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broadsheet

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feminist diary

Sept. 4: Women shop assistants have been granted a pay increase of 30%, men 20%. This award was in the pipeline before the Economic Stabilisation Regulations were introduced.

Sept. 12: Mr Thomson gave Parliament notice that he would seek leave to introduce the Women's Rights of Employment Bill. This would cover existing awards, except for provisions of the Equal Pay Act.

Sept. 12: Manufacturing has been less successful than other sectors of the economy in attracting women into its ranks, states a report recently published by the Manufacturing Development Council. It recommends that some industrial groups start a critical examination of the role women might have in their particular work force.

Sept. 13: A parliamentary select committee was established today to investigate discrimination against women in New Zealand, and to examine their role in society. The Committee consists of Ms Batchelor, Ms Jelichich, Mr Douglas, Mr Holland, Mr Watt (Government); Mr Thomson, Mr Young (Opposition).

Sept. 14: Accident Compensation will be extended to housewives under the Accident Compensation No. 2 Amendment Bill introduced into Parliament today.

Sept. 15-16: The United Women's Convention to mark the 80th anniversary of Women's Suffrage in New Zealand was held this weekend in Auckland. It was attended by approximately 1500 women.

Sept. 17: The New Zealand Shop Employees' Association has called on female workers in the union to find out if males doing the same job are receiving above award rates. This information must be available if women want to receive the full benefit of the first instalment of the Equal Pay Act.

Sept. 18: The key to severe labour shortages lies in releasing large numbers of married women who stay home caring for their families. This is the opinion of most manufacturers in a survey conducted by the Wellington Regional Planning Authority. The Authority's planning director said the Government should be asked to develop suitable child-care centres. Government aid for such centres would be a positive step to increase the labour force.

Sept. 19: More than 350 Auckland people took part in a protest march calling for repeal of the abortion laws. This marked the 80th anniversary of Women's Suffrage Day.

Sept. 24: Mr N.V. Douglas will be the chairman of the Women's Rights select committee, announced Mr Watt today.

Sept. 25: Employers and unions have not had enough time to agree on which women should receive an increase and how much this increase should be. It is therefore impossible for many industries to meet the deadline, October 1, for the first step towards equal pay. The Auckland Employer's Association deputy-director said the extent of the task was not realised by the law-makers.

Letters

AN OPEN LETTER TO CONNIE PURDUE

Dear Connie,

You and I both know each other's views on abortion. You also know that I supported you last year when the question of NOW's involvement in the abortion question came before the executive - at that time I voted against our taking a stand on abortion, largely because I felt NOW could not afford to lose your years of experience and commitment to the cause of women, and you had said you would resign if NOW came out in favour of abortion. (The other reason for my 'no' vote was my feeling that if we as a group became identified as pro-abortion we would lose any chance of support from Polynesian women who are traditionally against abortion, and that this support was vital to any claim to speak and work for all New Zealand women.)

I was therefore taken aback to find myself accused of dishonesty and lack of impartiality in my presentation of the report from the abortion workshops at the United Women's Convention. I have always shown openly my support for abortion law reform, but I did my best to present the results honestly and the facts support this. I realise now my error of judgment in showing my pleasure when the pro-abortion resolution was passed - I won't attempt to make excuses for my lack of control and tact.

I very much object, as I am sure you do, to attempts to tie feminism to the abortion issue, so that anyone who does not support abortion law repeal or reform is not a feminist, and anyone who does, is. This is ridiculous. We all realise that abortion is only one of the topics involving women's sexuality, not the basic feminist issue. There are many special interest groups for those interested in only one aspect of women's subjection - a feminist will be interested in the whole range of a woman's life from birth to death. Men tend to think of us as walking genitalia - must we play into their hands by stressing the sexual problems of women to the exclusion of all else? Could we start by trying to convince them we have brains as well? We must see abortion in its true perspective and not thrust it into a position of prominence it does not need.

Surely the basic question is that of education. Retraining of women, consciousness-raising, the way the school system supports sex-stereotyping and role playing, women's lack of political knowledge, legal and social discrimination against women - all these are aspects of education. What is at stake here is our right to become independent human beings, capable of thinking for ourselves and making up our own minds - and this entails the right to disagree and the necessity to be tolerant of disagreement.

There was a tremendous feeling of unity and strength of sisterhood at the Convention. It was never my intention to hurt or offend you or any other woman. Could we now agree to disagree on this topic, put it



in the background where it belongs for the moment, and together get on with the important and urgent political problem of the status of New Zealand women.

Yours in sisterhood

- Deirdre Milne.

Christchurch 1

Dear *Broadsheet*

Thank you for your two issues on Polynesian women. I must admit my knowledge and understanding (as a South Islander who has had association with only two Polynesian people) of Polynesian culture and aspirations was superficial. I now have some understanding of the Polynesian women's problems in a pakeha capitalist society and of their great strengths.

Unity can be forged only when there is knowledge and understanding.

It is time for the pakeha to listen to all Polynesian people.

- Robyn Black.

Palmerston North

Dear *Broadsheet*

Joanne Edwards in August *Broadsheet* demonstrates her blind feminist eye. She arrogantly wants to "shake the silly thing" and "kick her up the bum" to help the poor guy, her husband, yet she claims charity toward her sister locked in consumerism. She misses the whole point about sexual inequality. This is because she concentrates only on the consciousness aspects of liberation and disregards the underpinning social and economic structure.

Joanne Edwards assumes that if only our weaker sisters can get the wrong ideas and feelings out of their heads, there would be no problem - it's all the fault of women after all!

It is not the case that some women weakly accept stereotyping. It is that the structure of society bars the majority of women from any other source of satisfaction except those rigidly confined emotional and material pursuits. It is only a few lucky middleclass women who have had access to alternatives who can afford to stand back and look at the whole fucking mess.

But it is just this privileged position that puts blinkers on the whole women's movement in New Zealand. The movement oozes complacency - let us all be charming and free and self-expressive - let's not worry about the plebs - let's not worry about an economic system which needs the plebs - let us climb the system and find a cosy

letters

slot. We'll be right. We may even throw our pleb sisters a crumb or two!
Middleclass sisterhood is powerful!

Until middleclass women are willing to extend sisterhood to all women, that is to challenge the class system which divides us, until we analyse that system, see how the oppression of women is embedded in it and see that there are reasons why a lot of what we are saying falls on deaf ears, and realise that liberation is situation not a personal virtue, we will be impotent. And we will deserve to be.

Yours in sisterhood,
- Vivienne Porzsolt.

Palmerston North

Dear *Broadsheet*

For some time I've felt prompted to sing the praises of the New Zealand Play Centre Movement in the liberation of New Zealand women. Unless one has been involved, the exact meaning of this statement could be unclear. The Play Centre Movement was set up by women for some relief from the nuclear-type set up of the home and to support each other in caring for their children. Despite great efforts to involve men in Play Centre (since it is a 'family' group) it still remains fact that women organise, train supervisors, administer and 'teach' in the Centres.

In the process of training supervisors women are being re-introduced to relevant, interesting 'living' education. They are looking hard at the alternative methods and aims of childrearing and at themselves. Consequently the revolution is not so much with the 18 year olds, but with women of 25 - 35 and one can feel this excitement in the Play Centre Movement.

I began Play Centre training as a rural 'farmer's wife'. It became the means towards saving my sanity (dealing better with my children's and my own problems). I was able to socialise with other stimulating groups interested in society and education. My confidence, badly shaken by childbearing and rearing, was restored by organising and coping with other parents and children and it led me back to reading and searching through literature and study for what Betty Freidan described as the 'Problem with no Name' in myself. I was able to reassess my life and marriage.

When suddenly I required employment I was a well-qualified person able to support a family. Where previously I was 'unskilled' now I have a satisfying responsible position in the new and expanding field of Day Care. The implications for the retraining of every mother and particularly Polynesian and Maori mothers in rural and isolated areas are great and cannot be underestimated. A group of enlightened Play Centre people is a real force to be reckoned with, and they are almost all women - Ordinary Mums.

My best wishes for *Broadsheet* - its success is indicative of the growth of awareness of women in New Zealand.

Peace and Love -
Vera J. Donnelly.

Dear Sisters,

I discovered at the Convention that not only is Sisterhood Powerful - it is

also Supremely Beautiful.

