

with in many areas of their life. *Understanding a women's cultural identity will not alleviate her poverty or lack of daycare, and other special problems.* It may also lead to women being locked into traditional, oppressive roles.

*The state needs to begin taking responsibility for the immigration policies that have brought immigrants to Canada. It also needs to deal with the reality that confronts immigrants.* An added concern is expressed by Margaret Eichler, who states that over the past several decades, families in Canada — as in all highly industrialized countries — have been undergoing some rapid structural changes.<sup>6</sup> The rising divorce rate, falling fertility rate, and a continuing increase in the labour force participation of wives and mother, are only a few of the factors that have fundamentally altered the composition, structure and functions of families. As these changes have occurred, according to Eichler, the policies have not responded adequately to meet the needs of women and children. For example, the state has not significantly intervened in providing affordable daycare for single parents (usually women). In two-parent families, women are no longer working to supplement the family income for luxury items, but in order to provide basic necessities for their children.

The other issue that has not been addressed by the state is the forced dependency of women. Immigrant women are often found in hostels for victims of fam-

ily violence. Although there has been some service provided on a temporary basis in order to alleviate this difficulty, there has not been a real attempt to decrease women's dependency. Often women in this situation are trapped, with no way out: no remuneration is given to women to assist them in raising children. Women need this type of recognition so that value is placed on their work either in or out of the home. Without remuneration for the service they provide in raising children, they will never obtain the right to be independent. This lack of response by the state raises the question of what value is placed on children and women in our society.

My other concern regarding multicultural policy is that it may lead to the internalization by immigrant women of that view that their problems are due to personal inadequacies. This is particularly critical for Italian women because of the oppression they experienced being raised with the philosophies of the Catholic church. Internalizing difficulties is not uncommon for most women. There is the saying that women go mad, and men go bad because women tend to internalize frustration and anger rather than externalizing these emotions. This, added to the abuse that they experience through the media in terms of the exploitation of their bodies and their identities, becomes very worrisome.

*What do immigrant women have to do, say or be before we accept them as*

*women and as full members of the women's community?*

Women's ethnic identities should not be allowed to contribute to their further oppression. Women who immigrate to other countries do not seek to remain separate from other ethnic groups. Multiculturalism should not be allowed to divide women from other members of the women's community. Diversity should be encouraged and used to enrich women's lives, not to oppress further. Multiculturalism should never be seen as a separate piece of policy. It should be *integrated into every policy.*

<sup>1</sup> E. Kallen, *Ethnicity and Human Rights in Canada* (Toronto: Gage, 1982), p. 230.

<sup>2</sup> M. McGoldrick, J.K. Pearce and J. Giordano, eds., *Ethnicity and Family Therapy* (New York: The Guildford Press, 1982), p. 340.

<sup>3</sup> S.M. Tommasi, C.S. Tommasi and M.H. Engles, eds., *The Italian Experience in the United States* (New York: Center for Migration Studies, 1970), p. 340.

<sup>4</sup> McGoldrick, p. 347.

<sup>5</sup> Ed. B. Warfe, pp. 1-27.

<sup>6</sup> Margaret Eichler, *Families in Canada Today* (Toronto: Gage, 1983).

## Laced Shoes

Black, laced-up, stacked-heeled, my new shoes evoke memories of nuns' habits, corsets and pessaries, the old world ideas of sin and grace, virgin and whore. Pointed, they cinch my toes yet I am eager to wear them each day as if slipping into their too narrow fit, I am slipping back into a life familiar to me, a life of sacrifice. In these shoes, I am all women who believe in duty and vanity, who experience passion as an illness no drug can alleviate. These shoes lead me back down the convent halls of my soul, where the pain that makes me wince is a requisite for my salvation.

Anne Cimon

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