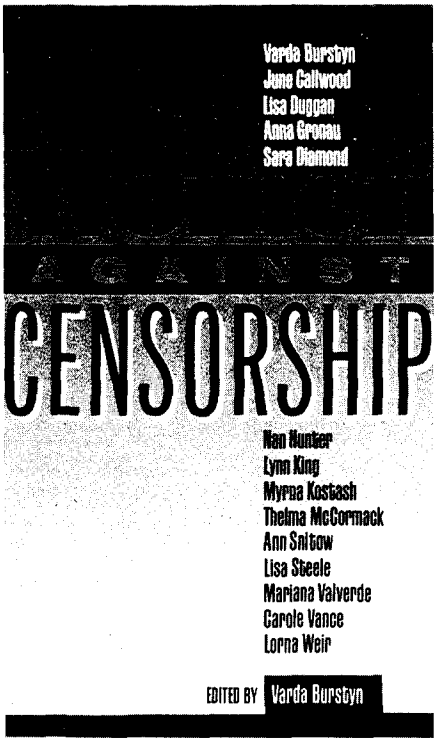
BOOK REVIEWS



WOMEN AGAINST CENSORSHIP

Edited by Varda Burstyn. Toronto: Douglas & McIntyre, 1985.

Kay Armatage

"No one who reads newspapers, watches television or talks about politics with others can doubt that sex is embattled territory today," writes Varda Burstyn, editor and contributor to this collection of essays. In the current crisis in gender relations, pornography has come to be seen as the site for struggle, along with abortion, over control of women's bodies. Strange and dangerous alliances are being forged. Feminists are linking with right-wing religious and political groups, many of them anti-feminists, as well as with the powerful leaders of the male-dominated state. And feminists against censorship find themselves on the same side as pre – and sometimes anti – feminist civil libertarians. This book is an attempt to sort through this intricately-mined battlefield, and to arrive at some strategies not only to defuse the current rhetorical arsenal, but to fundamentally alter the form and content of the war.

This is a tempest that has been brewing in the feminist teapot for a long time – to switch metaphors in mid-stream. Within the women's movement, sexual freedom vs. reformist controls have marked out divisions since the nineteenth century. The renegades, the bad sisters of the movement, have always been those advocating wider access to sexual information, birth control, bodily autonomy for women, and even free love. The social purists and maternal feminists, on the other hand, argued for the greater moral purity of women and their need for protection against rampant masculine sexuality, and fought against moral depravity of all kinds, including not only male war-mongering, political corruption, and drunkenness, but also prostitution, homosexuality, non-procreative sex, and the assertion of female sexual desire.

In the modern women's movement, the "sexual revolution" brought about by the pill, the freeing up of family life through communal living and the "smash monogamy" movement, the embrace of bisexuality and lesbianism as political expressions as well as extensions of women's sexual pleasure, and the fight for reproductive rights, have all been countered within feminism itself. Recently we have seen a renewed willingness to see women as victims of a repugnant male sexuality, a return to traditional family structures, a reiteration of the necessity for special protection for helpless women and children, and the neo-maternal feminism of Women Against Pornography, rejecting sexual "deviancy" among women as well as men and dismissing the possibilities of women deriving pleasure from sexual depiction, role-playing, experimentation, or sexual fantasy.

The single focus of such continuing differences amongst women has come to be the issue of pornography. The "recent boom in pornography" has come to be characterized as the monolithic first cause of not only violence against women, but incest, sexual inequality, "unhealthy sex," social and economic discrimination, and most of the remaining social ills of a rigorously gendered society. Burstyn sees the focus on porn as a diversionary tactic of the anti-feminist forces: "attention gets diverted from the fact that fewer and fewer resources are being devoted to improve the conditions of women . . . that real life for a large number of people is getting worse, not better." Lisa Steele shares her view: "Few men in positions of power and influence really care about porn at all. Porn is simply the part of women's agenda that they – politicians and others in power – can most easily buy into. They may hedge around equal pay, abortion rights, universal day-care, but ask them about porn and they're ready to rewrite the laws tomorrow, so deep is their 'concern.' " This level of diversion is more than simply a shift of attention, Burstyn adds. It actually co-opts the energies of feminism into expanding and reorganizing "the apparatus of social control:" police, courts, censor boards, jails, repressive legislation. And, in turn, the desperately needed social services shrink or disappear entirely.

Ann Snitow continues the argument: "Maybe, (the feminist antiporn) argument goes, the masculine power structure that resisted the ideology of equality will listen more attentively to the ideology of difference . . . If equality and gender-blind institutions are unobtainable, these feminists reason, why continue demanding equality? Why not demand instead specific recognition in law and custom of women's special nature and vulnerability?" While admitting that this argument may seem "compelling," Snitow argues that its base in the idealization of femaleness tends to undermine the movement's power to challenge the status quo: "In the antipornography campaign, the thing we

have most to fear is winning, for further legal control of pornography would, first, leave the oppressive structures of this society perfectly intact, even strengthened, and second, leave us disappointed, since crimes against women are not particularly linked to pornography and indeed have many other highly visible sources."

Snitow's argument introduces one of the principal strengths of this book: that it musters evidence, especially in Thelma McCormack's study of research on pornography, against the claims of porn as "first cause," as well as arguments against the political theories and strategies of the antiporn campaign. There is a great deal of interesting and important writing in this book, and each contributes to the argument differently. Journalist June Callwood mounts the civil libertarian platform; artists Sara Diamond and Lisa Steele tackle the question of the meaning and power of images; lawyer Lynn King argues against using the state and the courts to protect feminist values; and Carole S. Vance supports King's view with a vastly detailed critique of the Dworkin/MacKinnon antiporn legislation in the U.S.

Varda Burstyn concludes the text with an outline of "positive strategies," the "full feminist agenda" which will be the only real cure for the ills of which pornography is symptomatic. And this is where we find the major problems of the book. The alternative strategies range from the wistfully optimistic to the hopelessly daunting. Some are practical and already in process, but the conclusion, reiterated throughout by most of the writers, that only full-scale revolution will make any "realistic" change, is so depressingly enormous that it is easy to see why feminists have turned in frustration to a single-issue campaign that is not only specific but evidently possible, however incorrect and even dangerous such a strategy may be.

Moreover, the Dworkin/MacKinnon campaign draws on not only frustration, but the deeper emotions of disgust, outrage, sorrow, and hatred, lacing its rhetoric with titillating examples in brutally vivid language, and luring its followers with the thrill of fanaticism. Such an emotional appeal cannot begin to be countered by this book, whose writers consistently work reasonably, even patiently, in their attempts to persuade through logic and correctness. Eventually their intervention begins to pale before the traditional allure of the Satanic figure. Paradoxically, the neo-maternal feminists begin to seem like the bad sisters, while the revolutionaries have the stolid qualities of good old mom.

