# Women's studies journal

## Homophobia

## 'Home' work

## Her/history

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WSA (NZ)

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***Contributions and Contributors.***
The *Journal* will be published twice yearly. The next issue will appear in August and the closing date for copy is June 15. We are happy to discuss proposed work with intending authors. Please send two copies of articles, which should be typed in double spacing and have a maximum of 5000 words. Shorter articles are welcome, so too are graphics, cartoons and letters to the editor. We will send you a style sheet if required. (Would be contributors with bright ideas but no access to typewriters or money to pay for typing please let us know and we may be able to make helpful suggestions about overcoming this obstacle.) In accordance with WSA policy we accept contributions from women only.



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***Notice to Subscribers.***
Because of the uncertainty about rising costs, we are unable to set a subscription rate for the two issues after this one, in August 1985 and March 1986. Current subscribers and WSA members will be advised as soon as possible.
Unfortunately, all we can promise is that we will have to increase the present $15 subscription rate.
Single Issues: $10 per copy in New Zealand. $25 for overseas buyers.

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**NAME** .....

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# contents

## The 1985 Women's Studies Conference

will be held at Hamilton Girls' High on August 23-24-25. This is a women only conference.

This is the first call for papers and workshop topics for the conference. The Women's Studies Association has expressed particular interest in papers/workshops on Racism and Heterosexism for 1985, but papers on other topics will be accepted.

All women presenting material are asked to consider the visibility of lesbians, black women, the disabled, and working class women.

### Presentations

do not need to be academic papers necessarily. Other forms of presentation could be a video, or facilitation of a discussion on a specific topic.

In accordance with the policy of the Association, women presenting papers or workshops must be financial Women's Studies Association members.

### For further information

contact Jane Ritchie or Gillian Marie at the University of Waikato, Private Bag, Hamilton, or telephone them at Hamilton 62889 Extension 4907 (Jane) or Extension 4706 (Gillian).

# editorial

The first issue of the Women's Studies Journal attracted a universally positive response. We had no spare copies left within a relatively short space of time, and there were enough thoughtful supporters taking out subscriptions to keep WSA's financial anxiety at an everyday level (simmering, just below boiling-point) until the next lot of soaring costs.

We believe that our readers are continuing to get value for money with this second issue. Although the editorial collective did not call for papers round a theme, it turned out that half the contributions are significantly concerned with the state and status of motherhood, how it affects women and their life chances; the stresses of child-rearing and the strength of the associated ideology to which we all tend to succumb.

Two of the articles contain the word 'caring' in their titles. However, none of the writers in the *Journal* who address this topic has any sentimental or moral attachment to the term. They all regard this particular activity as an occupation that includes various essential chores which mothers/-daughters/wives usually do from economic necessity. They all seem to take for granted that the prevailing ideology, which condemns the public provision of day care as grossly inferior to 24 hours a day mothering, has a detrimental effect on the mental and physical health of women and children.

Perhaps the piece by Jane Chetwynd, Susan Calvert and Virginia Boss about the mothers of intellectually handicapped children needs one of those warnings — like some movies — about its possibly disturbing content. It records, systematically and undramatically, the abysmal 'quality of life' experienced by many of these mothers because of the lack of public resources, understanding or support. The concept of rugged individualism may be heroic, but its practical execution, in terms of child care, is all too often left to highly competent heroines who are too busy, exhausted,

trapped and guilty to call for help, let alone build up a network of people who could and would sometimes take some of the load.

Actually, there is a fascinating report on preliminary findings from a study of family support networks by Anne Meade, Margaret Rosemergy and Raylee Johnston. Here is the Clayton's form of child care — the minders you organise when you wouldn't dream of 'dumping' the kiddies in a professionally run nursery. The article discusses research in Australia and NZ where, it appears, both of the prevailing winds blow in favour of Mother staying home where she belongs. As the researchers show, a large proportion of mothers of young children are in the paid workforce or are studying while their children are being looked after in a variety of informal ways. No wonder women feel bewildered as they plunge, heads down, against the wind of words, instructions, and disapproval — after all everybody 'knows' that formal care is A Bad Thing.

In her review article, Rosemary Novitz also looks at the ideology peddled by the experts in the form of advice to mothers, and compares it to the mothers' own perceptions. She quotes Dorothy Smith in describing the 'abstracted mode' and the 'concrete mode' of men's and women's experiences respectively.

Again, the myth of the wife/mother role set against the reality of everyday life is examined by 'baby boomer' Helen Cooke in her 'Work in Progress' (a section we hope others will contribute to in further issues). She discusses conflicts among the post-war cohort to which her mother belonged — she is trying to tease out the social, political and economic factors of the 1950s which helped to exacerbate the tensions felt by this family-oriented 'quiet generation'. She claims that these women did not really retreat blindly into domesticity, but thoughtfully brought up the daughters who spearheaded the women's movement of the 1970s. It's pleasant to feel the glow of rehabilitation — speaking as one of those 1950s Mums — but the article also struck me as much closer to reality than would-be period pieces like, for example, our very own *Country GP* on television. That particular decade belonged to the McCarthy era which brought reds swarming under NZ beds and an accompanying bleakness to surburbia.

Courses in women's studies, even those trying to present

a feminist perspective, are not without their own similar forms of phobia directed at the political implications of lesbianism and the beds some women are in, or forced to stay under. Pat Rosier shows in her analysis of the questionnaire she designed and distributed to women's studies tutors that being ever so liberal makes it ever so easy for tutors to overlook, ever so politely, lesbian debates and concerns which continue to add so much to the theory and practice of feminism. The writer also suggests that where a lesbian in a group does identify herself as such, she is likely to be left with responsibility for contributing the lesbian perspective. However, the extensive bibliography which follows the article eliminates all excuses for eliminating lesbian issues ('but I can never find any material') — often an unconscious process arising from unresolved general anxieties about marriage and sexuality.

The naming of lesbianism as the cause of marriage failure and a threat to families and so forth may well be oversimplistic or, indeed, totally wrong. Marriage in itself is far more likely to create problems for itself, as Renee, lesbian and feminist playwright, points out was the case for her. This interview with Renee suggests that she epitomises the hardworking, versatile NZ woman: wife/mother; cook/-cleaner/teacher/etc.; extra-mural university student; writer/actor/director. I loved her account of herself as the small town director coming to the big city of Auckland to admire all the wonderful theatre — and finding nothing that she had not already done as well or (often) better. Her plays give us, as New Zealanders, back to ourselves, because she can tell us what it's really like to be women or working-class; and she says that another of her plays, still to be publicly performed, deals with the painful recognition of what it's like to be racist at home during the anti-Springbok tour protest against racism abroad.

Renee joins other women currently studying women in exploring the past that may give pointers to understanding the present. Beryl Hughes has gone back centuries to discuss the accomplishments of Elizabeth I (in response to an editorial comment in the first *Journal* — which the editor finds flattering). The article presents a sympathetic picture of Elizabeth, but makes it clear that she was no feminist in our terms. This account, though, of a remarkably talented woman skilfully crossing a risky tightrope to success in a

man's world evokes only admiration — and is a salutary reminder that, for a woman, life at the top is horribly problematic.

In keeping with the continuing interest in our past, we have included an 'Archives' section which we hope will be a regular feature of the *Journal.* This time we have presented excerpts from the history and some of the proceedings of the NZ Women Teachers' Association, whose first branch started in 1901. These extracts cover a lot of pages, but we believe it is important to revive our lost history, and to repeat once again the names of those active women who disappear from the records so quickly. What slightly depresses the reader of the 25 years of the debates is that their participants, if they had the chance to look at our arguments of the last 10 years or so could, with some truth, claim they'd already been there, done that, got the T-shirt. (Or the ladylike 1900s' equivalent).

However, this documentation reassures us that thoughtful NZ women did not just sit back once they had the vote —as myth and legend often has it. Similarly we need not underestimate our contemporary selves. Rosemary Novitz points out that the usefulness of the overseas books she reviews: '... by no means eclipses the varied and innovative work ... on our own doorstep'; Helen Cook observes of her study of American journals: 'Perhaps I'm biased but I feel that the stuff being written in NZ and the focus of research and writing is much better'; while Renee tells us: 'I wanted to write something that showed women as witty and intelligent and hardworking because all the women I know are like that, and I never saw any of them on stage.'

**Margot Roth**

# Caring And Coping: Life For Mothers Of Intellectually Handicapped Children

*Jane Chetwynd, Susan Calvert and Virginia Boss*

> People stare . . . there are constant reminders. I feel I've coped quite well with it. It depends on the people around you.
> You cope. Because when I first had her I didn't have any choice. I had three other young kiddies.
> You get used to it. Things that were hard in the beginning become part of your everyday life.

These quotes come from mothers of intellectually handicapped children. They illustrate not only the extent of problems faced by such women, but also their resilience and determination to cope.

These women were interviewed as part of a study concerned with the impact of an intellectually handicapped child on a family. During the interviews we found that as well as answering the specific questions, many

mothers made additional comments which amplified their answers. Whilst our questions were not intended to solicit detailed replies, we found that many women welcomed the opportunity to talk about their lives and to express some of their fears and anxieties. As far as possible, we recorded these discussions during the interview and collated them later. In this paper we present a summary of these comments and of the general impressions we gained.

The study itself had two main aims. First, to assess the stress on mothers and secondly to measure the financial burden on the family in terms of extra expenses and lost income opportunities. To this end, data were collected using a structured questionnaire from a representative sample of families. The statistical results of the study are reported elsewhere[1,2,3]. The purpose of our presentation here of the women's more detailed comments, is to supplement and 'flesh out' the bare bones of that statistical data. Whilst such statistics may be an essential way to assess and record the experiences of the sample, we believe it is these amplifications and unsolicited comments which have provided the real insight into the lives of the women.

We have drawn together the women's comments under five main themes including the isolation of the mother and the child, the education of the child, stresses in dealing with helping agencies and worries about the future. Each of these will be discussed in turn. Before this we present some details of the women who took part in the study.

All mothers were contacted who were caring for children attending special schools for the intellectually handicapped in the Christchurch urban area. Ninety-one of these mothers (83% of the total) agreed to take part in the study. The ages of the women ranged between 21 and 61 years with a mean of 38 years. The majority (91%) were European with 7% Maori or Polynesian and 2% Asian. Twenty-four per cent of the women were caring alone for their children whilst the remainder were in a permanent relationship.

The women were interviewed in their own homes and the interview usually lasted between one and two hours.

Many women felt that they were isolated from the rest of society as a result of caring for their handicapped child. Some were unable to get a break away from the child either during the day or, in the longer period, in order to have a holiday. Financial restrictions were the reasons for this in many cases. Women on low incomes could not afford to spend money on social activities and found themselves frequently alone at home with their child. For example, one woman when asked whether she worried about coping financially, said: 'I don't worry about it. I just can't go out'.

Another woman whose weekly income was only a few dollars higher than her weekly spending on basic requirements, felt her social life was

severely restricted by caring for the child. In the last three years she had had no breaks at all away from her home, and her child's annual holiday, paid for by the Social Welfare Department, had been her only relief from constant childcare. 'My only break is alternative care. I can't even get out during the day'.

The substantial time involved in caring for an intellectually handicapped child was also reported as a major restriction on the women's social activities. Some women found that caring involved time-consuming tasks, such as extra food preparation. 'Everything has to be specially prepared, and he likes the odd special food'. This was also true of laundry. 'I'm washing pyjamas, singlets, sheets and blankets every day'. Furthermore, teaching and managing the child was often found to be such a physically exhausting task that many women felt they had little time or energy left over for their own social activities. One woman saw it clearly as a choice between time for her or time for her child: 'The trouble is, it's the time spent on getting him to *do* things . . . it means we have less time to enjoy ourselves'.

Even when they had the time and money to do so, some women found it difficult to meet their own social needs. One woman who was looking for part-time employment, resented being home during the day and found it difficult to organize outings for herself in the evenings. 'I'm here by myself. I get so bored . . . I think she's (her adolescent handicapped daughter) jealous of my going out . . . it's hard to find a babysitter for a 16 year old'. Another woman, whose husband was her only support person, said their social life was 'absolutely restricted' and that the task of caring for their child had been a '24 hour a day task'.

Feelings of rejection were also an important restraint on social activity. Some women reported that people would not accept their child because of his/her behaviour or looks. Embarrasment or shame felt by mothers in public places such as shops and buses caused them to restrict the time they spent in public with their children. One woman described her way of coping in the supermarket with her child: 'I often pretend she's not mine. I know it sounds awful but I do.'

Others complained that they had been pressured to be with the child rather than to enjoy a social life of their own: 'I got myself into trouble last year with the school for going out too much. They found out and made me stay at home with my child'. Another mother had had a similar experience: 'When I gave up teaching him myself, people put pressure on me to be with him 24 hours a day.'

Many women reported a lack of understanding from other people about what was involved in looking after a handicapped child. One woman, describing a camping holiday with her child and other families, reported: 'Others say "Why are you jumping up and down all the time?" But they

don't offer to help.'

Many parents relied heavily on members of their own family for support, but in some cases such help was not given and this in turn caused resentment. Furthermore, some families felt their families were rejecting of their child and/or themselves. One father described the reaction of his parents when his child was diagnosed as handicapped: 'They wiped us completely'. A mother discussing her parents said: 'They don't accept my daughter at all. My father is ill but my mother just won't accept her'.

For some women the rejection was closer to home and came direct from the child's father. Some fathers had left when the child was diagnosed as handicapped. Others would have as little as possible to do with caring for the child, seeming to deny the child's very existence let alone the burdens his/her care placed on the mother.

Responding to a question on whether or not her husband's health had been affected by the demands of coping with the child's handicap, one mother said: 'No, because he just doesn't have anything to do with her'. Another woman said of her child's father. 'His real father hardly ever visits. He couldn't face the fact that he is handicapped'.

One woman said that her husband had left her, blaming her for the child's handicap and for the child being a management problem. The woman's only support was her other 19 year old child who was still living at home. She could not take the handicapped child with her into town because of his behaviour, felt her social life was severely restricted by him, and had had only one break away in the past three years. It was clear that it was very distressing for her to discuss her isolation.

In many cases mothers reported that their children had little or no social contact with other children who were not handicapped apart from their own siblings. They saw various reasons for this limitation of contact with 'normal' children. These included the reaction of other children to the handicapped child, the physical isolation from other children, the severity of the child's handicap and the reaction of the child's siblings to the child.

It would seem that as the handicapped children grew older, the amount of interaction they had in terms of play with non-handicapped children outside of their own family decreased. One mother said: 'She plays with other children at school. She used to play with the other children in the neighbourhood when she was little but not now'. This was a common experience. Mothers felt that when their child was young, the non-handicapped children of his/her age did not see the handicapped child as being different. For example, one mother said: 'They used to all play together. He always used to have little friends coming in and out'. However, it was often reported that adolescent children had outgrown the handicapped child in terms of maturity and that they no longer had any interests in common. One mother said: 'The other boys his age he used to play with

have grown up. They're interested in cars and girls, he still wants to play in the sandpit'.

Many women felt the older non-handicapped children saw a handicapped child as an oddity and treated him/her as such. One mother said: 'They know he's different. He'd like to play with them but they're cruel'. Another mother also described cruelty amongst her child's playmates: 'Other children are often very nasty. They make fun of her, call her names — well, you know what kids can be like'.

Physical isolation from other children was also a problem experienced by many of the families in the survey. Not all of the handicapped children lived near other children with whom they could play. For example, the following three quotes illustrate the problem.

> There aren't any older kiddies around here - most of the neighbours are older people.
> Our nearest neighbours would be at least a couple of miles away.
> He has no friends in the area.

For the children in these families, social interaction with non-handicapped children was again primarily with their siblings.

Whilst siblings can play an important part in the life of intellectually handicapped children, unfortunately in many of the families we interviewed, siblings were either not available or did not wish to play an active social role with the handicapped child. In 21 of the 91 families studied, the handicapped child was either an only child or the only child living at home. In other cases, age differences between the handicapped child and his/her siblings often made interaction difficult. For example, one mother said: 'They're busy with their own friends and don't really want him tagging along with them.' In another case, 'There's a big age difference. My elder son has got his car and runs around with his friends. He hasn't really got time for playing with my handicapped daughter'.

Some women also reported that siblings got bored with taking the responsibility for playing with the handicapped child. For example, one mother said: 'They get sick of her - they like to play with their own friends'. Another said: 'They'll supervise him sometimes but I wouldn't really say that they play with him'.

Some of the siblings of intellectually handicapped children did not accept the handicapped child or were embarrassed by the child. One mother said:

> 'One of our children isn't very good with him at all.
> She's at that age where she feels that having a handicapped brother is a sort of stigma.
> In another family: One child's good with him but the other hasn't

> been very helpful. Mind, neither of them have ever entertained him outside the home - they've never taken him to the pictures or anything. It hurts us to think that they're embarrassed by him'.

One of the consequences of this isolation is that the child becomes a 'loner'. This was variously described as:

> She's very much a loner -
> She doesn't really like playing with other children -
> He likes playing on his own

This lack of contact with other children clearly hindered the child's ability to develop social and communication skills.

Mothers also expressed concern that their child was often forced to play primarily with other handicapped children.

> He only really plays with other children when he's at school.
> She's got little friends at school - she plays with them.
> I've got a friend with a handicapped kiddie - they play together.

The mothers felt that their child's capabilities were extended to a much greater extent by contact with non-handicapped children than they were by other handicapped children. Furthermore, they felt that it was important for the child to learn to interact with others in a socially acceptable manner and that this was best learnt from activities with normal children.

The child's isolation from other children outside of school time also affected the well-being of the mother. Because her child was generally not playing with other children, the task of occupying the child fell heavily on the mother. Many of the handicapped children in the sample had very short attention spans and because of this, keeping them occupied made a constant demand on the mother's time and energy. Even when the handicapped child was playing with other children some mothers reported that supervision was still necessary. For example, one mother said: "When she's outside you need to know all the time where she is and what she's doing".

The attitude of other children to the handicapped child was often a source of distress to the mothers and some preferred to spend their own time and energy occupying their child rather than exposing him/her to the unsympathetic attitudes of other children. Mothers reported:

> He can't occupy himself at all.....I never let him out of the yard because the other children are so cruel to him. I just try and keep him busy myself.
> He's all right when something good is on the TV but otherwise I'm always having to try and find things for him to do.....I don't really

like him playing with the other children in the neighbourhood.-
...they can be so nasty.

The fact that many handicapped children do not interact socially with other non-handicapped children affects both the child and mother. It restricts the development of social and communication skills, while contributing to the child's level of dependence. In turn, this increases the burden on the mother.

Another major source of worry and stress to the mothers was the education of their child. While some mothers were happy with the progress their child had made at school, others expressed concern about various aspects of their child's education. These concerns were mainly about the lack of choice of schools their child could attend, their child's lack of progress at school, and the cost of schooling.

At the time of the study, some handicapped children were not entitled to free education as State schools were not obliged to accept a child whose behaviour or ability was outside the normal range. When parents of intellectually handicapped children come to choose a school for their child they find themselves with few options. Some families had made substantial geographical moves for the sake of their child's education. For example, in one case a mother reported: 'We came here from Auckland because the schools are much better here. They're much bigger in Auckland'. In another case, lack of choice of schools had prevented the father from moving to accept a promotion in his job. 'We had to stay in Christchurch because of the school'.

Some parents wanted their child to be taught in a normal environment, but had been turned down by both private and State schools. This meant that they were left with the choice of putting their child into a school for the intellectually handicapped, or not sending their child to school at all. Most chose the former but some mothers did decide to teach their children themselves. This meant however, that they had to give up most other commitments.

One family who did enrol their child in a normal class in the local school had had their Handicapped Child Allowance discontinued as a result. Others, who were unable to enrol their child in normal schools, were concerned about the effect on their child of being only with handicapped children. 'She's very lazy at school. It would be good to have her in a normal class. The other handicapped children are a bad influence on her at present'. In another case, the mother felt that school was probably counter-productive to the child's well-being. 'School is very restrictive. She does better out of school'.

Several mothers reported that their child had made little or no progress at

school and this was clearly distressing to them.

> I get so depressed because there's no improvement in him. There's too many teachers. He just gets settled and the teacher leaves and he has to go through the whole process again.

The cost of schooling was also a concern to some of the mothers in our sample. They were unhappy about the fact that because their child was handicapped, they had to pay for his/her education. 'Schooling shouldn't be an extra expense. There are enough extra expenses'. Clearly, the fact that families have to pay for the schooling of intellectually handicapped children comes as a surprise to many of them. One mother had not realised until she enrolled her child at school that 'An intellectually handicapped school was not an ordinary State funded school'.

Although the families in the sample came into contact with a wide range of helping agencies, there were two groups with whom all families had contact. These were the medical profession and the Department of Social Welfare. Although grateful for the help they had received, mothers were often dissatisfied with many aspects of their contact with these two groups. We will deal with each of them separately.

In their contact with the medical profession, the mothers identified three points of concern. These included the way in which they had discovered the child's handicap and the doctors' attitudes and advice.

Few of the women in the sample appeared to know much about their child's handicap or its consequences. They frequently did not know the medical term for the handicap, the possible reasons for it, nor how they could expect their child to develop. Although acknowledging that some handicaps are non-specific and do not have labels, many women indicated that they expected, and would have liked, to have been told more by their doctor than 'She's just a slow developer'.

Some mothers were also dissatisfied with the way in which they had been told that their child was handicapped. One woman said 'We found out when she was 18 months old. A paediatrician was talking to us about her - he thought we already knew'.

Others indicated that it was particularly difficult for them to be told that their child was 'a bit slow but otherwise normal', or that there was nothing wrong with the child, when it was already becoming obvious to them that something was quite seriously wrong. One woman said: 'They didn't tell me until he was two. They kept saying he was all right but they must have known - I could see there was something wrong'.

Most mothers indicated that they would have preferred to have been told as early as possible that their child was handicapped. The earlier this information is given, the earlier families can make contact with support

groups, with the Department of Social Welfare, and, most importantly, the earlier they can begin the process of coming to terms with the child's handicap.

Doctors' general attitudes to the women also caused them some distress. Some mothers felt that doctors could not communicate at their level when talking about their child. One woman said: 'I don't understand half of what he says - I don't know what he's talking about. If he used normal English or if I were a nurse I would'. This concern surfaced regularly and it appeared that there was a real need for doctors to take special care in ensuring that information was presented in a way that parents could easily understand. 'They do not need to impress us with their use of big words'. Similarly, some of the mothers felt that doctors treated them in a condescending manner.

> 'I'm always spoken to as if I'm stupid. You know, I'm never given any credit for having any common sense. I must know something about children - I've raised four others'.

Women who expressed this concern also expressed the feeling that no credit, and very little encouragement was given to them for break-throughs which they felt they had managed to achieve with their child. Generally the feeling was never one of partnership between the doctors and parents but rather one of 'I'm a doctor, I know best'.

Another area of dissatisfaction was that a few mothers felt that doctors and other health professionals were often insensitive to their feelings and those of their child. One of the women interviewed told how she had taken her child to the dentist because he had broken a front tooth. The dentist had told her that it would not be necessary to cap the tooth in his particular case. The implication the mother took was that the dentist assumed that because her child was handicapped it did not matter what he looked like.

Many women felt that their doctors should have been able to give them more advice and information about the care of their child and the services available to them. In fact, none of the women interviewed felt that their doctors had been helpful in this area. Rather, they felt that doctors provided very little practical advice concerning specific problems with their child, such as toilet training or the compounded problems they faced when their children reached adolescence. One mother, for example, was concerned that her adolescent son was exhibiting a desire to wear women's underwear. Despite the stress which this caused her, she felt that she could not obtain any practical advice about this from her family doctor.

