

Trouble

The radical feminist magazine

& Strife

NO
MAN
HAS THE RIGHT.

Z

ZERO TOLERANCE
of violence against women

Radical feminism in the 1990s

Mary Daly: The Be-dazzling Voyage

The failure of the sensible agenda

Who's writing our history?

Computer porn

Materialist feminism

NO. 27

£2.95

Trouble & Strife is cockney rhyming slang for wife. We chose this name because it acknowledges the reality of conflict in relations between women and men. As radical feminists, our politics come directly from this tension between men's power and women's resistance.

Trouble & Strife is produced by Lisa Adkins, Dianne Butterworth, Debbie Cameron, Marian Foley, Liz Kelly, Sophie Laws, Diana Leonard, Joan Scanlon and Sara Scott; with help from Sheila Burton, Caroline Forbes and Sonia Noonan.

With many thanks to the Women's Health and Reproductive Rights Information Centre for the use of their space and resources.

Printed and Typeset by Sandypress Manchester (061-273 7535)

Distributed by Central Books (081 986-4854).

Please note our address: *Trouble & Strife*, PO Box 8, Diss, Norfolk IP22 3XG

Subscribe to Women's News!

Ireland's feminist magazine

We have news on the state of the movement in Ireland & worldwide, as well as cartoons, creative writing, events & contacts...

Women's News has numerous contributors from Ireland and Elsewhere

If you would like to subscribe, then fill in the form below and send, with a cheque to Women's News: 185 Donegall St. Belfast BT1 2FJ



Rates (for 11 issues)	N.Ireland & Britain	S.Ireland	Europe	Overseas
Low/Unwaged	£7.00	IR£8.00	£9.00	
Ordinary	£9.00	IR£10.00	£11.00	£20.00
Women's Groups/Support sub	£12.00	IR£12.00	£14.00	
Institutions	£22.00	IR£22.00	£25.00	£30.00

NAME:
ADDRESS:

Sinister Wisdom

A Journal for the Lesbian Imagination in the Arts and Politics since 1976

Great issues full of terrific dyke writing and art agitate, soothe, inspire, move us to reflection and action:

- #40 On Friendship
- #41 Italian-American Women's Issue
- #42 Lesbian Voices (open theme)
- #43/44 15th Anniversary Retrospective (368 pages!)
- #45 Lesbians & Class
- #46 Dyke Lives
- #47 Lesbians of Color
- #48 Resistance (12/92)
- #49 The Lesbian Body (4/93)
- #50 Lesbian Ethics (8/93)

To get this great work sent to your home, your office, your friends — SUBSCRIBE NOW!
Name _____
Address _____
City _____
State & Zip _____

Subscription rates 1 yr or 4 issues
\$17 1 year, \$30 2 years
International: \$22 (US)
Single issues: \$6.50 (\$12.50-43/44)
Free on request to women in prison and mental institutions CA res.: add 8.5% tax

POB 3252 • Berkeley, CA 94703 • USA

RADICAL WOMEN'S NEWSPAPER

bad attitude

A brand new feminist newspaper lashing back against the backlash, witty, wicked and wild... and dedicated to the overthrow of civilisation as we know it.

"No one in their right minds would launch a newspaper like this." (Out 1st December 1992)

subscribe! and get your Bad Attitude delivered 1 year: 6 issues

£5 individuals £10 supporting rate
 £15 groups or send £1 for one issue

Name
Address

Bad Attitude, 121 Railton Road, London SE24 0PH, 071 978 9075

Harpies & Quines



Scotland's New Feminist Magazine

Yearly Rates: Unwaged £7
Waged £14 Organisation £21
Supporter £28 For those who would like to give more & enable unwaged women to receive the magazine at a special low rate.

I wish to subscribe to Harpies & Quines. I enclose subscription of

Name _____

Address _____

Send to: Harpies & Quines PO. Box 543 Glasgow G20 6BN

Contents No. 27

Trouble & Strife

Letters	2
Editorial: Then and Now	3
Going on Endlessly: defining radical feminism in the 1990s	7
Telling it like it wasn't <i>Debbie Cameron</i> examines how radical feminism becomes history	11
Zero Tolerance <i>Roz Foley</i> describes the impact of the campaign	16
Getting Personal: four radical feminists talk about the politics of personal life	21
Now Voyager <i>Patricia Duncker</i> reviews Mary Daly's latest book	26
Wanking in Cyberspace <i>Dianne Butterworth</i> writes about computer pornography and 'virtual sex'	33
The World and his Wife <i>Stevi Jackson</i> reviews "Familiar Exploitation" by <i>Diana Leonard</i> and <i>Christine Delphy</i>	38
The Failure of the Sensible Agenda <i>Lynn Alderson</i> salutes the successes of radical feminism	45
The Myth of the Bad Girl <i>Rachel Wingfield</i> reviews "Unleashing Feminism"	49
Campaigns	52

Letters

Dear Trouble & Strife

A friend of mine was flicking through the last issue (*T&S* 26) and nearly choked when she read: 'most heterosexuals are indifferent to the prospect of world-wide famine that will result if the present population explosion continues unchecked' (p.43).

The idea that world-wide famine is the result of 'population explosion' is untrue and dangerous. It is untrue because famine is the result of unequal distribution of resources, i.e. politics, not any simple scarcity of them. A North American child, for instance, will consume *90 times* what a Third World child consumes. The issue is not how many babies women have, but who uses resources and at what cost.

The myth is dangerous because it is usually third world women who have the largest numbers of children. So it's no leap at all to start saying that Third World women are to blame for hunger, or that they should be forcibly sterilised etc.

Many women do choose to have fewer children, once they have a secure standard of living. Development might mean smaller families/households. Not the other way round: limiting child-bearing never causes development.

I had to struggle to assure my friend that this quote was not an opinion supported by *T&S*. When you do so much to challenge racism, please be careful not to uncritically reproduce implicitly racist ideas.

In sisterhood

Amanda Root
Oxford

* Dear Trouble & Strife

I was glad to read Christine Delphy's article on 'mother right' in *T&S* 24. It feels terrific to see in print something putting into words the sense of unease I know a lot of my friends and feminist colleagues share about the muddled and sentimental maternalism of much current 'radical' feminist writing. I can't help contrast it with my reaction to reading Dena Attar on motherhood in the previous issue, which was to feel hopeless.

What is so comforting about those easy, mushy lines about mother right that Christine exposes? Well, there's less to do if you believe we're all right as we are, that we

*indicates a letter has been cut

may be powerless and poorer, but at least we're morally superior to men. I guess motherhood seems like the one thing we can hang onto when everything else gets insecure, and children the only thing we own. And mothers can feel bitter (and therefore righteous) about isolation and being left to do all the work. And like almost all women, feel ambivalent and feel bad about feeling ambivalent about children and caring.

What do mother-right feminists make not just of other cultures but of any woman who chooses not to bear children — whether or not she chooses to look after children? Or women who have borne children but wish they hadn't, or women (like my lover) who are happy to have children but also happy to leave much of their care to the father? Are we really men, or at least non-women? And what about mothers who raise their children in ways we cannot possibly condone?

Women who have never lived as lesbians, or knowing that they will never be mothers, should beware of assuming that gender unnormality is an easy option, even within feminism, let alone the rest of the world. But sentimentality about mother rights does precisely reinforce the idea that our biology is our destiny, and that any of us who deny this are wrong, bad, perverted.

Obviously some women are discouraged or even physically prevented from having children, because of their race, sexuality or physicality, and in bearing children they do assert their (and all of our) right to choose. But this can't get round the importance of challenging motherhood myths. Feminism is pretty meaningless unless it supports women who choose not to be mothers, and fights for their place as full, adult members of society with a social interest in what happens to children along with other members of society, and their own personal wishes to know what they want, including children. The questions of social responsibility and interest in children are huge issues, but I believe they cannot be addressed rationally if we accept the easy line that mothers — by which I mean women who have given birth — own the debate, or the children, or any of the silly things like heritage or virtue that Christine so ably attacks.

in sisterhood

Ruth Wallsgrove
Milton Keynes

RADICAL FEMINISM

Editorial: Then And Now

Here's what *T&S* thought in 1983...

We hope that this magazine will provide a new centre for what has been known, since the start of the current wave of feminism, as radical feminism.

We want *Trouble and Strife* to be a widely available, easily readable magazine, exploring in depth issues which are of direct and current relevance to the Women's Liberation Movement in Britain. We will publish material we do not necessarily agree with in every detail, and certainly from women who do not call themselves radical feminists. But we want to encourage writing from, and to make visible the activities of, a particular strand within feminism. Radical feminism, though central to movement practice, is too often silent in print.

Within this strand, some call themselves just 'feminists', because they see labels as restricting and divisive, and they want an evolving, broad and united Women's Liberation Movement. However, there are today important differences within the movement and many strands always use a qualifying adjective. We, therefore, feel we must too. The following paragraphs outline what we in the collective see as the

shared basis of our radical feminism.

We believe that men as a group benefit from the oppression and exploitation of women as a group. We do not see women's oppression as secondary in importance to class or any other oppression; nor do we see it as produced by or maintained because of class or any other oppression. Although we recognise that women experience additional oppressions, particularly through race, ethnic origin, age, disability, class, and that these additional oppressions may benefit and be contributed to by women who do not share them, all women are oppressed *as women*.

Men oppress women, but not because of their (or our) biology — not because men are physically stronger, nor because men have phalluses and women may bear children and breast feed, nor because men are innately more aggressive. We consider men oppress women because they benefit from doing so. All men, even those at the very bottom of male hierarchies, have advantages which flow from belonging to the category male. Even the men most sympathetic to women's liberation derive benefit from

local CR group or specific campaign) by, for example, reading books or by doing a women-only course, but we need not interpret this as a sign of a failing movement. Rather it may be a shift in the points at which politicisation can take place, connected to broader social changes.

Given that there appears to be a revitalised interest in radical feminism amongst young women — many of whom would have been too young to have taken part in the collective activities of the 1970s, or not born at all — surely what we need (and this piece is a very small contribution to answering the need) is an analysis of the social conditions in the 1990s which form women's relationship to feminism.

Different not dead

If we recognise that the old forms of political practice were possible because of the particular social conditions of ten and twenty years ago (and not just because of the particular qualities of the people who were present), and that these conditions have changed, we can see that there is perhaps not so much a demise of the women's movement, as a change in its form or expression.

However, if, as we have argued here, points of politicisation have shifted and many forms of collective activity have dwindled, we are going to have to rethink the claim made in *T&S* ten years ago 'that change can come about only through mass women's collective action.'

If social conditions have changed — and if in particular it is increasingly difficult to organise collectively — then our strategies will also need to change. We need new forms of activism — ones that don't necessarily depend on hundreds or thousands of women taking part in one particular event or being organised around one particular issue and which use new possibilities. Women abseiling in the House of Commons comes to mind — one action by a few women which was seen by millions on TV in Britain.

This is not to argue for ad-hoc pieces of action which are disconnected from radical feminist analysis — far from it. But rather to argue that it needs to be recognised that huge marches, protests or conferences may not be possible in the way they were ten or twenty years ago, and also that they may not be as effective as tools of change today.

In some ways there have already been changes in feminist organisation. Whilst it may be increasingly difficult to organise nationally, we have many more international contacts than ten years ago, and we think much more globally.

Why we still need a journal

Another issue which stands out in the original editorial statement is its apology for writing, and for providing a journal.

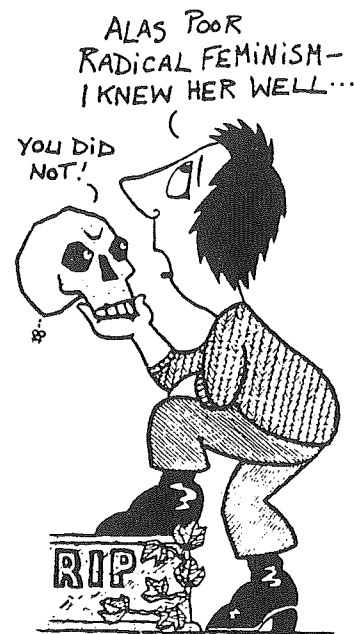
A similar sentiment was also expressed in other radical feminist publications set up around the same time. In the French journal *Questions Féministes* which started in 1977, for instance, there was a long justificatory note on why the founders believed writing was an important part of radical feminist activism. This seems now extremely outdated, and very much a product of the times.

Ten years ago, whilst radical feminism had a strong oral culture, very little was written down — and there was suspicion of those who did write. They often got accused of trying to take personal credit for collective 'movement' ideas, or (paradoxically) of giving their personal view instead of everybody's (differing) views.

This antagonism has had some unfortunate consequences. There are, for instance, very few (no?) histories of radical feminism available; and grievous omissions and misrepresentations in the 'general' (socialist feminist) histories which do exist. (See Debbie Cameron — this issue).

We no longer feel the need to apologise for writing or to justify its significance, perhaps because the benefits of radical feminist writing are now far clearer, and perhaps also because of the kinds of social change discussed earlier. Since we don't have the conferences, the campaigns and the oral culture that we used to have, we can't rely simply on hearing about what's going on. This has the advantage of also making radical feminist ideas more accessible to 'outsiders'.

However, as ten years ago, radical feminists remain committed to written ideas being simply expressed and accessible to all women. And this stays central to *Trouble & Strife's* position. □



Cath Jackson

Going on Endlessly

We asked a number of women to say, as briefly as they could, what radical feminism meant to them, and to name their top five 'classic' books—either titles they thought were essential reading then and now, or titles that had been important in the development of their politics. Here are the replies they sent us.

Sara Scott: Radical feminism means...

- ...not getting your knickers in a twist about there being 'some nice men'
- ...believing menstruation, motherhood, madness, money and men are all political issues
- ...considering 'post-feminists' to be politically pre-pubescent
- ...working with heterosexual feminists, if you're lesbian
- ...working with a lot of lesbians, if you're heterosexual
- ...not going on endlessly about being a lesbian (unless you've just become one)
- ...not going on about being heterosexual at all (in front of lesbians)
- ...insisting that incest, rape and battering are issues of power, not perversion
- ...still being accused of being biologically determinist
- ...and still denying it
- ...preferring 'women's liberation movement' to 'wimmin's community'

Pet hates: Equal Opps-speak; S/M dykes; Erin Pizzey
Soft spots: Mary Daly, your first women's group, Tony Benn(!)

Classics: Redstockings, *Feminist Revolution*; Adrienne Rich, 'Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence'; Susan Griffin, *Pornography and Silence*; Phyllis Chesler, *Women and Madness*; Susan Brownmiller, *Against Our Will: Women, Men and Rape*.

Liz Kelly: A politics of courage, pain, hope, joy and action. The courage to name women's oppression by men as systematic — patriarchy. The pain of knowing all the forms patriarchal oppression takes and how in its mundane, everyday and horrifically brutal realities it limits, constrains and stunts all women's lives. This pain also involves recognising the many ways in which women participate in the oppression of other women. Hope springs from a profound belief that things could be different, and a passionate desire to be part of making a difference — changing the world, which requires us to act. I experience joy when I act in dissent with other women, when I remember I am part of a massive global revolt against men's power, when I understand more of the complexity and enormity of what we have taken on, and when I feel

closer to the possibility of 'woman-loving'.
Classics: Shulamith Firestone, *The Dialectic of Sex*; Cherríe Moraga and Gloria Anzaldúa, *This Bridge Called my Back*; Kathleen Barry, *Female Sexual Slavery*; Robin Morgan, *The Demon Lover: The Sexual Politics of Terrorism*; Charlotte Bunch, *Passionate Politics*; Vandana Shiva, *Staying Alive*.

Dianne Butterworth: Radical feminism looks at power relationships in all levels of societal organisation, from inequalities in individual sexual relationships to institutionalised racism, from the control of women's sexual and 'domestic' labour to the dynamics of international economics. Radical feminism accepts that in a patriarchal system, men as a group hold power over women as a group. Compulsory heterosexuality is at the centre of the patriarchal dynamic, and various strategies maintain it, particularly male physical/sexual violence and pornography as a manifestation of that violence.

Radical feminism is a politics of change: a belief that women and men can change themselves and their societies, that we can make the world better. Central to this idea of change is the application of politics in the real world — activism.

Classics: Sheila Jeffreys, *Anticlimax*; Andrea Dworkin, *Intercourse*; Kate Millett, *Sexual Politics*; Adrienne Rich, 'Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence'.

Lisa Adkins: Radical Feminism takes as central that 'men' and 'women' are two socially constructed groups which exist because of the relationship between them: a relationship where the dominant group, men, benefit from their oppression or exploitation of the subordinate group, women. There are variations in what is seen as the key dynamic underlying this relationship — some, for instance foreground sexuality, others the control and exploitation of women's work — but the key common element is seeing men and women as socially made, opposed groups.

Classics: Adrienne Rich, 'Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence'; Kathleen Barry, *Female Sexual Slavery*; Monique Wittig, 'The Category of Sex'; Christine Delphy, 'The Main Enemy'; Colette Guillaumin, 'The Practice of Power and Belief in Nature, Part I: The Appropriation of Women'; Catherine MacKinnon, 'Feminism, Marxism, Method and the State: An Agenda for Theory'.

Joan Scanlon: Radical feminism is about prioritising women. It's about collective action, not about individual identity — about actively wanting to be part of an international women's liberation movement. Radical feminists have always insisted on the relationship between theory, activism and personal life. Intrinsic to radical feminism is the understanding that lesbianism is a political identity, and that the logic of a feminist politics is the pursuit of equality in personal relationships. It is also fundamentally about being opposed to all forms of violence against women, including the pornography industry. As radical feminists we have a particular relationship to the word and the image; we dislike the uses to which they are generally put, and yet are continuously preoccupied with the possibility of reinventing the world we inhabit.

Classics: Catherine MacKinnon, *Feminism Unmodified*; June Jordan, *Lyrical Campaigns*; Sheila Jeffreys, *The Spinster and Her Enemies*; Kate Millett, *Sexual Politics*; Susanne Kappeler, *The Pornography of Representation*.

Stevi Jackson: Radical feminism is a broad current within feminism rather than a single perspective. What I think unites radical feminists across our differences is that we see male power, patriarchy, as a system of oppression. This does not mean that patriarchy is a static, unchanging structure. Nor does radical feminism ignore differences among women, or forms of inequality which intersect with patriarchy. It certainly does not (contrary to popular stereotypes) involve any notion of 'natural' differences between women and men — radical

feminism challenges the very basis of gender difference, which derives from patriarchal structures, not from nature.

Classics: Christine Delphy, *Close to Home*; Monique Wittig, *The Straight Mind and other Essays*; Adrienne Rich, 'Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence'; Susan Brownmiller, *Against Our Will: Women, Men and Rape*; Sylvia Walby, *Patriarchy at Work*.

Kirsten Mlacak: I have become a radical feminist through a process of consciousness-raising whereby I came to recognise the centrality of patriarchy — a politics of male dominance — and pornography — the pivotal codification of male violence — in maintaining women's oppression. Being a radical feminist also involves recognising (compulsory) heterosexuality — the institutionalisation of guaranteed access to women's bodies, for men — as the third member of the triumvirate.

The implications of this feminist political awakening are far-reaching. I have reassessed my relationships with men and women as well as being compelled to get involved as a feminist politically (though as yet somewhat haphazardly). Essential to my feminism has been an acknowledgement of my own racism and the workings of racism in society.