Thank you for the experience.

- Vera J. Donnelly.

Dear *Broadsheet*

This is a copy of letter I sent to W.E.A. concerning costs at United Women's Convention. You may consider printing it in your next *Broadsheet*.

18a, Cotton Street
Auckland 6

8 September 1973

Dear

"The Bourgeoise have dinner served
The Working Class take cut lunches"

I must say how disappointed I am to find that \$5.00 is the cost per person for the "Women's Suffrage Day" weekend. At this late date could not something be done to at least give people a democratic choice. How many wage earners can take \$5.00 from their household budget, or are you only aiming to preach to the already middle-class convinced?

I have been out of Auckland all this year, but had previously arranged to attend together with 10 or 15 of my neighbours who are mostly non-earning women, e.g. mothers.

Last year's women's suffrage day gathering really inspired me to try to bring along as many as I could this year.

At \$5.00 per person this is out of the question.

Could you not at this late date instruct your ticket sellers to cut the tickets in half and charge \$2.50 for all who provide their own food.

Regards,

- Carroll Robson.



Bringing Up the Next Generation

editorial

in retrospect

Now that the Convention is over, a gathering unique in the history of New Zealand, we should look at what happened and assess what we have learned. For the women who worked on it, our efforts were an act of faith, that is, faith in women and the power of Sisterhood. For in inviting women right across the board in our society, in fact, in going to unusual lengths to ensure that women who were not feminists would be there, we risked finding we had worked for a year to produce a kind of female Rotary meeting. I, myself, having seen what happened at the Seminar last Suffrage Day had few such qualms, but for the younger women who contributed so much of their time and energy, there must have been moments when they wondered just what they were working for.

Contrary to the petulant charges of the few women who lost their anti-abortion resolution and who have apparently never heard of the British tradition of 'being a good loser', we did get women coming from almost every part of New Zealand and from almost every women's organisation. Our register of names proves it, our list of delegates proves it, and the questionnaire filled out by those who attended will also prove it. The women who claim we invited only feminists or only pro-abortion people are simply raving with no evidence whatsoever on which to base their raves. I will not now discuss just what was involved in what we refer to as The Abortion Hassle; my thoughts on that may appear in *Thursday*. But I do regret it immensely, because what I had hoped for the Convention was not only that we draw many more women into our sisterhood, but also that New Zealand women throughout the country would read about it and feel an increase in personal pride and concern for other women. I believe that possibility was perhaps marred by the Press coverage of the miniscule reaction to the almost unanimous agreement of those present that abortion be a matter of a woman's choice.

How can it be that something, which for most of those who attended the Convention occupied but five minutes of the two days, could receive so much publicity? It happened because the Press, ever-hovering like vultures looking for trouble, seized on that as 'news'. The imaginary grievances of the approximately 25 women who walked out of the Convention were duly recorded, while only Judy McGregor of the *Dominion* bothered to interview any of the other 1475 women present. (I am not, of course, including the 'On Camera' team, which did a superb job of televising the Convention). Again and again throughout the various phases of the Convention, it has been proved to me (a) that the Press is an institution which through the necessity to sell papers and hence its biased selectivity, distorts the realities of human existence, and (b) that the attitudes of the Press hierarchy towards women are condescending and belittling and that these attitudes both reflect and reinforce the prejudices of the masses towards women. Yes, I know I'm not saying anything new. It's all

been said before - but we've got to keep saying it.

First there was what amounted to almost an embargo on any pre-Convention news in the Auckland Press. The Secretary of the W.E.A. was told by several reporters that the Press in general had decided the Convention was 'just another Women's Lib thing' and hence they would give it no advance publicity. There is no question but that if we'd had only one decent picture of Katharine Whitehorn or Elizabeth Reid with a little piece beside it on the Convention, we would have had the 2000 present we'd hoped for. As it was, with such little help from the Press, we can be proud of the 1500 women we did get, and should be extremely grateful for the radio and other types of publicity given us. Even when our overseas speakers arrived and the Press and Television descended on them in their hordes, they were NOT ONCE ASKED WHY THEY WERE HERE. Compare the advance Press coverage of any large male gathering and it is immediately apparent that there is a difference in the treatment. We could barely get a sentence or two on the women's pages. In other parts of New Zealand much better advance coverage was given: the *Waikato Times* sprinted the programme in its entirety. The Wellington papers gave such good coverage that Auckland women were often placed in the embarrassing position of learning about the Convention, e.g. that Elizabeth Reid was coming, through an enthusiastic letter from Wellington.

Then the coverage of the Convention itself: The *Auckland Star* excelled itself with a most blatantly stupid and belittling Bromhead cartoon depicting two overstuffed and vacant-looking women bleating helplessly for a man to fix a mike cable. That, and the fatuous photo caption about the baby at the Convention wishing it were liberated so it could go to a rugby match, were obvious put-downs of a serious women's gathering, and if the *Star* had sincerely wished to polarise the women there into radical feminism, they went the best way about doing it. After a barrage of angry letters, the *Star* editor disclaimed any attempt to belittle women, and claimed that we had not yet given them time to cover the Convention. If the *Star* editor sees nothing wrong with those two items, then our worst suspicions about his ignorance and prejudice are confirmed. (It's simply jolly good sport to make fun of women, and why should we make a fuss about that? After all, hasn't it been the favourite occupation of the majority of men for centuries?) Whether or not the *Star* would have given us the subsequent coverage without that angry reaction from dozens of articulate women, we will never know.

Then there was the 'Gallery' programme which failed to eventuate. I have already referred to the excellent programme put together by the 'On Camera' people, but the 'Gallery' crew were also at the Convention with the expressed purpose of doing an in-depth programme on it. But even as one after another articulate and intelligent women got up to speak on

issues vital to women and the entire country, the 'Gallery' people came to the conclusion that 'nothing was happening'. The proposed programme was cancelled and the team apparently spent Saturday night frantically scouring the streets of Auckland in an attempt to find prostitutes to interview as a fill-in. Now mention of this is in no way intended as a slur on prostitutes. I am merely pointing out that the United Women's Convention happened for the first time in the history of New Zealand, while prostitutes can be interviewed at any time ... in fact from time immemorial. The 'Gallery' programme is purported to be New Zealand's most respected programme among educated people. What does this treatment, or rather non-treatment of the Convention imply for women?

The other crunch issue which forced me to re-evaluate the extent of the difficulties women face in being regarded as equals to men, lay in our inability to get sponsorship for our overseas visitors, two of the world's most prominent women. The *New Zealand Herald* which had run Katharine Whitehorn's columns for years, refused on the grounds that 'there was not enough mileage in her'. BOAC apparently could not spare one seat on its 'planes for a top British journalist. And so it went. No-one can imagine the anguish Marcia Russell and I went through as weeks went by and we could get no sponsor for her. The story was

the same with Elizabeth Reid. Ultimately, only Marcia's heroic personal commitment to the aims of the Convention brought them here. For, to get them sponsored, she had to commit *Thursday* magazine's advertising to such an extent which almost jeopardised her position as editor.

The lesson we learn from this appalling situation, knowing that there would have been no problem for two men in similar positions, is that women, even prominent women, are not very highly valued among those with power and money. Again I am no doubt stating the obvious.

When one considers our difficulties with publicity and sponsorship, added to the immense difficulties women have in organising anything - that is, that they are totally lacking the resources men can call on: wives, secretaries and money to pay people to do the thousand-and-one necessary chores - the enormous success of the Convention must be counted as a minor miracle - a women's miracle. For women did come in their hundreds, they did appear to enjoy it hugely, and even more important, they voted almost unanimously on all the vital feminist issues. Don't tell me the age of miracles is over! For I saw one with my own eyes.

- Toni Church



Broadsheet is now on file at the International Women's History Archive, 2325 Oak Street, Berkeley, California, 94708. This is the only complete archive on material of the Women's Movement. Judy Bush, Oral Historian at the Women's History Library has published a Women's Songbook which is available at \$2.00 plus postage. Most women's study courses

have started with materials from this Library which, in turn, collects course outlines, term papers and theses. A continuing Catalog has been kept and is available at cost - \$16.00 for the first three years. Send stamped return envelope or donation when requesting information.

