

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

workers of society. Brown insists that these associations be aggressively challenged so that the cycle of poverty may be broken.

The audience members repeatedly ask how this can be achieved in a society which has socialized its members to reinforce and perpetuate the same hackneyed myths. Brown's answer, and the ultimate thesis of Ochrymovych's film, is: pay attention to women's education. Brown appeals to the 270 women in the audience to demand an excellent education and to set long term goals for themselves. As the camera scans the students's faces, Brown awakens them to the necessity for change. This combination is both powerful and inspiring. Although education does not equal wealth, a lack of education almost always equals poverty.

As the camera freeze-frames familiar faces from the audience, appalling statistics which form the bulwark of Brown's argument are reintroduced. The unavoidable conclusion is that the issue of women and poverty must be put on the Canadian agenda.

The next two films in the series provide examples of the women that Rosemary Brown discusses in her lecture. The viewer

is introduced to the faces behind the statistics in *For Richer, For Poorer* and *Playing for Keeps*.

As the title implies, *For Richer, For Poorer* examines the reality behind marriage and divorce. Divorce is one of the major contributors to the feminization of poverty. Four in ten marriages end in divorce, and although men tend to flourish after marriage breakdown, women's financial security decreases up to 73 per cent. As Joan, a woman who shares her struggle with us, states, "We knock on the doors of foodbanks, while *he* enjoys life!"

Jan Tennant's familiar and compelling voice narrates Joan's battle for emotional, financial, social and psychological stability. Accompanying this account of strife is the introduction of the support systems available to her. Ochrymovych identifies the need for women to unite. By avoiding isolation women can empower each other in re-assessing, defining and even re-defining their goals.

The third film in the series, *Playing for Keeps*, is directed by Lyn Wright. This documentary paints a bleak picture of the romantic myths surrounding teen motherhood. The three young women in the film are all members of the generation which

Brown calls "disheartening," because unlike their predecessors, they have the power to stop the feminization of poverty but have not yet realized it.

The most wrenching piece in the film is the inclusion of one woman's experience with the justice system. Debbie, one of the teen mothers, is charged with stealing food. As the camera focusses on the exterior of a building, an angry male voice condemns Debbie for her actions. She, like many other poor Canadian women, faces the threat of losing custody of her child. Poor women are not only financially poor but politically poor.

The film is accompanied by a user's guide which enables people in schools to incorporate the film into existing curricula. Wright is providing the Canadian educational system with a mechanism to help fight poverty.

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'We are not going to Khayelitsha'— the slogan of residents of Cape Town's black areas forced to leave their homes by the state, 1986.

Silkscreened poster produced for UWO at CAP, Cape Town. Black and Green.

Reprinted from *Images of Defiance: South African Resistance Posters of the 1980s* (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1991).