Classics: Andrea Dworkin, *Pornography*; Adrienne Rich, 'Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence'; Kate Millett, *Sexual Politics*; Sheila Jeffreys, *Anticlimax*; Patricia Hill Collins, *Black Feminist Thought*.

Sue Botcherby: Radical feminism is a politics which surpasses 'reformist feminism'. It is a theoretical position which posits men as the enemy and patriarchy as a historical and current framework in which sexual relations are the basis for inequality; identifying a constant and ongoing power struggle of men over women.

The theoretical basis of Radical Feminism rests on the assertion that 'the personal is political', which has informed the political activity of women in this wave of feminism. Radical feminism encompasses the struggles of women globally and has attempted to redefine itself and move forward in the past

and into the nineties. It is impossible to conceive of a current feminist politics without reference to radical feminism.

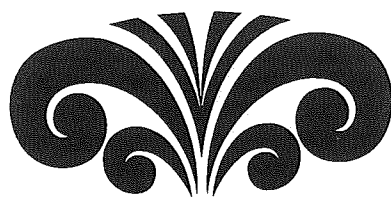
Classics: Redstockings, *Feminist Revolution*; Shulamith Firestone, *The Dialectic of Sex*; Kate Millett, *Sexual Politics*; Mary Daly, *Gyn/Ecology*; Anne Koedt (ed.), *Radical Feminism*.

Julia Parnaby: Activist/radical/feminist/anti-racist/anti-porn/anti-sm/aware of class politics/lesbian/revolutionary/rooted in reality/materialist/collective/personal is political/non-abusive/support/struggle/anti-bourgeois/non-hierarchical/aware/fun/thoughtful/sisterhood.

Classics: Sheila Jeffreys, *Anticlimax*; Andrea Dworkin, *Pornography*; Adrienne Rich, 'Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence'; Anne Koedt, *The Myth of the Vaginal Orgasm*; Shulamith Firestone, *The Dialectic of Sex*.

Mandana Hendessi: Radical feminism represents thought and practice which puts women first and sees the interests of women as paramount in a society (or societies) in which we, as women, face constant infringement of our rights, where violence and abuse of women is an inseparable part of the male-dominated culture. Radical feminism embodies a vigorous challenge to uproot discrimination and violence against women.

Dena Attar: I have two [definitions], one ideal and one more of a current description. Ideally as a framework of theory and as a movement radical feminism opposes every form of oppression but tends to give priority to challenging the oppression of women on the theoretical grounds that it's the most universal, most taken-for-granted and in that sense the most fundamental — and on the practical grounds that we have to prioritise fighting our own oppression because nobody else is going to do it for us. It follows that radical feminism naturally also opposes racism, class oppression and heterosexism, though I see the oppression of lesbians as part of a continuum of oppression of women



generally rather than as separate. Radical feminist analysis should be about understanding such connections rather than about constructing hierarchies of oppression. Another aspect of my ideal definition is activism — the idea that consciousness raising is an active ongoing activity linked with the concrete struggle against oppression, and that theory develops alongside this — but also that activism shouldn't be 'mindless' but needs to be accompanied by discussion and reflection. To put it another way, gut feelings need to be acknowledged as important, likewise direct experience, but radical feminism as a rational coherent movement cannot stop there. In the real world (defn. 2) we haven't always lived up to any of this.

Classics: Redstockings, *Feminist Revolution*; Shulamith Firestone, *The Dialectic of Sex*; Andrea Dworkin, *Right-Wing Women*; Adrienne Rich, 'Of Lies, Secrets and Silence'; bell hooks, *Essays* (any, but especially first collection published here).

Debbie Cameron: To me radical feminism means looking at gender as a *system* of oppression. Of course it doesn't work exactly the same way for all societies or all groups in one society, but the differences in women's situations shouldn't obscure the things we have in common. Radical feminism is radical because it questions the basics of men's power over women — marriage and the family, compulsory heterosexuality and compulsory motherhood. It takes on the most extreme forms of male power, like violence against women. It doesn't pretend that women can be equal in the system as it stands, or that the problem is just 'attitudes' — the problem is structural, the problem is power.

Classics: Susan Brownmiller, *Against our Will: Women, Men and Rape*; Nawal El Sadaawi, *Woman at Point Zero*; Christine Delphy, *Close to Home*; Gena Corea, *The Mother Machine*.

Rachel Wingfield: Radical feminism is a systematic analysis of power relations in society, understood in terms of collective and structural reality, and as a socio-historic

contract. It understands patriarchy to be the force which structures all social power relations, which includes in its current form capitalism — class exploitation — and institutionalised racism. Radical feminism believes women's oppression to be maintained through a number of key mechanisms: institutionalised heterosexuality; sexual violence (and state sanctioning of that violence); the eroticisation of that oppression through pornography, SM and dominant sexual ideology; economic inequality between men and women; and through institutionalised male power, e.g. in education and the medical profession. Radical feminism cannot be, however, simply an analytical tool: inextricably linked with its social perspective is its understanding that the personal is political and vice versa. Therefore, it must be active and lived — a material reality for those women who are part of it.

Classics: Susan Brownmiller, *Against Our Will: Women, Men and Rape*; Kate Millet, *Sexual Politics*; Sheila Jeffreys, *Anticlimax*; Adrienne Rich, 'Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence'; Andrea Dworkin, *Intercourse*. □



off our backs
a women's newsjournal
Join us for our third decade of news, reviews, commentaries — the best in feminist journalism!
subscribe today
11 issues a year \$19
Contributing \$22
Canada, Mexico \$20
Overseas, all airmail: US \$28, UK£16
Trial sub: 3 issues for \$5
NAME _____
ADDRESS _____
CITY _____
STATE _____ ZIP _____
oob,2423 18th St.NW,Wash.DC,20009

Telling it Like it Wasn't

How Radical Feminism Became History

Something peculiar is happening to the history of the WLM. Debbie Cameron wades through some recent contributions.

In the past few years, more and more histories and memoirs of the WLM have been appearing in Britain and North America. There are probably several reasons for the flurry of interest: a demand for material from Women's Studies teachers dealing with students who don't remember 1980, let alone 1968; the eternal quest for original Ph.D topics; the publishing industry's obsession with anniversaries (if it started in 1968, the WLM has recently celebrated 20th and 25th birthdays), and the present cultural fashion for 60s and 70s nostalgia. No doubt we all want to see feminism given its proper place as an important social movement of our time; but we do need to look carefully at the *politics* of writing about the WLM as a historical phenomenon. If the interpretation of our history certain feminists are now offering becomes the orthodox view of the WLM, radical feminists will have good reason to be alarmed. The not-so-hidden agenda of many recent books is to discredit radical feminism or erase it from the record.

Writing the WLM's history is difficult and gives unusual scope for interpretation. Unlike most political movements, the

WLM was always a relatively loose and decentred configuration of diverse groups rather than a hierarchical organisation with official policy documents and authoritative central records. And though there are plenty of individuals who can bear witness to the events that interest a historian, relying on their testimony brings its own problems. In a leaderless and decentralised movement where women do not speak as official representatives, who you talk to makes a difference to the picture you get. And testimony is bound to be affected by hindsight — a problem for all oral history, but especially for oral political history. Women may well discuss their actions and beliefs twenty years ago in ways designed to enhance their political credentials in the very different climate of the present.

For example, the 1960s and 70s activists interviewed in many recent histories tend to dwell on the racism and classism of the early WLM, which is fair enough; but in those cases where (white and middle-class) women claim that racism and classism are the main things they remember, I for one suspect them of trying to present a sympa-



Jacky Fleming

thetic image of their present selves at the expense of any understanding of what they thought they were doing at the time.

If you look at *written* sources for the period 1968-78, eg the pieces collected in *Sisterhood is Powerful* or the *Spare Rib Reader* spanning the first 100 issues, it's a rather different story. There's little support for the idea that 1970s feminists were not aware of race and class. Most strikingly, though, these pieces still convey a sense of the vitality and optimism of the early WLM, which you would never suspect from the new wave of historical writings about it. Self-criticism is good politics, but on its own it is unenlightening history.

In any case, what looks like self-criticism can often be scapegoating - *other* women were the racists, classists, essentialists, reactionaries, naive and self-righteous prima donnas. Mostly these scapegoats, feminists from whose error one-time sisters now rush to distance themselves, turn out to be... radical feminists.

From radical feminism to cultural feminism?

A very overt example of radical-feminist bashing is Alice Echols' *Daring To Be Bad: Radical Feminism in America 1967-1975* (yes, she does believe it ceased to exist after that) — a book now on countless reading lists in the US, partly because it saves the trouble of photocopying out-of-print writings by the feminist groups Echols discusses, like Redstockings, New York Radical Women and The Feminists. (Again these are still worth reading if you can find them.) But whereas those writings present a spectrum of views and leave you to make up your own mind, Alice Echols has 'An Agenda'. From her account of the short, unhappy life of radical feminism you can only conclude it was a 'Terrible Mistake' and paved the way for the collapse of any feminist politics worthy of the name 'radical'.

What Echols says explicitly is the implicit background to a great deal of recent writing about the WLM, so I will briefly summarise the story she tells. American radical feminism arose out of women's involvement in and dissatisfaction with the counter-cultural (Civil Rights and anti-war) movements of the 1960s. The women involved were mainly white, economically and educationally privileged. When their utopian ideas, expressed in slogans like 'sisterhood is powerful' and 'the personal is political', proved difficult to live by — they glossed over differences between women and legitimated a lot of self-righteous policing of women's behaviour by other women — groups broke up in an atmosphere of exhaustion and recrimination. Some women left the movement; others turned away from 'real' politics to a concern with setting up alternative cultural spaces and institutions where woman-centred lifestyles and personal growth could be pursued.

This group, the so called 'cultural feminists' (I say 'so-called' because no-one in the US ever calls *herself* a cultural feminist), developed an essentialist and reactionary ideology about men (inherently violent and oppressive) and women (inherently peaceful and nurturant) which led to such unfortunate consequences as the anti-pornography movement, an obsession with male violence and a puritanical attitude to women's sexual

behaviour. Thus Echols suggests that radical feminism was destroyed by its own excesses, and a cultural feminism which carried on the worst of those excesses went on to 'hijack' the entire movement, making it reactionary and ineffectual.

Britain: same old story

In Britain the story has to be told somewhat differently, with different terminology and slightly later dates. The label 'cultural feminism' has started to creep in from the US, but the political positions associated with it, such as opposition to pornography, are still generally known as 'radical feminism' here. Its most vocal critics tend not to be burned out or disillusioned former radical feminists but former marxists, or sexual libertarians. So the idea of radical feminism destroying itself and being replaced by cultural feminism cannot so easily be sustained in relation to the British WLM. Historians can however accuse radical feminists of taking over the movement with their brand of essentialism, moralism, lifestyle politics, indifference to race and class issues, and so on, in much the same way Echols criticises US cultural feminists.

This for instance is the argument of Lynne Segal's 1987 book *Is the Future Female?*, which talks about 'the current hegemony of the new radical or cultural feminism, with its passionate rhetoric about male violence and female virtue' (p.66), and it is also prominent in Michelene Wandor's 1990 collection of memoirs by women who were at the Ruskin conference of 1970, *Once A Feminist*.



Jacky Fleming

Historian Sheila Rowbotham tells Wandor that after the 1973 conference in Bristol she felt uncomfortable with the direction the WLM was taking. "I seemed to see a politics that was identifying feminism as something more to do with a personal way of dressing or lifestyle..." (p.39). Alternatively radical feminism can be ignored, as in the outrageously-titled *British Feminist Thought*, or portrayed as a spent force, as it mostly is in Amanda Sebestyen's compilation 68, 78, 88.

I personally find it quite hard to recognise either the caricature of radical feminism in these texts (Was WAVAW about a 'personal way of dressing'? Does the 1983 editorial manifesto of *T&S* support a politics of male violence and 'female virtue'?), or the neat distinctions they make between radical and socialist feminists in the 1970s. It's interesting that earlier histories, like Sara Evan's *Personal Politics* (for the US) and Anna Coote and Beatrix Campbell's *Sweet Freedom* (for Britain) makes far less of divisions among feminists than more recent books. *Sweet Freedom* for instance is the work of two socialist feminists, but the impression you get from it is one of considerable consensus among women on a wide range of issues.

With the (admittedly quite important) exception of separatism/political lesbianism, this is what I remember too. For example, I recall a series of meetings in Newcastle in the late 70s titled 'Women, the Family and the Labour Movement', sponsored by the WEA. The socialist women who organised the meetings took it for granted that violence against

women would be a strong theme, and even organised a session on pornography with Sheila Jeffreys as the guest speaker. I can't speak for the experience of other women in other parts of the country, but when I look back to my peak years as an activist (1978-84, well after the alleged 'death' of the movement), what I recall has little to do with the warring of mutually antagonistic sects I keep reading about. We may not have been a happy band of sisters taking on the patriarchy in perfect accord, but the sharp divisions made by Alice Echols and others, not to mention their account of what radical feminism was and is, strike me as a projection back in time of hostilities that broke out much later around pornography and s/m. Is that history, or point-scoring?

Diverse memories

A more diverse picture is potentially available from memoirs, where instead of one person's interpretation you get a series of personal recollections presented with little or no commentary. This is the format of *Once A Feminist* and *68 78 88*. Of course the selection of contributors puts a particular slant on the collection as a whole; in *Once A Feminist* the slant is anti-radical. But even in *68 78 88*, where Amanda Sebestyen has been more concerned to include a range of viewpoints, there's a dispiriting sense of women writing the WLM's obituary rather than what the blurb describes (oddly, since the pieces are nearly all written accounts) as 'a many-sided oral history'. The book's subtitle — *From Women's Liberation To Feminism* — underlines what seems to be the emerging orthodox view that 'the organised movement has gone', leaving only a residue of feminist attitudes women bring to their other, more pressing business.

Some of the attitudes contributors to *68 78 88* hold are surprising to say the least. Reading an interview with a woman who gave up feminism for the Bhagwan I hardly knew whether to laugh or cry, while a smug and self-justifying piece about how you can get married and still be on the cutting edge of feminism reduced me to gibbering rage. No doubt many feminists past and present have acquired marriages, mortgages, straight jobs and possibly even New Age beliefs; but are these developments in the life histories of individuals all there is to say about the

historical development of the movement? It is striking how few contributors mention current involvement in active campaigning (though most were once very active, and a significant number have jobs where their feminism is relevant). But this does not mean activism itself has ceased. You can only present these women's stories as the story of the WLM itself if you have (a) a strong generational (and ethnic) bias, and (b) an absolute determination to ignore the continued existence of radical feminist campaigns.

Nostalgia versus nausea

The classic problem in writing or talking about the past is sentimental nostalgia, but in *68 78 88* as in Alice Echols' interviews with former radical feminists, women seem to be suffering less from nostalgia than from nausea. They continually berate their younger selves, one another and the movement in general for nastiness, naivety and 57 varieties of idiocy. We can only hope anti-feminists don't read these books, for if they do they will find all their prejudices triumphantly confirmed. The WLM was apparently full of humourless harpies, silly hysterical girls and neurotic control-junkies; its members could neither get on with each other nor organise the proverbial piss-up in a brewery. Older and wiser now, they know their parents were right when they said young hotheads grew out of it.

It's depressing to think of younger women being given this sort of stuff as an introduction to feminist history. An American friend, no fan of 'cultural feminism', recently had to teach *Daring To Be Bad* and found the experience a nightmare. After reading it, her 19-year old women students were even less able to understand than when they started why anyone would ever have got involved in such an unpleasant and self-defeating enterprise. Not only is radical feminism presented as 'dead' in this account, it is presented as having achieved nothing while still alive. You can only wonder why the likes of Alice Echols are so threatened by what they claim is an ineffectual lunatic fringe that they spend hundreds of pages killing it and dancing on its grave.

Reading these books is bound to make you wonder if there's a conspiracy against radicals, or if we've been silenced by

exclusion from certain academic and publishing cliques, but in fact I don't think it's that simple. Some women at the radical end of the spectrum do write feminism's history (eg Sheila Jeffreys), and (former) radicals are represented in both Echols' book and Sebestyen's. But they all seem to be affected by the same grudging and pessimistic spirit, the same need to tell us that the party is definitely over (thus for me, Jeffreys' *Anticlimax* reads like a mirror image of *Daring to be Bad*, with radical and revolutionary feminists as the goodies instead of the baddies). I suspect this is mostly a generation thing, and ironically the WLM may be better served when younger historians emerge with a view less affected by personal memories. I also wonder if the slant of many histories has something to do with there not being enough written sources to provide a fuller picture (e.g. diaries and letters as well as pamphlets and journals), and especially with activists not recording their perceptions and experiences, for lack of time, energy, interest or

whatever. Perhaps the need to leave our mark on history is something radical feminists should bear in mind for the future.

Meanwhile, though, we can't overlook the fact that published histories are influential in shaping people's views of the past, and the present crop of histories of the WLM are setting an agenda that's destructive for women's politics now. Even leaving aside all its other depressing features, this 'why did we bother?' genre of history writing has the effect of totally obscuring the issue of male power — the reason for the WLM's existence and the reason why so many women become involved in it despite the undeniable difficulties. Writing a version of history in which radical feminism becomes the problem does not alter what the problem really is, nor offer us any solution. Proclaiming that organised feminism is dead only hastens the day when it might be. Readers should ask themselves: whose interests does that serve? □

Anna Coote and Beatrix Campbell, *Sweet Freedom* (Picador 1982)
 Alice Echols, *Daring To Be Bad: Radical Feminism in America 1967-1975* (University of Minnesota Press, 1989)
 Sara Evans, *Personal Politics* (Vintage, 1979)
 Amanda Sebestyen, *68 78 88: From Women's Liberation to Feminism* (Prism Books, 1988)
 Michelene Wandor, *Once A Feminist* (Virago, 1990)
 Lynn Segal, *Is The Future Female?* (Virago, 1987)



still here,
 still fighting,
 and with
 good reason

ZERO TOLERANCE

Posters on Princes Street denouncing violence against women were one of the highlights of 1992. Roz Foley described the impact of Edinburgh District Council's Women's Committee's Zero Tolerance Campaign.

Last winter I took the train to Edinburgh. As usual I had mixed feelings about going back to Scotland. Looking forward to seeing my loved ones but dreading bumping into the violent ex-boyfriend I'd left to get away from.

In a pub in the city centre I saw a poster. It showed two girls playing with toys on a hearth rug. It read, 'By the time they reach eighteen one of them will have been subjected to sexual abuse. From flashing to rape male abuse of power is a crime.' The poster had been produced by the council's women's unit. Across the bottom was the slogan 'Zero Tolerance of Violence against women'.

It is difficult to describe how empowering just seeing that poster was. Suddenly that space felt safer. I stopped caring that the last time I'd been in that bar, a couple of the rapist's friends had walked out objecting to my presence. Knowing that somebody had been sufficiently sympathetic to put it up, validated my version of events. It no longer seemed to matter that I'd been threatened with recriminations if I didn't shut up — the council was on my side.

