science is a lot more difficult than many of us thought it to be.

Reprinted from WEdf, Summer 1991, Volume 9, Number 1.

Jan Clarke is currently teaching sociology and women's studies at Augustan a University College in Camrose, Alberta.



Reprinted from WEdf Summer 1991, Volume 9, Number 1.

TECHNOLOGY

Noisy
moving
rolling
scratching.
rumbling

Tumbling
wheels
Turning.
Twisty
springs
Springing
about.

wire

for
axles
to
use.

Slimy
oil

on

rusty

chain.

Twisty

bolts

and

squeaky
wheels.

Pushing
handles
pushing
buttons.

That's what

Technology
is about!

by: Jessica Miller
and
Rachel Beattie

Literacy as Threat/Desire

by Kathleen Rockhill

What has been ignored is the experience of married, immigrant women with very little education in their own language.

Between 1976 and 1982 Kathleen Rockhill participated in interviewing over 100 Latino immigrant women and some Spanish-speaking natives in Southern California. Most had come to the U.S. from Mexico; some came from Guatemala, Colombia, Ecuador, and San Salvador. Anyone who had entered the U.S. after 1975 was living without documents. The majority were in their twenties to forties and married. Some were interviewed in couples and the study included three extended family histories. These particular women were interviewed because in the urban northeast and southwest where Rockhill worked, most of those identified as illiterate were not native speakers of English.

What the women and men said about their lives in these interviews challenged the prevailing assumptions in literacy theory and practice; it casts a shadow of power relationships inside the family on the bright ideals of advocates of the universal right to literacy.

What has been ignored, says Rockhill, is the experience of married, immigrant women with very little education in their own language, who see themselves primarily as responsible for the care of their children, husbands, and homes, and whose husbands, in one way or another, refuse them permission to seek literacy and education.

In this excerpt the gendered nature of literacy is explored, first by considering how the professional discourse is framed to mask women's experience and then by investigating how literacy is experienced in everyday life by working-class Latin women.

Kathleen Rockhill enseigne dans le département de l'Éducation des adultes à OISE (Institut des études pédagogiques de l'Ontario). Ceci est un extrait d'un article qu'elle présenta à la Conférence sur les femmes et l'éducation qui se déroula à Vancouver en 1987. Une version corrigée de l'article complet apparaîtra dans "Women in Education: Perspectives," dont les rédactrices sont Jane Gaskell et Arlene McLaren et que publieront prochainement les Entreprises Detselig Limitées de Calgary.

Dans son article, Rockhill remet en question les hypothèses sur lesquelles se fonda à l'heure actuelle le travail effectué dans le domaine de l'alphabétisation. Elle rejette la notion selon laquelle si l'apprenant apprend et si l'enseignant enseigne,

l'alphabétisation peut se faire avec succès. En s'appuyant sur les recherches qu'elle a effectuées parmi des Latino-Américaines en Californie, elle démontre que les réalités de la vie de l'apprenante, en particulier celle qui veut que l'homme la domine, sont autant d'obstacles qui empêchent son apprentissage. Elle cite entre autres Maia, à laquelle elle fit passer une entrevue dans le petit appartement où elle vit avec son mari:

Je ne veux pas être une femme d'intérieur toute ma vie. Je voudrais être quelqu'un.... Je voudrais sortir et discuter avec des gens, travailler, faire quelque chose d'intéressant, aider quelqu'un. Mais c'est terrible parce qu'ils disent "tu es une femme, tu dois rester à la maison, tu dois préparer le dîner." Il faut tout faire.

Celle qui est alphabétisée détient un certain pouvoir, dit Rockhill. Beaucoup tomberont d'accord pour affirmer qu'il s'agit d'une équation simpliste, mais c'est pourtant sur cette hypothèse fondamentale qu'on se guide dans le domaine de l'alphabétisation. Le pouvoir de l'alphabétisation a surtout été formulé en termes économiques. Pour l'individu, celle-ci signifie ne plus être pauvre, pour une nation de pouvoir se développer. De façon plus radicale, on accorde à l'alphabétisation un pouvoir politique, c'est-à-dire qu'elle représente un tremplin à la résistance en cas d'oppression politique et économique, une clef pour une transformation révolutionnaire. Rockhill remet en question cette hypothèse car elle croit que l'alphabétisation ayant différentes répercussions dans la vie des femmes, elle renferme en elle le pouvoir de changer les choses mais représente en même temps une menace.

* * * *

For women, literacy, in itself does not necessarily mean power; but when it is acquired through education, literacy poses the potential for change. The anomaly is that literacy is women's work, but not women's right. Caught up in a sexist world in which male relationships are primary and all-powerful, literacy is experienced as threat and desire.

These conclusions are based upon a study of limited English-speaking Hispanics who immigrated to Los Angeles. The purpose of the study was to understand how knowing or not knowing English was constructed by and constructed their everyday lives. In a recent re-interpretation of this work, I have been struck by the centrality of gendered practices and ideologies to these processes.

It is difficult to get people to talk about literacy. Most talk about language and the problems of learning English. They conceptualize their situation as one of not knowing English, not of being illiterate. While all stress the importance of learning English, they also say that they get by OK without it. As they see it, English is essential to advance economically, and yet they experience themselves, day by day, progressing despite their lack of English. Their sense of progress is explained in economic or political contrast to the lives they knew prior to immigrating, and in the hope they feel for their children. In the words of one woman, "I would rather walk in the United States than crawl in Mexico."

Most take an English class, typically soon after their arrival- and virtually all stop going before long, and then some try again, and stop again. Some acquire basic English literacy, typically those who already are literate in Spanish.