UNITED WOMENS CONVENTION

What the speakers said

"Women under 25 years cannot be employed in hotel bars, also until the recent announcement by the Minister of Transport, women could not drive taxis during the night. Also the Factories Act states that women may not be employed after 11 p.m. and before 7 a.m. These provisions and others are justified on the grounds that they are protecting women, yet this protection does seem to be rather selective when 17 year old girls can perform as strippers into the early hours."

- Margaret Wilson

"The housework by itself is all right, but combined with the entertainment of two small children, say 13 months and 2½ years old, it is a job which requires good management and a placid outlook, in order to sail through. And not many of us have this combination. We either manage so well that the children become timetable nuisances or we play with and enjoy them to the detriment of the evening meal and the husband's temper."

- Marian Logeman

"In order to develop a sense of community one does not have to sell one's home and move to the Coromandel Peninsula - you can achieve it in your own neighbourhood. In early 1971 a group of youngish people decided to meet every Friday night in different homes for tea, bringing along children and food. We did not all know each other - but we soon did. Our circle extended as we brought along new friends and interested people. From here we planned a co-op food buying scheme and group picnics, like a white Christmas in the mountains."

- Marian Logeman

"Co-operation and co-ordinated planning can be extended to renting or buying houses adjacent to each other. Fences do not have to be built; individual vegetable gardens can be amalgamated leaving a playground large enough for the kids to let loose with balls relatively safely."

- Marian Logeman

"The times for discussing work on some project are not limited to evening meetings .. Discussions can be held while childminding, doing the dishes or having the inevitable cup of tea. Your interest is stimulated by others - your eyes opened to different viewpoints and methods. We have been able to edit a magazine, put a proposal to Government on education and are now beginning to work on trading patterns with the Third World countries. For the woman at home with a little baby, such activities are a blessing - because your horizons do not end with the washing-line full of nappies."

- Marian Logeman

"The evidence seems to suggest that people tend to limit their families voluntarily when they have a reasonable degree of

security, the prospect of improving their own standard of living or providing better opportunities for their children. When security is not available through the community, children become one tenuous means of providing security against sickness and old age, and, hopefully, an additional source of income.

- Margaret Shields

"In our competitive business society we see the production of endless varieties of sewing machines - all with people trained to mend that brand alone: why is there not a universal model that the user is taught to mend. Our old do-it-yourself ethic is being buried, with all the independence that went with it."

- Marian Logeman

"Population increases are rather like weight increases. It's easy to convince oneself at a banquet that one more pound won't make much difference. It won't. But several more pounds will, and do. Two more children will make little or no difference to the available stock of resources in New Zealand. The two million additional people we expect to be born, educated and provided for in the next 35 years will make a very considerable difference to our country as we know it - three more Aucklands."

- Margaret Shields

"Both men and women of chiefly rank participated in all but the most menial of tasks, which were performed by slaves and captives of both sexes, and not relegated to the female of the species. Work, generally, was in no way considered demeaning - industry, and service were encouraged in both sexes."

- Mira Szaszy

"The life of the Maori woman was not based on the concept of 'motherhood' or 'home-maker'. The fact that three terms - whaea, whaena and koka - are used by different tribes indicated that a specific term for 'mother' is comparatively recent. The woman who bore a child was a lover, or a means of procreation, ensuring tribal continuity, but never quite the 'mother of children' as seen through the eyes of the child today."

- Mira Szaszy

"If we are to believe the statistics put out by the Health, Social Welfare and Justice Departments, urban living has taken its toll on Maori women and children. Maori women have the highest rate of mental breakdowns (an affliction also particularly suffered by under-24 Maori youth); Maori infants suffer the highest mortality rates and Polynesian children rank highest in juvenile delinquency and crime. The cause of mental breakdown, according to Dr Fraser MacDonald is "suburban neurosis" - whatever that is. For Maori women and children, it is basically socio-economic - poverty, cultural deprivation and poor education."

- Mira Szaszy

"The fact that the Australian Government, or the Prime Minister decided to appoint a person to his staff who would concentrate particularly on problems relating to the welfare of women, was an implicit acknowledgement of the fact that women have been very badly done by, by our societies. That the wellbeing of our societies has, to a vast extent, depended upon the suppression of women, amongst others."

- Elizabeth Reid

"The Women's Liberation Movement began setting up a climate in which specific reform groups could come through and achieve what they wanted, if only because they could then say 'We are respectable, they are rabid' and they would be listened to, and it is a sad commentary on our society that we have to put other sisters down in order for men to listen to us."

- Elizabeth Reid

"We have a programme in Australia called Monday Conference. Women are becoming very fashionable, they bring twenty of them into the studio and expect to get a cool, intelligent discussion of issues, and then of course, as soon as they don't, because these are the women who are very concerned - they are issues that they have been fighting men to achieve for ages - they turn around and say 'Well, really, you know, they got a bit hysterical, didn't they?' Now what you should remember is, that they set up the rules of that game; have you ever seen twenty men passionately concerned with an issue shoved together in order to intelligently discuss an issue? No! They set up the rules and we're silly enough to fall in with them, accede, and go along. I would think very seriously, if I were you, about accepting invitations under these conditions."

- Elizabeth Reid

"Rather than tackle the task dealing with the greed and aggressiveness of the male economic world, criminality can be eliminated by manipulating the female role - by offering inducements - in this case, presumably financial - to offset the insidious results of equality. We accept this kind of thinking because we accept the logic of sacrifice; that women's interests must be sacrificed to the public good precisely to compensate for the fact that men's are not."

- Phillida Bunkle

"Somehow in our expectations about the extended family we had forgotten that old age is a modern invention. Until the social welfare advances of the 20th century, life expectancy for the white world was similar - to say, Ceylon today - 30 for men, 28 for women."

- Phillida Bunkle

"But it was not until the 19th century that the family as we conceive it arrived in earnest and along with it the women's movement. In my opinion the decisive change was the removal of work from the home. As productive activity moved out of the dwelling, working class women went to market, middle class women stayed at home. The home quickly came to be seen as a retreat from the hostile world."

- Phillida Bunkle

"As in the 19th century the women's movement was not a response to disintegration, but to increasing intensification in familial demands. It represents the

response of women marooned with an inadequate self-concept in a contradictory role which promises unique fulfilment but denies them self-esteem."

- Phillida Bunkle

Rather than print a report on the Convention - many of you were there anyway - we decided to share with you some quotes from the speeches of some of the speakers at the United Women's Convention. The full text of the speeches, together with the results of the questionnaire and reports from the workshops, will be published in booklet form later this year. For an entertaining report of the Convention, see *The Listener* October 8 - 14 issue.

What you thought of it

I have gained a great deal; it cost me about \$150 to attend and I don't begrudge a penny of it and I had to save so hard to come. From babes in arms to grandmas - what a marvellous range of interests and ideas and different types of women. It has truly been a UNITED WOMEN'S CONVENTION. Thank you.

Some hope that women will at last begin to take "a great leap forward" after years of stagnancy since suffrage, in order to cope with a changing world.

Discrimination of toilets at Conventions. Apartheid should not be practised - toilets are toilets and completely sexless.

I am over 70 years and enjoyed, heard and took in Phillida Bunkle's speech.

To assimilate other women's experiences in the feminist movement and relate it to my own personal experience in nursing and capitalist enterprises.

Knowledge of women's depravity.

The feeling that things will move in New Zealand. Inspiration, recharged batteries, who is thinking what, who is who - can we get some momentum into this movement? It was better - more exhilarating than I could ever have hoped for!



one woman's view

If we examine closely the sexual function of the species we see that nature has placed the female, to some extent, at the mercy of the male. He alone can afford to take up an aggressive attitude in his sexuality. In seeking sexual satisfaction he can afford to disregard the permission and pleasure of the female. He needs only to hold her down, by virtue of his superior strength, penetrate her and bring about his own orgasm. The female, however, cannot secure her satisfaction without at the same time providing some pleasure for the male; she needs his erect penis for her orgasm; to ensure this she must please him or erection will not occur. Sensing this advantage, it is possible for males, after ensuring their own gratification, to take abusive and aggressive attitudes. If unsatisfied the female is awkwardly placed. She must parry his aggression and await his next erection. Against his brutality there are avenues of escape. One is vaginismus, the closing of the outer third of the vagina in a muscular spasm that renders penetration impossible; this happens only in extreme sexual trauma. It can be temporary or for life. A less extreme measure of escape is simply the rejection of the violent male and passing on to a more satisfying partner. This free selection is essential to the maintaining of positive sexual function in the female and the one way in which she can ensure avoidance of tyranny and domination.