This might seem a simplistic analysis but it was the reaction of dozens of survivors I have spoken to about the posters. They were all over the city and on huge billboards too. Everybody seemed to be discussing Zero Tolerance. They did not all necessarily agree but the violence had been named and the perpetrators identified. As soon as the posters started going up, letters started to flood into the women's unit from women saying how good they felt about the campaign.

Preventing crime against women

The Zero Tolerance campaign was launched by Edinburgh District Council Women's Committee in November 1992. It was billed as Britain's first crime prevention campaign on the issue of violence against women. It was explicitly based on the premise that male violence against women has to be challenged and that men have to accept responsibility for it. What was exciting for feminists was not the messages, most of which we have been voicing for years, but the fact that they were being said so loudly, so publicly and that they seemed to have achieved wide public support.

The formal launch was controversial but attention-grabbing in that it used an all male platform with the exception of the chair. 'Prominent' men representing sections of the community signed a public pledge supporting 'Zero Tolerance of Violence against Women' and the campaign's three key aims:

active **PREVENTION** of crimes of violence against women and children;
adequate **PROVISION** of support services for women and children;
appropriate legal **PROTECTION** for women and children who are the victims of violence.

The pledge stated that, 'Education from early childhood through to adulthood should challenge violent behaviour from the premise that women and children are usually the targets of aggression and men and boys are usually the perpetrators. Preventing crimes of violence against women should be a priority for local, regional and national government.'

This central statement was crucial. It meant that the campaign, although broad based and cross party had a clear political perspective which people were asked to endorse. The campaign had taken the issue of sexual violence into the political mainstream without diluting the feminist perspective.

The public awareness campaign was undertaken in response to research carried out in local secondary schools which found that there was a wide acceptance of violence against women amongst boys in particular. ¹ Although violence within relationships was seen as acceptable, there was a great deal of ignorance about the reality of domestic violence, with boys having more misconceptions than girls. The women's unit also found in one of its regular surveys on which issues local women saw as most important, that fear of sexual assault was extremely high and a priority issue for the majority.

The campaign took its slogan and inspiration from Canada. It pointed to the 136 million dollar 'Family Violence Initiative', started by the Canadian Federal Government following the 'Montreal Massacre'. ² It was pointed out that the British government was prepared to spend millions on tackling things like drink driving and car crime but next to nothing on the

safety of women and children.

Posters and politics

The second phase of the campaign tackled domestic violence. The poster shows a woman sitting on the floor in a fairly well-to-do looking living room. It reads, 'She lives with a successful businessman, loving father and respected member of the community. Last week he hospitalised her. Emotional, physical, sexual, male abuse of power is a crime'. (Lots of the small posters were graffitied with the word 'male' scored out — were they feeling defensive?)

The third phase focused on rape. The poster depicts an old woman with a young



**EDINBURGH DISTRICT COUNCIL WOMEN'S COMMITTEE
WORKING FOR ZERO TOLERANCE OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN**



girl and reads, 'From three to ninety three, women are raped. Husband, father, stranger, male abuse of power is a crime'.

During these three phases, the arguments were backed up using accessible statistics which convincingly backed up the message of the posters. Bookmarks were given out in public libraries with mini posters with extracts from research on the back. A good relationship had been developed with the local newspaper which ran a simultaneous 'Free from Fear' campaign. Zero Tolerance was used as the media 'hook' to report on local services, eg self defence projects and the need for increased refuge



EDINBURGH DISTRICT COUNCIL WOMEN'S COMMITTEE
WORKING FOR ZERO TOLERANCE OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

funding, as well as recent reported sexual assaults. When a rape survivor stood up at Scottish Conservative Party conference and described how the legal system had failed her many papers automatically reported the case in the context of the feminist campaign.

There was no backlash until the last poster appeared. There was no picture on it. It simply read "NO MAN HAS THE RIGHT". While some men agreed that they have to accept responsibility for the abuse of power, many attacked the poster, interpreting its message as saying 'all men are rapists'. (Wonder why?)

During this phase, in addition to the billboards, the 'Z' image was displayed along the main street. The big black and white Z was now beginning to be identified as a symbol of opposition to male violence (women have been overheard telling harassers to 'Z off'). The triangular display stands which normally hold things like Christmas decorations, bore huge Zero Tolerance posters. As you travelled along, you were confronted with statements like; almost half of all homicides of women are killings by a partner or ex-partner³; that 85% of rapists are men known to the victims⁴; and that no man has the right. Because a substantial number of the statistics came from 'respectable' sources such as the Home Office or academic research, as well as local rape crisis lines, they were hard to challenge.

I know women who took the long way to work in the morning to pass these posters in order to feel validated and strong in their own survival. My mum has acquired posters for the doctor's surgery where she works, hoping that women realise that if they want to talk about the real reasons for their injuries she will believe them.

Consulting the feminists

Although this stage of the campaign has now formally wound down it has provided a spark for several other councils to initiate similar campaigns. Other campaigns have recognised that you cannot simply lift what is appropriate in one city and automatically apply this elsewhere. Edinburgh undertook extensive consultation with women's groups prior to launching its initiative. The decision for the photographic images to be predominantly white was informed by the wishes of

the local Asian women's refuge. So far it has worked well in conjunction with the existing groups. There was never a 'top down' approach. Public meetings for women have been organised. There was a conference providing survivors' perspectives of child abuse. A historical element to 'Zero Tolerance' is planned with a plaque to be unveiled at the spot in the city where witches used to be burned.

The Edinburgh Campaign is currently being evaluated in terms of its impact on the media and street surveys are being conducted next to the posters to discover people's reactions to the campaign. The initial findings are that the campaign has been very well received. It would set up a campaign to fail to claim that attitudes have changed or that violence has decreased as a result. If all that the campaign has done is to name the violence and identify the perpetrators then that itself is a success.

There is always the problem of ownership with such a campaign. Feminists do not want to take over and refuse to acknowledge the input of others. We want others to address the issues of male violence. The danger is that the issue can be addressed in a diluted or odd way. Recently, one London borough used the slogan to refer to all violence in the home, lumping elder abuse in with domestic violence, thereby losing the message.

Voluntary organisations in London which provide services for survivors are often hassled by rape alarm companies for endorsement. It is likely that some private companies will have a dodgy agenda for supporting a wider initiative. There is also the perennial moral dilemma in running such a campaign of who you are taking money from; an anti-racist campaign recently incurred the wrath of the animal rights movement by accepting sponsorship from a company that sells meat.

Popular and radical?

Some groups will argue that money is wasted challenging male violence because men are inherently violent and cannot change. Others will argue that the money would be better spent on funding voluntary groups which provide survivors with support services. However most research on where

women get support shows that the majority never come into contact with refuges, rape crisis lines etc. Women use each other as a resource. A public education campaign provides a safer way of checking out how someone will respond without making personal disclosures. It is far easier to tell somebody who agrees that 'No man has the right', knowing that it is less likely that you will be disbelieved, blamed or mocked.

For a campaign which tackles sexual violence as a continuum and incorporates flashing and sexual harassment as well as rape and child abuse, Zero Tolerance does have some glaring omissions. The most obvious being that there is no direct reference to



EDINBURGH DISTRICT COUNCIL WOMEN'S COMMITTEE
WORKING FOR ZERO TOLERANCE OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

1. 'Adolescents' knowledge about, and attitudes to, domestic violence: Report to the Edinburgh District Council women's committee, May 1992.

2. 'Montreal Massacre', on December 6th 1989, when fourteen young women, mostly engineering students, were murdered in Montreal, Canada. The murderer deliberately singled them out, objecting to women's encroachment on male territory.

3. National Working Party Report on Domestic Violence, Victim Support Scheme, July 1992.

4. Concerns about rape, Home Office, 1989.

Women's Support Project, 871 Springfield Road, Glasgow G31.

pornography. (An earlier, and much smaller scale poster campaign, run by the Glasgow-based Women's Support project⁵, states 'Pornography is violence', in one of its six posters.)

It is a false dichotomy to suggest that radical and popular agendas cannot co-exist. Although the word 'patriarchy' is not used in the Zero Tolerance campaign, it does frame violence against women in radical terms. And other, more radical groups, took action around male violence in Scotland during the campaign, for example a group of feminists flyposted Edinburgh city centre last Father's

day with a poem about incest.

Issues of sexual violence are getting more attention and there is increasing pressure for a national public awareness campaign. The Home Affairs Select Committee on Domestic Violence which reported earlier this year called for a crime prevention campaign targeted at actual and potential perpetrators. But if we let non-feminist institutions co-opt this kind of campaign, what we will get will be the usual crap that puts the onus on women to change our behaviour, and not on men to change theirs. □

RAPE IN MARRIAGE



-IT'S A CRIME!

In Scotland, a man can be charged with raping his wife — whether he is living with her or not.

For further information women should write to:
Women's Support Project, 871 Springfield Road, Glasgow G31

**WOMEN NEVER DESERVE
TO BE RAPED**

Getting Personal

What's happened to discussions about the politics of friendships, relationships and intimacy between women? In this roundtable discussion, Julie Bindel, Liz Kelly, Jill Radford and Joan Scanlon discuss the silence around what was once a key issue for radical feminism. They offer some ideas about why this shift has taken place.

Liz Kelly: A lot of the discussions that I remember having in the 70s about how you could create different kinds of friendships and different kinds of relationships have disappeared. Those questions that were so passionately debated then just have dropped off the agenda and so the only models that are around today are very conventional ones.

Julie Bindel: But what I look back on in those discussions was just how many women you could or should be sleeping with, how you could duplicate sexual relationships and how you could turn all these relationships into sexual ones. That was really important because we were talking about living or having a relationship with someone that didn't have to be exclusively anything. It focussed an awful lot on non-monogamy, but it didn't go far enough. What I think was missing was how we actually develop very close friendships per se. Like how you develop close friendships with women you are either sleeping with or not sleeping with. At that time I used to have all these rules about what you didn't do and what you did do and they were very rigid. You didn't live with a lover, you didn't just have one lover, you knew it meant all this incredibly political stuff, but now when I see what changes I have gone through and when I see what rules I have now it's totally different. I don't call my lover a lover and if a lover isn't a friend then there's something very wrong. So therefore a lover is a friend and she's a friend of a certain priority and I don't have any

rules about who you live with and who you don't, just *how* you live with women.

Radical Feminism and monogamy

Joan Scanlon: I wasn't part of these conversations. I just had an awareness of them through people talking about the kind of conversations they had in the 70s and reproducing them as if they were hilarious and symptomatic of a naive idealistic way of thinking. As if you thought you could tackle issues like jealousy by sleeping with lots of women, and there were some really jokey stories about how you had lover number 1,2,3. The implication was that we had put all that behind us, we are all much more grown up and you don't even need to use the term monogamy now because it had become the political orthodoxy of radical feminism, so much so that younger radical feminists who I have met have just assumed that radical feminists and monogamy go hand in hand. They aren't even aware that there were any debates around it in the past at all.

LK: I want to go back to what you were saying Julie about how these conversations were all about basically sexual relationships and what kinds of sexual relationships it was politically okay or not to have. I think it's really easy to forget how *uneasy* in the very early days we were around having very close friendships with women. What we were talking about then was how we prioritised women in our lives and how you develop kinds of intimacy with women that we felt

"What's the difference between a friend and a lover?"



"Why are lesbians increasingly retreating into conventional relationships?"



comfortable with and that felt like they were moving outside of how we had been encouraged to think about and treat each other. I think that over time those conversations did become much more focussed on the sexual, but they didn't begin there and that's the bit that has got lost and needs revisiting.

JB: So, as women got more used to being able to talk to each other and explore intimacies in a general way, then women would consider sexual relationships with each other as an extension of that closeness. Because for women who actually don't have a lesbian community set up and may have difficulty around lesbianism to be able to extend those relationships or form sexual relationships with women is in and of itself really exciting and an indication that what was happening was really good. And then you can easily take certain things for granted, as I did. For example I got to meet women in a CR group by phoning Lesbian Line, so for me it wasn't an issue. It wasn't a difficulty. What was a difficulty was actually thinking about friendships because I hadn't had them with women before. I was young and my first relationships with women that touched me in any way were sexual.

LK: I think that may increasingly be the case, and that's problematic in all sorts of ways. Because what for me that early stuff was about, was trying to work out what it meant to love women and by extension what it meant to respect yourself as a woman, and I don't think you explore that in the range and breadth that we need to if the only places where that happens is in sexual relationships. The limiting of these discussions to just sexual relationships gives them too much importance, too much place in your life. Also, because of the particular dynamics that go on there, I think there's less room to explore what was really exciting and wonderful about changing how you saw yourself and other women.

Lesbian feminism

JB: But from being thrown into this lesbian feminist world where I hadn't actually explored anything from either side really, it then meant that I was able to think about women as friends, and that's when for me the whole issue about friendship became so vital, and far more exciting than being a lesbian, if you see I'm not separating it. I didn't



spend much time thinking about being a lesbian; for myself I took it for granted that was what I had chosen to be, and how I'd chosen to live. But what was exciting, what infatuated me, was becoming close to all these women that you could have this physical contact with and you could do all these things with that I thought were reserved for sexual relationships. But I was lucky living in that context, and younger women now wouldn't have that same opportunity.

JS: The first encounter I had with feminist organisations, predominantly lesbian feminist, was the moment when my understanding of what it meant to be a lesbian became huge in the way that you're describing it, and it wasn't simply about a sexual identity it was about a sense of community. It was about the possibilities for friendship, it was about a political identity. But at that time what I was appalled by, was a version of political lesbianism that was about women who had all sorts of rules.

One woman I had a relationship with, who had come to lesbianism through feminism had all sorts of rules. It was as if somehow she was telling me how I should be lesbian because of her heterosexual history and baggage. I'm not saying we don't all have complicated baggage that's about heterosexuality whatever your experience or history, but it was as if she felt in a position to judge women in the lesbian community who weren't feminist in the way she understood it. And yet of course it could all be wonderful for women who hadn't grown up as lesbians with a distorted sense of their own identity as a woman. So the phrase 'political lesbian' for me at the time was anathema because I associated it with women who had relationships with women out of some kind of political correctness rather than out of just loving women. And I only came to use the term - I'm not even sure what I'd use now, probably just lesbian feminist - because of the way in which the lesbian community did have this absolute preoccupation with couples and with owning everybody's relationships. So that for example everybody got involved in women getting together, everybody heard about it, everyone had views and opinions about it, and it was just so claustrophobic and intrusive, and not about the kind of community that I imagined.

LK: I think that happens when the categories of lover and friend are separated because you wouldn't ever want difficulties in a friendship. You wouldn't ever automatically seek other women to take sides in it, nor would they feel obliged to do so. In really important friendships you do everything you can to maintain them and to keep them there in your life, and I feel exactly the same about anyone who I have been lovers with: that's also about a friendship, I want to keep that even if the lover part of it stops. That was something that a lot of women tried to fight for and tried to find ways of doing and maintaining. But it becomes increasingly difficult to do that when there is a culture which treats those relationships very very differently from friendships.

JS: There's a real problem not allowing for some of the messiness, so that even talking about something stopping implies a very linear way of thinking about it. You're a friend, then you become a lover, then you stop being a lover. But a lot of our relations with women are more fluid than that. You don't cease to be attracted to somebody just like that. It may well be linked with the fact that your friendship is less close, for example, and maybe it's renewed again. I think there's a way of thinking about sexual relations as progression and then becoming friends again as regression, which reinforces that notion that it's linear in some way. And I just don't think it works like that for everyone and I don't see why it should. You may, for example be involved in a friendship with somebody and you may sleep with them, it would be very unlikely that you wouldn't sleep with them again; and often the reasons why we are or aren't involved in relationships with particular women are circumstantial as much as anything else. You might, for instance censor any kind of attraction to somebody before it reaches a point of consciousness if you know that it is completely unrealistic. You might not even think about it regardless of circumstances if your friendship seems complete as it is. But it's not that you have made a conscious decision that you don't find this friend of yours attractive. So it's a lot messier, and one sure way of not sorting out the mess is to impose heterosexual models as solutions.

Heterosexual models

LK: I agree, but I do think those models predominate at the moment and women who try to do something different, who try to maintain whatever elements that they want of something which has changed, are seen to be attempting to do something idealistic, impossible, silly. I've had experiences of trying to support women wanting to renegotiate certain parts of their relationship and maintain others and almost everyone around them apart from one or two exceptions, have presumed that it will change in particular ways which aren't the ways that they have wanted it to change, and are bemused by what it is that they are trying to do. That seems to me to be a massive change from times when there was a wish to explore different ways of doing things in the whole range of situations. Now there's an expectation model of what will happen A,B,C,D. There is a limit to what you can do as individuals when there's no support structures for those of us who want to create alternatives.

JB: I know this might seem like I'm digressing, but I don't think I am. Stuff about flirting has annoyed me for years. It's this whole routine of who flirts and who doesn't. First of all you have the definition of flirting which I find highly offensive, then you have who does and who doesn't and what that's based on is so problematic, and has never ever been discussed in any real sense. I think it tells us something about how we haven't even begun to think about male definitions of women 'asking for it', of women taunting and provoking and all these kinds of things. Yet who would think that you're being offensive if on the surface you think about somebody saying, "oh she was really flirting", "we were at this party she's a terrible flirt". I say it, it's said to me, and if you actually just look a bit below the surface we haven't ever really thought about that one.

Jill Radford: That's interesting, because it ties in with something that happened to me a couple of times last year. You think you have been sociable to somebody and the next thing you know they are desperately in love with you. As far as you know, you have only said "Hi, how are you, how's it going". Then I'm thinking oh no, is it to do with me? It can get quite confusing, what you think of



"Are women who are trying to create different forms of friendship and community naive idealists?"



"Why have we lost faith in our ability to create and maintain alternatives?"

as feminist good manners and how others read your behaviour.

JS: I think that links back with what Liz was saying about how if you don't alter your model of relationships then people's perceptions of that don't change. If you meet somebody new and their model of relationship and friendship is that you restrict certain patterns of behaviour such as enthusiasm and passionate excitement to intimate sexual relationships, and you are enthusiastic and excited and friendly, then it goes beyond what they deem to be appropriate for a friendship, and it could be interpreted as flirting. But that is not the kind of thing that Julie is talking about at all, which is out and out sexual innuendo and imposition.

JB: But I think it is the same thing in one way because it restricts your behaviour so much and this is why it has always made me angry. I have a friendship with someone where we relate to each other in quite a physical way. We are not lovers and we haven't been, and we probably won't be in the future, and neither of us are aware or conscious of any sexual attraction. But we constantly get told or it's inferred that we are flirting or acting in a way that's quite shocking. What that then does for me, if I let it, is it restricts my behaviour towards women that I think it matters to.

The politics of intimacy

JS: But that's the whole thing about the lesbian community taking on board certain kind of heterosexual ways of thinking about intimacy again because with a heterosexual woman you would be very careful unless you knew them well not to be physically demonstrative in any way at all because of the possibility that it could be misinterpreted, even if that is over-anxiety on your part. One's so conscious of the way in which lesbians have been constructed as leaping on women and behaving the way men do. But if we actually have to restrict our behaviour towards other women who we think share a politics around these things it's really sad. For example, I know I feel deeply inhibited about certain ways of behaving with women I don't know well. I have noticed that with women in Justice for Women that there is a much more demonstrative and affectionate way of being with women but that certainly isn't evident in many places.

