

# *Active Engagements*

A Collection of Lectures  
by the Holders of  
Nancy's Chair in Women's Studies,  
1986-1998

Edited by Margaret Conrad

Institute for the Study of Women  
Mount Saint Vincent University  
Halifax Nova Scotia Canada

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## FOREWORD

In 1998, Mount Saint Vincent celebrated 125 years of dedication to the education of women. Now a diverse educational community that attracts women and men from the East Coast region, across Canada, and around the globe, the Mount still considers the educational needs of women to be paramount.

In celebrating our anniversary we wanted to bring special focus to issues of particular importance to women. One of the "jewels in the crown" of our commitment to advancing women's education and the study of women's issues and perspectives is Nancy's Chair in Women's Studies, whose history is related in the Introduction of this volume. We have been blessed over the past several years to have a succession of distinguished women's scholars on campus as the holders of Nancy's Chair. What better way to celebrate our anniversary than to invite each of them back to deliver an anniversary lecture? We were not disappointed! It was a fabulous experience to have all of these women return to the Mount and share with us their thoughtful insights on women's scholarship today.

After one such lecture, I was chatting with Dr. Margaret Conrad who had held the Chair in the two years immediately prior to our Anniversary. While I understood Marg's feeling that it was too soon for her to give another lecture, I nonetheless wanted her to be part of this Anniversary project. And so I invited her to edit a volume of these Anniversary lectures and to write the Introduction. We later agreed that Marg's paper on the Mount and its mission, given during her first year as Nancy's Chair-holder, would be a welcome inclusion in the collection.

The Mount is proud to be the publisher of *Atlantis: A Women's Studies Journal*, now celebrating its twenty-fifth anniversary. Published twice a year through our Institute for the Study of Women, *Atlantis* continues to be a valuable outlet for scholarship on women. From time to time the Institute also produces other occasional publications of relevance and significance to the Mount's mission and history. This current volume is such a publication. It came to fruition through the hard work of Dr. Margaret Conrad as its editor. Cecily Barrie, the Managing Editor of *Atlantis*, worked closely with Marg to bring closure to this project, and the volume reflects her meticulous attention. The Mount owes each of them a debt of gratitude. So, too, do we express our appreciation to all the Nancy's Chair-holders for their contribution to making our 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary a special, reaffirming time in the University's history.

On a final note, I want to express appreciation to Nancy Ruth, without whose foresight and generous support in helping to establish Nancy's Chair, this volume could never have come about. Its pages are a tangible expression of Mount Saint Vincent's ongoing commitment to research on women, to the active engagement in discourse on gender, and to the education of students who will themselves be enlightened participants and agents of change in this discourse.

*Sheila A. Brown*

President and Vice-Chancellor





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## INTRODUCTION

When President Sheila Brown asked me to edit the papers presented at the Mount Saint Vincent 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Lecture Series, I was pleased to accept. The lecturers, former holders of Nancy's Chair in Women's Studies, gave stimulating talks and it would have been a great loss had they not been widely disseminated. Having just spent two years as Nancy's Chair, I resisted the invitation to speak again so soon but one of my presentations, an exploration of the Mount's mission to women, is included here to make the list complete.

Sheila Brown's decision to host a lecture series featuring the former Nancy's Chairs in Women's Studies was an inspired one. Not only did it highlight the breadth of scholarly interests represented by Chair holders, it also offered stimulating challenges to those who heard, and will now be able to read, what these thoughtful women had to tell us. What strikes me about the papers published here, other than their mercifully accessible prose, is how well they capture the concerns of a generation of Women's Studies scholars. Readers of this volume are treated to a comparison of Canadian and Quebec feminisms by Thelma McCormack; an inside look, by Marguerite Andersen and others, at how feminist pedagogy is applied at Toronto's Linden School in Toronto; a development perspective on women's work by Krishna Ahooja-Patel; an analysis of the link between gender and sustainability by Margrit Eichler; and an exploration of the politics of reproduction by Maureen McNeil. Had Dr Brown decided to assign topics, she could not have produced a more balanced roster than that which fell into place when the former Nancy's Chairs sent in the titles of their talks.

Endowed Chairs in Women's Studies have been with us now for over fifteen years. The publication of this volume serves as a useful occasion to reflect on their contribution to Canadian academic life and to document the Mount's role in their creation. I have taken up this task none too early. In this age of short and conflicting institutional memories, it is already difficult to determine who held the Chairs and for how long, and even when or how certain Chairs were established.

The idea of endowed university-based Chairs in Women's Studies had been in the air for at least a decade before they became a reality. Feminist scholars in Canada had a useful model in the more than a dozen Military Studies Chairs established by the Department of Defence. By the early 1980s, the Women's Program of the Secretary of State became the focus of an intensive lobby for similar Chairs to support the study of women's issues. Much to the surprise of doubting Thomasinas such as myself, the pressure worked. In the fall of 1983, the federal government announced a program to

create five regional Chairs in Women's Studies: one each for the Atlantic Provinces, Quebec, Ontario, the Prairie Provinces and North West Territories, and British Columbia and the Yukon.

The criteria for the Endowment Assistance Program were surprisingly straightforward.<sup>1</sup> One Chair was to be established each year for five years and each Chair would be endowed with up to \$500,000 of federal monies, roughly half of what was needed (at the then high interest rates) to sustain a full-time appointment. By establishing this funding ceiling, the government threw responsibility back on the applicants to find matching monies to sustain a Chair. Successful applicants to the Endowment Assistance Program were to agree, among other things, that the Chair would be interdisciplinary; that provisions would be made for applied research and publication components in addition to teaching activities; and that the Chair would undertake to establish links with other Women's Studies programs in the region where they were located. The goal of the Chairs was simply stated as leading to "better understanding of the contributions of women in Canada and worldwide."

Mount Saint Vincent University played a major role in the lobbying effort. In March 1982, the Mount had sent a proposal to the Women's Program of the Secretary of State for the establishment of a Chair in Women's Studies.<sup>2</sup> The proposal noted that there was no centre in Canada where research on women and the dissemination of research findings relating to women received primary attention - though, the supplicants were quick to point out, Mount Saint Vincent was in the process of establishing an Institute for the Study of Women. As the Mount's application worked its way through the bureaucratic process, the larger vision of establishing a series of Chairs of Women's Studies quickly took shape.

With its application already in place, Mount Saint Vincent was the first university to benefit from the program. The Secretary of State's Chair Committee met at Mount Saint Vincent in August 1984 to discuss criteria for hiring the first Chair. Dr. Susan Clark, who had been instrumental in establishing the Institute for the Study of Women at the Mount and attracting *Atlantis* from Acadia University, chaired the hiring committee which called for applications to be submitted by 15 March 1985. In the Winter of 1985, the Mount launched a series of public lectures by Women's Studies scholars, both as publicity for the first appointment to the Chair and as an opportunity for the academic and general public to become aware of the range of scholars in the field of Women's Studies. Jill McCalla Vickers, Director of Canadian Studies, Carleton University; Elizabeth Dobson Gray, a feminist theologian from the Harvard Divinity School; Thelma McCormack, Professor of Sociology, York University; and Ruth Roach

Pierson, a historian based at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, were the speakers invited to participate in the lecture series. On 1 January 1986, Thelma McCormack began a one year term in the Women's Studies Chair at Mount Saint Vincent University.<sup>3</sup> Simon Fraser and the Ottawa-Carleton Chairs came on stream in 1984 and 1985. The Joint Prairie Region Chair was awarded to the universities of Winnipeg and Manitoba in 1986 and the Quebec Chair to Laval University in 1987.

Each Chair was on its own in seeking matching funds. In 1988 Mount Saint Vincent found a patron in feminist philanthropist Nancy Ruth and named the Chair in her honour.<sup>4</sup> Nancy Ruth continues to support generously the cause of women and includes among her various projects a web site - [www.coolwomen.org](http://www.coolwomen.org) - devoted to Canadian women.<sup>5</sup>

At Simon Fraser, a 45-woman community-based committee spearheaded the fund raising campaign that secured its entire \$500,000 objective by the fall of 1987, the first Endowed Chair to do so. A major proportion of that amount - \$400,000 - was donated by Mary Twigg White and Elizabeth Russ, daughters of Ruth Wynn Woodward, pioneer cattle rancher, businesswoman, and chatelaine of British Columbia's Government House from 1941-1946. As Director of Development at Simon Fraser, Joy Leach played a critical role in negotiating this generous donation. Psychiatrist Susan Penfold (1985-86) and politician Rosemary Brown (1987) were the first holders of what became known as the Ruth Wynn Woodward Chair.<sup>6</sup>

In Winnipeg, Elaine Adam, June Menzies, and Mavis Turner formed an inter-university committee to secure matching funds. They targeted 25-30 people to give at least \$1000 in return for the promise that donors' names as "Leaders of the Chair in Women's Studies" would be engraved on a plaque hung in both universities. A happy moment came when the Provincial Ministry of Education pledged three-fifths of the money sought, permitting the committee to reach its \$500,000 objective by 1990. At that time, the Chair was named in honour of the renowned author and feminist Margaret Laurence. The first appointment to the Chair was literary scholar Keith Fulton (1987-92).<sup>7</sup>

Laval's Chaire d'étude sur la condition des femmes was co-funded by the University's foundation. While there may have been some initial difficulty in securing this support, it was a welcome solution to the fund-raising challenge. Maria de Koninck, a professor in Laval's Department of Social and Preventative Medicine, was the first holder of the Chair (1988-92). She was followed by Claire Bonenfant (1993), a public figure associated with La Fédération des femmes du Québec and President of the Conseil du statut de la femme du Québec.<sup>8</sup> The Chair at Laval was subsequently in honour of Claire Bonenfant.

The Joint Chair in Women's Studies at the universities of Carleton and Ottawa was orchestrated by Jill Vickers, Susan Mann, and others who hoped it would bring women studies in the two universities closer together.<sup>9</sup> Like Laval, Carleton and Ottawa provided matching funds to get the Chair up and running. The first Chair holder was politician and health activist Monique Bégin (1986-1991).<sup>10</sup>

The terms of reference for the Chairs are similar, allowing incumbents to be drawn from three categories of Women Studies: a noted and established scholar; a promising scholar of standing in the discipline; or a generalist of public stature in society. While the Mount, Laval, and Ottawa-Carleton have made appointments primarily in the mature scholar or public figure category, Manitoba-Winnipeg and Simon Fraser have made a point of also attracting junior scholars to the Chair. Simon Fraser and the Mount have favoured one or two year appointments; Laval, Ottawa, and Manitoba-Winnipeg have often chosen longer and sometimes shorter terms. Because the criteria for the Chairs are flexible, the possibility for innovation is seemingly endless. The two universities participating in the Margaret Laurence Endowment, for example, have decided to split the funds to address particular needs of their respective Women's Studies programs. The University of Manitoba is currently supporting a research fellowship with a major part of their funding.

Most Chairs are attached to Women's Studies departments in some way and there are usually special committees that oversee the hiring and activities of Chairs. At Laval, there are two committees, a scientific committee that supports the Chair in her work program and a steering committee that is responsible for managing Chair funds.<sup>11</sup> In most cases, universities now find that the investment return from one million dollars is inadequate to cover the costs of salary, travel, and administration associated with the Chairs. Common ways to build up the endowment, other than further fund-raising, seem to be to leave the Chair vacant for a short period of time or to appoint a junior scholar to the position.

In general, it can be said that the Chairs are successful in proportion to the strength of the Women's Studies programs and/or research institutes to which they are attached. In turn, Chairs have the potential to strengthen Women's Studies departments not only by providing an extra body to teach and advise students but also by raising the program's profile and offering extra administrative assistance - usually a secretary - who can help with some of the paperwork involved in mounting conferences and maintaining Women's Studies networks in the region. At each site the Chair has also added to the outreach function of Women's Studies, a goal that often eludes full-time, tenured faculty.

Each Endowed Chair has had its ups and downs but, taken together, they have helped to bring Women's Studies to a new level of maturity. That Chairs can now be filled by scholars who have degrees in Women's Studies speaks eloquently to the progress made in the field since the first Chair was established a decade and a half ago. Most importantly, perhaps, the Chairs always serve as catalysts for change and new beginnings. This function will be especially welcome as Women's Studies embarks on its second generation of research, teaching, and activism.

Margaret Conrad  
January 2001

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I want to thank Hélène Boudreault, Toni Gaunt, Lou Lepine, Meredith Kimball, Wendy Robbins, and Mary Lynn Stewart for helping me track down information relating to the Chairs.

#### ENDNOTES

1. Appendix IV, Women's Studies, Criteria for Endowment Assistance Program.
2. Proposal for the Establishment of A Chair in Women's Studies, 2 March 1982, Institute for the Study of Women Files, Mount Saint Vincent University.
3. Mount Saint Vincent University, The Institute for the Study of Women, *Communiqué* (Fall 1984 and Summer 1985).
4. Following Thelma McCormack, the Nancy's Chair has been held by French literary studies scholar Marguerite Andersen (1989); international relations scholar Krishna Ahooja-Patel (1990); sociologist Margrit Eichler (1990-91); cultural studies scholar Maureen McNeil (1993-95); historian Margaret Conrad (1996-98); and women's health activist Sharon Batt (1999-2001).
5. For a profile of Nancy Ruth's philanthropic activities, see Iris Nowell, *Women Who Give Away Millions: Portraits of Canadian Philanthropists* (Toronto: Hounslow Press, 1996), 35-90.
6. History of the Simon Fraser Women's Studies Department, photocopy of a typescript provided to the author by Billie Korstrom, 19 November 1996, 13. Other incumbents of the Chair include writer and literary critic Daphne Marlatt (1988-89); economist Marjorie Cohen (1989-90); scientist Hilda Ching (1990-91); postdoctoral fellows Deborah Dunne in Philosophy and Marnie Stanley in English (1991-92); postdoctoral fellows Margaret Little in Political Science and Margaret Malone in Sociology (1993); sociologist Vanaja Dhruvarajan (1994-95); sociologist, activist, and former NAC president Sunera Thobani (1996-2000); and poet, novelist, and essayist Dionne Brand (2000-2002).
7. Keith Fulton was followed by sociologist Susan Prentice (1993-96), and two political scientists: Deborah Strienstra (1996-97) and Joanne Boucher (1997-99).
8. Claire Bonenfant was followed by Huguette Dagenais (1993-97), Professor, Department of Anthropology, Laval University, and founding editor of *Recherches féministes*; and Hélène Lee-Gosselin (1997-present), Professor, Department of Management, Laval University.

9. Interview with Jill Vickers, Ottawa, 26 May 1997.

10. She was followed by Greta Hofmann Nemiroff (1991-96) whose research focus is Gender, Fair Education, women, knowledge, and power; Pnina Geraldine Abir-Am (1997), historian of women in science; Wendy Robbins (1998), English literature scholar and co-founder of PAR-L; and Ann Porter (1999-2000), who focuses on issues relating to women, the welfare state, and globalization.

11. Huguette Dagenais, "Coordinator's Column," *Canadian Women's Studies Association Newsletter* (Fall 1995): 7.



## Canadian Feminism Without Québec

*Thelma McCormack*

Nancy's Chair, 1986

### ABSTRACT

If Québec secedes what will its impact be on women, women's movements, and on feminism in separate nation-states? Québec feminism based on concepts of identity and Canadian feminism based on inclusivity have led to different political responses with respect to the Charter, constitutionalism, and the cultural meaning of equity. This paper examines the two feminisms - their origin, development, and differences - and argues that free trade agreements and the erosion of the welfare state have created new fault lines and new opportunities for working together without compromising separate agendas. Hemispheric feminism can offer an alternative to the misogynist biases and practices of the hemispheric economy.

### Introduction

If the referendum produces a decisive triumph for the "Yes" side, a Canada of ten provinces and two territories may cease to exist.

Alan C. Cairns<sup>1</sup>

We know the price of autonomy, but also its value.

Federation des femmes du Québec<sup>2</sup>

In 1995 a Québec referendum on separation confirmed strong support among francophones for sovereignty.<sup>3</sup> The shock it produced across the country, second only to Lévesque's election in 1976, was palpable. Feminists and women's groups generally, who had worked hard to hold the two feminist movements together, were now feeling a deep loss. Their efforts to produce a *rapprochement* after the bitter Charter debates and the Meech Lake Accord, both divisive, now seemed like a lost cause. We would be lucky to keep the country together.

Speaking personally, as someone who had lived in Québec for three years and watched the beginning of the Quiet Revolution, a sociologist who naively believed in those days that modernization could solve all problems, Québec politics and Québec feminism have been a serious and on-going concern of mine and a test of my feminist framework. Feminism, I believed then and now, expresses certain core values that we all share wherever and in whatever language. These values are transformative so that we are no longer defending old boundaries but realizing a new social space. Was the referendum a sign of failure dooming us to reinvent the same boundaries? Are we on some regressive path?

In the past I have tried to understand the referendum results and write about them, but with no success. Knowing that I would be among friends at Mount Saint Vincent encouraged me to try again. And I invite readers to engage with me in this exploration of what happens when a "small state within world markets" becomes two smaller states within a world market.<sup>4</sup> Or what happens

when one nation-state dissolves into two nation-states at a time when the nation-state itself has become, according to many political theorists, a thing of the past, a nineteenth-century anachronism in a world dominated by a supranational institution?<sup>5</sup> If our country becomes binational, if Québec chooses to become an independent state, how will women's history read? What will Québec scholars tell their students? What will we tell ours? And what is the fate of our personal visions of universal equality and liberation?

I will explore some of these issues here and suggest that they are at the very centre of Women's Studies. I will argue that whether we legally or constitutionally separate or not, we have, through the process of reconfiguration, developed two incompatible ways of being a "political woman." One is based on the *politics of identity*; the other on the *politics of inclusivity*. One is based on the concept of a distinct *society*; the other on the concept of distinct (gender-based) *interests*. Our paths, however, meet as we face the severe problems for women created by of the global economy and the neo-liberal state. The politics of inclusivity are pushed in the direction of protecting cultural sovereignty and some form of identity politics, while the politics of identity loosen to include a broader spectrum of women. The new options for us, political and intellectual, constitute, I believe, the new Women's Studies agenda.

My comments are highly speculative. They are, in some ways, an exercise in futurology, but only by looking ahead and imagining certain hypothetical conditions can we often acquire some insights about ourselves and the present. Before I go further, I have three caveats. Because of space considerations, I have left out the questions of Aboriginal women and how they place themselves. The second caveat is that there is a growing generational gap among feminists. The confidence we had in the 1970s, the opportunities we had to be listened to, are no longer present. I think women have changed, but the climate of opinion has changed faster. And that, too, redefines how we teach Women's Studies. And, third, the title of my paper is "Canadian feminism without Québec." It could also be "Québec feminism without Canada," but it would take someone who knew Québec feminism better than I do.

### **Canada Without Québec**

There are many Canada-without-Québec scenarios, usually written by men, mostly by lawyers, legal scholars, political theorists, and strategic thinkers about the mechanics and consequences of separation.<sup>6</sup> The structure of government, monetary systems, population movements, environmental policy, problems of trade, sharing the national debt, currency, postal regulations, defense agreements, diplomatic representation, the isolation of Atlantic Canada, political instability, mass exodus from all parts of Canada, but especially from Québec to the United States, passports, and transition costs have all been discussed.<sup>7</sup> There is a near obsession with the question of how the national debt is to be divided. Will Québec walk away with no penalty? At a time when we are urging the G7 countries

to forgive the debts of the developing countries, is it really so unacceptable to do the same for Québec?

The scenarios range from benign (a post-separation arrangement like the European Community,<sup>8</sup> a form of confederation), to moderately disturbing but remedied (long-term economic uncertainty, a population exodus from Québec to the United States; the disproportionate influence of Ontario),<sup>9</sup> to a worse-case scenario (civil disorder).<sup>10</sup> There is a general assumption that these cost-benefit pragmatic considerations would persuade sovereigntists to reverse course or, at least, hesitate. Studies of European elections, however, provide evidence that ideologues give little weight to the short-run consequences, no matter how negative, or, indeed, that these decisions are based on self-interest.

Nevertheless, Anglophone critics, descendants of Utilitarians, who do think in terms of short-run losses and gains, continue to write columns and publish books intended for the undecided voter.<sup>11</sup> Some of the discussions deal with "the woman question" and the lack of representation in any of the consultations; most of the scholars are concerned with the short- and long-run legal and political consequences of deconfederation.<sup>12</sup> Some of the studies focus on how to obstruct separation; others on how to rebuild a new unity.<sup>13</sup> Only one that I could find, Jeremy Webber, wanted to jettison all the talk about nation-state and discussed the issue in terms of community,<sup>14</sup> but I have yet to see one that deals with the sociological problems of social structure, with questions of class and gender.<sup>15</sup> If the status of women is tied to distributive justice, of narrowing the gap between rich and poor, of eliminating racism, where will we be in a new political economy?

Canadian democracy, the Canadian state, Canadian political institutions were all created without women: without our votes, we did not have one; without our consent or our participation, we did not have the qualifications. This is not because we are passive or innately apolitical. After all, we stormed the Bastille; we started bread riots; and today we march against poverty, boycott products and picket. But looking back, had we been in charge of repatriating the Constitution in 1982, would we have done a better job of it? I do not know. Given the benefits of hindsight, we might have done some things differently, but there are certain kinds of imperatives, historical and structural, which limit our degrees of freedom. In the social and political world, there is no *tabula rasa*. The fact remains that we were not participants. And women everywhere are determined not to repeat that infamous history. Not now, not in the future, not ever again. As one German feminist put it, *Ohne Frauen ist kein Staat zu machen*. A state cannot be made without women. And on this point there is complete agreement between Québec and Canadian feminists.<sup>16</sup>

The right to be involved is one thing; becoming involved is another. How do we insert ourselves into a process which was created to exclude us? Legal thinking and legalistic forms put most of us at a disadvantage in any dialogue.<sup>17</sup> Language does not explain why women are excluded, or why, when they are included and are also outnumbered, they are often ineffective; certainly, less effective than when they are a critical mass on their own cultural turf, using their

own voice. Some consideration, then, must be given by us to communication in developing newer techniques of discussion and conflict resolution that are more compatible with our lived experience.

