

evidence that the people and places of the West Coast exist and are real. The collection presents faces of the Indian people, settlers, entrepreneurs, missionaries, government agents and labourers who live on the many shores and in the remote communities of the mainland, Vancouver Island and the Queen Charlotte Islands. The intent of the book, it seems, was to bring together functional, documentary style images of these people within their geographical settings. The collection represents a several-year search to capture the real life of the faces and communities of the coast.

Knowing the remoteness and isolation of most of the places that appear in this book, I wonder how the photographer gained the assent and complicity of her subjects. Many of the communities are only accessible by fishingboat or floatplane. Most have fewer than 400 inhabitants; several consist of just a few families. Half of these communities do not have hydro-electricity, their source of power being a diesel generator. It is interesting to note what a potential intruder was allowed to see of the physical and social aspects of the subjects' lives, and what she chose to capture on film. The photos probably present these people as they would like to be seen. The majority show them labouring at some task or other — fishing, logging, mining, weaving, gathering and preparing food — surviving by the work of their hands.

The book's format is about 9 × 11, with photographs of various sizes up to 8 × 9. The book contains over 200 black and white duotones. The design is pleasing enough; however, the publisher's choice of printing methods takes much away from the quality of Ulli Steltzer's photographs. Though most of the photography is ordinary and surface, there are pages where the images have a difference, and in these the quality of her work and way of seeing do not come off the page the way they might.

Most of the visuals are accompanied by the transcribed words of the people being photographed.

The book uses transcribed speech to get us beneath the surface of the visuals. This text varies in length from one to five paragraphs. The transcribing and editing of these narratives, explanations and personal commentaries are the work of co-author and co-interviewer Catherine Kerr. What time and questions did it take to get beyond the surface to the subjects' physical and social environment? Their words pick up on their concerns, hardships and memories. Where the photos are studies the words are not needed; in the ordinary shots, the words often give a lot more information.

The book could be viewed as photography, geography and sociology, as an assignment to capture the remote landscape and people as visuals and accessible social documents. The pictures rarely show the unusual or unexpected. There is no distortion of image. We do not see experimentation with the possibilities of black and white; there is little work with shape, pattern, lines, light or texture. The judgment of what is good and what is better seems to have been set by the desire to make available to the market, photographs and words of remote places at levels that vary from 'let's get acquainted' to 'let's get serious.' The sequence of the book, and thus, the ordering of the photographs, is a geographical journey from place to place. It is a coast of many places: the northern mainland heading south, Vancouver Island, and the Queen Charlottes.

***Wheat & Woman*, by Georgina Binnie-Clark, University of Toronto Press, 1979, pp. 313, hardcover \$20.00, paperback \$7.50.**

Apolonja Kojder
Georgina Binnie-Clark's *Wheat & Woman*, in many respects, brings to mind Susanna Moodie's *Roughing it in the Bush*, although it is set in the prairies, several decades later. The elements of immigrant literature are found in rather frequent references contrasting the Canadian and English ways of life and in an undercurrent of nostalgia for the home country, but there are no real defeats, only minor

setbacks.

Although stylistically the book can at times be tortuous, the reader is amply rewarded in the final analysis. Georgina, as an established English journalist, was influenced by the emigrant guides that sought to educate the British reader about life in the colonies. Thus, the book's constant aim of informing the reader can become tedious. Autobiographical in nature, the book gives a wealth of detail about breaking the land, seeding, harvesting and coping with seasonal farm labour. Its point of view is that of a newcomer, a 'greenhorn,' and — more significantly — an English gentlewoman. The book is certainly invaluable and undeniably precious, considering the few written records that pioneer prairie farm women have left behind. But its significance does not lie simply in its detailed account of the survival of an individual in southern Saskatchewan in the period 1905–08. The story also points out the feasibility of farming in the prairies (where virgin land was still available) as a route towards financial and personal independence for single women.