Advice on contraception and sterilization was also not readily available. Although it seemed relatively easy for mothers of female children to obtain contraceptives for their children, those of male children seemed to meet with unnecessary difficulties. One women had been trying for over a year to

have her 16 year old son sterilized. She said that her doctor had finally informed her that to sterilize her son would be unwise as it would lead to a 'dangerous build-up of sperm'.

Many of the women interviewed mentioned that dealing with the Department of Social Welfare was slow at best, and difficult or stressful at worst. They considered that the Department lacked an appreciation of their circumstances and subsequently their needs, and that the officers they encountered were generally not very supportive. Some women felt that there was a lack of understanding in Social Welfare about handicapped children and the problems that they might have. For example, one woman claimed that she was regularly sent forms relating to the Invalid's Benefit which the child herself was required to sign. As the child was unable to do this, the procedure was annoying and stressful for the parents.

More generally, appointments were made at the Department's convenience and delays and shunting between desks often meant that a parent had to take time off work either to meet appointments or to look after the child. Women stated that it was not uncommon for visits to the Department of Social Welfare to entail lengthy explanations of the family's situation to as many as five different people on three different floors of the Department.

In terms of access to information, many women felt that unless they knew specifically what to ask about, it was difficult to gain any information at all. When information was given, it was done so verbally and consequently it was difficult to remember details such as what families were entitled to under particular benefits or what conditions were necessary to qualify a family for these benefits.

It seems, from the women interviewed, that information and assistance is not given as freely as it could be by the Department. Many parents complained that application forms for various benefits were often complicated and lengthy and because of this, many women found them off-putting.

As children approach their teens and the age at which they must leave special school, parents are forced to confront the future. Many mothers reported that this was an especially anxious time for them.

The areas of greatest concern fell into two categories: the future for the mothers themselves and the future for the child.

Perhaps the most common anxiety expressed by the mothers was of doubts about their ability to cope with the child once she/he left the special school. As one mother said:

> 'Next year she will have to leave school and I really don't know what we'll do then. It's hard to get places in the workshops but I really don't think I could cope having her at home for 24 hours a day.

Part of this anxiety about their ability to cope arose out of the mothers' acknowledgement of the fact that they themselves were aging. As one woman expressed it: 'As he's reached adolescence he's got a lot more defiant and disobedient. We're not getting any younger - I really wouldn't be able to manage without my husband'. Combined with this is the knowledge that the child will probably need continuous care for the rest of his/her life. 'He's just a child really - a boy's mind in a man's body'.

The effect of the other children in a family growing up and leaving home also contributed to this anxiety about coping. These other children are often a most important source of support for mothers:

> We've only got two at home now. When they leave we won't have any social life. We just depend on them so much as babysitters. It's hard to get babysitters for a boy of his age.

> He'll do things when he wants to but if he doesn't you can't make him. He's so big. I depend on my other son a lot but he won't be here a lot longer.

Another aspect of the other children in a family growing up is that they often require time and energy from parents in ways that were not necessary when they were younger. 'As your other children get older they have problems too - marital problems, employment problems, and they need your time and energy too'.

In confronting their doubts about coping, some of these mothers had begun to consider the option of institutional care. We interviewed one woman who had placed her child in care. She reported:

> There was nowhere else for him to go on a daily basis. He was not equipped for the sheltered workshops. We had no choice but to put him in Templeton. There was no way I could have coped 24 hours a day at home with him, keeping him occupied.

However, this option also created stress for the parents. One woman said:

> We've struggled all these years at home with him so we could keep him out of institutions. Now it looks as if he'll have to go in anyway. It seems as though it was all for nothing.

Most of the mothers who expressed concern for the long-term future of their child saw institutional care as the only viable alternative for the child once they themselves were no longer able to care for him/her.

However, two mothers saw alternatives to this. One woman said:

> It would be good if she could get married to someone like herself as long as they were both sterilized. She'd make a good wife but she'll never be mature enough to make a good mother. Why should they miss out on some of the most special things in life just because they're handicapped.

The other said:

> My son and his wife said that they'd take her. I don't expect them to - they've got their own lives to lead, but they want to.

For the mothers of mildly handicapped children, the most immediate concern about the future was how the child could be employed once she/he left the special school. One mother said:

> I don't know what we're going to do when she finishes school. I'd like to think that she could get her driver's licence and help me by making deliveries.

These mothers felt that their children should be allowed the opportunity to work within the community and to develop some kind of independence both from their parents and from the sheltered environment provided by the workshops.

In many cases concern about employment had been compounded by the present economic situation. One mother said:

> She would be able to get a normal job as long as there wasn't too much head work involved - something like cleaning or washing dishes, but employment is difficult enough now without being handicapped.

The mothers of the more severely handicapped children were also concerned about the future employment prospects of their children. Many of the children were not equipped for sheltered employment and the mothers of these children were concerned about their ability to cope with and occupy their child at home. Those whose children were equipped for the workshops were concerned at both the length of the waiting lists and their own ability to cope with the child until she/he could gain a place in one of these.

It was clear from our interviews that many of the women caring for an intellectually handicapped child lived under a great deal of stress. A major factor in this stress was the burden of constant child care and the consequent social isolation experienced by the women. Some of them were

unable to have a break away from their child for either a short period during the day or a longer period in order to have a holiday. Clearly, this sort of constant burden has a heavy toll in terms of the mother's health and, in turn, on the welfare of the family as a whole.

The isolation of the handicapped child from normal children was also seen as a source of stress and worry to the women. This was not only because they felt that such isolation was detrimental to the development of their child, but also because it increased the child's dependence on the family and this, in turn, increased the burden on the mother.

Dealings with the medical profession and the Department of Social Welfare were also a source of frustration and resentment to many women. Rather than providing support, advice and understanding, it was felt that many encounters with these agents served to increase the family's feelings of rejection, disadvantage and failure.

Perhaps the most disturbing thing in the interviews was the sense of powerlessness that emerged. Although many women felt that the causes of their stress could be alleviated, they themselves felt helpless to do anything about them. The following quote sums it up:

> When I think back over my life I really don't know how I coped, or how I still cope, when there's so little help available. There seems to be all these great plans and discussions, but we're the last ones to find out. Nothing ever gets done and we're still left bashing our heads against a brick wall.

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# How Children Affect Family Style: The Hidden Contract.

*Anne Meade, Margaret Rosemergy and Raylee Johnston.*

This paper is about the effects of children on family life: in particular, about emerging conflicts of interest over the use of time once a baby arrives. I intend to focus on the relationships between labour force participation and family life. I will also illustrate the importance of both fathers' employment and mothers' paid work in the consideration of different child care arrangements; and emphasise the importance of ideology in understanding tensions which can arise in regard to child care.

When I looked at the preliminary material from the Family Network project (New Zealand Council For Educational Research, 1984) I was not

surprised that most parents do get someone outside the nuclear family to mind the children from time to time. What is surprising is that when both parents work, the majority do not use formal care as their main arrangement. This is true in Australia too. Parents, usually the mothers, prefer to absorb the tensions related to the use of time within the nuclear family, or call on extended family members or friends.

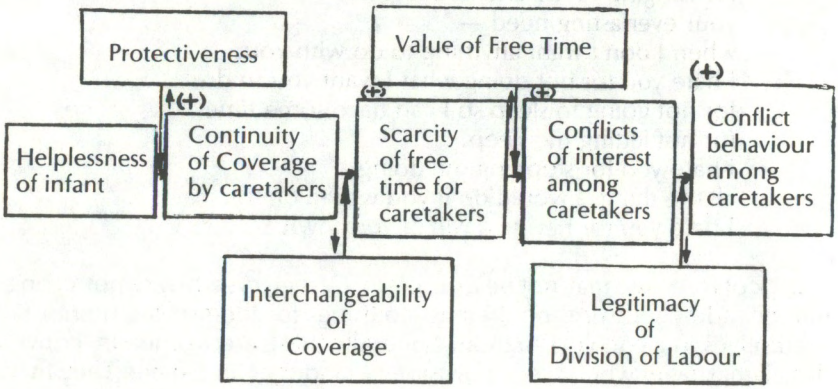
It is apparent that analysts need to look at the material circumstances of the household, family members' characteristics and the ideology within the family, in order to understand child care arrangements. It is also necessary, of course, to consider features of the child care provisions in the community. When two adults contract into a family partnership, whether this is via legal marriage or a de facto relationship they move into a fairly intensive period of negotiation of rights and obligations pertaining to both their 'wife' and 'husband' roles and their family and employment roles. Through such negotiations they work out arrangements which both regard as legitimate and valid. Generally, this is a period when they 'settle down' and get 'set up' (Richards, 1978) and they may not put much effort into establishing a relationship between the family and the neighbourhood community. Not all families get 'set up' before having children. The Wellington study of family support networks found that 75% of the families had moved house since the woman became pregnant with her first child, thus precluding the forming of a relationship with the community before children arrived.

The initial activity is mostly a balancing of personal, work and couple needs. Each partner carries out her/his activities serially, in reasonable conformity and harmony with the other's pattern. At this stage, there may not be much role segregation inside the home with both sharing in domestic production (housework) and consumption activities, but there is likely to be considerable segregation between paid work outside the home and home commitments (with potential for some conflict). Gowler and Legge (1978) talk about a hidden marriage contract which has to be negotiated to resolve any conflicting work and family negotiations. The three most common contracts are:

- Conventional marriage (husband has career, wife stays at home)
- working-couple marriage (husband is primary wage earner and wife is secondary wage earner and also 'works' at home)
- dual career marriages (husband and wife have similar commitments to their jobs outside the home and there is more sharing of domestic work and leisure).

When the first baby arrives, the balancing of activities becomes far more complex. La Rossa and La Rossa (1981) provide a useful model of the variables which may produce conflict between parents who are the main

**Figure 1**
**A Conflict Sociological Model of the Transition to Parenthood**




**Source:** La Rossa and La Rossa, op cit.

caregivers of young babies.

I am proposing today to modify and extend La Rossa and La Rossa's conflict model further to allow for the situation of all parents being in paid employment and therefore grappling with child care issues. I intend testing the model against some data from the Wellington Family Network project (in progress) and to gain some additional insights from Australian research; particularly the Institue of Family Studies' Geelong Social Support Networks study (Storer et al, 1983), Lyn Richards' *Having Families* (1978) and Peter d'Abbs, doctoral thesis (1983).

In Australia and New Zealand, and other Anglo-saxon cultures, it is agreed that helpless infants need continuous supervision 24 hours per day and so a roster is set up to cater for this supervision. The parent acting as the primary caregiver cannot make good progress with personal/leisure activities or domestic work unless the infant is sleeping (in which case the parent is still 'on call', supervising at the secondary level) or unless someone else spells them and gives them 'down time', thus allowing them to move into the tertiary supervision state (La Rossa and La Rossa). Free time is a scarce resource for parents of infants and particularly for the main caregiver.

**Mother's Catalogue** by Lesley Saunders
I hate you for not leaving me be,
for crying even harder when I hit you,
I hate you for making me shake you,
for clinging to me and needing me —
your everlasting need —
when I don't want anything to do with you.
I hate you for not doing what I want you to do,
for not going to sleep so I can have some time,
for not letting me sleep,
I hate you for stopping me doing
all the things I would do if you weren't here.
I hate you for having a will of your own.

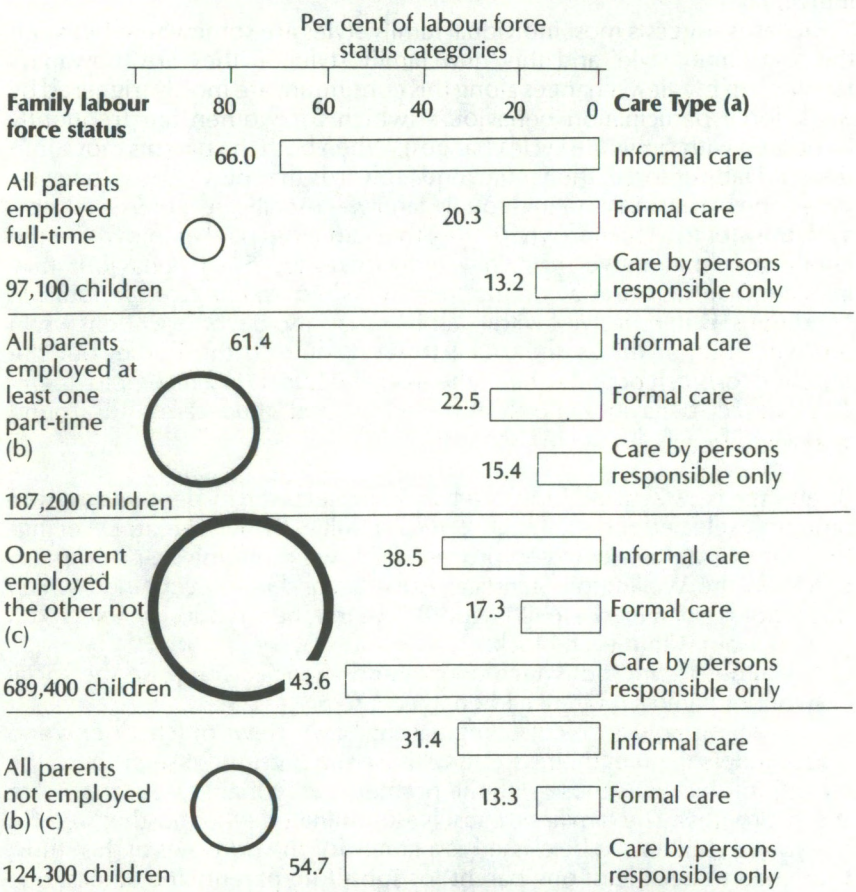
Lack of free time may not be a problem. Caregivers who are not strongly influenced by pressures on them to do things for themselves, do not find themselves in a conflict situation. Generally these are women in 'conventional' marriages who accept a division of labour as legitimate. They fit the model of the 'old' good mother in Lyn Richards' typology of families (1978, p294) who is passive, patient, devoted, busy and 'there' (Richards, c1980). Such caregivers *combine* child care activities with personal, wifely and housewifely activities. Gone are the days of serial activity.

However, for parents who want or need time out from being continuously 'there' for children — and research e.g. Sweeney, Staden and Jamrozik (1983) shows that these days most English-speaking parents do for a variety of reasons — a substitute caregiver has to be found. If there is a second parent in the family it is usually him or her who does this for infants; friends and relatives take over more when the children grow older. Parents' desire for 'down time' can often come at the same time, causing conflict.

One solution is to use formal child care, but this is the option least often considered although it is used more if both parents are employed outside the home.

Nowadays in Australia and New Zealand, the majority of urban families with children under the age of 5 years have periods of time when all parents (including one-parent families) are in the paid labour force. When this occurs, the balancing of activities has to be renegotiated. For the main caregiver, usually the mother, one more activity is slotted into an already busy schedule (possibly requiring other activities to be dropped, reduced, or passed over to someone else). For other family members, some responsibilities of the main caregiver are taken over or, more likely, helped with. In addition to the practical rearrangements, there has to be a readjustment of what Richards (c. 1980) calls 'family style'. The knot of norms about the mother role gets tugged and changed by the reassembling of the knot of

**FIGURE 2**
**Children under 12 years of age not attending school: Family labour force status by care type, June 1980.**




**Source:** Australian Bureau of Statistics, Child care arrangements Australia June 1980, p.7.

(a) Although not defined as care in this survey, the category 'care by person responsible' has been included in this diagram for ease of analysis.

(b) Note that children of one parent families are counted in "All parents . . .' depending on that parent's labour force status.

(c) Comprises unemployed persons and those not in the labour force.

norms for the worker role, because both are entangled with one another (and with the kinds associated with norms about family structures and the wife role). These sets of norms may clash causing conflict within that individual.

Richards suggests most individual family styles are somewhere between the 'old family style' and the 'new family style' — they are 'nowadays families'. In my view, changes along this continuum are mostly triggered by work force participation behaviours (which for women are frequently associated with family life cycle changes). When both the parents move into the paid labour force, the family tends towards the 'new' style. However, when one parent in a working-couple family — usually the father — accepts a job transfer to a location where the other can't find paid employment the family style may move from 'new' towards 'old'. Such behaviour may indicate that there was a common family style overriding certain outside conditions. Different styles within families may also become evident when the wife/mother thinks she'd like to work outside the home, but the husband forbids it or undermines the woman's efforts to gain employment. This conflict behaviour mostly revolved around child care and around associated beliefs about children's needs.

Briefly, the New Zealand Family Networks project is an in-depth study of 68 randomly selected and seemingly 'typical' families living in greater Wellington. Sampling was a two-step process. First, we randomly selected mesh blocks in the Wellington Statistical Area. Second, we ascertained which households contained a child aged 0-5 years, then randomly selected 3 families from within each block.

The aim is to find out which people and agencies comprise the social network of parents raising children aged 0 to 5.
The emphasis now is on collecting parents' own views of what helps and what hinders them in their parenting. I use the present tense because the Stage 2 interviews — those with the partners of the main caregivers — are still in progress. The families themselves nominated who mostly cared for the young children. To be classed as a family for the purposes of this study, there had to be at least one parent (or substitute parent) and at least one child living together. That means a variety of structures — two parents with children, one parent with children and extended families — and a variety of sizes (but mostly two children), spacings and stages. Only 33 families had pre-schoolers only. There was a bias towards middle class, higher income families in the sample. Also we failed to include two Pacific Island families who were drawn, because of a language barrier.

The Institute of Family Studies' Geelong study has quite similar aims but is not confined to one stage in the family life cycle and half the respondents no longer had young children. It aims 'to investigate different individuals'

perceptions of their needs, their use of . . . support networks . . ., and set this in a social context of the structures and services provided . . . in their community' (Storer et al, 1983: 12). Lyn Richards, in her Heidelberg Study (1978), interviewed both parents separately in 60 two-parent families, all of whom had a first child aged either 5 years or a few months.) Peter d'Abbs (1983) has also interviewed parents who had at least one child of pre-school age living in Melbourne. The sample of 20 included men and women, middle income and low income families; each was interviewed on tape three or four times.

In the Geelong Study, the first report to respondents said 'few respondents made *regular* use of child care arrangements while they are at work and most of these arrange to leave their children with partners, relatives or friends,' (p.29). It would appear that either Geelong differs from Melbourne and Wellington with regard to mother's employment, or the different life cycle stage of half the Geelong respondends was associated with the Geelong researchers saying 'Most respondents, both men and women, were strongly of the opinion that mothers should stay at home with their pre-school children and should not work more than part-time once their children were at school', (McCaughey, 1983, p.3). In contrast, Lyn Richard's Melbourne sample comprised 55 percent who said the wife would be or was working before the children were at school and our Wellington sample had 50 percent of the main caregivers in paid employment or studying *at* the time of interview. In Wellington, job hours varied from 1 to 63 per week, but only seven (9 percent) worked more than 20 hours. It is quite possible that most of the 16 caregivers (24 percent) who had fewer than 10 paid hours per week did not regard themselves as working mothers. Thus, they could deny any clash of norms and join the chorus saying 'mothers should stay home with pre-school children'. The majority of the main caregivers who had paid employment did work irregular hours, most commonly (16 percent of the 68) arranged to fit around the family.

When asked about the effects of the caregivers' paid work on the family life, few of the Wellington participants cited negative effects — two disliked being separated from their children (they 'had' to work), two had partners who were negative, three felt their children did not get enough attention and four said they were over-tired. Probably about half of these women were behaving like 'new style' mothers but still adhering to traditional norms. Certainly two partners were explicit about listening to old normative messages whilst finding their wives' behaviour at odds with these messages. When Richards asked 'What is a good mother?' those who fitted the 'old family' model were likely to describe women who didn't work in the formal economy were, 'always there', always thinking of the children's benefit and who 'spent the time required with their children' (1978, p.207). The Mel-

bourne 'new style' mothers were concerned that mothers be given the chance to develop their own individuality — for them, 'good mothers retain their own personality, for their own sakes and for the sake of their children,' (p.210). Thus, there is a risk of struggles within the family if the wife moves into the paid workforce and she or her partner believes in 'old style ' mothers. The ideological conflict potential can be reduced if both parents accept two-earners in one family is legitimate and/or accept that children's needs can be met by a confident mother who has retained her individuality. The positive aspects were a better family income, the caregiver felt more interested and satisfied, or the partners had some pressures taken off them. Also, career paths could be sustained.

Most of our Wellington caregivers in paid employment had reduced conflict to a not-worth-mentioning proportion, it seemed; perhaps because the struggle was behind them. Forty-five of the 56 effects from a dual-worker life-style cited were positive ones. In addition, 13 (of the 34 with jobs) said their paid employment had no effect on themselves, 24 said it had no effect on their partner and 18 said it had no effect on the children.

Looking at child care arrangements whilst the mother worked it seems that a lot of the normative conflict was reduced by arranging work schedules so that one or other parent could mind the children serially or by having a friend, neighbour or relative mind the children when both parents were absent. (Five families had two such arrangements patched together). Only five families used formal arrangements — four were with family day care schemes and the fifth used a creche at her workplace. This pattern endorses other social support network studies' findings which show that people believe in using family and friends for support in meeting everyday needs. Only in certain circumstances are outside formal agencies turned to as well — in the case of the child care for paid employment reasons, it was mostly when friends and family would not or could not help, (except when a creche was maintained by an employer). Lyn Richards' most recent study of social network processes in a new housing estate (1963) indicates that the processes of help such as child care are very comple indeed.

Most of the debate about child care needs are associated with examinations only of women's employment patterns. La Rossa and La Rossa's model indicates that it is each (that is, both) parent's use of free time that has to be considered to understand conflict within the home over child care and free time. The Wellington Family Networks data suggests that fathers' use of time for paid work can also lead to conflict within the home over child care, free time and/or women's employment time. Husbands (or wives for the two house fathers) were the modal type or carer when the main caregiver was in paid employment, but various other people added together care for more children than did partners. Friends and relatives were the important sources

of child care support for personal time. These data are not surprising when the partners' employment hours were examined. All had full-time employment and just under half worked hours which differed from a standard 40 hour week. The irregularities were mostly extended hours, but eight had shift or irregular hours and six brought paper work home quite often. There was not much time left at practical hours for the caregivers to pursue work or leisure and have fathers mind the children. Only one woman said that her husband's work hours were tailored to fit the family. More of the fathers feel that their hours have been changed to give them more time with their family.

The main caregivers, when asked to comment on the effect of their partner's work on the family mostly said 'no effect' or cited negative effects. (Perhaps the positive ones were taken for granted?) Eighty per cent said work has no effect on their partner, 40 per cent felt their partner's work had no effect on the family (read, children). Only 21 of the 105 effects cited were positive, and the most common positive statements were to do with work hours: flexible work hours (six people) or shorter working hours (five people). Two other statements are relevant to the issue of the partner sharing child care responsibilities — namely the partner working near to home (two) and the partner being able to take the children to work (four). Negative comments were mostly about work pressures spilling into the house, long hours, tiredness, workaholism and tensions related to redundancies.