Personally, my problem with Burstyn's program is simply the order of priorities. The first action she calls for is the unqualified abolition of censorship of all media. To my mind, this is a goal for the future, coming only after substantial progressive social programs have been effectively installed. The women of the Scandinavian countries, where there is neither censorship nor marked progress in gender-specific social reform (despite the widely touted day-care system), find their lives to be hell, inundated as they are with every form of pornography from every possible outlet. Consumer boycotts have rendered some small towns "porn-free," but such measures have not been effective on an urban scale. We have a specific struggle in Ontario, where the censor board is particularly repressive and continues to expand its powers, but as a first priority for feminists, the total abolition of censorship seems almost as foolhardy and deversionary as the antipornography campaign.

Women Against Censorship is an important and useful book nevertheless. I hope that it receives the thoughtful readership that it demands and deserves.

THE MAN OF REASON: "MALE" AND "FEMALE" IN WESTERN PHILOSOPHY

Genevieve Lloyd. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1984.

Joan Gibson

In this concise and illuminating book, Genevieve Lloyd is concerned with the notion of the Man of Reason in western philosophy and, to some extent, with showing its implications for women, men and contemporary ideals of rationality. She examines the idea of reason as it has emerged over the long history of western thought, and offers a clear and original overview of its place in the philosophical understanding of soul, mind, scientific intelligence and personality. Lloyd shows that, while the understanding of reason has altered considerably, it has traditionally been not so much a defining trait of humanity as it has of *maleness.*

The merit of the book lies in Lloyd's careful documentation of the relation between the idea of reason and the male-female distinction in the history of philosophy, and in her masterful avoidance of the pitfalls of such a project. Underlying her study is the view that "our ideas and ideals of maleness and femaleness have been formed within structures of dominance . . . and the male-female distinction itself has operated not as a straightforwardly descriptive principle of classification, but as an expression of values." Her conclusion that historically "rationality has been conceived of as transcendence of the feminine . . ." is well supported by her solid scholarship. While the conclusion is not novel in itself, its demonstration is important. The application of this insight is central to her extremely interesting analysis of the tensions presently surrounding the relations of women and rationality.

The author is concerned with reason in two ways. In the first, reason is seen in the context of theories of knowledge as an ability of the mind to know the world, to assess and make judgements about truth claims, and to provide and critique the methods by which we arrive at belief and knowledge of any kind. In this sense, reason is normative in all disciplines and grounds our beliefs about the morally good life. Lloyd examines, but does not quarrel with, this aspect of the history of rationality. She appears optimistic about the objectivity and universality of reason. In accepting its centrality and primacy she dissociates herself from recent relativistic claims about rationality itself.

But if "reason is taken to express the real nature of the mind, in which . . . there is no sex," nevertheless human minds are always located in particular bodies, times, places and circumstances. Lloyd's second approach to the history of rationality derives from this. It is one of the commonplaces of modern philosophy that mind and thought can only be described metaphorically. Reason has generally been praised and prized within a context of metaphors which express its differences and superiority to some "other," and metaphors based on the relations of male and female have been prominent.

In turn, reason itself has been used to characterize classes of knowers and agents in the world. It is here that the sexualizing of character traits based on metaphors of rationality becomes problematic. By combining theories of knowledge with "our understanding of what it

is to be a person at all, of the requirements that must be met to be a good person, and of the proper relations between our status as knowers and the rest of our lives," Lloyd highlights "character ideals centred on the idea of Reason" – thereby exposing the essential maleness of the Man of Reason.

She gives serious attention to the ways in which ideas are both socially shaped and socially shaping. Her work fills a gap in the emerging sociology of knowledge and makes a valuable addition, especially to the new feminist work in the history and philosophy of science and the work in history of theology and religion. Her study encompasses the explicitly sexual metaphors of rationality and those non-sexual metaphors of dominance which have unintended sexist consequences in a society tied to sexual dominance.

She has cast her net widely, giving a loosely chronological account of the history of the Man of Reason based on pivotal philosophers from Pythagoras to Simone de Beauvoir. The organizing principle, however, is not temporal but is based on her examination of central metaphors.

In each of six chapters she elaborates one metaphor of dominance, showing its structure, its deliberate or unintentional relations to the male-female distinction and its variations and development in several thinkers. In Chapter One, the relations of rational knower and unknowable nature are shown in the metaphor of power over nature, expressed in Plato by the master-slave relationship, in Bacon in the image of fruitful marriage. In Chapter Two, the metaphor is self-control. The soul is thought of as divided into a higher, rational power and lower powers associated with matter and the senses. The need for self-control or virile rational dominance is described in Philo, Augustine and Aquinas. Chapter Three focuses on the rarity and difficulty of practicing reason, conceived by Descartes as an impersonal, universal method freed from all constraints ofmatter. Hume's attempted reintegration of mind and the world by the subordination of reason to passion restates the division of self in terms of instinctive and reflective passions. Chapter Four explores the image of intellectual and moral development, seen as youth progressing to maturity, in the works of Rousseau, Kant and Hegel. Chapter Five addresses the public and private uses of reason in Hegel and, in Chapter Six, the author examines the metaphor of rejection through transcendence and otherness in Hegel, Sartre and de Beauvoir.

Lloyd has presented a reading of the philosophers which is sober and careful. She does not misrepresent the role of her material in the work of the philosophers, and is generous in her recognition of more positive statements and intentions with respect to the rationality of women. She employs none of the more sensationalist quotes available from her sources, nor does she exploit current examples which attest to the impoverished maleness of the Man of Reason. This admirable restraint is perhaps most apparent in her concluding remarks in which she outlines, without attempting to solve, the dilemma of attempting to be a Woman of Reason. Here I would have welcomed less caution and more speculation. She remains faithful to the ideal of philosophy as the pursuit of reason, but is only guardedly optimistic about whether the philosophical critique can lead to cultural acceptance of the Rational Person.

The book is interesting and challenging. It is perhaps too brief at 133 pages. In particular I would have liked a somewhat fuller discussion of the social implementation of philosophical ideas. The style is generally clear, though brevity sometimes leads to terseness and occasional elliptical connections. The material is well presented, but requires more grounding in the history of ideas. The bibliographic essay is excellent, both in its provision of background and in its continued reflection upon her topic. This volume, which comes from the respected Minnesota philosophy publications, is well edited, handsomely printed and bound, although the cover illustration – a 1519 woodcut of Phyllis riding Aristotle – is muddy in reproduction, as well as being a slightly lurid and misleading choice for the text. Discard the cover; savour the book.

LOVE'S SWEET RETURN: THE HARLEQUIN STORY

Margaret Ann Jensen. Toronto: The Women's Press, 1984.

FANTASY AND RECONCILIATION: CONTEMPORARY FORMULAS OF WOMEN'S ROMANCE FICTION

Kay Mussell. Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1984.