Yet, with the best of intentions, the simple fact is that feminists from Québec and feminists from the rest of Canada are on a collision course.<sup>18</sup> Their understanding of gender is the same, but their understanding of citizenship is not. Efforts have been made to paper over the difference.<sup>19</sup> We still have much in common and will continue to draw inspiration from each other, but the enthusiasm and solidarity that existed in the early years have been frayed and fractured. Our disagreements are only nominally about the Constitution; they reflect a deeper ideological cleavage that, if it has been latent in the past, is now open and manifest. And they contribute to the larger division in the Canadian polity. Both talk about multiculturalism, but mean different things.<sup>20</sup>

I want to try to locate this project at junctures when women were active. The first marker was the Royal Commission on the Status of Women established in 1967.<sup>21</sup> The head of Mount Saint Vincent University, then Sister Alice Michael (later Sister Catherine Wallace), presented a brief on women's higher education. Her thesis was that education for women must change from being either an overprotected all-women's institution or an underprotected co-education institution. At the time it was considered a very brave and courageous statement considering her own background, but it was not her advocacy of co-education that was so brilliant; rather it was her recognition that women must be educated in a way that brought them closer to the social reality of their world.

In retrospect, the Royal Commission *Report* was a powerful mobilizing instrument. Chaired by Florence Bird, the Commission included prominent Québécois and, as it went from sea to sea to sea, it contributed to a national consensus. Reading the Royal Commission *Report* today and the media reports of it, it is clear that there was no sense of a Québec feminism apart from Canadian feminism. On the contrary, there was an expectation that cooperation between anglophones and francophones was on the cusp of a new beginning.<sup>22</sup> There were important differences among women who appeared before the Commission, between socialist women and non-socialist women, a difference between generations - but the cracks that have appeared since then were not easily detected in that document. It was the shadow of patriarchy that hung over the report - of husbands who defaulted on child support payments, on economic discrimination and exclusion - and its consequences were pretty much the same for all Canadian women. The *Report*, then, with its minority report,<sup>23</sup> was in a sense, the beginning and end.

The second marker was the Charter of Rights and Freedoms (1982). In the debates leading to its final wordings, feminists in English Canada, who had worked for the equality clauses (Sections 15 and 28) and who have come to regard them as their special contribution to feminism in the Western democracies, were opposed by Québec feminists. The latter were convinced that these rights were fully protected in Québec's own provincial laws. Indeed, they argued that, if the

Charter became the ultimate text of reference, they would lose ground. In 1989 when Gwen Brodsky and Shelagh Day reviewed the Charter cases, they asked, is it "one step forward, or two steps back?"<sup>24</sup>

The Meech Lake constitutional debate in 1987 was the third marker. That event is now history but because it was the platform for a full debate among women's groups it may be remembered as a critical moment in women's history.<sup>25</sup> The concept of "the distinct society" feared by Canadian feminists as undermining Section 15 and Section 28 of the Charter was, for Québec feminists, an example of how little Canadian feminists understood Québec.<sup>26</sup> "Distinct society" was not about the survival of a culture but about the building of one, a transformative concept that meant gender equality, not, as often suggested by politicians and the press, as "language, law, and culture." The inability of Canadian feminists to understand this distinction led to frustration and the awareness of a much deeper impasse in modern political thought.

Charles Taylor who has studied Québec and knows it well defines a conflict between two types of rights-liberalism, a liberalism of individual rights and a liberalism of collective goals.<sup>27</sup> Taylor does not see the divide as absolute, but recognizes that it will take more than love-ins, bumper stickers, and good will to bring these two very different political cultures together. Opportunities to bridge the differences were less important to Québec feminists who felt that Canadian feminists were endangering some of the legal achievements they had won and which were far ahead of the gender rights women had in other parts of Canada. Thus, they felt increasingly misunderstood and distanced, frequently attributing the attitudes of their counterparts in the rest of Canada to prejudice. In the years following the Royal Commission Report of 1970, Québec women became more involved in Québec politics, in the new militancy. They drew closer to the labour movement and developed a new ideology.<sup>28</sup> *Pas de Québec libre sans libération des femmes! Pas de femmes libres sans libération du Québec!*

I want to suggest that the impasse, though politically real, is a false one. What divides us is not a division of powers between the federal government and the provinces. That is, at best, a strategic difference, but the true one concerns a narrative, a historiography, and the conceptual frameworks through which to understand the state and social change. A more appropriate distinction is between a *politics of identity* and a *politics of inclusivity*. The first looks inward and is concerned with authenticity; the second faces outward and is concerned with an institutional accommodation to differences and a norm of tolerance. The difference between the two groups of women will not be resolved either by unity or separation, for it is a difference found almost everywhere in the modern world where it is sometimes contested, sometimes accommodated.<sup>29</sup> But however it is played out, it is, when stripped of its secondary messages, two ways of being a political woman.

Finding a synthesis is both personal and public, individual and collective. It may be difficult, and finding ways of cooperating may be hard, but working together is far more rewarding than searching for some constitutional formula for

sharing power or a politics of partition. Alternately, if we fail and accept the incompatibility of our respective feminisms, we will survive, but the apartness, the dissolution of our dialectical tension may bring out the worst or the narrowest in each: overdependence on the state by anglophone feminists; the slippery slope to "ethnic cleansing" by francophone feminists. Charles Taylor, commenting on the Canada-Québec tortured relationship, sees the possibility of a new intolerance:

I sense in the dynamic of the independence movement, in the passions it feels required to be mobilized, the harbingers of a rather narrower and more exclusionist society. And very much the same can be said...of the movements in English Canada which would be glad to see Québec go.<sup>30</sup>

Putting this gloomy view on hold, we find that two things become clear. First, we have to resolve those questions and it is far more important for us as women, for us as feminists, than what happens at the next First Ministers conference or the next Québec referendum. Independence is not the salient question for Québec women. Culture, broadly defined, is. Second, in a context of a feminist backlash and a neo-liberal political economy, the entire feminist project is going to be that much harder. In the era of the welfare state, we were, as rational-choice theorists say, the "free riders." In the new era of the neo-liberal state, we are the new scapegoats depicted as Welfare Queens who are spoiled by welfare and waiting for the next handout. We need, then, to find a best-case scenario where the two feminist models may coexist and enrich each other.

I will start by discussing the recent Supreme Court of Canada decision on the unilateral secession of Québec. In the second part I will discuss the development of the two feminisms, francophone and Québec-based on the one hand, anglophone and Canada-wide on the other. I will then look at a still different discourse based on public policy, in particular the end of the nation-state and the welfare state, or the beginning of a neo-liberal state as part of a global economy.

### **Separation and the Constitution: Supreme Court**

In August 1996 the Supreme Court of Canada delivered a unanimous decision on the unilateral secession of Québec.<sup>31</sup> Could the province of Québec secede under Section 53 of the Constitution? Well, Yes, and then again, No. Yes, if there was a clear majority vote and a simple, easily understood question. (Stop there, you might say). But it would have to be negotiated in an orderly way. And the burden of proof would have to be on those who continue to adopt intransigent positions. But it was a possibility.

Could Québec separate under international law? Emphatically, No. Not unless it could impress the international community that it was the victim of colonial oppression and no other choice was available or reasonable. In the opinion of the Court, Québec with all its hardships, its justified claims of being treated as Other, its record of discriminatory treatment, did not meet these extreme

conditions.

And the third question: If there was a conflict between these two opinions, national and international, which would prevail? The answers to the first two made the third question irrelevant.

Although the Court's decision did not please anyone, it did not deeply offend anyone either. The timing was right: not too little too late, nor too much too soon. It was not substantively or in any way anti-canonical. If the problem was postmodern, the reasoning was not. But it was not without consequence. It strengthened the Charter and Charter citizenship. Beyond this it made three important contributions. The first was to give legitimacy to the unthinkable, putting an end to a public discourse that demonized the two parties and created an environment of suspicion and distrust, of polarization and waiting for the other to blink.<sup>32</sup> The Supreme Court said, in effect, "Cool it. This is a question of process; how we do what we do. So, practice restraint. Forget the inflammatory actions of the FLQ; give up the imagery of barricades and street theatre." Let us remember that the same De Gaulle shouting "*Vive le Québec libre*" was an autocratic Gaullist not a democratic socialist.

The second contribution was to enhance the authority and prestige of the Court itself by providing direction in some of these difficult foundational questions. It drew Canada ever further into treating political problems as judicial ones. But at the same time, it decentered Canadian nationalism and de-politicized the conflict. Issues about social justice, about freedom of expression, about our international obligations, about biodiversity and the ecosystem, indeed, about the feminist project, were put aside until we could get the process straight. Others, however, think these questions should be given priority. What would have happened if Québec had said, "No" to free trade and "Yes" to the "Distinct Society" clause instead of saying "Yes" to both? The free trade decision leading to the 1989 Free Trade Agreement (FTA) and the 1992 North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) alienated some of Québec's best friends, young people, intellectuals, and social democrats.<sup>33</sup> Should these issues be coupled? And can they be decoupled?

William Coleman argues that the language question in Québec has been more of a class issue than a cultural one, implying that the intensity and preoccupation with French-only is an expression of protest.<sup>34</sup> We can appreciate that the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, Wall Street, and the American State Department would like us to get this settled as quickly as possible but the quality of life for us, the nature of our political life, the entrenchment of a social charter - all of these would benefit from examining some of the larger social and economic concerns that are now isolated from this constitutional process.

On balance, I think the Supreme Court decision had a salutary effect. It says nothing about who would do the negotiating, beyond the provincial representatives. Many were eligible, but they were likely to be white, middle-class men, some of whom had, like members of the Court, grown up in the era of the



Cold War and were unaware of demographic changes and deeply suspicious of any kind of radical change. The women's movement sought representation as a principle in any discussion of constitutional change.<sup>35</sup> But although they were not, in principle, excluded, it was catch-22. To be included they had to accept the rules of the Court and its discourse, which was part of the problem. The truth was that the Supreme Court decision made the secession of Québec a form of logic, of game theory, the classic example of what Social Psychologists call "Prisoner's Dilemma."<sup>36</sup>

What women want is not game theory nor anarchy but a healing process. Deals, trade-offs, and *quid pro quos* may ultimately be necessary but only after we have tried to put ourselves in each other's place. Women in all parts of Canada have a certain empathy with Québec. The question "What does Québec want?" sounded very much like "What do women want?" Like Québec, we have been left out of the elite decision-making circles and forced to operate through our own networks and extraparlimentary organizations. Like Québec, we were part of relationships that, under the best of circumstances, were asymmetrical in power. No one understood better than we did the phrase "*Mâîtres chez nous*." Like Québec, we are continually being asked how much it would take to buy off our dissatisfactions. And, like Québec, we were engaged in long periods of introspection and in dealing with problems of identity. Who of us is not familiar with that dialogue? Yet this affinity did not overcome the fundamental division between Québec feminists and feminists in other parts of Canada, or between Québec feminists and francophone feminists in other parts of Canada, particularly in Ontario, Manitoba, and New Brunswick.<sup>37</sup>

### Québec and the Politics of Identity

When the Referendum votes were counted, Québec women supported sovereignty only slightly less than men, nothing that could be called a "gender gap." Their vote was the culmination of a history that goes back to New France and the injuries of the conquest, to rural women living in a classical, almost the prototype of a traditional patriarchy. Socialized by the Ultramontanist Catholic Church to be subordinate to men, they were faithful to the church and proud to have one of the highest birthrates in the Western world.<sup>38</sup>

Change eventually came very quickly as urbanization, industrialization, and later the secularization of education and social services converged. Québec women were enfranchised in 1940. By the 1960s they had the lowest birthrate in the Western industrial democracies. The period of *La révolution tranquille* "the quiet revolution" had begun. In 1981 the Civil Code was revised so that all Québec women kept their surnames given at birth.<sup>39</sup> Québec feminists began reading *Le Deuxième Sexe* and soon after moved on to the various French theorists with whom they shared a passionate interest in language and linguistics.<sup>40</sup> The question of identity that had been answered by the Roman Catholic Church, by schools that postulated education for a gendered division of labour, and by a culture that



constructed women as the backbone of the family was now phasing out.

Second Wave feminism in Québec was a social revolution as well as a political and demographic one. How did a classical form of pre-industrial patriarchy become transformed into a modern patriarchy and a post-modern set of gender objectives? The starting point was the myth of origin. Feminist scholars in Québec were searching their past, a prepatriarchal past, to Goddess religions, to Greek mythology, and to a more recent enactment on their own soil. What they found was not some pastoral dreamland, but a rural village communitarian-culture.<sup>41</sup>

Feminists are critical of the hypothesis that Québec, following the stages of development /modernization in the advanced industrial countries, was finally catching up ("*rattrapage*"). Much of feminist research in Québec is intended to show the extent to which Québec women were either in the vanguard or were going in a different direction. Either way the new scholarship was critical of the linear model of development based on the Anglo-American experience and the Marxist dependency model based on developing third world countries. Québec feminism, then, had its own historiography and its own critique of modernization theories that were part of the Anglo hegemonic domination. It is this unique myth of origin that is the tap root for a feminism based on identity, and which saved identity thinking from either essentialism or a hollow nationalism.<sup>42</sup>

Québec separatism was also inspired by something more contemporary: liberation movements elsewhere in the world. It was part of a new revolutionary political culture. During the 1960s a new group of technocrats, artists, and intellectuals came of age, among them René Lévesque who symbolized the new identity as *Québécois* rather than *Canadien-français*, and it was Lévesque who articulated the new doctrine and a new history. "It appears indisputable," he said, "that Québec is heading down a one-way street to sovereignty."<sup>43</sup>

To be political in Québec meant to reject Canadian nationalism and Trudeau's vision: a Charter, a multicultural society, and a bi-lingual state that would resist some of the inevitable pressures of assimilation and be, in its own way, distinctive and distanced from the United States. To be *Québécois* meant to protect French as the privileged language of education, work, finance, politics, and culture, to live in French around the clock.<sup>44</sup> It gave new meaning to the phrase "English as a second language." And it rejected assimilation as some sort of necessary, desirable, or inevitable process.

Gender equality was part of the struggle for political liberation. Women's liberation and Québec liberation were defined as reciprocal, two sides of the same coin, contingent upon each other. Québec feminists concluded that they had nothing to gain from an agenda and a party system that denied the priority and premise of Québec nationalism. Bear in mind Trudeau's view. Québec, he said, was different, but not different enough to weaken a federal government, and his longer view was that our dualism and multiculturalism made Canada a distinct society. Québec's dissident women interpreted this position as a return to the past; this time not to the Church but to a silence and a denial of their historic culture. Hence,

they turned their energies to strengthening other social movements, but especially the *Federation des femmes du Québec* and their ties both to the trade unions and the electoral wing, the Bloc Québécois.<sup>45</sup> Support for the Bloc and separation grew despite - and possibly, because of - the new Reform Party (now called the Canadian Alliance) and the dire warnings by experts of the costs.<sup>46</sup>

Three themes are central to the Québec feminist position. First, feminism in Québec is both social and political; the two are one. Operationally, this means that women must participate fully in all governance and development of public policies - not as a favour; not as a privilege, but as a right. Second, gender equality is what feminists in Québec mean by a "distinct society," and this extends beyond gender to a welfare state. It is not simply a reformist program. Third, women in Québec have won substantial freedoms that are often undermined by the federal powers. They have no confidence in the federal government; their primary confidence is in the provincial. This was very clearly spelled out in the Belanger-Campeau Commission.<sup>47</sup> To reiterate, Québec feminists regarded separation and autonomy as a means to an end. Their goal was a cultural regime.

### **Canada and the Politics of Inclusivity**

Canadian feminism shared many of the same issues. Both emphasized reproductive choice; both fought for wage and employment equity. But the roots of Canadian feminism are in social justice theory, and, in its early years it was influenced by socialist thinking. Canadian feminists still revere Emma Goldman. Canadian feminism was also part of bourgeois democracy. Starting with the suffrage issue, to the Person's Case of 1929, and The Royal Commission of 1970, there is a long record of seeking to eliminate discrimination through legislative and legal means. Although Canadian feminists have never formed a successful party of their own and although they have a poor history in seeking electoral seats, they have nevertheless developed, with the help of government, a strong organization that could lobby and pressure, could create a climate of opinion that recognized the iniquity of inequality and discrimination. Canadian feminists believe, and the data support them, that women and all underprivileged groups do better with a strong central government. In a word, a Canadian feminist is constitutionalist with a socialist conscience.

Canadian feminists worked very hard, despite many obstacles, to introduce equality rights in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Section 15 and Section 28 reflect their determination and efforts.<sup>48</sup> Americans who failed to get the Equal Rights Amendment passed have nothing but envy and admiration of the Canadian example. Canadian feminists were fearful that the "Distinct Society" clause would weaken Sections 15 and 28 and could open the door to a reintroduction of old forms of gender inequity. At best, it could undermine compliance and the ability to enforce the contract. The principle might be left intact, but there was such a heavy disincentive that few would pursue it. The debate within the National Action Committee (NAC) between Judy Rebick and Lynn

McDonald revealed to what extent even NAC had moved from a political to a legal model. As McDonald said, "No constitution can make a government spend money on any program it doesn't want."<sup>49</sup> There were other pragmatic reasons, but, in the last analysis, Canadian feminists, whether they were for or against Charlottetown and Meech Lake, regard women's *interests* as distinct, not the province nor the state.

Inclusivity as a central focus came quite naturally to Canadian feminists; Canada was not a homogeneous culture; it is remarkably regional in its outlook. Canada had also become an immigrant society with a population that spoke many different languages and had different customs, religions, and belief system. The inclusivity focus was developed further by women of colour, by indigenous populations, by immigrants from Asia, Africa, Latin America, the West Indies, and elsewhere, women who read into Canadian feminism a kind of liberation from both cultural patriarchy and racism. It pushed Canadian feminism toward a Human Rights orientation.

In a recent discussion, Judy Rebick and Kiké Roach concluded that anti-racism was the cutting edge of contemporary Canadian feminism.<sup>50</sup> Whatever one may think of this position, it is intended to broaden the basis of a coalition, to redefine feminism in a way that made way for affirmative action for disadvantaged groups - colour, sexual orientation, physically disabled - within the feminist movement, and outside it. But it is one further step in Americanizing Canadian feminism, in interest group politics, and undermining the bonding between Canadian and Québec feminists.

What I have left out of this picture is the larger context. First, education. We spend a great deal of time teaching our students that education is a system of control that reinforces a social hierarchy, patriarchy, and racism. Education has also sent women a number of alternative messages, one of which is the importance of their own autonomy. It is more explicit in our Women's Studies courses that have had, I believe, a trickle-down influence and it does not always lead to politics. Nevertheless, the basic self-esteem women acquired was the gift of our public educational systems. And self-esteem is a major component in empowerment. But there is a worm here. With more education women become more aware of a stratified social structure, but also more convinced that they personally have the ability and efficacy to overcome it and be successful; they are less interested in collective praxis.<sup>51</sup>

Second, the emergence of feminist movements, indeed of a whole array of social movements, was a function of a period of great economic growth, cultural nationalism, and the welfare state. These gave women enormous opportunities in the arts, in the public sector, in the new public service unions, in professional schools. The social services were crafted by women and delivered by women who, in turn, were the beneficiaries. Throughout the 1970s and 1980s the federal government proved to be generous on women's issues, funding a wide range of advocacy groups, including the National Action Committee, the Legal Education and Action Fund, and, I should add, the five University chairs. Yet, a significant sector of women gained very little. As we look at the homeless women in all of our

cities, as we look at the older women who never connected with the services intended for them, we recognize a reality about the Golden Age of the welfare state. And as we look back today at the erosion of the welfare state, I think we can chart the beginning of an extensive disempowerment.

If Québec feminists are right, we might find ourselves very shortly with one neo-liberal state of twenty-five million people and one welfare state of six million. The gloom-and-doom scenarios about the economic costs of separation would be called into question. A market economy brings benefits to a few; a mixed economy is better able to spread its wealth, and women have the most to gain from the latter approach. Were we destined to have this cut-back, roll-back, claw-back neo-liberal state? We should keep in mind that many European countries have had debt problems similar to Canada's and have not cut back on their social nets.

One way or another we have seen the welfare state unravel, replaced by a new set of economic rules: competition, deregulation, and privatization. Need has replaced entitlement, and the inequality gaps, rich and poor, male and female, have widened. More and more we are asked to finance our own old-age security through Registered Retired Savings Plans (RRSPs). The unfinished agenda on childcare and housing are being shelved indefinitely. Problems which were defined as systemic are now defined as transient, epiphenomenon, or particularistic. If, as we often said, the welfare state was capitalism with a kinder and gentler face, the neo-liberal state is capitalism with a face that would bring tears to Adam Smith's eyes. The gradual decline of health, education, and equity measures, the elimination of social and cultural services is one part of the story. The other is the devastating effects of the free trade agreements for women: unemployment as well-paying unionized jobs left the country, underemployment as women had to accept unskilled lower paying jobs - the small army of women who are part-time guest workers in their own country.

### **Toward a New Hemispheric Feminism**

I would like to suggest that this new economic reality could be the starting point of a new feminism built around the fault lines of the new regional trading blocs. There are a group of sociologists developing what they call a Global or World Culture which they see as an alternative to the global corporate economy and the nation-state.<sup>52</sup> It is a model that leans very heavily on international ties, international non-government organizations, international tribunals, and a large infrastructure that is not driven by material reductionist agendas. This may well be a new source of strength. To move in that direction, we have to put aside the National Action Committee and the *Federation des femmes* and concentrate on developing new forms of hemispheric cooperation with Québec, Mexico, the United States, and Chile. Domestically, we need to go back to the electoral system and rebuild a social democracy with women at the centre.

This model needs lots of research and discussion. Women's Studies programs could well be the avant-garde, the think-tanks for this project. Québec

feminists may, for similar reasons, be moving in the same direction so that, as we rejoin, it will be under a different umbrella and with a new broader agenda and participatory structure.