It is easy to see the advantages the male sex gains in enforcing monogamy on women. In successfully fostering a 'disgust' in her of her own natural promiscuity she has then no other alternative than to seek fulfilment in one man alone. The *right* to determine her *own* erotic life has been wrested from her.

Women tolerate male promiscuity as they are loath to kill sexual function in males, recognising as they do the part erection plays in providing their pleasure. They adopt an attitude of respect and care of the male organ. The male on the other hand does not hesitate to kill sexual function in the female. Her pleasurable co-operation can be dispensed with, he can manage with access alone. Indeed, he may see it as an advantage to take possession of her as a sensually dead being as he can still use her while being reasonably assured she will not stray. Thus he ensures his security at the expense of her sexuality. Security, however, extracts its own price and man finds that without erotic life in his woman, he is copulating with a corpse. He soon tires of her and so begins his restless search. Unnatural prohibitions having doused the sexuality in most females, he finds himself trailing from one corpse to another. He finds no essential variation among them. Gradually his own sexual potential begins to decline, lacking the *active reinforcement of positive female function*. An endless chain of women, younger and younger victims, double partners, pornography, prostitutes, strippers, now become necessities to induce his flagging erections. In all of this he feels

himself alone, and indeed he is alone. Sexually he has chosen to fly on *one wing* alone exalting in his solitary flight. But *two wings* are necessary for full erotic flight. It is not long before he falls into the same erotic ennui as that which he has imposed upon his female.

- L.M. Bozinovitch

our bodies, ourselves

Lorraine Rothman of the Los Angeles Women's Health Centre has just toured New Zealand giving public lectures about women's self-help centres and talking to small groups of women. Here one of the women who attended a small group meeting writes about the experience. These small groups will continue to meet and enlarge as more women become interested.

If you would like to attend one, write to Sharyn Cederman, The Organisation for Women's Health, c/o NZUSA, P.O. Box 6368, Wellington.

The Lorraine Rothman health group I attended was a real consciousness-raising. It was a gaining in self-knowledge and understanding. I had been worrying on and off for years over what might be or was going wrong in my vagina; which was compounded by the fact that society and the medical profession encourage a sense of mystery with regard to a woman's genitals. I had always felt a sense of guilt and ignorance in asking for routine vaginal examinations and when refused (as they often are) would feel a mixture of relief and intense anger. Anger because my need for reassurance was so lightly brushed aside.

Now, because I can have a fair idea of what is happening re my body, I feel justified in demanding good medical care from doctors, rather than begging for it; as so many women do - being afraid of being labelled neurotic.

Self-help health groups are geared towards preventative medicine - getting to know what well bodies are and learning to detect changes which are abnormal and so seek medical advice at an early stage. We learnt how to make cervical examinations and breast examinations and were amazed at the individuality and beauty of our bodies. We were shown how to recognise common problems such as cervicitis and thrush which can often be self-cured. By making regular examinations of oneself and observing normal changes the body goes through every month, it is possible to pick up what causes such problems. For example, some women find the pill causes various irritations which disappear on cessation or by changing to a different brand. Others find antibiotics, poor diet or just being over-tired can cause thrush.

It was good to consciously realise that our sex organs are a part of a beautiful whole and not an isolated portion to be frightened of, or talked about in hushed tones.

We CAN teach ourselves. We CAN know ourselves without fear or guilt, and know we are beautiful in our every part. We CAN demand proper non-secretive medical care.

adam out of eve

Sexually, is the male a
pale imitation — of us?



Did Eve come out of Adam, or did Adam come out of Eve? Which sex is primary? At first glance, this may appear to be a trivial enough question. Who cares, actually, particularly in these times when few of us take the Bible literally?

And yet the myth of creation continues to shape our lives. It is still generally assumed that the male is somehow primary, the female his helpmeet, his companion. And sexually, many women are still made to feel that men got there first with the most. We have a womb, of course, and we can grow babies, but that is a separate function, or so it seems. As far as the more strictly sexual apparatus goes, it is so easy to think of ourselves as possessing 'miniature' structures, derived from the male, but humbler and less magnificent. (And perhaps,

the implication goes, also less responsive and less enjoyable).

In some stunning research which had been going on for the previous 15 years and which came to full flowering in 1957-58, embryologists established, beyond any doubt, that all mammalian embryos are innately female. Female development is basic and autonomous: male development is a deviation triggered by hormones. In the beginning we were all created female.

Genetic sex is established at fertilisation, of course, but during the first five or six weeks of foetal life, the influence of the sex genes have no bearing. Then, if the foetus is a normal male, his genes somehow trigger off an 'androgen bath', which gradually converts his basically female structures into male structures. Should

something go wrong, as occasionally happens, and the 'androgen bath' not occur, or should the baby's mother be given anti-androgens, the baby, while genetically male, will look like a female at birth. Only the male embryo is required to undergo a transformation of his sexual anatomy. Without androgens this cannot be achieved. The female embryo needs no such transformation. Hence, male development is now considered a deviation from the basic female pattern.

Dr John Money, a Johns Hopkins University researcher, told me: 'Nature simply uses the rule, add androgen and get a male; do nothing and get a female.'

Not surprisingly, modern biologists have recorded these facts with little fanfare or comment. It took a woman psychiatrist, Mary Jane Sherfey, to draw the logical conclusion: 'Embryologically speaking, it is correct to say that the penis is an exaggerated clitoris, the scrotum is derived from the labia majora, the original libido is feminine etc ... For all the mammals, modern embryology calls for an Adam-out-of-Eve myth!'

It is also well-established through medical statistics that the human male is far more vulnerable to a variety of diseases than is the female. Indeed, the male is 'in trouble' or 'endangered', comparatively speaking, from the moment he is conceived, for more males than females die in the womb, in the birth canal, and at every subsequent step along the way. It is now believed, although the whys and wherefores are not yet established with any clarity, that the greater vulnerability of the male is related to the fact that his embryonic development is less autonomous and more chancy. There are more opportunities for things to go wrong - in his body and in the male circuits of his brain ... The male may be larger, on the average, and better able to lift weights, but let us not allow appearances to deceive us any longer. In many respects, including staying power, we can correctly be called the first and the stronger sex.

Woman's sexual, reproductive and excretory organs are also better differentiated than the male's and therefore more elegant and more advanced. For example, men possess only one canal for the emission of both seminal fluid and urine, while women have separate orifices for ovum and urine. In lesser animals, a single cavity is the opening for the testinal, generative and urinary canals.

In sexual potential woman now appears to hold the anatomical edge. Freud called the clitoris a 'stunted penis'. He maintained that many of woman's sexual difficulties stemmed from the fact that her clitoris is rudimentary, vestigial, a feeble imitation of the superior male organ.

But Freud was wrong on this, or certainly 'superficial'. For the fact is that the clitoris is merely the visible tip of a vast and complicated internal system of highly responsive sexual tissue. When you compare the penis to the entire clitoral system, which is hidden from the eye but which, biologically, is what the penis should be compared to, you find that woman is more richly endowed. During sexual excitement, the blood vessel engorgement of the male is obvious. (It's what creates his erection.) The blood vessel engorgement of the female is less obvious, being mainly subterranean, but it is probably greater, which may explain

why woman takes longer to prepare for orgasm.

Furthermore, the male's sexual capacity peaks in his late teens and thereafter diminishes. But in woman, sexual experience (and also pregnancy) increases her 'venous ued capacity'. Provided she is sexually active, her 'sexy tissues' continue to enlarge and grow.

This is all so contrary to what we have been taught about 'masculinity' (very sexy) and 'femininity' (reserved, shy, feeble) that the mind can hardly absorb it.

Nonetheless, the latest scientific evidence indicates that, sexually, the male is but a pale imitation - of us.

His capacity, which, compared to ours, was not much to start with, peaks at a ridiculously early age, and after that, it's downhill all the way. Our capacity continues to grow throughout much of our adult lifetime, if the world we inhabit and the men we consort with do not cruelly abort it.