Literacy, in itself does not necessarily mean power; but when it is acquired through education, literacy poses the potential for change.

Language and literacy work differently for men and women. In the case of married couples, the wives often have more schooling in their country of origin than their husbands. This is particularly true for those couples with little schooling, where the woman may have had four years and the man none. The men tend to speak more English, and to be credited by both with knowing more English. Yet when presented with situations involving the written word, the wives appear to understand more. The women prefer to learn English through classroom instruction, and the men to pick it up informally. Most of the women express a great desire to attend English classes, whereas the men, while stressing the importance of learning, are less enthusiastic about classes. It is very common for the wife to go to classes with her husband and to stop going when he does. She may go again, but with a friend, almost never alone, unless there is a radical change in her work or marital status.

The most striking pattern is one where the women learn and depend upon the written word, whereas the men acquire and use more spoken English. This has to do with the confinement of women to the domestic sphere and with the structure of work available to limited English-speaking immigrants. Women talk of being afraid to speak in public, ashamed of not knowing English. Men stress the importance of talking, of making themselves understood by whatever means necessary. Men feel at ease in public in a way that women do not. For immigrants, the public takes on a special meaning - it is a world where English is spoken, a world that women venture into only if they must in order to work or to take care of the family's needs. They rarely go out alone; whenever possible they go with a child, relative, or friend. The situation is somewhat different for women who are not living in married relationships. They go out more and overcome some of their fear learning how to get around the city.

In talking about their fear, women speak of their vulnerability to assault. They live in the ghettos, in the heart of high-crime districts which stretch from one end of the city to the other. As do women everywhere, they feel themselves sexually preyed upon. They will not go out alone, especially at night, not even to attend classes. Because they do not drive, they are dependent on their husbands or upon public transport each, in its way, tedious and treacherous to "master" in Los Angeles, even if you're fluent in English.

This public/private split is reinforced by the family. Not only are there the demands of the home with which to contend, but husbands who will not allow their wives to go out of the house, let alone drive. Unless it is to perform the traditional work of women, or to earn money when it is essential to the family's survival, most husbands object to their wives going out. For example, Julie vividly describes her anger at her confinement to the home

for years:

And there were three things that I wanted, like I wanted to eat: to know how to work, to know how to earn money, to understand what my children spoke in English and to know how to drive. These three things, I wanted like I wanted something to eat. He (her husband) said, "No, I want my wife all for myself not for others."

Most of the women had to work for the family to survive economically. The gendered structure of work reinforces the public/private split. The work available to women tends to be an extension of their work at home and does not provide them with the opportunity to learn English in the same way that men can. In fact, this is a critical point. The men who learn more English work in situations where they have contact with the English-speaking public. Examples are work in small restaurants and stores, or as gardeners. After working with friends or relatives for a while who help them learn the ropes and the language, men will often manage to get together the relatively small amount of capital it takes to strike out on their own. (In Los Angeles, landscaping is especially popular.)

The range of work options open to women is much more limited. The choices narrow down to domestic or factory work. Unless a domestic worker happens upon a very unusual employer who helps her to learn English, she is confined to the home where she works and often lives in isolation, learning only the few English words that are specific to housework. In the factories, the possibility of learning English is even more remote. There may be some forced interaction with the supervisor, but the language used on the floor - when it is possible to talk - is Spanish. Talk is rare. As Gladys notes, most of the day is spent in contact with a machine: "Also, as they say, something that doesn't help me out at all on my job is the fact that never do I speak. Only sew, sew, sew. I don't have a chance to talk."

Not only are there the demands of the home with which to contend, but husbands who will not allow their wives to go out of the house.

If a woman does manage to learn some English, she may be promoted to supervision, which then places her in a very uncomfortable position vis-à-vis her co-workers as she must enforce management policies. After promotion to supervision, Clemintina's boss wanted her to learn more English, but she resisted, feeling her separation from her friends and knowing that, no matter how much English she learned, there was no way for her to use it except to further the interests of management which alienated her even more from the women with whom she worked.

Ghettoization is enshrined by the heavy use of illegal labour - that is, the hiring of people without documents and paying them deplorably low wages. Illegal status means constant fear of deportation. It would be a grave mistake to underestimate this fear in both men and women. With few work options, the responsibility of their children, and vulnerability to sexual abuse, the situation of women without documents is severe.

Many of the women we interviewed had been used by men, sometimes under the guise of love, but often through overt violation. When they told their stories, they told them in hushed confidences. Bacilio does not have shame with which to contend. After telling of his sister's narrow escape from rape by three men, "coyotes," whom she paid to transport her across the border, he candidly adds: "You know, it is a lot of work and difficult for a woman to come up here from Mexico. It's very rare that a woman makes it up here without having been molested."

Women in the country legally and not married are vulnerable in a different way. Since marriage is one of the few ways to acquire legal status, men seek out women who will marry them. It is not uncommon for the man to be already married. One woman found out the night before her wedding that her groom-to-be had a family in Mexico.

Perhaps because they have fewer opportunities to learn English informally, the women want to take classes, and do, if possible, soon after they come to the country. If married, they often go with their husbands, or they go with a friend. As indicated, all but the highly educated will stop going, although the typical pattern is several attempts. This is because of the enormous pressure of their daily lives. In contrast to the men, women talk about worry, anxiety, too much on their minds and feeling too old to concentrate on the difficult and time-consuming endeavour of learning the language and yet, they express the hope that "God willing, I will learn one day." Like a refrain, it runs through the interview with Gladys.

I am thinking of going to school within the next year. I went a few years ago, but I didn't continue because I had a problem with my eyes. Youth has more capacity to learn. But the mind of the old woman [she is 41] has more trouble with it. One thing or other, it's difficult to hold the reins of a house and family. And another thing to worry about work and whether there is going to be food and rent.