LK: For me it's even more complicated than that because actually there are friends of mine who are heterosexual who I feel totally at ease with to be physically affectionate, to be enthusiastic, to be passionate about ideas, about our friendship, about whatever it might be and increasingly feel more restricted around lesbians who I know quite well. I've had discussion with other lesbians about how ironic it is that they now envy some of their heterosexual friends who have an ease with each other as women because they don't make any kind of sexual assumption about any of it, and that's a bitter irony.

JS: How much is that new sexualization of lesbian identity internal to lesbian feminist communities? And how much is it a reaction to more public and publicised forms of non-feminist lesbianism, for example Queer politics?

JB: Constant and obsessive talk about sexual practice and constant and obsessive talk about Aids I think is really relevant to that point because what you have with the whole Aids discussion is let's do it more, let's do it more visibly, let's do it with more aids - I mean sex aids - let's include ourselves in that whole debate around Aids and the way that taking risks has been made sexy because if we don't then we are missing out on some hot sex. So you've got that supposedly political discussion going on and then you've got pleasure politics which doesn't particularly pretend to be about anything serious, just obsession with orgasms and body parts and sleeping with gay men. I don't think any of us can fail to be influenced by that.

Gossip or politics?

JS: But there's also less public discussion and debate from a lesbian feminist perspective of relationships and friendships precisely because by comparison with what is being written about Queer and pro-porn sex from the heavy duty scene anything that lesbian feminists wrote about relationships would inevitably be pilloried and ridiculed as 'Bambi'; and because the debates and discussions have been hijacked by cultural/socialist feminists who've entered the debate at a point where it's as if we've just thought, well, let's avoid writing about and talking about sexuality now because it's too risky for us.

JB: But I don't think they have just been hijacked. I think we have been completely written out of history. We are told constantly that these discussions haven't happened and they are able to say that to themselves because we don't talk explicitly about sexual practice. Unless we do, our conversations will continue to be invisibilised.

JS: I was not saying we should be pressured into writing more about sex and sexual practice at all, I think it's dangerous to try to produce some alternative version. It's not just the discussion of sex and sexual practice that seems to have gone off our agenda, but also discussions around friendship, community, and relationships in general. It's as if you can't separate the two.

LK: Sometimes there is reference made to the fact that we did try to do these things in the past but it is implied that we failed so miserably and everybody was so unhappy and so hurt and damaged by it that we have given all that up because it was an illusion. And that obscures the fact that there are still a lot of women trying to find some way to create something different. But it is in a context where there is no acknowledgement or recognition of it. So it's quietly going on in little corners here and there and there is an increasing sense that there is no public voice or space for these things. So you retreat more into a more privatised world and that in itself can end up reinforcing some of the things that you were wanting to challenge in the first place.

But what I can't make sense of is why there stopped being some kind of more collective discussion around these issues because I know that they are still felt very strongly by a lot of women, it's still an important part of their feminism and their lesbianism to think about friendships and relationships differently. So what happened to the more public collective exploration of it - why did it disappear?

JR: A lot of the spaces where we had those discussions, such as in the Women's Liberation Newsletter, in conferences and CR groups have gone. But it's also to do with the way in which feminism has changed so much. The local government takeover of feminism for example, ended a lot of those things.

LK: As has becoming specialised in what we work on or do.

JR: Yes, we all get into groups like Justice or Rights of Women which have particular agendas and everything else seems to be gossip that's off the agenda.

LK: And what CR or your local women's group was actually about was much broader.

JR: It was a space for everything, it was about living rather than a specific issue of feminism.

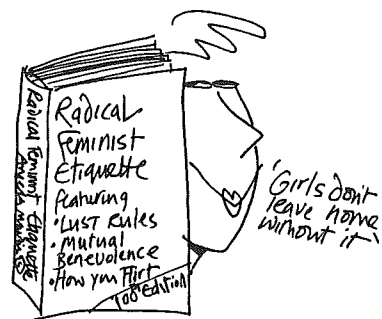
JB: And because there are no general conferences or get togethers we now have discussions in smaller groups and in private, not that we intend them to be private. If I think about how my social life has changed over the last few years it's quite indicative. I don't ever go to a public venue that isn't a benefit of some kind and I never go to discos, and I would never dream of going to several places where actually years ago you could have those discussions even at night with loud music. You could because the atmosphere wasn't restrictive and you would be able to meet lots of other women and you could go back to somebody's house and carry on talking. But now what I do is I socialise a lot with groups of friends at my house or their house or occasionally in a pub. So they are smaller discussions and they are not for public consumption any more simply because we haven't got a newsletter, we don't transcribe our conversations and send them out.

JR: It's like one of the Home Office picket lines, going back somewhere after them or while you are on them you can actually talk about other things between yelling and shouting and singing.

JS: But what astonished me, thinking particularly about one of your kitchen table, end of the night discussions, is that you can now have a bunch of women there who are completely at one about the politics of the particular campaigns and organisations they are involved with whether it is the Campaign Against Pornography or Justice for Women, but when you come to talk about some of the issues that we are talking about now, the spectrum, the political spectrum across ten women is astonishing. I remember after one of those conversations thinking I wish these debates were more ongoing in public, more broadly available to women to participate in. □



"If we don't open up our models of relationship for change, then what chance is there of a different model of community?"



Angela Martin



Now Voyager

Earlier this year Mary Daly talked to Patricia Duncker about her new book, *Outercourse: The Be-dazzling Voyage*. Here she Conjures the High Hagiography of Daly's work.



Philosophy 'regains its speech and gets a grip on itself again only on its borders and limits.'¹ Throughout the history of Western culture the philosophical subject has been remorselessly male; voicing male concerns, male desires, male fears. But out on the frontier, further out on the Boundary than any man can imagine, is Mary Daly, whose trajectory, as an intellectual, as a linguist, as a theologian, as a philosopher, and above all as a Radical Feminist, enables philosophy to regain its speech, that is, to become the discipline that embodies the adventure into consciousness, that invents new meanings, new languages. Daly enables philosophy to speak, for the first time, to Wild Women. Indeed, it is Daly's philosophy itself which will make you Wild.

I interviewed Mary Daly for *Trouble and Strife* in Liverpool, June 3rd 1993, and attended the (packed) lecture she gave that evening at the Open Eye Gallery organised by *News from Nowhere Bookshop*.

I first read Mary Daly in 1979. I was at a point in my life where the contradiction between my radical feminist analysis of the way the world worked and my then conservative approach to writing and to literature was killing my brain cells. For me, Daly's work was the door, the way out. She offered a terrifying analysis of patriarchy and a detailed proposal for its subversion. Her writing insisted not only that it was possible to live and think differently, outside the patterns given to women — marriage, heterosexuality, motherhood — and outside the patterns of male thought and conventional academic discourse, but that it was necessary to do so. I do not share Daly's mysticism, nor her potent apprehension of transcendence, which she calls Be-ing, but I respect her intellectual hardheadedness and her boundless courage. I went to Liverpool in early June 1993 to interview Mary Daly for *Trouble and Strife* and to hear her lecture, based on her new book, *Outercourse*. If you have never encountered her work before then *Outercourse: The Be-dazzling Voyage* is a good place to begin, with *Websters' First New Intergalactic Wickedary* at hand for reference.

Daly has written a philosophical life, a new kind of autobiography, which makes sense of her life and work as a Radical Feminist activist and philosopher. The two, for her, have gone hand in hand. Her books enact 'a kind of intellectual Karate' which

clears a free space amidst the surrounding verbiage. They are wonderfully disturbing to read.

Time to be Extreme

Daly sees *Outercourse* as a method of 'gathering more energy to move on'. This philosophical autobiography is in no sense a sequence of valedictory memoirs, charting the rise and fall of Radical Feminism, but a call to action, a re-calling of power. Daly's insolence and humour make for compulsive hilarity; as a long-term Crone, I was reduced to helpless Cackling on many occasions. She urges us to have the courage to be silly and tasteless, and above all, to sin. The root of the Indo-European word, *es*, to be, is the same as to sin. And if patriarchy is the religion of the planet then to sin is to be — and to dissent. We can only gain by sinning big.

Daly's vision is of the world seen both as hell and upside down. Her method is cheekiness, the spirit of play, a game of masks and jokes, an Intergalactic Spiralling in Capital Letters. She is not in the slightest bit interested in or concerned with the debates surfacing in the lesbian and gay community over the body, queer politics, the fractured subject, or S/M. This is not studied ignorance, it is a case of following an utterly different political and philosophical outercourse. The revolutionary insights of Radical Feminism have not suddenly become irrelevant or been disproved. They have been attacked, dismissed, denied, ignored. Radical Feminism is an intensely unfashionable politics. This has been one of the most effective tactics of suppression. Who wants to sound out of date, or out of touch? Daly cuts through the undergrowth of snoodaze (*Wickedary*, n. common, everyday stupor characteristic of the sado-society, the State of Stupefaction. See Numbed State) with characteristic asperity.

"It is High Time to be Extreme," I say. While we wade knee deep in the blood of women shall I chat about Freud, Derrida, and Foucault? No, I don't think so.²

If you love freedom in all its forms, political, intellectual, sexual; and if you expose lies, wherever you hear them, you won't have many friends in high places. Daly doesn't. Her priorities are and always have been clear, '...my commitment was and is to the cause of women as women'.

The foundation of Daly's thought is the proposition that the women's revolution is an ontological movement. (*Chamber's Twentieth Century Dick-tionary* (sic): ontology, n. the science that treats of the principle of pure being; that part of metaphysics which treats of the nature and essence of things. *Wickedary*: Ontology, n. the philosophical quest for Be-ing.) This means that her philosophy deals with nothing less than the transformation of consciousness. She goes far beyond demands for justice, equal rights, political programmes. She wants another world, a world in which the women of this planet and Gaia herself are no longer menaced and destroyed. The link between the natural world and women as the subject class, the second sex, in every society, was expressed in her earliest work and forms the basis of her Elemental Green Philosophy. Her puns, word-plays and the dismantling of the dick-tionary (*Wickedary*, n. any patriarchal dick-tionary: a derivative, tamed, muted lexicon, compiled by dicks) are not only aimed at transforming our perception of reality, but enabling us to act. As she points out, 'I could not say, "I am a Positively Revolting Hag" without trying to live up to this challenging eruption of words'.

Resisting Academentia

Daly has always been engaged in radical political action, on the campus, in the streets. She has never simply occupied a comfortable seat in what she calls academentia. In fact, her struggles within Jesuit-run Boston College, where she still teaches Feminist Ethics, form some of the most appalling and riveting sections of *Outercourse*. The Jesuits made several underhand efforts to rid themselves of Daly, while profiting from her growing international reputation. Yet she turns even this to account: 'These men could not understand that they were giving me rich material for analysis'. Daly has never conclusively won the battle against her academented institution. She is still not a full professor, and has been denied promotion and financial increments again and again. But she has never been defeated either. Each attempt to thwart her has resulted in energetic Radical Feminist action on the part of her loyal students and supporters within and outside the demented academy. Even in the 1990s, the great age of gender-blender studies, Daly still teaches women-only



classes. She has never refused to teach men; even if it means extra hours. She has always offered to teach the men separately from the women, thus defusing the spoilers, voyeurs and gagers. (*Wickedary*, n. a species of dickspeaker, one who tries to stop the Musings of Muses, especially by means of rules or ridicule; common preacher or dirty joker), who simply want to breach Women's Space.

Daly's dance on the Boundary between the foreground (*Wickedary*, n. male-centred and mono-dimensional arena where fabrication, objectivation, and alienation take place) and the Background (*Wickedary*, n. the Realm of Wild Reality) produces a witty analysis of how patriarchy works. One of the methods by which we are disempowered is through the lie of the two choices. We are often faced with two impossible choices, both of which are designed to crush our morale. In 1971 Daly was asked to preach the sermon in Harvard Memorial Church, the first woman ever to be invited in the 336 year old history of the institution.

To simply accept would be to agree to being used as a token. To refuse would seem like forfeiting an opportunity. I tried to think of a creative solution... Together (with her women's group) we planned the event, which was to be a call for a walk-out from patriarchal religion.

This is what Daly calls the third choice, the creative solution, the Transcendent 3rd Option. Daly's re-telling of this story is hilarious. Quaking in the patriarchal pulpit she called for the exodus, declaring 'The women's movement is an exodus community...' and was amazed at the response. 'Hundreds of women and some men began stampeding out of the church the Moment I finished. Far from being the "leader" of a "flock" as some journalists chose to perceive it, I was caught in the middle of the stampede'. It is up to us, whenever the two odious choices are posed, to find the Transcendent 3rd Option.

Taking it on trust?

The aspects of Daly's philosophy which I find most puzzling and challenging are those that are most alien to my own rationalist, materialist tradition of Radical Feminism; that is the mystical perceptions which are crucial to her thinking. Daly is a metaphysical philosopher. She has always worked on the frontiers between philosophy and theology, first as a radical Catholic theologian, and then after *Beyond God the Father* (1973) as she moved out-

wards and onwards in her intellectual journey away from male concepts and limits, as a postchristian feminist philosopher. But postchristian does not of course mean atheist. As Daly points out, 'I longed passionately for the transcendence that was held prisoner and choked by religion and theology and for the emergence of *Feminist philosophy/theology*'. This longing is at the root of Daly's powerful apprehension of Be-ing, of the Ontological unfolding of Be-ing, beyond anthropomorphism, beyond god the father and god the mother, the source of all things, not as person or as noun, but as intransitive verb. She has a fine sense of the wonder of the world, the beauty of animals, places, things. She writes movingly and convincingly of her encounters with be-ing and has a strong faith in intuitive knowledge. I don't think, however, that intuition is a prerogative of women, nor that it is a reliable guide.



The revelation of Be-ing is A-mazing for the person to whom the mystery is unfolded, but the rest of us will just have to take it on trust. I don't have to feel a mystical connection with the planet to know that we should fight both for the preservation of this world and for our own lives. Some of us can hear things that the others cannot, and as Daly's exposure of the octopus of patriarchy is irrefutably, horribly, graphically rational I need no further proof to be convinced.

Preaching to the Patriarchs

Daly has always revealed both the coherence of a concept like patriarchy and the ways in which the institutions of patriarchy operate. Her aim is to make the connections visible, and to Name those who are to blame. In all her work, Daly's analysis of the methods and motives of the men who invent, support and subscribe to the planetary patriarchy is



uncompromising and pitiless. This is a delight to read. We have all had to work with, live with and make tea for sneering snools or dicks (*Wickedary*, n. common members of the thrusting throng) at some time or another. Anger, which feminist and Lesbian women have used so creatively during the last twenty five years, remains one of the taboo sources of our energy. Daly's anger is clear, savage and articulate, but she also reveals and exploits the force of laughter. For her, women's laughter is one of the powers that rocks the world. Laughter does two things. It binds together the group which is laughing and diminishes the danger of the object of derision. Laughter is a political force. Laughter casts out fear.

Radical Feminists have always placed a high Hag-value on Women's Space (*Wickedary*, n. Space created by women who choose to separate our Selves from the State of Servitude). Throughout her outcourse journey, Daly is dogged by the perpetual hiss, usually from women who advocate human liberation: "But what about the men?" ...Well, what about them? Here I become as impatient as Daly does. They can all dissent from and dismantle or subvert their patriarchy at any time. The choice is theirs.

For the sceptical who think that one man's gesture would make no difference here are a few very modest proposals. Stop hitting your wife. Support your woman colleague. Employ a woman colleague. Insist on having a sexual harassment officer in

your workplace. Ask why all the women in your firm are on part-time short term contracts. Then do something about it. Give her half your salary. Give her all your salary. Insist that she gets paid the same wage. Listen to what she says. Teach her to drive the car and then put it in her name. Pay for your daughter to go to university. Suggest that she studies engineering and not English. Clean the fridge. Clean the lavatory. Take responsibility for the children. Challenge misogynists in the pub and risk being called a pooftah. Be a pooftah and be damned proud of being one. Then take a dyke out to lunch. Buy your wife a subscription to *Trouble and Strife*. Read it yourself. Make notes. It cannot be true that women have the power to think differently and become something other than constructed fembots and that men are helplessly imprisoned within the power and privilege of their own creating. All it takes is passion, imagination and a little Daly effort.

Daly demands that we live at the point where she articulates her politics, that is, on the Boundary between the foreground now and the Background Present. It means that we must live in one world while seeing another. This is not an extraordinary demand. It is the necessary basis of the Utopian impulse in Mary Wollstonecraft's wild wish of feminism: to see the distinction of sex confounded in society. But the Background can only engulf and transform the foreground through a collective women's politics of activism.





Angela Martin

Women beware women?

Daly's philosophical autobiography charts her intellectual journey, rather than her personal life. She emphasises explanation, justification, celebration. Wisely, she doesn't engage directly with women or men who have attacked her work. Sometimes, she lets her critics answer each other, as in the hundreds of letters she received after the appearance of each major publication. One woman, writing to Daly in July 1980, after reading *Gyn/Ecology* expressed her fears:

For me, *Gyn/Ecology* is a powerful and dangerous book. I am compelled to study it, but I am afraid of it...I am afraid if I enter into the joy of spinning everyone and everything around me will break from what they will see as destructive feminist energy... Please, if you know a way to Be without being alone, without giving up home, family, friends, job, etc, please tell me.

Many women have these fears. Freedom is a terrifying, difficult thing to grasp with both hands, but few women express their fear so honestly. Daly answers her by citing another letter which she received in 1979, where the woman states simply, "I have read too much to go where I was before..." I don't think that there is any point pretending that Radical Feminism is a soft option or that it is not a politics that may well cost you everything you ever valued in your life. Sometimes it does mean giving up home, family, friends, job. We are dissenters from man-made culture. It will always mean choosing to live differently.



Daly never hesitates on this issue. So far as she is concerned those that are not with us are against us. And she has names for them: Token Torturers, fembots, Painted Birds, snoolettes. This has been one of the most disconcerting aspects of her politics.

She sees what is irrefutably the case, that women can be and often are tools of the sneering snools and says so. Some critics have reacted strongly against this, arguing that Daly creates two categories of women, the pure and the impure, those that have heard the words of Radical Feminism and undergone the required conversion experience, and those that are still in the Benighted Darkness of Snoodom. It seems to me that this is simply a hostile denial of Daly's position, rather than a refutation of the uncomfortable facts. One woman's compromise to ensure her financial, sexual or physical survival is often achieved only by putting her boot on another woman's neck. Daly analyses how this operates. It is the classic mechanism used by every ruling group to subdue the rest, divide and conquer, women beware women. The fact that Daly's words are hard words doesn't change the fact that they are the truth. It is difficult to treasure and value women who are tamed and stunted like bonsai trees, to recognise those who survive by being collaborators with men and their methods, or to love those who appear to be cheerfully part of the subject race. But I have never perceived women as helpless abject victims; neither has Daly. We are responsible agents, capable of acting for ourselves and for each other. I would insist that it is crucial to remember that the woman who is trapped, blunted, stifled, is also ourself, one of our class, one of us. No one is pure, no one has clean hands. And Daly has never suggested otherwise. But we do all make political decisions about the ways in which we live our lives. No matter how terrible, limited, difficult our room for manoeuvre may be, we still come to a moment of decision when we can give way, give up, give in or decide to fight. It is still up to us.