Carole Yawney

I love Fridays . . . and it's not because of the lottery. Friday is my special day off after commuting the rest of the week between the city and my home in the country. A little relaxation before my weekend commitments. It's my very own day alone, since my spouse doesn't return until late in the evening. I determine my pace. I sleep late; I linger over coffee while reading back issues of the subscriptions; I tidy up the house a bit; and then I have a leisurely early afternoon brunch. By 1:30 p.m. I am curled up with some good home cooking and a glass of wine in front of the T.V. waiting for "As The World Turns." Until 4:00 p.m. I remain completely absorbed in my favourite soaps without fear of interruption or ridicule. I don't even answer the phone – and, anyway, I wouldn't want to disturb Paucity Bumpkins, the seven-toed wonder cat who lies snoozing at my feet. It's quite easy to catch up with the plots on Fridays, and besides there's something extra in the way of suspense thrown into the bargain, to help tide you over until Monday. A bonus, if you will, without even buying a ticket.

While participant-observation is the stuff of ethnography, going native is a most heinous crime in anthropological circles. Nevertheless, to fully appreciate the appeal of formula fiction, we need to experience romances the way their women readers do. Jensen and Mussell admit to reading scores of examples, but we'll never know for sure if this was only in the line of duty. As researchers we need to know more about the readers' subjective experience. Are we dealing here with a passive, lassitudinous state – like being rocked in a cradle – which produces alpha waves the way those strange little boxes generate negative ions? While such a hypnotic effect may seem innocent enough and even mildly therapeutic, it can be used to create a state of mind susceptible to easy programming. The question is: what is being programmed?

Jensen's and Mussell's books cover similar material but their approaches complement each other. Jensen's is a revised Ph.D. thesis: this is still evident in the

structuring of the chapters and in the many summarizing statements throughout the text, reminding the reader where she is in the construction of the argument. It would make a good book for students. *Love's Sweet Return* is also a sociological case study of one industry giant, Harlequin Enterprises, and its product. As a singular Canadian success story it would also satisfy the Canadian content quota in college courses. Jensen gives us an excellent discussion of the social organization of the formula fiction business, both its writers and its publishers, and provides us with several insights into this highly competitive market which generates half a billion dollars in sales annually in the United States alone. She shows us, for example, the sexist division of labour within Harlequin, where men play the decisive roles in management and administration, while the primary workers, both on the assembly lines and in the garrets, are women. Providing this kind of social context is a strength of Jensen's book, which Mussell's lacks. But should you want to try your hand at writing romance novels, Mussell's work by far reflects a more refined sensibility in these matters. And she goes further in relating some of the issues raised, such as the nature of sexuality, domesticity, and patriarchy, to current research in these fields.

Both books begin with an argument for making a serious analysis of the romance genre, despite the tendency of critics of high culture to dismiss women's culture as pap and pablum. Having affirmed that formula fiction deserves a closer scrutiny simply because it puts women's experience at the centre of the action, each author presents her case for and against. But first they detail for us the basic categories for formula fiction and the range of variations permitted. This new-found complexity alone should serve to shatter our stereotype of romance novels. I immediately found myself seeing the world in terms of elements borrowed from series romances, gothic novels, bodice-rippers, and the like. In this way I could turn the personal lives of real people into metaphors, proving at the very least that truth is more absurd than fiction. Applying formula fiction archetypes to female-male relationships isn't escaping reality, but simply mytho-poeticizing it, a possibility that Mussell touches upon but doesn't elaborate (p. 147). Jensen's book is organized around her basic point that "Harlequins are ambiguous, even contradictory, a fascinating combination of the realistic problems women face in our society and escapist solutions." Mussell's position is summarized in her statement that "romances simultaneously reconcile readers to the social myths from which they are trying to obtain relief by reinforcing the cultural message that such roles have meaning and value." *All* romances have guaranteed happy endings, but it's Mussell who is far more explicit about the limitations of the patriarchal social dynamics within which these dramas unfold.

The controversy surrounding formula fiction has to do with its effects upon women. Is short-term respite justified at the expense of long-term repression? Indeed, are there any long-term benefits for readers of this genre? In a conciliatory mood, Jensen offers freedom fantasies, language education, and geographical training as positive functions. She concedes that Harlequins have traditionally cast women in negative roles, but then goes on to suggest that the times are a-changing, that romance fiction is now incorporating modern scenarios, and that the future of the genre may be bright. Mussell is less sanguine about the genre overall, but she too concludes on a soft, wistful note: "despite their acquiescence to patriarchy" romances allow women at least to be "central to their own stories." A stronger political voice would surely invert that proposition: Whatever the virtues of formula fiction, in the final analysis it remains an instrument of patriarchy.

In this matter of weighing fantasy against repression both Jensen and Mussell skirt some central issues, while belabouring the obvious. It should be fairly clear why women read formula fiction. Writers of romance novels have most successfully pinpointed what is lacking in women's lives. They have marketed enchantments about protection, money, power, and romance. This they do in a bare-faced way; they make no attempt to mask the central appeal. We need make no search for subliminals or deep structure. What Jensen and Mussell in their earnest rehashing entirely ignore is the whole question of the impact of the medium as such on the consciousness of the reader. The production of formula fiction is one aspect of the massification of culture made possible by machine technology. Here artists become assembly-line workers, while the audience itself is marketed to the industry like any other commodity. In this situation reading becomes a perilous project for, if it is not undertaken with some conscious purpose, then it will likely serve to oppress the mind. Hypnotized by romance, the eyes swerve from line to line like a sort of typewriter carriage, learning deep respect for the right-justified margins, for proof-read copy, for print itself. That neat little fabrication called *the page* insinuates itself, under cover of rosy mists, as the autocrat of shape and form. Thus do we conspire to raise today's generation of word terminal girls. A century ago, did Nietzsche not say, *Another century of reading and the spirit itself will stink?*

It does us a disservice to suggest that formula fiction is in any way a part of genuine women's culture. Why should we want to confuse this print commodity with the truly intimate genres – diarist, poetic, epistolary – which women have developed? Among others, Walter J. Ong in *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word* (New York: Methuen, 1982) has pointed out that it was precisely because of woman's exclusion from élite circles that she had to create forms of expression that drew richly on the mother-tongue, while making use of domestic modes of production. To communicate with her sisters she applied pen to paper and what resulted was in every sense an expression of her unique personhood. This tradition should never be confused with formula fiction in all its chromium cynicism.

WOMEN, HISTORY AND THEORY

Joan Kelly. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984.

Mariana Valverde

American feminist history has given us many valuable studies of women struggling, individually and collectively, to make a mark on the public world. However, the emphasis on 'what women did in the past' can obscure the larger economic and social forces, the channels within which historical action flows. European historians have been less reluctant to study these forces and to face the theoretical questions that arise when one engages in this kind of deeper historical reflection. It is fortunate that one of the pioneers of women's history in the United States, Joan Kelly, was also steeped in French and Italian historiography and in Renaissance studies: this allowed her to

add a more 'European' dimension to women's history, thus remedying the empiricist and anti-theoretical bias that continues to mar this important field of women's studies.

