

films à petit budget, pourquoi vouloir changer?"

Depuis 1972, année où avait lieu le 1^e festival international de films de femmes à New York, il se crée d'année en année des événements similaires dans différentes villes nord-américaines et européennes pour faire connaître et promouvoir le cinéma fait par les femmes. Pas à New York, pas à Paris (Sceaux), ni à Londres, Toronto, Washington, Sorrente, Bruxelles, c'était à Montréal à faire ses débuts internationaux dans ce domaine cet été. Le pharaon devait jubiler!

Ma courte randonnée en bicyclette

s'achève, me voilà rendue devant le Complexe Guy Favreau, où je franchirai une autre fois les portes d'une salle obscure. Le grand écran s'est illuminé à de nombreuses reprises cette semaine, comme si la magie du Festival de feux d'artifices s'était repercutée jusqu'ici. J'apprendrai la semaine prochaine que 4661 personnes ont franchi ces mêmes portes, et que le budget de \$130 000 a été respecté! C'est donc une réussite sur toute la ligne que constateront les organisatrices, qui pensent déjà à la deuxième édition de ce festival qui aura lieu l'an prochain à la même période. Mais il est

à souhaiter qu'un tel événement ne "ghettorise" ou même n'ostracise le cinéma fait par les femmes: n'est-ce pas le revers de la médaille plutôt dangereux qui guette toute action positive?

"La vraie surprise du festival: Simone," *La Presse* (le 11 juin 1985); et "Envy: Good Topic, so-so film," *The Gazette* (12 June 1985).

²Et maintenant à Créteil.

Jeanne Painchaud est étudiante en Études françaises à L'UQAM et est une cinéphile avertie.

CHRONIQUE: CINEMA

HEAD START: MEETING THE COMPUTER CHALLENGE

Molly Ferguson

Head Start: Meeting the Computer Challenge, a new film produced by Studio D of the National Film Board of Canada (NFB) in collaboration with the Federal Women's Film Program (FWFP), urges women to consider how the technological revolution will affect our lives. Made for young girls who are about to choose a career, as well as for women already in the paid work force, this half-hour film examines the challenges women face regarding new technologies in the work place, and contains practical advice on how women can ensure that they benefit fully from technological change. It is the second in a series of films funded jointly by the NFB and the FWFP, a coalition of Canadian federal government departments and agencies founded in 1983 to promote an understanding of women's perspectives and issues through film. The first NFB/FWFP co-production was *Attention: Women at Work!*

What the film does do – it examines, urges, advises and tells – it does well. Women of all ages must somehow learn the facts about the work world before they can make wise decisions. But what the film doesn't do – suggest *how* to take action – is glaringly apparent. For example,



Scene from *Head Start*

Credit: National Film Board of Canada

one role model tells women to demand training, etc.: no one ventures into the *how*.

Part drama, part documentary, the film features Patricia Nolin as Michelle, a 38-year-old office worker, and Charlotte Laurier as Maureen, her teenage daughter. Maureen, who is learning about computers in school, is enthusiastic about the potential applications of

microtechnology. Her mother, however, is extremely wary – especially when she discovers that her new computer has enabled her boss to nearly double her workload and lay off a co-worker on maternity leave.

Viewers observe Michelle and Maureen in school, on the job, and at home – learning about computers, sharing their concerns, discussing how computers will

affect their career aspirations, and deciding how to achieve their mutual goal of financial independence. Intercut with the dramatic sequences are scenes illustrating the vital role computers now play in all aspects of our society – in schools, in offices, in a water filtration plant, and an engineering firm. Several women who hold senior positions in the field of microtechnology outline their responsibilities and their career paths.

Anne Bodnarchuk, Vice-President, Computer and Systems Services at Air Canada, explains that among her staff of eight hundred, women have rapidly advanced in the past few years into middle and senior management. She points out that one problem women face is their lack of confidence: "Women do very well, but that initial step into managing and supervising people is a bit of a shock, and you have to encourage them and show them they can do well." The critical omission here again is how to do this.

Also appearing in the film are Heather Menzies (author of *Women and the Chip* and *Computers on the Job*), and adult education specialist Michèle Jean. Menzies explains how automation of offices and service industries in which women are over-concentrated makes them vulnerable to job loss; she describes the type of

worker who will be in demand in the future. Michèle Jean insists that women must demand training programs and paid educational leave to equip themselves with the necessary skills. According to Diane Beaudry, the director and producer of *Head Start*, "the film not only details the impact of technological change. It also urges girls and women to recognize the need to be financially independent."

My quarrel is not with this valuable advice, but with the fact that, at the end of the film, mother Michelle and daughter Maureen are numbed by the prospect of what to do next. Michelle worries about being overloaded trying to retrain; Maureen sees ahead into the long, boring haul in school. We see them unsure about how to take control of their lives, and even resentful that they must. The film keeps telling us what to do, but Michelle and Maureen are not getting the message. There is so little psychological progression in the two that I felt that the film should show how they could empower themselves.

If it is true that fears about the unknown are legitimate, it is also true that women are exhilarated and motivated by the prospect of joining thousands of other women who are taking the initiative. A montage under the closing credits could have shown Michelle and Maureen talking to

support groups, meeting role models in industry, talking to university students in their lab – women asserting, exploring, questioning, deciding, taking control, buoyed up on a wave of new possibilities. That is the reality too.

In spite of these limitations, the film should be widely viewed by target groups.* But it needs a carefully designed follow-up discussion with plenty of resources, contacts, networks, retraining and enrichment information so that women can crack the barriers – not just talk about them.

*Suggested target audiences are:

- Guidance counsellors and Family Life educators
- Computer Science teachers (high school, college and adult education)
- Home and school associations
- Youth groups
- Women's Studies
- Women's groups and networks
- Trade unions
- Associations of women in the labor force
- Job placement and career orientation agencies
- Personnel departments in the public and private sectors

CHRONIQUE: LITTÉRATURE

DE L'OEIL À LA PLUME: QUAND LES MOTS DEVIENNENT VIE

Jacqueline Hogue

Trop longtemps, hélas, Gabrielle Roy a été pour moi le Prix Fémina de *Bonheur d'occasion*. A l'époque où les livres intéressants se comptaient sur les doigts d'une seule main, ce grand roman venait biffer d'un trait rouge la littérature édifiante et moralisante des années '40-50.

Puis le temps est passé. Le nouveau roman, venu de France, a envahi nos lettres. Fallait être à la page. Qui n'écrivait pas selon les derniers critères

risquait d'être taxé de traditionaliste, voire d'attardé; qui n'enseignait pas la toute nouvelle théorie passait pour incompetent aux yeux de ses collègues.

Et le temps a continué de passer. De se moquer des modes. Une autre a surgi, et non la moindre; celle-ci plus alléchante pour certains, plus ambiguë pour d'autres. Je veux parler de l'écriture féministe. Des colloques entiers à tenter d'en définir la nature. Subversion, contre-courant, écriture "à côté?" Tout cela et bien d'autres choses aussi. Recher-

che exacerbée de la figure de la femme, de la mère. Pourtant, énoncés et démonstrations demeuraient vagues; certaines affirmations laissaient voir un curieux parti-pris pendant que d'autres affichaient une inutile prétention.

Gabrielle Roy, elle, retirée loin des chapelles de toute appellation, ne cessait d'écrire. Pressée par les souvenirs et par le temps qui lui était désormais compté, sa mémoire s'entêtait à reconstituer le temps vécu, le temps de gestation. Et *La détresse et l'enchantement* paraissait enfin, quelques mois après sa mort. Également,