### ENDNOTES

1. Alan C. Cairns, "Suppose the 'Yes' Side Wins: Are We Ready?" *Western Perspectives* (Calgary: Canada West Foundation, 1995), 1.
2. Submission of Fédération des femmes du Québec to the Belanger-Campeau Commission reproduced in Richard Fidler, *Canada Adieu: Québec Debates its Future* (Halifax: Oolichan Books and The Institute for Research on Public Policy, 1991), 163.
3. The question read: "Do you agree that Québec should become sovereign, after having made a formal offer to Canada for a New Economic and Political Partnership, within the scope of the Bill Respecting the Future of Québec and of the Agreement signed on 12 June, 1995." The "no" side won by about one percent.
4. Peter J. Katzenstein, *Small States in World Markets* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985).
5. Jean-Marie Guehenno, *The End of the Nation-State*, trans. Victoria Elliott (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993).
6. One of the most complete and detailed discussions can be found in Robert A. Young, *The Secession of Quebec and the Future of Canada* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1995). One of the most critical pieces, written by two Québécois, is William F. Shaw and Lionel Albert, *Partition* (Montreal: Thomhill Press, 1980).
7. In addition to the publications by Fidler and Young, cited above, see Kenneth McRoberts, *Misconceiving Canada* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1997); Jeremy Webber, *Reimagining Canada* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1994); Daniel Drache and Roberto Perin, eds., *Negotiation with a Sovereign Québec* (Toronto: James Lorimer & Company, 1992) and Philip Resnick, *Toward a Canada-Quebec Union* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1991).
8. Peter M. Leslie, *The European Community: A Political Model for Canada?* (Ottawa: Minister of Supply and Services Canada, 1991).
9. Young, *The Secession of Quebec and the Future of Canada*, 14-28.
10. Desmond Morton, for example, invokes the American Civil War as a possible outcome. "Reflections on the Breakup of Canada, Conflict and Self Determination" in *The Tangled Web: Legal Aspects of Deconfederation*, ed. Stanley H. Hartt, Q.C. et al. (Toronto: C.D. Howe Institute, 1992). See also John McCallum's summary of the Belanger-Campeau report in the same volume.
11. See Marcel Côté and David Johnston, *If Québec Goes....The Real Cost of Separation* (Toronto: Stoddart, 1995).
12. Hartt et al., *The Tangled Web*.
13. Not the least bizarre was a letter to the *New York Times*, 8 September 1990, by an editorial writer of the *Financial Times of Canada*, suggesting that the United States could do its bit for Canadian unity by barring an independent Québec from the free-trade agreement.
14. Webber, *Reimagining Canada*.

15. David Schneiderman, ed., *Conversations Among Friends/Entre Amies*, Proceedings of an Interdisciplinary Conference on Women and Constitutional Reform (Edmonton: Centre for Constitutional Studies, University of Alberta, 1991). These are essays by women on women; there is no discussion of problems of the larger social structure.
16. Note that I am using the term "Canadian Feminism" to refer to the feminist movement outside of Québec, and the term "Québec Feminism" for the movement within the province. When I refer to all of us, it is "Feminism in Canada."
17. Donna Greschner, "Can Constitutions Be for Women Too?" in *Administration of Justice*, ed. Dawn Currie and Brian MacLean (Saskatoon: University of Saskatchewan, 1986), 20-34.
18. See Patricia File and Maylou Murray, eds., *Overview of Positions Taken by National Women's Groups on the Meech Lake 1987 Constitution Accord* (Ottawa: Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women, 1987).
19. Resolutions are passed by NAC and other organizations urging a strong centralized federal government which would, as a matter of principle, accord Québec and Aboriginal groups an exemption to work out their own models.
20. Gilles Bourque and Jules Duchastel, "Erosion of the Nation-State and Transformation of National Identities," paper presented at the 92nd Annual Meeting of American Sociological Association, Toronto, August 1997. Thematic Session: National Identity and Post-Nationalism.
21. *Report of the Royal Commission on The Status of Women* (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1970).
22. Clio Collective, *Québec Women: A History* (Toronto: The Women's Press, 1987).
23. The minority Report by John Humphrey can be found in the *Report of the Royal Commission on The Status of Women*, 433-451.
24. Gwen Brodsky and Shelagh Day, *Canadian Charter Equality Rights for Women: One Step Forward Or Two Steps Back?* (Ottawa: Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women, 1989).
25. Michael D. Behiels, ed., *The Meech Lake Primer* (Ottawa: University of Ottawa, 1989) and Marjorie Bowker, *Canada's Constitutional Crisis* (Edmonton: Lone Pine Publishing, 1991); See also Schneiderman, ed. *Conversations Among Friends/Entre Amies*, cited above.
26. Ginette Busque, "Why Women Should Care about Constitutional Reform," in *Conversations Among Friends/Entre Amies*, ed. Schneiderman.
27. Charles Taylor, *Multiculturalism: Examining the Politics of Recognition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994).
28. New, that is, to Québec, but familiar to Latin American liberation insurgents.
29. Michael Ignatieff, *Blood & Belonging* (Toronto: Penguin, 1993).
30. Pierre Birnbaum, "From Multiculturalism to Nationalism," *Political Theory* 24.1 (February, 1996), 33-45.
31. IN THE MATTER OF Section 53 of the Supreme Court Act, R.S.C. 1985, c.S-26; and IN THE MATTER OF a Reference by the Governor in Council concerning certain questions relating to the secession of Québec from Canada, as set out in Order in Council P.C. 1996-1947, dated the 30th day of September, 1996.

32. Norman Spector, a senior editor at *The Globe and Mail*, suggested that it tipped the scales slightly in favour of Québec. "A trump card handed to Bouchard," 24 September 1998, A23

33. Philip Resnick, *Letters to a Québécois Friend: With a Reply by Daniel Latouche* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1990).

34. William D. Coleman, "The Class Bases of Language Policy in Québec 1949- 1983," in *Québec: State and Society*, ed. Alain G. Gagnon (Scarborough: Nelson, 1993), 388-409. Owners, managers, entrepreneurs, and others who gave orders traditionally spoke English; workers, small business, the poor and the dispossessed spoke "Joual."

35. National Association of Women and the Law, *Women and Constitutional Change* (Ottawa: The Association, 1992).

36. Prisoner's Dilemma is a decision-making game involving two parties both of whom are suspects in a robbery. The Attorney General calls them in separately and says to each: "I know you're guilty but I can't prove it. But here is the deal. If you confess and implicate your partner, I will convict you both, but you will get a lighter sentence - three months; your partner will get twenty years. If you both confess, then I'll recommend ten years for each of you. If neither of you confesses, I will figure out something and you will both get one year. Now, you understand, I make exactly the same deal to your partner, so you'd better hurry and decide." Each person has to make a guess about what the other one is likely to do and on that basis make a decision. It is called a non-zero sum game. See John Sabini, *Psychology*, 2nd edition (New York: W. W. Norton, 1995), 357-59.

37. Not all francophone feminists in Québec support a separatist orientation. Many are strongly identified with the Liberal option: one Canada with Québec a "distinctive society." Others find their feminist aspirations in a continental model – feminist artists, scientists, athletes, and others identify with their counterparts in the United States.

38. The Ultramontanists believed in the doctrine of absolute papal supremacy.

39. They could use their husband's name, but for all legal purposes they were known by the surname they had at birth. *Family Law in Canada: New Directions* (Ottawa: Advisory Council on the Status of Women, 1985), 198.

40. In 1980 a new Québec-based large circulation magazine, *La Vie en Rose*, appeared on the stands and proved to be popular with men and women, as well with both academics and the general public. It included discussions of popular culture, profiles of women active in science, journalism, and the arts, glossy photography, and reviews of books, concerts, film. Apart from helping to build the movement and support for its aims, *La Vie en Rose* (along with *La Gazette des Femmes* and *La Petite Press*) contributed to the new culture.

41. Micheline Dumont, "Origins of the Women's Movement in Québec," in *Challenging Times: The Women's Movement in Canada and the United States*, ed. Constance Backhouse and David H. Flaherty (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's Press, 1992), 72 - 89.

42. I disagree with Michael Ignatieff who views this preoccupation with the underdevelopment of Québec as a useless waste of energy. "Québec nationalism," he says, "has mythologized a nation's defeat at the very moment Québec finally overcame it." *Blood and Belonging*, 153. Reconstructing it in a way that would preclude essentialism is more politically relevant than he indicates.

43. René Lévesque, *An Option for Québec* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1968), 9.

44. A year after Lévesque's election Bill 101 made French compulsory at work and in most schools, targeting the children of immigrants whose parents might have wished them to attend English schools.

45. Although the major feminist organization in Québec, the *Fédération des femmes du Québec*, has gone on record endorsing separatism, not all feminists in Québec are *indépendantistes*.

46. Bowker, *Canada's Constitutional Crisis*.

47. In its brief to the Belanger-Campeau Commission the Fédération des femmes du Québec argued that the social cannot be separated from the political. It is impossible, "to elaborate a political plan without a social plan, and the latter must have a feminist content." And this, in turn, "will be proportional to the degree of autonomy Québec obtains." This can only happen if "women are closely associated with all phases in the development of this model." In this and her other presentations it cites examples of gains Québec women made that were canceled by federal legislation which competes with the provincial initiatives. "Québec women, unlike their Canadian sisters, have greater confidence in their provincial government than they do in the federal government." But given autonomy, the Fédération argues for a more positive image of Québec as a welfare state. This idea is reiterated in the statements by Québec's Status of Women Council (*Conseil du statut de la femme*). The Québec Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms, "unlike the Canadian one, includes a chapter on economic and social rights."

48. A short but excellent account of how it happened and the implications of the Charter is found in Chaviva Hošek, "Women and Constitutional Process," in *And No One Cheered*, ed. Keith Banting and Richard Simeon (Toronto: Methuen, 1983), 280 - 300.

49. Op-Ed article in *The Globe and Mail*, 21 September 1992.

50. Judy Rebick and Kiké Roach, *Politically Speaking* (Toronto: Douglas and McIntyre, 1996).

51. Kane, Emily W., "Education and Beliefs About Gender Inequality," *Social Problems*, 42.1 (Feb 1995): 74-90.

52. John Boli and George M. Thomas, "World Culture in the World Policy," *American Sociological Review* 62.2 (1997): 171-190; John W. Meyer, John Boli, George M. Thomas, and Francisco O. Ramirez, "World Society and the Nation-State," *American Journal of Sociology*, 103.4 (1997): 144-181.



## Third Wave Feminism in the Making: The Toronto Linden School

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and Jamea Zuberi*  
Nancy's Chair, 1989

### ABSTRACT

This collectively written paper reports on the development of pedagogy at the Linden School, an experiment in feminist education, brainchild of co-principals Diane Goodie and Eleanor Moore. The mission statement of the Linden School lists as one of its aims to preserve the voice of girls or to help them find it. To achieve this goal, conflict resolution, cooperation, the downplaying of power, a strong academic and inclusive curriculum, and an ethics of caring are at the forefront. Faculty constantly interrogate an epistemology of knowledge, asking what is worth knowing, teaching, and learning.

### Introduction

As we finish writing this paper, the Internet reminds us of the peril of girls and women in Afghanistan, who are forbidden to learn, to work, to move about freely. What do innovations in feminism mean in the light of such oppression? It is our contention that education is part of the global feminist agenda, of a process that must not lose ground, because its results will surely cause other women to help building a better world.

The topic of our paper is the education of young women as it is taking shape at the feminist Linden School in Toronto. The school opened in central Toronto in September 1993, the brainchild of its two co-principals, Diane Goodie and Eleanor Moore, supported by a number of Toronto feminist academics and activists. The first year enrolment was of 44 girls, in Grades 4 to 10, being taught by seven teachers. In 1999, there are 130 students from Grade 4 to Grade 12/13, and about fifteen faculty. Twenty-five students have by now graduated.

The Linden School's staff and student body reflect the demographic mix of an urban environment. Students pay a yearly fee, an unfortunate fact, even though the fees are much lower than those of other private schools. The money is a necessity since the founders of the school were unable to convince the local school board to implement their vision of an educational alternative for female students. The school struggles with a perpetually inadequate budget, offers below-scale salaries, and has only in 1998-1999 begun to inquire into the possibility of a pension and benefits plan. On a more positive note, local faculty of education students vie with each other for a placement at Linden.

### Girls and Feminist Pedagogy

In North American public schools, the gender gap continues to exist; it narrows in some place, widens in another. The October 1998 report of the

Educational Foundation of the American Association of University Women (AAUW), reveals that, "while the gaps in math and science achievements have narrowed for girls in the past six years, a major new gender gap in technology has developed."<sup>1</sup> The AAUW Executive Director Janice Weinman noted upon the release of the report: "...technology is now the new 'boys' club in ... public schools. While boys program and problem solve with computers, girls use computers for word processing, the 1990s version of typing."<sup>2</sup> This may be to the disadvantage of girls in the twenty-first century.

How do such divisions occur? It must have to do with pedagogy (who is being taught what, how, by whom), with socialization, with different approaches (men like to experiment with machines, girls are afraid to harm the machines). In her book *Nattering on the Net, Women, Power and Cyberspace*,<sup>3</sup> Dale Spender argues that it is of utmost importance for women to familiarize themselves with computers and with the Net. She reminds her readers that it was after the invention of printing that women were deprived of education and that the Internet risks to become a male domain. She quotes Margie Wylie, editor of *DigitalMedia*: "Far from offering a millennial new world of democracy and equal opportunity, the coming web of information systems could turn the clock back fifty years for women."<sup>4</sup> While there are educational and other barriers hindering women from claiming their place on the Net, Spender gives as an example of good computer education the Methodist Ladies College in Melbourne which as early as 1989 provided each girl in Year 7 with her own laptop. The school, which unfortunately is another institution of privilege, encouraged experimentation with the computers. Its successes are said to be phenomenal, to the point that students and teachers were learning French thanks to the installation of the French version of Logo Writer.<sup>5</sup>

The school's pedagogical principles have also undergone tremendous changes and are in many ways similar to those followed at the Toronto Linden School. Although the latter cannot afford to equip every one of its students with her own laptop, computer courses are an important part of its curriculum. The Linden school's web site was built entirely by students. When Marguerite was a teenager, her mother forbade her to take a course in typing and shorthand; she did not want her to work under the dictation of men. Today's mothers would be foolish to recommend that their daughters not take computer courses. On the contrary, they and the teachers must encourage them to do so and furthermore urge them to go beyond word processing, on which they tend to concentrate because they are good at verbal expression. When asked which subjects they like, applicants to the Linden School rarely point to mathematics. In fact, most of them say they hate the subject. Aware of the need to encourage young women in mathematics and science, Linden faculty have developed pedagogy which results in provincial math contest successes, AP Calculus, and top scores in National Science Fair competitions.

Research (Gilligan, Spender et al.) has shown that girls lose their voice during pre-adolescence, adopting a silence that they later have difficulty breaking. The mission statement of the Linden School lists as one of its aims to preserve the

voice of girls or to help them find it. The school endeavors to function as a community of learners with equal voices, in which each learner will see her achievements as a result of her own effort, the teacher as a resource person. Hierarchy ceases to reign, teaching and learning are experiments in interaction. When something is being explained during a class and one student says she does not understand, another student will try to explain the matter to her. Teachers will admit their own shortcomings and will, with their students, find out what needs to be known. Teachers stop students who wish to thank them for a good mark; cuddly toys or other lucky charms cannot be brought into examinations. Grades and comments on report cards are the result of a discussion between teacher and student. The teacher calculates marks, writes a draft of her anecdotal comments, and sits down with each student who, in the meantime, has written her own assessment of her progress. Student and teacher compare notes, decide on final versions. The student may question a teacher's observation; she may need encouragement to be specific about a goal she is setting for the next term. Twice a year, marks are reviewed before the reports are written by both student and teacher.

Conflict resolution, cooperation instead of competition, the downplaying of power, a strong academic and inclusive curriculum, an ethic of caring, these are the characteristics of the Linden School. Its mission is the woman-centered education of girls and young women. It tries to create a schooling which, in the metaphor of Emily Styles,<sup>6</sup> is both a "window" to and a "mirror" of students' real lives, addressing issues of gender, race, class, and sexuality. Teaching and learning become "an authentic, value-laden and liberatory process for student and teacher."<sup>7</sup>

### The Linden School Experience

Linden teachers constantly interrogate an epistemology of knowledge, asking what is worth knowing, teaching, and learning. Locating the authority of our discourse in our experience as teachers, we have identified points of contact between our practice and current feminist and critical pedagogy. We question prescribed academic and educational policies as we position our curriculum. We reflect on the creative and evolutionary process taking place within and around us.

For example, Yolanda Mak, a graduate of the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, former member of its Women's Collective, sees as her mandate addressing inequity in society through anti-bias pedagogy. It coincides with the school's mission statement to create a woman-centered learning environment that incorporates principles of equality and accessibility. Her endeavor involves synthesizing a lifetime of political thought and action into an art education program for the students. In her attempt to create a successful anti-bias, art-focused learning environment, Yolanda has found it helpful to have the process of art-making inform the process by which she teaches art.

She and her students ponder the question, "What is Art?" They consider the act of creating the artwork, both physical and conceptual components, and the

act of viewing. Together, they examine historical responses to the question, and the students create a definition of their own. One of the conclusions reached is that the artist strives to make artwork that is a manifestation of her experience, understanding, and belief. When the viewer enters the physical and conceptual space of the work, it creates a resonance within the viewer, who then collaborates with the artist in creating an experience, understanding, and belief of her own. The key seems to be in finding the right mix of conceptual and physical elements to create a space that facilitates this interactive encounter in a manner that is significant for the viewer and in which the artist's intent is conveyed. So it is with teaching and, Yolanda suspects, so it is with mothering.

As a teacher, she attempts to model this process of art-making in the delivery of her program. It is the moment when the viewer encounters an artwork and is filled with a sense of illumination that she attempts to mimic in the classroom. As the teacher, she provides physical and conceptual elements (materials, technical skills, a historical context, sense of intrigue) to make a space in which the students can find their voice. In fact, Yolanda calls her program, *Giving Voice*.

She has, for instance, taught a unit about women and textiles. In her attempt to generate fertile creative ground for art-making, she presented the topic as an integrated study of related historical, economic, social, and political issues, including a consideration of fashion, body, and self-image issues. Having created this space, she then invited the students to make a garment of their own design in a medium of their choice and to write an accompanying text. The garment project was unconventional in that the students not only had a choice of medium, but also were not restricted in how to interpret the directive to make a garment. Yolanda considers it to be essential, for a more complete creative process and for the creation of authentic artwork, that the artist not be directed towards a predetermined template.

Zinta Zommers, Grade twelve (1996), of Latvian origin, wrote about her piece, two plaster hands, hand cuffed and holding a shawl:

My piece is about textile production - past and present. The handcuff with the bar codes symbolizes commercialism's hold on us. Today we go to stores to buy our clothes, not giving a thought about where they came from or how they were made. Two hundred or even a hundred years ago I would have made my own clothes. It would have been mandatory for me to knit, sew and weave. These skills are no longer necessary. In modernizing the market, I feel that we have lost something precious. The hands in my piece are wrapped around a hand-made Latvian shawl. They do not let go. Despite the handcuff's hold, they continue to clasp the traditional textile. Perhaps we should do so too. Perhaps that is the key to unlocking the handcuff.

The following year, Yolanda taught a unit about Self-Portraiture in which class and teacher examined the nature of self and addressed the question "Who am I?" Students explored self-portraiture within the context of an integrated study of related historical, philosophical, social, and political issues, including a consideration of the artist, the model, the viewer, as well as the issue of the identity of the artist in terms of gender, race, class, sexual orientation. The final assignment was to create a self-portrait in a medium of one's choice. According to the students, this topic, and the manner in which it was instructed, provided them with a greater sense of resonance and space than the garment directive did.

Rina Daya (Grade 10), who chose to do some work around an old cupboard, wrote:

For me the process of completing this art project is much more significant than the actual object: merely a cupboard. I chose a cupboard to represent myself because a cupboard stores objects, hiding them from a stranger's eye. Many people are like cupboards; they take things in, and store them away, keeping them from strangers' eyes. Sometimes, people keep their cupboard doors open, revealing what they contain inside, while others shut and lock those doors.

My cupboard was intended to look polished on the outside, and contain various meaningful objects inside. However, as I began the process of finishing the wood, I realized that this process was much more significant to me than the actual cupboard. Uncovering the excess paint and varnish, getting down to the original wood, is what every person does at some point in life. It is the process of discovering one's self.

I haven't reached the original wood on my cupboard yet.

Alexandra O'Donnell (Grade 12) wrote about a plaster cast bust she created of herself, surrounding it with mirrors:

Do I really look like that?  
This is a question mirrors prompt one to ask oneself.  
Are these features mine?  
Is this beauty or ugliness?  
By whose standards?  
Some days, it feels like the whole world is scrutinizing you.

Yolanda finds it interesting to notice the similarities between that ever-subtle creative space and anti-bias pedagogy: anti-bias pedagogy strives towards accessibility; the creative space needs to be accessible to the student. Art and art education need to be egalitarian and collaborative in nature, where neither artist nor viewer, neither teacher nor student controls the other while they both work

together to achieve a goal: art or the teaching of art.

Jamea Zuberi, who teaches English at the elementary level, recalls her experience teaching Nourbese Philip's novel, *Harriet's Daughter*,<sup>8</sup> in a Grade 6 class. Jamea tries to look at different subject areas and issues through as many different lenses as possible. She has developed an integrated English and Social Studies unit on Caribbean culture and writing. This unit reflects both her background and professional interests. Having emigrated from the Caribbean as a preteen, this teacher shares with the Linden School a commitment to developing anti-bias curriculum strategies. Jamea chose *Harriet's Daughter*, the story of a young adult coming of age in contemporary Toronto, because it is extremely rich, its setting is familiar to Toronto students, and because the main characters of the novel are young girls close in age to the Grade 6 students. They deal with issues faced by young women: friendship, coming of age, immigration, neighbourhoods, community, identity, and spousal abuse.

As feminist theorists and other women work towards a more inclusive definition of mothering, there is a need to look at different women's times, places, histories, economic circumstances, and cultures. Immigration patterns, historical circumstance, and economic and cultural influences have shaped and diversified mothering among African Canadian women. In *Harriet's Daughter*, Margaret's parents emigrated from the Caribbean when immigration to Canada was at its peak.<sup>9</sup> During this time, between 1967 and 1977, most working class Caribbean women of color found employment as domestics, working long hours outside of their homes. The theme of Canadian immigration is prevalent in *Harriet's Daughter*. The forces of race and gender oppression as represented by Mrs. B, the Caribbean, and Mrs. Blewchamp, the Jewish immigrant, are clearly constructed by Philip who later explained that she was laying down the work for a sequel that would explore the possible links between a Jewish survivor of the Nazi holocaust and a descendent of survivors of the African holocaust.

Older students continue their examination of themes important to women's lives. Mary Ann Duffy was, until June 1998, the senior English teacher at the Linden School. In the fall of 1997, her Grade Nine was beginning its "Journey" unit, one based in mythology but including a look at the rituals accompanying the menarche in a variety of cultures. In preparation, Mary Ann needed to review that material and go over her Demeter/Persephone file to add a new poem or two, as well as revise her ever-expanding list of goddesses discovered in reading and web-browsing. She also had to find a reliable source for ripe pomegranates for the beginning of the unit. This latter task was, of course, linked to the myth work to be studied, but also to the fact that teenagers need to be fed. This literal/figurative nurture is at the heart of her work as a teacher of girls and young women. But also at the heart of teaching and mothering is the imperative to teach self-feeding, the ability to do so as well as the ability to ask for nurturing.