Unfortunately, consciously or unconsciously, many men do not want passionate wives. They fear that if they stimulate and please a woman, 'she might get to like it too much', and then, presumably, she might be unfaithful. (Or she might be distracted from cooking and washing socks.)

Anthropologist Lee Rainwater tells us that the lower-class males - in the United States, in England, in Mexico and Puerto Rico - still hold openly to the macho concept of masculinity where the man is insistent on taking his own pleasure without reference to the woman's needs. Sure, he may try to stimulate her when he is first courting her but after that - no.

The model of an obedient wife, who never refuses sex, but who enjoys it only for the pleasure she gives her husband, has much to recommend it from the male perspective. Today, in our supposedly sexy society, it has become rather common for women to fake orgasms. The woman who finds herself 'faking it' is probably responding to the signals of a man who is ambivalent about feminine sexuality. He wants her to moan and groan because Playboy has assured him that's part of the procedure. But if her satisfaction is genuinely important to him, why isn't he taking the trouble to find out what she really likes? I think the reason he isn't is that he doesn't really want a woman who is truly responding.

In cultures where the men expect their wives to enjoy sex, they do. In cultures where the men do not expect their women to enjoy sex, the women usually don't. Of course we cannot make any generalisations about our twentieth-century males because our culture is so complex - and so confused and contradictory about sex - that our men's expectations probably run the gamut. To some, their partner's satisfaction is almost as important as their own, while to others, it hardly matters or might even frighten them.

Now let us look at a happy Polynesian island, Mangaia, where no woman is frigid. Dr Donald S. Marshall, an anthropologist, has made three trips there and reported his findings in two books.

'The Mangaian male lover aims to have his partner achieve orgasm (mene) two or three times to his once ... His responsibility in this matter is so ingrained into the Mangaian male that upon hearing that some American or European women cannot or do

not achieve a climax, the Mangaian immediately asks (with real concern) whether this will not injure the married woman's health.'

The seriousness which Mangaian pay to the sex education of their adolescent boys could be a lesson to us, except it is difficult to imagine that even the most progressive school or family would be willing to experiment with a similar programme.

In Mangaia, a boy is a man when he has proved he can satisfy a woman. The Mangaian believe that 'the orgasm must be "learned" by a woman and that this learning process can be achieved through the efforts of "the good young man".' A boy is not unleashed on young girls until he has proved his skills. Should he seduce a virgin and should she not reach orgasm, he has a solemn obligation to continue 'visiting her' until she does.

In contrast, consider nineteenth-century England, where William Acton, the leading authority of his time, could declare it a 'vile aspersion' to even suggest that woman has any sexual nature.

Occasionally, a male from one sort of culture encounters a female from the other sort, and the outcome, if successful for the woman, is perplexing for the man. John C. Messenger, who has been performing field studies in a small and isolated Irish community, recently reported:

'There is much evidence to indicate that the female orgasm is unknown - or at least doubted, or considered a deviant response. One middle-aged bachelor, who considers himself wise in the ways of the outside world, and has a reputation for making love to willing tourists, described one girl's violent bodily reactions to his fondling and asked for an explanation; when told the "facts of life" of what was obviously an orgasm, he admitted not realising that women also could achieve a climax.'

The male orgasm is nowhere unknown, or doubted, or considered a deviant response. With rare exceptions (which are pathological), a sexually mature male must have an orgasm to deposit sperm. He cannot perform his part in reproduction without sexual pleasure. By contrast, a woman can and often does. She can ovulate monthly, get pregnant yearly, can live and die, and leave behind a huge family, without ever having an orgasm or dreaming that it is possible. Reproductively, the female orgasm is a luxury, the male orgasm a necessity.

But precisely because orgasm and sperm production are intertwined, there is a natural ceiling, as well as a floor, to the number of orgasms a man can have. Women have no such limitation, which brings us to the 'unmentionable' finding of modern sex research - the finding which no one likes to talk about. In her extraordinary study, entitled The Evolution and Nature of Female Sexuality in Relation to Psychoanalytic Theory, Dr Mary Jane Sherfey, recognising the 'extreme importance of cutting across the compartmentalisation of knowledge', has undertaken a vast integrative effort, which explains female sexuality in terms of 'physiology, anatomy, comparative embryology, endocrinology, gynaecology, palaeontology, evolutionary biology, population genetics, primatology, and ethology - not to mention anthropology and psychiatry, the central foci upon which the rest converge.' She concludes

that - potentially - women may well have an insatiable sex drive, like the sex drive of certain female primates who have an anatomy like ours:

'Having no cultural restrictions, these primate females will perform coitus from 20 to 50 times a day during the peak week of oestrus, usually with several series of copulation in rapid succession. If necessary, they flirt, solicit, present and stimulate the male in order to obtain successive coitions. They will 'consort' with one male for several days until he is exhausted, then take up with another ... I suggest that something akin to this behaviour could be paralleled by the human female if her civilisation allowed it.

In sedate, scientific language, Dr Sherfey predicts that all hell could break loose as more and more modern women come to recognise - even to dare suspect - what a vast sexual capacity they have. 'The magnitude of the psychological and social problems facing mankind is difficult to contemplate,' she observes.

Woman, it appears, has a plastic sex drive which both is and isn't designed for monogamy. At the lower limits, it can be turned off almost completely. Woman can live virtually without sexual expression if she and her lovers were reared to expect that she requires none. But sex may well be addictive in woman, and once she starts letting herself enjoy it, there may be no upper limit short of exhaustion.

An orgasmic woman can be emotionally satisfied with an average sex life of several copulations per week, and sometimes she can will herself to believe that she is physically satisfied as well. But if Dr Sherfey is correct, such a woman is never sated - as her husband or lover is sated. At some primitive level of her being, she desires a much higher frequency than does her mate. The more a woman does, the more she can, and the more she can, the more she wants to. Masters and Johnson claim that they have observed females experiencing six or more orgasms during intercourse and up to 50 or more during masturbation with a vibrator.

Dr Sherfey, who maintains that the nymphomaniac may actually be the most normal and natural of women, practises psychiatry and psychoanalysis in New York City. As an undergraduate, she studied with Dr Alfred Kinsey at Indiana University.

Surprisingly, Dr Sherfey is a Freudian. While on a superficial level she appears to disagree violently with Freud's thoughts on orgasms and female sexuality, she actually views his theories as flexible, and feels that he might have agreed with her biological updating. She quotes from his famous book Behind the Pleasure Principle (1920): 'Biology is truly a land of unlimited possibilities. We may expect it to give us the most surprising information, and we cannot guess what answers it will return in a few dozen years to the questions we have put to it. They may be of a kind which will blow away the whole of our artificial structure of hypotheses.'

Freud recognised that the twentieth century would bring many scientific advances, and already:

- Embryologists have established that females are the first sex and that the male sexual structures are merely a variation on the structures of the female.
- Sex researchers, especially Masters and

Johnson, have established that the female has a sexual capacity which is at least as great as the male, and probably greater.

- Anthropologists have clarified that in some cultures, even today, the vast sexual capacity of the female is taken for granted. Their field work in primitive cultures lends extremely convincing support to the historical thesis that the forced suppression of female sexuality was somehow necessary for the development of 'higher civilisations'.

Does all this mean that women - under ideal conditions - actually enjoy sex more than men?

There may never be an answer because sexual experience remains so subjective and even mystical. It is one thing to take measurements of an act. It appears that most people's most tenderly remembered sexual experiences have little to do with number of contractions, length of orgasm, or anything else of the sort. A reunion with a beloved person is, obviously, far more significant than a blast-off which is merely technically terrific.

Nonetheless, the mystical appeal of sex, crucial as it is, has been too often used in a fashion that disserves women and encourages selfish or lazy men. (Good women only care about the 'closeness' and 'don't really mind' if they aren't brought to climax; that sort of thing.) Therefore, if only to redress this imbalance, it should be stated here that we just might be able to have better orgasms than men. At least, we are reported to have more erogenous zones, throughout the body, and more sexy tissue in and around the pelvis. Our orgasms are longer and perhaps more complex, occupying 'three stages', in Masters-Johnson terms, while the male orgasm exhausts itself in only two. Also, if a male is low on seminal fluid, his orgasms are usually less enjoyable, whereas the female has no such limitation. For whatever it's worth, she can have many more orgasms in a short period of time, and the second or third may be even better than the first. (Some males under 30, and relatively few thereafter, can climax several times within 10 or 15 minutes. The quality invariably diminishes. But many females can climax even more times in the same period.)