Joan Kelly died three years ago of cancer. Her colleagues put together this book by collecting her most significant previously published essays, along with Kelly's own introduction and a foreword prepared by several of her colleagues. Her publications, at the time of her death in her early fifties, were not numerous, but they were key contributions to both Renaissance studies and women's history; they continue to be quoted and reprinted.

One of Kelly's central insights was that feminist historians ought not to just add a new file labelled "women's history" to the traditional discipline: rather, they had both to study what women did and, more importantly, rewrite history from a feminist perspective. Those of us engaged in this daunting task would do well to pause and consider Kelly's legacy to us, especially its methodological aspect. There is no space here to enumerate all the theoretical lessons embodied in the unassuming, elegant prose of the essays in *Women, History and Theory*. One example will have to suffice: this is Kelly's novel use of the concept of the state.

'Straight' historians tend to simply overlook the role of the state in their investigations. One finds many feminist historians, particularly in the United States, outlining the struggles of women without so much as a reference to the relationship between state power and patriarchal power. (The state, incidentally, is not only the government: it includes the legal, medical, and educational systems). On the other hand, Marxist historians tend to look at the state *only* insofar as it props up bourgeois rule, legitimizes it, and mediates class conflicts. Socialist feminist historians like Kelly are expanding this critique of the state to include gender as well as class domination. Given that gender struggle takes different forms than class struggle, the concept of the state has to be modified as we go along.

In a revised version of her 1982 essay "Early Feminist Theory and the *Querelle des Femmes*," Kelly makes the following comment about the relationship between the rise of modern centralized states and the emergence of feminist discourse among European upper-class women in the 15th and 16th centuries:

> *Feminist theorizing arose in the fifteenth century in intimate association with, and in reaction to, the new secular culture of the modern European state. It was the voice of literate women who felt themselves and all women maligned and newly oppressed by that culture, but who were, at the same time, empowered by it to speak out in women's defense. Christine de Pisan was the first such feminist thinker, and the four-century-long debate on women that she sparked, known as the* querelle des femmes, *became the vehicle through which most early feminist thinking evolved.*

Kelly explains that the cultural rebirth associated with the decline of feudal warfare and the rise of 'rational' methods of state administration was anything but progressive in regard to women. Women of the peasant classes were affected by a whole series of vagrancy laws, poor laws, and regulations against witches, prostitutes, etc. The net effect of these laws was to enforce a 'standard' household in which the master (father or employer) was in firm control of women and apprentices. In the meantime, the aristocratic women who had led armies, engaged in palace coups, and fought against rival barons for control over land – the main source of wealth in the feudal period – had to be replaced by a 'modern' domesticated woman.

As Kelly explains in her justly famous essay "Did Women Have a Renaissance?," both the new forms of the state and the emerging capitalist class relations acted to gradually separate off a domestic sphere/women's sphere. Cultural forms were used to construct and nail down this sphere of passivity, chastity, and loyalty to the master. For example, while the noble lady of the late Middle Ages was allowed to engage in fully consensual and passionate affairs with her male admirers, the Renaissance saw a new emphasis on chastity for women. Love poetry was still a major cultural form, but the kind of love was no longer the same. Dante's heroine Beatrice, an ethereal and silent inspiration to male Reason, replaces the lusty women of the troubador tradition. As Kelly says, in much of Renaissance male love poetry "the beloved may just as well be dead" (Beatrice, incidentally, was already dead).

Kelly does not stop with this analysis of cultural shifts: she looks for the socio-economic roots, and finds them precisely in the changing class relations and in the new forms of centralized state power. The new modern state did not have room for Eleanor of Aquitane or any other powerful woman intent upon making and unmaking kingdoms. Kelly adds that "the Italian noblewoman in particular entered a relation of almost universal dependence upon her family and her husband."

By not stopping at a consideration of women's experiences, Kelly challenges the long-held notion of the Renaissance as an enlightened period, by showing how gender struggle heated up in this period. She also traces the connections between familial and sexual ideology, state formation, and class relations – not a mean feat!

Finally, Kelly's analysis also allows us to see the double-edged character of gender struggle ('gender struggle' is not her term but it fits her dynamic view of history as contradictions). She describes the patriarchal push to confine women to domestic roles and deprive them of sexual, economic and political autonomy. But she argues that the very virulence of the attack, especially in misogynist tracts, caused a feminist reaction, in the shape of the first published defences of the feminine sex in European history. In this way we are able to see women simultaneously as victims and as resistors, as shaped by large-scale social forces but also as active agents. Since women's history tends to gravitate to the extremes (woeful oppression vs. glorious heroines), Kelly's balanced view, sensitive to both dimensions of our history, gives us a lesson from which we can all learn.

THE ORWELL MYSTIQUE: A STUDY IN MALE IDEOLOGY

Daphne Patai. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1984.

Erika Gottlieb

In *The Orwell Mystique: A Study in Male Ideology* Daphne Patai presents a case not only *contra* George Orwell, but against an entire society that has uncritically accepted Orwell's self-image – the lonely warrior in uncompromising battle against prejudice, oppression and exploitation. Examining the dynamics of this mystique, Patai's feminist critique is presented as a coherent thesis no feminist can afford to leave unread, and no Orwellian, unanswered. Holding Orwell to his own standards of decency and justice, Patai's verdict is that, in the final analysis, Orwell

"cares more for his continuing privileges as a male than he does for the abstractions of justice, decency, and truth on behalf of which he claims to be writing."

We should no longer be surprised that, like many other feminist critics, Patai finds yet another male idol to have clay feet, ranking Orwell with the growing number of writers (including D.H. Lawrence, Milton, Shakespeare, and going back to and including the authors of the Old Testament) who, we are being told, either do not understand or do not respect women. All this does not come as much of a shock: even dedicated Orwellians are ready to admit that Orwell's reputation does not rest on his feminine portrayals. Yet Patai does go further than most feminist critics when she suggests that Orwell's largely unconscious, yet deeply consistant gender ideology is a direct source of both aesthetic flaws and political distortions. The definition of human values according to a standard of manliness is at the heart of the matter. Consistently, often convincingly, and always brilliantly, Patai argues that this standard of manliness clearly excludes the female. Less convincingly, Patai also argues that this exclusion of the female implies contempt towards women as inferior, an assumption that underlies and undermines the validity of Orwell's egalitarianism.

In a series of insightful re-examinations, Patai submits all of Orwell's fiction to scrutiny, according to his own tacit standard of manliness, beginning with *Down and Out in Paris and London* and culminating in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. Appropriately, the analysis of Orwell's final novel as the essence of his political and aesthetic position is also the clincher of Patai's own argument, offering some of the most provocative insights into this novel that have come out of its academic and media exposure in this busy title year.

In a significantly original approach to *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, Patai introduces the analogy of game theory to re-examine the relationship between victim and victimizer in a totalitarian system. She also suggests that the relationship between Winston and O'Brien should be understood in terms of a game only males can play. In effect, she argues, it is the manliness of the players that is at stake, and therefore the outcome of this confrontation applies to men only. She also concludes that the ultimate vision emerging from *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is one of despair over the political-psychological future of humanity, a despair she relates to Orwell's uncritically androcentric definition of human nature.