One of the strongest pleas I have seen for a better balance of work, recreation and family commitments came from an Australian mother of two. She agreed to do a case study interview for the Institute of Family Studies Family Formation project (in progress). She said:

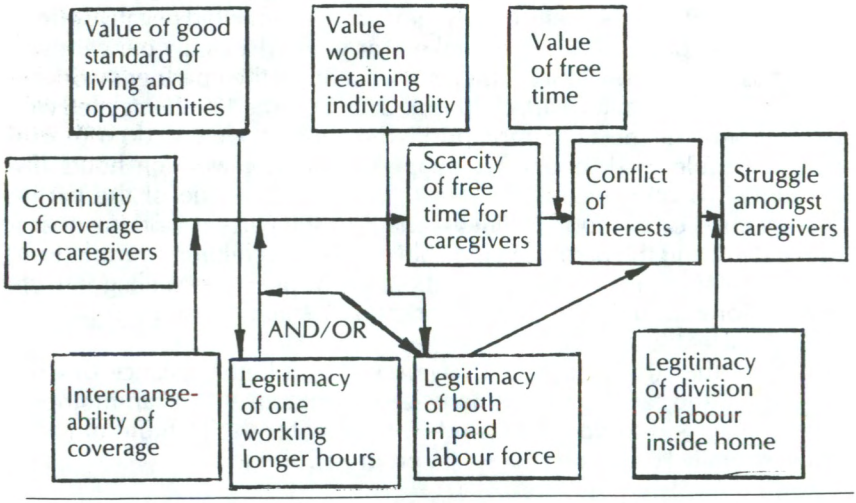
> His selfishness bothers me. I can understand it, but it bothers me because I can see his work is taxing. Therefore I can see he wants time to himself. But he has got a wife and family. He's also got to find time for those but he doesn't seem to find as much time for those as I think he should . . . I've told him in straight words. I've said I don't mind if you have nights and Saturday to yourself, but Sundays you should try and spend with the family . . . I *can* see his point of view. I would just like him to try and realise that being at home all day with the kids can be just as tiring as dealing with adults at work.

Another effect of partner's work on main caregivers of children and consequently for their behaviour as women, mothers and paid workers was the mobility of the families because of the partner being transferred or taking a new job in a different location. Seventeen percent of the Welling-

ton sample had moved since starting a family for this reason, and not always without some conflict. This is another of the hidden contracts discussed by Gowler and Legge.

In order to use the La Rossa and La Rossa model beyond the transition-to-parenthood stage, additions to it are necessary. I have modified it thus:

**Figure 3**
**Family struggles: a modified version of La Rossa and La Rossa's conflict model**




I personally prefer to say that the variables in the model are associated with struggles in the family, (Hartmann, 1981). The values (noted above the line) have potential for increasing the conflict of interest between parents, whilst acceptance of certain ideological stances (noted below the line) can reduce the potential for conflict. Most parents in the Wellington Family Networks Project had modified their apportionment of time to work, housework, family and personal/leisure activites until a reasonable compromise had been reached and each felt satisfied *or* resigned to their family style. There are differences in these arrangements according to the labour force status of the women according to time budget studies (Forer & Viney, c.1975).

Marie's and Jon's case study describes some of the processes that occur inside families to reduce the struggle to a satisfactory level. In addition, it

illustrates the need for social analysts to look at both material circumstances and the ideology of the family to understand how society is shaping family life and how in turn, families make some impact on the nature of society (Mitchell, 1971). Marie recognised the formal economy and the home as two separate 'worlds' (Bernard, 1981) and had her own grounded theory about the way they impinged on one another. She recognised that within each 'world' choice is possible and yet other 'worlds' constrain and limit choices (Fisher et al, 1982). As Piotrkowski put it, the family 'absorbed' the tensions and conflicts inherent in selling 'their labour to external work enterprises and utilizing it in providing household goods and services' (1978: 275), in particular child care.

Marie was born in a Western European country but emigrated with her working class family to New Zealand when aged 10 years. She married Jon when he finished his degree in engineering. He came from another country specifically for a New Zealand university education. They have two children: a son just about to start school and a 2 and a half year old daughter. He earns good money and they own their house and a flat, but live very modestly in order to save money for trips to see his family every few years. Hers are in New Zealand.

The constant demands of a young baby was a real shock to Marie when she first had Victor after years in paid employment. She said:

> I don't think education prepares you (for parenthood) . . . You are not prepared for the amount of time they take . . . ; they are constantly demanding especially on the mother, all the time. When Anne arrived 'she was really difficult' but even so 'she just slotted in with everything and it was fine'.

The struggle to adapt to little time for herself was almost resolved. The partners had worked out a routine for child caring, for working and recreating to a reasonably satisfactory level. Marie stayed at home and joined the 'women's world' and Jon continued with his career and helped a little at home.

Marie had a 'diversified' social network (d'Abbs, 1983). She relied on a number of people, all women, to give her help and day-to-day support to meet companionship, occasional day-time babysitting and transport needs. Her closest friend was visited rarely. Each week she attended a small, supportive playgroup (which was 'more for the mothers') and played mid-week netball with a practice the day before. The children always went along too, so Marie was still 'on call' to her children. When the family joined the study, Marie had been a traditional 'old style' wife and mother for five years.

Jon works long hours during the week and often goes to work on Saturdays too, (sometimes taking Victor with him). This contributed to her

saying, 'We (Jon and I) operated as separate units if you see what I mean'. She was referring to the physical separation of family and work in industrialised societies. And yet despite this separation, Marie felt a lot of pressure from Jon's job on the family. He works about 45 hours per week and it has been virtually impossible to get a holiday away because of continuous deadlines. One of Marie's dreams was 'that my husband will have a bit more time with us and not always at work'. A little later she said:

> Marriage is rather interesting, isn't it, because you are so close and yet you become more and more apart. You operate as two different people (him in the career world, her in the family world) which is dangerous in some ways . . . My husband is very much involved in work. I do foresee that if he gets a promotion I will be, (she paused) upset; because it will mean more time away . . . As I say to him 'Sometimes I feel you're married to your work and not to me' and that can be dangerous. I feel they, (employers) are not in any way geared towards the family . . . At times I feel I've had to pull him back into the family — to keep him in.

More and more phone calls had been coming in to the home for Jon from his firm, so they were adopting avoidance tactics. At the weekend, Marie answers the phone first and says 'He's not in'. The other, more major, strategy was Marie taking an evening job four days per week. She is able to satisfy 'old' norms because one or other parent is always with the children. Jon comes home at 5 pm and had, as a result, stopped his boss from starting meetings at 4.45 pm. The family has a quick meal together and Marie goes to the factory from 6.00 to 10.00pm On Friday there is no shift so she gives Jon 'down' time from family and work responsibilities and he goes to the pub. Marie and the children share a take-away meal with the only co-operating neighbour in her social network on Fridays. Jon also has 'down' time on Sundays when he has a game of squash. This change to both their use of time has meant:

> Jon is now part of the family'. I didn't think it would have such an impact. Before he did not do much in the way of bringing up the children . . . The job is great, in the sense that I do not feel in any way responsible for the kids during that time. I feel completely safe with Jon here. If somebody else had to look after then I'd not feel at ease. Also, if either of the children is sick we can look after them. This 'nowadays' family has many 'old' style ways.

Her paid work is divorced from the home and family and yet it impacted on the family, mostly in positive ways. The main disadvantage had been

reduced husband-wife time. Marie is determined that Jon's work will not jeopardize her job; even though 'the money is only a little bit of pocket money', the job had considerable significance. She had planned for the possibility of Jon going for work overseas from a southern city but, interestingly, 'if Mum can't come, it would be a matter of Jon's firm paying for a babysitter, I've made that clear. It won't be a great deal of money for the firm paying a babysitter but it would be a great deal out of my wages.' I sought clarification and asked: 'So you feel that if the firm takes away your companion and babysitter, they should help you?' and Marie replied emphatically 'Yes, definitely'. She had seen the stong connection between the capitalist world and the family and was resisting being exploited too heavily.

This family had absorbed most potential conflicts. Marie had adjusted to the 'old family style' after a good deal of distress in the first six months of parenthood. When she stepped towards the 'new family style' she arranged her paid work to make serial child care by the parents possible, therby avoiding upsetting the old norms held by her and Jon. He in turn got satisfaction from his increased family responsibilities and it provided a legitimate reason to decrease his paid work hours, and for her to have some 'down time'. However she still desired a little 'down' time for herself, for Marie the person. She said wistfully and poignantly:

> Sometimes I still feel being a parent is very, very difficult. You are *always* responsible. I really love my kids but, (pauses to choose her words) it's kind of a funny thing (pauses again), sometimes I just feel I would like to be by myself, to go anywhere by myself.

The household and employment systems were so closely interlocking that Marie had difficulty moving outside the constraints of these structures which were competing for her time and energy. She expressed feelings of strain. And yet like most families in all the studies cited today, Marie and Jon were managing and 'absorbing' these strains. I should say that Marie was the buffer.

To conclude, the qualitative data in this study provides important insights into intra-familial sexual politics and the consequences regarding who will care for young children. The main caregivers revealed explicitly a huge commitment to their children and implicitly a large commitment to their partner's paid work, and this commitment has positive consequences for the well-being of the children and negative consequences for the status of women given our society's value system.

*Anne Meade, Margaret Rosemergy and Raylee Johnston were all working for the NZ Council for Educational Research when this paper was written. Anne and Margaret are mothers.*

## Notes

Anne Meade first presented this paper at the Australian Family Research Conference, Canberra, in November 1983. The conference proceedings were published by the Institute of Family Studies (1984). A modified version of the paper was given at the NZ Association for Research and Education conference in Wellington, December 10-12, 1983.

1. Copies of this progress report may be obtained fromm the NZ Council for Education Research, Box 3237, Wellington, New Zealand.

2. 7.6% of Australian adults aged 18-35 years in the 'Family Formation Study' were 'living together.'

3. Some individuals contributed more than one negative comment.

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# Success In A Man's World: The Reign of Elizabeth I of England

*Beryl Hughes*

In the first editorial of this journal, Margot Roth commented on the distorting processes to which women in the past have been subjected. 'If,' she continued, 'their names should remain associated down the years with some kind of status, like for instance, Helen of Troy or Cleopatra or Elizabeth I or Katherine Mansfield, they become translated into fatal beauty, a nose of the right length, an intact hymen, or pre-menstrual tension .... Too often, women achievers are found guilty by association with their physical attributes, positive or negative'. I do not want in general to dispute this idea, which seems to me to be, unfortunately, correct. I would like, however, to

discuss the ways in which one of these women, Elizabeth I, managed not merely to transcend her intact hymen but even to capitalise on it; to show how she contrived to turn the undoubted handicap of her sex into at least a partial asset.

Elizabeth and her half-sister, Mary I, who ruled immediately before her, were the first reigning queens that England had ever known. In order to make plain their oddity and to deal with any names that may occur to anyone, let me explain what the precedents were for female rule. Boadicea in the first century A.D. was the heroic leader of a resistance movement against the Romans in Britain. She was the widow of a British chieftain and was never in any sense a ruling queen. In the seventh century, an Anglo-Saxon queen called Seaxburh ruled for one year following the death of her husband, the previous king, over one of the small kingdoms of which England was then composed. Nothing much is known of this situation; I would guess that Seaxburh acted as a kind of regent at a time when there seemed to be a difficulty in determining who the next king should be. After the Norman Conquest the only woman in England who came near to sovereignty was Matilda in the twelfth century.

Her father, Henry I, whose only surviving child she was, wanted her to succeed him, but for several reasons, most of them linked directly or indirectly with her sex, she was not acceptable to the baronage and the throne was taken by her male cousin. Although Matilda put up a fight, she was never crowned queen and was in fact kicked out of London by the indignant citizenry (Matilda was tough and tactless) while she was optimistically preparing a pre-coronation banquet.

England was not unusual in having little experience of women rulers: there were remarkably few European kingdoms which had experienced them.[1] The rule of women was believed to be not simply highly inadvisable but *wrong*. Books and pamphlets were written attacking the idea, the most famous of which was by John Knox. The title of his book, published in 1558, *The First Blast of a Trumpet against the Monstrous Regiment of Women*, suggests perhaps to people today an army of ogresses on the march, but what those words meant then was the unnatural rule of women, which exactly expresses what men felt about it: women's rule was contrary to nature and therefore wrong. It was a reversal, dangerous and disgusting, of the right order, in which political power belonged to men.

Quite apart from this passionately held belief, one of the central tenets of patriarchal society, women rulers presented certain practical problems. Kings were expected to rule actively and that included, if necessary, leading armies into battle. Not only would a woman's ability to handle military matters be considered particularly suspect but hardly any women would

have the particular kind of riding skills necessary for service with the army. Dealing with male councillors, giving orders to men who were themselves accustomed to command, was another difficulty. Yet another was the special status a king enjoyed as God's annointed: could an inferior being like a woman, attacked throughout the centuries by many clergy as unclean, be allowed to hold this status?

Another problem was the matter of marriage. A ruler was expected to marry in order to continue the royal dynasty and save the country from the danger of a disputed succession. A king usually married a royal woman from another country since marriage to a noblewoman of his own country was liable to stir up enmities. These foreign queen consorts were of only minor political importance; they were expected to live chastely, bear sons, fit into the social life of the court and behave in an amiable manner. They were not expected to take part in governing except possibly as regents if their husbands went overseas for a long period. In that case they were assisted by a royal council and they acted on lines laid down by king and council. The spouse of a female ruler would, however, be in a very different position from a queen consort. As an upper-class male he would be accustomed to governmental work at some level or other; he would almost certainly expect to take an active part in governing the country and other men would find it difficult to deny him this right. Wasn't it a husband's job to direct his wife? Then what would be the relationship between reigning queen and her husband, who would be her subject and as husband might legitimately expect her to obey him? Would a reigning queen's husband expect to be made king? Would he expect to rule as regent for their child if his wife should die, leaving a minor heir? Would he expect to rule as king after his wife if she died childless? Moreover, the complications which a sovereign's spouse would experience with his or her family of origin, which were usually slight in the case of a queen consort, were likely to be more serious if the spouse were a man. A man was more likely than a women to remain identified with his own family and to push its interests, even perhaps against those of the country he had married into.

As female rulers, then, Mary and Elizabeth were handicapped by the beliefs and attitudes of the world in which they lived and in particular by the idea that a woman wielding sovereign power was a contradiction. Sovereign power, like all political power, belonged to men. For it to go to a woman was an assault on the right order of the world in which people of the time believed fervently. A woman ruler cut across accepted categories and was therefore both difficult to understand and frightening. She needed special theories to justify her and special imagery to make her safe. As crowned queens, as the only living descendants of their father, Henry VIII, Mary and Elizabeth were accepted as rulers but in practice men seem to

have found it difficult to accept their authority. Mary complained that she spent all her time shouting at her Council. Even William Cecil, Elizabeth's best and most loyal adviser, experienced misgivings about her. He reproved someone for discussing with the queen what he called 'a matter of such weight, being too much for a woman's knowledge'. This happened early in her reign; I doubt if he would have said it later. But the point is that a queen had to assert herself to show that she *could* rule.

The basic fact that a reigning queen had as much sovereign power as a king had to be established in Mary's reign. One of the first actions of Mary's first parliament was to pass a bill declaring that '. . . the regal power of this realm is in the Queen's Majesty as fully and absolutely as even it was in any of her most noble progenitors, kings of this realm'. (Neale I, 1953:22) This was not a feminist declaration and was probably done on the initiative of Mary's officials to ensure that government business and parliamentary statutes could be dealt with effectively, without the possibility of any challenge to the sovereign's legal competence. It was not, of course, necessary for this to be re-enacted in Elizabeth's reign.

Elizabeth became the second reigning queen of England in 1558 after a rather dismal start to female sovereignty under Mary. When appraising Mary's reign it is only fair to remember that it lasted for no more than five years. But is also fair to remember that Mary gave little indication of improving as she went along or of being able to learn from her mistakes. Such successes as her reign showed were the work of officials appointed by her father while for the disasters she bore a very large measure of responsibility. Furthermore, Mary completely fulfilled the expectations people had of women in authority. She was emotional and irrational, letting her heart rule her head and committing herself to a marriage not in the interests of the country and against the advice of almost all her councillors, whose lack of enthusiasm matched the bridegroom's. Mary died at the age of forty-two, deserted by her Spanish husband and a victim of delusions of pregnancy; she could serve as a warning of what a woman ruler might be.

Elizabeth was welcomed as a Tudor and as younger, healthier, more attractive and more English than a half-Spanish Mary, but as a woman ruler she must have appeared to be very much a second best. Yet before many years had passed she had achieved popularity and respect. How had she overcome the handicap?

To begin with, she was a woman of considerable natural ability and she had been taught by the best schoolmasters of her day. 'I thank God," she said once, 'that if I were turned out of the realm in my petticoat, I were able to live in any place in Christendom'. I don't doubt it. Even at a time when the opportunity for employment for upper-class women was extremely small, Elizabeth could easily have earned a living anywhere in Europe (Christendom) as a teacher of foreign languages or a translator. She had an excellent

knowledge of French and Italian, and also of Latin, which was still the universal means of communication among the truly well-educated throughout Europe. She was highly intelligent and had a flair for publicity and communication. Some of this flair was presumably innate but I suspect that she learnt how to project the right image as part of the skills for survival she learned during her troubled girlhood and during Mary's reign when she had feared, not without cause, for her life.

This talent for publicity can be seen during the coronation festivities, which were designed to show the queen to London. The carefully planned spectacles allowed for friendly and familiar speeches from Elizabeth, some of them spontaneous, some not. Accounts of the various ceremonies and celebrations were sent around the country. This sort of thing was standard form for coronations but Elizabeth entered into the pageantry with more gusto and skill than most monarchs showed. A contemporary observer said of her that the city of London at that time could not be called 'anything other than a stage', which catches the theatrical nature of what was happening and shows Elizabeth as actress. I do not mean that she was behaving falsely but that she was deliberately projecting herself. Over the years she had plenty of opportunities for this and took them. It has been said that no other English monarch had such an obsession with her own stage-management. (Strong and Oman, 1917:7)

Progresses around the country were another feature of royal life in which Elizabeth showed a fine touch. She had the gift of putting people at their ease when she wanted to, telling an official of the town of Norwich, for example, that she had been more afraid of him than he of her. She usually travelled in an open litter so that she could be seen more easily.

Her speeches to Parliament were an important part of her relationship with the political elite of the country. Surviving drafts make it clear that she prepared them herself and that she worked over them carefully. On occasion she made modest references to her sex, calling herself 'a woman wanting both wit and memory', who suffered from bashfulness, 'a thing appropriate to my sex'. (Neale, 1953:107) She was adept at putting the House of Commons in its place if members pushed her too far on questions of marriage and succession. A virgin queen, she insisted, should not be dealt with so coarsely. As she grew more experienced and confident she also on occasion spoke her mind pretty plainly to them. Some of her speeches ring splendidly; no wonder the Commons were so dazzled by them that at times they seemed scarcely to notice that she was dodging their demands.

Her appearance was an important part of her image and she cherished it accordingly. Her hundreds of dresses, stiff with gold and pearls, might be considered a surprising extravagance in someone who in general was economical. Historians of earlier generations, unaccustomed to 70 year old male politicians with hair transplants, have accused her of feminine vanity.

Certainly human vanity came into it but there was a serious political point, too. Lacking some male advantages, she was forced to concentrate heavily on other assets such as her appearance. She was distinguished-looking rather than pretty or beautiful, with a slender figure, red-gold hair, a pale skin, fine-features and long tapering fingers. She knew exactly what suited her: black and white and tawny colours like orange, russet and peach, with her maids-of-honour in white and gentlewomen in black. These expensive and elaborate clothes and careful colour schemes were part of her display at court. When she was alone with her women she dressed plainly.

Her looks were much admired and over-praised. There is something gruesome in the flattery that was ladled out to her in her old age, but skilled costumiers and waiting-women expert in hairdressing could no doubt present her in the best possible way. It was said of her when she was fifty-nine that she could compare with a maiden of sixteen. This was said, not by a courtier on the make, but by a German diplomat writing home; presumably he had been captivated by the illusion.

Another weapon in her armoury was the royal portrait, which was an important means of impressing herself on the country. Most families of any standing had a portrait of the queen on display. Elizabeth was interested in the art of portraiture as Nicholas Hilliard, the leading Elizabethan miniaturist, testified. (Buxton, 1963: 124-5) In almost all her portraits Elizabeth presents a very formal appearance, set off by her elaborate clothes and at the same time a little dehumanized by them: individuality is lost in regality. Many of the portraits have the stiffness of an icon, showing a goddess rather than a woman, a being to be worshipped. A royal portrait was far more than a likeness; it was a representation of royal government, which reminded people of the principles on which that government rested and of the power wielded by the sovereign. For this reason the portraits usually contained appropriate symbols to convey the ideas of majesty, religion, peace, victory over enemies, whatever seemed to deserve emphasis at the time.

Marriage, or rather the avoidance of marriage, created another need for Elizabeth to project the right image. Elizabeth was necessarily faced with the question of marriage, an important issue for a country still haunted by memories of the dynastic war of the previous century. The queen lacked an obvious heir, since on the Tudor side of her family she had no male relatives or close female ones. For her to marry and bear children was the simplest solution to the succession problem. Members of parliament regularly requested her to marry and continued to do so until it was clear that she was past childbearing. Elizabeth resented this. Sometimes she talked and acted as though she intended to marry; more often she fenced with parliamentarians, with prospective suitors and even, I suspect, with herself.

What exactly was she up to? Marriage undoubtedly presented difficulties for her. The Scottish ambassador told her '. . . you think that if you were

married, you would only be Queen of England and now ye are king and queen both'. (Johnson, 1974:111) There was much truth in this; Elizabeth obviously enjoyed exercising power and a husband would almost certainly have limited her. I think, too that she had misgivings on personal as well as political grounds. Her own mother had been executed on a charge, pretty certainly faked, of adultery. Her first stepmother died in childbirth, her second was set aside with an annulment, her third executed for adultery. Her fourth and final stepmother, who survived Henry, did not offer a more heartening model. After three childless marriages to elderly men she married again, this time for love, and died soon after in childbed fever. Elizabeth's half-sister's marriage was, as we have seen, equally depressing to contemplate.

I believe that the fate of these women left Elizabeth with a disinclination for marriage but not an insuperable one. I think that if it had been possible she would have married Robert Dudley (later Earl of Leicester) with whom she was in love. Dudley, however, had married several years before he and Elizabeth were attracted to each other. His wife was found dead of a broken neck in 1560. The verdict at the inquest was accidental death but there was a great deal of gossip, much of it spread by Dudley's enemies.[2] Marrying him now became too dangerous. A queen is constrained by the double standard in sexual morality. She can be crushed by a situation which would not harm a king — which might even enhance his glamour. Elizabeth in a crisis was able to put politics above passion and to stay a sovereign ruler. She dabbled in marriage projects after this but there was no other man she seems to have considered worth the risks and sacrifices that marriage would bring.

Her failure to marry raised problems concerning the succession to the throne which do not seem to have deeply troubled her, and another, more personal difficulty: not marrying might make her appear inferior. Marriage was the normal destiny for women, particularly for those of the upper-class who had very few alternatives. An unmarried queen might seem peculiar, unfit, lacking the most significant experiences of a woman. Elizabeth's response to this danger was to capitalise on her virginity. She referred to it repeatedly as something in which she gloried. On occasion, she also referred to herself as the mother of her people. This was a contradiction which did not trouble her or the mass of her subjects. After all, in the Catholic faith a virgin mother had an honoured place in heaven. Protestantism had demoted Mary but the concept of Mary was not yet forgotten. The figure of Elizabeth, virgin, mother, of her people and queen, replaced the cult of Mary, Virgin, mother and queen of heaven.

This exercise in image-building was not undertaken by Elizabeth alone but also by her poets and publicists, two categories which are sometimes hard to separate. Their motives were a mixture of self-interest, genuine

admiration for the queen and a desire to build up support for her. Frequently sweeping themselves off their own feet by their eloquence, they bestowed on her a number of names and attributes. She became Diana, the Huntress, Astraea, the Just Virgin, England's Aurora. As well as virgin mother she was also a kind of sex symbol, the incomparable Gloriana whom her courtiers were supposed to adore. She was the Faerie Queen, she was the moon goddess, Cynthia.