Gladys sees learning English as going to school and learning. There is a point at which taking classes is no longer a question of learning English but of going to school. Initial efforts to learn the language are seen as self-defense, survival. This shifts to a frame of "advancement," of getting ahead. It is important to understand this distinction in order to understand how it is that literacy can be both the taken-for-granted work of women and a threat. As long as the reading and writing or spoken English are seen as the rudiments of survival, there is no threat. Learning and education are a different matter; they carry a symbolic dimension of movement into a better, more powerful class and culture - another world, another life, which is both desired and feared.

Domination in the Family

Once literacy carries with it the symbolic power of education, it poses a threat to the power (im) balance in the family. Men need to feel in control; not only does this mean having more power than their wives, but controlling what they think and do.

The only woman we interviewed who has not been married is Clemintina whose urgent desire is to find a man who will treat her well and marry her. Otherwise, as a traditional Latina, she says she will have to continue to live in the home of her parents. For the Latina, marriage is the rite of passage, and the only legitimate option available to get out from under her father's control. Most women marry in their teens and if they are not already pregnant, soon are and before long have several children. Immigrants from Mexico tend to be poor, have large families, and live in inadequate housing. These conditions contribute to the intensity of woman's oppression in the household.

Women do most of the work of the household. In addition to domestic labour, they attend to most of the purchasing of goods, as well as transactions with social services, public utilities, clinics, and schools. We were surprised to find that most transactions requiring the use of forms are handled by the women. The husband normally does the banking, but it is the wife who keeps track of the money. In a detailed inventory of English-language situations in everyday life, women report handling almost all of those which involve the use of the written word. Where community workers provide help to those in need of it, the woman acts as the mediator. The exceptions, where men do most of the work, are transactions in the areas of transportation and home repair.

When women enter the public domain where English language is spoke, they do so in ways that involve specific transactions in a variety of situations which do not occur on a regular basis. They do not experience frequent, repeated contact in linguistically similar situations, so they cannot learn to speak English through this work. If possible, they go with someone who can help them with English. They do, however, develop some facility in understanding English, especially in deciphering the many forms that come into the house.

We learned this as women brought out papers for us to help decipher. We provided the help as they requested, but first asked what they thought the paper before us was about. In this way, we became aware that they can read more than they acknowledged.

Our staff talked a lot about what we increasingly noticed as the invisibility of women's literacy in English. In most cases, when asked, wives say that their husbands know more English than they do. When couples are interviewed together, the man agrees that he knows more English. Sometimes further questioning reveals that the wife can read more, but often her greater facility with the written word is unacknowledged. This is not meant to imply that literacy skills in English are good - nor that the literacy of the women is perceived to be less than it is, and that wives defer to their husbands as to who is more

In a traditional marriage, where women are the property of their husbands, men do not want their women to learn more than they know.

competent. My guess is that wives not only present their husbands as more competent, but believe that they are. Most of the women do not feel very confident in themselves, and talk of feeling ashamed. Several describe how their husbands "call them down," tell them they are stupid, illiterate, even whores; at the same time, they oppose their wives taking classes.

In a traditional marriage, where women are the property of their husbands, men do not want their women to learn more than they know. Except for a few cases where the man is well educated and/or fairly fluent in English, husbands are opposed to their wives taking classes or learning more than the rudiments of literacy in English. Once literacy carries with it the symbolic power of education, it poses a threat to the power (im)balance in the family. Men need to feel in control; not only does this mean having more power than their wives, but controlling what they think and do. This is especially so in a society where the man feels little or no power at work, in the family



L. Emily Elliot

as the breadwinner, or in other positions associated with masculinity. This may explain the large investment in the macho act of drinking. According to the women we interviewed, masculinity as domination is especially brutal in a culture where machismo reigns. The words of Maria echo the feelings of many: "I don't want a macho. I want a man ."

Many of the women live with violence in their daily lives. Alcoholism, or heavy drinking by their husbands, left them feeling desperate. Modesta breaks down and sobs: "He drinks a lot. He is very much like a man. Right now, things aren't going very well for us. He loves his children very much but he treats me badly. Very badly." Several related stories of being physically beaten; some flee their homes and a couple call the police or turn to the priest. Rosa related part of her story:

It got to the point where he was drinking so much. He'd come home and try to beat up on all of us. My children were very small. I used to tell him you can do anything to me - he'd get mad at me and beat me up - but please don't touch the children. Leave them alone.

While it is true that not all the women talk of violence, it is also very true that we asked very little about marital relationships - we did not even directly ask about the husband's attitude toward their learning. What is quite amazing is that these stories come out in the course of informal conversations between women about how English-language practices fit into the texture of their daily lives. It is the fact that I did not explicitly look for this

aware of the importance of reconceptualizing how we think about literacy and educational participation where it involves women.

Husbands do not have to oppose their wives taking classes directly for the wife to censor herself and never consider that possibility.

I have stayed away from including these incidents of violence to avoid feeding into racist, class-biased stereotypes about the Mexican immigrant community. While all women do not talk of violence, under conditions of systemic sexism, women are oppressed through sexual practices enshrined as normal by the family, church, and other social institutions. While its form may vary and take a more subtle shape, violence toward women is not limited to particular class or culture - and it has serious consequences for women's right to learn as well as for men's.

It saddens me greatly as I write this. I have lived in the face of male rage and violence. I have a feeling for what it means to live daily in the fact of threat, never knowing what act will be interpreted as a transgression, an attack upon male right or power, setting off an explosion. You do nothing to set off that rage and withdraw into the safety of a kind of death. You do not even consider moving in what might be perceived as a threatening direction.