In her attempt to integrate gender ideology with elements of the writer's political ideology and aesthetics, Patai offers a significant new insight both into Orwell, and, I believe, into feminist criticism in general. Nevertheless, Orwellians will and should take issue with Patai's conclusions on a number of areas.

As an Orwellian of the feminine gender, I agree that, like many other writers, Orwell feels more comfortable with the inscape of characters of his own sex, but then, the same applies to a good number of women writers. (Mary McCarthy's *The Group*, for example, is teeming with credibly realized female, and two-dimensional male characters). Therefore one should be rather cautious with the suggestion that the weak characterization of women, such as Dorothy in *Clergyman's Daughter*, indicates the author's view of women as inferior. As the example of so many male and female writers indicates, the predilection for greater empathy with characters of the writer's own gender does not necessarily follow from sociological or ideological premises. (Conversely, Tolstoy's empathy with and understanding of the exceptionally vivid female characters in his fiction stands in marked contradiction to the devastatingly anti-feminist tenets in his political and religious tracts).

But the premises of Patai's argument, particularly as they relate to *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, Orwell's major work, deserve the most vigorous examination. Is it true, for example, that Julia's portrayal reveals Orwell's misogyny, and that all the female characters in the novel are shadows, while the male characters are well realized? Finally, is it true that Orwell's androcentric definition of the "game" of totalitarianism leads him, inevitably, to despair?

Although Patai's analogy of the game theory has introduced a most suggestive matrix for the dynamics of totalitarianism, I feel that her interpretation tends to overlook some of the major strategies of the novel itself. *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is quite clearly the story of Winston Smith as Everyman, and there is no doubt that Orwell's Everyman is a male. Yet once we accept that the story is seen through Winston's eyes, all other characters – including O'Brien and Julia – will appear obviously less well realized than Winston. They exist mainly as milestones of Winston's journey – Julia, as the measure of the gradual and systematic liberation and self-healing in Parts I and II; O'Brien, as the indicator of the equally systematic breakdown of personality in Part III. Few perceptive readers have failed to notice that Winston's relationship to Julia is at the very centre of his quest in Parts I and II: the male-female bond is crucial to Orwell's definition of Winston's selfhood. The betrayal of this bond in Room 101 is tantamount to Winston's betrayal of himself, and marks his irreversible collapse as a human being.

Julia may indeed stand for a somewhat traditional, even stereotyped definition of femininity, yet she is clearly the only representative of positive values in Winston's private world; she stands for the very essence of his conflict with the values of Oceania, a world defined by exclusively public loyalties imposed by Big Brother upon the collective psyche. And if the model of Winston's private universe is traditional, one must remember that the novel's main strategy demands a return to the past as an escape from the intolerable future. Winston's only alternative to the submerging of the private self in Oceania is the emotional-psychological model of the family as it existed in the past – a traditional model with the woman as the emotional-sexual centre of man's private universe.

Orwell's attitude to the female is indeed traditional; he looks at the male-female relationship in terms of romantic, largely archetypal patterns. Defining the female as the Other, in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* Orwell would agree with D.H. Lawrence that only two in union can be perfect – hence the symbolic suggestion behind the glass paperweight, emblematic of the timeless perfection of the lovers' world: it contains and unites the opposites of maleness and femaleness. Traditional as Orwell's attitude may be, he seems to be in good company here with Donne, Coleridge, and D.H. Lawrence – none perhaps convinced feminists, but no misogynists either.

Another of Patai's provocative suggestions is that Orwell's flawed gender ideology makes him incapable of getting to the essence of the dynamics of totalitarianism, either the Nazi or the Stalinist version. Although there is no doubt that fascism had a strong anti-feminist bias, it is important to point out that, at least overtly, Stalinism was not explicitly anti-feminist. And it seems to me rather groundless speculation to suggest that, by

developing a feminist critique of either of these societies, Orwell would have arrived at a viable method of annihilating totalitarian systems. Patai herself admits that history does not offer conclusive evidence that women's achieving equality should resolve the political dilemma of power and violence. Indeed, there is more evidence for the claim that women's admission to the political arena would lead to the end of totalitarian terror.

Finally, it is true that *Nineteen Eighty-Four* reveals Orwell's ultimate despair about the future of mankind and about human nature in general? Like many other commentators within or beyond the pale of feminist criticism, Patai assumes that Winston's defeat signals Orwell's despair, and that somehow this defeat is due to a flaw in Winston's (and ultimately in Orwell's own) personality and ideology. Underlying these 'defeatist' interpretations of the novel is the assumption that in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* Orwell succumbs to some kind of a private nightmare, overlooking the fact that Orwell's vision of totalitarianism is not a neurotic mental construct; it is an accurate representation of the ascending dictatorships he had witnessed in his own lifetime, a growing threat he had every reason to anticipate.

What the 'defeatist' interpretation also overlooks is that one of the central goals of Orwell's strategy is to convince us of the deadly potency and longevity of the totalitarian system once it achieves power: in Oceania no individual human being could be left undefeated. Therefore, once we allow totalitarianism to come to power, no one could fare better than Winston Smith, our Everyman, the last man of Europe.

Winston's defeat by Big Brother should not be mistaken for Orwell's defeat in formulating a non-totalitarian alternative for the future. On the contrary: we still can – and should – oppose the forces that defeated Winston Smith. In fact, the impact of the novel does not come from the writer's pessimism about human nature: it derives from its power to warn against totalitarianism as something that is unnatural and inhuman, contrary to human nature. The frightening alienation totalitarianism creates between man and woman is one of the most powerful manifestations of these unnatural, inhuman forces.

Regardless of the disagreements about Orwell's strategy, most readers of Orwell will probably agree that Daphne Patai's thesis makes *The Orwell Mystique* one of the best informed, and most tightly argued works that have emerged from the profusion of Orwell scholarship in 1984. Patai's intimate knowledge of all aspects of Orwell's work should earn the respect of even the most dedicated Orwellian. In fact, even in 'debunking' the edifice of the Orwell mystique, she works intramurally, consistently relying upon the foundation of Orwell's moral-political terminology. The depth of her insight and the perceptive application of the feminist perspective to Orwell's own political and aesthetic thought make this a most provocative study. And even if Orwell himself would have defied an interpretation of his work in terms of "male ideology" (just as he would have rejected any other manifestation of the Procustean bed of ideology), *The Orwell Mystique* is a work that should offer enlightenment to all shades of opinion along the Orwell spectrum.

THE GIRL I LEFT BEHIND

Jane O'Reilly. New York: Macmillan, 1980; first Collier Books paperback ed., 1984.