This presentation of Elizabeth as semi-divine served two purposes. It helped to create a swell of loyalty towards the throne at a time when religious division and foreign enmities threatened the nation's stability. Furthermore, it brought ceremony and pageantry to a country which had lost much of this at the Reformation. After Elizabeth was excommunicated by the Pope in 1570 and the threat of invasion by Catholic powers seemed more serious, the anniversary of her accession to the throne was widely celebrated. Each seventeenth of November bells were rung throughout the country by local, not government initiative. Some towns added bonfires to bells, while sermons of rejoicing were heard in almost every pulpit. Naturally at court, in the magical presence, there was opportunity for more magnificent celebration and tournaments were held to which the public were admitted. Although there were speeches, music and comedy, the jousting was the central point, showing Elizabeth in yet another light, as the lady of her knights in the old feudal tradition.

These roles of Elizabeth, mythical, religious, poetic, did more than enhance her prestige and keep her firmly on the throne; they made a reigning queen acceptable. Power in the hands of a woman was potentially dangerous but power in the hands of a goddess-cum-fairy was safe; no one would be mad enough to believe that because Gloriana could exercise power an ordinary woman could.

The responsibility for creating the right image for the queen was not, as we have seen, Elizabeth's alone. Some of it certainly was and even when the work was done by others Elizabeth provided the charisma necessary to sustain it. She worked hard at being queen and staying queen, at keeping power. I believe that she recognised that her power depended, to a degree, on the vitality with which she presented herself; I think that this was the chief reason that she fought so hard to stay young.

There was, of course, nothing remotely feminist in all this. Elizabeth did what she did for herself and for what she considered to be her right to rule. There was not even a desire to preserve her throne for the dynasty. Elizabeth's avoidance of childbearing and her ambivalent attitude to the question of the succession contrast very markedly with her father's obsessive determination to leave a male heir. Her outlook was not feminist but neither was it patriarchal.

Elizabeth is an example of a woman succeeding in a man's world who has

completely accepted the idea that women in general are inferior. Virtually everyone believed this so she can hardly be blamed for being a prisoner of the values of her epoch. Her feelings towards other women were mixed. She disliked potential competitors such as courtiers' wives, who were not welcome at court where they might draw attention from the central figure of Gloriana. On the other hand, she seems to have been genuinely attached to some of the noble ladies who were her companions. She had no interest in women's rights, even in the limited sense in which these were raised in the period. The anger she displayed towards Knox's anti-feminist tract was personal: it challenged *her* right to rule, it queried *her* capacity.

Did the presence on the throne of a female ruler benefit women? I find it difficult to point to any direct and specific advantage that it brought to them. It is true that the late sixteenth and first half of the seventeenth century were times when one can point to certain changes relating to women. Playwrights like Shakespeare and Webster created strong and exciting female roles. Women began to copy articles of masculine dress to the point where Elizabeth's successor, the misogynist James I, believed it necessary to instigate an attack on 'the man-woman'. Before and during the Civil War women began to organise petitions to parliament and to take part in other political activities. Women and their roles in life were increasingly discussed — not always sympathetically. But all sorts of explanations can be given for these changes. Elizabeth alone cannot account for them and it is unclear to what extent she even contributed to them.

Elizabeth must be considered a solitary achiever, who managed to survive the negative stereotypes of women and even to capitalise on some of them. In her indifference to the interests of other women she recalls certain political highfliers today. These are not the kind of women achievers that feminists most admire or respect. Granting that, I still want to give credit to her for her intelligence and skill. To return to the quotation from the *Journal* with which I began, I would point out that Elizabeth today is remembered for more than an intact hymen. She is remembered as one of England's most successful rulers, as the centre of a talented court and as a queen celebrated by distinguished writers. Her name has been given to a glittering age. There are a number of things that account for this, such as luck, and other people's efforts and ambitions. But Elizabeth herself must be given her share of the credit.

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## Notes

1. After the scarcity of women rulers over the centuries, a number appeared, by sheer coincidence, in Western Europe in the sixteenth century. None of these preceded Mary I of England in time and only one preceded Elizabeth, and that by only four years. This was Mary of Guise, a genuinely active Regent of Scotland.

2. Murder, suicide, accident and more recently natural causes (her neck snapping from the spreading of breast cancer from which she apparently suffered) have been advanced to account for this mysterious death. All four theories are open to criticism.

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## Bibliographical Note

The number of books dealing directly or indirectly with Elizabeth probably runs into hundreds. Some of them are rubbish, some have little independent value, some are moderately good, some are outstandingly good. I consider that the most useful of the many that I have read are those by Johnson and Neale given in the References above and the classic biography of the queen by Neale. *(Queen Elizabeth I* published in 1952 by Penguin). In the addition, there is excellent material in several books by Roy Strong. Apart from the one given in the references there are:
*The Elizabethan Icon* 1968, Routledge and Kegan Paul.
*The Cult of Elizabeth* 1977, Thames and Hudson.

Alison Plowden has written several semi-popular books on Elizabeth and her times which are readable, reasonably reliable and in some cases attractively illustrated. These include:
*The Young Elizabeth* 1973, Pan Books
*Marriage with My Kingdom* 1977, Stein and Day
*The House of Tudor* 1976, Weidenfeld and Nicolson
*Tudor Women, Queens and Commoners* 1979, Weidenfeld and Nicholson

Two good books on the policies of Elizabeth's government by W.T. MacCaffrey are:
*The Shaping of the Elizabethan Regime* 1969, Jonathan Cape
*Queen Elizabeth and the Making of Policy 1572-1588.* 1981 Princeton University Press.

There has been virtually no feminist writing on Elizabeth. One article has appeared in *Signs:* Queen Elizabeth I: Parliamentary Rhetoric and Exercise of Power, *Signs,* 1975 vol. no.1.
This is a study of Elizabeth's speeches to parliament. While it is interesting and scholarly, it has very little in the way of ideas and insights which have not already been discussed in Neale (1965). Carolly Erickson's biography of Elizabeth I found disappointing. Erickson, Caroly. 1983. *The First Elizabeth.* Summit.

# Lesbian Issues in Women's Studies

*Pat Rosier*

Women's Studies has been an activity in New Zealand for 10 years (Macdonald and Page, 1984: Roth, 1983). Courses called 'Women and . . .' or 'Women in . . .' can be found (by an alert eye, for there are not many of them) in most university calendars, university extension or continuing education programmes, on the noticeboards of (some) community houses and in the prospectuses of technical institutes and community colleges. At the Auckland Workers' Educational Association (WEA), however, women's studies courses comprised one third of both the 1983 and 1984 programmes. With very few exceptions all such courses are taught (and rightly so) by women. A few have 'feminism' in the title or sub-title. I have identified only one entry in a programme[1] with the word 'lesbian' in its title.

In her introduction to **Lesbian Studies,** Margaret Cruikshank (1982) raises a number of issues about the relationship of lesbians and lesbianism to women's studies. She writes of the National Women's Studies Association in the USA creating:

> . . . a climate in which some academic women could come out as lesbians . . . (which) . . . has allowed us to find each other, explore common concerns and support each others' work. (p. ix).

But she goes on to say that lesbian women are beyond the stage of needing that context, and that lesbian studies, as an area in itself, will:

> . . . add a new political dimension to women's studies by implicitly demanding that lesbian feminist issues be taken more seriously than they have so far. (p.x).

She suggests that lesbians' influence on feminist thought has been disproportionate to the numbers involved[2] and makes the point that as women were invisible in studies about humankind, so lesbian women can be invisible in studies about women. There is more than one aspect to lesbian visibility in women's studies: for teachers who are lesbian there is one range of issues and challenges and for students there is a different but overlapping set. Some relate to getting and keeping jobs, some to concerns like credibility (will all my ideas on, say, childbirth, be dismissed by students who perceive lesbians as perverted or sinful?) and integrity, and yet others to personal and emotional fears.

Lesbian visibility, whether in reference to teachers, resource women, writers, thinkers or students is as relevant to New Zealand as anywhere: the risks and threats it invokes are real in any homophobic society[3] I agree with Margaret Cruikshank when she says that everyone involved in women's studies teaching has a responsibility to include lesbianism and to make lesbians, as women, visible as a matter of course. This also involves confronting racism. She says:

> We (herself and the other contributors to *Lesbian Studies*) do not want 'lesbian studies' to mean studies by and about white, middle class women which unconsciously take them to be the norm. (p.xiii).

Lesbian studies as an organised activity with curricula, courses, paid teachers and so on does not yet, to my knowledge, exist in New Zealand, although groups of lesbian women get together and talk about issues that affect them. (I see no reason why this cannot be called lesbian studies, also.) Women's studies, while far from secure and often not adequately funded or staffed, does exist. In order to get information about whether women's studies teachers in New Zealand presented material about lesbianism, how they did so and what their attitudes are to the issues, as well as to lesbian women in classes, I sent out a questionnaire[4] (see Appendix 1) in May 1984.

A total of 62 went to as many women's studies tutors as I could identify, and to all the women who had bought the pilot edition of the Women's Studies Tutor Kit (Craven et al, 1984) at the 1983 national Women's Studies Association conference in Christchurch. Nearly half of the 48 women who bought the tutor kit wrote back to say that they could not respond to the questionnaire as they were not involved in teaching. Twenty-seven were completed and returned: eight from lesbian women and 19 from non-lesbian women. Many of the women who responded teach more than one course and gave information covering several.

In discussing the replies I will distinguish between those from lesbian and those from heterosexual women but, to protect their confidentiality, I will not do any identification by name or location. The type of location where the courses took place is shown in the following table:

| | |
|---|---|
| Women's Centre or Community House | 2 |
| Community College | 3 |
| Technical Institute | 3 |
| WEA (Auckland) | 4 |
| University Extension/Continuing Ed. | 7 |
| University degree course | 8 |

It cannot be concluded from this table that there is a 'lot' of women's studies in New Zealand universities — just consider the number of papers per year in a single department — nor that women's studies is taught largely in universities, simply because university teachers formed the greatest proportion of respondents. University teachers are more easily identified than those working in less formal ways.

A wide range of types of courses was described in the answers — from a third year level university course to a feminist theory weekend where the 'experts' were the women taking part. The survey did not set out to compare courses but the answers indicated that the major difference between those inside and those outside the universities is in teaching style, rather than attitudes. It did attempt to find out how the tutors used (or didn't use) lesbian content and about their attitudes towards lesbian women in classes.

Descriptions of courses showed that many of those outside universities were based on a combination of input from tutors, readings, guests actively involved in feminist issues and the experiences of women in the class. A high level of participation from the women in the group, no conditions of entry and small, women-only groups were other features. From within the universities descriptions range from: 'Student designed . . . ', to: 'Detailed examination of theory, debates, substantive areas of study, methodology'.

It was clear that some university teachers were making real efforts to mitigate against the setting in which they were working. One third of the women who answered took their course by themselves, some with occasional guests. Of the rest a few co-ordinated, with some direct teaching, but most taught a substantial part themselves. In some cases there were questionnaires returned by more than one woman involved in a course.

In no instance did a course have more men than women members. The highest ratio of men to women was 10:15. Half the courses had no men. Noting that university rules do not allow for women - only classes there was some careful arranging of tutorials. WEA (Ak) was the only organisation which had a stated policy of women-only classes for women's studies.

Many of the answers to the section of the questionnaire which asked for details of lesbian content were long and detailed. Five of the eight lesbian women who replied described a lesbian perspective in all their teaching. The other three used it where they saw it as relevant to the course. Some of the comments from the first group were:

> Favourite books were: (1). Lorde. (2). Rich. (3). Walker — 2 dykes and an ardent feminist.
>
> I try and include the few known lesbians . . . and make a deliberate policy of including their work so I can say this is a lesbian . . . As for lesbianism as a separate topic, it scarcely exists as far as information is concerned. It is still a closet subject in my field, alas.
>
> I do 2/3 lectures on my topic as an 'expert' — woman in the lesbian force etc. This year I covered my personal coming out process, some historical material on lesbianism and the emergence of the movement, the elements of lesbian feminist theory, heterosexual privilege and separatism.
>
> As a lesbian-feminist tutor lesbian content and a lesbian perspective play a major role in all courses I teach/facilitate. Analysis of compulsory heterosexuality is one of the key areas of feminist theory. Lesbian visibility has *high priority.*
>
> I present as a dyke deliberately and publicly early on and continually raise pro-lesbian and pro-gay perspectives, experiences, information, readings and personalities throughout. I use a lesbian perspective to criticise social science and natural science methods and theories. I make sure that dykes in my class feel free to promote dyke issues (which they do).

The responses from tutors who are not lesbian indicate some reliance on lesbian women in a group to bring up issues and provide content. For example:

> In the lectures only one out of 27 are explicitly about lesbianism . . . in the context of . . . feminist theory. In essays there is not a specific lesbian question but any question could be answered from a lesbian perspective . . . (There is) the option of all-women tutorial groups which in practice are therefore lesbian-dominated and will have a high lesbian content.
>
> . . . usually there are lesbians in the class and they raise the issue of 'heterosexism' throughout the year.
>
> . . . mention of lesbianism as a choice but most of the women in the course are not aware of the idea.

Various lesbian participants did bring up the subject and it was discussed as related to people's feelings about relating to each other.

> Lesbianism is not included every year. Depends on the students in the course, who choose the seminar topics.
>
> My courses are unstructured and depend very much on student interest and expertise. They contribute as much as I do, with occasional exceptions. Interest in lesbianism has been very rare indeed — none at all in recent years.

Areas of courses in which lesbianism might be included (either by the tutor or by student insistence) covered the whole range of topics and interest but, for heterosexual women it was most likely to be a planned part of the course in sexuality and feminist theory sessions. Two women — both working in a historical framework — mentioned a lack of resources as a reason for not including lesbian content. One of them commented:

> I would gladly include material on lesbianism if I knew of adequate material . . . for this period . . . I have explained (to students) that I don't know of material on lesbianism for this period . . . I point out that this does not mean that lesbianism did not exist and suggest reasons for the lack of material.

When asked whether they identified a resource by a lesbian as such over

half the lesbian teachers answered with an unequivocal 'yes'. One comment:

> I think this is vitally important to make students recognise and appreciate our contributions and how (in my view) there wouldn't be much of a women's movement without us.

The three who gave qualified answers had reasons such as, 'Only when the resource is about lesbians', and:

> The classes span a vast continuum from fundamental christian to lesbian. As a person interested in (helping) work I'm concerned about the homophobia of this small city which could be used to discredit (the group concerned). I understand the complicity I have with the heterosexism of this city.

A quarter of the heterosexual tutors said they always identified lesbian resources to a class, an eighth said they didn't and the rest said, in various ways, 'It depends'. It appeared to relate to what they saw as 'relevant; and again this was most often within the topics of sexuality and feminist theory.

Three-quarters of the lesbians who returned the questionnaire told the class their sexual orientation in at least one of the courses they took. When they didn't they were protecting their credibility with a very mixed group. Over half the non-lesbian women did not discuss their own sexual preference and their comments indicated that, on the whole, it was not an issue for them. One response was: 'I'm not into men at all.'

When asked about class members referring to their sexual preference, all but two of the lesbian women answered 'yes' for at least one course taken by them. In classes taken by heterosexual women the answers indicate that it is usually the lesbians themselves who mention sexual preference — otherwise the subject may come out (sic) incidentally through talk about partners and so on. Because heterosexuality is taken for granted as the norm, it is not necessarily referred to, and unless lesbian women proclaim themselves, they are presumed to be heterosexual.

All but one of the lesbian teachers said they experienced no difficulties when there were lesbians in a class. One comment was: 'Obviously the difficulties are more from heterosexual women who feel threatened.' The lesbian woman who did experience some difficulty said:

> Sometimes radical lesbian women have 'freaked out' the conservatives in my class. My class spans a wide range of women

> and one of my concerns is to unite them and find the areas of common interest. Aggressive feminism or lesbianism has led to scared women leaving a class. For me as a teacher I sometimes feel very aware of lesbians (undeclared) in the class and the fact that my material may not be radical enough for them. It can be very hard to find the commonality that will hold the class together — but to do so is part of my teaching method.

None of the non-lesbian tutors said outright that they experienced any difficulties when there were lesbians in a class but a few of the explanations indicated that there were some. One concerned the tutor, knowing that three women in a group were lesbian, being aware of the problem for them of making this known to strangers in a provincial town. Other comments were:

> Only guilt and anxiety that I'm not meeting their needs.

> Women with a commitment to feminism often come to women's studies with an expectation that, for once, their perspective will be the dominant one. It is consequently very frustrating when they find their perspective is one of a number of feminist stances.

Three women had never, to their knowledge, had any lesbians in a class. The positive aspects to having lesbians in a class that lesbian teachers perceived included:

> Their general openness to discussing topics in a lot more depth. Many heterosexual women feel threatened to discuss feminist theory in depth, and particularly its extension into their own lives.

> It makes me feel easier about coming out and also acts as a social pressure for me to come out, which I'm grateful for.

> Lesbians are a joy!

> The rub off of strength that comes from lesbians on to straight women. The positivity of being *visible* to many women who have never even 'met' a lesbian.

> Students see the range, value the activists, work alongside them, role play being lesbians (or gay men) introduce lesbian and gay perspectives and experiences into essays and presentations.

This teacher also wrote about the severe stress of working in such an out and open (to students) way in a university.

> Heterosexual assumptions can no longer be made in these classes.
>
> It is good to have lesbians who feel comfortable and strong in their lesbianism and are prepared to declare it in class and who also have a supportive and tolerant attitude towards the more conventional women. This does wonders in breaking down stereotypes and makes me feel supported as a lesbian teacher.

It is clear that lesbian teachers get support and strength from having lesbian women in a class. The comments of the non-lesbian women who sent back the questionnaire were positive but related to the input and broadening of ideas that lesbians provided. Half made comments about how lesbians: offered alternative ways of thinking and living; widened experience and understanding; made perceptive and important comments; were good role models of independent women; helped keep discussion off men as a topic; acted as a reminder to the teacher when she 'inadvertently' overlooked a lesbian perspective. Two comments mentioned the challenge lesbians offered to the teacher to examine her own perspectives. Some of the specific statements were:

> A challenge to the group to accept diversity of people and work at not feeling threatened.
>
> An eye opener for many women that these are ordinary women. Helps to come to a better understanding of both sides, bridge the gap.
>
> Lesbians make it more possible to discuss sexual orientation as part of a continuum, rather than biologically fixed and natural. Their experience relates to all women's oppression so that the whole thing becomes clearer.
>
> As more clearly woman-identified women it is *possible* that their perspectives/experiences can clarify discussion in certain areas . . . This depends on ability to link and articulate connections between private experience and topic under discussion in an appropriate way.
>
> We don't know if we have had any in our class.

> It seems from these replies that a lot is asked of 'out' lesbians in a women's studies class. Non-lesbian tutors seem to leave to them a great deal of the responsibility for initiating and considering lesbian issues. It is not clear that they, on the whole, take a concomitant responsibility to see that the parts of the course for which they, as tutor, are taking the lead, include material that validates and supports the lesbian women. Comments from two women indicate an awareness that lesbians in a class may need something from them:
>
> For the lesbian women I hope my class would be a 'safe' place in which to be themselves.
>
> . . . an opportunity for lesbian women to share their experiences in a safe environment.

But, as Marilyn Frye, (1982) a lesbian teacher, has said: 'What is a topic for (heterosexual teachers) is a condition of life for me'.

Nearly half of the lesbian respondents felt they did give adequate attention to lesbianism in their courses. Those who did not added:

> At this introductory level course it is adequate but only given the level of homophobia in Godzone.
>
> I do think my effectiveness would be limited if I came out though I am resolved to give some more lesbian content.
>
> Not enough in the course overall.
>
> Hopefully not. I'm continually growing and learning with input from others on the journey!

One sixth of the heterosexual women felt they spent enough time on lesbianism in their courses, one with the rider, 'Although it does not satisfy some lesbians'. Another said

> Yes, for my purposes, which are related to all women. Definitely not for women whose primary identification is being lesbian.

About a third felt they did not give it enough attention and said things like:

> Certainly your questionnaire has raised the question in my mind.
>
> As with Maori material I feel reluctant to speak for lesbian/Maori women myself. Would prefer to have invited speakers.
>
> We are severely restricted for time in all parts of the course.
>
> Possibly an issue that could be extended in the course, which changes each year.
>
> Maybe I should think about the perspective more.
>
> I need to think about it.

Of the remaining half of heterosexual teachers who thought their treatment of lesbianism was inadequate three felt that time restrictions limited their attention to all topics and two expressed interest in hearing about resources about lesbian women in their particular (historical) area. Other responses were:

> I feel inadequate discussing lesbianism just as I feel inadequate discussing racism.
>
> Doing this questionnaire has made me aware how much more lesbian content I could include.

One answer was very comprehensive:

> Not having the experience is somewhat restricting — I can only take an 'academic' approach to these issues. I fear I might be simplifying the ideas/arguments and leaving out crucial issues. Last year I invited a friend who is a lesbian to do a lecture about lesbianism and this was very valuable for the class as a whole. She has provided me with a reading list and I know she will give me any help I need. The pressure of time — what you can fit into a course is a big consideration — means that while I may not do justice to lesbian issues I am also limited in my treatment of race. A lecture, a tutorial, and a couple of readings is not much out of a year. I suppose the ideal would be to integrate the lesbian experience and lesbian issues into other areas of the course.

There is a solution for heterosexual women implied in this statement — invite a lesbian speaker, focus some tutorials or sessions on lesbian issues,

have some lesbian reading and integrate lesbian experiences into all aspects of the course. And it could be a good solution.

But how many women's studies teachers can, or want to do this? How many are aware of issues around motherhood, work, property ownership and so on that are of particular concern to lesbians? (And, often, to any unmarried woman). If our concept of 'woman' includes lesbians (and the same principle applies to other groups such as Maori women and disabled women), and we believe that discrimination against any woman affects all women; or if we have a particular investment (we are lesbian or our daughter/sister/-friend is) in promoting lesbian issues then it may be a priority. By using guest speakers and specifically lesbian resources all feminist educators could 'bring lesbian issues into the curriculum' without being dependent on the presence of declared lesbians in a class.

While it is important to be aware that anti-lesbian teachers are unlikely to have returned questionnaires, the answers from those who did send them back generally indicated goodwill, at least, towards lesbians. But there is also a sort of polite homo-anxiety suggested in statements about catering for all women(by excluding lesbian women?); and by the tendency to include lesbianism only when lesbian women in the group insist on it, and perhaps have to take responsibility for it as well.

There are now enough resources written by and about lesbians in women's bookshops and (some) libraries to transform lack of resources from a *reason* into an *excuse* for not including a lesbian perspective in courses about contemporary women.

But the issues are not the same for all women's studies teachers. As I have previously mentioned, lesbian tutors who are teaching mixed or heterosexual groups have to think about such things as their credibility, the personal and emotional demands of dealing with homophobic responses and the threats to their children, their careers and their standing in the community if they declare themselves. This is not to undervalue those non-lesbian women who give lesbians real support: but they are few in number overall. Lesbian teachers may also be dealing with their own feelings of guilt and self-criticism for not being out and open and confronting the issues. As one commented, the fact that known lesbians are in a group acts as both a social pressure and a support to come out. It also means that the woman who, as teacher, is a focus of the group, is not the only one with the label 'lesbian'.

For a heterosexual woman with a class or group of heterosexual (as far as she knows) women it is easy to ignore lesbians and lesbian issues entirely. If the teacher, as a feminist, takes responsibility for bringing up these issues herself she will very likely get a 'bored' or disinterested response. Whether

or not she interprets this as a shield for anxiety homophobia or feeling threatened she will find it a real block to making progress on the issues. This presents a real quandary to women teaching women's studies in contexts where an important criterion for including a topic or issue is the wishes and interests of the group!