Also, what Masters and Johnson call status orgasmus has been observed - in islands under the sun and in sex laboratories both - in females only. This is an orgasm that seems to go on and on, the heart beating at an inordinately rapid rate.

Well, then, if women have all this sexy tissue, which grows richer and sexier with pregnancy and experience, and if we also have this impressive capacity to keep having more, and even better, orgasms, and if we also occasionally demonstrate a capacity for a 'knock-out' orgasm, which is apparently rather beyond anything the male experiences, then why do so many women not know how sexy they are?

Sherfey believes that males have forcibly suppressed the vast and virtually insatiable erotic potential of females. She goes so far as to suggest that 'the suppression by cultural forces of woman's inordinately high sexual drive and orgasmic capacity' has been a 'major preoccupation of practically every civilisation'. Dr William Simon, a former Kinsey Institute researcher, agrees with Sherfey and carries her thinking one step further: 'The suppression of female sexuality has not been easily achieved,' he comments. 'Societies have had to work very hard at it. A similar investment in males would have paid off easier.'

It seems only common sense to suppose that in the interests of establishing an orderly family life, paternity, the descent of property, and so on, it was necessary to curb woman's sex drive and encourage her to be monogamous. And surely one way to do this was to make sex unsatisfactory for her.

Moreover, we know that males in most civilised cultures have long feared sexy women, drawing a sharp division (which may be justified) between the chaste and sexless 'good' woman and the unreliable woman who likes sex. Even today, as sophisticated as we think we are, in many of our sub-cultures the males deliberately refrain from using their best erotic techniques on their wives, in fear that their wives might get to like it.

On the other hand, it seems to me implausible that it was men only who set out to cool and restrain the natural passions of women. A pregnant woman, a woman in labour, or a mother with a nursing at her breast is vulnerable. Surely, under primitive conditions, the survival chances of a mother and her babies were improved if she had protectors. Thus, I think we must consider the possibility that it was adaptive for woman herself to curb her own sexuality. The children of a mother who was capable of forming ties with one male probably stood a better chance of growing up. The 'plastic' woman who smothered her own sexuality lost something, but gained something, too.

Has woman's inherent drive abated in all these years? Sherfey thinks not. She believes that every girl born has the capacity to become a veritable nymphomaniac.

Even if she is right, however, I think that most of the women who continue to opt for marriage and family life will continue, sedately and perhaps a little sadly at times, to 'will themselves' satisfied. A mother's attachment to her young is very strong and not easily jeopardised.

On the other hand, there is no question that a new life-style is emerging for educated women in civilised countries. The world is pretty well filled up, and the men who rule it are coming to view babies as a threat to their own survival. The pressures on women to marry and reproduce are rapidly diminishing, at the same time as their solo economic position is being vastly improved.

To complicate matters further, we may be very close to the day when scientists (male) will be able to grow babies in test tubes, thereby proving themselves equal to Eve and thereby leaving woman even freer to indulge her own sexuality.

As the woman as mother becomes obsolete, perhaps packs of ravenously sexy, rapacious women will roam the world, as in some grim work of science fiction. But sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof. For now it is still problem enough convincing our husbands and lovers that we have sexual appetites, too, which may have a different rhythm from theirs but which are everybit as normal and every bit as urgent.

Taken from "Free and Female - The Sex Life of the Contemporary Woman", published by Coward, McCann & Geoghegan.

- Barbara Seaman, 1972.

Womens Studies Course

At Sydney University, in the middle of this year, a student-initiated course on Philosophical Aspects of Feminist Thought struck two major obstacles: finance and the Professorial Board. The first was removed by anonymous non-University sources. But the Professorial Board voted against the course, forty to seven. This rejection led to strike action and the setting up of a "Women's Embassy" in the main quadrangle. The Professor of Philosophy, who opposed the course on the grounds of inadequacy of the proposed teachers, and the weakness of the course content, suggested the alternatives of informal lunch hour lectures "where many of the best intellectual things in this university have started" and discussions for a future interdisciplinary course (Government, History, Anthropology, Philosophy, Psychology, and Biology).

At Waikato University, an Interdisciplinary Course was suggested early this year - but fell through as the only interest elicited was from a single staff member who offered two lectures on Anti-Feminism in the Middle Ages. However, Waikato is offering The Sociology of Women (for which the Professor of Sociology has made a very generous allocation of departmental library funds) and Psychology of Women. The Professorial Board has approved. But so far no anonymous extra-university sources have been located. However, presumably the teachers concerned (I am one of them) will be paid something somehow. I have committed myself to teaching the course even on sweated labour, as I feel very strongly about the need for Women's Studies - but poor pay is bad for the image of the course, and for women in general. And a bad precedent.

Waikato University Extension Department seems happily free from obstacles (both of finance and of authority) - and has engaged me on regular terms for a lecture series.

Below are the outlines of my two proposed courses - I hope readers will send me comments. Both courses are designed for student participation based on books, mass-media and day-to-day experience. The lecturer's job is to reveal major themes or areas as fields of force to attract, and focus, group discussions - which will jog memories for examples and counter-examples, start fitting pieces of information together, and suggest new questions or lines of enquiry.

(a) Sociology of Women (University 3rd year and graduate); Comparative analysis of statuses and occupations of women; emphases on dynamic inter-relationships, within contrasting socio-cultural environments - both between status and occupation, and between these and traditional and changing ideologies, economies, and politics; detailed analysis of 19th and 20th century organised Women's Movements, and their backgrounds.

(b) Proposed Programme for Waikato University Extension Department. (Any of the sections can be extended into independent courses); (I) Images or stereotypes: Lecture 1: Stereotypes and their making - particular power through mass-media; 2: Influence on women's education, occupations, status and expectations. (II) Historical and cross-cultural: Lecture 3: Primitive societies; pioneer societies; 4: Western society; 5: Developing societies. (III) Challenge:

Lecture 6: Struggle for political rights (the Vote), U.S., U.K., N.Z.; 7: Demand for economic rights (working conditions, Equal Pay and Opportunity); 8: Aims and methods of Women's Movements after 1960. (IV) Repercussions: Lecture 9: Changing attitudes and activities - Children; Men; Family. (V) Recapitulation: Lecture 10: Themes arising from discussions.

In America there are hundreds of different courses at different levels. In many universities, courses have been going for three full years. And 1973 saw the first graduate course underway - e.g. at Sacramento State University where Kate Millett is Director of Women's Studies.

Many women, and some men, regard the need for Women's Studies as self-evident. Many men, and some women, however, cannot see any need for them - and indeed, regard them as showing that women's interests and interest (other than sexual and exploitable) in women have grown out of all proportion. And a regular question is - why aren't there Men's Studies? It has even been pointed out to me that there are two half-drawerfuls of catalogue cards under Woman/Women; but there is only one card filed under Man/Men (and that one refers to Men in Monastic Orders) - and this one token entry is cited as a clear case of discrimination against Men. So why don't I order books on Man/Men for the Library? We've got books on Woman/Women!

The answer is that in America a year or so ago, less than 1/5 of 1% of all the books available to the readers of America for purchase or loan were under the general category of Woman/Women - i.e. about 750 titles (most of which were written post-1965) in Subject Guide to Books in Print: six pages out of 3,320 for half the human race!

Anyway, I have tried to formulate reasons, acceptable even to some male chauvinists, for the need and growing demand for Women's Studies. We have had history books full of kings, priests and battles, and lesser males in less pugnacious and less celibate activities - but always history to the neglect of herstory. Women's Studies offer the latter for its own sake and to complement the former - thus giving new perspectives and new orientations to change the questions we ask about human beings and our method of studying them. Women's Studies give confidence to girls and women to whom school text books, for example, have given the impression that females make minimal contribution to society, except in service roles. The exponential increase since 1965 of books, pamphlets and articles, increasingly extensive and intensive, dealing with women means that guidance is needed to select and keep abreast. Women Studies Abstract (begun 1972), a quarterly, draws from over 1000 sources.