Judith Posner

The appearance of Jane O'Reilly's essays on feminism in paperback is a godsend because, contrary to what some of the media have been suggesting, this book demonstrates quite clearly that feminism is alive and well. At the risk of sounding disparaging, O'Reilly's book occasionally reads like Erma Bombeck gone political. It thus reflects the degree to which feminist ideology has been assimilated and integrated into mainstream culture – which is not to suggest that things could not be improved but, as O'Reilly herself suggests, there is no turning back. In short, the book makes you feel good.

Before writing *The Girl I Left Behind*, or at least the magazine essays which preceded the publication of the book, O'Reilly was a full-time writer and twice-divorced mother who had, by her own admission, paid little attention to the feminist movement. She wrote on significant political (male) issues, not housework. The latter issue, which became a turning point in her thinking, pervades the book.

The book is really less a series of essays and more a bundle of ruminations related to feminism, first published in her 44th year (in hardback). In the introduction she comments that it took her quite a few years to realize that the concept 'feminism' applied to her. She refers to Gloria Steinem, who encouraged her: "I remember thinking Gloria was becoming too preoccupied with the subject of women;" and she is still able to recall how silly she first felt "raving on about something so unimportant as housework: "It took me three months to write 'Click: The Housewife's Moment of Truth' and when I finished, I had become a wild-eyed radical libber – a woman edged away from at social gatherings." In this regard, she even offers her own subversive version of how to get through the day. (To be contrasted, no doubt with the endlessly tedious advice of Marabel Morgan, *et al.*) First, she says, "Decide what housework needs to be done. Then cut the list in half." No rhetorical raving here. And it is this aspect of the book's tonal quality that makes it so uplifting. If cliché used to have it that feminists have no sense of humour, O'Reilly's book proves that we are certainly laughing now. And contrary to what some people might think:

> *Being able to take a joke is, perhaps, the first sign that you* are *taking yourself seriously, a rather necessary preliminary toward making anyone else take you seriously. One day in Washington a genial male colleague greeted me in the city room by shouting: 'Here she comes, hormones raging.' I laughed.* (emphasis mine)

The fact that we can all laugh with her and step beyond the stage of sober vigilance is a sign of just how far we've come. Not surprisingly, her humour is frequently aimed at her own ambivalence: "It is funny, actually, to be unsure of what you feel more offended by: your guests ignoring your opinions or not complimenting you on your soufflé."

Yet she manmages to be reflective without falling into self-disparagement. These gentle reprisals and ambivalences poignantly reflect the real lives of struggling contemporary women, and the beauty of her work.

> *Trying to be a perfect feminist, with daily examinations of conscience, is not really a big improvement on trying to be a perfect wife, mother, and lady.*

> *It is so hard to be a feminist if you are a woman. Every time I get another level of my consciousness raised, I find another, stubborner, layer beneath.*

In short, O'Reilly's book is filled with numerous quotable one-liners, perfect for pasting up on office (or fridge) doors.

There are some who will undoubtedly respond to her as just another liberal feminist, a concept which, for some strange reason, she never addresses (although she comes close in Chapter I when she talks about feminism as a middle class movement). Yet in this surprisingly readable, meandering set of musings O'Reilly manages to mention just about every relevant feminist issue from sexuality to housework, with pornography, rape, abuse, harrassment, the New Right, Third World women, and everything else in between. She discusses the personal and she also courts statistics when it counts. And, although the book is clearly about the American scene, it is certainly applicable to Canada; in fact, Canadians may find her discussion of the media distortion of the ERA particularly useful. All in all, it is a kaleidoscope of contemporary feminism that would be as useful in the classroom as out – the sort of book you want to share with men and women of all ages. And, despite the fact that the hardback version was first published in 1980, it is not really dated.

On the subject of discriminating against female reporters in athletes' locker rooms, she acknowledges the false sense of modesty, but goes further to cut through to the heart of the matter when she asks: "Why is it considered interesting to watch someone – male or female – ask a professional athlete clad in a towel what he thought about the game?"

About men: "I seem to have a cognitive dissonance problem, I keep reading about the New American Man, and I can't find one. I asked my men friends about signs of change. 'No, I haven't seen any,' they said complacently."

Not surprisingly, on the topic of sexuality she is especially funny and most clearly reflective of her generation, which was born a tad too early for the sexual revolution:

> *What would happen if I drove into a gas station, gave the mechanic a big smile, and said, "hyja, good-lookin', want to fuck?" . . . My tongue would turn black. Maybe I could put an ad in some discreet literary journal saying, "Ms. O'Reilly will be auditioning new lovers from two to four on Tuesdays."*

But O'Reilly shows her true colors (radical when it counts) without any elaborate rhetoric on the topic of child care, abortion and women's economic status when she writes:

> *In the United States the entire economy is run on selling through sex, but children are an unacceptable by- product of our marketing revolution. No one is responsible for them. Except their mother. But she is denied full control over her body, and at the same time denied a chance to become economically independent. Because she might get pregnant.*

Simple truths which poignantly express the paradoxical, Catch-22 situation of the contemporary female. It is no wonder that the feminist movement is a middle class one. Who else could even begin to extricate themselves from such a bizarre set of inconsistencies?

My only criticism of the book is its rambling, superficial nature. She is so good at times I would like to hear more from her on a topic, but she moves on too quickly. On the other hand, I suppose it is the nature of a work such as this and, perhaps too, the nature of the movement. As the Queen said to Alice, "This is a very fast country."

If we can all keep up with Jane O'Reilly we will be doing very well indeed.

ON THE TREATMENT OF THE SEXES IN RESEARCH

Margrit Eichler and Jeanne Lapointe. Ottawa: Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, 1985.

TAKING SEX INTO ACCOUNT: THE POLICY CONSEQUENCES OF SEXIST RESEARCH

Edited by Jill McCalla Vickers. Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1984.

KNOWLEDGE RECONSIDERED: A FEMINIST OVERVIEW

Ottawa: Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women, 1984.

Patricia Elliot and Lorraine Markotić

Although feminist researchers have long been aware of the sexist nature of much research, others have been slow to recognize the bias built into their methodologies, language, and interpretations. In an effort to raise the level of awareness among academics of sex as a social variable, the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council have produced a booklet on the subject, written by Margrit Eichler and Jeanne Lapointe. Although the booklet gave rise to "more than the usual amount of debate," the Committee finally agreed that, in the interest of "scientific rigour and objectivity," sex-related bias ought to be discouraged and a "dual perspective" (combining male and female perspectives) ought to be promoted. This approach is intended to foster "open-mindedness" with respect to the kind of research proposed, the concepts, language, methods and models employed, and the interpretations and statistical classifications assigned to findings. While one-sex studies are also acceptable (indeed, studies involving women are specifically encouraged), the findings should not be deemed applicable to everyone.

Although an "integrated vision" of reality is the long-term goal, the authors conclude that "given the androcentrism of our academic tradition, much new work from a female perspective will be needed before any adequate balance or combination will be possible." They do not, however, go so far as to advocate making funding for feminist research a priority, a step we feel must be taken. We also noted a contradiction in holding both that a) there is no value-free science and b) men and women can "detach" themselves from a male-dominant culture in order to conduct "objective" research. Most disheartening was the realization that awareness of sex as a social variable has still to be pointed out, debated and documented.