Any lesbian woman in such a group who does not feel able to declare herself as such is likely to feel extremely bad about herself both because of this and because of the reactions to lesbianism that she has experienced. A lesbian woman who does declare herself could find that she becomes responsible for initiating lesbian perspectives and issues, or that where the tutor sees them as 'relevant' she is treated as the 'expert'. Some lesbians will be able to deal with this and for others it will be an unbearable pressure. Where there is more than one lesbian it is likely to be assumed that they have a single (lesbian) viewpoint. In fact, unless they came to the group together, they are no more likely than heterosexual women who have not met before to have the same ideas about anything.

This survey did not include any reference to students or group members and their feelings about lesbians and lesbian issues are dealt with in classes. Maybe someone will do some work on these lines: the results could be very enlightening.

Unfortunately, it is generally true that until members of a minority group speak out and insist on being taken notice of, and in their own terms, this does not happen. The responses to my questionnaire indicate that this principle applies to women's studies in New Zealand. However, the work of lesbian women like Margaret Cruikshank gives positive leads to all women's studies teachers and it behoves us all to take notice that just as women, as people, are claiming visibility in studies about humankind; so lesbians, as women, are claiming visibility in women's studies.

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## Notes

1. Auckland WEA 1984 programme, June-December. The title was 'Lesbian Study Circle.'

2. For example, the contribution to the development of the analysis leading to the recognition that h osexuality is one of the basic premises of our society.

3. 'Homophobia' does not have an entry in the *Concise Oxford Dictionary,* 1976 (6th edition). I like the following statement by Suzanne Pharr, writing in the American periodical, *Off Our Backs* in January, 1984:

   > Phobia, from the Greek, means fear, dread, hatred... when we talk about homophobia we are talking about the blend of all these things that work to keep homosexuals as a hidden (closeted) underclass of society, discriminated against, treated as deviants, singers, maliciously perverted, sick and abnormal. From those who hate us most we receive the messages that we should be cured or killed; from those who are liberal and tolerant we receive the messages that we must be quiet and invisible.

4. My thanks to all the women who sent back a completed questionnaire and to those who wrote explaining why they did not.

5. These long descriptions of content are not included partly for space reasons but mostly because they are specific enough, in many cases, to identify the course and therefore the respondent.

6. I have compiled an annotated list of books that I have found useful, and it comes after the notes and references at the end of this paper.

7. This point did not arise from the questionnaire, but from a discussion at a meeting of the Women's Studies Association (NZ) in Auckland.

## References

Craven, Candis, Claire-Lousie McCurdy and Margot Roth. 1984. 'Women's Studies Tutor Kit: A Workshop" pp. 130-131 in Hilary Haines (ed) *Women's Studies Conference Papers '83.* Women's Studies Assn. (NZ).

Frye, Marilyn. 1982. 'A Lesbian Perspective on Women's Studies' pp. 194-98 in Cruikshank (1982).

Macdonald, Charlotte and Hilary Page, 1984. 'WSA (NZ) History'. *Women's Studies Assn (NZ) Newsletter* 6,1 (November): 18-23.

Roth, Margot. 1983. 'Womens's Studies and WEA (Ak).' *Women's Studies Assn (NZ) Newsletter* 5,1, (November): 24-8.

## Annotated Booklist

Baetz, Ruth. 1981. *Lesbian Crossroads Personal Stories of Struggles and Triumphs.* William Morrow.

More than 20 lesbian women, of different ages, races and classes speak in their own words of their major concerns.

Cruikshank, Margaret (ed.). 1980. *The Lesbian Path.* Naiad Press.
Short personal narratives by lesbians, many of them related to the coming out process.

Cruikshank, Margaret (ed.). 1982. *Lesbian Studies Present and Future.* The Feminist Press.
An extremely useful collection of writings by women teaching women's studies in the USA. Also has a good introduction and over 40 pages of bibliography.

Cruikshank, Margaret (ed.). 1984. *New Lesbian Writing.* Grey Fox Press.
A collection of lesbian short stories.

Ettore, E.M. 1980. *Lesbians, Women and Society.* Routledge and Kegan Paul.
Straightforward with lots of information.

Faderman, Lillian. 1981. *Surpassing the Love of Men.* William Morrow.
Subtitled: 'Romantic friendships and love between women from the Renaissance to the present', this is one of the few books about lesbians that has a historical framework.

Ferguson, Ann, Jackquelyn Zita and Katheryn Pyne Addelson. 1982. 'On "Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence": Defining the Issues.' pp. 147-188 in Nannerl O. Keohane, Michelle Z. Rosaldo and Barbara C. Gelpi (eds) *Feminist Theory A Critique of Ideology.* University of Chicago Press.
This paper contains critiques of the ideas in Adrienne Rich's *Compulsory Heterosexuality* article by three women. Advances the arguments.

Hess, Katherine, Jean Langford and Kathy Ross. 1981. *Feminism First.* Tsunami Press.
Has an excellent analysis of lesbian separatism and discusses various 'brands' of feminism.

Hull, Gloria T., Patricia Bell Scott and Barbara Smith. 1982. *But Some of us Are Brave.* Feminist Press.
Black women's studies with lesbian and heterosexual contributors. Important for its insights into issues to do with black women and lesbian/feminism.

Johnston, Jill. 1973. *Lesbian Nation.* Simon and Schuster. One of the lesbian classics. Best read at a single sitting.

Kreiger, Susan. 1983. *The Mirror Dance: Identity in a Women's Community.* Temple University Press.
A detailed study of a particular lesbian community, using non-traditional research and writing methods. Focuses on the conflict for individual women between personal autonomy and a commitment to community.

Lorde, Audre. 1984. *Sister Outsider, Essays and Speeches.* The Crossing Press.
A black American lesbian's responses to a number of events and issues.

Mohin, Lilian and Sheila Shulman (eds). 1984 *The Reach.* Onlywomen Press.
The first British collection of lesbian short stories that is very different in tone and style from the American personal narratives and fiction.

Moraga, Cherrie, and Gloria Anzaldua (eds). *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Colour.* Persephone Press. (Being reprinted by Kitchen Table Pres).
Valuable for extending the range of cultural experience. Some very moving pieces.

Rich, Adrienne. 1976. *Of Woman Born.* Bantam.
An excellent example of a woman who is a lesbian writing about an issue close to all women.

Rich, Adrienne. 1980. *On Lies, Secrets, and Silence. Selected Prose 1966-1978.* Virago.
Rich, Adrienne. 1981. *Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence.* Onlywoman Press.
The standard explanation of the idea of compulsory heterosexuality. First published in *Signs,* 1980 (Vol.5, No. 4), and since then included in various anthologies.

Rule, Jane. 1975. *Lesbian Images.* Peter Davies.
A reader containing essays about some lesbian issues (e.g. 'From Sin to Sickness') and about 12 lesbian writers of fiction.

Saphira, Miriam. 1984. *Amazon Mothers.* Papers Inc.
A very important book because it is about lesbians as mothers in New Zealand.

*Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society.* 1984. 'The Lesbian Issue'. Vol 9, no. 4
Contains a review of and comment on the ideas in Kreiger's *The Mirror Dance; a review of Cruikshank's Lesbian Studies;* and an excellent paper by Jean E. Kennard: *'Ourself Behind Ourself: a Theory for Lesbian Readers';* and more.

Smith, Barbara (ed). 1983. *Home Girls. A Black Feminist Anthology.* Kitchen Table Press.
Smith is a lesbian and contributes an excellent introduction. There is a section on black lesbians.

## Appendix 1
### Covering letter and questionnaire

Dear

I am interested in finding out about how lesbian issues are dealt with in Women's Studies in New Zealand. In this context I am using the phrase 'women's studies' to refer to any course or class that is about women and intended for women. This does not exclude university courses that may have male enrolments.

I would be grateful for your co-operation in filling out the enclosed questionnaire and returning it to me at the address above. If you wish to answer any question in more detail than the space provides for please use the back of the page or add extra paper. You may like to complete it anonymously. However it you include your name I will be able to send you some feedback. When the results are written up, probably for the *Women's Studies Journal,* I will not identify courses in ways that will allow for identification of tutors, such as by university or by title.

If you are someone who hates answering questionnaires then sending me a description of your course(s) with some comment on what lesbian content you use and your own reactions to lesbians in your classes would be helpful.

Yours sincerely,

Pat Rosier

QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Is/are your course(s) taken in

   WEA
   Community House
   Technical Institute
   Community College
   University
   Other,
   Please name .....

2. State the name of your course(s)

3. Description of the course(s) (Attach extra replies if you are responding for more than one course)

4. Are you the only tutor/teacher? Yes/No
   If 'no' state how much of the course you take yourself

5. How many would there usually be in a class? Women ☐
   Men ☐

6. Here is a list of general topics that might be covered in a women's studies course. Please tick any that you cover in your course. Add any that are in your course and not listed.

   work
   health
   education
   law
   violence against women
   lesbianism
   motherhood
   marriage
   language
   sexuality
   images of women
   feminist theory
   mental health
   religion
   psychology

7. For any topics that you have ticked or added please describe any lesbian content that you use. You might refer to references you give out, themes for discussion, points you make and so on.

8. When you are using a resource (book, poem, data etc) by a lesbian (eg, Adrienne Rich, Mary Daly, Miriam Saphira, Andrea Dworkin .....) do you identify her as such? Yes/No
   Comment:

9. What is your sexual orientation?
   Do you mention your sexual orientation to your class(es)? Yes/No
   Do class members mention theirs? Yes/No
   Describe a context in which you might talk about your sexual orientation.

10. Do you experience any difficulties if you have lesbian women in your class? Yes/No
    Describe:

11. What positive aspects do you feel there are to having lesbian women in a class?

12. Do you feel that the attention you give to lesbianism is adequate? Yes/No
    Coment:

# Feminist Writer Renee: All Plays Are Political

*Interviewed by Claire-Louise McCurdy, November 1984*

**What started you writing?**
I was one of those kids — there are a lot of us — one of whose best things at school was writing. School was very important to me because it was a place where I got a lot of approval. I was a bright, intelligent, rather timid girl and although I didn't have the same clothes as everybody else, there were other girls in the class who didn't either. But of course if you're bright, teachers like you, and if you're timid, they like you even better. Doing very well at school was good because I didn't do very well at home, and I wrote a lot of things that they get you to do.

I suppose I was always interested, but it wasn't until I was 30 and had three sons that I must have felt I had to have something, because all I can remember of those years is a dreadful, dreadful tiredness. So I started writing — a lot of it wasn't very good, but it was practice. Then I read somewhere (it might even have been the *NZ Women's Weekly*) about the Hawkes Bay branch of the NZ Women Writers' Association. So I looked the

worked outside the home ever since Tim was four years old.

In the end, all those things came together. It took me about 10 years to reach the stage where I needed to do advanced levels for my university degree and I came to Auckland to finish at the university here because you couldn't do stage three subjects extra-murally. My old friend Bernadette was already living here. She had come to Wairoa to work for Social Welfare and heard that I needed *someone* to play the lead in *Butterflies are Free,* so we worked on that, although she'd never done a straight part before, but a lot of semi-operatic and musical type stuff. We did two or three plays together and then she was transferred up here. I stayed with her when I came up here on a drama course and I really liked Auckland — I liked the blue - the agapanthus and the jacaranda - and I loved the way you didn't have to go very far before you saw some green, and the relatively easy access to beaches. We all came up; my husband and Tim and me. I studied and I worked at Theatre Corporate as a cleaner and I worked on the till at the University Bookshop and then I went to work at Long Bay College teaching English and drama.

I was approaching 50 and started to have severe menopausal symptoms. The first thing was severe flooding and it was just hideous. And I accepted it. I'm an intelligent woman really but those sorts of things are a slow gradual process and you don't realise until one day you're actually buying 10 packets of Modess. The first day of my period I would have to remember to put some newspaper on the floor because I couldn't get from bed to lavatory without a stream of blood. I was having hot sweats as well. I eventually realised that this wasn't normal and went to a doctor who decided I should have a D and C. That took care of the flooding — there were polyps which were benign. I was thinking then about the significance of being 50 and what it meant. For some time I hadn't been happy in my marriage and I'd spent a lot of that time believing that there was the possibility of change. I was wrong. The discovery, the admitting of my lesbian identity was not the reason I left my marriage. The reason I left was because I'd got sick of compromising, because I had got terribly damaged. By the time I did leave, I couldn't use the telephone and I still can't drive. I was very badly injured.

By then I'd known Bernadette for 10 or 11 years and we'd always been extremely good friends and had done a lot of things together like going to the 1975 United Women's Convention. We'd talked non-stop from the time we met, and we still do. We'd thrashed out a lot of political stuff. We'd rowed, we'd debated and we'd worked together on theatrical enterprises. I realised that she meant a great deal to me and was probably the most important person in the world for me. When I left my marriage she asked me if I wanted her to come with me and for a year she did everything.

If someone is going through a very bad emotional patch, I always think that the best thing anyone can do is to believe them when they say they can't do something. Then you should say: 'I'll do it for you.' Bernadette did. That really has meant so much to me because, up until then, you pulled yourself together as I did after the operation and you kept on and you didn't admit to failure and you didn't admit you couldn't do something as simple as using the telephone. I think that was the first time I recognised that there was such a thing as mental illness, that emotions could make you ill, and that that was something that should be respected, just as much as if your foot were cut off. So that was a real learning experience for me, because I was one of the sniffiest people about people pulling themselves together and getting on with it because I had always done it.

I'd realised before I left that I loved Bernadette and I had also admitted to myself that a lot of the things that had puzzled me about myself were now crystal clear because I had had a chance to talk to lesbian women, and I now had a chance to read things that I'd never read before. So I knew that these great changes were taking place. Along with that went these great changes in my body which, because of the generally chaotic nature of my feelings at that time, meant that my health was quite chaotic too. I had very severe hot sweats and things like that. So it was a year of big changes.

But along with that came a real flowering of my creativity. That was the year I wrote three plays. It was also the year of the Springbok tour. Somehow or other I got over my cowardice and went on the marches and found that I could cope. My only reason for being cowardly was because I was frightened that I would be hurt by the police. I'd been on protest things before and I wore a black armband when the All Blacks went to South Africa without any Maoris, and I'd been involved in Vietnam stuff. But this seemed to me to be different. The Vietnam stuff that I'd been involved in was in a small town and was mainly doing things like debating whether NZ should be there or not, and wasn't the active kind of protest that had happened in the cities. But I was really frightened of the police by this time — frightened of what I knew they could do. Then I got involved politically with things about domestic racism and stuff like that.

All these things came together and one of the things that came out was this melding of my feelings about women, about the theatre, my politics and the knowledge that when I had come to Auckland, I had expected to see wonderful theatre and it wasn't any better than mine. The directors weren't any better than me and in some cases they were worse. If it was good, then it was the standard I already knew about, and some of the clothes and some of the sets were not as good as I had done. And also there were hardly any plays about women. I started to realise, when I labelled the things I had always known as feminism — which is what they were, but I didn't call it that — I started realising that I was getting very sniffy and very

critical about what was going on on stage. And I began to get more and more angry about the fact that there were no really good parts for women, or if there were, they had a lot of males in supporting roles. Whereas men have a lot of good parts, but there's not that many supporting roles for women. They're little parts. So I wanted to do something about that.

I can only say why I started to write — I wanted to write to put women on the stage but I'm not sure why it turned out to be plays really. It was just an amalgam of the three things I was really interested in, I suppose. Of course, I'd always believed that you could make a political point very well and very quickly on stage: you could do something in two to three minutes that would take half an hour to explain. The understanding of what works theatrically had come from all sorts of avenues — I had the idea of shape and gradually developed more skilful use of dialogue. And I became aware that simple things are best — clear, specific statements that go from the specific to the universal — like *Wednesday To Come,* when I took a family of four generations. Many things that thse women are saying appeal to such wide range of women. From their specific circumstances you have these little ripples going out to the universal experience of a lot of women.

**Tell us about your plays in more detail**

*Setting the Table.* I wanted to write something that showed women as witty and intelligent and hardworking, because all the women I know are like that, and I never saw any of them on stage. And I also had debated furiously with friends the question of the use of violence as a weapon, as a strategy, as an action, and it seemed to me that no one out there in the wider community had any idea of what feminists actually did and I wanted to show something of that too. So that's why I wrote *Setting the Table* and why it was contemporary women. It wasn't autobiographical except in the sense that some of the debate was. I really liked those women and I still do. I saw it done at Victoria University about two months ago by a group of drama students, and I thought the play and the debate still come across well. It's become rather notorious now, but that's really only to people who haven't read the play. The play itself is a good competent piece of work which says some important things, I think.

*Secrets.* I'm going to write some more one-woman pieces — I think they can be really effective if you hit on the right thing, I guess. But I did this one — I did it out of a clear, blue sky, as it were. I had no idea at the time, of writing a one-woman piece, but then I thought of what Miriam (Saphira) was doing on the sexual abuse of children. I talked to her and she loaned me some books. And I wrote about that woman. A lot of the stuff that I put in there was something I made up, but when I showed it to Miriam, she said that it was very like what some women do experience, particularly this mania about wanting to be clean all the time — the excessive sort of exercise

that that woman goes through. I wrote the first half and then I wrote the second half and I was really cocking a snook at Theatre Corporate in a way because when I was working there as a cleaner, only a few people said 'Hello' to me as Renee and the rest just saw me as an extension of the vacuum cleaner and stepped over. (I do remember the ones who were personally very civil to me and so I was really pleased when Elizabeth Hawthorne was going to play Iris in *Wednesday* because she was one of them who always said 'Hello' to me as Renee). A lot of people like the second half better because it is more cheerful and it had a happy ending in some ways. I've never been sure whether it is as good as I could have made it, but it's been very popular.

*Dancing* is about four women, three of whom are older women and one of whom is going through what I was going through when I wrote it in terms of menopausal symptoms, so she's there on stage with tissues and stuff like that, and it's lovely. And in between each little scene, they dance the Maxina which is nice. I really just touched on 1951 in that play and I knew when I did that I wanted to write something much bigger. **Dancing** is a play that I think really needs songs. I think it's probably the scenario for some sort of musical that I haven't actually done yet. The play has been done once as lunchtime theatre and it worked reasonably well but I've always thought that it really needs another form. And next year, I'm hoping to look at that because I did write some songs for revues.

There were original songs in the roadshow *Asking for It.* It took me months to recover from exhaustion after touring with it, but when I think about it now, I know from the friends I've made and the women who've been affected and touched by it, that it was well worth it.

Then I applied to the Queen Elizabeth 11 Arts Council for a grant. I'm not a timid little girl any more and I thought it was about time. I got a grant for $5,000, which was paid out in $2,500 dollops to write two plays, and there was another $1,000 tabbed for a workshop which I could use for either one or both.

So I wrote *Groundwork* which is about the effects of the 1981 Springbok tour on a group of women, and it's set in the cells at the central police station on the last day — the last test. It's a play I'm very fond of because it has a Maori woman in it and a woman whose background is something similar to mine, in that her mother's family were Maori but she has denied any of that culture because her mother suffers from the prevailing racism that makes her think that there is something wrong with that — that there's something bad in it. So I was glad to be able to deal with that in a context where domestic racism in this country was only just being recognised as a problem by the white people. It hasn't been done yet, but I think it is going to be next year. I'll look forward to it.

It's very much more overtly political, making rather grand political statements as we all did at the end of the tour and throughout it — and the more painful kinds of things that happen to women as they actually sought to deal with and face their own racism. It's a record of some things that I observed and felt at that time and that's why it's important to me. We've all come — most of us — quite a long way since then in our thinking and analysis, but we were like that then, and I wanted to record that.

Then I wrote *Wednesday to Come* which is something I'd wanted to do for ages. I'd wanted to write about Mum and women like her and their strength and their survival. I'd tried before but it had never worked out. I tried the short story form and those sorts of things, but it just wasn't right. Then I suddenly thought about my uncle driving my father's body back from Wellington to Hastings because they couldn't afford a hearse. I didn't find that out until about 10 years ago. In fact my uncle told one of my kids and he told me. I also wanted to have some generations on stage because I'd never seen any old women on stage and very few young ones. And 13 is probably about as young as you can get away with, with adult actors. I wanted to show a young boy who was emotionally affected in a way that is not generally shown on stage — a boy who wasn't able to keep a stiff upper lip, who had to jam the mouth organ in his mouth so that he wouldn't be crying all the time.

And I wanted to show in Iris how I repeated my mother's patterns to some extent and maintained some sort of protective brief over the reality that I chose my kids to see. My Mum did the same, only in a more intense way —she never told me about my father shooting himself until I was 12 or so and she had to get very boozed to be able to do it. So there were a lot of things that I didn't find out.

And I know with my own kids, although I tried to make them face other kinds of realities I don't think I would have done what Iris did, which is allow them to be there, to open the coffin. So Iris is not me. But there are some things about her, I think, that are Mum — that kind of hardness, that wry sort of humour that only Iris can see is humorous and everyone else doesn't. So there are some things about that woman that I felt were like Mum because Mum could be verbally tough, very tough and she was very cynical and had little respect for anything she saw as false, She also had a hell of a lot of respect for good manners and things. She didn't see the irony of the two viewpoints. The actual look of things, how you behaved, your politeness and that sort of thing mattered more to her than getting first in class. She was paranoic about good manners so we're all terribly, terribly well-mannered. Being easy at the table and talking at the table were things I had to grow into as an adult because you didn't speak at the table. You had your meal and that was that.

There are all sorts of aspects of her that I will show in other characters

because I see that we are all very deeply affected by this woman who mothers us, but there is something of her in Iris and that was very pleasing. And Mary — there are so many women like Mary. I'm a bit like her myself. Women who carry on doing the dishes, getting the meals, doing the washing, doing the ironing in the midst of these fearful crises because somebody had to do it. And Granna — I wanted Granna to have been a marcher, to have been a protester about something and to have this ability to remind them of things. To not just be your old woman who's a little dotty or who's a bit vague and who sleeps most of the time in front of the fire, but to actually have a function of reminding them of things, to show that old women sometimes choose whether they want to be involved in a conversation or not. They have only so much energy to expend and they will choose how they will expend it and if they want to expend it by going down and giving the people at the Post Office a hard time, that's fair enough, because it's saying 'I am here. This is me, and somebody is going to notice me'. And I really approve of that. Sometimes that sort of behaviour is the most appropriate behaviour in a certain context. Sometimes when a woman sits in a corner and cries, that is the most appropriate behaviour in an intolerable situation. And I'm always really pleased when I see stroppy old women because it means to me that there is something there, and determined to be there. Something of that person is blossoming.

**What about your relationship with professional theatre in New Zealand?**
Directors haven't fallen over themselves to do *Setting the Table* before this year. I think they found it too political. The fact that it took 84% houses at Mercury when they put it on for 10 days didn't seem to weigh with other theatres and there has to be a political explanation for that, so I made that obvious political analysis for myself. It generally got good reviews by the critics. They couldn't say it wasn't well done because I'm a damn good director and they were wonderfully talented women. So what they had to do if they were stuck for something bad to report was to say things like 'playing to the converted' or that it was feminist, which meant bad. Some critics gave me very good reviews and practically without exception they were women. The *NZ Times* critic said: 'a witty, abrasive little show', using, as a lot of men do, the diminutive as a put-down. So my relationship with critics sometimes depends on how they feel about women and feminists. If they don't feel good about them, they use their reviews to say something that shows that bias. In terms of the establishment theatre, there are three theatres that have done *Wednesday to Come,* so that's been great. I was very well treated at Downstage where it was first done and there was no question of any difficulties with my politics. Up here, Theatre Corporate have treated me very well.