The twin concepts of ownership of one's own learning and learning as a lifelong process are embedded in the feminist pedagogy of the Linden School.

Where the surprises occur in fostering student ownership of their learning is in the paradoxes of role. Mary Ann quotes Kathryn Morgan who calls one of these ambiguities "the paradox of critical nurturance."<sup>10</sup> Within an ethic of care, "teaching women," as Joanne Pagano calls female teachers,<sup>11</sup> come face to face with themselves as strangers - enacting roles they did not seek and resisting roles students and peers thrust upon them. In her intriguing essay, "The Perils and Paradoxes of the Bearded Mothers," Morgan states the situation succinctly:

Feminist education is, preeminently, a form of existential liberation from the straitjacket of patriarchal education with its essentialist defining of *woman* as invisible other(s) and the correlative assignment of her to various worlds of supportive immanence. Merely identifying and criticizing women's education as patriarchal and confining does not yet entail full transcendence, although it may stave off total gangrene of a woman's intellectual subjectivity. However, once genuinely integrated educative "deep breathing" becomes possible, a central feminist goal emerges: developing a *self-created, self-chosen* form of educated subjectivity and personal vision situated dialectically in an educational community of similar subjects striving collectively for self-esteem and respect. The goal of autonomy is clear, and it is expected that autonomy will be facilitated through modeling and identification.<sup>12</sup>

In this modeling and identification process difficulties arise. Mary Ann gives an example from work in a unit with older students, aged fifteen and sixteen, in grade eleven.

The project is called "Coming of Age at the Millennium," and developed out of a study of writing by Canadian women. The class read Margaret Laurence's *The Stone Angel* together and then each student chose another work by a Canadian woman to study on her own. Out of this reading came essays identifying issues common to the characters in the fiction. The class quickly discovered recurring themes of concern to women at various stages of their lives and a need to research some of the issues of "maiden, mother, crone." Reading Evelyn Lau's *Runaway*, Aritha Van Herk's *No Fixed Address*, Alice Munro's *Lives of Girls and Women*, Sharon Butala's *Luna*, as well as novels by Margaret Atwood, Olive Senior, Marie-Claire Blais, Carol Shields, and many others, the young women easily found issues connected to their own lives, the lives of other women, and the future.

A research project of the grade eleven English course has two components. The first is an oral report, based on inquiry using at least three media, two of them non-print. Web sites, interviews, videotapes, and music enliven the reports and ensure that the research is current. The topics chosen bristle with relevance: "Women and pornography," "Tattooing, body piercing and scarification," "Myths about birth control," "Adolescent suicide," "Teenage girls and feminism," "Women in the sex trades," "Representations of homosexuality in the media." The second component requires the creation of a vertical file for the



school library, instilling the notion that learning is lifelong, collaborative, and cumulative. Project findings become the basis for someone else's learning, providing joint pleasure, knowledge, and growth. Some of these subjects are researched in social studies and physical education classes in many schools. What's different at Linden? Depth, breadth, and personalization. And in the personalization by the teacher come the ambiguities of role, the paradoxes of critical nurturance.

Mary Ann admits that although she knows feminist pedagogy seeks to foster role-modeling, she is terrified to be seen as a model. Who is complete enough to be a role model? Deanne Bogdan writes:

Underlying the ethical aims of feminist pedagogy and literature education is the accepting of the other on the other's own terms. In classrooms full of real readers reading, this principle, which informs what Elizabeth Ellsworth has called "a pedagogy of the unknowable," plays itself out in the interstices between authority and trust, academic rigour and personal empathy, community and fracture, professional and political responsibility.<sup>13</sup>

Sometimes, like Persephone, says Mary Ann, we go down into the dark, not knowing what we will find. Sometimes, like Demeter, we bear torches, running through the world to find what is lost. Often, we celebrate reunion, of self with self, of self with other, of rebirth and renewal and coming of age, whatever age that might be. Teaching within such an environment is initiation, over and over again. Madeleine Grumet, in *Towards a Poor Curriculum*, calls education "the idiosyncratic dialogue of each person moving toward and extending from [her] own physical, historical, and social environment."<sup>14</sup> The ideal at the Linden School is that each person, teacher as well as student, engage in the dialogue. And the more idiosyncratic, the better, says Mary Ann.

Marguerite Andersen also dealt in one of her French classes with the mother-daughter relationship. While the students had in English and in Visual Arts shown reluctance to deal with this subject, they accepted it quite easily in French. When people are in the process of learning another language, they will all of a sudden reveal secrets. Marguerite suspects they have the impression that this different language is outside their reality which makes it easier to touch upon more delicate subjects. Using a wonderful exercise, shamelessly stolen from a recent book by the French writer and pedagogue Daniel Pennac,<sup>15</sup> Marguerite asks her students to imagine waking up as their mother, while the mother in turn wakes up as her daughter. It is an exercise in creative writing, somewhat disorienting to begin with, but which most of the students end up enjoying. It makes them realize what busy lives their mothers lead, how a mother's morning is filled with duties, how many hours of her day, whether she is a professional woman or not, are focused on family matters.

Here are excerpts from the work of two students:



C'est le matin. Je me réveille. Je me rends compte que je suis ma mère. Je cours très vite dans la chambre qui était à moi quand j'étais moi... quand j'étais Victoria.

Je réveille Victoria, pas trop gentiment. Puis j'appelle l'école et les clientes de la petite qui hier encore était ma mère.

Ce jour, nous restons à la maison pour lire et faire les autres choses que nous aimons.

Victoria Anisman-Reiner Grade 9.

This is how Shealagh, also from Grade 9, sees her mother's morning:

Je dois me lever de ce lit... Je prends une douche. Mais quand j'applique le revitalisant, l'eau s'arrête. Alors je crie : "L'eau ! J'ai besoin d'eau!" Chaque jour quelqu'un utilise l'eau quand je suis en train de prendre ma douche... Je descends l'escalier. Mais, mon Dieu, ma fille n'est pas encore réveillée... Pourquoi est-ce qu'elle est toujours comme ça ? Je devrais la mettre dans un pensionnat... peut-être.

Shealagh Earle Meadows, Grade 9

French is a very sexist language. Every noun has a gender which rules over pronouns, adjectives, and past participles. Wherever male and female genders meet in a text, the masculine takes over: if six hundred women and one truck (*le camion*) or one mosquito (*le moustique*) stopped in their travels (*se sont arrêtés*), the past participle will be plural and male. If in one sentence a boy and a girl, or any number of girls, are said to be intelligent, it can only be a sentence (*ils sont intelligents*) where the boy's gender twice prevents the girl(s) from becoming visible, namely in the the personal pronoun and in the adjective. These rules of grammar often render women, their qualities, their activities, and their achievements invisible and can be consciously used to do exactly that.

Feminists writers and linguists in Québec and in France have pointed out this sexism, deplored and caricatured it. They have suggested remedies which the Office de la langue du Québec continues to examine. This institution has by now feminized the names of many professions (e.g. *auteur, auteure*). Although Switzerland, Belgium, and France have to some extent followed suit, such innovations remain unacceptable to the minds of many francophones. The Ontario government has published guidelines for writing French in a non-sexist way and such publications are useful, but it takes generations of teachers, grammarians, and people to change the language. In class, Marguerite points to its sexism. And at the Linden School, the students, all of them girls of course, are receptive to feminist criticism. In fact, they quickly acquire a great alertness to such matters and enjoy pointing it out. In a way, this makes them more attentive to the intricacies of French grammar.

When teaching literature, a French teacher must to some extent respect the canon. If a student gets to read one or two works of seventeenth century literature, it has to be Corneille, Molière, or Racine. But Racine and Molière wrote plays in which the female characters are of the greatest importance. And there are the letters that Mme de Sévigné wrote to her daughter, Mme de Grignan, in seventeenth-century France. Linden's senior students are respectful of their mothers, close to them, and are therefore able to delight in Sévigné's letters, enjoying a confirmation of their own feelings.

As to the twentieth century, students must read Camus, Sartre, Ionesco, Beckett. It is, of course, possible to examine the works of any of these authors from a feminist perspective and senior students at the Linden School would be surprised if that was not done; they simply do it. And then, luckily, there is Simone de Beauvoir: *Les Belles Images* and *Une mort très douce* are two of her works that deal with the mother-daughter relationship, as do many of the novels of Marguerite Duras.

Inevitably, some class hours at the Linden School are more difficult than others. We aim to give our students voice. Some students seem to believe that "voice" means loud expression of opinion, a belief that exists especially in grades 7 and 8. Senior students equate voice and critique. Voice itself becomes a model for discussion in our collaborative learning; the teacher functions as a resource person whose resources must also be open to scrutiny.

Feminist pedagogy must continue to influence pedagogy in general. It must lessen the judgmental, severe role of the teacher which some still favour. The late Mary O'Brien wrote in, "Feminism and Education: A Critical Review Essay":

Education as a mode of social control is dedicated to the justification of the present by the past, and thus all forms of patriarchal education, irrespective of their political labels and the difference... are, in terms of gender, radically conservative. What they conserve is the theory, justification and social stability of male supremacy which survive all reform and all pseudo-radicalism and libertarianism. The goal of a feminist education is not equality in knowledge, power and wealth, but the abolition of gender as an oppressive cultural reality.

...What we are doing as women; recovering our past; charting the modes of oppression to be transcended; fighting for economic security, for control of our fertility, for a healthy environment, for an unexploded planet; tenaciously attempting to cross the barbed wire barriers of class and race and nationalism and sexual preference which patriarchy has erected; creating a new aesthetic universe; redefining and celebrating erotic life; domesticating some men and alarming many more; stretching the parameters of knowledge itself; none of these activities figure prominently in the curriculum guides of ministries of education. But ministries of education, despite their best efforts, have never managed to

make their blueprints of the world stick, and every teacher learns of the elasticity of guidelines.<sup>16</sup>

### Conclusion

Have we at the private institution of the Linden School succeeded in our vision of functioning as a community of learners? Have we successfully stepped over the stumbling blocks that sometimes obstruct our paths? Are we a collective in which all voices are equal or is the Linden School a utopian enterprise? Enterprises need money to function. Rent, insurance policies, equipment, and faculty, and staff need to be paid. Can marketing considerations and feminist principles coexist? These are questions with which we struggle every day.

As political process, feminism contributes to social change. The woman-centered Linden School constitutes a tool for such change. To use Audre Lorde's metaphor, we are trying to forge new tools, replacing those of the master. According to our mission statement, the school "empowers its graduates to become full participants in, and to take leadership roles in local, national and international areas." Of course, we are not trying to carve our students into a particular shape, to create a single-stranded theoretical or political model. The young women who come to the Linden School will no doubt, each in her own way and voice, influence their private worlds as well as the public one. They have already begun. Linden students have made presentations at international women's studies conferences at York University in Toronto and at the meetings of Canada's Congress of the Social Sciences and Humanities ("Learneds") Societies. Lack of funding prevented another team from presenting a paper accepted by an Australian conference. Students are already constructing "real products" of their learning for use in the real world.

At the Linden School, faculty attempts to show the students how to deconstruct knowledge before reconstructing it according to collective and individual insights. We encourage discussion to allow reflection on knowledge, leading our students to become active and interactive thinkers. This is Third Wave Feminism in the making.

### ENDNOTES

1. "Gender Gaps: Where Schools Still Fail Our Children," *Report*, Educational Foundation of the AAUW (October, 1998).
2. Ibid.
3. (North Melbourne: Spinifex Press, 1995). We used the Canadian edition (Toronto: Garamond Press, 1996).
4. See Spender, 3.
5. Spender, 113.
6. Emily Styles, in Peggy McIntosh, "Interactive Phases of Curricular Re-vision: A Feminist

- Perspective," Wellsley College Center for Research on Women, Working Paper #124 (1983), 2.
7. We are indebted for the delineation of some of these issues of human learning to Nona Lyons's "Dilemmas of Knowing: Ethical and Epistemological Dimensions of Teachers' Work and Development" in *The Education Feminism Reader*, ed. Lynda Stone (New York: Routledge, 1994), 195-217.
8. (Toronto: Women's Press, 1988).
9. From 1967 to 1977, 121,225 people immigrated from the Caribbean region to Canada.
10. "The Perils and Paradoxes of the Bearded Mothers," in *The Gender Question in Education, Theory, Pedagogy, and Politics*, eds. Ann Diller, Barbara Houston, Kathryn Pauly Morgan and Maryann Ayim (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1996), 127.
11. See "Teaching Women," in *The Education Feminism Reader*, ed. Lynda Stone.
12. Morgan, 131.
13. "When is a Singing School (not) a Chorus?" in *The Education Feminist Reader*, ed. Lynda Stone, 349.
14. Paraphrased by Lynda Stone, 223.
15. *Messieurs les enfants* (Paris: Gallimard, 1997). A sexist title, unfortunately.
16. *RFR/DRF*, XII. 4 (November 1993): 3-16.

## Development Has a Woman's Face: (A Paradigm Shift)

*Krishna Ahojia-Patel*

Nancy's Chair, 1990

### ABSTRACT

This paper analyzes the concepts that have transformed the "woman question" into the current notion of "gender mainstreaming." It focuses on the definition of economic activity and the techniques devised to measure and quantify economic contribution to the system of national accounts. Does it matter if an economy accounts for all women's work, paid and unpaid, inside and outside the house? The answer given by surveys and reports show that its relevance lies in a very simple finding and that is that women are poorer than men anywhere, everywhere. As women around the world attempt to address this reality, they are calling into question current development strategies that yield micro enterprises and micro credits for women.

### Introduction

Development has many faces, but a closer look with the right lenses reveals that in each of these profiles is a hidden reality: A woman's face emerges in blurred tones, its contours and features always recede in stereotyped perception. The current definitions of development, the dominant paradigm, generally pay lip service to the idea of development being interdisciplinary or multidisciplinary - implying that the sources of original inspiration are derived from disciplines in social sciences. However, the closer examination reveals that the definitions of institutionalized development have various ideologies, a multitude of concepts, and well-conceived, hidden political agendas. Their core contents reflect a heavy bias in favour of economics as a scientific area of enquiry in which the pride of place is given to methodologies of measurement or systems of quantification, such as the popular concept of gross domestic product (GDP). But most significant aspects of life such as destruction, disasters, and deprivation which affect the majority are left outside its scope and application.

It is only recently that researchers and scholars have focused their attention on the so-called "non-economic" factors of the processes of development earlier relegated to the lower realms of social and cultural hierarchy. The world economy is becoming more and more global and the economic sovereignty of many countries is being steadily eroded. The political prerequisites of higher rates of economic growth or rapid creation of material wealth have acquired a higher value in human behaviour in themselves, leaving aside human relations and quality of life. The series of 1990 Conferences held under the auspices of the United Nations on such varied subjects as population, environment, human settlements, women, and human rights have clearly demonstrated that development is not an end, but a means towards a brighter

future for humanity at large. Indeed, there are several points on which the international community has found consensus in the declarations and resolutions of these conferences.

The statistics on inequities and inequalities among and within nations continue to bewilder the ordinary citizen but it is clear that many people around the world are deprived of resources, income, and social support. The community base in every society is becoming increasingly feeble and vulnerable to global influences. Local space has become connected to global fluctuations in the balance of power. As a general rule, women across cultures are oppressed by newly established power structures in the pyramid of international, national, and community relations.

What is the significance of the neoclassical (neo-liberal) paradigm whose focus is to shift attention to the maximization of efficiency in resource allocation? How do the dependency analyses apply to social groups permanently excluded from participation in and benefits from the creation of additional wealth? In what way has the neo-Marxist paradigm influenced the essential nature of the mode of production that prevails within the periphery? How does the "Basic Needs paradigm" change the key question of poverty in the development process? There are only fragmentary and incomplete answers to these heavy-duty questions. The terminology of development itself (at least in English) is increasingly esoteric and goes well beyond the capacity of most dictionaries.<sup>1</sup>

This practice of exclusion of more than half of humanity in dealing with war and peace, wealth and poverty, and starvation and opulence has given a monopoly of power to a small percentage of companies, families, and policy makers. How to bridge the widening gap between the powerful and the powerless? Theory and reality? These are the real challenges for the next millennium. This paper will explore the distortion and bias that has crept into current development paradigms that have institutionalized social, economic, and political exclusion of women. It will look at these development paradigms "through women's eyes." It will also briefly outline the new and emerging norms of the 1990 series of world conferences on different sectors of development from the gender perspective. In conclusion, an attempt is made to bring together the elements of an alternative paradigm, with women, not as forgotten producers and subjugated reproducers, but as full partners with dignity, liberty, and rights.

The challenge to the researcher and the development practitioner today is to find answers that are not so distant from reality and that at least partially move towards a solution for the vast majority who are homeless, jobless, and unable to obtain at least one full meal a day. As women struggle to preserve life and its energies, the tragedy today is that the new generation is so despondent that it does not even nurture hopes and dreams for the future.

### **Non-development and Women**

At the end of the Cold War in 1988-1989, the bipolar world of

competitive ideologies ostensibly crumbled with the fall of the Berlin Wall. On a symbolic level, the end of the Cold War put a brake on the race among competing ideologies and technologies which encouraged the global stock-piling of nuclear and conventional weapons, capable of destroying the planet many times over. The political need to prove which economic system - capitalism or socialism - was superior was rendered temporarily irrelevant as it became more and more evident that the existing ideologies have left a legacy of profound social problems which could not be solved wholly by the "free market" or by the "predominance of the state." The resulting political confusion particularly after the Gulf War in 1991 has made previous development strategies appear passé, out of date, irrelevant. The social chaos that followed in the war's aftermath made the world unipolar with one super power as the major arbitrator of conflicts among nations. In 1991/92, the dominant development model began to be packaged with more and more attractive wrappings but was completely hollow and devoid of substance. At the same time, for the first time in history, international development studies showed a leaning towards building development models with a sensitivity to gender issues. One such approach was labelled "people-centred" by the Report of the South Commission.<sup>2</sup>

The much discussed international peace dividend did not materialise despite enormous efforts to achieve it by the civil society in the North and the South. The reduction in defence and disarmament expenditure has occurred but slightly and has not released new financial resources for development. While the role of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) have been further reinforced despite changes in spending policies in the 1990s, the United Nations humanitarian institutions have been further downgraded in social and economic spheres. Many governments doubt that the revitalization of the United Nations will bring real benefits to the South.<sup>3</sup>

The current world reality will lead any intelligent observer to the conclusion that most ideologies and paradigms are crumbling and have become merely sophisticated theories which employ a large number of intellectuals everywhere, but which yield few positive results. The best minds of this century, despite an enormous amount of research, have not been able to resolve the political problem of global poverty. Evidence presented at world conferences organized by the United Nations in 1990s indicate more clearly than ever before that *poverty has a gender bias*.<sup>4</sup> This means that women are poorer than men everywhere irrespective of economic structures or political systems. The cause of this bias - discrimination against women - is increasingly becoming evident in every economy and society that is studied and surveyed. The key solution lies in eliminating discrimination against women at all levels of society; at home, in the office and, most importantly, in political institutions. One message that emerges from the World Conferences is clear: *educate, educate, educate women, no matter what the definitions of education*. And it is suggested that the financial cost of educating women as an investment is little compared to higher rate of economic and social return that will accrue in the processes of development.

The tricks and traps of mal-development and non-development in real

life are experienced daily by the seventy-five percent of humanity who are women and children. They are politically ignored, left out of the economic rewards, and pushed to the margin to suffer serious consequences of man-made and natural disasters. Is it surprising, therefore, that the majority of the refugees and displaced persons in the world are women and children? They are always at the receiving end of all catastrophes - a finding that bears little relation to paradigms manufactured in rarefied atmosphere of bureaucracies and academics.

### Relevance of Development Indicators

Reduction of poverty in general at the macro aggregate level does not imply reduction of inequalities in income and does not necessarily close the gender gap. The survey of women's share in total global employment shows that higher ratios of economic growth *per se* do not eliminate discrimination against women in the labour market. With "development," occupational segregation and gender inequalities in income might well have increased. Recent international studies from several countries provide evidence for the view that, while the absolute condition of women might have improved, their relative situation compared to men has not fundamentally changed. Information collated for the Fourth UN World Conference on Women (Beijing, 1995) has further supported this general conclusion.

During the last thirty years, economists have constructed various development models, raised a host of controversies on how to measure "poverty lines" within countries, and theorized on how to reduce the development gap between rich and poor countries. The consistent rate of economic growth does not guarantee anywhere the satisfaction of minimum needs, which has become the main responsibility of women worldwide. Most importantly, more and more women are being classified in the official "poverty line" of most countries in the North and the South. Poverty lines, profiles, and indicators are building-blocks for poverty analysis and policy design. The "poverty line" is a measure that separates the poor from the non-poor (those whose income and consumption fall below the line are poor; those above are non-poor). It needs to be emphasized that while the extent of poverty differs among regions, countries, and social groups, poverty is not only a problem of developing countries. During the 1980s, more and more enclaves of poverty have appeared in the rich industrialized countries and in large countries such as India and China. Country-specific data on rates of economic growth, poverty, and gender equity point to wide differences in China and India among regions. There are regions with higher rates of economic growth and a higher pace of social development, while others with lower rates of economic growth and a lower pace of social development, and still others where high rates of economic growth have not seeped through to minorities and social groups excluded from the benefits of development. Finally, there are regions and states within China and India with lower rates of economic growth and high levels of social development.



The methodology for measuring poverty is not new and has been on the economic scene for more than four decades. When, in 1990, the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) constructed a Human Development Index (HDI) on the basis of three development indicators - life expectancy, adult literacy, and purchasing power parity - it expanded the definitions of poverty and development to include human welfare. This index is of some interest in comparing the advancement of women among various regions or countries. The UNDP defines "human development" as a process of "enlarging peoples choices," adding that "income is clearly only one option." According to the report, in all types of deprivation, poor rural women, whose number is estimated to be between two to three hundred million in India and China, are considered to be the victims of the "greatest deprivation." They do not possess the basic necessities for a decent life for themselves and their children. Millions of them continue to be illiterate; more in Asia and less in Latin America. Their real incomes have not increased substantively and in some parts of Africa they have drastically fallen. In some countries women continue to face a high risk of death during childbirth.