Literacy is caught up in this dynamic of threat and withdrawal; for women, it is lived as part of the relationships of domination in the family. Husbands do not have to oppose their wives taking classes directly for the wife to censor herself and never consider that possibility. In situations where violence is part of daily life, and overwork already severe, it is almost impossible to find the energy to move in new directions, let alone those which may incite further upheaval.

This may explain why women are more likely to develop their English literacy skills once they are separated or divorced. Several of the women we interviewed had left their husbands and talked of changing their lives through education, especially those who are younger and know enough English to see a different kind of work. This is also true of the married women who have the support of their husbands. Youth, education, and knowing some English tend to go together, as does the desire for a better life.

Another key element is that women do not think of literacy, education, or learning as a right for themselves. When these are perceived as a right, it is as a male right. Several of the more articulate men we interviewed consider learning English, literacy, and education in terms of rights, for themselves and their children. Women frame their lives in terms of family relationships. Men present themselves as the agents of their lives and talk primarily about their own experiences, whereas the women talk about their families, especially their husbands' experiences and their hopes for their children. Within the family women never put themselves first, but always last. Elena, a highly educated, gifted woman we interviewed, now working as a domestic, explains how it is that she thinks of her life as a success:

I consider myself to be a successful woman because I went to the school and they told me that my son was the best and that he likes to study. That is a triumph for me. And then, my husband says to me, "My work is going better and better." This is also a success for me.

Yet Elena had to stop taking English classes because she could not find the time, with family responsibilities and working as a domestic labourer six days a week. She accepts that she will never return to her profession, and devotes all her energy to providing a better life for her children.

Not to conceptualize themselves as having rights, to put themselves last, whether by choice or force, and to take on the bulk of the work of the family, is typical of the women we interviewed. This is how domination is lived through the gendered practices of the family; these practices are taken to be natural and normal; it is how literacy is gendered.

When women talk of literacy, they speak of desire. They have to desire themselves to one day learn English, but most keenly they feel the desire that their children become educated. Literacy as education symbolizes hope for a better life, a way out of the working class into a world of middle-class culture and lifestyle. The dream for most is to enter this world through secretarial work, and for some through nursing or teaching. For women whose only options are field, domestic, or factory work, the world of commercial and professional practice holds the hope of being "somebody." This is what Maria means when she says, " I would like to be somebody, you know."

Yolanda, working nights as a cleaning woman, talks of saving to send her daughters to finishing school and of providing them with a superior education so that:

They have the way of getting a good job, without killing themselves, without having to work in the job that I have, which is not a ... it's not a job which one can be ashamed of but its not a very clean job.

Office work is clean work; it is also the way to meet a desirable partner for those who are unmarried. It also conforms to dominant cultural images of femininity which depict slim, well-dressed, unmarried, beautiful, smiling women working in offices. This image holds out the promise of marriage to a non-macho male. Marriage is not questioned. The violence of marriage is seen in terms of machismo, not the institution itself and the power dynamic it constitutes.

The women we interviewed cannot learn enough English to move into the next strata of occupations open to them. Efforts to train women for work in the trades will be problematic unless the issue of literacy as desire is addressed. The women we interviewed do not want to be machinists; they want to be secretaries - and this work is being revolutionized by technology.

To seriously act upon the principle of literacy or learning as a right-or even a possibility-for women, we must reconceptualize "the political." Our work suffers from a splitting

between the public and private which reinforces the domination of women through gender practices. While we've begun to look into reproductive practices, we are wary of acknowledging the centrality of family, religious, and other cultural forms, or sexual practices, to women's oppression. We act as though literacy is neutral, apart from these forms, and so miss its charged dynamic for women. We must be willing to venture into the sensitive world of the supposedly private sphere; the sanctified realm of the family and church, the hidden realm of the sexual, if we are to be with women politically.

This is an excerpt of the original version of a paper presented at the Women and Education Conference held in Vancouver in 1986.

CLOW Web Site
For information and updates on CLOW activities, visit the web site at: http://www.nald.ca/cclow.htm

Reprinted from WEdf, Spring 1987, Volume 5, Number 3.

Kathleen Rockhill has been an Associate Professor in the Department of Adult Education at OISE since 1983, when she moved from Los Angeles where she was a member of the faculty at UCLA. Since coming to Canada, she has been working on developing a feminist critique of adult education. She is particularly interested in theories and practices relating to the development of feminist critical consciousness, both in education and research.

Non-Traditional Fields for Women *Against the Odds*

by Sharon Goldberg

At the School of Natural Resources in Lindsay, Ontario, the emphasis is on practical, natural resources-oriented education in such diverse programs as Resources Drilling, Geological Techniques, Fish and Wildlife Technology, and Natural Resources Law Enforcement. For many years, very few female students applied or were accepted for admission to the programs and, currently, approximately 20 per cent of the student body is made up of women.

Support or lack of it can have a strong influence on the choices we make in our professional development and education.

As a faculty member of the School of Natural Resources, which is a division of Sir Sanford Fleming College, I became interested in the motivation of women to seek post-secondary education in non-traditional occupations. In the 1987-88 school year, I developed and administered a survey dealing with the attitudes of female adult students to studying in non-traditional areas.

Of the twenty-three women who participated in the survey, ten were in their first year, eight were second-year students, and five were third-year students. Their ages ranged from nineteen to fifty-one. They were enrolled in programs including Cartography, Farm Business, Fish and Wildlife, Forest Recreation, Forestry, Heavy Equipment, Law Enforcement, Environment Pest Control management, and Water and Terrain Geology.