I'm not sure how *Groundwork* will go though. I've had approaches, so that I know that it will be done, but I think that some theatres would feel very diffident about the politics in it because I have a Maori woman saying some rather harsh things to Pakeha women — nothing that you or I haven't heard before. Certainly we're going to hear it all again — and I hope that we are going to get challenged all the time. But for some people that is something they find very hard to take. I think myself that it will go extremely well and that they will find that they don't have to be frightened. I mean they don't worry if it's Brecht or people like that. They don't mind political plays, but its got to be a male who writes them, and its got to fit into male politics, and then it's quite acceptable. Now I really admire Arnold Wesker. I think of his plays, the one that I love best is *Roots*. That play about a woman learning to be articulate, learning to talk about her own ideas and not the ones she has picked up from her boyfriend and parrotted out. She starts to think and analyse and finally to speak her own ideas. I think it's a terrific play.

But I always say that all plays are political anyway. Even rubbish is political. NZ theatre is very healthy at the moment. The directors and administrators of the theatres have discovered that NZ plays pay and now they're including a lot more in their yearly programme. But there is still some reluctance to see women's concerns as main bill. There's a tendency to put them on at 6pm. I suppose that they think that people who are really interested in that sort of thing will go. There are so many women writing. That's one of the most exciting things. I went to a workshop just recently when I was the dramaturge for Stephanie Johnson's play about pornography: *Accidental Fantasies*. It's a most exciting stylish play because not only does it break the mode of what women should do or say on stage but it breaks the mode of style. It doesn't end with the audience feeling satisfied that there's been a solution. In fact, I think it probably raises more questions than anything else. But it's such an exciting play. I mean, this woman shoots De Sade and Hugh Heffner beside a car crash on stage. A designer would just love it. It's in two distinctly separate styles, and for me they work.

And Rosie Scott's *Say Thank You to the Nice Lady* was workshopped by another group at the same time. Margaret Blay wrote *Clearing Out* and that's a play that should be put on by the establishment theatres because it had a lot to say. Margaret herself says that the end needs reworking but they do that for male playwrights and it would have benefited from working with a director and a cast, with Margaret there as the writer. I'm talking mainly about the Auckland scene, but there are other women writing plays in NZ, other women who deserve to have space and time and expertise at their disposal. I think that's one of the roles the establishment theatres should play. They should also be encouraging Maori theatre and Maori directors. I would go so far as to say that if they won't do it any other way, then they

should have a quota forced on them. I feel very strongly about it. They should set aside some part of the year when their staff, their building, their lights and their expertise are there for people to learn. I'm not sure how Maori theatre groups feel about performing in what is really a very pakeha environment, but there have been some very successful and very moving things done in that situation. I heard Rangimoana Taylor talking on the radio one day and he felt that to have been a student at the Drama School and to have worked with George Webby had been a good experience — that it had given him skills that he could use whichever way he wanted to. I think the theatres have not faced up to their racism. Until recently when Maoris and Samoans and other Pacific groups formed their own groups, the reply always was 'We can't get them.' Then the thing was: 'We can get male actors' and there are some excellent ones. Now, some of them are telling me that they can't cast a play that has a 30 year old Maori woman in it. I think that shows their racism. There are some very talented women around.

There are problems with the all-male directors in our theatre. There are women directors who have got jobs, but there are not many. I wonder if there should be just a women's theatre, if that's the only way women are going to get expertise. We've got really wonderful actors, singers, musicians and we've got some women who are expert on the technical and production side, but we need a lot more. There are one or two very good designers who are women, but we need young women who are being trained to do that and direct and do the lighting. There are a hell of a lot of things we've got to keep on at the theatres about. They are just the same as any other segment of society really. They have the same biases, the same blindness, the same prejudices and it takes the same amount of time to break them down. But in terms of the actual New Zealand scripts, there is a readiness now to look at them and to see that they are commercially viable. And that is good.

**What are you working on now?**

I've become a full-time writer and I've been one for about six weeks and it's absolutely terrific, it's just wonderful. I can't tell you how privileged I feel to be able to do this. The reason is that I was asked to do a film treatment of *The Butcher's Shop* and was paid in advance for that so I could leave my paid employment at *Broadsheet*. And I knew that I was going to get money from the three productions and I knew that with care, that could last a year. So I thought that this was the time to take the gamble, and I have.

I've been working on a pilot scheme for TV writers where a writer who has skills in one field, but not necessarily TV, works alongside an experienced writer as they write a script for *Country GP*, say. I've just finished doing that, and I've got a commission to write a *Country GP* script. I regard that as a good thing. I need to learn the skills and I want to learn them. I've been working with a woman script editor, Phillippa Campbell — she's been

great. I can see that by the end of next year I'll have a lot more skills in a field that I didn't have at the end of this year. And I'm looking forward to learning that and being good at it. But I don't feel grateful. I think it is my right to see that any potential I have does blossom. That's my right — but I'm so glad it's writing because that is something you can do for years. If one gets arthritis, with word processors and the little taps that you use for machines like that, I can see myself writing until the pen drops from my fingers.

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*Secrets* and *Setting the Table.* Playmarket New Zealand Transcripts

The first half of *Secrets* has been filmed with Elizabeth McRae and directed by Diana Rowan.

# Caring: The Advice Of The 'Experts' And The Reality Of Experience

*A review article by Rosemary Novitz*

*Dream Babies: Child Care from Locke to Spock*
Christina Hardyment. Jonathan Cape, 1983

*War in the Nursery: Theories of the Child and Mother*
Denise Riley. Virago, 1983

*A Labour of Love: Women, Work and Caring*
Ed. Janet Finch and Dulcie Groves. Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1983.

*On being a mother: A study of women with pre-school children*
Mary Georgina Boulton. Tavistock, 1983.

Attention to both the physical and emotional needs of others has usually been the experience of women. However, their relative lack of involvement in these activities, in either a paid or unpaid capacity, has not inhibited men from giving women advice on how to care for others. Those who have assumed the role of 'experts' have largely been men; those who have experienced the day-to-day reality of caring for others have chiefly been women.

This review of a number of books recently published outside New Zealand highlights this tension between the advice and theorising of 'experts', and the lives with disabilities. The themes and issues pursued in these for young children, disabled books are related to current New Zealand research and writing which extend our understanding of women's involvement in unpaid caring work and explore some of the reasons why it continues to be unequally divided between women and men.

Few women go through the experience of being a mother totally uncontaminated by advice offered to parents through the innumerable manuals on baby and childcare. These manuals are often a substitute for the exchange of information among women which is based on the experience of caring for children. We buy them either out of a sense of the need to overcome our ignorance about everything from teething rash to bedwetting; or they are foisted on us by well meaning relatives or friends.

A recent New Zealand study revealed that antenatal classes and books were the major sources of information about baby and childcare for women having their first child. While nearly 60 per cent used books as a source of information, only a third relied on friends, neighbours and relatives, or the experience of caring for others' babies (SROW, Christchurch Branch, 1982: 26-39).

*Dream Babies* reviews the advice offered to mothers in babycare books from the eighteenth century to the 1980s. Christina Hardyment argues that what parents want of such books is information, not prescriptions for action. What a reading of her book suggests is that prescription, based frequently on theoretical speculation rather than experience, is a dominant feature of these publications.

Dorothy Smith's distinction between the 'concrete mode' of women's experience and the 'abstracted mode' of men's experience is vividly illustrated by this review of attempts to enlighten women about baby and childcare (Smith, 1979). From the abstraction of political theory John Locke (who had no children of his own) is revealed as confidently giving advice in the early eighteenth century on the care of small babies. This included a scheme to preserve the child's freedom of will by feeding it at different times every day. This, he speculated, would ensure that it never formed the habit of eating at the same time, and thus was freed from the demands of its stomach.

Christina Hardyment locates the type of advice being given in babycare manuals to changes in the lives of the predominantly middle class people to whom they were addressed. The development of the pram and the playpen are linked to the declining access of the middle class to domestic help. Nursery schools are also advocated when low paid child carers are in short supply, and babycare manuals shift their emphasis from physical care to the emotional and intellectual needs of children as infant mortality rates drop, psychologists focus attention on the measurement of IQs, and middle class parents are forced to assume more responsibility for the day-to-day care of their children. By the nineteen fifties parenting had to be sold to women as 'fun'; an intellectual and emotional journey which, if it was not accomplished properly, would permanently scar their children for life.

Any look at babycare manuals as a means of examining advice to parents, is predominantly a look at advice to the middle class purchasers of such books, and they seem to occupy centre-stage in *Dream Babies*. However, it seems likely that the advice given in these books did penetrate to mothers in working class households since it was absorbed by 'experts' like doctors and public health nurses, who did have the time and inclination to read them, and who passed the advice on to those who did not have the resources to purchase such books, nor the middle class obsession with rearing 'superior' children.

Of course, it would be wrong to infer that the advice in the manuals was ever completely adhered to by those who bought or read them. Like many others, I suspect, my use of such books has been very selective, and primarily directed at identifying the symptoms of various childhood diseases. What emerges clearly from *Dream Babies* is that those who have cast themselves in the position of experts have frequently given conflicting advice; and that the type of advice given is often more closely linked to the social, political and economic context within which it is given, than any serious investigation of child development, or the process of parenting. This neglect in the New Zealand context is being overcome by David Swain's work on transition to parenthood (1978), the family networks study being conducted by the New Zealand Council for Educational Research (Meade and Rosemergy, 1984), and by the work of Robin McKinley (1983), whose doctoral thesis posed the question: *Mothers: Where would we be without them?* New Zealander Marg Gillings' thesis on the process of parenting, while based on Australian case studies, also enlarges our understanding of the experience of parenting as opposed to abstractions about how it might be done (Gilling, 1984).

The discussion in *Dream Babies* of the formal advice of the 'experts' is the perfect justification for a book like *Mothers Matter Too* (Phillips, 1983) which intertwines personal experience, the results of research, and practical advice about alternative coping strategies for women at home with

young children. Jenny Phillips has managed to convey, through the impersonal medium of the printed page, the type of reflection based on personal experience that most women might receive face-to-face. Christina Hardyment's review of the so-called 'expert' advice to women convinced me how fortunate we are in Trish Gribben (1979, 1982) and Jenny Phillips who can combine personal experience, humour and general knowledge in their revelations about the complex process of parenting.

*Dream Babies* is not an explicitly feminist book, but is a useful resource for anyone interested in a historical perspective on the pressure on women to define their responsibilities as mothers in certain ways. The successive building up of alternative and contrasting social constructions of 'motherhood' is a powerful antidote to the acceptance of whatever the current experts 'view might be on parenting.

Change over time in views about the ideal ways to raise children is beautifully illustrated by a review of various editions of Dr Spock's *Baby and Child Care*, a bestseller only outsold by the bible. Spock tended to revise and reassess his position on certain key topics like toilet training and feeding every decade. However, while recent editions of his book recognise that he is increasingly likely to be addressing women who are in paid work, he clearly considers that children who do not have full-time mothers are having 'second-best' care.

Spock's assumption that the continual presence of the mother is in the best interests of their young children is, of course, consistent with the view of John Bowlby, whose reports on the mental health of institutionalised children after the second world war were being published at just the same time as Spock's encyclopaedic baby manuals were first becoming popular. Hardyment's discussion of Bowlby tends to focus on the misuse of his conclusions about the negative effects on young children of long term separation from their parents.

Denise Riley provides a much more detailed and searching discussion of Bowlby's work and its impact. She argues that, far from having his work misused to discourage women from employment, Bowlby actively publicised the application of his arguments about 'maternal deprivation' to children in non-institutional settings. She cites a pamphlet written by Bowlby in 1958 entitled: *Can I Leave My Child?* The answer to the question he poses is Yes, but only in very limited circumstances which require careful preparation, and with the knowledge that separations from the mother, are going to give rise to problems'. The reward for mothers in their sense of being needed — after all 'no-one else will do' (Riley: 101).

*War in the Nursery* is an attempt to examine the relationship between psychological theories about child development such as Bowlby's and social policy with respect to women and children in post-war Britain. Denise Riley argues that while psychologists like Bowlby were advancing argu-

ments consistent with policy which would limit the availability of daycare centres, the closure of the war nurseries was based on continuous maternal care. The state's view was that the nurseries had only been established in order to draw women into employment during the war. After the war, the nurseries were only necessary in those areas where there was a continuing need for the paid labour of women with young children. Nurseries were only to be kept open if there were a 'demand'. This demand was not to be assessed in terms of the needs of either parents or children, but in terms of the labour market situation in particular areas.

Pragmatism, rather than psychological theory lay behind state policy with respect to women in the immediate post-war period — and this required the sending of ambiguous messages. If their labour were needed, women would have to be induced into providing it as a national service and their contribution to post-war reconstruction. If they were not needed as paid workers, they were to devote themselves to unpaid work in the home and maintain other jobs by the consumption of manufactured goods. Regional economic development was to determine which nurseries remained open, and the costs of maintaining them were to be met by local authorities rather than cental government.

State policy and the ambiguous response to that policy by left-wing parties, unions and women's organisations, (which all wanted to protect women's place in paid employment and improve the 'quality of life' for families) is seen by Riley as providing the context within which the acceptance of 'Bowlbyism' can be explained. Rather than having an effect on state policy, the popularity of Bowlby's ideas is explained as a consequence of their congruence with a course of action with respect to 'women at home' that had already emerged by the time his books and reports were published. The book, therefore sets 'Bowlbyism' within the context of theories of child development and post-war state policy in an attempt to develop an argument about the need for a sophisticated analysis of the relationship between ideology and state policy.

Denise Riley argues that there was 'no imposed and concerted drive to re-instate the family 'from above' at the immediate end of the war' (Riley: 1869), merely an extension of a pre-occupation with 'family' that had existed throughout the war. Working women's organizations and the socialist left, concerned about the standard of living of women at home, often failed to challenge attempts by the state to reconstruct the two parent, one bread-winner nuclear family, since those attempts were frequently linked to arguments for better housing, higher child allowance and access to consumer durables which might lessen domestic drudgery.

A dichotomy between 'women workers' and 'mothers' development which was not confronted by women's organizations, nor by the left. 'Women workers' were usually seen as unencumbered with children, while

'mothers' were firmly linked to full-time work in the home. The interests of 'women workers' were to be pursued by improving their rights to employment, the interest of 'mothers' lay in things like higher child allowances and better housing. This division in the perception of the interests of dirrerent categories of women, which was fundamentally misplaced since mothers were increasingly involved in paid work, is the legacy of the 1950s which is challenged by contemporary feminism. Denise Riley explains the emergence of this legacy through weaving a complex web of state interests, labour market demands, psychological theory, and the positions of women's groups and the socialist left.

The complexity of the post-war experience of New Zealand women, and the legacy of New Zealand post-war reconstruction of 'the Family' is emerging in Helen Cook's comparative research into the experiences of two generations of mothers — those in the 1970s and 1980s. In a recent paper she looks at contradiction and change in the lives of New Zealand women after the second war through an analysis of the pages of the *NZ Women's Weekly* and the *NZ Listener*. (Cook, 1984). Her review echoes some of the themes that emerge in *War in the Nursery*. There were similar concerns in Britain and New Zealand about the birth rate, and a tendency for groups concerned about women's interests to accept pronatalism in advancing arguments for better housing, family allowances, kindergartens and maternity care. The New Zealand Family Planning Association, for example, argued that 'New Zealand women would have more children if the difficulties now met with could be reduced or done away with' (Fenwick, 1977).

There is also evidence in New Zealand of some tensions between women's involvement in paid work and unpaid domestic work. Women whose employment during the war had been encouraged were now asked to question whether they were 'married to their job' or shortening their lives by doing 'men's work'. At the same time it was acknowledged that women were often better fed and healthier when they contributed to the household income.

On balance Helen Cook's review of the views projected in the *NZ Women's Weekly* and the *NZ Listener* suggest the dominance of expectations that women would be 'mothers', devoted full-time to childcare and domesticity. This did not prevent women from expressing concern about their conditions of work and the sheer drudgery involved in being on call for 24 hours a day. As in Britain, arguments for childcare facilities were often made in the interests of providing full-time mothers with some break from their children, rather than enabling them to enter paid employment. The development and expansion of the NZ Play Centre Movement grew out of this concern for the needs of 'mothers at home' rather than 'women workers'.

Some heirs to the legacy of the post-war construction of 'motherhood' are

the focus of Mary Boulton's study of the experiences of women with pre-school children. *On Being a Mother* is based on a doctoral thesis, and there are hints of this in her discussion of statistical correlations and distributions in tables. However, the strength of the book lies in extracts from the open-ended interviews she conducted with 50 women in two London suburbs. These capture the tensions and contradictions that are the reality of the experience of women caring for young children. Frustration, irritation, loss of identity and a sense of limitation, are documented side by side with the pleasures of first smiles, soft bodies and skills newly acquired.

Mary Boulton argues that little has been written on the actual experience of motherhood and childcare. Certainly the literature is nothing like as extensive as the prescriptive writing reviewed in *Dream Babies*. She considers that most of the recent attempts to fill this gap, such as the work of Ann Oakley, (Oakley, 1974, 1979, 1980) focus on mothering as 'domestic labour' or 'work' and often neglect the emotional features of the experience. While I have tended to see this as a useful approach since it fundamentally challenges that distorting division between 'women workers' amd 'mothers', Boulton argues that frameworks of analysis developed to investigate paid work are not necessarily appropriate for understanding the experience of being a mother. Her view is that, while the 'domestic labour' perspective on mothering provided many useful insights, it 'did violence to women's own accounts of their lives' (Boulton: 33) because their work as mothers is carried out within the context of a set of social relations which are not identical to those which characterise paid employment.

*On Being a Mother* attempts to take seriously women's accounts of their lives and 'to develop concepts to make sense of those accounts in the way women themselves do' (Boulton: 31). The conceptual framework used involves distinguishing two different modes of experience involved in mothering : women's immediate response to looking after children, and their sense of meaning and purpose in doing so. It is recognised that women can at any one time be filled with irritation and frustration as they cope with their young children, and yet be sustained by a sense that what they are doing is worthwhile. This sense of purpose may keep women at home with their children, even when the frustrations seem overwhelming.

These distinctions are useful in analysing complexity and contradictions in women's responses to the experience of caring for young children. However, I consider that Mary Boulton herself did 'violence' to women's accounts of their own lives by using the interview material to categorise the women according to whether their immediate response to caring for their children was 'enjoyment' or 'irritation' and whether their 'sense of meaning or purpose' was 'strong' or 'weak'. Exactly how she managed to place the women she interviewed in these dichotomous categories is never fully revealed, and it is done at the expense of underplaying the fact that

women's enjoyment and frustrations, their sense of doing something worthwhile, or perceptions of total futility, are not static, but frequently changing and subject to review.

The categories of 'enjoyed' or 'irritated', and 'strong' or 'weak' sense of purpose are used to generate four types of experience of mothering ' 'fulfilled', 'satisfied', 'in conflict', and 'alienated'. While it is stressed that these are categories of experience, rather than categories of women, it is clear that the women are grouped on the basis of this framework. The result is of an oversimplification of what the interview material suggests is an intriguingly complex set of responses by women to what they do as mothers, and what motivates them to do it. Sociological studies of work satisfaction which placed people on seven-point satisfaction scales have not been very informative about the responses of paid workers to their work experiences, and attempts to devise equivalent categorisations for women's responses to mothering are often similarly unenlightening.

Fortunately, *On Being a Mother* is not totally dominated by attempts to categorise the women interviewed and their experiences. There is extensive quotation from the interviews which are lively, interesting, and richly illustrate diversity in women's experiences and their feelings about caring for small children. Of particular interest was many women's expression of their 'need to be needed', and how much their sense of purpose in life often derived from the knowledge that they were uniquely important to their particular children. As one woman put it: 'It's nice to have someone who's *dependent* on you, someone who needs you'. Another woman stressed that although older children lost the physical dependence of babies they still remained emotionally dependent on their mothers' support and attention: 'They need you in new ways'.

Dependence of others as a source of personal fulfillment and identity has, of course, been illustrated for New Zealanders by Rosemary Barrington and Alison Gray in *The Smith Women*. Their interviews highlighted many women's 'need to be needed' in this society, and the feeling of worth and satisfaction derived from caring for others. Bowlby in the 1950s offered others' dependence on them to mothers as the 'reward' for providing their children with continuous maternal care; it seems to retain its attraction in the last quarter of the twentieth century in both New Zealand and Britain. What I remain uncertain about is whether this need to be needed has a causal effect on women's behaviour, or whether it is a last ditch attempt to draw satisfaction out of the very dependency in ways that were never imagined before becoming a mother.

The satisfaction that derives from a sense that a child is dependent on you in a unique way, is, of course, often for women linked to their economic dependency on either a male partner or the state. As Hilary Graham states so perceptively:

> Thus, for many women, being a dependent is synonymous not with receiving care, but with giving it . . . For children, and for men, economic dependency and poverty is the cost of being cared for: for women, economic dependency and poverty is the cost of caring. (Graham 1983: 24-25)

Mary Boulton does not probe too deeply into the costs to women of their children's dependence, or their own economic dependence on the men in their households. Little attention is given to economic dependence as a trap which may keep a woman with dependent children in a violent marriage which John Church has documented (Church, 1984 : 58-59). Nor is the dependence of young children as a source of depression considered in any depth. The women Mary Boulton interviewed may express irritation and frustration, but seldom confess to the psychological distress which Jenny Phillips has sketched so graphically for New Zealand women in *Mothers Matter Too.*

Mary Boulton suggests that 'another area which requires further exploration is that of the influence of social networks on the women's experience as mothers' (Boulton : 211). Such a study is, of course, presently underway in New Zealand. The Family Networks study of the NZ Council for Educational Research has involved several interviews with women and men which focus on the people and organisations which comprise the social networks of parents with children under 5 years. The advantage of this study is that it not only fills a gap in our knowledge about the social networks of parents with young children, but it also involves interviews with *both* parents in two parent households (Meade et al, 1983, 1984). Boulton's study, like many others, depends on women's reports about their husbands' involvement or lack of involvement, in parenting.

While *On Being a Mother* does analyse some of the contradictions and complexity of women's experience of parenting, it does not equal much New Zealand writing and research which is increasingly, not only capturing women's accounts of their experiences, but resisting pressures to apply to those accounts the neat categorisations employed by Mary Boulton. We now have accounts of mothering in the New Zealand context which are historical (Olssen and Levesque, 1978; Roth, 1980) and capture their experiences in the words of women themselves (Barrington and Gray, 1981; Meade, Rosemergy and Johnston, 1983, 1984; Trainor, 1984). At the same time we are developing a body of indigenous theory about domestic labour, and the political relations of reproduction which will stimulate not only our thinking about mothering, but a whole new crop of empirical studies (Saville-Smith, 1982; Porszolt, 1984; Trainor, 1984).

It is, of course, not exclusively in their position as mothers that women

expend their energies as unpaid carers. *A Labour of Love : Women, Work and Caring* explores women's experience of caring for children and adults who are disabled or chronically sick, as well as elderly people, and assesses the economic costs of the provision of that unpaid care. The opening chapters by Hilary Graham and Clare Ungerson explore what caring means, and why *women* care.

In their introduction, Janet Finch and Dulcie Groves argue that caring means work, and this labour is often hidden behind the emotional and psychological aspects of caring. However, like Mary Boulton, they also suggest that domestic labour and caring for others is never *just* labour because it occurs in the context of emotional bonds which frequently provide an explanation for why women continue to do this work.

This theme is developed by Hilary Graham who is critical of the separation of the labour of caring from '... its symbolic role in the constructions of women's identity' (Graham, 1983: 17). She argues that ' . . . caring is simultaneously about our material existence and about our consciousness' (Graham: 14), and stresses that we need to locate caring in the context of a set of material relationships within and beyond the household, and consider its psychological, emotional and symbolic importance for women. It has to be explained both objectively and subjectively, because it is both a *process* occuring within material relations which link households, capitalist economies and the state, and an *emotional relationship* linked to individual carers' sense of personal identity.