According to UN sources, even in some highly developed countries there are marked differences in levels of achievement between men and women. Redefining further its gender sensitivity index in 1993, the UNDP Report concludes that Japan, which has the highest levels of human development according to its HDI index, dropped to seventeenth when the index was adjusted for gender disparity. In 1992, according to the same index, Canada topped the list, but dropped to seventh place when the gender sensitivity analysis was applied. Some of the reasons for this drop in rank relate to education and employment in both Japan and Canada. In Japan, the post secondary enrollment ratio for females is only two-thirds that of males. Similarly, in employment in that country, women's average earnings are only 51 percent that of men's. Women in Japan are also generally excluded from decision-making positions, where they hold two percent of parliamentary seats, and only seven percent of administrative and managerial posts. Japan does not have any woman at the ministerial level. In contrast, in Canada in 1993, women occupied 47 out of 295 seats in the House of Commons, and several women held ministerial posts. Figures, numbers, data are frozen in time and do not lend themselves to real, precise, and "scientific" comparisons. As each development indicator is evaluated and given a different statistical weight culturally and ideologically, it emerges as a new indicator and pulls down a country in ranking, or places it higher on the top of the list.

The above discussion shows the complexities of linking economic and social advance with gender inequalities. In an attempt to create an alternative methodology to compare countries on the basis of a combination of available development indicators, I selected data from 1980 to 1987 derived from the *World Development Report*, 1988, and the *Human Development Report*, 1990, as well as the global data generated from 1976 to 1985, the UN Decade for Women, which witnessed three world conferences: Mexico (1975), Copenhagen (1980) and Nairobi (1985). These international conferences laid the foundation for a

systematic compilation and analysis of data supplied by governments and the research of individual experts. Despite various surveys and studies, the crucial question of measuring the gender gap among countries has not yet been addressed adequately. Even at the Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing, 1995), the gender gap among countries was not an issue, despite the fact that it remains a serious international concern. Many of the current development models, conceptual frameworks, and development strategies do not properly take into account the gender dimension or even refer to the contribution of women in the economy.

To better measure gender disparity, a new Gender Development Index (GDI) has been constructed by UNDP. It uses the same variables as the HDI, but adjusts average achievement of each country in life expectancy, educational achievement, and income in accordance with the disparity in achievement between women and men. The indices are added together with equal weight to drive the final GDI value: the higher points show lower ranking. For example, India's ranking among 135 countries is 103; while China is higher at 79. In order to measure the relative empowerment of men and women in political and economic sphere of activity, another index called Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM) has been constructed which takes into account the percentage share of men and women in administrative and managerial and technical jobs. Unfortunately, none of these indices or ranking provides a comprehensive picture of women's advancement on a comparative basis.

If the main objective is to compare the degree of women's advancement in different countries and thereby show which country is more advanced, it is not possible to rely exclusively on any available indices constructed at the international level. A new index based on variables beyond real per capita income and life expectancy of women is needed. It must include all dimensions of women's lives: women as producers, women as reproducers, women as consumers, and women as citizens. For such a study, seven indicators could be selected: Purchasing Power Parity (PPP), Maternal Mortality Rate (MMR), Infant Mortality Rate (IMR), Life Expectancy at Birth (LEB), Post-Secondary Education (PSE), Labour Force Participation (LEP) and Participation in Parliamentary Assemblies (PPA). These seven indicators are basically self-explanatory and correlate to the seven roles of women in the family, economy, and society. These are maternal, occupational, conjugal, domestic, kinship, community, and individual. Of the several development indicators on women's advancement, only one, purchasing power parity (PPP), has not been disaggregated by sex. This indicator is considered to underscore all the available data because women have less income and therefore less purchasing power than men. It is the single most important indicator determining the status and empowerment of women. No money - no power, in modern life.

### Limitations of Comparative Analysis

During the last two decades, core issues of measurement have moved from "how to measure to what to measure." Until mid-1990, the former had remained the exclusive domain of the discipline of economics, while the latter was considered to be the area of research for "soft social sciences" such as sociology and anthropology. The areas of enquiry on which these disciplines normally focused was also classified by the development theorists as "non-economic" or social or cultural. The definitions of "nature" and "culture" also restricted their entry to the realm of pure "economic" analysis. At the same time, the new and emerging norms during this period focused on the struggle for survival of those groups in society who were being steadily marginalized and excluded from the mainstream models of development. This period has also coincided with the acceleration of the struggle for women's rights, to which social scientists began to pay closer attention.

The controversial issues which came to the surface at the community, national, and international levels encompassed more and more conflicts in social and cultural life. The search for identity by the individual as a member of an ethnic, regional, or religious group has challenged the constitutional definitions of nation-states and federations. Women's search for identity and justice has further compounded political issues and permanently shifted the boundaries of various disciplines. For example, what are the *differential factors* that influence the evaluation of women's efforts, labour, employment, performance, and economic rewards? What if gender were placed at center-stage? Would the parameters of development need to be permanently shifted? What if we looked at the world through women's eyes? The major breakthroughs during the last two decades in building and constructing data and indices on women was undertaken mainly by statistical bureaux of several UN agencies, especially the International Labour Office (ILO), the Office of Statistics at UN headquarters (New York), and the International Institute for Research and Training for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW) at Santo Domingo. There are also a number of resolutions adopted on women's statistics and indicators that were supported, formulated, and implemented by various UN bodies and agencies.

Since early 1950s these UN bodies and agencies have attempted to find alternative measurement methodologies which could be used internationally to at least challenge the central hold of the GDP as a concept of measurement, if not replace it. Development indicators that have been put forward by various agencies and authors include physical quality of life (PQL), Basic Needs Strategy (BNS)<sup>5</sup> and the Human Development Index (HDI). The three components of the HDI are adult literacy, life expectancy, and purchasing power parity; the two former indices were closely analyzed by the South Commission for the formulation of international development strategies. The analysis of these non-economic indicators have further supported the desegregation of statistics by gender. The

results have made the construction of a new development paradigm more gender sensitive. The ranking of countries by HDI<sup>6</sup> revealed the huge gaps that exist between men and women in all sectors, particularly in education.<sup>7</sup> The inequality of access at all levels (primary, secondary, and university) in education is a major discriminatory factor in our so-called Information Age. Few countries have managed to achieve equality between men and women at the university levels, although there are some interesting examples of equality in numbers of boys and girls at the primary and secondary stage in some developing countries (UNESCO, *Report on World Education*, 1995).

The demand that women's work should be counted and included in the GDP was first raised at the international level as early as 1980 at Copenhagen, during the mid-term evaluation of the UN Decade for Women (UN, *Copenhagen Programme of Action*, 1980). The question that became a political issue at that UN Conference was not whether the unpaid work of women should be measured, but which alternative methodologies should be applied to this area of human labour. During the last fifteen years several attempts have been made to include women's work in the calculations of the GDP of various countries.<sup>8</sup> Calculations and methodologies were focused on "non-economic activity," which includes more than 75 percent of women's work, officially not recognized in statistics. How do we transfer these activities to what is officially described as "economic activity?" And if women's total paid work hours globally are included in the GDP, what difference would it make to a national economy and in turn to the world economy?

There are several answers to this question which link development to the concepts of nature and culture and which push the accepted parameters towards a new rationale. In 1981 the World Bank's World Development Report defined economic development as "a sustainable increase in living standards that encompass material consumption, education, health and environment." The same report for the first time also published nine development indicators including the GDP, in which there was an attempt to desegregate data by sex. Leaving aside GDP, which still retains its gender neutral stance and maternal mortality rates, in which men are not obviously involved, data for all other development indicators - education, labour force participation, access to health, number of seats in parliament, and population percentages - has been desegregated by sex over a period of twenty years for a large number of countries. By adopting these indicators, women were included for the first time in the parameters of the dominant development paradigm - which is built on three pillars; namely, globalization, liberalization, and privatization.

No other area of research has introduced such technical complexity to the development paradigm as the evolution of development indicators. Several UN bodies and agencies have been engaged in the enormous task of constructing indices that would mirror economic and social reality, particularly its *differential impact* on men and women. While the powerful economic indicator, GDP, has sailed through bureaucratic interests and patriarchal institutions, the non-economic indicators, or social indicators, have had greater difficulty in

emerging on the top of the list of the hierarchy of development indicators. There has been enormous resistance during the last two decades at the political level to accounting for and counting women's work, particularly in housekeeping, subsistence agriculture, parenting, and care giving. One of the main reasons why governments, particularly in developing countries, have been slow in supporting research on social indicators is due to the fact that these efforts were considered costly (UNRISD 1990). Higher cost is always an argument in favour of postponing social priorities, and, of course, desegregation of statistics by sex would mirror social reality in a powerful manner and underline the inequality between men and women.

The remarkable feature of social research at the UN level is that different bodies and agencies formulated policies and programs to implement the UN resolutions on statistics and indicators on women. The economic cost was shifted to development agencies. The result of the pressure from below by various women's movements and the policy resolutions from above has produced a veritable data bank on women, published for the first time by the United Nations in 1985 for the UN end Decade Conference in Nairobi.<sup>9</sup>

### **Is Development Beyond Gender?**

The 1990 series of UN Conferences began with the World Summit on Children in which seventy heads of states participated and adopted a Declaration on the Rights of the Child. This Conference recognizes that to improve the life of children would require ameliorating the conditions of life for women at the same time. No child can be healthy if the mother is sick; no child can learn if the mother is illiterate, and no child can be protected without at the same time offering physical and financial protection to the mother. The subsequent cycle of conferences covered by the United Nations were: The Earth Summit (Rio de Janeiro, 1992), the Conference on Human Rights (Vienna, 1993), Population and Development (Cairo, 1994), the Summit on Social Development (Copenhagen, 1995), and the Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing, 1995). In 1996, The Habitat II World Conference reaffirmed women's right to adequate shelter, including land security and inheritance of rights to property and land.

Each of these Conferences in their declarations and plans of action emphasized the crucial role of women in the processes of development. The Vienna Conference on Human Rights recommend the collective struggle of the world's women by adding specifically the word "women" to Human Rights. Ordinarily the term "human" should include women, and the national legislation in many countries interprets the term as such, but practice has led women to believe that women's human rights are "specific" and "special" and need to be separately studied. The Earth Summit produced Agenda 21, which recognized the vital role of women, particularly in the management of natural resources. The Cairo Conference concentrated on the empowerment of women underlining education as the key to human development. The World Summit on Social Development

(Copenhagen, March 6-12, 1995) was one of the largest gatherings of world leaders in history in which 20,000 official delegates and non-government organizations (NGO) representatives discussed world's gravest social problems: poverty, employment, violence, and the participation of women. Before they left Copenhagen, NGOs working on health, environment, and women's Human Rights made a Pledge to Gender Justice. This pledge called on governments, the United Nations, and civil society to make good their commitments and turn the principles into practice. The pledge gives women a vehicle to pressure and monitor government responses.<sup>10</sup>

There is an emerging new field called "feminist" economics. In most societies, women are generally presumed to know little about economics at a global or a national level. Yet, as Marilyn Waring has noted, "A simple and disputable fact of everyday experience is that most women know how to be economical, to use things sparingly and to cut down on expenses." Waring continues:

The new field of feminist economics is tackling all aspects of economic research by examining micro- and macro-level policies. Not only is this research attempting to reveal the impact of policy on women compared to men, it attempts to transform macroeconomic policies to take these effects into account. It argues women's cash and in-kind earnings are vital to families around the world. Although women's unpaid housework is defined as non-economic and is not measured in a country's gross national product, feminist economics shows that this is work no country could do without.<sup>11</sup>

Among the three principles mentioned by Professor Karl Polanyi on the economic systems prevalent in the 1930s and 40s, one was called "house holding."<sup>12</sup> The other two principles were reciprocity and redistribution. At that time, he defined the principle of "house holding" as "production for one's own use." "House holding" played a major role in history and became a feature of economic life only with the development of agriculture; however, even then it has nothing in common either with the motive of gain or with the institution of markets. This concept has not changed much in the subsequent four or five decades. Is household as a production unit beyond gender? And if it is so recognized, then its social implications are extremely important for the emerging paradigm being constructed by feminist economics.

Most development concepts have kept nature and culture outside their analysis on the grounds that these two concepts do not figure in the contractual systems of the monetary economy. Most recently there has been an effort to present the economic cost of natural resources wherever degradation of the environment has become a political issue. A large part of the activities of UNESCO have underlined the vital role played by culture in development. And yet the purely economic discourse has discarded its relevance mainly because various aspects of culture do not lend themselves to statistical calculations. What unites

these two notions is their ambiguous relationship to the contribution of women as the main conservers of nature and preservers of culture.

Social scientists who do not lean towards "economism and industrialism" as the be all and end all of development have advocated the importance of culture as a crucial dimension of any new paradigm. Those researchers who wear blinkers and do not perceive gender differences have not analysed the role of tradition in culture and their connection to women's performance. In fact, the struggle for women's equality in the 1970s consisted in "'reintegrating' women in the development process." The first World Women's Conference at Mexico (1975) made women's integration in development a major theme of its Plan of Action. Two World Conferences later and after an enormous struggle of the women's movements with their governments, the Beijing Conference in September 1995 let go "integration" and called for "full participation." Despite its obvious weaknesses, the Beijing Platform for Action adopted by over 180 governments represents the strongest statement ever made on women's equality, empowerment, and justice. As suggested by the Women's Environment and Development Organization (WEDO), "changes are not about simply mainstreaming women. It's not about women joining the polluted stream. It's about cleaning the stream, changing stagnant pools into fresh flowing waters."

Most of the central issues that appear on the Beijing Platform of Action to eliminate discrimination against women are the result of negotiations and renegotiations at the local, national, and global space. These are the critical areas of concern that support new insights on the impact of globalization on women. The macro-economic trends, which are almost universally advocated by the neo-liberal economic thinking, will increasingly determine and undermine the livelihood, income, and status of women. The explosion of technologies - especially the hi-tech variety - the introduction of structural adjustment programs, and liberalization of trade flows and the consequent need to integrate women in the world economy has created a new global profile of women. In this distorted picture, gender equality, economic equity, and social justice are more elusive than ever.

The processes of globalization have compelled transnational corporations to seek flexible production processes to respond to market fluctuations which have pushed women in the category of workers - temporary, part-time, or home-based. This means that women have become dispensable workers with lower wages, poor working conditions, and longer hours. Global restructuring in practice has meant that transnational enterprises have an expanded share of trade and monopolies in the world economy. This gives the corporations the flexibility to seek a cheap labour force in an unregulated market driven economy.<sup>13</sup>

As consumers and investors, women have the power and the leverage to change corporate behaviour. Companies will increasingly devote efforts to address social and environment concerns, but only if consumers and investors will keep the pressure on. At the time of writing, it seems that there is a progressive *rapprochement* between governments and foreign investors in which the interests and rights of all



workers will be seriously affected. In this scenario, women workers will suffer most when their living conditions deteriorate, affecting households, communities, and countries. If women are excluded from existing development strategies, there is a serious economic and social cost which will continue to be paid by society.

#### ENDNOTES

1. Eric Allard has surveyed the various dimensions of welfare by interviewing four thousand people in Scandinavian countries under interesting titles of "having", "loving", "being." United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD), Discussion Paper (Geneva 1986).
2. "Challenge to the South," Geneva, 1992; published in *Facing the Challenge: Responses to the Report of the South Commission* (London; Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Zed Books, 1993). The structural adjustment policies promoted by the World Bank and the IMF are usually analyzed at the micro-economic level, mostly involving reduction of public expenditure on social programs, devaluing currency, and increasing exports. Apart from the economic mythology, the social reality indicates that the impact of these policies is mostly at the micro level - in the home. The most significant result of the new pattern of work is that the male bread-winner has practically disappeared. The concept of the male bread-winner had a prestigious and powerful run for over a century. What is even more significant is that the male response to this situation is also shifting. Unfortunately as male unemployment increases, so does male violence in the home. Richard Auken, *Gender and Jobs: Sex and Segregation of Occupations in the World* (Geneva: ILO, 2000) 46-47. See in particular, occupational segregation by sex based on detailed occupational data: extent to which occupations are male dominated or female dominated - Chapter 10.
3. World Institute for Development Economics Research, *WIDER Angle*, 1 August 1995.
4. During two decades of global economic restructuring, free trade structural adjustment programs, deficit reduction, and downsizing have permanently changed the pattern of the labour market. In this political economic framework, women's labour has once again become dispensable; women are fired first and hired last. As they join a vast army of home-based workers with uncertain incomes and unstable situations, another group of younger workers who have never been employed have started seeking "feminine" employment. Krishna Ahooja-Patel, "Gender Distance Among Countries," *Economic and Political Weekly*, Bombay, 13 February 1996.
5. Going beyond the minimal requirements of basic needs and poverty relief, many attempts have been made to define an *adequate level of living* or to use the cognate term, *welfare*. This is a multifarious endeavour because it depends so much on social and cultural factors, but "indicators can throw some light on broad interrelations, temporal changes and inter regional patterns," says Robert V. Horn in his excellent book on *Statistical Indicators for the Economic and Social Sciences* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 206-207.
6. The Index on Human Development constructed by UNDP in 1990 and refined in subsequent reports moves beyond the physical quality of life. It is based on a combination of life expectancy at birth, adult literacy, and GDP per capita (purchasing power parity). The index uses the range between the highest and the lowest ranking from over 130 countries to set minimum and maximum "values." This index made some governments of some countries extremely satisfied (for example, Canada, Norway, and Japan) while the majority of countries who came off badly did not mention the UNDP Report in their official speeches.
7. The most important contribution of HDI to gender is described in the 1995 Report presented to the Fourth UN Conference in Beijing in September, 1995. Under the title "Still an Unequal World," the UNDP makes a bold statement: "In no society today do women enjoy the same opportunities as men." This unequal status leaves considerable disparities between *how much* women contribute to human development and *how little* they share in its benefits. That this problem is universal and global across country and community boundaries is now established beyond any doubt by using the refined



methodologies of quantification and measurement. Such a conclusion has serious economic and social implications not only for public policy but also for development paradigms. *Human Development Report 1995* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 29.

8. The most important question on the unpaid contribution of women has also been raised in the *Human Development Report 1995*. "Is there any reason that only work for the market-place should be valued and that work must have an exchange value, not just a human value, to be recognized in economic terms?" 97.

If these unpaid activities were treated as market transactions at the prevailing wages, they would yield huge monetary valuations - a staggering 16 trillion dollars, or about 70 percent more than the officially estimated 23 trillion dollars of global output. This estimate includes the value of the unpaid work performed by women and men as well as the value of the *underpayment* of women's work in the market at prevailing wages. Of this 16 trillion, 11 trillion is the non-monetized, "invisible" contribution of women, 97.

This estimate is not meant to imply that this is the amount that would have to be paid for non-market work, since the entire wage structure would change if all activities entered the market. What it shows, however, is that the unpaid and unrecognized work is substantial (97).

9. UN, *Trends and Data on Women*, 1985; also see revised version 1995.

10. Women's Environment and Development Organization (WEDO), June 1995.

11. see Marilyn Waring, *If Women Counted* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1988) 31.

12. *The Great Transformation* (New York: Rinehart, 1944).

13. *Progressions*, North-South Institution, 1 May, 1995.



## Gender and Sustainability

*Margrit Eichler*

Nancy's Chair, 1990-91

### ABSTRACT

This paper explores the complex relationship between gender equity and environmental sustainability by critically examining seven approaches found in the literature: that (1) women have a privileged relationship with nature; (2) men are disproportionately responsible for environmental deterioration; (3) women experience environmental deterioration differently from men; (4) environmental sustainability and gender equity are linked politically; (5) the oppression of women and nature go hand-in-hand; (6) environmental sustainability requires gender equity; and (7) the two are linked intellectually and educationally.

### Introduction

When I held the Jackman chair - now Nancy's Chair - I organized a regional conference on the topic of gender and sustainability. I felt it was appropriate to pick up the thread where I left it, so to speak. On the occasion of that conference, I asked everyone whether they thought that the way we organize ourselves is sustainable in environmental terms. Not a single person thought so. I now wish to repeat this question once more: Who believes that the way we organize ourselves as a society is sustainable in environmental terms? Clearly we do not need to engage in a sustained discussion of all the things we do wrong and the many ways in which our planet is disintegrating. I recently attended a conference of the Royal Society of Canada on the topic of sustainability, and one of the speakers - John Leslie - took a good half hour to describe the many ways in which we were hurtling towards extinction. According to Leslie (1999), we risk human extinction via:

- an accidental nuclear war;
- biological warfare;
- population pressure leading to warfare;
- various environmental pressures, including the ozone levels;
- climate warming;
- the weakening of our immune system.

These were the more or less conventional ways in which many have predicted the end of humanity. Then he had a few real doozies:

- self-reproducing micro-machinery will wipe us out;
- economic chaos resulting from overreliance on computers will kill us all;
- physicists misusing high energies will blow up the world.

To this we can all add our own pet theories of the apocalypse. This is, after all, the year of the millennium, and it is *de rigueur* that we have visions of the end of the world.

My personal pet theory is that genetically modified organisms, released by corporations such as Monsanto, will migrate and mutate in horrible and unpredictable ways, wiping out much of our food supply in the process, and/or trans-species genetic products will generate new illnesses against which there is no defense. So, we see that there is no dearth of theories explaining how we are all going to hell in a hand basket. I do not wish to dwell on this aspect here; instead, I want to examine how we might conceivably get ourselves out of the mess and whether - and in what way - gender is relevant in this discussion.

One way that scholars have approached this issue is by identifying a primary cause of the current problem. There are a number of very likely candidates for the role of primary cause, global capitalism and militarism being the two leading ones among them. Both of them are intimidatingly complex. Solutions elude our grasp. Capitalism, the way it is currently constituted, inevitably leads to environmental destruction because it is premised on continuing growth and because environmentally destructive processes, such as clear-cut logging or trawler fishing, are more financially rewarding in the short term than more environment-friendly processes, such as selective logging or in-shore fishing. This perspective, of course, is premised on a particular political structure and could be changed. We could give tax benefits to corporations that behaved in an environmentally and socially responsible manner, and could slap tax penalties on those that do not. However, this seems unlikely to happen at present because our governments are actively colluding with the very corporations that engage in these destructive activities.

Looking at the military - the single biggest destroyer of the environment - the picture is similarly complex. Of course, global capitalism and the military are not really two separate issues. How will we get the world to disarm? How will we stop warfare? Indeed, Thomas Homer-Dixon (1994) has argued that disputed access to environmental resources, such as water, is likely to increase warfare rather than stop it. There is thus a vicious circle: the military and global capitalism wreak havoc on the natural environment, which results in diminished natural resources, which results in industrial and military warfare, which increases the burden on the natural environment, which results in warfare....