Of course there are women who have made handsome careers out of developing acceptable versions of feminism, plastic feminism (*Wickedary*, n. rageless, humourless product of Boredom: fashionable feminine 'feminism') and out of Daly-bashing.

Daly herself says that she has often felt like a 'punch-bag'. I asked her directly whether she felt betrayed. Her answer:

No. I don't feel betrayed, because I'm not into being a victim. I understand how the machine works. I understand that for them to

move a little bit there has to be someone really far out so that they can say. "I'm not as crazy as she is".

This is crucial political sense for the 1990s. Radical Feminism is an unreasonable revolutionary women's politics and we speak to all women, of all races, all classes, rich or poor, whether they are Lesbian or heterosexual, whether they are Wild Hags or snoolettes. What we do is clear out the patriarchal foreground space. In Daly's *Wickedary* there is a sequence of powerful, creative fire words, such as 'Pyrosophical Temperance: Fiery Temper, Distemper, Distemperance of Dragon-identified women who cause derangement, disturbance, and disorder in the sadostate'. We should be bush fires, consuming the undergrowth, and we cannot do this by tempering our politics into acceptable shapes. In one section of *Outercourse* Daly dramatises an encounter with the fashionable feminists which ends thus:

"As white privileged middle-class women we can't possibly imagine..."
 "Shut up", I say politely. "You bore me, you gore me. You are killing me with your academized stupidity."
 "We feel invalidated by your remarks," they say.
 "Well, that's good". I say. Finally.



Daly also has hard words to say on the subject of sexuality: "There is nothing radical about being an assimilated lesbian." She also insists ("Write this down", she said to me) that if she is asked which is the more crucial identity for her — Lesbian or Radical Feminist, then she will always say Radical Feminist. The really explosive combination, and she stresses this point, is "bringing together Lesbianism and Radical Feminism which is equivalent to the Dis-covering of Fire". We will be punished for being dissent-

ing Lesbians and for being Radical Feminists, however furtive or minimal our actions or our words may be. We therefore have nothing to lose by sinning big — or going all the way. It is my view that as Lesbian Radical Feminists we have no interest either in separating ourselves from the class of women, nor in arguing that we are like everybody else; we just happen to love women rather than men. We are not like everybody else, and our intention is to present a menace to society as presently constituted.

Common knowledge

The strength of being marginal is that it gives you the potential to become *liminal*. In Latin, *limen* means threshold. And this is where the metaphysical aspects of Daly's philosophy become uncanny, even to a sceptical rationalist like myself. I experienced Daly's ideas as a door, an escape route, the way out; but, and it is this that is peculiar, she was articulating perceptions that I already knew. Reading Daly was not so much a process of discovery as of recognition. She was my threshold; through which I stepped from the foreground into the Background. Where does the knowledge of feminism go when it is effectively suppressed by patriarchy? How did the insights of nineteenth century feminism vanish? Why is it that the overwhelming majority of women who hear or read Mary Daly feel that she is telling them something which they already know, that she is making visible something that they have already half-seen? Daly has an answer for this. She calls it the Subliminal Sea:

...there has always been a Sea of subliminal Background knowledge shared by women under patriarchy. So I have never been completely alone in my knowledge... This would surface in some individual in expressions of insight, fragments of understanding that would burst out - only to be contradicted by the same woman in a babble of patriarchal clichés. But they had clues, and so did I.

Here Daly is pointing to the fractured discourse of women; to the ways in which we tell the truth, tell lies, often in the same breath, the same sentence, to the ways in which we know how we are being exploited, controlled and destroyed, to the ways in which we refuse to know. Thus the knowledge, the analysis we have of what it means



MARY DALY: SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY

- *The Church and the Second Sex* (1968). New edition with Feminist Postchristian Introduction and New Archaic Afterwords (Beacon Press, Boston, 1975, 1985).
- *Beyond God the Father: Towards a Philosophy of Women's Liberation* (Beacon Press, Boston, 1973).
- *Gyn/Ecology: The Metaethics of Radical Feminism* (1978) The Women's Press, London, 1979.
- *Pure Lust: Elemental Feminist Philosophy* The Women's Press, London, 1984.
- *Websters' First New Intergalactic Wickedary of the English Language* (Conjured in Cahoots with Jane Caputi) (1987) (The Women's Press, London 1988).
- *Outercourse: The Be-dazzling Voyage*. (The Women's Press, London, 1993).

to be constructed as a woman within patriarchy may be lost, but it is never utterly extinct. Which is why, whenever a political crack appears in the wall, there is a flood of women's anger, women's activism and women's desire that appears to well up from nowhere. We have a historical memory that is not part of the official discourse.

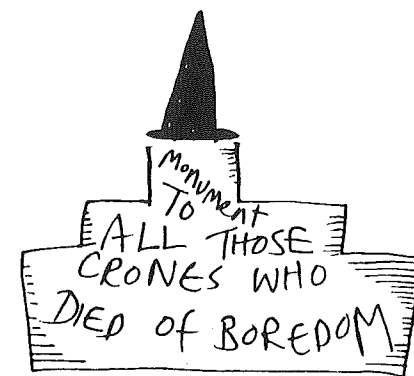

Just Dare!

Daly argues that the evolution of Radical Feminism is geographically diverse; where activism appears to die down in one country or in one part of the world it rises up in another. I think this is true. On March 8th 1993, International Women's Day, while I was freezing on a barren mountain in Britain, my own women's group, the women of Bagdam Café in Toulouse, were demonstrating on the streets in defence of the women of ex-Yugoslavia and in protest against rape in war. The slogans on their placards were uncompromising, accusatory, enraged.³ We were confronting male sexual violence, one of the facts of our lives as women which Radical Feminists have always refused to deny or ignore. The energy of the Background emerged, furious and in revolt, into the foreground now.

Daly calls for this eruption of energy in the final part of *Outercourse*, the Fourth Spiral Galaxy of her Voyage. It is at once the most heartening and the most disturbing section of her book. The brutal truth is that there is no continuous progress towards a chiliastic⁴ vision of Radical Feminism triumphant. There are very few of us. The passion, anger and the economic and political conditions which fuelled the women's rising of the 1960s and 1970s have largely sunk back into the Subliminal Sea. But this is Daly's point.

My Cronies and I - who are we? A ragged remnant maybe. But also the Conjurers of a different Course... Shed tears no more... or tears galore. But summon the guts to keep going.

What I shall remember most clearly about my encounter with Mary Daly was the way she made me — all of us — laugh and laugh and laugh. The women before her in Liverpool on the night of June 3rd 1993 were all ages, all races, middle-class, working class, dykes, straights, queers, and we were all doubled up, laughing together. I was the last of her audience to leave the room when she had finished her signing session. She wrote in my copy of *Outercourse* the message I pass on to you: "Just Dare!" Our numbers are actually irrelevant. Our importance is that we mark the different course, the alternative, the way out. Wild Women do get the blues from time to time. But we stay Wild. □



Angela Martin

1. Michel Foucault *Preface à la Transgression* (1963) quoted in James Miller *The Passion of Michel Foucault* (HarperCollins Publishers: London, 1993), p. 144
2. *Outercourse: The Be-dazzling Voyage* (1993)
3. Bagdam Café: Women's Café/Bar/Restaurant, 4, rue Delacroix 31000 Toulouse, France. Tel: 61. 90.03.62. The women of Bagdam organise various activities, exhibitions, concerts, theatre, talks, discos and political demonstrations.
4. *Chilioi* is Greek for one thousand. *Chiliasm* is the apocalyptic vision of Christ's reign on earth for a thousand years. This is very unlikely. So too are a thousand years of triumphant Radical Feminism. However desirable.

WANKING IN CYBERSPACE

Computer technology was meant to usher in a new age of freedom of information and make possible exciting new leisure activities. But as Dianne Butterworth explains, the development of computer pornography is leading to ever more sophisticated possibilities for the abuse and exploitation of women.

Pornography is an act of dominance and of sexual exploitation, at the same time as it expresses and reinforces that dominance and justifies that sexual exploitation. One of the primary frustrations of anti-pornography feminists is trying to get a liberal society to acknowledge the harm done to the women in the pornography and to women in the sex industry, as well as the harm done through the use of porn by the male consumer. Time and again we encounter the same tired old arguments about pornography being fantasy, as if somehow the women in the porn are merely flickering images on the television/cinema screen

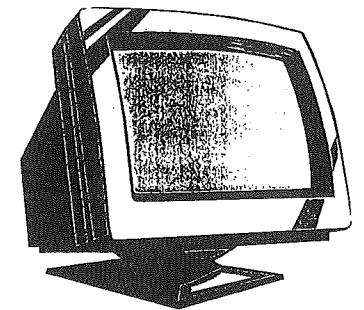
Now technology is promising the development of 'virtual sex', in which a computer user has 'sex' with a computer program which simulates a woman, a step which will further disguise the harm done to women. It seems the further you get from a real, live woman, the less real the women become, and the fewer consequences for women can be perceived. Each layer or intermediary between the porn consumer/sex industry user and the women 'acting' or portrayed seems to make the use and the abuse of women less real. This technology is the next logical progression in a particular application

of computer technology, starting from computer pornography.

Technological revolutions

Computer pornography has been around since IBM brought out the first mass-market personal computer in 1981. The first type of computer porn was written — excerpts of pornography typed into the computer and distributed as text. As the technology improved, simple, almost cartoon-like, graphical drawings were used; now computer porn is available which is indistinguishable from photographs in the quality of the display.

To get pornography onto a computer, a photograph is digitised, that is, converted into a format which can be read by computer. Computer screens display images composed of tiny 'dots', called pixels (for picture elements). If you look closely at a computer screen, even a word processing document, you can see the individual pixels that make up the letters. Similarly, graphic images are composed of pixels of different colours in different positions. How 'realistic' a graphic image is depends on the number of pixels there are on the screen, how small the pixels are and how many colours the screen can display.



A digitised graphic image on computer consists of a file which describes how many pixels are in the image, where they are placed, and what colour they are. So, for instance a file might determine that the top left pixel is fire engine red, the pixel beside it is royal blue, and so on. The way in which this description is stored and retrieved on computer (graphic formats) has been standardised over the years, so that they can be interpreted by and viewed on any computer, including Apple and IBM-compatible computers.

To digitise a photograph, it is placed on a colour scanner, a machine sort of like a fax machine hooked up to a computer, which takes a 'snapshot' of the photograph and digitises it in one of several standardised formats. A frame of a video tape can also be digitised, or even a segment of tape. The more complex the image (ie the more colours and the bigger it is), the more storage space the image requires. The storage requirements, particularly for digitised video, have been problematic for the full-scale use of computer pornography. However the technology has improved, and techniques for reducing the size of stored images and video have also improved, making the use of colour graphics and video clips much more widespread than they were even two years ago.

Film-less cameras are now available which take photographs in digitised format; the camera is then linked up to a computer with a cable and the photos are sent directly to the computer. At the moment, these cameras are only black and white, but when colour cameras are eventually produced, we can probably expect this technology to be used in the production of porn at home in the same way that normal cameras and video cameras have been used.

Easy access

A computer consultant recently stated in an interview that every large office he had ever been to had pornographic images stored somewhere on the computer system. And with the increasing use of computers in the home, more and more porn will intrude into women's lives. One of the problems with computer pornography is that porn which, in its printed or video form, is relatively difficult (but by no means impossible) to obtain

in this country — child pornography, images of women and animals, images of the rape and torture of women — is much more easily accessible in computer format.

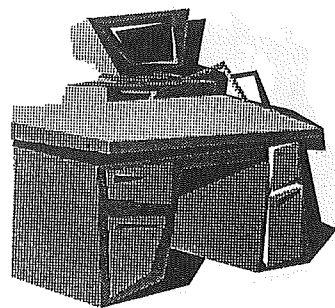
The reason is that the majority of computer pornography is distributed via bulletin boards. A bulletin board is a computer with modem (a machine that converts computer data into a form which can be transmitted via telephone lines) and a software program which can handle incoming calls and control the access of the caller to the contents of the computer's hard disk.

Bulletin boards usually have an area where you can leave messages, either for specific individuals or for everyone to read. They will also have an area where you (or the person running the board) can leave files that other callers might be interested in. Files on bulletin boards can be 'downloaded', that is, the user can get your computer to retrieve the file from the bulletin board computer via the telephone line. You can also send, or 'upload', files to the bulletin board.

Bulletin boards can be useful information-sharing tools, where people from different areas of the country and across the globe can exchange information or files.

Some of you may have heard of JANET (the Joint Academic Network) which links up UK post-secondary educational institutions or INTERNET, which is a global network. CompuServe is one of the world's largest bulletin boards, where you can 'chat' with others about your particular interests (eg politics, computer programming, scuba diving) or you can download a file (for instance, a list of prime scuba diving spots). However, about 10% of bulletin boards in this country have pornographic images on them. There are some which carry only porn.

It used to be that most computer porn was distributed 'free'. Someone would scan in the photo and place it on a bulletin board for others to download. Some bulletin boards, however, now charge a membership fee and/or an hourly connection fee and charge for each image downloaded. This can be a very profitable venture, depending on the type and quality of pornography stored. A recent *Cook Report* on ITV looked at bulletin boards specialising in computer-based pornography. One computer consultant was charging £350 for helping men to access over 10,000 hard-core



pornographic images and to set up their own pornographic bulletin board. It was only a matter of time before the commercial pornography producers realised how much revenue they were 'losing'. *Playboy* have successfully sued, for copyright violation, a bulletin board operator in the US for distributing a scanned image from one of their magazines.

The vast majority of pornography at the moment is filmed for video, with a small proportion of photographs for magazines. However, the *Cook Report* stated that the largest producer of pornography in Germany estimates that within 5 years the majority of the porn they produce and distribute will be in computer format. *Penthouse* now have a bulletin board, called '*Penthouse Online*', where men can download porn files, 'chat' with the models, and discuss whatever it is that porn users discuss. More recently *Penthouse* have gone one step further.

From consumers to producers

Interactive computer pornography is an alarming, but logical, progression in computer porn — the interactive exploitation of women. Not only does the male consumer look at the porn, he controls it. *Penthouse's* new CD-ROM, called, imaginatively, '*Penthouse Interactive*', holds 45 minutes of digitised video. (CD-ROM is a method of storage which looks like an audio CD, but which stores information in a format which computers can read.) The user plays the role of a *Penthouse* photographer; he chooses which one of three women to photograph, how much (or little) she wears (she strips off the required amount of clothing) and in which position she lies/sits/stands. The user takes a 'photograph', and Bob Guccione (the owner of *Penthouse*) judges how good (pornographic???) it is. The article in *Penthouse* magazine announcing this new product says:

There is a level of involvement or engagement, of naturalness, that a deeply interactive experience offers. Interactive electronics let you join in, shaping your fantasies to suit your own individual dreams, tastes, and preferences.

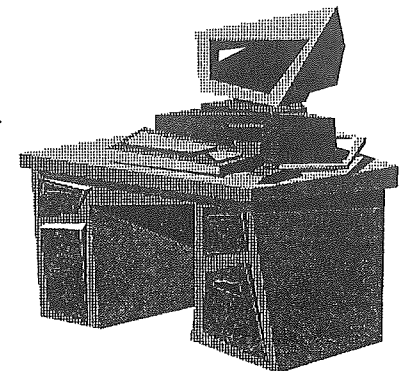
Radical feminists have always maintained that pornography affects men's attitudes to women and their propensity to commit violent acts against them. From the not-so-subtle messages about women's proper role and demeanour in sexual intercourse, to the pornographic reinterpretations of reality that occur in porn magazines and videos —

'scenarios' where women react to sexual harassment in the office by turning into insatiable sex-crazed beasts, or where women enjoy rape, or where the casual visit of a door-to-door salesman turns into an orgy - women's experience and reality have been distorted by the propaganda of the pornographers. Interactive pornography means that the consumer is no longer just the consumer, he is, in a sense, the producer as well. Not content with gazing passively at images of women, he can now 'enter into the fantasy' by directing the action.

This latest offering from *Penthouse* is, I believe, just the beginning of a new phase in pornography. Because a CD-ROM can store much more information than the average hard disk (over 360 megabytes, compared to an average of 100 megabytes on a hard disk), it is therefore possible to distribute actual digitised video. This means that the 'action' on this CD-ROM is really that — moving images of women removing their clothes, lying down, and so on. CD-ROMS also have the advantage of not being easily reproducible, partly because of the amount of information stored on them and partly because CD-ROMS cannot yet be copied as easily as floppy disks can.

Virtual Reality and 'Virtual Sex'

The next step from looking and interacting with 2-dimensional images and data is looking and interacting in 3-dimensions. Imagine a curved computer screen which is built into the visor of a helmet. This screen fills your entire visual field, even your peripheral vision. Graphics are displayed on this screen; no 'real' visual information can be seen. For example, the 'visor' displays the image of a statue. Sensors in the helmet track the movement of your head in space, and your 'perspective' on the statue changes according to how far the sensors detect you have moved your head or at what angle your head is tilted. With a graphic display realistic enough and sensors that are accurate enough, you can almost imagine that the object you are looking at is real. You can 'walk around the statue', viewing it from the front, side and back, and you can look up and down at the top and bottom of the statue. To all intents and purposes, it is reality you are experiencing — 'virtual reality' (VR).



You can put on gloves which have sensors on each finger and the palms, and you can 'push' the statue over (as long as the computer program knows that when your hands 'move' to where the statue is 'taking up space', the display should show the statue falling over). At this stage in technological development you might not actually 'feel' your hand touch and push the statue, but scientists are currently working on gloves that not only sense the position and movement of your hand, but through some kind of built-in mechanisms, can give feedback to your hands, simulating touching an object. This means that when you move your hand to where a virtual object is, the gloves would react in some way, perhaps tightening the fabric of the gloves on the pads of the fingers, so that it seems as though you are actually touching the object.

Last year, when the film *The Lawnmower Man* was released, the media went into a frenzy of speculation about virtual reality and 'virtual sex' as a consequence of VR. The idea behind 'virtual sex' is that a computer is hooked up to a 'glove' which covers the entire body, and linked up via a phone line to another computer to which someone else is linked. (Body gloves may eventually become unnecessary — research is being done into linking the brain directly to external input, for example, passing information directly into the visual cortex, bypassing the eyes entirely, although this remains a sci-fi scenario for the foreseeable future.) I remember some magazines at the time talking about 'virtual sex' as being a boon for those busy executives who travel a lot; they can link up to their partners and 'make love' to them long-distance.

What is actually more likely is that 'virtual sex' would lead to a whole new area of prostitution — women paid to have 'virtual sex' with men. Women have been exploited by technology in the service of male sexuality since the camera was first invented — 'French postcards', 'blue movies', 'dirty videos', 'telephone fantasy lines', computer pornography and, perhaps within 20 or 30 years, 'virtual sex'. (Perhaps men wouldn't even need a full body glove - a 'penis glove' might suffice for the purpose!)

A lot of the hype talked about this kind of 'virtual sex' as the ultimate 'safe sex',

is reminiscent of some of the arguments about pornography being ideal in the 1990s because it limits a person's exposure to sexually transmitted diseases, particularly AIDS. (In this view, *pornography* is sex, not the masturbation that accompanies it, as if it is sex because the consumer is in some way 'interacting' with the woman in the photograph/video and not just with his hand.)