This approach to caring breaks through arbitrary disciplinary boundaries in a way that is characteristic of women's studies, while the understanding of caring as '... the medium through which women are accepted into and feel they belong in the social world' (Graham: 30) compactly sums up the insights into the 'need to be needed' which have been generated by research into women's experience of caring, both here and in Britain. Graham's interest is in incorporating and extending socialist-feminist analyses of domestic labour.

Clare Ungerson uses the distinction between 'caring about' and 'caring for' others in order to separate the emotion of caring from the time, labour and energy involved in doing it. To 'care about' another person demands no more than having positive feelings about them. To 'care for' someone involves tending to their needs, it entails work. She sets women's unpaid work of caring for others in the context of changes in their involvement in the labour market, state policy with respect to the care of elderly and disabled adults and children, and the ideology which sustains both women's provision of unpaid care and state intervention, or lack of intervention, in the day-to-day care of dependents.

While there is no direct New Zealand equivalent of *A Labour of Love* a number of us are addressing ourselves to the issues pursued in it. A recent

study of the stresses on women of caring for an intellectually handicapped child, as well as the financial costs to the family of that care, is extending our understanding of both the experience and the economics of that form of unpaid care in the New Zealand context (Chetwynd 1983, 1985a, 1985b, 1985c). The dependency of children on adults for day-to-day care, the associated tendency for women as carers to be economically dependent on individual men or the state, and the development of government policy with respect to these dependency situations has also recently received detailed attention by Peggy Koopman-Boyden and Claudia Scott (1984).

Research is underway ito the social processes involved in caring for a physically disabled partner (Farnsworth and Gidlow, 1984). While men as well as women assume responsibility for the care of other adults in their household who are physically disabled, the greater likelihood that men will experience accidental physical disablement through car accidents and sports injuries contributes to women, more frequently than men, facing the demands of this type of unpaid care.

The problems of those caring for dependent relatives at home have been explored in a Wellington study based on interviews with 65 people, predominantly women, who were caring at home for children or adults with intellectual or physical disabilities, or looking after elderly relatives. This study captures the stresses involved in caring for dependent relatives which ranged from depression and mental breakdown, to sleeplessness and sheer physical exhaustion of tending to the needs of those who are physically disabled (SROW, Wellington Branch, 1976).

This has not been an exhaustive review of recent work which explores the reality of women's caring in the New Zealand context. It should, however, be suggestive of the range of work which is currently underway into the unpaid caring work performed by women in their own homes, and the material relations, ideas, beliefs and sentiments that inform, sustain and reproduce that experience. Work produced outside New Zealand may have provided a framework for this discussion of our own contributions to information about women's experiences as carers, and to the development of theoretical understandings of their involvement in unpaid caring, but it by no means eclipses the varied and innovative work being done on our own doorstep.

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# Images, Illusions of Harmony: the 1950s' Wife and Mother.

*Work in progress by Helen Cook.*

Only four years after the end of World War Two the women of NZ were being urged to 'Vote for Compulsory Military Training.' The headlines in a full page advertisement of the *New Zealand Women's Weekly (NZWW)* stated:

> Women have *every* reason to vote for COMPULSORY MILITARY TRAINING. Ex-servicemen make this earnest appeal. Returned men from two wars gratefully remember the wonderful support they received from the women of New Zealand. Now they ask it again — to PREVENT war. Safety lies in a strong nation. Preparedness can ensure security. (July 28, 1949. Inserted by: NZ Defence League; Servicemen's Associations; Defence Action Committee.)

Yet, in the aftermath of the war this same magazine had carried many articles urging women to move into politics in order to counterbalance the warmongering of men. As one anonymous article of 1947 had said:

> This male civilisation of the west is just about to destroy itself. . . As a result we may see at last that women exhausted by the sacrifices of her children generation after generation will take a hand in affairs . . . A man controlled world is 'ipso facto' a world of combat, and combat no matter in what field will destroy our civilisation. (August 7, 1947).

But now, as they moved into a long awaited decade of hoped for peace and prosperity, women were again being exhorted to protect their homes and families by supporting a new war effort. After the depression of the thirties, the hardships and separations of war, the continuing domestic trials of the late forties with housing shortages, power cuts, more rationing and a shortage of consumer goods, the ideals of the 'good life' were just showing signs of becoming reality when the distant war clouds began to gather once again. *NZWW* editor Jean Wishart wrote:

> Peace when it finally came was a glorious relief — but we soon discovered it was only an interlude. World War Two had been the major conflagration, but there were other fires of hate and discord still burning . . . Are we racing headlong to self destruction in this so called atomic age? Is our democratic way of life more secure . . . is that 'new world' any nearer to being a reality? (August 26, 1954).

Amidst the traumatic reunions and domestic difficulties, the newly established families, the foundation of post-war NZ, were just beginning to find their feet. This visible blooming of life as the post-war babies began to toddle and talk provided an emotive reason for New Zealanders to concern themselves with far away 'evils' — and once again to incorporate the loyalties of the womenfolk as mothers of the new baby boom generation: children who were to be protected from harm, and given all the benefits that a supposed peaceful prosperity, family stability and psychological insight could provide.

This time the enemy was vaguer and could not be pinpointed with such accuracy, or combatted with such unity as Hitler's Nazism had been. The enemy was apparently not just moving in military formation through distant lands, but was also infiltrating and active under the rooftops of NZ suburbia and, even worse, on the shop floor of the workplace. Communism or the 'red menace' was spreading south, and the domino theory which was spread through the playgrounds and into the school rooms became increasingly acceptable and accepted. Roy Theodore wrote in a *NZWW* article entitled 'We Must Take a Stand':

> In South-East Asia communism is trying hard to gain control of

> Burma, Siam and Vietnam, which produce the rice which feeds millions of people. The programme is clear. With control of those countries, Malaya would be next and Indonesia would follow. Thus the biggest part of the communist bridge to Australia and NZ would be built. Yes, potentially we are close to the storm. (February, 1950).

Similarly the *NZWW* editor wrote:

> The arc is slowly but slowly extending . . . The infiltration of communism throughout the Far East cannot but have repercussions here, and at the present rate of progress, in the event of a flare up, we stand to fight alone — an unpleasant thought. At all costs further penetration must be halted . . . The Government need have no fear that New Zealanders will shirk their duty once they fully understand where their duty lies. (June 29, 1950).

And indeed New Zealanders did answer the call to Malaya, then to Korea and later to Vietnam (although by then the tables had turned and the protected generation of children, now long-haired and vociferous, rejected the arguments and led the protest that heralded the more tentative politics of 'each unto her/his own' and 'live and let live'.)

Unlike earlier wars the fight against 'the reds' was not necessarily over there and out of the way: the paranoia whipped up over the waterfront dispute in 1951 demonstrated that part of the battle was to be fought on our own land, as F.M.H. wrote in the *NZWW*:

> The whole of the world today is in the midst of strife, not merely the actual battle in Korea, but all the little undeclared wars where men are striving by devious means to institute communism throughout the world. Here in New Zealand this strife is manifested in the waterfront strike. (October 4, 1951).

And Margaret Robinson, another contributor, had already claimed: 'These workers are doing their utmost to ruin a prosperous little country.' (May 17, 1951). However, such a backdrop of political and moral unease provided an ideal environment for the promotion of a social consensus based on unified values which, if adopted, would be seen to counterbalance and overlay such uncertainties as were invading NZ's shores. An era of strong consensus values and accepted rules of behaviour gained even more credence because it was accompanied by relative prosperity that could be an antidote to other ills. This myth of affluence spread an aura of optimism that was coupled with the belief that remaining ills could be cured — i.e. the

tools of psychology and science, given will power and expertise, would quell such disruptions and abnormalities that might disturb the ideals of the 'good life.'

Indeed, there was a carefully orchestrated campaign to the effect that, in the main, the dangers of communism could be kept at bay and even overseas, provided there was harmony at home and in the home. Again, the reality was not so straight forward, as these consensus conditions for living were themselves fraught with contradiction. The myth of family stability and happiness rested on the illusion of separate spheres for men and women — the male breadwinner and the female homemaker: each content and occupied in the separate spheres of influence and endeavour that would succour and benefit the new breed of children being raised.

Yet, in part, the new prosperity was vested in the incorporation of more workers into the economic machinery, in particular the spending of more and more money on domestic consumption. This required the incorporation and retention of more wives and mothers into the paid workforce; their pay packets could then enrich their own domestic budgets so that they could afford to buy the goods being produced.

This gradual shift in the everyday working lives and expectations of families had inevitable repercussions on the personal power politics of family life; but it was not accompanied by a shift away from the ideological values which were being preached with even greater certainty. Thus, the messages hitting men and women were confusing and contradictory. A major concern of the fifties was the rise of marital conflict and discord. The reverse side of the images of happy families and separate spheres was provided by magazines full of insight and advice designed to integrate the impact of new equalities for women into the traditional framework of marriage responsibilities. The wives and mothers of the fifties trod a delicate line as skilful if confused jugglers.

The focus of my work in progress is on how these wives and mothers mediated the multiplicity of contradictions that surrounded their roles as paid workers, community volunteers, housewives, lovers and mothers throughout the decade. In an earlier paper (Cook, 1984) that dealt with the lives of women in the immediate aftermath of the war during the period of rehabilitation and reconstruction, I traced the process of domestic adjustment and discontent of women who were not sliding quietly back into their pre-war roles as had been expected. On the one hand women yearned for some peaceful domesticity and, in accord with this, government policy and rehabilitation schemes saw the establishment of 'normal' family life as the best basis for future economic and social recovery, as well as the emotional well-being of the 'returned' men. But the longterm shortages of housing and consumer goods, together with the effects of a restructuring of industry and business on a peace time basis prevented 'normality' from matching the

rosy ideal.

At the same time, women themselves had wanted a new deal in the way of services to ease their lot as housewives and mothers, while acquiring new equalities and opportunities in the workplace and a stronger voice in decision-making. Reconstruction plans drawn up during the war generated such debate, which was given extra fuel by the continuing domestic hardship after the war.

But by 1950 the tenor of such protest was changing, becoming less strident, less collective, focusing less on wider political issues and more on the personal politics of family life. On the surface it may appear that women's radicalism, deriving from war and hardship, was being mediated by the easing of shortages; submerged by busy domesticity as the new generation of children crowded the bedrooms; and fragmented amidst the rituals of suburban living. Yet was it? Few of us 'baby boomers' being reared in the fifties have memories or images of our mothers as radical or political women. Yet even if few of our mothers gave a vocal or active expression to the new ideals that had been debated so vociferously in the immediate post-war period I propose to show that the seeds of these ideals did live on, as a quiet revolution that started to change the basis of family life. Unlike the noise and razzamatazz with which we heralded our own revolutions in the women's movement, our mothers seem to us truly 'the quiet generation' as they have been characterised. I would suggest that the seeds of this later protest movement had their beginnings in the experiences and new consciousness of our mothers as young women of the 1940s — 1950s. Their lives may appear to us as a sellout compromise that seemingly upheld traditional family values and power relationships; yet this 'quiet generation' of women were, within their own communities, establishing the new frameworks which were to be an essential bridge to the women's movement of the seventies.

More importantly, whilst upholding the values of marriage and family life, they were quietly imbuing their daughters with the contradictory ideals of careers and self sufficiency. They were also spearheading the new community services that were needed to alleviate the total responsibility for children, then falling on mothers. In the forties they had naively demanded that the government provide such services, in the fifties they did it themselves — and it is their daughters who have felt the tangible rewards of their energies.

Feminist appraisals of the history of the women's movement have tended to write off the fifties as a 'back to the home' period, but I would suggest that feminist activism in the fifties becomes more visible if we daughters can discard our preconceived 1970s' framework of what constitutes feminist activity, and acknowledges the primacy of marriage and motherhood as a dominant ideology. Feminist writing and activity of that particular period

took place in the context which saw women as having a unique role within the family which had to be encouraged and reinforced — yet at the same time their domestic burden ought to be eased in order to make room for other activities. The difference was that my generation of women had not lived through a depression and war. We had also acquired new skills and a new consciousness of male hegemony; unlike our mothers we did not necessarily place a peaceful and ordered domesticity high on our personal priorities. This choice of our mothers has a curious duality. Harmonious domesticity provided the basis on which many of their activities were justified, but it was also a barrier they were reluctant to cross towards new alternatives and greater equality. They were reluctant to rock the boat of conventionality, yet their activities in the home and the community were beginning to do just that. As in my earlier paper, I am presently using for my next one material from the *NZWW* and the *New Zealand Listener.* In the same way I have brought together various strands of anecdote and analysis which collectively portray a reality that connects the individual experiences of women with the wider political, economic and ideological structures that constrain and order individuals in their everyday lives. The printed word is just one medium people use both to change and validate realities, employing words that both reflect and foreshadow their concerns. Thus, the printed weeklies give a glimpse of the dialectical dialogue between individual experiences and aspirations and collective values and structures. In this second paper my selection and ordering of material is again personal and is, of course, presented with 30 years of hindsight reflection. It also acknowledges that ordinary life and reality are fraught with contradiction and conflict; we overlay and mediate these with ideological norms and everyday activities. We become, then, simultaneously blind to such contradiction, yet also aware of it because we are an integral part of it.

For example: the twin terms of 'wife and mother' may roll off the tongue as if their coupling were natural and easy to achieve. The naturalness may appear inevitable, but all women know that the ideological images of wives and mothers, and the day to day practicalities of the roles do not coalesce so neatly. It is not so uncommon for women to maintain that children are an essential part of their marriage, but simultaneously state that the marriage has not been so good since the children came. We might be aware of the contradiction in the dual role of 'wife and mother' but we also sustain the contradiction through mediation, which cannot resolve it, but makes some kind of acceptance possible.

My forthcoming paper has three sections: the first gives an insight into the concerns about marriage that were much written about in the fifties. Such concerns may still be hitting the press, but an analysis of the new marriage 'problems', as they were perceived in the fifties, begins to reveal the contradictions that were reverberating in the various dimensions of life.

Marriage itself was not necessarily at the centre of the strain, rather, the stress of living amidst such contradictions had an inevitable impact on marriage. The conflicts emerging in the marriage relationships reflected and replicated at an intimate level the wider contradictions between ideological values and social and economic realities — which were becoming less easy to mesh together.

The second section analyses the new expectations for women in their role as mothers. Motherhood was portrayed as a career; a worthy alternative to the real careers becoming possible for women. This new picture of motherhood enabled women to portray their abilities as unique and worthy, yet the demands of this role led to much frustration, as their efforts did not necessarily yield the results the experts predicted.

The third section focuses on the new ideals of equality and femininity and the impact these had on the working lives of women in the house, the community and the workforce. Although women's 'work' was subsumed within the primary framework of being a wife and mother, their total activities, both paid and unpaid, helped to undermine the hegemony of marriage and motherhood ideology.

*Helen Cook was supervisor of the Victoria University creche 1978-84, and president of the Early Childhood Workers' Union 1982-84. She has been overseas working on her Ph.D thesis, which is looking at the impact of child rearing on women's lives. She is returning home in May.*

## Notes

The author of this introductory outline of a much longer work was travelling overseas when we received her draft. We decided to publish th outline as it stood, rather than wait for the completed paper, because it adds another important perspective to the discussion of ideology by our other contributors. Editor.

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# Archives: Associations Of Women Teachers in 1901 —

*Margot Roth*

Currently, there are women in various places up and down the country building up files on our accomplished foremothers, in preparation for the publication of the *National Biography* in 1990. All this industry is to assist the compilers of the *Biography* in redressing the balance of visibility, which so far has (unsurprisingly) favoured men. Among particular areas of women's lives to which history has turned a consistently blind eye is their involvement in paid employment. This omission may be influenced — consciously or unconsciously — by the notion that a woman doing regular work for wages is taking second-best and only marking time until she steps out in the wedding march. Her occupational activities, then, become unreal and are therefore hardly worth mentioning or counting. Consequently, it is reassuring when records turn up to show that teachers, for example, took them-

selves and their profession very seriously; were very well aware of the discrimination that aimed at keeping them at the bottom of the career ladder; and briskly and competently organised themselves to counter all this. On the other hand, it is a little depressing to read 84 year old discussions about male attitudes and women's pay and find them so drearily familiar — still.

The New Zealand Women Teachers' Association began in Christchurch in 1901. Other branches were established, and in 1914 formed themselves into a national federation. Some Association records are held in the library of the New Zealand Educational Institute. At present they are on loan to the NZ and Pacific section of the Auckland University library, and that is where I saw them.

The extracts which follow come from a brief history of the Association's first 25 years (Chaplin, 1926), and from the proceedings of some of the annual conferences. (One slightly tantalising feature of these reports is that very few first names are given — they are mostly initials and occasionally even these are absent). The selections are, of course, constrained by space considerations as well as my own preference.

**The history:** The New Zealand Educational Institute started as a small body of teachers in 1883, and by the beginning of the present century women were feeling the need of an organisation that should focus attention on their view of matters Educational.

Many weaknesses in the system pressed very hardly on women teachers, and they were moved to make articulate a natural desire to improve their status. They resented too, statements publicly made of their inferiority.

Realising that 'unity is strength' they began to combine into associations of women teachers.

Prior to 1900, the Education system of New Zealand was a thing of shreds and patches. It was quite a common thing for a fully certified teacher to serve in a school for several years at a salary of £60 with no prospect of improvement. Any teacher who received as much as £150 per annum was looked upon as 'rich beyond the dreams of avarice,' while the less fortunate grew hopeless with long waiting.

One typical scale of salaries for girl pupil-teachers was:—

1st year £16 per annum.
2nd year £24 per annum.
3rd year £32 per annum.
4th year £40 per annum.

Those who elected to enter a training college in their fifth year had to suffer a drop from £40 to £30.

The desperate feeling of the teachers under this regime may be imagined, and by means of the representations of the men and women at

the annual councils of the Institute, and by leading teachers who wrote to the public press and interviewed members of parliament, the country began to be aware that the Educational house needed badly to be set in order.

Parliament then agreed to the setting up of 'A Royal Education Commission' to go into the whole question (1900).

The evidence given before this Commission consisted largely of the evidence of headmasters, board members and of others concerned in the management of schools, but of very few women. As already indicated, women had fallen into a more or less hopeless state, and did not realise the importance of putting their view before the Commission, consequently only a few did so, but a great many of the rank and file later realised that they would suffer for the neglect. The publication of the evidence given by some headmasters and others who apparently had a low opinion of the value of women teachers' work struck a blow at the woman teacher's prestige, already in a parlous state. This awakened the women to action, and was the beginning of the organizations now scattered throughout New Zealand.

At Christchurch on June 8th, 1901, a meeting of women teachers was held. There were 23 present and Miss Christina Henderson, B.A. was voted to the chair. After a discussion, in which the opinion was expressed that 'it seemed highly necessary for women teachers to band themselves together if they were to keep their status in the schools and to get a fair emolument for their work,' the following resolution was moved by Miss E. Beck, seconded by Miss Morrison, spoken to by the Misses E. Stevenson, E. Kitchingman, K. Baldwin, G.E. Glanville and E.A. Chaplin, and carried unanimously: — 'That an Association of women teachers be formed to secure a proper recognition of women's work.'

On June 15th, 1901, the first general meeting was held. Strong objection was taken by several speakers to some of the evidence given before the Royal Commission concerning the work of women teachers and a motion of protest was carried against statements that 'women cannot teach the upper standards.'

Officers elected were:— President — Miss C.K. Henderson, B.A., Vice-Presidents — Misses B. Jack, B.A., and Stewart, Hon. Secretary and Treasurer — Miss G.M. Glanville, and a committee of five.

At the next meeting in August, 1901, the following resolutions were passed:

> That women teachers resident outside North Canterbury be asked to form associations of women teachers in the different centres of the Colony on the same lines as the North Canterbury Association

> and to join in petitioning parliament that the first principle of equal pay for equal work receive immediate and practical recognition and that no colonial scale of payment be passed into law which ignores this principle.
>
> That this meeting of women teachers protests against the adoption of the Scale of staffs and salaries suggested by the Commission on the ground *(a)* That the interests of women teachers have been almost ignored, *(b)* That it perpetuates the anomalies of the old system in refusing to recognise the principle of equal pay for equal work, *(c)* That the scale is deceptive inasmuch as many of the higher positions marked F. exist only on paper.

The interest shown by the women teachers in the movement towards a better recognition of their work is shown by the fact that at this meeting, when the Association was only two months old, the membership role was reported as 130.

The Wellington Branch of the W.T.A. was formed on Sept. 10th, 1901. The meeting was convened by Miss M. Lorimer, M.A.

The following resolutions were carried — Miss P. Myers, B.A. proposed and Miss Hall seconded:— 'That an association of women teachers be formed.' Miss Helyer proposed and Miss Craig seconded:— 'That the object of the Association shall be the improved status of women teachers.'

The officers elected were:— President — Miss M. Lorimer, M.A., Vice Presidents — Misses Dowdeswell and Craig, Secretary — Miss Flannagan, Treasurer — Miss Hall.

The formation of these associations of women teachers marks the beginning of a steady advance towards a better recognition of a woman teacher's work. The progress has been slow, but the movement is onward. Though her status is yet below its rightful place, she occupies a better understanding than in 1900. Her meagre salary then barely sufficed for the needs of life, and a woman teacher was often known as such by her shabby and old-fashioned clothing. This will be readily understood when authentic figures state that in 1900 the average salaries of *adult teachers* were:—

Men £163 12s. 8d.
Women £85 12s. 6d.

**A.G.M. 1902:** As affecting women teachers, it should be mentioned that the loss of the term 'Head Mistress,' as distinguishing the head women teacher in a large primary school, has done considerable damage to the prestige of women teachers. To class the ablest women teachers in the service of the primary schools as 'assistants' marks them with an impress of inferiority which is plain to pupil and parent alike.

Today, nearly all primary schools are *mixed* schools, where women as

'assistants' have very little scope for developing originality in methods of teaching, or in proving their organizing ability. This fact has led to a feeling of dissatisfaction and unrest among the ablest women. The movement towards a widening of opportunity continues with renewed force.

In 1904 strong representations were made to Parliament against the double scale of salaries. The North Canterbury W.T.A. passed resolutions of protest and in October arrangements were completed for the Misses K. Baldwin and E.A. Chaplin to leave for Wellington to interview the Education Committee of the House, when a telegram from a member assured the women that the necessary amendments had been agreed upon.

The work done had not been in vain, for in 1905 an Education Amendment Act came into force with the obnoxious M. and F. headings removed. To the delight of women teachers the new salary scale for assistants (Schedule, Part I for Mixed Schools), made no differentiation in salary for sex. By this scale the minimum salary of an assistant was raised to £85 and by the Amendment Act of 1908 was further raised to £90.

The lack of a promotion scheme was keenly felt by teachers and formed the subject of considerable effort from 1906 onwards. About this time, too, the women teachers realised the injustice that was being suffered by women under some Education Boards.

A clause in the Education Amendment Act, 1905 provided that 'at least one of the first three assistants in any school must be a woman.' Some Boards (*e.g.* — N. Canterbury and Southland) gave the *second* of these three positions to a woman, while the Boards of Auckland and Otago almost invariably granted her only the *third* place *i.e.* — the *lowest possible* allowed by the Act. As the women concerned were among the most experienced and able in the teaching service, they not only suffered in salary, but would probably retire with the salary of only *third* assistant and so be penalised for the rest of their lives by a correspondingly small superannuation allowance.

The matter bulked largely at the annual meeting of the N.Z.E.I. at Dunedin in January, 1909, when a proposal was made by women delegates that the Clause in the Act should be altered to read 'one of the first *two* assistants in any school must be a woman.' So many 'amendments' and 'further amendments' were proposed by men, that no proposal was carried. The nine women present left the Conference disappointed, but not dismayed.