The educational background of the women ranged from high school completion, to some college, to college completion, to some undergraduate work at university, to university completion in an undergraduate program. Their employment background covered all spheres: traditional (waitress, sales clerk, office clerk), non-traditional (farm labour, forestry, tree planting), a combination of traditional and non-traditional experience, and one woman who had never had paid employment prior to studying at the School of Natural Resources and who is also an international student from Zimbabwe.

Parents' educational and employment backgrounds were also varied. Some of their parents did not complete high school, some did, some a combination of high school and college education, and some had completed university. In addition, there was a split between those whose mothers worked outside the home, and those whose mothers did not. Surprisingly (to me), not one of the respondents had a mother who had paid employment in a non-traditional area.

En tant que membre du corps professoral de l'école des ressources naturelles du Collège Sir Sanford Fleming, Sharon Goldberg a élaboré et mené une enquête portant sur l'attitude des étudiantes à l'égard des études de nature non traditionnelle. Ont participé à cette enquête vingt-trois femmes, âgées de 19 à 51 ans. Sharon a découvert que la famille, les amis et les professeurs de la plupart de ces femmes avaient essayé de les dissuader de se lancer dans des études non traditionnelles. Les femmes sont tout à fait conscientes des obstacles qui se dressent devant elles lorsqu'elles poursuivent des études supérieures et se lancent dans la carrière de leur choix. Des écueils, comme le harcèlement de leurs pairs et instructeurs et autres difficultés du même genre dans la main-d'oeuvre, empêchent les femmes d'aller de l'avant dans le secteur des emplois non traditionnels. Toutefois, les femmes ne perdent pas l'espoir de voir des changements survenir à l'avenir et d'être un jour considérées par les hommes comme des partenaires à part entière. Il incombe à ceux et celles d'entre nous qui forment des femmes à des emplois non traditionnels de leur apprendre à surmonter les attitudes négatives auxquelles elles se butent pour les aider à atteindre cette égalité dont elles rêvent.

I asked, "What was the main reason that made you decide to attend the School of Natural Resources?", hoping to find out if there were any specific influences from the media, from their previous school, from their peers, etc. Instead the responses I got were very practical. Ten of the women chose Sir Sanford Fleming College because it "had the courses I wanted to study" or because it "was the best place to study in my field." Fourteen more stated that the deciding factor was their "interest in the environment" or that they "wanted a field where I could work in the outdoors."

"Our high school does not push anything non-traditional. They like to keep girls as secretaries [and] in the home ec. shop."

In terms of their plans for after graduation, not surprisingly, a healthy majority plan to work in their field, either self-employed or for someone else. Some stated that they would like to continue their education. Four students said as part of their response that they would like to get married and have a family, but none stated this as their only goal.

In the next section of the survey, I asked the respondents if they saw any difference between themselves and the male members of their classes in academic performance and in employment goals. For academic performance, the response was "no difference" (14), but a strong minority (nine) felt that women students did better, mostly because "they did not take knowing everything for granted" and in some cases were more motivated. The majority also felt there was no difference in employment goals, but here too, there was an undercurrent of feeling that women had to try harder, or were more motivated (three respondents).

I wanted to find out if these women had been supported in their plans to study in a non-traditional field by family, friends, teachers, and others, because I believe that support or lack of it can have a strong influence on the choices we make in our professional

development and education. Those people closest to us can have a strong influence either by setting up additional barriers or by helping us to deal with and overcome the barriers that exist. Following is a selection of the comments:



My father was the type who thought I would decide to get married and quit school halfway through. He did not have this attitude with my brothers.

I am going to go after what I want no matter who likes it or not. The support I have received has made it easier to cope with events.

Our high school does not push anything non-traditional. They like to keep girls as secretaries [and] in the home

ec. shop.

In a further question, the women spoke about the support they are receiving or are not receiving from their family, friends, and teachers now that they are enrolled in a program at the school.

One faculty member told the girls in my class we should be looking for different jobs in a different field.

I worked approximately 30 hours a week and it left me pressed for time homework-wise. Most staff did not care because it was waitressing. But when a few guys in class got weekend jobs pruning and did not get things finished it was "all right."

In response to a question regarding what kind of support they were receiving in their career choices, most of the women appeared aware of the problems they would face once out in the workforce.

Now I just have to get the support from the employers in my career choice.

My friends are a bit worried I might not be able to defend myself: They are worried about my well-being.

I do not feel the teachers here really care what my career choices are.

Through the study I wanted to discover if any of the women had been influenced in their choices of study and training by women's organizations and by the work of feminists in support of greater equality of opportunity and access to training.

I also wanted to find out how these women felt about this support. I received a range of responses:

Freedom. Feminism frees me (women) from having to follow the traditional norm of getting married, having kids and looking after them and the husband. It allows me to choose. I can be traditional if I wish but I do not have to be. It also makes me realize that I can be a total woman without a man. I do not need men's approval in order to feel good about myself:

Women's rights - I do not know really much about it, but - anything a guy can do I can do better.

Even if these groups did not speak out I would still be doing this on my own.

Sometimes I feel they are a bit too strong or pushy and tend to anger people more than help them understand our desire to work in these fields.

I do not think these groups have done anything but talk.

In response to the question, "Have you any role models that assisted in your decision to study at the School of Natural Resources?", I received few answers. One woman said David Suzuki, another said her brother, a third said a close friend's mother.

In the final question, I asked, "Do you have anything else you would like to say on the subject of women working in non-traditional fields?" It was as if I had pushed the right button - opinions, feelings, personal stories, came pouring out. I have divided the responses included here into first, second, and third-year students.