Who should read this booklet? The SSHRCC urges all researchers to consult it when preparing submissions to the Council. Given that this guidebook outlines the ABCs of sexist research in painful detail, we would urge all non-feminist researchers to consult it, including members of the Council itself.

Read in the light of the preceding document, Jill McCalla Vickers' edited collection, *Taking Sex into Account*, provides further evidence of the need to eliminate sexist research. Half of the articles involve descriptions of sexist research from a feminist perspective, and half deal explicitly with the policy consequences of sexist research. In the overview provided by Margrit Eichler, "Sexism in Research and Its Policy Implications," we learn that sex is *more* than a social variable, and that we need to consider sexism in the research

process as a whole. Here Eichler identifies three additional "entry points for sexism:" 1) the issue of who participates and in what capacity, 2) the conditions under which research is conducted, and 3) how research results get reported and published. She concludes that sexist research is bad and should not be funded because it distorts reality, reinforces sexist social structures, and prevents much needed research on issues of relevance to women from taking place.

Articles on sexism in language, in school curricula, in sex-segregated sports and in anthropological and psychological research all echo the main themes of the 1982 CRIAW/ICRAF Conference (from which these papers were collected). However, by now we ought not to be surprised that male bias and the absence of females can be found in every field of research.

More important for the advancement of women are articles which consider the implications of male research for feminist research and politics. In Mary O'Brien's article, "Hegemony and Superstructure: A Feminist Critique of Neo-Marxism," a critique of Gramsci also leads to important insights for the construction of feminist politics. Gramsci's theory of hegemony and counter-hegemony may be useful to feminists attempting to translate "the contention that 'personal is political' from slogan to strategy, from private to public, from school to family and from theory to practice." Barbara Cameron's critique of male bias and blindness to women's economic situation leads to the endorsement of concrete policies (unionization, equal pay for work of equal value, the elimination of married women as labour reserve) which male theorists have explicitly opposed. Kathleen Lahey suggests that child abuse be examined in the context of the sexual division of labour, and not in terms of women's abilities as mothers. Elinor Burwell's extensive research on aging informs us that funding for elderly women is not a priority because their specific needs have not only been ignored, but have never been researched in the first place. The remaining articles, dealing with welfare, housing, and prisons, all document the lack of research on women's specific needs and situations. The lack of funding for such research perpetuates women's invisibility, which results in the lack of government policy changes and in the lack of funding for women. The failure to take sex into account (and this is the basic argument of the book) results in the continued invisibility of women; in inadequate, sexist, or unformulated social policies; and in the perpetuation of what O'Brien calls "patriarchal hegemonic practice."

The edited collection *Knowledge Reconsidered: A Feminist Overview* is attentive to the implications of the arguments and the apparent intentions behind the publications of the previous two books. Each article discusses feminist thought in relation to a particular area of study. The authors examine how a consideration of women's place, or women's absence, encourages a reconsideration of the structure of the discipline and of the very parameters that are used to define and constitute it. For example, Andrea Lebowitz argues that feminist critics' considerations of forms of writing often associated with women (letters and diaries, for example) have brought into question both the assumed hierarchy of genres within literary criticism (poetry and drama being seen as "higher" forms than the novel), as well as presuppositions about what should be included or excluded under the category of a "literary work." On the other hand, the articles argue that little attention still is being paid to concerns specific to women, and that there is a need not only to correct this but to document how this occurs.

The theoretical implication in all the articles is that, in most, if not all, disciplines there exists what Dorothy E. Smith refers to as a "gender subtext" whereby it is not the case that women are accidentally overlooked or left out; instead the very structure and theoretical framework of the discipline systematically functions to exclude or diminish women's experience and concerns. The universal claims that are made, based upon an "impersonal" ideal of knowledge, are usually limited to what is specific to men, and women's particularity – women as subject – is seldom considered. Even in Anthropology and Sociology, Meg Luxton notes, which begin from theories about social relations between men and women, women have until recently, been considered only as "other," and have been theorized as "objects in relation to male subjects." Further, because this masculine bias passes under the guise of "universality," "objectivity," or "relevant criteria," it is not readily apparent. The need for feminist research, for studies on women by women, is one that must continually be explained, argued for and fought for: feminist research, all the authors acknowledge, is a political struggle.

The back cover of *Knowledge Reconsidered: A Feminist Overview*, published by the Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women, is decorated with a drawing of a large owl perched atop a women's symbol, the latter containing within it four hands linked at the wrist to provide a support. The most interesting articles in the book are those which are implicitly critical of the symbol and of the name of the institute, or which at least call them into question.

The book is at its most incisive when it illustrates that the notion of advancement is a problematic one. Sylvia Van Kirk points out that one of the dangers confronting feminist historians is that because women do seem to have "advanced" historically in terms of social and legal rights, feminist historians tend to devalue women's past actions, given the oppressive and restrictive structures within which these actions occured. Ursula Franklin insists that we should not expect women who have fought to enter traditionally male fields (such as engineering) to have a critical feminist perspective, or not to display characteristics similar to those of immigrants who, working hard to establish themselves in a new milieu, are hardly likely to be critical of it. Andrea Lebowitz points out that feminist literary critics' insistence on their "lack of impact," their not being taken seriously, "conceals a need and desire to be legitimized by the 'white fathers.' " If we consider feminist work to be a fundamental challenge to a discipline, we should not expect to be greeted with open arms by that tradition. There is a tension in the term "feminist literary critic," Lebowitz writes, which should be confronted rather than left unexamined.

Dorothy Smith writes that the Renaisssance of Women is and will be quite different than the Renaissance of Man. The latter was linked to a knowledge which flowered in relation to an "impersonal, abstracted and extra-local ordering of power." Women's Renaissance, however, must contend with the tension between women's need for "systematically developed thought and knowledge" (which somehow must be institutionalized so that it is not lost and so it need not be "rediscovered" by each generation) and the manner in which the pursuit of knowledge within these institutions intellectually detaches us from the very world of women which provides the impetus for our feminist concerns.

According to Hegel, the owl of Minerva

flies only at dusk, when the battle is over and the dust has settled. The articles in this collection, however, imply that the Renaissance of Women is a reconsideration of knowledge which occurs in the midst of things and through a struggle in which there is no clear sense of how to advance or – if there is one – we should be wary of it. They suggest that the concept of wisdom, often traditionally understood as something definitive, should also be reconsidered. And they further suggest that we should be careful about adopting and erecting traditional symbols, owls or otherwise, upon the symbol of women.

FEELING THE WORLDS

Dorothy Livesay. Fredericton, N.B.: Fiddlehead Poetry Books & Goose Lane Editions Ltd., 1984.