Would 'virtual sex' with real women be 'safe' sex? It would, if you believe that the shaping and reinforcing of men's beliefs about women's sexuality and women's reality through the propaganda of pornography has no consequences. It would, if you believe those who say that the sex industry is harmless (after all, the argument goes, those women are being paid, and they look like they're enjoying themselves), that the women in it are expressing their 'true sexuality' and that they have all freely 'chosen' to make pornography or to prostitute themselves.

If, on the other hand, you believe women who say they have been prostituted and pimped and photographed and filmed against their will or under duress, then it is not safe. If you believe 'Third World' women who say they have been trafficked to serve in brothels and strip joints, then it is not safe. If you believe that the current structure of patriarchal capitalism systematically pays women less, restricts them to lower-paid types of jobs, discriminates against them in all areas of the workplace, so that prostitution becomes one of the very few jobs in which women as a group are paid more than men, then it is not safe. If you believe that pornography legitimises men's sexual access to women as a group, disseminates lies and distortions about us and eroticises inequalities of power, then it is not safe. It is, in fact, downright dangerous. Any technology which promises to lead to an expansion of the sex industry cannot be safe for women.

'Virtual women'

The first stage in the development of this technology will require two people linked to two computers in order to have 'virtual sex'. The eventual goal, however, is to write a computer program which can 'simulate' a woman — a 'virtual woman'. (For the foreseeable future, this technology is out of reach because it is difficult to write a pro-

gram which will react realistically to all types of input. Imagine how difficult it would be to program a 'virtual woman' to respond appropriately to all of the various actions a user could dream up.) Users could then act out any fantasies, including violent ones, without 'hurting' a real woman in the act.

However, radical feminists have looked at the issues of power and control in sexual interactions between men and women, from the implications of women's economic dependency in marriage, to rape and child sexual abuse as expressions of a sexuality in which dominance over and control of women is as crucial to the abuser's pleasure as his orgasm. One of the harmful ideas that is at the core of all pornography, including so-called 'soft-core' as well as 'hard-core' porn, is that all women are sexually available to any man, at any time, and in any way he wants. This propaganda reinforces men's (and via them, women's) conceptions of the 'inherent' dominance and subordination in sexual and other relations between the sexes.

If interactive computer pornography gives men the illusion of control over the real women in it then 'virtual sex with virtual women' would give men real control over illusionary women. Pornography affects men's ideas about women and thereby their treatment of them (studies have shown that the only significant measurable difference between men who rape and men who don't is that rapists have a greater belief in rape myths, for example, that all women secretly want to be raped, that women who dress 'provocatively' are 'asking for it', and so on). It seems logical to me to suppose that the use of 'virtual women' who, in the user's perception, actually *are* real, would reinforce even more strongly harmful perceptions about women and dominance and subordination. How big a step is it from 'acting out' fantasies, violent or otherwise, on women who only *seem* real to acting them out on women who *are* real?

The technological is political

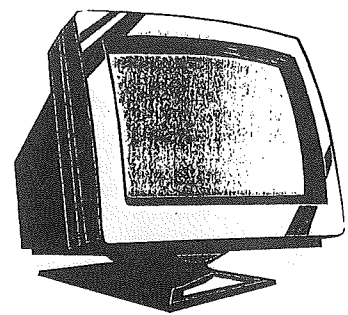
This article may sound like a chapter from a science fiction novel. It is fictional, in that virtual reality technology is still in its infancy. It is science because the technology *is* being developed. Computer pornography

exists, VR technology is now being used in the defence industry (of course!) and VR games are already being produced (there is one at the Trocadero shopping complex in London). And sexual exploitation is a reality.

Feminists need to anticipate social and technological developments, to try to influence how they are going to be used and implemented, and to initiate and insist on public discussions on the implications, as we have with reproductive technology. The 'technology club' is a largely male-dominated one, and men are happy for it to remain so. Men have been using computer porn and exchanging it in the 'privacy' of their own realm of technology for a long time, with no dissenting voices to be heard. It wasn't mentioned or discussed publicly until the Campaign Against Pornography brought the issue to light last summer. Since then there have been television programmes, newspaper and magazine articles and radio debates and even a couple of seminars on sexual harassment using computer pornography in universities and schools. The Institute of Data Processing Management has issued guidelines about computer porn.

Women are not consulted in the development phase of new technologies, nor are the implications for women of new technologies ever thoroughly thought out (except insofar as how women can get the toilet cleaner, or cook meals faster). Technology is represented as being an 'evolutionary' process, which arises out of neutral ground or 'the survival of the technologically most useful'. In this view, technology 'just happens' and the god stuff stays, the bad stuff, no-one buys. Radical feminists know that nothing in this world happens which is divorced from its social and political context; that just as the personal is political, so is the technological. □

Useful reading on women and technology: Jan Zimmerman, *Once Upon a Future* (London, Pandora Press, 1986).



The World and his Wife

Materialist feminism offers a radical challenge to both mainstream and current feminist understandings of women's exploitation. Here Stevi Jackson reviews a new book which develops this materialist perspective.

Many feminists have seen the family as central to women's subordination, but what is specific to *Familiar Exploitation* is that it treats the family as an economic system in which men exploit and benefit from women's labour. This materialist feminist perspective, which Christine Delphy and Diana Leonard have been developing since the early 1970s, represents an important, but often neglected, variant of radical feminism. Their argument is an unusual one for radical feminists in that it rests on marxist methodology — that is, it makes use of concepts such as 'production', 'labour power' and 'exploitation', and draws on Marx's materialist understanding of human history and society. In applying these ideas and concepts to the analysis of patriarchy, Delphy and Leonard claim that men constitute an exploiting, and women an exploited, class. This is what makes their argument radical feminist, and also, from the point of view of conventional marxists, heretical.

A major reason for the neglect of materialist feminism (along with most other forms of radical feminism) in published accounts of feminist theory, is that many of the women who write such books are striving to maintain credibility within male-stream academia. They do this, in part, by



Judy Stevens

distancing themselves from radical feminism. Radical feminists, they say, are simplistic and unsophisticated in our understanding of 'gender relations' (the nice neutral term they currently prefer). In particular, we are often accused of essentialism, of assuming innate differences between women and men or believing that men are naturally violent and exploitative. Materialist feminism confounds this stereotype. To say that relations between men and women are class

relations means that male domination has nothing to do with 'nature' but is the product of social and economic arrangements: the categories 'men' and 'women' are social, not biological. This directly challenges the basis of the patriarchal division of the world into men and women — something I see as fundamental to radical feminism.

Not just an academic argument

This is not just an academic argument. Delphy and Leonard make it clear that their intentions are political: we cannot hope to challenge male domination effectively unless we understand how patriarchal institutions work. They do not claim to be offering a total analysis of women's subordination, nor of every aspect of family life, but seek to demonstrate that economic exploitation within families is a key element in the maintenance of patriarchy. Their analysis is structural, in that they look at the family as a system rather than at individual desires, feelings and motives. But this does not mean that women's experiences are irrelevant. They say 'it was concern for, and anger at women's experiences within the family which gave rise to our work'. In order to understand — and change — those experiences we need to go beyond description and try to explain what gives rise to them.

This book is the culmination of more than twenty years' work, and a great deal of thought and care seems to have gone into its production. For some, the marxist terminology and closely argued theoretical points might be off-putting, but this is a very significant contribution to feminist theory and its implications are truly radical. Although it is rather dense in places, every effort is made to spell out complex ideas and debates in an accessible style, to lead us through the arguments step by step and to anticipate likely objections. This makes it difficult to summarise without losing much of its subtlety and humour.

Even after more than two decades of feminist critique and research revealing the inequality and abuse common within families, the popular image of the family as a haven of warmth and security is only slightly tarnished. Most people still seem to want to believe in the cosy happy family, to see violence against wives and children as an aberration, to see marriage as a caring part-

nership. Why this ideology persists is an issue beyond the scope of this book, but Delphy and Leonard do point to the ways in which it masks the inequality which is a routine part of everyday family life. The idea of heterosexual romantic love, for example, makes relationships between men and women seem 'natural' and quite removed from any form of economic, calculative-concerns.

A conceptual minefield

It is not only the pro-family lobby which makes it difficult to analyse the structural bases of inequality within families. To write about the family today is to enter a conceptual minefield. Sociologists frequently distinguish between 'households' as 'co-resident units' and 'families' as 'groups of kin'. Moreover some sociologists and feminists suggest that the family is more of an ideological construct than a lived reality, that households are too diverse to allow us to use such a monolithic term as 'the family' and that only a minority of households are 'families' (see, for example Barrett & McIntosh 1982). The problem with emphasising diversity amongst families is that it makes the structural similarities underpinning them invisible and therefore seriously undermines feminists critique. That such regularities exist, and that they involve the systematic exploitation of women's labour, is what this book sets out to demonstrate — and it does so very convincingly.

Delphy and Leonard use the term 'family' to mean a domestic residential group based on a heterosexual couple and children. They resist the vogue term 'household' because this downplays the gender and generational hierarchies within family relationships. They argue that the familial basis of households is part of our social system — it is not an accident. It may be the case that only a minority of households are *nuclear* families if you define this very narrowly, but the majority of the population (about 80%) live in households whose members are related by marriage and/or descent. Most of those who do not live in families have done so or will do so at some point in their lives.

We see the familial basis of domestic groups as an important element in continuing the patriarchal nature of our society: that is, in the continuance of men's dominance over women and children in the West.



Judy Stevens

This does not imply that the family is in any sense a natural unit. Delphy and Leonard are emphatically opposed to 'naturalistic' assumptions about the family which conceal the social nature of gender, heterosexuality, marriage and parenthood, their variability and the oppression associated with them. For example, they consistently draw our attention to the ways in which heterosexuality, far from being natural, is maintained by familial and other social structures. They argue that aspects of family life which might seem to be expressions of our 'natural' selves - such as sexuality and motherhood - are bound up with the labour relationship of marriage. The work women do for their husbands includes emotional, sexual and reproductive labour as well as housework.

Their political position is very different from that of marxists and most marxist-feminists with whom they share a materialist perspective. Although feminists have managed to modify marxism, both traditional marxists and most marxist feminists still view capitalism as the sole or main cause of women's subordination. Even where some concept of patriarchy is accepted it is often seen as somehow dominated by capitalism. Delphy and Leonard argue that such approaches are founded on a refusal to treat women's subordination as seriously as class inequality. Hence women are treated as if not 'worth oppressing in and of themselves' but only insofar as their oppression 'further the exploitation of proletarian men'. Marxists find it hard to accept that working class men might exploit their wives or that 'bourgeois' women might also be oppressed. Delphy and Leonard base their own analysis on 'the premise that women are oppressed and exploited in and of themselves, and that patriarchy and capitalism are distinct, and equally social, systems which are empirically and historically intertwined'. A properly materialist analysis should consider the ways in which women's work benefits men, not just capitalism.

What's so special about housework?

Since the rise of second wave feminism there has been a growth in research and theory on housework, but little consensus on how housework should be analysed or even

how it should be defined. The terms housework and domestic work have been used interchangeably in a rather vague way to cover the chores women do in the home. Delphy and Leonard argue that we need more precise definitions of the work women do within families. They suggest that we should look at what is specific to this work and why it is unpaid in terms of the social relationship within which it is undertaken.

It is often held that families are no longer productive since capitalism has removed that function from them, leading to a reduction in women's status because they no longer engage in production. This version of history plays down the patriarchal structure of pre-capitalist households and ignores the production that still goes on in families (despite much being removed through industrialisation). This view rests on a very narrow definition of production - that which is produced by wage labour for exchange on the market and is therefore productive and profitable for capitalism. Delphy and Leonard argue for a broader definition of production and for a view of the family household as hierarchical precisely because it is a unit of production.

The unpaidness, the specific character of housework depends rather on the fact that the tasks which comprise it are performed within a particular relationship, one where the people who usually do the work do not own the products of their practical, emotional, sexual and reproductive labour.

Frequently an arbitrary line is drawn between production and consumption, with housework associated with the latter. Hence the work which goes into transforming raw materials bought on the market into something consumable - such as meat and vegetables being made into a meal - gets defined out of existence. Sometimes housework is seen as different from waged work because its products, and the work itself, have no 'exchange value' (are not exchanged on the market). This, however, cannot account for the special character of housework, nor the fact that it is unpaid. It is not the tasks women perform which determines their social situation: 'it is their social exchange value' (p88). Wives' opportunities to exchange the products of their labour are limited because these products belong to the head of the household. Yet all the tasks com-



Judy Stevens

prising housework and the goods and services it produces are available on the market - so it's not the work itself which is the problem, but the social relations within which it is performed.

These social relations are also important in defining 'unpaid work'. Delphy and Leonard do not see all work done within the home as unpaid - doing something for oneself is not, strictly speaking, unpaid since the person doing the work benefits directly from it and is thus remunerated. If I cook a meal for myself I benefit from my own work and save myself the cost of a carry-out or restaurant - I receive some remuneration. If I cook for my partner he benefits from work he has neither done himself nor paid for - he appropriates the labour I have put into cooking his meal 'Unpaid work' is work which not only receives no payment, but is also done for someone else, which receives no remuneration because someone else appropriates it.

On the basis of this analysis, Delphy and Leonard distinguish between housework and family work.

Housework is: the composite of regular, day-to-day tasks which are judged necessary to maintain a home in contemporary western society.

Housework is: all the work done within family household units. This includes, but is certainly not restricted to, housework alone.

Family work is: all the unpaid work done by dependents... the relations within which the work is done are those of dependency and... people are recruited (obliged) to do this work by kinship and marital relationships. (This is what Delphy has previously called 'domestic work').

Their concern in the rest of the book is primarily with women's family work. They argue that if we are to understand and change women's situation we must recognize the differing material interests arising from the family economy. Rather than simply emphasizing how family relationships are 'different from (rotten old) wage labour', they confront the hierarchy and exploitation which exists within the family, and hence the possibility that "family life is perhaps no better than rotten old capitalism - even if it is different from it".

Are women really exploited?

The idea that women are exploited within families is not short of critics - even among

feminists. It is often said that things are changing, more women head households, men are more willing to share domestic chores and few women are full-time housewives. The extent of such changes is frequently over-stated, as Delphy and Leonard demonstrate in answering some of these common objections to their arguments.

While there are increasing numbers of women-headed households, only about 1 in 10 household heads between ages 16-60 are women. It might seem an obvious point - but one that is often missed - that such women do not have wives and their position is not the same as that of male household heads.

Men certainly do some household work but very few have to do unpaid household work - family work. They may do their own housework if no woman is available and may even care for a disabled wife, but they are still head of the household. It is very rare for a male relative to take on such work in return for upkeep, to adopt a dependent role. Men are now under pressure to 'help' with housework, and many want to be more active in childcare, but they do what they choose to do, and do it as household heads, not subordinates. They have the choice because they head the household - housework becomes family work only for women who are obliged to do it as unpaid labour because they are dependants.

It could be argued that women are remunerated for their work because they are maintained - but even slaves are maintained, sometimes at a good standard but no one doubts that they are unpaid and exploited. Within families work and maintenance are not exchanged - this is what makes family transactions different and specific. A wife's obligations to work for her husband and his obligations to support her are distinct, not equivalent, obligations: each exists independently of how adequately the other is carried out. The maintenance a wife receives depends not on the amount of work she does or how well she does it but on her husband's income and his goodwill.

Even when wives are employed they still do the bulk of domestic work. In this situation this work can no longer be justified by the supposed exchange of work for keep



— they may earn enough to keep themselves, a few earn as much as their husbands. Their domestic work is clearly then done for nothing. It might seem that wives no longer owe all their time to their husbands, but wives do not have a discrete workload which, once completed, leaves them free to work elsewhere. Their marital obligation is to devote whatever time and energy is necessary to do what their husbands require. This might include wage labour if household income is low, or not working if it conflicts with other responsibilities.

Home Economics

Now that few families produce for the market, grown children are escaping family work, but wives' unpaid labour is still taken for granted. In the West today most families produce primarily for their own consumption, with the wife (or substitute) doing most of this work, but more families put goods and services on the market than is generally realised. Where families produce for the market, men usually restrict themselves to this work. Women contribute to this work in addition to production for family consumption. The tasks done by family members — 'from breadwinning to cleaning toilets' — carry varying amounts of prestige and generally adult men do the high status work. What makes particular work 'women's work' is not the allocation of specific chores to them but that 'the status, the conditions of doing it, the relations of production of the work, are specific to family subordinates'. Those who argue for improving women's position by socialising housework often miss this point:

...the place where household tasks are done is not just a technical feature... [but] derives from the relations of production within which they are done... for the household head without payment and precisely as and when he wants it done.

All this implies a power structure within which the household head manages labour and takes decisions. Often this control is not recognized because who does what depends on custom, or because delegated control — such as the wife's responsibility for the kitchen — is misread as total control. A wife may influence her husband's decisions, may make him change his mind — "but the mind to be changed is his".

Although in principle many men and women support an egalitarian ideal, in practice the power relationship between them persists and is taken for granted — although it is sometimes bolstered by force. This is not to say that a husband's power is never challenged, but as long as he is seen to be exercising his control for the good of the family as a whole, he will usually get his wife's support. This is not a matter of individual men's sexism; it is built into the family system.

Wives who do unpaid work are usually granted some autonomy and some control over resources, but this is delegated responsibility. If they have independent sources of income they may find their bargaining power increased, but their money is not fully theirs. It is usually allowed for by the head who implicitly determines what it is to be used for, for example by reducing his contribution to housekeeping or by earmarking it for his wife's 'personal spending' so that he does not have to buy her clothes.

Resources within families are distributed according to the same principles which govern the division of labour — according to the status of those receiving them. What men consume carries prestige, what carries prestige is consumed by men. It is not, as has generally been assumed by sociologists and lay people, that consumption within families is determined by individual needs. In poor families even food is not equitably distributed. Among the more affluent differential consumption becomes evident in a wider variety of arenas.

It is not just a matter of how much people consume, but how they consume it. This is particularly important within families because those who are exploited are maintained rather than paid. Hence much of their consumption is not free consumption: having a coat bought for you, for example, is not the same as buying one for yourself. Moreover what is consumed in the home involves not just commodities, but the labour entailed in preparing them for consumption. This is a highly personalized service — having meals prepared how and when you want them, the precise clothes you need washed and ironed and ready for appropriate occasions. Wives do this for oth-

ers - they rarely have such services provided for them. These inequalities of consumption are so commonplace as to avoid recognition. It simply passes unnoticed that children are coerced, forbidden certain items, while women are self-sacrificing — imposing restrictions on themselves, leaving the best for others as part of the ideology of being a good wife and mother.

The transmission of property and rank are also gendered — although not all families have such advantages to pass on to their children. While women can and do own and inherit property, the patriarchal bias in our inheritance system usually means that they inherit less. Class position and occupation are now mediated by the education system, but it is not unusual for more to be invested in a son's education than a daughter's.

Having shown that particular patterns of production, consumption and transmission within families are interrelated and that the economic system of the family differs from that of the market economy, Delphy and Leonard introduce what has been implicit in their analysis - the idea of the domestic mode of production. Given the centrality of this concept in Delphy's earlier work, I was surprised that they left it unstated until they had fully outlined their case. It may be that this caution was dictated by the outrage the concept provoked among Marxist feminists when Delphy first proposed it. Or it may be that the concept itself matters less than their general line of argument: that within families women's labour is exploited and under-rewarded.