First Year

All I have to say to women who want to go into non-traditional fields is that you have to be able to handle the teasing and harassing. Once the guys see that you mean business and you know as much as they do, they begin to respect what you are doing. At first they treated me as if I were only there to get attention from them! Now that they know that is the last thing I would want they just treat me as one of the guys.

I think that teachers need to be educated regarding how to encourage equality-oriented attitudes. I have spoken to several of them during my past year here and although I initially elicited some defensive hostility in the end they all agreed with me and promised to make a better effort in the future. It is crucial that the education system reflect an equality-oriented attitude so that in the workforce, the same attitude will prevail.

I have had to supervise a male-chauvinist "pig" and it was no picnic!! Perhaps some professional development seminars would be helpful.

"Feminism frees me from getting married, having kids and looking after them and the husband. It allows me to choose. I can be traditional if I wish but I do not have to be."

Second Year

I get so angry at the injustice in the system we live by. I think it will take a long time for the sexes to become equal because not only do we have to fight against the ignorance and fear of men but also against the women who do all they can to ensure that women stay second-class citizens. There will always be women who want to work in non-traditional fields just as there will always be women who feel the place they belong is at home looking after the husband and kids have found very little difficulty in being a woman in a non-traditional field. In carpentry, I have occasionally encountered men who are a bit skeptical towards my abilities, but once they see I know what I am doing, they fully accept me as a carpenter. Things are slowly getting better each year as more and more women stick it out in fields of their choice.

Third year

I think it is great if the woman is genuinely interested in the field and is not just trying to make a statement about equal rights. I think time will help women in the workplace. All of the hoop-la and complaining done by women will probably just turn the men off (not to mention other women) and probably cause the transition to go slower. Women do not want to wait for their rights, but if we keep on pushing it we may not get anywhere. I do not think a woman should get a job because she is a woman - which is something that I see happening as a way to temporarily appease the vocal women's organizations.

My pet peeve concerns the fact that in this school we are forced into practicing verbally our women's rights by competitions that develop between male and female students. I do not consider myself a "women's libber" by any means, but find myself continuously harassed by comments from my classmates to which I feel I must defend myself. I feel that the "spotlight" should be dimmed somewhat, so that we can prove ourselves in the field by our work, and not by verbal comments. I know I am capable of any job given to me and I will complete that job to the best of my ability.

In spite of the division of the responses into three groups, it can be seen that, for the most part, they indicate the same concerns. The issues do not change, even though some of the respondents have been students at the school for one or two years longer.

These women are quite aware of the barriers that exist to pursuing their education and training and to further pursuing employment in their field of choice. While at school, they are verbally harassed by peers and instructors who ridicule and resent their presence. These women are also aware of the barriers they will have to overcome once in the workforce. They are aware that someone has to be the first in order for the others following to reap the benefits, but they find the pressures and responsibilities that come with being among the first aggravating and distasteful.

But rather than resignation to accept things as they are, I found in the students strength, hope, and determination to change their future work situations so that they can be accepted as equal partners. As a third year student said: "I feel that if a woman is capable

of doing the work required she should be given a chance to do so."

"Not only do we have to fight against the ignorance and fear of men but also against the women who do all they can to ensure that women stay second-class citizens."

How can we better prepare these women to face these challenges? The faculty at the School of Natural Resources teaches them the skills of their trade, but is this their only responsibility? I do not believe so. Those of us who are working with women, training them for work in non-traditional occupations, also have the responsibility to teach them how to live in a male-dominated work world, how to deal with the negative attitudes they will encounter and how to achieve a more equal and equitable working and living situation.

Reprinted from WEdf, June 1990, Volume 8, Numer 1.

Sharon Goldberg is currently the Women's Centre Program Coordinator at the Surrey Women's Centre. She has an M.A. in Adult Education from OISE, and is the author of Women in Construction: A Report on Access, Training and Retention in the Construction Trades.

Art / Craft High / Low

by Ann MacGillivray

Women artists recognize the importance of craft that has been relegated to the decorative and domestic.

Is it art? The enduring question has been asked since the Renaissance, when, explains Parker and Pollack in their book *Old Mistresses*, high art began to take place in the academies and decorative art was relegated to craft workshops. The academies eventually banned women from learning in their patriarchal halls claiming they could not be exposed to nude models; but as history has shown the truth was a much more complex matter.

The divorce between the creative forms of art and craft became complete in the mid-nineteenth century and thus was established the hierarchy in the arts. This division endured with few exceptions until recent times; only the last two decades have seen some breakdown of the structure. As the history of women artists is recorded, reasons for the art/ craft division have come to light in such books as Lucy Lippard's *From the Centre and Get the Message*, and Hess/Bakers' *Art and Sexual Politics*.

The result of these studies and the evolution from the patriarchal titled "modernist" to the "post-modernist" period has brought change. The once insignificant has become significant and slowly the art/craft quandary is recognized as a matter of culture. Feminism has exposed the prejudiced historical concept that one form of creativity is less valuable than another.

Women artists recognize the importance of craft that has been relegated to the decorative and domestic. Their art has slowly been raised from the floor to the walls, taken from the home/studio and placed alongside "high" art in the gallery context. As with other issues under patriarchal constraint, the change is taking years to achieve. We are fighting battles in all arenas that still discriminate against women and their art: gallery and museum spaces, art colleges, grant agencies, and in the public domain.

This discrimination lends itself well to continued division by the capitalists. Mass production of crafts by Third World artisans, mostly women in the textile trade, is only one example of discrimination for imperialistic profits. High art at high prices is still the code entrenched by a large number of male executors and consumers. The calculated promotion of ethnic values and goods encourages a desire for the more intriguing "high" art and incites a fantasy that can be satisfied with affordable "decorative" art products.