Heather Murray

The desire to celebrate and the refusal to commemorate drive Livesay's latest book of verse, a collection of new poems published for her 75th birthday. Suiting the occasion, Fiddlehead has produced a handsome volume, with clean type, clear spaces, and heavy paper, pleasing to the senses. It is (perhaps) her twentieth volume in a literary production that is the bibliographer's nightmare and the reader's dream: almost sixty years of poems, statements, rhymes and reasons, bestowed with a generous hand and scattered all over this country. The title of *Feeling the Worlds* tells us that her poetic project continues, in its quick apprehension of the many and the disparate. There is no closing, no solution or equation in this volume which marks time (as anniversary) while refusing to mark time. Here is a poet who is – to use one of Livesay's favourite metaphors – in full flight:

What is the best time?
The best time is tomorrow
and yesterday
(for contrary to all the sages
today cannot be lived for itself:
it's lived for what it was
and what it will be).

The poems in *Feeling the Worlds* move from past to future, from "Photograph" to "Epitaph," beginning with the snap of Livesay's young self and her "Gran," the picture then bursting into motion and speech:

and your voice, musical, proverbial
saying
Above all else be truthful
never tell a white lie.

To which Livesay, from her present place, a "Gran's" place, responds:

O my Gran
life would be simple
for my children and grandchildren
if lies – black or white –
were the only barriers.

The first ten poems, collected as "Family Tree: A Suite," begin by examining a double legacy – of birth and beginning, and the death and ending enfolded within them. "But this, though: death, the whole of death – even before life's begun, to hold it all so gently and be good: this is beyond description!" So wrote Rilke in the Duino Elegy: but where description fails, analogy and metaphor come forth. For Livesay, the child ("On Holding A Baby") is born into a Wordsworthian "dazzle" of objects to "overdose" on sense impressions until:

you seek and are satisfied
and quench the eyes' blue fountains
in a drift of sleep

So, too the poet's writer mother ("F.R.L.") is last seen at the beginning of her own last journey:

her eyes still cornflower bright
surveying the blurred landscape

For her mother there is "Nothing ahead/but she had mastered the lock,/in her hooked and freckled fingers/held the key to ongoing." Now Livesay, too, looks to her relatives to learn how to age and to "persuade our children/that this has to be/just so."

The sense of generational continuity which links the "Family Suite" is not, however, unproblematic. A family tree branches, broadens, shelters, includes; yet it establishes lineage, rights, shadows, and exclusions and its roots are the origins of the family (a title Livesay has previously appropriated). In "Everywoman Every Man" she examines a further dual inheritance, that of her parents:

Nailed to two crosses, his and hers
the mother's
the father's
How to resurrect
is the intense question
How to make of thine
mine?
Out of such desperate inharmonies
to become
one human domain?

If there is a resolution, a happy ending to this family romance:

it is because
you each one kissed me goodnight
without reprisals . . .
I was allowed to dream

Yet the very structure of the title "Everywoman Every Man" indicates that we are seeing here the position of woman, both mother and daughter, under the sign of the father. (Tucked in here, too, is an economical gesture of sympathy for man's isolation.) The poet may find her own voice in "dreaming" and through a long process of profound personal integration. ("But whether 'public' or 'private' each poem is a part of me and belongs as my skin belongs," Livesay wrote in a recent assessment of the lyric and documentary impulses in her work.) But the lyric voice, no matter how "musical, proverbial," the documentary speaker, no matter how "truthful," cannot take language for granted:

if lies – black and white –
were the only barriers.

"Feeling the worlds," when heard not read, when spoken not seen, shades with Dickinsonian slant-rhyme into "feeling the words," and language here is a constant concern: pleasing in its play, liberating in its plurasignification, communicative in its tales and rhythms – and potentially co-optive and reductionist. (Alternatively, and equally dangerously, it may be a hegemonic "game" which obscures simple sense.) To war with "Everywoman" again the symbolic "Every Man" is thus a project for poetry, for the "Voices of Women" which form the second section:

Who will now speak for them
as poets
these two who lived by the wonder
of the word
Who will stand up
and be counted
for their sake
will stay alive
womanning the last barricade
until the end of falsehood?

The "Two Lives" here are Pat Lowther and Sharon Stevenson, the dead poets. The death dealers, "certain of their rock hard grip/on eternity" must be resisted, and the poems of this cycle praise, exhort, invoke, and touch a series of women artists while detailing the confusions, pains and dangers that women face. We are reminded clearly of what it is to be married yet alone, to be unwillingly

pregnant, to be certified "insane," to be old and invisible – and of what it is to be a woman strengthened by sisterhood and woman's love:

My hand within you
yours in me
by these crossed swords
we make a peace
not of this world
song without words

This, from "Arms and the Woman," whose title alerts us to the revolutionary potential of such friendship. The third section, "Found Poems," situates the woman as artist and observer in day-to-day experience, in a life which offers fresh substance for laughter and reflection:

("Let me in. Let me in," howled
the Vancouver Sun columnist when
the Women and Words *conference*
excluded men at its working sessions.)

Anecdotes and fantasies spin out from moments of quick observation (on cars, children, doctors, dreams, television, travel, in a catalogue of the quotidian). "Bread and Circuses," on the fortieth anniversary of the liberation of Kiev ("O my people/how in your lion's roaring/is the lone heart crying?") merges the personal and the political and blends these voices of women with the singers in the square of that devestated city.

Poetry, for Livesay, is substance, the song in our hearts, and the bread in our mouths; the next section opens with a writer's manifesto:

Poetry is like bread
Neruda said
It should be shared
by everyone

We women are everyone
beginning to share
Poetry is communication
not a game played with words:
a poem is a message

The message, simply and strikingly, is "plain talk:/NO MORE WAR."

The poems immediately following this, on starlings, finches, and sparrows, are initially both incongruous and disturbing in their swerve. But with these "Nature Studies" Livesay grounds her politics in an ecological awareness formed by close attention to the land ("SAVE OUR WORLD SAVE OUR CHILDREN/But save also I say/the towhees under the blackberry bushes") at the same time as she instills a wariness of the refuges of "Nature" and the comforts of the pastoral:

This is not paradise
dear adam dear eve
but it is a rung on the ladder
upwards
towards a possible
breathtaking landscape

This meditation on "Bellhouse Bay" is in sharp juxtaposition with "Precautions" against the temptations of this seemingly innocent paradise/not paradise:

Oranges oranges
"Navels, my dear"
"Delicious"
Buy Buy Buy
and kill every other child
at Soweto

It is a call to constant mindfulness.

In "Respice ad Finem," from the 1981 *The Raw Edges,* Livesay informs us that "Look to the End" is the "motto" of the Livesays. Her words there may be read as a premonition of the project of this most current volume:

We may go down bombed
set on fire then dying
but the word the poem
has been hurled
to the tombed target
our epitaph defying

In the "Epitaph" to *Feeling the Worlds* the poet fades through shades of identity to bone, stone, the gravestone, mutable yet hard as "time's granite/ the warranty of death." In acceptance of the death of the one, in defiance of the murder of the many, Livesay turns to feel that last world, hurls her words to the target.

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