Part of the problem is that we are dealing with a condition that seems only structural, with no personal face attached. It is the capitalist *system* that is seen as - and, indeed, *is* - the culprit, not any one specific CEO. However, it *is* possible to put a human face on at least a part of this problem. In its most recent Human Development Report, the United Nations looked at the group of people - who, I assume, are all men - whom they call the "ultra-rich." The report says that the world's "three richest people have assets that exceed the combined GDP of the 48 least developed countries" and that the "... cost of achieving and maintaining universal access to basic education for all, basic health care for all, reproductive

health care for all women, adequate food for all and safe water and sanitation for all is...less than 4 percent of the combined wealth of the 225 richest people in the world" (United Nations 1998, 3). I believe we should identify these individual people, and start a massive and world-wide campaign asking them to donate 10 percent of their assets to solving some of the world's problems which they are implicated in creating.

What does it mean for us that our society is unsustainable? The first and most obvious thought that offers itself is that it is entirely unclear who the "us" in this question is. Does "us" include the entire world? If so, we note that we are pretty lucky that we are living in Canada rather than in a developing country, where many more people live at the margins in every sense of the word. Their survival is marginal, they are considered as marginal by their own governments, and they live on marginal lands where natural disasters, when they occur (and they are occurring more frequently now than they used to before), tend to have much more horrific consequences than if they occur here.

Is the "us," then, only people in Canada? Even if restricted in this way, we find that there are pretty significant differences between us. There is a profound difference in how one is affected by environmental deterioration depending on whether one is a fisher in the Atlantic Provinces for whom the picture is bleak, or an academic in Toronto, for whom things are pretty much going on as always. Even if I were to restrict myself to Toronto only, the "us" is problematic. I am writing this paper in the midst of the most severe snowstorm I have ever experienced in Toronto. As I look up from my computer keyboard and see the snow drifting gracefully down onto the trees in my garden, sitting in a warm and comfortable room, part of a beautiful and peaceful home, well-fed and well-clothed, I cannot help but wonder what it might be like to be homeless in Toronto at this very moment. I am including a so-called natural occurrence such as a snowstorm in Canada under the heading of environmental deterioration because I am assuming that the various severe manifestations we have had in the past few years are affected by the pervasive climate change which is due to human activity. The "us," then, needs to be defined. Effects of environmental deterioration are mediated by many factors, including geographical location, social class, what type of job a person holds.

What about gender? Are women affected or implicated in environmental in/sustainability differently from men? Here I turn to the literature to seek guidance in understanding this question. I have categorized the various approaches to this issue under seven major headings, which I will consider in turn. They are:

- (1) women have, as an inherent quality, a privileged relationship with nature;
- (2) men are disproportionately responsible for environmental deterioration;
- (3) women experience environmental deterioration more quickly and more drastically than men;

- (4) environmental sustainability and gender equity are linked politically;
- (5) the oppression of women and nature go hand-in-hand historically, philosophically, empirically, economically, and in genetic engineering;
- (6) environmental sustainability *requires* gender equity - one is unthinkable without the other;
- (7) gender equity and environmental sustainability are linked intellectually and educationally.

In the following, I will explore each of these statements. I will look at their basis in fact, and I will consider whether any of these statements adequately captures the complicated relationship between (in)sustainability and gender.

### **Women have, as an inherent quality, a privileged relationship with nature**

This statement derives from an ecofeminist perspective. Ecofeminism is fed by many sources, including (1) radical/cultural feminism; (2) exposure to nature-based religion, usually that of the Goddess; and (3) from environmentalism (Spretnak 1990). Holland Cunz adds to these sources (4) feminist utopias (Kuletz 1992). Consequently, "there is no one version of eco-feminism" (Warren 1987, 4).

Ecofeminists posit patriarchy or gender oppression as the primary and most important oppression of all. Salleh (1994, 110), for instance, argues that: "By introducing the nature-woman-labor nexus as a fundamental contradiction, ecofeminism affirms the primacy of an exploitative, gender-based division of labor, and simultaneously shifts the analysis of all oppressions towards an ecological problematic" (112). The special woman-nature relationship consists of a postulated "closer" relationship between women and nature than that enjoyed by men. This closeness can be conceptualized in various ways, such as that "Women have always thought like mountains" (Doubiago 1989), or that women have a perceived closer body/mind bond than men (Spretnak 1989).

King (1989) turns this essentialist link into a political one by arguing that women have been *culturally constructed* as being closer to nature. She argues that "although the nature-culture dualism is a product of culture, we can nonetheless *consciously choose* not to sever the woman-nature connection by joining male culture" (King 1989, 22/3). Along with many other critics, I must conclude that accepting a culturally constructed essentialist position for reasons of political expediency will simply reinforce the essentialist position. Besides, it leads logically to a special responsibility which is a consequence of the postulated special relationship, thus putting the burden of cleaning up the mess that patriarchal men have left to women - a project that is neither feasible nor desirable nor just.

### **Men are disproportionately responsible for environmental deterioration**

Environmental deterioration does not simply happen. There are clear structural forces at play, which include the military as the worst offender, global corporations, and governments that work together with these corporations. There is also no denying that world-wide these institutions are dominated by men. The military is the primordial male institution, even though women have now started to join the combat forces in some countries. Big corporations, likewise, are mostly dominated by men. As yet, the number of women among the truly powerful corporate CEOs is minimal. With respect to governments, in the entire world, only 7 percent of all people in government are women (United Nations 1998, 188 - Table 29). While this single statistic hides some gross differences, it does make it clear that most of the decisions that are made at the political macro-level are made by men. Men, therefore, are much more likely to make the decisions that result in environmental deterioration than are women. In this sense we can argue that there is a causal connection between being male and making the macro-decisions that result in environmental insustainability. Of course, the vast majority of humanity, whether male or female, is *not* a military, corporate, or government leader. It therefore seems rather premature to indict the entire male sex on this basis and to assign the problem to maleness *per se*, for instance, by deciding that testosterone is at fault.

Whether or not decisions would be different if the major decision-making positions were occupied by women is a moot question. The few women who have made it into the seats of power do not bode well for such promise. Margaret Thatcher, for example, lent her name to a whole approach that is certainly not characterized by social and environmental responsibility. However, this does not prove anything beyond the fact that women in a male-dominated setting behave like men - else they are unlikely to make it in the system as it is a present. We do not know whether policies would be different if women and men shared power with respect to major decision-making. We can only hope that they would be.

### **Women experience environmental deterioration more quickly and more drastically than men**

There is a lot of support for the proposition that women and men experience environmental deterioration differently. This is intrinsically connected to the division of labour between the sexes. Often, environmental deterioration shows itself in changes in those resources that are part of our daily life necessities. For instance, if water smells, feels, or looks funny, it is likely women will notice this more quickly and more drastically because they are more likely than men to cook with it, wash with it, and employ it in a multitude of other ways. Women tend to be the health-keepers in their families on behalf of their husbands and children. Women are also more likely than men to exchange information about such matters. Therefore, it is more likely to be women than men who will notice if

particular illnesses within a community are on the rise, or if there is an increase in still births, or in birth defects.

We are all familiar with the fact that, in developing countries, it is women who tend to collect the fuel and fetch the water. There are dismaying statistics revealing how much the labour and time involved in these activities has increased. So if the water source within a specific area dries up or becomes contaminated, or if the trees have disappeared in the closer areas, women will have to walk for hours to collect twigs and branches, or to fetch water. They will be keenly aware of these problems, more keenly than the men for whom water and fire still magically appear.

I personally am not living in a poor country. If I collect fire wood, it is as a luxury to burn in my cottage fireplace. Water comes out of the tap, and if the pipes freeze and eventually burst, as just happened, I can always go to a neighbour and get plenty of water until the plumbing is fixed again. Nevertheless, even in highly industrialized countries like Canada it remains women who tend to notice and be concerned about various environmental problems more quickly than do men and who get involved in trying to address the problems. This brings us to our next proposition.

### **Environmental sustainability and gender equity are linked politically**

I believe that this is true. "Seventy percent of the leadership being taken around the world to protect the environment is initiated by women" (Viezzer 1992, 8). As women become active in various collective activities to fight for a sustainable natural environment, such mobilization requires a measure of resources to be able to do so effectively. Therefore, we could expect that, as we increase the educational and other resources of ordinary women, a portion of them (and comparatively more than men in the same situation) would become active to protect the sustainability of the earth.

Another approach to the whole subject matter are statements to the effect that :

### **The oppression of women and nature go hand-in-hand: historically, philosophically, empirically, economically, and in genetic engineering**

Most has, perhaps, been written about the concomitant oppression of nature and women. It was Carolyn Merchant (1980) who drew our attention to the fact that the enlightenment period simultaneously denigrated women and nature. Ecofeminists have argued eloquently that all forms of oppression are philosophically connected, and hence will be addressed at the root only if we eliminate them all. For instance, Karen Warren (1987, 4-5) has argued:

- (1) there are important connections between the oppression of women and the oppression of nature;



- (ii) understanding the nature of these connections is necessary to any adequate understanding of the oppression of women and the oppression of nature;
- (iii) feminist theory and practice must include an ecological perspective; and
- (iv) solutions to ecological problems must include a feminist perspective.

A question that emerges in this context is whether there is a connection between the oppression of women and nature that operates today. It remains to be tested whether there is a connection between a country's gender empowerment index and its environmental record. I looked at the UN figures to test for such a relationship, but found that the data are not sufficiently informative to draw any trustworthy conclusions. On an interpersonal level, however, there is clear evidence that links the abuse of animals with the abuse of women, giving some substance to the statement that there is, indeed, a tendency to violence in some men that will express itself in violence against animals and women simultaneously.

There is, moreover, no question that there is a direct relationship between the lack of value attached to women's unpaid work and nature's regenerative powers. As Marilyn Waring (1988) has so eloquently argued, the current United Nations Systems of National Accounts - the way we compute our GNP or GDP - both derive from the system Britain instituted when it wanted to justify a war in economic terms. The United Nations system of measuring the human development of a country is starting to lead us into a different direction. However, we are yet waiting for our government to take the human indicators more seriously than what we currently *think of as* economic indicators although the latter do *not* tell us much about the well-being of people in our country.

Finally, I want to mention a connection between the oppression of women and nature that is normally not considered in this context, and some will argue that what I call oppression is, quite to the contrary, a form of liberation. I am talking about biotechnologies, and specifically, about genetic engineering.

We have now split the gene as well as cracked the human egg. While genetic engineering is touted by its propagators as "clean" and "green," in fact, we are already consuming hybrids, in which animal genes have been introduced into plants - usually for the purpose of making them pesticide resistant, tolerant of long distance transportation and shelf life, or for cosmetic purposes. The motive behind these manipulations is profit making. This has resulted in such atrocities as the so-called "terminator" seed - seed that has been created to be sterile, to force farmers to buy seed corn every year rather than save a portion of their crop as seed.

What has this got to do with women? According to Shiva (1997), the same type of reductionism that allows destroying the creativity of seed leads to the disregard of the natural biological creativity of women. The connections go even deeper than this. When it comes to genetic manipulations, it makes little difference whether the gene is a plant gene, an animal gene, or a human gene. The fact that we have treated animals inhumanely, by regarding them only in the limited capacity

in which they are useful to humans - as meat, as milk machines, as producers of organs for transplants for humans - has meant that genetic alterations in animals have been pursued regardless of the well-being of animals overall. The current issue swirling around the bovine growth hormone provides a good example. Who - besides Monsanto - will be benefitting from making the cows give more milk, given the fact that there are enough cows and enough milk to satisfy all our demands and more? Not the family farmer, not the consumers, and certainly not the cows, who are likely to contract more infections, which will then be treated with antibiotics, residues of which may remain in the milk, which is then consumed by us.

Such limited thinking is now offered to women. In vitro fertilization, to take only one important example, was first used on a large scale on cattle, then on humans. It reduces women to their reproductive organs. While there are a few women who have profited from these new techniques, there are many more who have been exposed to them without, at the end, receiving a healthy baby.

One can legitimately argue that if this technology is in demand on the part of women - and it is - than it is simply arrogant on my part to point to the dangers, since the women who undergo the procedure will have been told what their chances are. The more compelling argument against these technologies is that the real driving force behind them is genetic engineering of humans. What starts out with a benevolent purpose is likely to turn into an unanticipated monster. Already embryos are being destroyed, not because the woman is not able or willing to bear a child, but because of some presumed superiority of one embryo over another. This is not an issue of women being able to decide whether or not they carry a pregnancy to term - which I support and have always supported - but of women being put into the situation of acting as eugenic gate-keepers (Basen et al. 1993; 1994). Further, given that these techniques are very expensive, it introduces even more market forces into human health and human reproduction. And it is precisely the expansion of the market into previously non-market spheres that is the driving force behind our increasingly unsustainable way of life. Genetic engineering thus becomes one new facet of capitalism.

There is another consequence. We are facing an unprecedented number of immune system breakdowns. By focusing on genetic aspects, we ignore the environmental causes of such epidemics. I consider the human genome project, which aims to map every single human gene, as the scientific expression of a neo-liberal economic policy. The social responsibility is downplayed in each instance, with a firm focus on the individual. Health thus becomes an individual issue rather than a function of a healthy environment.

### **Environmental sustainability requires gender equity, one is unthinkable without the other**

I now want to turn to a different way of dealing with the relationship between gender and sustainability. So far, I have argued that there is a complex

relationship between gender and environmental sustainability. There are a number of authors who go one step further and argue that one is unthinkable without the other. While I have so far argued that indeed, at a world-wide level, increased gender equity would probably and hopefully lead to more pro-environment activities, there is also need for a caution. As we here in Canada fight for increased gender equality, this translates often into fights for higher wages - which I support - or access to higher prestige jobs. This is good and well as long as we realize that Canada, as a society, far exceeds its ecological footprint (Wackernagel and Rees 1997). That is, collectively we consume far more of the earth's resources than we are entitled to if we assume that every human being is born with the same right to a fair earth share. As we fight for gender equity, as well as other forms of equity such as race equity, we are at the same time arguing for yet increasing our footprint further, unless we argue *at the same time* for a reduction of consumerism for everyone. Failing to do this may mean that we increase gender equity in our society at the expense of increased *inequity* in countries of the South - for we in the North live to a frightening degree off the resources of the South. This is not an argument against gender equity, but an argument for recognizing that, unless we couple our demands for internal equality with demands for global equity which requires a significant reduction of our patterns of consumption, we improve the status of women here on the back of women as well as men elsewhere.

### **Gender equity and environmental sustainability are linked intellectually and educationally**

One of the great challenges that lies before us is that not only do we have to learn to live sustainably, but, in order to be able to do so, we also need to *unlearn* many of the things that we have grown up with (Asante 1997, 51 ). That is one instance where Women's Studies can be of tremendous help. Women's Studies - and the people who have held Nancy's Chair have been prominent among those who have pushed this forward - have from the beginning involved identifying what are sexist messages in scholarship and developing alternatives. In other words, Women's Studies have involved teaching people to *unlearn* as well as to learn. It therefore seems to me that the environmental movement has a lot to learn from Women's Studies with respect to identifying patterns of thought that need to be recognized, made explicit, criticized, and for which alternatives have to be elaborated. It is a difficult process to engage in, and we have come a fair distance in its pursuit.

### **Summary**

How, then, do we understand the connection between environmental sustainability and gender? It is a complex relationship, in which gender equality may result in greater environmental sustainability, but it also may result in greater insustainability, unless we make both gender equality and environmental sustainability explicit goals of our activities that need to be pursued simultaneously.

We need two lenses, not just one, through which to critically look at scholarship, policies and activities.

There is one last issue that I wish to briefly touch upon. So far, to the best of my knowledge, no one has as yet come up with a useful definition of either environmental sustainability or of gender equality. I would suggest that we not go down the road trying to devise some definition of either concept that will involve us in endless debates. The literature is full of them. Instead I would propose that we focus on reducing gender inequality, as well as reducing environmental insustainability. It is usually pretty easy to agree whether a particular practice is unsustainable or inequitable. Focusing on eliminating insustainability - rather than achieving sustainability - and focusing on eliminating inequities - rather than focussing on equality - grounds us in the here and now. It provides usually quite clear guidelines for thought and action. I suggest we adopt this approach from now on.

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## Feminist Reproductive Politics: Towards the Millennium

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Nancy's Chair, 1993-95

### ABSTRACT

Contending that conceptualising reproduction has been crucial in second-wave feminism, this article begins with a review of three phases in that theorizing: the anti-maternalist, technological fix phase; the maternalist, anti-technological phase; and the cyborgian phase. The next section considers items that might be placed in a millennial time capsule to represent feminist reproductive politics of the twentieth century, including a collection of contemporary narratives about reproduction, the film *August 32nd on Earth*, a CD-ROM of various editions of *Our Bodies, Ourselves*, Toni Morrison's novel *Beloved*, surveys on domestic labour and childcare, and an international report on child poverty. The final section reflects on the political resonances of the proposed ingredients for the feminist reproductive time capsule.

### Introduction

When I proposed my title for this talk many months ago I did not calculate that my timing would be so millennially and reproductively significant because, according to media reports, we are approaching the optimal period for the conception of the first millennium babies. My timing is not usually so good! Despite the timing, I am rather embarrassed by implicating myself in the millennial mania which I find rather tedious. But there you go: what is a girl to do when she has to provide a title for a public talk more than a year in advance!

### Theorizing Reproduction

More seriously, I want to use this occasion to reflect on a set of issues that has engaged me and many other feminists during much of second-wave feminism. As Donna Haraway has observed:

Reproduction has been at the center of scientific, technological, political, personal, religious, gender, familial, class, race, and national webs of contestation for at least the past twenty-five years. Like it or not, as if we were children dealing with adults' hidden secrets, feminists could not avoid relentlessly asking where babies came from. Our answers have repeatedly challenged the reduction of that original and originating question to literalized and universalized women's bodies parts....

(1997, 187)

She notes that in posing questions and answers about reproduction, feminists have drawn "attention to the social-technical webs that constitute reproductive practice."

It would be no exaggeration to claim that concerns about biological reproduction have shaped the contours of feminist theory in the second half of the twentieth-century. Mary O'Brien opened her *Politics of Reproduction* with an internal dialogue: "Where does feminist theory start? I answer: Within the process of human reproduction" (1983, 8). It is possible to trace three phases of recent feminist theorising that have been linked to different appraisals of the significance of women's reproductive capacities and to different expectations of technological intervention around them.

Early theorists of second-wave feminism echoed Simone de Beauvoir's (1949/1974) negative appraisal of pregnancy and childbirth as restricting women to the natural realm: female bodily immanence was contrasted with male transcendence, particularly through technological achievement. Shulamith Firestone picked up de Beauvoir's thread, declaring pregnancy "barbaric" in her *Dialectic of Sex* (1970, 96). She claimed that "it was woman's reproductive biology that accounted for her original and continued oppression" (1970, 83). This early theme of second-wave feminism, coming out of the work of de Beauvoir, continuing most obviously with that of Firestone, but also in the writings of Kate Millett (1977) and Evelyn Reed (1975) was identified with, as Mary O'Brien (1983, 18) described it, "the denial of creativity, historicity and intellectual significance to human reproduction." These feminists sought technological solutions to relieve their biological burden and facilitate female liberation. This could be labelled as an *anti-maternalist technological fix* phase in feminist thinking about biological reproduction.

A second phase of feminist theory emerged from critical confrontation with the denial of female creativity in procreation and mothering. Adrienne Rich's (1977) attempt to disentangle women's experience of mothering from the institution of motherhood, Mary O'Brien's (1983) challenging of the negativity in the treatment of human reproduction within both Western political philosophy and early second-wave feminism itself, and Luce Irigaray's (1985b) psychoanalytic pondering of the denial of the maternal as the defining feature of Western patriarchal culture turned feminist theorising in a new direction. These feminist theorists were pivotal figures in more positively evaluating the maternal. From the late 1970s there was also a proliferation of scholarship that documented the masculinist nature of reproductive science, technology, and medicine (Ehrenreich and English 1979; Merchant 1980; Easlea 1980 and 1981; Rose 1983). This work carried feminism in a *maternalist, anti-technological* direction.

In recent years, feminist theorising seems to have entered another era, that we might characterise as the *cyborgian phase*. The impure figure of the part-human, part-machine was invoked, most notably by Donna Haraway (1991), to indicate women's implication in the world of technoscience and, indeed, the technologization of human bodies. For Haraway and the many feminists sympathetic to her vision (and I would include myself as a cautious and sometimes critical member of this group), we are too savvy to think that technology is either to be our salvation or that it can be totally rejected. In these circumstances,



reproductive politics has become immensely more complicated. It can *not* involve a politics of disavowal: either of feminine embodiment in its messy immanence or of the desire for technological transcendence. The political field is much more murky. Acknowledging the difficulties of the current conjuncture in feminist reproductive politics, Haraway observes that looking for a "feminist doctrine on reproductive technology, in particular...would be ludicrous" (1997, 191). This leaves Haraway with a politics of "yearning," the term she borrows from bell hooks (1990), to express the desire to forge a different configuration of technologies and bodies in reproduction. Haraway tries to flesh out the dimensions of such a feminist politics by advocating that it might require "*learning to think about and yearn toward reproductive freedom from the analytical and imaginative standpoint of African American women in poverty*" (1997, 198 - emphasis in original).

Hence, reproductive politics have been central to second-wave feminism and I am interested in the "social-technical webs that constitute reproductive practice," while experiencing my own yearnings for alternatives to the current configurations. One way of exploring the possibilities for alternatives might be to play with the millennial packaging I have invoked.