Est-ce que c'est de l'art? On se pose cette question depuis le Renaissance, époque à laquelle l'«art» et l'«artisan» étaient respectivement séparés en académies et en ateliers. Ce n'est que dans les deux dernières décennies que la situation a quelque peu changé. Les féministes ont mis en évidence le concept erroné selon lequel une forme de créativité a moins de valeur qu'une autre.

Les artisans du Tiers-Monde, que comptent surtout des femmes travaillant dans l'industrie textile, ont également pâti de cette discrimination et ont été exploités. Toutefois, on accorde de plus en plus de valeur aux oeuvres d'art que les femmes créent. La question qui se pose à l'heure actuelle est de savoir si nous voulons vraiment être reconnues par des personnes dont l'échelle des valeurs nous est étrangère.

Their art has slowly been raised from the floor to the walls, taken from the home/studio and placed alongside "high" art in the gallery context.

The inherent contradiction of the affordable and available ethnic crafts is a matter of economic hierarchy. Eskimo carvings and African artifacts are examples. When a creative product is manipulated by the entrepreneur to be "Original" (i.e. controlled quantity), the price is raised and the product then enters the high art forum of gallery or museum. Culture determines artwork's place and, as in the original dilemma, the patriarchy excludes/includes whatever/whomever it desires.

The importance of the art created by women, while having been excluded from the "higher institutions" is presently being acknowledged. An example is the recent research and writings that have brought rich sources of needlework to the forefront and given them overdue recognition. Articles of decor and ritual now in museums are breaking the boundaries once imposed on them and the post-modern discourse, recognizing inter-relationship of art and

craft, has discarded many of the distinctions made by its predecessor, the modernist movement.

As a woman artist who began 20 years ago as a weaver of functional articles and who continues to use textiles in my work, it occurs to me now to question the value of being allowed to play with the "big boys." As Lippard states, "Some women, however, have realized how unsatisfying success can be in an alien world with an alien value structure."

Reprinted from WEdf Spring 1988, Vol. 6.2.

Ann MacGillivray was a production weaver in Nova Scotia before going back to school. Much of her art centres on feminist and political concerns in Central America where she spends much of her time.



This sketch was part of a cooperative art process that took place during a visual brainstorming exercise held during a B.C. CLOW summer retreat.

The brainstorming exercise involved relaxation and guided visualization processes designed to liberate the visual artists in all of us. Each woman was asked to draw her ideas of what feminism meant, and what a world would be like that was a realization of feminist ideals." - Janet Patterson

Reprinted from WEdf Spring 1988, Volume 6, No.2.

Celebrating Canadian Women

Prose and Poetry By and About Women

Review by Maureen Shaw

Edited by Greta Hofmann Nemiroff. Toronto: Fitzhenry and Whiteside, 1989. \$35, 406 pp.

Because several well-known Canadian writers are women - Margaret Atwood, Margaret Laurence, Alice Munro - many believe that the status of Canadian women writers is good; that Canada gives equal opportunity and voice to its women writers. In fact, the reverse is true.

To find works by Canadian women writers is difficult and to find anthologies of their writing has been almost impossible.

Male writers receive most of the grants, support, and publication; the publishing industry is male dominated; English and Creative Writing departments in colleges and universities are staffed largely by men. Anthologies of Canadian literature and reading lists in English courses comprise mostly male writers. And while the reading audience in Canada is overwhelmingly female, to find works by Canadian women writers is difficult and to find anthologies of their writing has been almost impossible.

Celebrating Canadian Women: Prose and Poetry By and About Women, edited by Greta Hofmann Nemiroff, fills that void. In her introduction, Nemiroff refers to "the near invisibility of women writers and artists in the curricula of schools and universities" as one of the motivations for compiling this anthology. She is to be

celebrated herself for the success she has achieved in bringing together these women's voices that express in diverse ways the intricacies of women's experiences and perceptions.

The book contains short stories and poems from countless Canadian women, grouped under ten thematic headings from Growing Up Female to Power and Transcendence. Our most famous - Atwood, Laurence, Munro - are represented as are other well-known writers such as Dorothy Livesay, Audrey Thomas, Leona Gom, Aritha Van Herk, Ann Cameron, and Sandra Birdsell. But one of the book's strengths is its inclusion of the work of relatively unknown writers such as Lori Weber, Sandra Hartline, Sharon Carlson, Susan Glickman, and Frances Davis. Sadly, several notables are missing - Carol Shields, Jane Rule, Mavis Gallant - but perhaps Nemiroff did not receive submissions from them. Some of the entries are of questionable merit but the strengths of the rest overshadow the deficiencies of weaker ones. The final section, Biographical Notes on the Contributors, is helpful and enlightening, although a few of the writers are, unfortunately, omitted.

*Au Canada, le monde de la littérature comptant plusieurs écrivaines connues, on a souvent tendance à croire que ces dernières jouissent d'une situation enviable, qu'elles ont les mêmes chances et autant voix au chapitre que les hommes. Or, rien n'est plus faux. Si, au Canada, l'effectif-lecteur se compose surtout de femmes, il est en revanche difficile de trouver des ouvrages d'écrivaines canadiennes et presque impossible de dénicher des anthologies de leurs écrits. Le livre *Celebrating Canadian Women: Prose and Poetry By and About Women* édité par Greta Hofmann Nemiroff, comble ce vide. Il contient des nouvelles et des poèmes d'innombrables nouvellistes et poètes canadiennes, regroupés sous dix rubriques thématiques. Les écrivaines les plus célèbres (Atwood, Laurence, Munro) y sont citées, ainsi que d'autres bien connues. Toutefois, l'un des atouts de ce livre est de présenter les écrits d'auteurs relativement inconnues.*

Les universités et les collèges devraient généraliser l'utilisation de cette anthologie dans leurs cours de littérature de langue anglaise et dans les cours d'études de la femme, car elle propose une vaste gamme de lectures diverses à celles et ceux qui souhaitent être à l'écoute des Canadiennes, qui éprouvent des difficultés à se faire entendre.