A final remark: First encounters of interpretations of values, attitudes and expectations as relative, or socially constructed, may lead to some degree of a sort of cultural shock. Therefore, teachers and members of courses need to be sensitive to where each person is at.

- Rosemary Seymour.
(37 Bretton Terrace
Hillcrest, Hamilton)

The Feminist Eye

book review

Doris Lessing - "The Summer Before the Dark" - Jonathon Cape, 1973, pp. 241.

Some of you will have already read the early chapters of this book in *M's* magazine, and it's well worth obtaining to read the rest.

Kate Brown, middle-aged and married to a surgeon, with four lovely grown-up children and leading a life where her only area of independent choice is in the selection of clothes and appearance (and even this circumscribed by the necessity to 'scale herself down') finds herself unexpectedly superfluous to the needs of her family. She feels 'as if a warm covering had been stripped off her, as if she were an animal being flayed', and to save her family the embarrassment and effort of having to cope with her redundancy, takes a job as an interpreter for a conference. This job leads to others and Kate finds the efficiency she had developed to a fine point as the organiser of her household, a sought-after commodity in the outside world of international committees and conferences. Doris Lessing traces her gradual alienation from her previous life in both physical and symbolic terms. Day by day Kate casts off her persona as the capable Mrs Kate Brown and slips into ill-health and precarious sanity and at night grapples with a recurrent dream in which she is trying to carry a dying seal to the sea.

Doris Lessing excels at describing 'the woman's condition' such as when she gives Kate's thoughts as she analyses her place in the family: "Looking back at a typical family scene, during the adolescence of her four, she saw herself at one end of the table, tender and swollen like a goose's fattening liver, with the frightful pressure of four battling egos that were all in one way or another in conflict or confluence with herself, a focus, a balancing point; and her husband at the other end, being tolerant, humorous - a little weary. But not really implicated, not involved, for he worked so hard, had so little emotional energy left over to give the family, to the four children - monsters." And again:

"With three small children, and then four, she had had to fight for qualities that had not even been in her vocabulary. Patience. Self-discipline. Self-control. Self-abnegation. Chastity. Adaptability to others - this above all. This always. These virtues, necessary for bringing up a family of four on a restricted income, she did slowly acquire But virtues? Really? Really virtues? If so, they had turned on her, had become her enemies. Looking back from the condition of being an almost middle-aged wife and mother to her condition as a girl when she lived with Michael, it seemed to her that she had acquired not virtues but a form of dementia."

The latter part of the book has an unreal quality as Lessing, (as she did in the fifth volume of "Children of Violence", the "Four-Gated City"), takes us into a Britain in the near future where neo-Fascist political groups have become the pre-occupation of youth. The book becomes peopled with half-realised characters of whom Kate is one, or perhaps the transformation of Mrs Kate Brown at the beginning of the book to Kate at the end of the book is too big a leap to retain the credulity of the reader. She is like a whole new character whose dimensions Lessing does not sufficiently trace. Kate's experimental excursions into the night-time streets of London (wearing first the appearance of a drab, and then assuming the disguise of an available woman) to gauge the reactions of men, and her strange visits to the zoo to see the sea-lions, seem surrealistic unless they are meant to indicate the distance of Kate's journey from 'normality'. But if this is so, why does she so abruptly return home? Another imponderable: is the 'dark' of the title 'the dark' of the existence Kate descends to, or is it the dark she returns to when she goes home?

- Sandra Coney.

television

We got a lot of time to say our piece this month - particularly on Frost's Abortion programme. I could have wished for the programme to have continued longer, and also I wish Frost had been a better referee/chairman. It was all a bit random-fire and there were a lot of points that could have been explored that were touched on and left. I expect Frost wanted emotional, fiery television and he got it.

Dorothy Jellicich sounded unemotional when she talked about discrimination on Gallery; so did her so-called opponent Mr Thompson. In fact they were both so reasonable they could have been on the same side. There was then an interview with Elizabeth Reid, who, though magnificently stirring at the Convention, was quietly and objectively convincing on tele. Gallery ended its feminist half hour with a chat with the author of 'Women with a Cause', Bill Sutch.

I presume we got all this time because of the then imminence of the United Women's Convention, but why in the entire programme did no one mention this?

Just another small moan: I wish news readers or news writers for NZBC had taken the trouble to find out whether they were talking about a United Women's Convention or a United Women's Conference, instead of using these terms interchangeably.

- Joanne Edwards.

Broadsheet on the Arts

kicking against the pricks

Rosemary Ronald was sent a sample copy of *Cosmopolitan* magazine with an accompanying letter which read in part: "We've selected you to receive one of these first copies because we feel you are a "Cosmopolitan" Girl. *Cosmopolitan* is written especially for the woman who's young at heart, who loves men, may be married or single. She's intelligent, emotional, she's chic, has class and money to spend. She's a do-it-yourselfer, eager for information which will help her mind, her body, her face, her knowledge of life and especially her relationships with men."

Cosmopolitan is ghastly (and expensive). It's not a female version of *Playboy* but a magazine on how to make yourself into a sex object. It's a woman-hating, man-pandering magazine written by Auntie Toms. Here's an excerpt from the editorial: "Do you come across 'professional' wives as much as I do? - Girls who just 'play wife' and live through their man while achieving nothing by themselves? Lyn Tornabene writes on all the worst types - women you will never be anything like of course! - on page 56."

Other gems: Dr Lorien Chase writes: "I think it is time for us finally to lift the onus for pregnancy from the man and place the responsibility where it belongs: with the woman."

And this in an interview with Oliver Reed:

"He does not, surprisingly, like girls to go bra-less. 'When I'm with a woman, the way she looks belongs to me - not to everyone else. I want those nipples to point only at me.'

'Clever women make me apprehensive. Women are not thinking vessels. They are vessels for man's sex and his children. Never has it been written that a woman has the right to mouth things to make her equal. Women's Liberation is intellectual thuggery by a gaggle of smart alecs.'

'Except for sex, most men are happiest with other men.'

Last word on *Cosmopolitan*: don't buy it. Rosemary's ended up where it belonged for a magazine full of crap.

Quote from the May issue of the British magazine *Mother and Baby*:

"Sexually women seek temporary satisfactions in genital stimulation and orgasm, more lasting pleasure in pregnancy and enduring gratification in breastfeeding and parenthood."

I wonder why women with children want to keep on fucking.

Kirkie dismissed the idea of an adviser on women as suggested at the United Women's Convention before he even knew what it was all about. The situation is different in New Zealand from Australia, Kirkie said, because we have four women MP's. "Besides, I have a wife" he added. And so too, has Libya's leader Colonel Gaddafi who said recently "Because of biological defects, a woman's place is in the home."

Ms Lesley Kendall was the winner of the executive secretary of the year award given by the Auckland and Wellington Chambers of Commerce.

"The successful executive secretary must be willing to tackle any job, however menial, 'even if it is walking the dog', says Ms Kendall. She has got to know when to keep her mouth shut and play 'dumb'. "My job is to ease the boss' path, to keep my head in tight corners, to do the more responsible, lesser-done jobs - the ones that waste the boss' time," says Ms Kendall who has no hankering for the director's job." (*New Zealand Herald*, September 22). A bit like "the perfect wife."

The *Waikato Times* devoted some space to advice on how to "Become the perfect wife in 'thirty simple steps'." Here are some of them:

"Always try to be at home when your husband returns from work; don't rush in half an hour late saying you got caught up with the girls."

"Don't fume if he rings and says he'll be home late. Isn't it better than his not ringing at all?"

"Keep his socks darned and his buttons sewn on without him having to ask."

"Let your husband know you look up to him - but don't be too servile. Nobody likes a doormat."

"Be quiet sometimes. A long silent look can be very provocative ..."

"Make sure you always smell sweet and fragrant."

"Even if you're a super career girl, give him the impression his job is the important one."

The reader who sent in this gem suggests that the perfect wife is "a deaf and dumb nymphomaniac."

From *Thursday* August 23: Tonia Hunt, Sales Manager for Eve Natural Cosmetics said "For make-up I believe in a natural look, but for myself I have to achieve it with quite a lot of make-up." ??? Sandra Coney



broadsheet report

W.O.W.