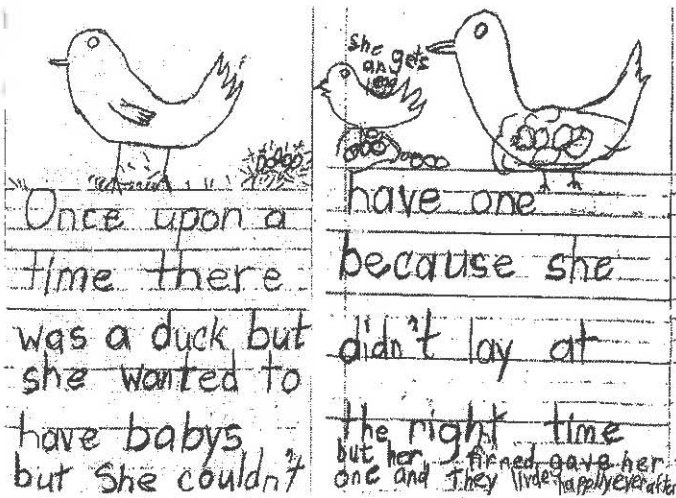
### A Millennial Time Capsule for Reproductive Politics

The British government, in a very controversial and much debated project, is building a Millennial Dome in the London Docklands. Here, as on many designated memorial sites around the world, a time-capsule will be buried to mark the turn of the century. If I were to nominate fitting items relating to reproductive politics to be assembled for such a capsule there would be many possibilities, including: an ultrasound image (these are now often found as the first image of new members in family photo albums); copies of the 1965 and 1990 issues of *Life* magazine with front cover photographs of a foetus by the Swedish photographer Lennart Nilsson;<sup>1</sup> an advertisement which uses foetal imagery;<sup>2</sup> pictures of Dolly the cloned sheep and "miracle babies"; shock stories associated with recent reproductive technoscience (with headlines such as: "postmenopausal woman gives birth to her granddaughter"); a report on the Human Genome Project;<sup>3</sup> and a recent report by a Cambridge University social science researcher that claimed that lesbian couples make better parents than their heterosexual counterparts.<sup>4</sup> Those who prefer instruments might assemble a different set of ingredients: a speculum - which "had become the symbol of the displacement of the female midwife by the specialist male physician and gynecologist" (Haraway 1997, 193) and which was re-appropriated both materially in feminist self-help groups of the 1970s and symbolically in feminist intellectual and cultural struggles - and a turkey-baster or syringe as technologies for self-insemination.<sup>5</sup> In Canada a more nationally specific collection might be assembled, including: a copy of *Proceed With Care: Final Report of the Royal Commission on New Reproductive Technologies* (1993), documents from the RAFI (the Rural Advancement Foundation International), the Non-Governmental Organisation concerned with biodiversity which has its headquarters in Winnipeg;<sup>6</sup>

press clippings about the surviving Dionne Quintuplet's compensation claims against the Canadian government.

How would you represent reproductive politics today? What would you nominate as appropriate icons or mementoes to indicate to future generations this aspect of late twentieth-century life? The rest of this presentation takes on this question, as I provide a possible list of inclusions for a feminist millennial reproductive politics time-capsule. I begin by nominating two Canadian mementoes which represent aspects of reproductive politics at the end of the twentieth century.

I might put in my time capsule a picture story of duck egg donation created by a six-year old in a Grade I class that my sister Judy Brown taught in Whitby, Ontario. This is the remarkable creation by a little girl named Samantha who, judging from my sister's account, is well on her way to becoming a feminist theorist of reproduction in the twenty-first century. Last December she quizzed my sister about the story of the Angel Gabriel appearing to announce to Mary that she was to be the Mother of God. Despite her Catholic education, Samantha was skeptical about this story. She pointed out that Mary would have already known that she was pregnant because she would have missed her periods. Out of the mouths of babes... Samantha's picture story of late twentieth-century reproduction is told as a narrative about sisterly altruism, with no mention of technology, set in a rather a pastoral setting. Samantha's invocation of the "and they all lived happily ever" ending rounds off her reproductive narrative in a classic fairy-tale mode.



One aspect of this story that fascinates me is its clever and subtle blending of the old and the new: Samantha adapts the familiar narrative form of the fairy tale to accommodate contemporary reproductive practices. There are parallel patterns of adaptation being forged by women who are using new reproductive technologies (NRTs). Hence, I might staple with Samantha's story an excerpt from one of Charis Cussins's accounts of her ethnographic research undertaken in a fertility clinic in the United States, where she observes new "choreographies" (1996; 1998a) of kinship being enacted through and around various forms of gamete exchange. For example, she describes the case of Giovanna and Paula, which in some ways echos Samantha's tale. Giovanna, who "described herself as an Italian American approaching forty," presented herself to Cussins as having "tried but 'failed' IVF, using her own eggs and her husband's sperm" (Cussins 1998b, 43). Giovanna, like Rebecca's duck, gets an egg from a friend. As Cussins (1998b, 4) explains:

Choosing a friend for a donor seemed to be an important part of reconfiguring the experience of pregnancy: if conception was not to occur inside her body or with her eggs, then it was preferable that she have the emotional attachments of friendship to (and could make the corresponding demands on) the woman who was to be her donor.

Giovanna also sought a donor with whom she would have, in her own terms, "enough genetic similarity." Giovanna "accorded her [own] gestational role a rich biological significance: she said that the baby would grow inside her, nourished by her blood and made out of the very stuff of her body all the way from a two-celled embryo to a fully formed baby" (1998b, 44).

We could read Charis Cussins's ethnography as fleshing out the real life complexity of egg donation in high-technology North American settings - in contrast to the fairy-tale version Rebecca represents. Both reflect on the terrific investments (economic and otherwise) that particularly white, middle-class, and heterosexual Western women are making in the hope of reproducing. They also illustrate the continual renegotiation of the boundaries between nature and culture and of the meanings of kinship that constitute reproduction in late twentieth-century North America.

Samantha's story represents egg surrogacy that is one of the practices of late twentieth-century reproduction in North America. Her narrative form also mimics much media reporting of a range of NRT practices. In the early 1990s, I undertook a study of these narratives, noting their standard form, which I condensed as:

I can't have a baby. Like many of the heterosexual, middle-class (in origin or in aspiration), white women of my age group in the Western industrial world, I moved through my 20s concerned with contraception and avoiding pregnancy. Financial independence and birth control were to be

my tickets to freedom and I invested in both early and completely. As I moved into my 30s, I began to think about having children. The past ten years or so have brought me to a gradual and sometimes painful confrontation with the fact that I can't have children. As time slips away, it seems increasingly unlikely that I'll ever become a mother.

(McNeil 1993, 489)

I contended then and would maintain still that this kind of narrative has become formulaic and familiar in discussions about reproductive technologies, either in autobiographical form or in its third-person version ("Jane Smith can't or couldn't have a baby"), or sometimes framed in terms of the plight of a couple ("Marjory and Allen can't have a baby"). I suggested then that such stories constitute a distinctive genre of our time and our society (hence the proposal for their inclusion in the millennial time-capsule). Samantha's story indicates that these formulaic narratives are being reproduced among younger generations. Reporters in Western industrial countries such as Great Britain and the United States have used such stories to frame representations of NRTs. Indeed, when the Report of the Canadian Royal Commission on New Reproductive Technologies was released in the fall of 1993, CBC Radio employed such a narrative. Perhaps no other genre (except possibly, far more negatively, the narrative of AIDS sufferers) typifies introductions to the challenges associated with contemporary high-technology medicine.

We have become so accustomed to these stories that, after the initial moving invocation of the plight of those who cannot reproduce, we expect a shift to an account of medical intervention - enter doctors and scientists. Here is one such account:

At thirty, securely employed as a lecturer, the obligatory hitchhiker's guide to Europe behind me, I found myself reconsidering "motherhood"...I "came off" the pill to become a mother and climbed down into pain...G recommended a private gynaecologist who would prescribe Clomid... to be combined temperature charts of daily readings taken "before you put a foot out of bed."

(Maggie Humm quoted in Klein 1989, 36-7)

Stories such as this tell tales of immersion in medical treatment, usually involving in-vitro fertilisation and/or its many variants. I have argued elsewhere (McNeil 1993) that such stories are the real moral tales of our high-technology societies. They encourage and legitimate investment in such treatment. They reproduce and recirculate happy endings associated with technological triumph and feminine fulfillment through motherhood or, rather, birth. Indeed, birth generally marks the closure of such narratives. So, we are encouraged to assume feminine fulfillment derives from the achievement of giving birth.<sup>7</sup>

Samantha reproduces the form of these stories and their happy ending,

interestingly, without specific reference to technology. But the form of this and related narratives shows that we are constantly being encouraged to see technoscience and medicine as the medium for fulfillment, particularly "feminine" fulfillment. The favoured term now is "assisted reproduction" and more and more women are seen to be in need of such "technoscientific assistance." As Sarah Franklin (1993) has emphasised, "natural" conception is now considered exceptional, as technoscientific medicine elaborates in ever more detail what can go wrong in the process.

Perhaps a copy of the film, *August 32nd on Earth* (*Trente-deux août sur terre*) (directed by Denis Villeneuve)<sup>8</sup> would be another appropriate item in the would-be Canadian reproductive politics time-capsule. After a Cronenbergesque opening sequence involving a car crash, the heroine (played by Pascale Bussières) is shown pursuing and ultimately meeting a friend/former lover (played by Alexis Martin). She reminds him of their pact that, if she had not had a child by her twenty-fifth birthday, he would offer his services with the aim of conception. She now wants to cash in this reproductive promissory note. Her friend/former-lover is now in a relationship with another woman, and perhaps for this and other unspecified reasons, is rather reluctant, but he ultimately consents. However, he insists that their copulation must occur in the desert. So they fly off to Salt Lake City and, despite some delays, finally get to the desert by taxi. The awesome desert is, as they discover, a site of death, not of life: not a propitious location to create new life. Indeed, the film abounds in images of death and sterility and their reproductive mission is thwarted. Subsequently, upon their return to Montreal, he is mugged and the final scene shows her locking the door of the hospital room where he lies comatose. Apparently they have not had intercourse and the film conveys an atmosphere of conceptive frustration. Nevertheless, there is a deliberate ambiguity about the last scene as she locks the door: is she going to steal his precious semen, securing his corporeal cooperation for reproduction when he is comatose?

I did wonder whether this was one of the films that had prompted a critic in the British *Observer* to write an article titled, "Have you noticed how strange Canadian films are?" (Morris 1999). The author, Mark Morris, summarised his thesis as follows: "every film that comes from Canada seems to resonate with underlying weirdness created by trying to be polite." More pertinent to my topic is the film's quirky, but symbolic set of images associated with human reproduction at the cusp of the twenty-first century. It taps into the layers of anxiety in many Western nations about reproduction. It represents (amongst many things): sterility (in many forms); the disconnection of reproduction from the traditional heterosexual family, from heterosexual coupledness, and even sexual involvement; the difficulties of heterosexual relationships in this era; and female assertiveness, particularly in controlling and regulating reproduction - women going it (or, in this case perhaps, *not quite*) on their own. Of course, concomitantly, this film could also be viewed as the projection of fears about all of these developments: fears about sterility and infertility, about the disconnection between sexuality and reproduction, about prospects for the traditional nuclear family and heterosexual coupling, about

women taking over the reproductive sphere, and about men losing control of reproduction, symbolised and materialised in the allusion to the possibility of their sperm being taken without their consent.

The last scene of the film is evocative of a number of recent scenarios of reproduction. It is in contrast with and a sort of reversal of the reports of comatose women who have been kept on life support machines so that they could "give birth." The first such widely reported case was that of Karen Quinn in the 1970s. This case provided the inspiration for Douglas Coupland's recent novel, *Girlfriend in a Coma* (1998). Possibly a more direct connection can be made between the film image and the case of the British woman, Diane Blood, who conducted a long legal battle to gain the right to use her dead husband's sperm for impregnation. The sperm had been extracted without his permission, as he lay dying. Ms. Blood gave birth to a son in December 1998, following implantation of the sperm which was conducted in a Belgium clinic. In the tradition of the "test-tube baby" school of reporting such events, which tends to efface women's contribution to reproduction, the story was flagged in the British *Observer* under the headline: "New born baby boy given life by frozen sperm is the 'image of his dead father'" (Thomas 1998).

The film and the Blood case in the United Kingdom have stirred male fears about control of their sperm. There is an irony about the cultivation of these sensibilities since folklore would have it that men have never been able to control the ostensibly overwhelming male sexual drives that propel them anyway. Another recent manifestation of these fears is the Paul Wallis *vs* Kellie Smith case in New Mexico in which Wallis has accused Smith of stealing his sperm. He is claiming "unspecified damages to reimburse him for 'economic injury'" (Prasad 1999) related to the cost of his contribution to supporting their child for the next eighteen years, even though Smith has not asked for child support.

Including this film in a reproductive politics time capsule would be a fitting reminder of the political controversies associated with reproduction in the Western world in the 1990s and about the powerful anxieties regarding possible female dominance in reproduction. One of the ironies of feminist reproductive politics in our millennial days is that, while men have become more involved with reproduction and have more control over reproduction through technology, male anxiety about female dominance seems to have increased. There are many other manifestations of Western anxieties about reproduction in the 1990s: panics about low sperm counts, infertility, and low birth rates; the vilification of lone mothers; scare stories about career women not reproducing. There are also highly problematic palliative measures being advocated to address these fears: Viagra, organisations such as the British Families Need Fathers group, and punitive measures against lone mothers. Could this anxiety about biological reproduction be displacement for the broader concerns of privileged Westerners in Europe and North America contemplating their fragile global hegemony and the prospects for their cultural reproduction?

To this point I have proposed two items for the millennial reproductive

politics time-capsule. First, I suggested a set of stapled interrelated narrative fragments - Samantha's story of duck egg donation, Charis Cussins's ethnographic transcript emerging from an infertility clinic, and a typical newspaper report of reproductive "technological achievement." My second inclusion would be a copy of the film the *August 32<sup>nd</sup> on Earth*.

My third proposed item for the millennial reproductive politics time-capsule would be a copy of *Our Bodies, Ourselves* (1973). Produced originally by the Boston Women's Health Book Collective from mimeographed notes for a course on women's health, which had been widely circulated through informal networks of women's health groups in the United States in the early 1970s, this book underwent many translations and appeared in various editions around the world. It is probably the most popular and widely-circulated text to emerge from the late twentieth-century women's movement. Therefore, instead of a single copy of the text, I would propose that the millennial time-capsule include a CD-ROM of the various editions of this feminist handbook as an archive through which future scholars may trace the transformations and the local framing of feminist body politics. The many translations of this text would also provide evidence of the international dimension of recent feminism.

*Our Bodies, Ourselves* is a marker of the ways in which second-wave feminism has been forged in and through the politics of reproduction - not just in theory but also in daily practices. The Boston Women's Health Book Collective original text emerged from grass-roots women's health movements of the 1970s in North America and Europe. It signaled, facilitated, and embodied the attempts of many women to proclaim, explore, and extend their expertise about their own bodies and to challenge the encroachment of male medical and scientific expertise. It encouraged self-help and women's mutual support to that end. A further reason for the inclusion of *Our Bodies, Ourselves* is to document the collective aspirations of feminist reproductive politics of the late twentieth century. This is in contrast with much media coverage of NRTs which has reduced such politics to individual choice.

The text itself bespeaks the contradictions and binds of recent feminist reproductive politics: a book about women's bodies that contests the confinement of women to the corporeal; a book that presents the female body through the prism of reproduction, while refusing the definition of women through procreation; a book that challenges male technoscientific control, while demonstrating the continual immersion of women within technoscience. In a recent article, Emily Martin provides a striking illustration of these contradictions. She explains that *Our Bodies, Ourselves*, which she labels as "the premier feminist manual of health care for women," employed, until its 1992 edition, "the failed production model of menstruation" which has been the problematic mainstay of modern medicine. Martin (1998, 136) refers to this as a feminist encounter with "the submerged cultural content of biological facts."

A fourth ingredient for my millennial package would be a copy of Toni Morrison's, *Beloved* (1993). I choose Morrison's poignant novel about slavery and



motherhood for two reasons. First, it powerfully demonstrates that the gender politics of reproduction is always a politic of "race" and frequently a politic of racism. Secondly, it underscores the importance of understanding the politics in the *refusal* of reproduction - even in its most disturbing forms - which is what concerns Morrison. Full reproduction is the desire and goal only for the truly powerful and hegemonic. The less powerful members of society may joyfully enter into biological reproduction, but they do not want full reproduction in all its social and political dimensions. Their hope is that their progeny will *not* be restricted to their inheritance. In this sense, feminist politics necessarily need to be politics of *non-reproduction* - politics about producing a different world, in which the current injustices and inequalities will not be reproduced.

My fifth component for the millennial time capsule would be a collection of surveys on domestic labour and child and elder-care. I recommend these documents for inclusion to indicate the often neglected crucial ingredient in reproduction - women's domestic labour. Such evidence would be reminders that, thus far, the histories of innovation associated with both domestic and reproductive technologies have been fraught with disappointments for women. Despite the increasing sophistication of these technologies, patterns of the sexual division of domestic labour have not been radically transformed in the Western world in the late twentieth century. Moreover, there has been little attention given to the complex regimes associated with new conceptive technologies and to the demands they place on women's time and energy in the late twentieth century. Recent surveys on domestic labour would be a sober reminder that the realisation of truly alternative patterns of reproduction have scarcely begun in the Western world.

The politics of reproduction is a matter of global politics, a point that is easy to forget when so much attention has been focused both inside and outside of feminism on the new conceptive technologies in the Western world. For this reason I would want to include in my millennial feminist reproductive politics parcel an up-to-date, detailed international report on child poverty. This document would enable interrogation of the patterns of inequality around reproduction and of achievements in struggles for change. How is it possible that there could be more than fifteen million hungry children in one of the richest countries of the world - the United States - in the mid-1990s?<sup>9</sup> How much is spent on supporting living children in the poorer nations of the world compared to the investments in NRTs in countries such as Canada, the United States, and Great Britain?

### Political Resonances

I have proposed and explained the contents of my time capsule to represent late twentieth-century feminist reproductive politics - my would-be millennial project. Feminist reproductive politics has undergone many changes during the last quarter of the twentieth century. My proposed collection of items for this package registers some of those changes and some of the confusions in



their wake. I will conclude by alluding to *some* of the political resonances of the ingredients in my millennial package.

My millennial objects demand a confrontation with differential patterns of investment in reproduction, from the high ones associated with fertility treatment mainly for the relatively privileged in the Western world to the low investment for the poor both in the generally more prosperous North and in the less prosperous South. These objects also encourage some disentanglement from the ubiquitous fairy tales about feminine fulfillment only through birth and through the technoscience that may, in some cases, facilitate it. Another theme in my selection is a move towards critical purchase on the high anxiety about the male role in reproduction and about reproduction in general among privileged sectors of Western societies. These chosen objects may also foster exploration of the contradictions and possibilities of the notion of our bodies/ourselves which has been a fruitful, but problematic, dimension of late twentieth-century feminism. The generation of reflection about collective alternatives to personal choice as the optimum goal of reproductive politics is a further dimension of the collection. Taken together, this millennial package may draw more attention to the politics of refusal in reproduction and to the entanglement of gender and racial politics around reproduction. It is designed to focus concern on the reproduction of poverty and the plight of poor and hungry children.

So, this is my proposed feminist millennial reproductive politics time capsule. It should be obvious by now that, although I don't really care about the millennium, I am passionately concerned about a feminist post-millennial politics of reproduction. I yearn for forms of feminist politics that might be built around the resonances emitted by the objects in my millennial time-capsule.

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I wish to express my thanks to Samantha and her mother for allowing me to use her story and to my sister Judy Brown for drawing it to my attention.

### ENDNOTES

1. For an early influential feminist consideration of ultrasound technology and imagery see Petchesky 1987. For an account of the significance of Nilsson's early foetal photography see Petchesky 1987 and for a consideration of the range of his subsequent foetal image making see Haraway 1997, 178-9.
2. See Janine Taylor's (1993) very interesting analysis of the use of foetal imagery in advertisements for Volvo cars.
3. For a critical perspective on this project see Hubbard and Wald 1997.
4. The research was undertaken by Gill Dunne at Cambridge University, funded by the Economic and Social Research Council of Britain (see Dillon 1999a; 1999b).
5. The category of instruments was not included in my original lecture, but has been added in my revision. I want to thank Sheila Brown for this suggestion and Jackie Stacey for reminding me about the importance of turkey basters in recent reproductive politics. For an analysis of an interesting feminist cartoon by Anne Kelly which Donna Haraway calls *The Virtual Speculum* and of feminist speculum politics since the 1970s, see Haraway 1997, 175-97; esp. 192-7. See also Luce Irigaray's *Speculum of the Other Woman* (1985a).

6. This organisation is concerned, amongst many things, with the "loss of genetic diversity." Information concerning this NGO is available from their website, [www.rafi.ca](http://www.rafi.ca).

7. For an analysis of the narratives associated with IVF as presented in the media see Franklin (1990).

8. This film was an entrant in the Cannes festival in "Un Certain Regard" category and won various awards in French-speaking film festivals in Quebec and Belgium. It was circulated in Great Britain with this English title.

9. This is the figure cited by Haraway 1997, 205 with reference to figures provided by the United States Census Bureau. Haraway claims that: "The U.S. child-poverty rate is about double that of any other industrialized nation," 307-8, n.41. Nevertheless, there have also been recent revelations about worrying levels of child poverty in Britain and Canada.

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## The Mount's Mission for the New Millennium

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### ABSTRACT

The current neo-liberal environment, defined by privatization, competition, and cost-recovery, seems entirely out of step with Catholic and feminist values based on community, cooperation, and charity that defined Mount Saint Vincent's various missions since its founding in 1925. Should the Mount make an effort to incorporate neo-liberal values into its blueprint for the future? Can the Mount's mission to women survive our current discontents? What has gender got to do with higher education anyway? This paper charts the changes in the Mount's mission over the past seventy-five years, reflects on the current efforts to redefine the university's goals, and offers a few suggestions on how to plan for the twenty-first century.

### Introduction

Mount Saint Vincent University is uniquely blessed. While other institutions of higher learning are casting about for a mission to set them apart from the common herd, the Mount stands alone in Canada in its commitment to women's education. That commitment, of course, meant different things at different times. Beginning in 1873 as an academy for the education of Roman Catholic girls, the Mount evolved by 1925 to include a degree-granting women's college among its educational services. The Sisters of Charity who founded Mount Saint Vincent College defined mission in an overtly Christian sense and no doubt had some misgivings in the 1960s when the Mount began the protracted process of reinventing itself as a secular university with a liberal feminist mission. In 1988, the Sisters of Charity formally transferred ownership of the university to the Board of Governors.

No sooner had this goal been accomplished than governments began cutting back on the funding that had encouraged and sustained the Mount's secular direction. The current neo-liberal environment, defined by privatization, competition, and cost-recovery, seems entirely out of step with either Catholic or feminist values based on community, cooperation, and charity.<sup>2</sup> Should the Mount make an effort to incorporate these new values into its blueprint for the future? Can the Mount's mission to women survive our current discontents? What has gender got to do with education anyway? These are tough questions and I have no debate-stopping answers. What I propose to do here is to chart the changes in the Mount's mission over the years, reflect on the current efforts to redefine the Mount, and dream a little dream about what the Mount might become in the twenty-first century.