It must be kept in mind that the very articulate Georgina was a gentlewoman, and that *Wheat & Woman* is written from that privileged point of view. When Georgina 'waxes poetic' over the beauties of nature in the Qu'Appelle Valley, or lies daydreaming on the bank of a slough, she is describing the experiences of a woman who can afford the luxury of leisure. Georgina at various points discusses the chivalry, or lack of it, of the males she encounters. Again, this was a luxury that most pioneer women were not in a position to consider, let alone demand, in a life that meant labour which often strained the endurance of both men and women. A more earthy, less flowery style of writing would perhaps have reflected more effectively the harsh realities of rural prairie life for women who had no family or capital to fall back on as a last resort.

However, it must be acknowledged that Georgina could not help but be acutely aware of her rather privileged position. To some extent, the

tone of the book changes as the author herself lives through hardships — no longer disdainful of milking cows and clearing out manure. Independence and survival meant being able to do everything on the farm.

From her own personal experiences Georgina concluded that sufficient capital was essential for a woman to establish a successful farming operation — both for initial expenditures on land, machinery, and labour, and for emergencies. Realizing that most women did not possess sufficient capital, Georgina writes at the conclusion of her book about the injustice of homesteading rights in Canada which did not allow women to obtain land free from the government. Unfortunately, the movement for the extension of homestead rights to women (which involved such prairie notables as Cora Hind) proved unsuccessful, and by 1930 the scheme for giving homesteads away was abandoned in Saskatchewan since most of the land had been disposed of by then. Nevertheless, when Georgina wrote her book homestead rights for women seemed at least possible, with such prairie women as Violet McNaughton, Emily Murphy, and Nellie McClung, among others, to articulate and fight for the rights of women less privileged than themselves.

It is worthy of note that as late as the 1920s women from eastern Europe were immigrating in large numbers to the prairie provinces. These young women were often single and arrived either with their families or by themselves. Central Saskatchewan still had land to be broken and farmed. Consequently, there was a need for farm labour and these destitute young women took up back-breaking jobs as farm hands. Although most of these women had been exposed to agricultural work as seasonal labour on the 'pan's' estate, making essential contributions to the family's economy, they were not prepared for what they found on the prairies — the harshness of climate, the unending physical labour of breaking the land, and isolation from their compatriots. There was no family for these women to turn

to, as usually they either sent their much-needed earnings back home to eastern Europe or gave it to their parents struggling on homesteads some distance away. Most saw marriage as their only alternative, as a means of gaining independence, of having their own land. Times had not changed much in this respect from the days Georgina was farming. These young women had the added disadvantages of not knowing English and lacking an education. And so, the choice of remaining single and farming was an alternative that did not present itself.

The celebration of the 75th birthday of Saskatchewan (1905-1980) is being marked this year by recognition of pioneer women by the Department of Agriculture. One can only speculate how much more these women might have accomplished had they been permitted to do so. Georgina Binnie-Clark was able to disprove the 'she can't' in her farming endeavours. Many others, even years later, were not so privileged.

Apolonja Kojder, whose home is in Saskatchewan, is a PhD student at OISE in Toronto.

New Feminist Scholarship: A Guide to Bibliographies, by Jane Williamson, *The Feminist Press*, 1979, pp. 139.

Sheila McIntyre

In 1974, when Jane Williamson began this work as an independent study project while a student of library science, there were no records of the proliferation of small press, 'underground', or institution-published bibliographies on feminist research in the standard authorized sources in library reference sections. Her book, then, grew out of both practical and political feminist goals. She sought to assist researchers in women's studies by providing a comprehensive, well-organized and 'authoritative' reference tool. (Being assigned a Library of Congress catalogue number for the headings 'Feminism,' 'Women's Studies,' and 'Bibliography' qualifies a work as authoritative). She also tilted at the established library world by challenging it to acknowledge the scope and

astounding quantity of bibliographic material on women rendered invisible by library reference guides.

Feminist scholars, researchers and activists should celebrate this work. It provides a long overdue reprieve from the hit and miss research techniques which have hampered (and often discredited) feminist research. With 391 references listed, one containing as many as 31,000 citations, *NFS* should become one of the feminist scholar's primary sourcebooks. With such a massive catalogue of work on women, it should also deliver a resounding rebuke to establishment scholars — librarians included — who have dismissed feminist research as a peripheral, unprofessional and inconsequential drops-in-the-buckets of paperwork generated by commercial and non-profit publishing institutions. Furthermore, by including in *NFS* lists of archival holdings, film catalogues, source book and survival guides in addition to bibliographies of academic scholarship, Williamson does the feminist cause an enormous service. She has not played to the scholarly establishment by defining feminist scholarship so narrowly that valuable research tools are inaccessible to interdisciplinary study.