What do wives actually do?

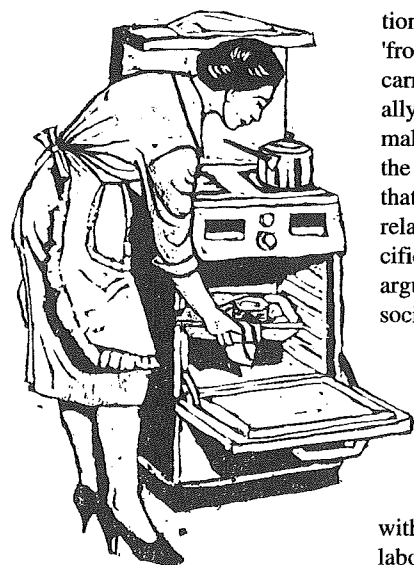
Two chapters of *Familiar Exploitation* are devoted to empirical studies of British factory workers' families and farm families in France. There is not the space here to summarize the evidence they draw upon - but it does amply demonstrate the unequal distribution of work and resources within families, the exploitative nature of family work, the non-exchange typical of family production and the power hierarchy within families. The important point to note here is that these general features of the family mode of production hold good for households which look superficially very different in terms of their main economic activities and sources of income.

There is, however, considerable variability in the work women actually do. There is clearly a difference between dividing one's time between agricultural work and housework and between waged work and housework. In a further chapter Delphy and Leonard consider the ways in which wives' work is affected by the differing circumstances and preferences of the men to whom they are married. As they point out, it is precisely because family work is a personal service for a given man that it varies so much. A husband's occupation, income, leisure interests and personal preferences influence the precise content of the work women do. Here they draw upon and extend Janet Finch's pioneering study *Married to the Job*, which reveals the contribution women often make to their husbands' occupations.

Women's direct contributions to their husbands' work are most obvious among the self-employed where women often work unpaid — or are only nominally paid. In some jobs there is a recognized consort role for wives, as in the diplomatic service, among politicians and so on. Even where women do not directly work for their husband's occupation they often make part-time contributions: for example the vicar's wife offers spiritual comfort to parishioners, the academic's wife does his proof-reading and indexing. Most commonly wives provide back-up service - taking messages, filtering phone-calls and callers. This is not only required by professional men, but also many small tradesmen who work from home or active trades unionists. In addition they do the routine housework which frees a man to concentrate his time and energy elsewhere. In much the same way wives contribute to their husband's leisure. In addition wives provide copious moral support through their emotional labour and also sexual services, which are often seen as a necessary part of helping a man unwind, relax and feel good.

Such activities are rarely reciprocal - a professional woman's husband is not expected to act as a visible consort, entertain her colleagues or provide secretarial back-up - let alone devote himself to creating home comforts for her. Her sexual needs are rarely seen as existing in the same sense as men's.

A husband's work and leisure structures his wife's life in a variety of ways.



Judy Stevens



Where they live, the internal organization of domestic space, her time and her domestic routine are dictated by his work and leisure. She is expected to accommodate to him, not vice-versa. Couples may claim that marriage is a partnership - but wives are the junior partners.

The Politics of Marriage.

Most feminists now argue that gender and sexuality are socially constructed in such a way as to ensure the continuation of women's oppression. Delphy and Leonard go further in stressing the class-like nature of relationships between men and women. The implication of this is that gender differentiation itself - the categories men and women - are rooted in this class division.

For us 'men' and 'women' are not two naturally given groups who at some point in history fell into a hierarchical relationship. Rather the reason the two groups are distinguished socially is because one dominates the other in order to use its labour. In other words, it is the relationship of production which produces the two classes 'men' and 'women'.

This means that heterosexuality involves a great deal more than who desires or sleeps with whom - it is institutionalised as an exploitative class relationship and is required for its continuance. This point, however, is not fully developed. The ways in which heterosexual love continues to facilitate men's exploitation of women is speculated upon and it is suggested that 'because of this class relationship heterosexual relations are enjoined and the other sexual and emotional relations vilified'. I would have liked more analysis of the relationship between economic, sexual and emotional relationships.

Delphy and Leonard do not claim to have provided a full analysis of the class relations between men and women even within the family. They have not, for example looked at issues of desire and self-identity associated with sexuality, motherhood and housework. Although they are not centrally concerned with issues of individual subjectivity, they stress women are neither colluders in or passive victims of their oppression: women do resist. Effective resistance, however, requires a language and theory to explain our oppression and a movement to support our struggle against it.

References

- Michelle Barrett & Mary McIntosh *The Anti-Social Family* (Verso 1982)
Christine Delphy *Close to Home* (Hutchinson 1984)
Janet Finch *Married to the Job*, (Allen & Unwin 1983)
Sylvia Walby *Theorizing Patriarchy*, (Basil Blackwell 1990)



The strength of the structural analysis presented here is that it avoids the pitfalls of attributing individual blame for our situation - of seeing men as wilfully exploitative by nature or heterosexual women as collaborators. While men certainly benefit directly from patriarchy, they do so whether or not they actively seek to because the structural arrangements of our society ensure their continued dominance. Hence our ultimate political goal is to change the structure of society, to work towards a society in which gender divisions no longer exist. This is a long term aim, which implies recognizing that there are limits to what we can achieve here and now. We cannot put our faith in voluntaristic solutions - so although they make it very clear that heterosexuality is embedded in an exploitative class relationship they do not promote political lesbianism. Because the problem is structural, lesbians cannot escape patriarchy. Moreover, they see moralistic disparagement of heterosexual women as damaging to the women's movement.

This does not mean that we should avoid difficult discussions about the ways in which we should live and behave as feminists, nor cease to recognize that refusing heterosexual attachments is an important form of resistance to patriarchy. 'But a woman's movement which requires women to obey its commandments is dangerous'. Delphy and Leonard argue that we need to recognize that we can make changes, but also accept that sometimes the personal costs involved in trying to change as individuals within the present social structure are too high. We must accept accommodations women make to the present system as well as giving credit to the many forms of resistance to patriarchy - which oppresses us all whatever our life choices:

Only by recognizing the opposition between men and women and no way to escape all of the effects of this opposition currently - but only various ways to work through and struggle against it - can we understand our situation and see why change is so difficult, but also why we must struggle for change just the same.

It is perhaps disappointing that they say so little about how such struggles might be advanced - even if there are, as they say, no easy solutions. □

The Failure of The Sensible Agenda

In the 1990s, conventional wisdom says that mainstream feminist demands have been achieved whereas the radical agenda has faded away. Lynn Alderson thinks the reality might be the other way around.

What follows is a personal, somewhat idiosyncratic view of the success and failures of strategies for women's liberation over the last 20 years. I haven't written the much longer piece necessary to substantiate many of my assertions - my intention is to provoke fresh thought and discussion around the generally held notion that gradual progress is being made from a liberal point of view, as opposed to the ineffectualness of radical feminist thought and action.

The basic idea in this article is simple - if we look back at the agenda created by Women's Liberation politics in the 1970s, compare those things that we thought then would be almost a matter of automatic progressive development with the more radical agenda, what we find now is an extraordinary lack of progress on middle-of-the-road, less controversial issues, and a higher than expected level of success in establishing initiatives which came out of the radical analysis.

What I call the 'sensible agenda' rests on fairly straightforward notions of equality: that women should have equal rights in the field of employment; that decent childcare provision would benefit the whole society; that without challenging social structures too much, women would rise to positions of power - become MPs, scientists, industrialists, professors, senior managers,

entrepreneurs - in ever increasing numbers. It was, of course, an agenda emphasised by many liberal and socialist feminists. It was, and is largely acceptable to political parties, has been the subject of legislation and local government positive action. Significantly some of these 'demands' crossed party lines and were so *sensible* that even right-wing women accepted and campaigned for them.

I think there was a profound sense that because these things were so obviously right, didn't involve an analysis that was too hard on men, didn't involve a total rejection of the system, appealed to our belief in 'fairness', women would gradually play a more equal role in our society as part of the natural process of social development. Even those of us who didn't think that would be enough - who wanted to see radical change and didn't believe women's liberation could happen without it - thought that this kind of progress would happen. It seemed almost inevitable.

So - what has happened?

Not a lot on the childcare front - patchy provision at best and no acceptance of the duty to provide. The current outburst of single mother blaming/hatred demonstrates how far we are from those goals, and indeed, that we may be retrogressing so rapidly that we will shortly end up if not with the reinstatement of the 1950s stigma attached to illegitimacy,



then with increasing poverty and isolation for women and children in those circumstances.

Employment - the failure of equal pay and anti-discrimination legislation was predicted, but could we have expected the increasing gap between men and women's pay; increasing ghettoisation of women into part-time and low-paid service work; increasing homeworking and casualization which is reducing employment protection and basic conditions; poor maternity rights and a rise in the pensionable age by 5 years! The picture is one of increasing poverty for women whether in work or dependent on benefits.

The much discussed 'glass ceiling' appears to be mysteriously preventing almost all women from reaching the top. How I love that expression. It discourages any analysis of vested interests, but it does enable men and women to go to expensive seminars and sit together quite amicably discussing the phenomenon without the least sense of collective responsibility, as though it were an elemental force of nature.

Anyway, to get back to my main point. The numbers of women breaking into male-dominated areas of work and power are still, by and large, pitifully small. The exceptions are made much of - I hope I don't need to discuss with *T&S* readers why having a female prime minister didn't benefit women, not even in parliament itself. Why the odd professor, gynaecologist or Anita Roddick doesn't mean that women are getting a real grasp on the professions or capital. There are some exceptional areas, and I am generalising, but I think you get my drift - progress, what progress! Revolutionary and radical feminists may not have made the revolution but the safe agenda has hardly lived up to anyone's expectations, however modest.

Surprises - and some successes

I don't want to claim too much for advances on the other front, but I think there are one or two surprises here.

Violence to women - no I'm not trying to claim that we have reduced it or altered women's position in basic power relationships with men, but there is a women-built and run set of support structures around

domestic violence, rape, assault and incest which is largely run on radical feminist principles. What is interesting too is the extent to which campaigns in this area have had an effect on the establishment. The police have responded with specially trained women officers, rape examination suites and domestic violence units. My point here is not how good they are, but that the police *had* to respond to very powerful changes in public opinion. Prosecution and sentencing practice have altered significantly (and again, even though judges do still make stupid and prejudicial judgments on some cases, they are likely to be ridiculed in the national media for so doing). Most refuges and many crisis and counselling lines are funded, however inadequately, by local government because there is some recognition of the importance and necessity of these women run services for women.

In my own area the Home Office has directly funded feminist research and multi-agency work on domestic violence which has gained co-operation not only from the voluntary sector and women's organisations, but the Crown Prosecution Service and magistrates. It's also interesting to note in this context that radical feminist language, for example 'domestic violence', has been accepted in a way that 'domestic labour' has never been. The recent campaign run by Edinburgh's local government women's committee focused directly on Zero Tolerance of male violence in a large scale advertising campaign. It was one of the most popular and effective actions of its kind ever undertaken by the council and failed to produce the expected hostility. A recent 'do' at Chiswick Refuge managed to turn out not only women stars of stage and screen, but Princess Di!

I won't go on, and one shouldn't forget that there is no comprehensive funding for such initiatives, but my point is that serious inroads have been made into the prevailing attitudes of what is acceptable, an effect is being achieved. It's difficult to measure, but, undeniably, something has significantly changed.

Child sexual abuse was exposed to the public gaze initially by feminists involved in social work in the USA. Much

practice (not *all*) in social work departments today is influenced by a feminist analysis which names men and male power in the family and does not sacrifice the interests of the child for the purpose of keeping a father in the family. The current moral panic around these issues; the decline of marriage (certainly as a permanent condition) and the rise of the single mother; the perceived necessity for pro-family and pro-father campaigns; the development of legislation to protect fathers' interests - all indicate how far the institution of the nuclear, heterosexual family has been shaken. Feminism has had a part to play in all of this, and indeed is often especially blamed by male apologists and proponents of the backlash who try to reassert individualistic, moralistic and therapeutic analyses and responses.

My point about this cluster of issues is that they are based on radical feminist analyses which emphasise male power, its expression through sexuality, the connection with violence and pornography, and they are a direct challenge to the power of men. It's a politics which takes the pro-woman line, not a stance of neutrality, or conciliation or even-handedness, which posits the different, often conflicting interests of men and women as groups, which has separatist elements (and I don't mean in terms of the

women involved, but through the principles of women's empowerment through women's solidarity). Women's Aid, CAP, Justice for Women, Women Against Fundamentalism - isn't it interesting that it's these kinds of women's campaigns that are surviving - there are no real parallels around issues of social justice and equality on a mixed mainstream basis. It's no coincidence that what does exist in the mainstream is Opportunity 2000, founded by the government to get more women to the top; it's a tokenistic, toothless, resourceless exercise in ministerial cynicism and luke-warm ambition.

What about the spectre of lesbianism I hear you cry. Well, respectability does not seem to have quite won the day. In spite of the fact that anything women-only was actively discredited by association with lesbianism quite a lot has actually survived including the principle itself. I don't want to go into great detail here about the campaigns

around sexuality per se, but will make a couple of points. Liberal feminism ran away from the issue of sexuality, and from lesbians, in an attempt to gain acceptance for their issues. A younger generation of lesbians have been encouraged to run away from feminism - in my view neither has benefited. It doesn't appear to have helped the struggle for mainstream gains for nice girls, and fashionable non-feminist lesbianism with its associations with gay men's issues and exotic lifestyle has lost any potential connection with most women's lives - precisely the element which was most threatening to men and the status quo.

Strategy

I have made a lot of assertions here, but if I'm at all right in my thesis, then I think we need to think through its implications for strategies for women into the 90s. Why has the sensible agenda and the reasonable approach been so unsuccessful? Why has the radical agenda had more success than we might have expected? (By the way, I'm not trying to score points here - I've been working on the mainstream agenda for a number of years, mostly on the basis that it is more achievable in the current, increasingly right-wing political environment. I don't think I'm alone in having made that kind of judgement.)

In the heyday of the WLM I think I thought that we'd burst through the strata of society like a bomb, disrupting the level flow of history. The power of ideas - the potential for revolutionising social relationships at all levels was so evident to those of us who were deeply involved. The actual picture has turned out differently and assumptions about the way change is brought about require serious review.

It's interesting why some issues were taken up by radical feminism rather than others. It wasn't because we thought economics or employment weren't important but rather that the whole 'making-demands-of-the-State' format within which such issues were necessarily framed sat very uncomfortably with notions of the autonomy of the movement and the building of women's power which were the bedrock of radical feminism.



OPPORTUNITY
2000,
THE CHANCE
TO PUT OFF
FOR THE
MILLENNIUM
WHAT WE
COULD DO
TODAY





Bea Campbell (1993) *Goliath: Britain's Dangerous Places* (Methuen.)

I remember revolutionary feminists in particular arguing that violence was the issue because it exposed male power so starkly and because it had the potential to unite all women across race and class divisions. The growth of Black women's organisations and feminism had, I believe an enormously positive impact on the latter day white-dominated WLM. That source of energy and radicalism, campaigns like Women Against Fundamentalism have had a bearing on the survival or regeneration of women's activism and have altered the concept of what a radical women's politics need to be.

However, equally little impact has been achieved vis a vis race politics - another great liberal cause. I don't propose to go into this here, but it's not irrelevant to this discussion and shouldn't go unnoticed.

Much of what *has* survived seems to have done so partly because of the enormous commitment of the women involved, the underlying strength of which is, I believe, collective action by women, for women. Recession and the rise of the right seem to have knocked the stuffing out of any socialist opposition and moved the country so far to the right that even the welfare state can now be dismantled. Any agenda which relies on an extension of the influence of the left, as for example childcare does, is not going to succeed in the present climate.

Even where some successes were achieved through, for example, the National Abortion Campaign, the battle was not conclusively won and requires fighting again and again.

The whole notion of progressive development must be questioned in view of what is now happening. We've consoled ourselves with the idea that progress is slow and piecemeal, but not faced the fact that it may not be there at all in the sense in which we need it. We owe it to ourselves and other women to recognise a decline in the position of women, if that is what's really happening, and to be clear about what really helps.

When the chips are down...

When the chips are down, divisions become stronger - that can easily be seen vis a vis race. But what does that mean if the tensions between men's and women's interests are

increasing? What happens on estates where all are poor, but women have become the only breadwinners? In which way do men seek to reassert their power? Bea Campbell's recent book *Goliath* explores some of these issues and presents some frightening conclusions. Politicians may choose to ignore them, we cannot afford to.

Men at the top likewise are increasingly under pressure, they do not willingly move over, even if you're wearing a nice suit when you ask them to. Rational arguments fail. The demographic timebomb which asserted that women would make great advances in the world of work because of a shortage of school leavers, was a damp squib. Many of us suspected such notions from the start, and radical feminism was developed out of a rejection of the socialist and liberal traditions. But I think we are now in a position after twenty odd years of specific practice to review what counts as success in our own terms, and in the light of the loss of much collective political action by women.

Feminism has been under attack for many years now. We can now see how divide and rule and co-option have worked on us. When you are hard pressed and you see massive reactionary change taking place all around, you do move away from the radical end of your agenda, or you end up feeling like a dinosaur clinging to principles at the cost of any practical gains. I am not, therefore, advocating a return to some mythical purity or separatism per se, but that we honestly analyse where and how *women* have been able to make the kind of impact we are seeking.

It's not so much that I expected the radical revolution to succeed, more that I didn't think the other would fail. What I really want to say is that I think the radical impulse may be surviving a lot better than I'd hoped, and making change not in the ways I'd have predicted, but none the less effectively. We need to understand how that works. The radical feminist in me feels encouraged. It's the lady in the nice suit who feels betrayed. □

The Myth of the Bad Girl

moded, naive and uptight. 'Thus begins the good/bad girl story of the porn and SM debates.'

In the opening quote above K Miriam points to the extent to which the defence of lesbian sadomasochism has relied on a rewriting of the history of the Second Wave, and of radical feminism in particular. A 'hole in history' has developed in the argument of SM lesbians, where our powerful revolt against patriarchy has been blocked out and re-written into a single, linear history of debates over 'desire'.

Citing examples such as Alice Echols

'Daring to Be Bad', Miriam shows how the public face of lesbianism has moved from being the 'lavender menace', 'woman loving woman' or 'man hating dyke', to being 'a pornographer's dream' — lesbians who are 'tired of screaming women's liberation', who are profiled opening strip joints and sex shops for women. The new style lesbian 'sex rebels', in sharp divergence from their feminist sisters, seem to have been 'overcome by a mood of reconciliation'. Former lesbian feminist writer Jan Clausen, for example, is quoted as saying:

At this moment in the dialectic, heterosexuality ironically represents for me the anarchic power of the erotic, in contrast to the bourgeois respectability of a stable lesbian family unit.

Part of the 'good girl/bad girl' plot relies on the belief that in the bad old days of the Second Wave, feminists (radical feminists in particular) didn't talk about sex, and made no place for women to discuss their personal feelings around sadomasochism and pornography. Instead, lesbian feminists 'pretended' that they did not get turned on by porn, or rape fantasies and attempted to 'repress it'.