Similar anthologies of this kind, of which there are few, include Rosemary Sullivan's *Stories by Canadian Women and More Stories by Canadian Women*. But these two collections differ in purpose and kind. Both, most obviously, are anthologies of just short stories. The first volume takes a historical approach, starting with Isabella Valancy Crawford and ending with Aritha Van Herk. The second volume includes "new writers," those who have risen to prominence in the last two decades, such as Janice Kulyk Keefer and Bharati Mukherjee. Neither volume uses the thematic linking of *Celebrating Canadian Women*. Nemiroff also intended that her anthology serve as a complement to *Women & Men: Interdisciplinary Reading on Gender* (Fitzhenry and Whiteside, 1987) although as she points out: "the focus in *Women and Men* is on describing, explaining, and remediating the issues under discussion. The works in *Celebrating Canadian Women* illuminate how women perceive and define these experiences."

This anthology should be widely used in college and university courses, whether in English or Women's Studies. Lately, the white, male dominated "canon" of literature in English courses has been challenged by those who realize that a much wider diversity of human experience needs to be expressed and recognized; this anthology would provide a suitable alternative. And although the state of Women's Studies courses in Canada is deplorable, as Nemiroff outlined in the spring 1989 issue of *Women's Education des femmes*, this collection would provide an impetus for developing new ones.

Celebrating Canadian Women in its diversity and range provides a wealth of reading for those who want to hear from Canadian women. They have had a difficult time being heard.

Reprinted from WEdf, March 1990, Vol. 7.4.

Maureen Shaw the President and CEO of the Industrial Accident Prevention Association (IAPA). She is also a wife and mother of Christie and Marc - both survivors and learners. Maureen is committed to ongoing opportunities to share knowledge and skills for the betterment of our community.



Current 1998/99 Board Members. From left to right, Suzanne Bailly; Nova Scotia; Maria Cordeiro, Administrative Co-ordinator; Doris MacDonald, Prince Edward Island; Jo-Anne Stead, Ontario; Betty Donaldson, Alberta; Linda Shohet, Quebec.

Women's and Labour Market Adjustment

CLOW continues to be an active participant in the National Women's Reference Group on labor Market Issues (NWRG), a coalition of national women's groups who select and support the women's representative to the Canadian labor Force Development Board (CLFDB). CLOW members and volunteers maintain active participation in the NWRG, as well as the provincial women's reference groups in Saskatchewan and New Brunswick. In Ontario, CLOW members are also involved with the local women's reference groups, those that support women's directors to local boards. In October 1998, Pat Webb, recently a Past-President of CLOW, became a member of NWRG'S Executive Committee. Joanne Lindsay, CLOW'S Executive Director, has been the women's representative to the CLFDB since June 1997.

At the recent CLOW Board meeting and Annual General Meeting, held in Toronto in November 1998, CLOW provincial and territorial directors brought information about training for women, enabling CLOW to develop a cross-country map of the status of women's access to training, a map that was presented to those members attending the Annual General Meeting. CLOW is particularly interested in understanding the impact for women of the labour Market Development Agreements (LMDA'S), through which the federal government has transferred, to provinces and territories, management responsibility for the delivery of training and other employment services funded through Employment Insurance premiums. In particular, CLOW wants to know how these transfers will affect women's access to training opportunities across Canada. Also at the AGM, Ursule Critoph, a Senior Associate with the CLFDB, gave an update on her

research about the impact of access to training as Employment Insurance has replaced Unemployment Insurance.

CLOW has also been involved in another research project funded by Status of Women Canada, in collaboration with the Canadian Housing and Renewal Association. Two researchers from the University of Waterloo approached CLOW in September 1998, requesting assistance in identifying potential case studies for research on enhancing women's economic participation through housing development. As part of the research, CLOW hosted, in December 1998, a focus group in Toronto that brought together women involved in skills training, community economic development and housing development.



From the front, clock wise around the circle: Jenny Horsman; Pam Evans; Ursule Critoph; Cheryl Senecal; Joanne Lindsay; Linda Shohet; Betty Butterworth; Suzanne Bailly; Catherine Cookson; Roberta Bishop.
CLOW'S November 1998 ACM. Photo: Gaye Jackson.



CLOW
Canadian Congress for
Learning Opportunities for
Women

The Canadian Congress for Learning Opportunities for Women was founded in 1979 and is a national, voluntary, feminist organization with networks in every province and territory. CLOW advocates equality for women by promoting equal participation in our educational, political, economic, legal, social and cultural systems. To overcome discrimination based on gender, age, race, class, ethnicity, ability, and sexual orientation, CLOW focuses on improving educational and learning systems. Our work has included innovative research, advocacy, program development, educational resources and involvement in educational activities.

CCPEF
Congrès canadien pour la
promotion des études chez la
femme

Le Congrès canadien pour la promotion des études chez la femme a été fondé en 1979. C'est un organisme national, bénévole et féministe qui a des réseaux dans chaque province et territoire. Le CCPEF prône l'égalité des femmes en promouvant une participation égale de tous et de toutes à nos systèmes éducatif, politique, économique, judiciaire, social et culturel. Pour surmonter la discrimination qui se fonde sur le sexe, l'âge, la race, la classe sociale, les caractères ethniques, les compétences et l'orientation sexuelle, le CCPEF s'attache à perfectionner le système éducatif et celui de l'apprentissage des femmes.