Considerable dissatisfaction having been expressed regarding weaknesses in the system, a Royal Commission on Education was set up in 1912. Its wide field of enquiry is summarized thus:— 'Generally in what respect

improvements can be made to secure higher efficiency, better administration and co-ordination, and the securing of greater value for the annual expenditure on the branches of Education referred to.'

Women teachers in all the centres seized the opportunity of placing before the Commission their views on the matters in question. They were disappointed that it had not been thought necessary to give any woman a seat on the Commission. One of them wrote to the Minister of Education on this point, (under date May 28th, 1912), and the Minister replied:—'I am sorry that I did not think of putting a woman on the Commission before its personnel was set up. The thought occured to me too late.'

Unfortunately, this is but one incident which shows the necessity of keeping the women's viewpoint before the Educational authorities. It has not always been *malice prepense* on the part of the powers that be, but a simple forgetfulness that women need be considered at all.

The poor salaries allotted to women under all the preceding scales, and now threatening under the 1914 amendments caused the women teachers throughout the Dominion to work together as they had never done before, and the need for a union of forces was strongly felt. Correspondence between the Misses E. Simpson (Auckland), P. Myers (Wellington), H.L. Birss (Southland) and E.A. Chaplin (Canterbury), resulted in definite steps being taken towards a federation of the various Women Teachers' Associations.

It was agreed that the Wellington Branch communicate with other centres, and convene a meeting to be held prior to the annual meeting of the N.Z.E.I. Wellington. — Miss Bright, Miss N.E. Coad, M.A., Miss P. Myers, B.A., Miss Cooper, Miss J. Finlayson, Mrs. McKellar Smith, Miss E. Helyer. Christchurch. — Miss A. Barker, Miss E.A. Chaplin, B.A., Miss M. Smith. Dunedin. — Miss A. Andrew, Miss M. Ralston. Nelson. — Miss Cameron, Miss A.F. Johnson. Auckland. — Miss E. Wilson. Hokitika. — Miss E. Ward.

Apologies for absence were received from Mrs. Dowling (New Plymouth), Miss E. Glanville (Gisborne), Miss H.L. Birss (Invercargill), Miss Macdonald (Invercargill, Miss Woolf (Masterton), Miss Dowdeswell (Wellington).

Miss P. Myers was unanimously elected President *pro tem* and Miss Coad, Secretary; Miss E. Wilson was appointed to represent the North Island; Miss E.A. Chaplin, to represent the South Island.

The President explained that the need of combined effort, and a united opinion in dealing with Educational questions had been brought home to them in connection with the discussions on the recent Bill. The Secretary referred to the work that had been done by circularizing members of Parliament, by deputations to the Minister, personal interviews with members, etc. She hoped their hands would be strengthened by the formation of new women's branches.

Miss Chaplin referred to the work done by the Canterbury Association. They had prompted a petition during the year (1914) praying that the Council of Education to be set up should have some women representatives. This petition they had circulated throughout the Dominion among women teachers, and eleven hundred certificated women had signed the petition.

Though the women would look at questions from their own viewpoint, they were not working in antagonism to men. Miss A. Andrew spoke as deputy for Miss M. Mackenzie, President of their women's branch. They wished to work with the men, who, however, fully appreciated the fact that women understood far more about the education of girls and infants than they themselves did. Miss Wilson (Auckland), said they had been forced into a defensive attitude, but they were not aggressive. The opposition they had encountered had made women more than ever united. It was mainly the junior men whom they had to oppose, the older and more experienced men generally took a more broad-minded view.

After further discussions as to the aims and objects of the Women's Associations, it was moved by Miss E.A. Chaplin (Christchurch) and seconded by Miss Helyer (Wellington) — 'That this meeting take steps to form a federation of Women Teachers' Associations.'

The resolution was carried and it was resolved that steps be taken to get the Association registered. It was further resolved that women teachers be urged to join the Institute and that the Association's subscription be as low as possible in order to encourage membership of both.

The President pointed out that they were striking out on behalf of the education of girls and infants. At present all deputations had to be appointed by the N.Z.E.I. and consequently women were left out. Hitherto there had not been any women on the Executive of the N.Z.E.I. Miss Chaplin contended that women had no weight when they were in such an absurd minority as they had been at the annual meetings of the N.Z.E.I.

Further discussion took place as to the wisdom of relying too much on the Institute. The President, in reply to controversy, quoted the following:— The Twelfth Schedule of the Education Amendment Act had made provision for women inspectors, that clause having been inserted on the recommendation of the various women teachers' associations. When it came before the House for consideration it was quietly struck out. That was a typical example of what to expect when they had no independent standing.

Representations derogatory to women had been made before the Education Committee of the House, and the President pointed out that in regard to the basis of grading they must bestir themselves at once. It was after discussion resolved: 'That the various women teachers' associations be asked to bring forward through their district institutes to be sent on to the

N.Z.E.I. the following remit:— "In a system of grading based on efficiency and service there can be only one classification list for teachers."

The Secretary then gave evidence of the serious disabilities under which many women were labouring. The great bulk of women teachers were in grades I and II, and many of them had been in the service as long as 20 years. Promotion was not a practical possiblity for the great majority. Provision should be made for every teacher to rise above £140 during 20 years of service.

After discussion, the following resolution (moved by Miss Coad and seconded by Miss Chaplin), was carried unanimously: 'That pending the introduction of a system of payment, based on efficiency and service the salary in Grade II be £140 to £180, and grade III be eliminated.'

**A.G.M. 1920:** Miss Andrews (Taranaki) moved, 'That this conference of the N.Z.W.T.A. strongly supports the policy of the Minister of Education in training women as dental nurses for schools and hopes that in the interests of the children this policy will soon be carried into effect.' Miss Chaplin, in seconding the motion, said that the need of the children was great, and this was a practical effort to cope with the ever increasing evil of dental decay and consequent ill-health. Carried.

Miss Coad moved, 'That women teachers in Secondary schools should receive the same annual increment as men in secondary schools.' Miss MacKenzie seconded. Carried. Miss Coad also moved, 'That there should be no differentiation in the salaries of men and women entrants into Secondary schools.' Seconded by Mrs Howard and carried.

Miss Chaplin moved, 'That in any reconstruction of schools, it is desirable that the separate schools for girls should be retained.' She said that there were very few primary girls' schools, but they had done good work, for in them there were better opportunities of specializing in girls' education. In the towns they were particularly valuable, and it would be a distinct loss to merge them into mixed schools. Mrs Howard (Marlborough) said that girls' schools were general in all large centres in England and had proved their worth. She seconded the motion. Carried.

Miss Chaplin moved, 'That this Association re-affirms the principle that the inspectorate should consist of both men and women.' She urged that it was but just that, in a system where the schools consisted of girls and boys, and where the teachers were women and men, the inspectorate should not be one-sided. Visitors to New Zealand expressed themselves as amazed that our education authorities shut women out of these positions. It was not so in any other country of good educational standing. We were content, apparently, to send young women teachers out into the remote backblocks to conduct small schools, yet women were deemed unfit for the better paid and more dignified positions on the inspectorate, because

of the difficulties the inspection of backblock schools would afford them. It was time that a more common sense view of the matter was taken. Miss Wills seconded the motion. Carried.

Miss A. Finlayson (Canterbury) moved, 'That in each educational district, a women supervisor should be appointed to direct all matters connected with the Domestic Science (Manual Training) classes for girls.' The mover said she could quite understand why a man should be in charge of all the organization, etc., of the woodwork classes, but it was strange that in most districts the whole oversight of the cookery and laundry classes was in the hands of a man. New cookery centres had to be established, and often young teachers had to be sent to take charge. They needed advice and help which only a trained and qualified woman could give. Miss E. Wilson (Auckland) seconded the remit, and related Auckland's experience, where their Education Board had appointed a woman to organize and supervise all their cookery centres. The success of the plan was such that all districts should follow it. Other speakers supported this view and the remit was carried.

Miss Bayly moved: 'That more attention be given to restricting child labour both before and after school hours.' She believed in 'restricting' child labour, not abolishing it, for a little legitimate employment was good for boys, it made then brighter and more self-reliant. But such work as employed boys and girls in picture theatres, and at any work for an undue length of time was unhealthy and exhausting. Mrs Howard seconded. Carried.

Miss Coad moved: 'That no child under 14 years of age be employed in street trading, and no child under 16 be employed after 7pm or before 8am, and that the hours of work on school days shall not exceed two hours.' She said that street trading was the source of a tremendous amount of moral harm — 70% of the children committed to industrial schools had been engaged in it. This kind of employment in the cities badly needed regulating, and women teachers could help. Miss Edwards seconded.

Miss E. Wilson (Auckland) moved: 'That the poor physique and manifest delicacy of several recent entrants to the teaching profession is a matter of grave concern; in the interests of the school children, of the candidates themselves, and of the ratepayers of the Dominion, therefore, this Association urges that the preliminary medical examination be compulsory, of a more searching nature, and be made before appointment.' She pointed out that there was urgent need of attention to this matter. In some parts it seemed to be the delicate members of the family who became teachers, and this was a huge mistake as the work made great demands on a teacher's strength. At present it was evident that if there was some kind of a preliminary medical examination, it was quite inadequate. Miss I.W. Bain (Hawke's Bay) and other delegates referred to the various kinds of proce-

dure followed in different districts, and to the fact that many of the pupil teachers and probationers appointed, had proved to be physically unfit for the work. Carried.

— Miss Lea (Wellington) moved: 'That this Association strongly disapproves of the introduction of differentiation in the salaries of young teachers on the following grounds:

(1) That the work required of such trainees being identical, it is a premium on sex and a violation of the principle of equal pay for equal work.
(2) That the cost of living presses equally on both sexes, and that a young girl in most cases has to face special difficulties as regards accommodation.

The Association had recognized the principle underlying the remit, and there was no need to say more. Miss Edwards seconded. The Secretary said that the Minister had been written to on the matter. The step made recently was a retrograde one. Carried.

Miss Edwards moved: 'That women teachers with dependants be granted the married assistants' allowance of £40.' She spoke of the disabilities suffered by many single women with dependants. Miss Lea seconded. Miss Coad referred to the Taxation Bill which stated that if a man supported his mother as well as a family he was allowed an exemption of £50. The responsible duties to their dependants undertaken by single women were not recognized. Carried.

— Miss Bayly (Auckland) moved: 'That the whole matter of cleanliness and sanitation of schools calls for special investigation and improvement.' The arrangements for cleaning schools were most inadequate. She advocated the use of a suction plant and gave instances of insanitary conditions. Miss Wills seconded.

**A.G.M. 1919:** (From the president's address): The epidemic of last year taught some bitter lessons, particularly with regard to the need of sounder teaching in practical hygiene. In its recommendations, the Royal Commission drew attention to weaknesses in our System, which our Women Teachers' Association have for some years been trying to remedy, viz:—

That greater attention be given in the Primary and Secondary Schools, to domestic science, hygiene, first aid and home nursing, as subject for girls — these subjects to be made compulsory.

That the health of school children be given increased attention through the establishment of school clinics under the charge of qualified medical officers.

It is a matter for regret that the organization of our large primary schools

has frequently not made effective provision for the training of girls in several essential matters. In some districts the schools were formerly grouped into boys', girls' and infants' departments. Under this system there were better opportunities for the training of girls along lines that make for refined and capable womanhood. With the general abandonment of this system, came a certain decadence which was inevitable, for with the large mixed classes of upper standard children, taught in many cases by men, there were few opportunities for girls to be trained in subjects which ought to be considered as of the first importance.

There are many who think that we should follow in our city schools the example of English schools of today, and establish separate departments for boys, girls and infants, or have separate schools. We are loth to advocate this principle if we can secure for girls a more efficient education along the lines of the first remit on our order paper. Women teachers have not been encouraged to make themselves specially fit for this responsible work. Indeed in at least one district, they were treated as incapable of teaching above Standard III, and this avenue was practically closed to them. War conditions compelled changes in this respect, and the fallacy of unfitness has been disproved. It will generally be found that when women are given scope for their talents they 'make good,' and justify the sweeping away of such absurd barriers.

— Today under recent regulations, the woman teacher who would reach the highest position open to her in a primary school must be an infant mistress. A woman who has gifts of personality and influence which would be invaluable in the teaching of girls in the upper standards, must become an infant mistress to get promotion. Why should there not be 'a free career for all the talents?' The teaching of infants is undeniably noble. Is not the education of girls in and about the years of adolescence equally noble? Both spheres call for gifts of equally high character. Experience has taught those who are not wilfully blind to the lessons of city life, that greater encouragement should be given to women teachers, to cater for the needs of older girls, and in every large school an experienced teacher should be set apart for this work. Just as a considerable part of the training of older boys is best done by men, so a great deal of the teaching that is essential to the right and efficient Education of girls, can only be done by women. When this is generally recognized in practice one section of reconstruction work will have been begun. Such a policy could not but result in lasting benefit to the scholars.

The unhygienic domestic conditions revealed so frequently during the epidemic, must be laid largely at the door of a system that allowed girls to drift away from school without a knowledge and practice of the principles that govern a clean and healthy home life. The teaching of a well-defined

curriculum in physiology and hygiene, and the inculcation by daily precept and practice of habits of neatness in dress and surroundings generally, are but a part of the training which is the right of every girl.

In conclusion, I am sure we, as a body of women teachers, are prepared to do our utmost in this work. The brave lads who won for this country an honoured name, deserve that those who follow them should keep that name in high esteem. The best tribute we can offer to their memory is to train boys and girls to become worthy citizens of a glorious country.

Following are extracts from the proceedings of annual meetings:
**A.G.M. 1915:** The first annual meeting of the N.Z.W.T.A. was held in the Mt Cook Girls' School, Wellington, on Wednesday, July 14, 1915.

Miss P. Myers presided, and there were present Misses E.A. Chaplin and A.W. Spence (Canterbury), H.L. Birss and C. McLeod (Southland), E. Simpson and E. Hawkins (Auckland), M.M. Brown (Marlborough), Faubert (Hawke's Bay), J. Finlayson (Wellington), N.E. Coad (Wellington) Secretary.

The minutes record the following matters as dealt with at the meeting. (1) The Secretary explained the position in regard to registration and it was again agreed that as soon as the Wellington W.T.A. became registered, information as to the procedure necessary should be forwarded to each affiliated W.T.A. in the Dominion. (2) An outline of the work attempted in securing the nomination and election of women representatives to the Council of Education, and of women representatives to the Annual Meeting of the N.Z.E.I., and to the Executive of the same was given. (3) It was resolved that the women representatives to the N.Z.E.I. should support Miss Brown's amendment to the remit dealing with classification of teachers, to the effect that, In a classification scheme based on efficiency men and women teachers should not be placed on separate graded lists.

Miss P. Myers and Miss E.A. Chaplin, the representatives of women teachers in Primary Schools on the Council of Education, gave brief accounts of the work to be attempted by this body. The necessity for the support and co-operation of all teachers was emphasized in order to make their work on the Council as efficient as possible.

The following officers were elected: — President — Miss P. Myers, B.A. (Wellington), Vice-Presidents — Miss E.A. Chaplin, B.A. (Canterbury), Miss E. Simpson (Auckland), Hon. Treasurer — Miss E. Williams, B.A., Hon. Secretary — Miss N.E. Coad, M.A., Committee — Misses Birss and McLeod (Southland), Miss A.F. Johnson (Nelson), Miss M.M. Brown (Marlborough), Miss Faubert (Hawke's Bay), Mrs Dowling (Taranaki).

The early years of the N.Z.W.T.A. were those of the Great War, and

women teachers everywhere were occupied in patriotic work. As time went on they realised that owing to the great loss of the flower of the country's manhood, it was more urgent than ever that the education of the young should be along the best possible lines. Women at this time showed their ability to do work of which, in some quarters, they had before been deemed incapable.

The next Conference was held on April 20th, 1916, at which Miss Myers gave an address on Sewing with special reference to patriotic work.

**A.G.M. 1919:** Remit 8, 'That in the Superannuation Act an undue handicap is placed on women in relation to their teaching service, and this Association considers that they should be allowed to complete 40 years' service,' was moved by Miss Mackenzie (Otago). She said that in Otago women teachers of 55 years of age had been practically dismissed, although they were fit and well, and their Inspectors' Reports proved that they were quite efficient. Miss Hodgson (Hawke's Bay) seconded the remit. Miss Coad said that the N.Z.E.I. Executive had considered the matter. The Act gave Boards the power to retire their teachers at the minimum retiring age if they so desired. Miss Moore (Manawatu), pointed out that owing to the lower salaries of women, they suffered greatly in cases of compulsory retirement.

The President spoke of the great value of experienced teachers' work to the State. It was a wasteful policy which compulsorily retired fit teachers of good ability while many schools were being served by uncertificated and inefficient teachers. She thought, however, it would be unwise to jeopardize the present right of women teachers to retire after 30 years service if health reasons made such a step necessary. On the motion of the President, seconded by Miss Moore, the motion was amended to read:—

'That in the Superannuation Act an undue handicap is placed on women in relation to their teaching service, and this Association considers that though they may retire after 30 years' service, they should be allowed to complete 40 years' service when such service is efficient, particularly in view of the shortage of teachers.' The amendment was carried.

Remit 10, 'That in preference to the introduction of Sex Hygiene as a subject in our primary schools, the department is urged to circulate widely among parents suitable pamphlets dealing with the subject.' Moved by Miss Andrews (Taranaki), who said that she was opposed to the teaching of Sex Hygiene as a school subject. Town children early

became sophisticated and blase, often through constant attendance at picture shows. Girls should derive sex knowledge from their mother. There should be no barrier between them.

Miss Coad (Wellington) seconded, and said that the real remedy for social evils was the creation of a healthy moral atmosphere. The President said that the personality of the teacher, and the child's daily environment were most influential factors in the social education of the child. She was quite in accord with the resolution. Carried.

**A.G.M. 1923:** Many voices were raised in advocacy of the appointment of women to the inspectorate. The large number of girl pupils and women teachers in the schools added point to the contention. The president, Miss Coad, told the meeting that she had seen a position for a woman supervisor for the education of girls and infants advertised — the term being the Department's name for women inspectors. The schedule of duties which she had obtained out of curiosity from the Department was read to the meeting. 'She must be a certificated teacher with wide experience in school work. She must have a special knowledge of Montessori and of kindergarten work. She must be specially qualified to direct reforms in connection with infant departments, of primary schools, also specially qualified to direct instruction for girls in the upper standards in sewing, domestic science, hygiene, physiology, first aid, etc.; she must be able to convene meetings of women teachers to deal with matter relating to the education of girls and infants, and direct discussion at such meetings.' Miss Coad said no woman had yet been appointed. She would be a wonderful woman, and would have to cover all New Zealand, which took 52 men inspectors to do, and for all these multifarious duties she was to receive the pay of £420 a year. One speaker said the super-men of Germany, before the war, were weaklings compared with the wonderful women the Department asked for. (Laughter and applause). She considered the schedule the finest compliment yet paid to women teachers. 'The super-woman has not yet been evolved,' said a member. It was pointed out that women health officers travelled all over New Zealand, and into the back-blocks, but when it came to women inspectors they were told that women would have to face too many hardships. Three of the delegates present had had experience under women inspectors, and spoke in the highest terms of the service of women inspectors. They said these inspectors worked in the greatest harmony with the teachers, and their assistance was always appreciated and gained the desired results. Miss Kennedy mentioned the case of Miss Conway, who was the first woman principal appointed to the position in a large English school. She had a first male assistant and first female assistant, and a large staff, each of whom spoke in the highest terms of her control. The meeting reaffirmed its opinion that women inspectors were desirable.

**A.G.M. 1926:** During the Conference Miss Hetherington was heartily welcomed and congratulated on her appointment as the first woman Inspector of Secondary Schools in New Zealand. Miss Dyer, the first woman Inspector of Domestic Science in New Zealand, was also present, and spoke with reference to her work.

Following are the names of N.Z.W.T.A. office-holders during its first 10 years:

Officers of the N.Z.W.T.A. 1914-24: Presidents: 1914-16, Miss Phoebe Myers, B.A. (Wellington); 1917-19, Miss Emily A. Chaplin, B.A. (Christchurch); 1920-24, Miss N.E. Coad, M.A. (Wellington).

Secretaries: 1914-16, Miss N.E. Coad, M.A. (Wellington); 1917-19, Miss Mabel Smith (Christchurch); 1920-22, Miss E.A. Chaplin, B.A. (Christchurch); 1922-23, Miss M.B. Turner, B.A. (Hons. Lond.); 1923-24, Miss L. Morgan (Wellington).

Treasurers: 1916, Miss E. Williams, B.A. (Wellington); 1917-1919, Miss A.E. Barker (Christchurch); 1920-21, Miss Mabel Smith (Christchurch); 1922-23, Miss E.A. Chaplin, B.A. (Christchurch); 1923-24, Miss A. Menzies, M.A. (Christchurch).

## Aims of the Women Teachers' Associations of New Zealand.

1. To advance the cause of Education generally.
2. To study the educational need of girls and infants particularly.
3. To uphold the just claims of women teachers.
4. To cultivate a spirit of helpfulness and unity among women teachers.

Some twenty years ago, the pioneer Women Teachers' Association in New Zealand was formed in Christchurch, and subsequently others were instituted in Auckland, Wellington, and in other centres.

In 1914 a representative Conference was arranged which met in Wellington, and thus began a federation of the women teachers of the Dominion.

It has already made itself a potent force in the Educational forward movement; it is alive to the best interests both of its members, and of the children of the nation; it is broad in its outlook, and sincere in its aims for the advancement of Education. It is helping women teachers to realize more fully the greatness of their work, and the Annual Conferences have been the means of binding together the women teachers of the Dominion in bonds of friendly service.

The Women Teachers' Association takes a place occupied by no other organization. It is in no way antagonistic to other Educational institutions, but is complementary to them. While it shares in the discussion of general school topics, it seeks to make plain the women's aspect of Educational questions, and to ensure that they receive such attention as has not always been bestowed upon them.

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WOMEN TEACHERS.

If you are not already a member, and there is a W.T.A. in your district, join it! You will enjoy your work better as a member of a helpful organization of fellow-workers than as a unit.

The subscription (2/6 per annum) is so small that it debars no one.

Should there be no branch in your district, join with your friends in forming one. Any information required will be gladly forwarded on application to Miss L. Morgan, Hon. Secretary, N.Z.W.T.A., Mt. Cook Infants' School, Wellington.

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## Note

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## References

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*WOMEN'S STUDIES ASSOCIATION NEW ZEALAND (INC), P.O. BOX 5067 AUCKLAND.*

This Association is a feminist organisation formed to promote radical social change through the medium of women's studies.

Some of the objects of the Associaton:

- to undertake, promote and disseminate research about women by women from a feminist perspective.
- to inform and educate women about women
- to encourage the preservation of existing material about women
- to facilitate the establishment of women's studies courses with a feminist perspective.
- to undertake and promote the publication and dissemination of material about women
- to organise and participate in activities, conferences, seminars and displays in furtherance of the objects of the Association.

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**CONFERENCE PAPERS:** The Association holds an annual conference where members present the latest research and discussion papers, and workshops explore issues important to women. The Conference Papers are published annually and some back copies are available. Members receive a discount for the Conference and the Conference Papers.

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**NEWSLETTER:** A quarterly newsletter containing local and overseas news, book reviews, conference reports etc. are sent to all members.

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**JOURNAL:** The Association produces a Journal twice a year.

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**MEMBERSHIP TO JULY 1986**

**NAME** .....

**ADDRESS** .....

**PHONE NO** ..... **DATE** .....

□ Full Membership (women) □ Associate Membership (other individuals)

(Tick appropriate box)

□ Corporate Membership (organisation) □ Hardship

**SUBSCRIPTION RATES:**

$10 Full membership $10 Associate membership

$20 Corporate membership $5 Hardship

**Please return to: P.O. Box 5067, Auckland, New Zealand.**

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