

NO TIME TO STOP

Directed by Helene Klodawsky.
Produced by the National Film Board of Canada (under the Federal Women's Film Program), 1990. 29 min 06 sec.

THE POWER OF TIME

Directed by Liette Aubin. Produced by the National Film Board of Canada (under the Federal Women's Film Program), 1990. 28 min 43 sec.

By Laura Roccaton

The Federal Women's Programme has produced two films on the status of women in urban society. *The Power of Time* and *No Time to Stop* look at the themes of isolation and the working poor.

Growing old involves the fear of what comes next. In *The Power of Time*, Liette Aubin examines the concerns and fears of elderly women. She accomplishes this by defining women not as victims but as survivors. This is a major shift from the mainstream depictions of the elderly as frail, inactive and weak members of society.

The camera zooms in on the last act of a play, the theme of which is the abuse of elderly women. An old woman screams through her door to be left alone. Through the use of a few questions, she manages to outsmart a door-to-door salesman. He flees before the police are summoned. Elderly women, the film shows, are vulnerable to manipulation by solicitors and con artists. Aubin dramatizes one way in which the elderly can take an active role in ending this manipulation and abuse.

The film is centered around a programme in Montreal called Project Change. This programme is broken down into smaller units which are all aimed at empowering elderly women. It allows shut-ins and widows the opportunity to learn from one another. This is especially necessary for the larger population of immigrant women who suffer from dual isolation. They cannot speak the language; hence, they are dependent on their children. Their pensions are insufficient, and feelings of helplessness are inevitable. Burdens such as isolation, financial insecurity, and declining health are constant. Project Change is one effective way many women have overcome some of these



From the National Film Board production, *Playing for Keeps*

problems.

The strength of the film lies in its portrayal of elderly women as their own champions. They are the producers, directors and actors of their own lives. These women announce to the world their incredible diversity and capabilities. Aubin sends a message of independence to elderly women. They are our link to the past and must therefore be given the opportunity to take part in the shaping of our future.

No Time to Stop is another film in this series which examines the lives of immi-

grant women and the job ghettos in which they work. Director Helene Klodawsky introduces the audience to the struggle of three women who are members of the class known as the working poor.

The three women in the film share their stories of hardship. They are defined by what they do, as opposed to who they are, because they are poor, and the poor work long hours. No time to stop, no time for anything else. "When I'm sick I still work...I have no choice," says Kwai Fong Lai, a garment worker. But this is just one of the many battles these women face.

Their status as immigrants also dictates the kinds of jobs they are allowed to do. That is why domestic work and the garment industry are filled with immigrant women trying to survive in Canada.

Angela Williams explains her reasons for coming to Canada and joining many women who are trying to end the cycle of poverty. By working hard they may be able to give their children the education necessary for a richer life.

The ultimate message of the film is the hope women derive from banding together. Klodawsky appeals for an end to racial discrimination, and for universal access to language and job training. "If I can't speak nothing, I can't make money, I can't make life." Kwai Fong Lai's words are reflected in the eyes of her children. This film is powerful in that it challenges our perceptions of who we believe to be poor. The Canadian reality is that many immigrant women, although working, are poor.

Both films demand the re-examination of the status of poor women in Canada. Films such as these will help to reinforce the need for change.

FOR RICHER, FOR POORER

Directed by Ariadne Ochrymovych.
National Film Board of Canada
Feminization of Poverty series, Part II,
1988. 30 min.

NO WAY! NOT ME

Directed by Ariadne Ochrymovych.
National Film Board of Canada
Feminization of Poverty series, Part I,
1988. 29 min 39 sec.

PLAYING FOR KEEPS

Directed by Lyn Wright. National Film
Board of Canada Feminization of
Poverty series, Part III, 1990.
44 min 11 sec.



From the National Film Board production, *Playing for Keeps*

By Laura Roccatori

"Poverty is a woman's issue!"

Ariadne Ochrymovych is determined to challenge with her compelling series, *The Feminization of Poverty*. The three current films available in the series are *No Way! Not Me*; *For Richer, For Poorer*; and *Playing for Keeps*. All three films examine the Canadian reality of women and poverty.

No Way! Not Me centres on a lecture by former B.C. cabinet minister, activist and educator, Rosemary Brown. Brown ad-

dresses an audience of high school students who represent Canada's future decision-makers. She takes these students through a journey of the past, present, and future. This journey is filled with visual images of Canadian women and their poverty-stricken realities. The black and white pictures of the past are interwoven with the bleak outlook of today's poor. Throughout this collage, the viewer is made aware of the subordinate roles women have played in society and the ways in which they have been defined. They are the docile, dependable, cheap