As a research tool, *NFS* will bring a tear to the bloodshot eyes of overworked, isolated feminists. It's almost all here: (1) descriptive and evaluative annotations on 215 of the 391 sources cited, each numbered consecutively for easy cross-reference; (2) an author and title index; (3) a list of publishers, with addresses, for in-print sources (and helpful annotations on out of print sources); (4) straightforward subject headings for 30 fields of feminist studies ranging from the obvious academic disciplines to social issues — rape, life cycles and drug and alcohol use. (5) The sections on 'Art and Music,' 'Third World Countries,' and 'Philosophy,' are unaccountably small, however, and will have to be expanded in subsequent editions.

Williamson clearly states in

her introduction that *NFS* does not pretend to be comprehensive. Deliberately excluded were reading lists of basic feminist texts, catalogues of non-sexist books for young readers, bibliographies of individual women writers and source guides or bibliographies that are appended to major works, monographs or anthologies rather than published separately. With few exceptions, periodical articles were not annotated. Although this policy is practical, given restriction of time and availability, I wish Williamson had made an attempt to annotate articles which are the single source on a subject.

What Williamson tried to include are all bibliographies, resource lists and literature reviews she could find published in English (whether in or out of print) in Canada and the U.S. She opted not to classify Canadian material under a separate subject heading and to disperse them throughout the book under the relevant subject headings. Disperse is the key word. Though Williamson calls *NFS* a 'bibliography of U.S. and Canadian bibliographies,' at a rough count a scant 15 out of the 391 works cited were published in Canada.

Given that Williamson cites the *Canadian Newsletter of Research on Women* under the 'General' subject heading as 'an unequalled resource for research in progress, bibliography and book reviews,' it is difficult to bear with sisterly tolerance her failure to tap it as a source of Canadian materials. By contrast, 38 review essays published in *Signs* are cited under the appropriate subject headings in *NFS*. Williamson has completely ignored most of the original review essays and original bibliographies and annotated references to recently published bibliographies contained in each issue of the *Newsletter*. Although some of the Canadian materials cited in *NFS* are too important to ignore, Williamson should have identified them under a separate heading as a very incomplete listing of Canadian works, referred readers to the *Newsletter* and made no further claim to represent Canadian

scholarship.

Less serious an omission is Williamson's decision not to draw any overt conclusions from her research. Though by virtue of its novelty in library catalogues *NFS* reproaches the established library world for failing to cite feminist research in standard reference sources, Williamson could have been more pointed in her criticism. According to her digging, only 16 university and college libraries and four public libraries have published bibliographies of their own holdings on women or women's studies; only 11 libraries have produced reference guides on how to use their facilities to locate material on women. Although the vast majority of these 31 library publications were issued in the mid 1970s, 13 were out of print as this book was published.

It may be that government cutbacks, administration resistance to feminism or disinterest account for this dearth of vital cataloguing. There is no doubt, though, that professional librarians must build on Williamson's pioneering work — especially in Canada. They should stock her book, inform her of her omissions (her request), stock those in-print works she has cited which are not amongst their holdings, catalogue their own holdings, and so on.

In her introduction, Williamson refers to omissions and incompleteness as 'the bibliographer's nightmare.' If librarians lobby to reduce the obvious gaps in their own holdings, we might yet see bibliographies and catalogued resources which are the feminist researcher's fantasy.

Shakespeare's Sisters; Feminist Essays on Women Poets, edited, with an introduction by Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar, *Indiana University Press*, 1979, pp. 337, hardcover \$21.45.

Sherrill Cheda

As Gilbert and Gubar say in their introduction, the essays in this anthology seek to find our 'grandmothers' and thus trace the outlines of a distinctively female poetic tradition — our matrilineal heritage — and they are successful.

In 'A lonesome glee,' the