A different view of history

In opposition to this view of feminist history, Miriam points to the fact that radical/lesbian feminism has always acknowledged SM desires. Our analysis of SM has one of its foundations in the assumption that SM — eroticised dominance and subordination — forms the basis of institutionalised heterosexuality in our culture, and hence patriarchy. The difference between 'us' and 'them' therefore is not who 'admits to' having SM fantasies, but how we interpret them and

There is a hole in history where a revolt against heteropatriarchy is supposed to be... In this gap is a 'screen memory', called 'the politically correct good girls versus the sex rebels.'

K. Miriam

In 1969 Kate Millett defined patriarchy in *Sexual Politics* as 'a system of dominance and submission'. In 1993, the phrase 'dominance and submission' has a more familiar usage for lesbian feminists in the terms of what has become known as 'the SM debate'. The phrase tends to conjure up for us not a history of radical feminist analysis of male power, but a current preoccupation with eroticising 'dominance and submission' within some sections of the lesbian and gay community. How we got to this stage, and how we get out of it, are the questions this collection sets out to answer.

Given the painful and seemingly irresolute nature of the 'SM debate' so far, why — asks the editor of this anthology — another anthology critiquing lesbian SM? Hasn't it all been said before? Aren't we all fed up of hearing about it? A reading of this collection, however, more than justifies its existence, and dispels any fears that further radical feminist writings on this issue are simply doomed to repetitions of our already well documented anger and despair (a fear I had before reading the book). Ten years after the publication of *Against Sadomasochism, Unleashing Feminism* shows us exactly how the terms of the debate have changed, and roots it firmly within the material circumstances of the lives of women in the 1990s, as well as providing us with some tools to place the debate within the history of this century.

Good girls and bad girls?

The editor explains her decision to publish the collection by pointing out that ten years ago, the concern for lesbian feminists writing in the *Against Sadomasochism* collection was to refute lesbian sadomasochists' demands for 'inclusion as feminists'. Today, however, 'Lesbian-sadomasochism has been reframed as a rebellion against feminism itself.' No longer arguing for 'tolerance' in the feminist movement, lesbian SM lobbyists have moved to a position where they are presenting themselves as an *alternative* to feminism: in this 'post-feminist' phase, feminism is presented by the SM lobby as out-

what we do with them.

Whilst pointing this out, however, Miriam is critical of how radical/lesbian feminism attempts to deal with the issue effectively on a collective basis. She argues that whilst our strength has been in understanding the social and political nature of SM fantasies, we have expected women to 'overcome them' on a purely personal level. Miriam recommends CR groups as a solution to this, although perhaps underestimates the extent to which this already goes on amongst lesbian feminists on an informal level: the issues are discussed openly and often by radical feminists I have come across although perhaps it is a problem that not more of this happens in the public arena. Miriam is also critical of the fact that radical feminists have not sufficiently taken on board issues of power and abuse in lesbian relationships, and have again provided SM lesbians with an opportunity to exploit the lack of analysis and resources we have put into the issue.

Essentially, Miriam argues, we need to understand why so many lesbians are drawn to SM and porn as forms of sexuality at this time in history. It is often suggested by its proponents that SM is a way of 'working through' past sexual abuse. Miriam argues that, on the contrary, SM is rather a reaction against the power of memory of these abuses:

I suggest that SM took hold in the lesbian community in a moment that was roughly parallel with the eruption of memories within that same community, of childhood sexual violence. This most recent explosion of memory - a memory of rape - was precipitated by feminist activist opposition to male sexual violence, making the latter public and intolerable; it exemplified in a particularly profound way the politics of memory for an oppressed group.

Miriam's analysis is backed up by a lot of what SM lesbians have to say. SM lesbian Carol LeMasters, for example, argues that 'It is in our power to turn even pain into pleasure and terror into pure delight'. We can control our response to our abuse by eroticising it. The implication is, if we can't stop it, we might as well consent to it. However, whilst LeMasters is emphasising 'gaining control' over memories, another SM dyke Jan Brown, blows apart the myth that the abuse and humiliation in SM is somehow 'fantasy':

Remember when we all agonised over our fantasies?... We emphasised the simple difference between fantasy and reality... Well, we lied. The power is not in the ability to control the violent image. It is in the lust to see how close we can get to the edge. It is in the lust to be overpowered, forced, used, objectified.

Getting ourselves out of this mess

Although Miriam writes very well about masochism in the lesbian community, she doesn't really deal with lesbian sadism. D A Clarke, in a later essay in the collection, deals better with why it may be in some women's interests to exploit or abuse other women. Where Miriam's article is most strong is in its final section on political strategy — which is one example of the book's overall determination to talk about how we get out of this mess, as well as how we got into it. Miriam quotes both SM lesbians and lesbian feminist separatists as arguing that direct confrontation with patriarchy 'gives it more power'. Somehow, it is argued, if we just get on with 'our thing' they are more likely to leave us alone.

Miriam doesn't draw any simple — or offensive — parallels between separatists and SM lesbians. She recognises the fundamental opposition of their politics. She is, however, concerned by the fact that major sections of the lesbian community are retreating into lifestyle politics of one kind or another. She is alarmed at the idea of building a lesbian feminist separatist community with no real thought about how we could fight for its survival within patriarchy. She is also concerned by the lack of serious thought about how systems of gender, race and class oppression in our society can be combated, rather than ignored. Her discussion of this is an example of another of the book's strengths: its confrontation of a white, middle class perspective on the world.

The three remaining major essays of the collection all continue the theme of looking at the SM debate in terms of historical context and material reality: they all address the question of what it means to live in an SM culture, and how the prevalence of SM thinking affects our interpretation of violence and power more generally. Jamie Lee Evans illustrates this by quoting the original jury's justification of the 'not guilty' verdict in the Rodney King case:

Mr. King was the party in control the entire time he was being beaten...

Mr. King determined how long and how severe his beating would be and he was in control of the situation... he was acting like an animal that needed to be tamed.

Denouncing Nazism

Irene Reti's article goes into these issues still further, looking at the role of sado-masochism in both the build up to and the events of the holocaust. A harrowing and passionate article, this is one of the most effective pieces of writing I've come across on either SM or the holocaust. Reti not only points to some of the literal ways in which porn and SM were associated with the Nazis — their use of porn to distribute propaganda against the Jews, and their sexual excitement and orgasms whilst torturing Jews in concentration camps — but also on a wider level the way in which the charisma of the Nazis came from their exploitation of SM tendencies in patriarchal culture: of the 'romance' associated with power, uniforms and masculinity.

Reti is at her most powerful when she talks about the rewriting of the history of the holocaust — 'the hole in history' here being that of Jewish resistance, and the lie of Jewish passivity and 'beautiful suffering' in the face of the genocide. As with the history of women's resistance, that of the Jews has been written to fit an SM narrative of denial. The holocaust is now a tourist attraction in Reti's view, Auschwitz has a hotel and two restaurants built within the camp, and a souvenir stand selling postcards, lapel pins and pendants with scenes of the camp on them. Auschwitz is also a scenario for much of the sadomasochistic porn currently produced — both tourist attraction and porn are 'an incredible insult to my dead' she tells us 'a horrifying trivialisation of burnt flesh'. Reti leaves us with a question: 'Is what you are doing really free of the bootprints of history? Which of these desires are really yours?'

In the final article, DA Clarke puts the SM debate in the context of the increasing move to the right in the States in the 1980s. During this period, the West in general saw the re-emergence of laissez-faire capitalism, with its emphasis on the free market and individuals' rights as consumers. She argues that in current US thinking, freedom tends to amount to the extension of privileges to harm others. So, for example, some privileged lesbians may gain the 'right'

to women's brothel's, but who will service them? Camille Paglia, for example, has defined herself as 'radically in favour of prostitution', but is unlikely to end up trying to flag down cars on the highway in order to raise money for her next meal. Clearly, Paglia does not see herself as the 'servicer'.

Clarke's final section is her argument that for lesbian feminists in the States the best strategy for fighting patriarchy and global capitalism is through the green movement. Whilst I'm not particularly convinced by her argument, and certainly don't feel you could transfer it to the British context, it's extremely heartening to see a genuine attempt to explore the ways in which lesbian feminists can try and find strategies to fight not only the sex industry, but patriarchy more generally.

Serious about change

Despite the fact that this collection is often painful to read, it is also one of the most exciting and productive examples of radical lesbian feminist theory in recent years. It is so unusual to find radical feminist writing which not only provides a shrewd analysis of our political context, but which is also written by activists rooted in collective movements for change, and *deadly* serious about wanting to do something.

I came away from the book feeling that all the contributors really *meant it*: they really meant that violence against women — eroticised or not — is not just unfortunate, but horrific and devastating and *it matters*. More importantly even, they really meant it to stop — and that we have to stop it, because no-one else is going to. The contributors to the book are indeed 'unleashing feminism'. And they are unleashing a radical feminism which the book shows has come a long way in ten years. One which has built strategies, renewed its analysis, been self-critical, taken account of the importance of history and of material conditions of violence, class and race. And above all else, a radical feminism which has remained *active* and *collective*: a rare thing in the current climate.

In her introduction Reti tells us she has published this book because she still believes in 'the potential of lesbian feminism to change the world'. Reading this collection, you'll believe in it too. □

Unleashing Feminism; Critiquing lesbian sadomasochism in the gay nineties A collection of radical feminist writings, edited by Irene Reti (Herbrooks 1993)

Against Sadomasochism A Radical Feminist Analysis edited by Robin Ruth Linden, Darlene R Pagano, Dianne E H Russell, Susan Lee Star (Frog in the Well 1982)

In the autumn of 1992, Sheila Jeffreys gave a talk at the London Women's Centre, which focussed on the myth of the lesbian 'sexual revolution'. *The Lesbian Heresy*, her book on this subject, will be published by The Women's Press early next year.

Campaigns:

We have obviously not been able to contact all campaigns of interest to radical feminists. If you know of any you would like to see listed, please write to us at the subscription address. We would like to continue this listing in future issues, if we have the space.

Campaign Against Nestlé:

The World Health Organisation and UNICEF have an international Code of Marketing which bans all forms of promotion of baby milk. Nestlé violates this Code more often than any of its competitors. Campaign Against Nestlé asks that people stop buying Nescafé, the company's best-selling product, as well as other Nestlé products.

Baby Milk Action, 23 St. Andrews Street, Cambridge, CB2 3AX, (0223) 464420.

Campaign Against Pornography:

Group of delightful, committed, friendly sisters doing endless pickets, meetings and leaflets. Anti-porn revolutionary force of the highest order.

11 Goodwin Street, London, N4 3HQ, 071-263 1833

Justice for Women (London):

A feminist organisation campaigning against discrimination within the legal system towards women subjected to male violence. Our current focus is on domestic violence, particularly women who have killed their violent husbands/partners. Incorporating Free Sara Thornton and Free Emma Humphreys campaigns.

55 Rathcoole Gardens, London, N8 9NE, 081-340 3699

Leeds Justice for Women Campaign:

A women-only group with a feminist perspective focusing on women who kill men known to them who have been violent or abusive towards the woman herself or her child/ren. We assist and campaign on behalf of women who kill abusive and/or violent partners; we provide support and assistance for women in prison and their families; we campaign for law reforms which reflect women's experience of violence from known men; we raise awareness

as to the effects on women of violence/abuse from known men.

Box 6, Northern Star, 52 Call Lane, Leeds LS1 6DT, (0532) 621356 Chris or (0532) 620293 Jude.

Kalayaan:

Campaigns for justice for overseas domestic workers, the majority of whom are women and come from: Philippines, India, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Mauritius, Ghana, Nigeria, Benin and other African and Asian countries.

St. Francis Centre, Pottery Lane, London, W11 4NQ, 071-243 2942

Lebido:

Lesbians and bisexual women together. A bi-weekly group addressing issues that are important to us: relationships, feminism, sex, monogamy, etc. We have leaflets and try to outreach to bisexual and lesbian women's groups to break down barriers that exist between our communities.

c/o BM LBWG, London, WC1N 3XX, Kathy 071-739 4565 (weekdays)

Northern Older Lesbian Network (NOLN):

NOLN is a group/network for lesbians over 40 that produces ideas, does something about them, and has fun on the way. NOLN looks at and explores issues to do with becoming/being an older lesbian; is involved in practical politics by actively and collectively campaigning around topics that form part of our own life experiences and needs; provides space and opportunity to meet wider network of like-minded lesbians; holds monthly meetings and produces regular newsletters.

c/o Bradford Resource Centre, 31 Manor Row, Bradford, BD1 4PS, (0274) 484610 Sue or (0535) 647443 Georgina.

Pain & Strength:

Campaigning to raise awareness of abuse within lesbian relationships. Particularly concerned to raise consciousness and build support systems within the lesbian community. Respond to invitations from the wider community, offering speakers and training. Pain & Strength consists entirely of women who have left and are recovering from abusive relationships and functions as a support and CR group.

c/o London Women's Centre, Wesley House, 4 Wild Court, London, WC2B 5AU

Women Against Fundamentalism:

Researches into and disseminates information about the activities of fundamentalist movements, especially as these concern women. 'Fundamentalism' defined broadly including, e.g. Catholicism (Ireland abortion struggles, freedom of information), nationalism, etc. WAF publishes a journal, organises seminars and speakers, has supported anti-deportation campaigns concerning women at risk from religious-inspired persecution and violence elsewhere.

BM Box 2706, London, WC1 3XX, 071-272 6563 or 081-571 9595

Women's Aid to Former Yugoslavia:

WATFY is a women-only, non-sectarian, anti-war group. Our aims are to provide direct support to women refugees, the women who work with them, and women opposing the war in former Yugoslavia.

c/o 20 Tennyson Road, Portswood, Southampton, SO2 1GW, (0703) 551094

Yellow Gate, Women's Peace Camp, Greenham Common:

An autonomous collective of women who are guided by the principles of anti-racism, nonalignment and non-violence. We believe in taking non-violent direct action against the military: concentrating on stopping the Trident Trident nuclear missile system becoming operational. We are working towards a non-violent revolution, overthrowing the patriarchy. We see the military as one of the most destructive expressions of the patriarchy.

Yellow Gate, Women's Peace Camp, Greenham Common, Newbury, Berkshire, RG14 7AS, (0374) 136728 between 8.00 pm and 9.30 pm.

Zero Tolerance of Violence Against Women:

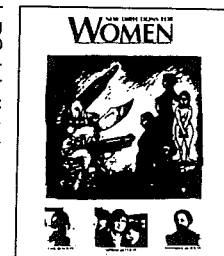
Public awareness campaign initiated by Edinburgh District Council Women's Committee, which aims to raise awareness about the prevalence and unacceptability of violence against women.

Women's Unit, City Chambers, High Street, Edinburgh, EH1 1YJ, 031-529 4504

Sinister Wisdom #53 — aims to prove that ageing ain't what it used to be. And never was. The over-sixty guest editors of a special stereotype-defying issue by and about old lesbians/ dykes invite submissions of all kinds of writing and art from lesbians born before 1935. We want to give voice to old lesbians in all our variety, including class, racial, ethnic, dis/ability and age differences. We invite personal histories and especially material reflecting our present lives and expectations. Please share this call with every old lesbian you know. For guidelines, write Sinister Wisdom, PO Box 3252, Berkeley, CA 94703 or call 415-585-0666 (message). Deadline is February 1, 1994.

TIMES DEMAND THAT WOMEN'S VOICES BE HEARD!

Political and progressive, reaching more than 65,000 readers, our six issues a year cover the women's beat: politics, health, grassroots activism, racism, homophobia, sexism... and more. We critique pop culture—movies, theater, books, art and music—all from a "blissfully biased" feminist perspective.



Don't miss a single issue of **New Directions For Women!**

YES. I want to try a sample copy. Enclosed is \$3.00.
YES. I want to subscribe. Enclosed is \$16.00 for a one-year subscription, \$26.00 for a two-year subscription.

Name _____
Address _____
City/State/Zip _____

Return to
Subscription Department NDW
PO Box 3000
Denville, NJ 07834-3000
NEW DIRECTIONS FOR WOMEN
108 WEST PALISADE AVENUE, ENGLEWOOD, NEW JERSEY 07631-3001

Trouble & Strife Subscription rates/ Back issues

Subs for one year (3 issues):

Britain & Ireland	£8.50
Supporting Sub	£25.00
Unwaged Sub	£6.50
Surface mail worldwide	£10/\$19.50
Airmail worldwide	£13/\$24.50
Institutions: Inland	£25.00
Overseas	£35.00

Back issues nos.

3-18, 20-24	
Britain & Ireland	£1.65
(3 copies)	£4.00
Seamail worldwide	£2.50
(3 copies)	£6.00
Airmail worldwide	£3.50
(3 copies)	£8.00

Costs for overseas subscribers are less if you pay by an International Money Order in £UK as the bank charges for converting currency are £3.50 per cheque!

Please send me *Trouble & Strife* for one/two years, starting issue

I enclose a cheque/PO for £ including a donation of £

Please send me back issues nos

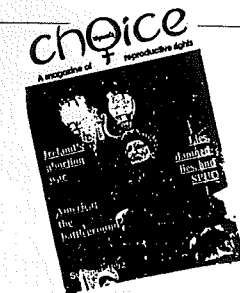
I enclose a cheque for £

Name

Address

Trouble & Strife Subscriptions, PO Box 8, Diss, Norfolk, UK IP22 3XG

A NEW MAGAZINE FROM THE NATIONAL ABORTION CAMPAIGN



To understand about abortion in Ireland, read *Women's Choice*. If you want to know just how serious the situation facing American women is, read *Women's Choice*. If you have ever wondered how far anti-abortion organisations are prepared to go, read *Women's Choice*. And it has great cartoons!

It costs £1.00 plus 34p postage for a single issue. A year's subscription (4 issues) is £5.50. It comes free to NAC members and affiliates.

For a sample copy, send £1.34 to: NAC, Wesley House, 4 Wild Court, London WC2B 5AU, from whom details of membership are also available. (☎ 071 405 4801)

KINESIS KINESIS
News About Women That's Not In The Dailies

KINESIS means movement — and KINESIS also means Canada's foremost feminist newspaper. Send \$1 for a sample issue. Or send \$21.40 (outside Canada, \$25) for a year's subscription (10 issues). **KINESIS: #301 — 1720 Grant St. Vancouver, BC Canada V5L 2Y6**

Winter 1993

Letters	2
Editorial: Then and Now	3
Going on Endlessly: defining radical feminism in the 1990s	7
Telling it like it wasn't <i>Debbie Cameron</i> examines how radical feminism becomes history	11
Zero Tolerance <i>Roz Foley</i> describes the impact of the campaign	16
Getting Personal: four radical feminists talk about the politics of personal life	21
Now Voyager <i>Patricia Duncker</i> reviews Mary Daly's latest book	26
Wanking in Cyberspace <i>Dianne Butterworth</i> writes about computer pornography and 'virtual sex'	33
The World and his Wife <i>Stevi Jackson</i> reviews "Familiar Exploitation" by <i>Diana Leonard</i> and <i>Christine Delphy</i>	38
The Failure of the Sensible Agenda <i>Lynn Alderson</i> salutes the successes of radical feminism	45
The Myth of the Bad Girl <i>Rachel Wingfield</i> reviews "Unleashing Feminism"	49
Campaigns	52

£2.95