The Wellington groups joined forces for Suffrage Day. There was leaf-letting on 18 and 19 September, and the Women's Abortion Action Committee march also on 19 September. In the evening an open meeting was held. We have been holding a stall at the Victoria Market, selling clothing, toys, ornaments etc to raise money for the Lorraine Rothman tour.

The most recent accomplishment by the group has been the lifting of the laws restricting women from driving taxis after the hours of darkness. The ban was put in force to protect women from attack. The investigations of the Ministry of Transport proved though, that in Australia over the past seven years, among all the women in Melbourne driving taxis there was only one attack.

Also, we have now got a regular creche going; the Council did not provide a creche when the Festival of Wellington was underway, preventing mothers from going to poetry readings, exhibitions etc. So we complained very loudly and Mary Mantel, then Secretary, saw Councillor Elizabeth Campbell and got one going at the last minute for the Festival. After that, it went on every Wednesday 10 a.m. until 3 p.m. (which is not really long out of seven days, but it's a start) and is flourishing every week.

- Box 2663
Wellington.

N.O.W. Hastings

News of our activities - very little I'm afraid. A lot of original members have fallen by the wayside and we're concentrating on a new recruitment programme with newspaper ads and a poster in the public library, but with little success to date.

Meanwhile, we are concentrating on rap sessions and plan to hold a creche in the city at Christmas time for the relief of harassed mothers. Personal contact seems to be the only way to get the message to the masses, and I'm trying to drum up enough courage among members to do a door-to-door campaign and perhaps organise coffee-morning meetings in some of the new housing subdivisions.

- P.O. Box 1222
Hastings

Women's Workshop

This is the new name adopted by the Victoria University of Wellington Feminists. One of our members, Felicity Tuohy, wrote to all the schools between Christchurch and Invercargill on the main route, asking for speaking engagements. She then spent 1½ weeks hiking from school to school and in that time addressed 1500 pupils. We have been allocated a tiny room at the top of the stairs at 48 Aro Street for use as a library and files room. We meet every 1st Monday at 8.00 p.m. in the Lounge of the University Union.

- P.O. Box 3871
Wellington.

Radical Feminists - ChCh

The group meets every 2nd and 4th Monday at 7.30 p.m. for business meetings, and every 1st and 3rd Monday for study groups. The business meetings are being held at 26 Riccarton Road at present and the venue for the study group rotates around each member's home.

We have been raising money for, and helping to organise the Lorraine Rothman tour, which we enthusiastically support. Recently a Women's Homosexual Equality group attended one of our meetings for a mutually interesting exchange of information. We have offered our support of this group's activities when needed.

- P.O. Box 2331
Christchurch

Contact: Suzanne 75-987; Chris or Beth 554-489; Diane 55-476

Palmerston North

The group is concerned at the sales tax on contraceptives. The present 80% tax is seen by members as "a means of exploitation of all women by the government." We urge other groups and individuals to put pressure on government to end this tax and our other aims of: intensive sex education programmes on the use of birth control methods for all people of childbearing age, free contraceptives, abortion for any woman who requests it.

Some of our members are forming a neighbourhood group with the aim of providing practical help (babysitting, help when a mother is ill) and friendship for groups of women living in the same locality.

Gisborne

The Gisborne branch of NOW was formed a few short weeks ago when a meeting of interested women was called together during the visit of Sharyn Cederman. The group has been engaged in consciousness-raising and has several other interested women on the mailing list. Six of us attended the United Women's Convention in Auckland and have endeavoured to give our other members as much information as possible about that great event.

You may be astounded to learn that a man who attended the meeting at which Sharyn was present (we have since decided to keep membership for women only), donated \$250 towards the purchase of feminist literature as a nucleus of a library for the group. His only stipulation was that some of the money be used for similar books for the local public library.

Plans are now in hand for the holding of a fondue party for the raising of funds to be used for such things as circulars and information to be sent to members, stamps, writing materials etc.

At an opening meeting to be held this week our first speaker will be gynaecologist, Dr Wendy Savage.

Should anyone wish to get in touch with us, or to visit us, our official postal address is: The Secretary,

The Gisborne Branch of NOW,
Box 90, Manutuke, Gisborne.

Dunedin Collective

The 80th anniversary of Women's Suffrage was celebrated in various ways in Dunedin. Dressed for the occasion and wearing the purple-green-and-white rosette, members of the Collective joined the march organised by the Abortion Action Committee to repeal abortion laws. Over 100 people marched from the Museum to the Octagon, while an equal number of SPUC's and Right-to-Lifers, including many students from the Catholic boys' high school, in uniform, lined the streets, then marched to the Octagon with the usual placards. The Abortion Action Committee had to go through the routine of getting a permit from the police and the City Council, then change the itinerary at their request, then have the posters, leaflets and rosettes examined. The SPUC's and Right-to-Lifers did none of this and were undisturbed by the 'authorities'. Even our conservative local press commented on the unfairness of the whole thing.

After the march, in the Octagon, some of us read excerpts from the Parliamentary Debates of the 1890's on women's suffrage. Leaflets were handed out drawing a parallel between the situation then and now. In the morning some of us spoke on suffrage, feminism and liberation in girls' high schools.

We were very happy to have Lorraine Rothman among us for a few days. 28 of us, plus three members of the Invercargill Collective, participated in her small group meetings and many more attended the public meetings. At a meeting for medical students it was interesting to note the presence of John Kennedy of the Catholic weekly, *The Tablet!*

On 23 September Knowhow had a successful afternoon of "sexplanation".

Our six small groups take turn in producing our fortnightly newsletter. If anyone would like to be put on our mailing list, please send \$2.00 to P.O. Box 446, Dunedin.

NOW ChCh

The outcome of the August workshops was a committee set up to research primer textbooks for sex role stereotypes, and, hopefully, publish their findings. NOW in Christchurch has decided to support abortion law reform. The questionnaire was answered by 92 out of 160 members - 77.2% supported NOW taking a stand; 85% were in favour of change; 12% voted for no change, and 2% felt abortion laws should be less liberal. We are at present conducting a survey on the need for emergency home-aid help - our City Council is interested. There will be a General Meeting on 16 November, Te Kura Lounge, Bealey Avenue. Dr W. Sutch, author of "Women with a Cause" will be the guest speaker.

- P.O. Box 2720
Christchurch.

N.O.W. Whangarei

Meetings are held at 8 p.m. on the last Wednesday of each month at 24 Cartwright Road, Onerahi. For information telephone Whangarei 61-145 or write to P.O. Box 1313, Whangarei.

Our negotiations for setting up a permanent playroom came to an end at a City

Council meeting. Premises in Central Park had been offered. The Council withdrew their offer mainly because of the Park Superintendent's opposition to a fenced-off play area that is required for Child Welfare Regulations. In face of all the opposition encountered, the Playroom Committee decided to go into recess. We are investigating the possibility of introducing a child-care course (based on the Playcentre 'mother-helper' course) to be taught at schools to both boys and girls. Basically, it would involve a course on child development, run in co-operation with a creche or playcentre.

H.O.W.

A survey of child-care facilities has just been concluded and it is expected that the results will indicate greater need in this area in Hamilton and a submission will be made to government. A report will also be written up to appear in the H.O.W. column in the *Waikato Times* (a slot available for our use when any worthwhile contributions come to light.) Necia France had an article published recently (2/8/73) in the *Times* entitled 'Deprivation, a Mother's View' - being a critique of John Bowlby, and assimilating various ideas on maternal deprivation.

Muriel Blackburn is leading a research/discussion group on prostitution. It is planned that we conduct a survey of discrimination against women among Hamilton banks, departmental stores etc., on opening accounts, making financial/legal transactions etc; the results to be published in the local paper (*Times*) and forwarded to the Campaign Against Discrimination if completed in time. Official letters of protest to Lane, Walker & Rudkin about their Hip-Hi pantyhose ad - "a man's best friend"; and to Cambridge Electric Power Board in respect of their application and agreement for supply, which requires HUSBAND'S NAME IN FULL.

H.O.W. membership stands at 52 at present. Business meetings bi-monthly; social gatherings on alternate months (film evening to see 'A Married Couple' October; meeting November - speaker "Women in China"; December - Christmas party). Meetings first Wednesday of the month.

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