### Changing Missions

Most of the records from the early college years were lost in a disastrous

fire in 1951 but we are able to piece together developments in the first quarter-century of the Mount's history from a variety of sources. Indeed, the loss of so much of the official record provided the inspiration for seeking out private sources that might otherwise have remained hidden. The personal angle of vision often adds an important dimension to our understanding of the past. For example, in our work on Maritime women's diaries, Toni Laidlaw, Donna Smyth, and myself were delighted to locate the diary of Mary Dulhanty, a Commercial student at the Mount, who described the first convocation, held on 1 June 1927, this way:

Well we all went to the College Closing and my first Commencement Exercise. It was certainly impressing and I lost my veil. Poor me.... We had solemn high mass in the morning and Solemn Benediction in the afternoon....It is the first time that M.S.V.C. has graduated anyone. Rose [Orlando] and Dolly [MacDougall] certainly have a great honor. The College girls all wore white dresses and shoes and stockings and the Freshmen wore the Mount white uniform and blue collar and cuffs. Mary Windeatt played a solo and Marguerite's solo was wonderful. Mary Shannon and Elizabeth Bishop played a duet....I wonder if I ever shall get through. I must write Mum and ask her for some money.<sup>3</sup>

Other than the timeless relationship between students and money, the religious element in the graduation exercises is particularly obvious in this account. It remained so throughout the time that the college was run by the Sisters of Charity. As the 1947-48 *Calendar* stated, the Mount was "the first and only women's college in Canada," and its statement of "Purpose," was "to offer young women a thorough liberal education, designed to develop all the faculties of soul and body and to train the mind and will to clear thought and right action." The *Calendar* continues:

Therefore the College specifically endeavours to enable its students:

"To develop and perfect their natural faculties by coordinating them with the supernatural." (Pius XI, Encyclical, Christian Education of Youth)

To acquire the broad foundation in the liberal arts which is the beginning of all culture.

To become acquainted with the best in Catholic thought and literature.

To look forward to economic independence by training for professional life.

To prepare for participation in civic activities by the formation of right attitudes toward individual responsibility as citizens.

To train themselves in the fine art of gracious living through daily intercourse with others in social and cultural group activities.

The programme of education sponsored by Mount Saint Vincent College endeavours "to take in the whole aggregate of human life, spiritual and physical, intellectual and moral, individual, domestic, and social, in order to regulate and perfect it in accordance with the example and teaching of Christ." (Pius XI, Encyclical, *Christian Education of Youth*)

In 1966 the Mount became a university and, under Sister Catherine Wallace, began the process leading to secularization, co-education, and a commitment to the new wave of feminism. In the 1966-67 *Calendar*, the Mount's "Purpose" was rephrased to respond to the institution's new "university" status and secular orientation:

### Response to a Need

Mount Saint Vincent College was founded in response to a need. At a time when university education for women was of little interest generally, it was evident to Sister Evaristus, principal of Saint Patrick's High School for Girls in Halifax, that a special effort must be made to provide and encourage higher education for women. From this concern and determination evolved Mount Saint Vincent College.

In the spirit of its founder the university is aware of this original responsibility.

### Service to Women

Consequently it tries to be sensitive and alert to the changing needs of women:

It offers courses in areas of special interest to women; is concerned about adjusting the regulations surrounding higher education to their special situations.

It is eager to provide them with counselling and continuing education, encourage research in areas of special interest to them and provide the tools and library facilities to carry this on.

The concern, however, is not with women in isolation. And so it shares with the neighbouring universities and with the Halifax community in social, cultural and educational programs.

### Objectives

In general, as a university, Mount Saint Vincent's objects and purposes, according to the revised Charter of 1966 are:

- (a) to promote the advancement of learning and the dissemination of knowledge;
- (b) to further the total development - intellectual, social and physical - of those participating in the life of the university.
- (c) to serve in the betterment of society.

In the 1971/72 *Calendar*, a new Service to Women statement appeared and for the first time men are mentioned:

### Service to Women

Although it now accepts a limited number of men as non-resident students, the University considers the educational needs of women to be paramount and therefore remains sensitive to the changing needs of women in an evolving society.

Offering courses in areas of special interest to women, the University endeavours to counsel and prepare women for their changing responsibilities and a rewarding life. It provides women with opportunities to return to university after marriage through programs of continuing education and summer schools.

Margaret Fulton arrived at the Mount in 1978. Contrary to widely held opinion, she did not alter the Mount's stated purpose with respect to women, though she seems to have inspired a more academic focus in the university's statement of objectives. According to the 1978-79 *Calendar*:

Mount Saint Vincent University, as an institution of higher learning, has these major objectives:

the dissemination of knowledge through teaching;



the extension and dissemination of knowledge through research and scholarly activity;

the preservation of knowledge through its role as a repository and trustee of our cultural heritage;

the continuing development - intellectual, moral, spiritual, physical - of those sharing in the life of the university;

service to the community through its programs, resources and facilities.

Following Margaret Fulton's departure in 1986, the Mount, like other universities in the province, became engaged in various "rationalization" processes. The control of the university passed to the Board of Governors in 1988 and the statement of purpose became a "mission statement," an ironic term given the university's religious origins. Appropriately, perhaps, the mission statement, which appeared for the first time in the 1988-89 *Calendar*, reintroduced a recognition of the Roman Catholic traditions of the university:

Mount Saint Vincent is concerned primarily with the education of women. It provides a strong liberal arts and science core and selected professional disciplines. It is dedicated to promoting academic excellence and an environment characterized by a Catholic tradition and a high degree of personalized education.

Since 1988 the mission statement has been variously worded but retains the focus on women. The Service to Women statement in the 1996-97 *Calendar* reads:

The Mount considers the educational needs of women to be paramount, although men are welcomed as non-resident students. Programs, class times, facilities and services are specifically tailored to provide maximum accessibility for women.

Students can take an interdisciplinary Bachelor of Arts or Honours Bachelor of Arts degree in women's studies.

The Institute for the Study of Women was established in 1981 to promote the kind of research and scholarly activity that will help to bring about equality of women with men in every sphere of human endeavour.

As well, the Nancy Rowell Jackman Chair in Women's Studies brings to the university for specified periods of time

distinguished visiting scholars in women's studies or persons in public life who have contributed to the advancement of women.

The Catherine Wallace Centre for Women in Science, opened in 1993, allows women greater access to the sciences.

As the foregoing attests, the Mount's mission has been recast several times over the past half century, reflecting the struggle by Nova Scotia women to achieve higher education, a place in the paid labour force, and a sense of purpose larger than their own selfish interests. While Margaret Fulton perhaps publicized the Mount's mission to women more broadly and with more *élan* than most presidents, the university's current path was set by Sister Catherine Wallace who was no slouch in grabbing headlines at a time when the women's movement was rapidly gaining momentum. Margaret Fulton's great gift was her down-to-earth style and her enthusiastic - indeed, joyful - dedication to the job she had taken on. Fulton was president of the Mount at a time when Canadian society was more supportive of initiatives relating to women than at any time before or since. This reality, in large measure, explains her success in attracting funds and developing programs.

### **The Current Challenge**

In the years since Fulton's departure from the Mount, the world has changed dramatically. We are now being asked to reinvent our universities to fit into a new world order that has defined feminism and liberalism as problematic. In a recent article, sociologist Dorothy Smith has suggested that we deconstruct the codes that frame many of our activities in the 1990s.<sup>4</sup> These codes encourage students to embrace the challenges of a mean-spirited workplace without protest, women dutifully to take on more unpaid labour both in and outside the home, and corporate managers to justify their high salaries on the flimsiest of grounds. Preoccupied by the issues now deemed relevant - paying down the debt, reducing taxes, eliminating entitlements - governments are withering away, leaving people to the mercy of the market place that cares only about the bottom line. The result is that much of our academic energy has been focused on downsizing, inter-university cooperation, and positioning our institutions for leaner and meaner times. Nova Scotia is a particular victim of these processes, with its universities being asked to make greater sacrifices than are required in any other provincial jurisdiction: student fees are higher, in some cases twice the level of fees paid at universities in Central and Western Canada; faculty salaries are lower by as much as twenty-five percent; and resources to sustain infrastructure and develop new programs have been pared to the bone. In the 1950s university presidents, provincial politicians, and leaders of business and voluntary organizations collaborated to demand equality for the region's peoples and institutions.<sup>5</sup> Where

is that Maritime voice now? And who speaks for women?

Given the refusal of governments to place the concerns of women very high on their agendas, and purposeful efforts to erase women as a relevant category of analysis and policy development in the postmodern age, current exercises in planning for the future of the Mount take on an unprecedented urgency. We cannot bring back, nor perhaps would we want to, the conditions of inequality that made being an outrageous feminist so much fun two decades ago. It is now important that we assess the situation in which we find ourselves, and work with courage and creativity to create conditions that will enable us to accomplish our goals. Our preoccupation with making universities relevant is just what my generation of feminists demanded. Of course, what is being defined as relevant has shifted considerably, but there is surely space in Canada for a university that tracks the status of women, that organizes its activities in ways that make it a good place for women to study and work, and that serves as a model for institutional development elsewhere. Gender differences have not disappeared, nor have women achieved equality by most measures. Despite the fact that women now make up half the student body in most universities, they are not taking up positions of leadership in key areas of our society. Studies of American universities suggest that graduates of women's colleges are much more likely to succeed in public life than their sisters in universities founded to serve men. Although men's universities are now co-educational, they fail to give women the history and focus required for them to develop self-confidence and leadership skills.<sup>6</sup> Unless there is a miracle in the near future, the Mount's mission will continue to be relevant. It is therefore vitally important that the Mount survive the present crisis with its mission in tact and that it infuse that mission with substance.

The Mount's first challenge is to determine how it wants to define its feminist agenda. I use the word "feminist" deliberately because I sense that even at the Mount there is an increasing tendency to discount feminism as an ideology and a movement. While it is the case that there is no longer - if there ever was - a monolithic feminism, there is a coherence to our multiple feminisms in the belief that women should be free to achieve equality and that it is legitimate to take women's needs seriously. When someone tells me that they are not a feminist, I respond with this question: "What are you then? If you do not believe in equality for women, what do you believe about gender relations? Do you really think that women should be unequal and subordinate to men, that there should not be some balance in rights and duties between women and men? How interesting!"

In a recent issue of the *Journal of Women's History*,<sup>7</sup> Christine Farnham has underscored the degree to which feminism has become equated with "male-bashing," and feminists made the objects of demonization and marginalization. She suggests that embracing the nineteenth century term "women's rights" might be a useful strategy at this point, but then notes the obvious: changing labels attacks the symptom rather than the problem, which is the loss of power to formulate the issues in the media and in our most cherished institutions. If we want to drop the f-word because it has been so thoroughly trashed by our detractors then we need

to find words that will allow us to say what we mean with clarity and confidence. At the very least, the Mount should insist, as do other universities, that its faculty and staff embrace its mission as a condition of employment. This is not, as some people will surely argue, a violation of intellectual freedom. As the Mount currently functions, it embraces a liberal feminist agenda. It has nearly an equal number of women and men as employees, and a growing number of male students. Let us say for the sake of argument that the Mount decided to enshrine gender parity in its institutional structures as one of its goals. A continuing debate on how this ideal might be reached could be a healthy and creative process for everyone working at the Mount. (This would be analogous to a university making, for example, computer-based learning a condition of employment. There would be some criticism of such a rigid template but it does not stop universities from asking that its employees conform to negotiated goals.)

The Mount's second challenge is to continue to make itself relevant to the community it serves. Although that community changes yearly, it currently includes the Halifax area, from which over half of its student body is drawn, as well as communities in eastern Nova Scotia and Cape Breton that have long been sending students to the Mount. Since its founding, and especially since the 1970s, Mount Saint Vincent has been a buzzing hive for women's activities but we now need to do even more in terms of outreach and leadership. The minority women in Nova Scotia, in particularly Aboriginal, Acadian, Black, and immigrant women, should be a special focus of study and hiring. In addition, the Mount should be a reliable source of expert advice on women's issues for government agencies, the media, and the public at large. As Nancy's Chair, I was frequently called upon to comment on issues that are far from my field of specialization and I was deeply conscious of how hard it was to find "experts" at short notice - in radio, television, and newspaper coverage, it is always now, not tomorrow. The Mount is often represented in the media, but it could play an even larger role both in providing informed comment on issues of the day as they relate to women and, perhaps more importantly, in defining what issues the media takes up.

With the focus now on the private - whether corporate or familial - institutions such as the Mount must work hard to ensure that women's interests are not compromised in the rush to reaffirm family values and corporate agendas. This responsibility requires resources, not just in parking, physical plant, and technology, but also in creative human beings and hard cash. Universities in the 1990s, whether we like it or not, are big businesses and require big budgets to carry out their missions successfully. We will almost certainly fail if we tailor our goals to our dwindling resources rather than finding the resources to sustain our ambitious goals. In this respect, I suggest that we consider going after some of that private money that is floating around out there. The rant about debts and deficits notwithstanding, there has never been a time in human history - even Maritime history - when there was so much money in circulation. Most of it, of course, goes to big transnational corporations whose CEOs use it to buy, among other things, good will, sex, and sports teams. Why not siphon off some of these dollars for

universities such as the Mount? Should not a university purporting to focus on the educational needs of women have a Miss Clairol Science Centre, Elizabeth Arden Sports Complex, Avon Calling Theatre, Tampax Chair of Women's Studies, Shoppers Drug Mart Computer Building, Maytag Scholarship Fund for Needy Students, Kenmore Residence for Single Parents? After all, we buy most of the cosmetics, feminine products, and kitchen appliances used in the world. Where's the pay back? If this route is taken, I urge the university to play tough and take the money on its own terms, not those demanded by the donors. We should never become the captive of compromising corporate missions.

The Mount's final challenge is to think very carefully about how it wants to position itself in the new global order. The tremendous impact that feminist values is having internationally suggests that there is a major role for the Mount to play in helping create a world in which the pursuit of gender equality is neither compromised nor minimized. Of course, we cannot do everything, but we must do more and do it smarter. The Mount is the only women's university in Canada but there are some eighty such institutions in the United States and more in other countries around the world. Is there strength in some alliance with other institutions like the Mount? Why not initiate closer contact? Can we use new technologies to create programs that will reach women in cyberspace? Why not deliver a first class Women's Studies program over the Internet? Do we want to attract students from all over the world to the Mount's beautiful campus? What must we do to be successful in such a venture? How can we enlist the energies of men in our mission(ary) efforts, for surely feminist goals will be strengthened by men's enthusiastic involvement? I am greatly encouraged, for example, by the efforts of such groups as Montreal Men Against Sexism, who participate in PAR-L, an e-mail network of great importance to Canadian women. What a joy it would be to see male faculty at the Mount creatively working to advance the Mount's mission. Would we be well served by taking up gender studies with more energy, making men a subject for serious study? Can we contribute to a better understanding of the construction of masculinity across time and cultures and help determine what conditions make gender equality possible? Is it too much to ask that the Mount become a model and a mentor for a brave new world of human rights and gender equality?

### Big Questions and Big Dreams

These are big questions that warrant our most serious consideration. In my wildest dreams, I see the Mount marching to an entirely different drummer, recognized the world over for its innovative programs and practices. I can see it all now - imaginative funding campaigns, residences for single parents, global Internet programs; media expertise on gender issues large and small; creative policies designed to encourage harmonious gender relationships; tuition fees that make university degrees accessible to people of all ages and cultures. Even if a few of these dreams came true, others would stand up and take notice.

How can we get there from here? Why not start by inviting a cross-section of creative people from around the world to help shape the Mount's mission for the new millennium? What an exciting symposium that would be and what a wonderful project for the Mount's fourth quarter century which will begin in the year 2000.<sup>8</sup> And why not encourage continuing innovation by setting up a committee from all sectors of the university whose job would be to dream big dreams and consider imaginative ways of making them come true?

We live in an era when creative thinking is desperately needed. The renewed emphasis on the baser instincts of human beings - aggressiveness, competitiveness, succeeding at all costs - poses a real challenge, not only to the Mount but to the world at large. Such values gained ascendancy earlier in this century with the result that two major wars took the world to the brink of disaster. While human beings have the capacity to triumph over their basic natures to create harmonious and complex communities, they need to be encouraged and educated to do so. The Mount, it seems to me, can do no other than to march in the vanguard of those who insist that the hard-won lessons of the past which made tolerance, democracy, human rights, and gender equality the bottom line for all people, not be forgotten.

### Afterword

Since this talk was given in 1997, the Mount has again reworked its mission statement. In the 2000-2001 *Calendar*, it reads:

#### Mission

Mount Saint Vincent University is dedicated to the education of women. The University is committed to the promotion of academic excellence through the provision of a strong liberal arts and science core and selected professional disciplines; a high degree of personalized education; the advancement and dissemination of knowledge through teaching, research and scholarly activity; the preservation of knowledge through its role as a repository and trustee of our cultural heritage; and the continuing intellectual, moral, spiritual and physical development of those sharing its life in an environment characterized by the values of its founders, the Sisters of Charity - social responsibility, ethical concern, and service to the community.

#### Vision

Become the world leader in innovative education for women

#### Values

excellence, supportive and challenging environment, accessibility, personal and professional development, community, partnerships and service, and stewardship

The Service to Women statement has been modified to include the following sentence: "All the programs we offer are periodically reviewed to ensure that women's concerns are reflected in courses and curriculum."

#### ENDNOTES

1. This paper is based on an address given at Mount Saint Vincent on International Women's Day, 8 March 1997. Although I have retained the text of the talk, I have updated the notes to alert readers to sources relevant to the topic that have appeared over the past few years.
2. In the years since this address was given, a fine history of the Mount has appeared: Theresa Corcoran, SC, *Mount Saint Vincent University: A Vision Unfolding, 1873-1988* (New York: University Press of America, 1999).
3. Mary Dulhanty, "Diary, 1926-27," Mount Saint Vincent University Archives.
4. Dorothy E. Smith, "'Politically Correct': An Ideological Code," in Stephen Richer and Lorna Weir, eds., *Beyond Political Correctness: Toward the Inclusive University* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995), 23-50.
5. Margaret Conrad, "The Atlantic Revolution of the 1950s," in Berkeley Fleming, *Beyond Anger and Longing: Community and Development in Atlantic Canada* (Fredericton: Acadiensis Press, 1988), 55-98.
6. Alexander Austin, *What Matters in College? Four Critical Years Revisited* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1993).
7. *Journal of Women's History* 8, 2 (Summer 1996): 6-9.
8. In response to this suggestion Mount Saint Vincent President Sheila Brown hosted a symposium entitled "Why a Women's University?" as part of the convocation program in the Fall of 1997. Dr. Jadwiga S. Sebrechts, President of the Women's College Coalition, Washington DC, was a keynote speaker for the event. An interview with Sebrechts by Dr. Patricia Baker, Professor of Women's Studies, Mount Saint Vincent University, can be found in *Atlantis* 22, 2 (Spring 1998): 127-135.





## Contributors



**Krishna Ahooja-Patel**, PhD (Nancy's Chair, 1990), served for 25 years in the United Nations system including eighteen years in the International Labour Office, Geneva. In 1992, after working as a research scholar at McGill University, Montreal, Quebec, she joined the International Development Studies Program at Saint Mary's University, Halifax, Nova Scotia. She is currently teaching "United Nations in Development" at that university and is offering a special course on Conceptual Foundations of Development and Women's Rights/Human Rights. She is also the President of Women's World Summit Foundation, an NGO coalition of women and children in Geneva and editor of their global newsletter *Seventy-Five Percent*.



**Marguerite Andersen, PhD** (Nancy's Chair 1987-88), is former chair of the Department of Languages and Literatures of the University of Guelph and is an accomplished writer of French fiction. Dr. Andersen was the editor of Canada's first feminist anthology in the 1970s, *Mother Was Not A Person*.



**Sheila Brown, PhD** is President and Vice-Chancellor of Mount Saint Vincent University in Halifax, Nova Scotia. Under her leadership, the University has seen a period of significant growth and broadened academic scope. Dr. Brown was chosen as one of Atlantic Canada's top 50 CEOs by *Atlantic Business Magazine* for two consecutive years. She serves as a Governor of the Council on Canadian Unity and as a Board member of the Sacred Heart School and Neptune Theatre.



**Margaret Conrad**, PhD, FRSC (Nancy's Chair, 1996 to 1998), is a professor of history at Acadia University, and was a founding member of the Editorial Board of *Atlantis* and its co-editor from 1977 to 1985. She has published widely in the fields of Maritime Canada and women's history and is co-author with Toni Laidlaw and Donna Smyth of *No Place Like Home: The Diaries and Letters of Nova Scotia Women, 1771-1938* (1988).



**Mary Ann Duffy, MA**, has most recently taught senior English to adult students in Toronto. She is currently migrating to Vancouver where she plans to continue teaching, reviewing, and speaking in support of women's issues.



**Margrit Eichler**, PhD (Nancy's Chair, 1992), is a Professor of Sociology and Equity Studies at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of Toronto and Director of the Institute for Women's Studies and Gender Studies at the University of Toronto. She has received several honours for her work: including the Distinguished Visiting Professorship at the University of Alberta in 1985, an honorary Doctorate of Laws from Brock University in 1991, and election to the Royal Society of Canada in 1996. She has written eighteen books and monographs and has acted as a consultant for many government organizations on women's issues including Statistics Canada, the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women, the Canadian Human Rights Commission and the Attorney General of Ontario.



**Yolanda Mak**, BA, BFA, BEd, is a writer and teacher of contemporary issues in art education. She has studied at the University of Toronto, the Ontario College of Art and Design and the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design. She currently lives and works in Toronto.



**Thelma McCormack**, PhD, in 1986 became the first appointment to Nancy's Chair. Dr. McCormack is Professor Emerita at York University. She is a former President of the Canadian Sociology and Anthropology Association and of the Canadian Women's Studies Association. Her areas of interest include communication, political sociology, and health. After receiving an undergraduate degree from the University of Wisconsin and completing graduate work at Columbia, Dr. McCormack has gone on to teach at many North American universities, as well as at the University of Amsterdam and the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.





**Maureen McNeil**, PhD (Nancy's Chair, 1993-1995), is Director and Reader in the Institute for Women's Studies at Lancaster University, UK. She wrote *Under the Banner of Science: Erasmus Darwin and His Age* (1987), edited *Gender and Expertise* (1987), and co-edited *The New Technologies* (1990). Dr. McNeil's research areas include such topics as Feminism and Foucault, cultural studies, feminist pedagogy, fetal alcohol syndrome, and "crack babies."



**Jamea Zuberi**, BSc, BEd, has been teaching English, Science, and Music at the Linden School for seven years. She is the director of the Linden School Steel Band. She is working on her Master's degree in Education at York University; her thesis will explore the interstices of gender, race, class, age, and sexual orientation. Born in Trinidad, Jamea is deeply committed to Toronto's Black community where she finds much inspiration for her work.