



THE WOMEN'S LIBRARY

NEWS LETTER

VOL. 4 NO. 1

FEBRUARY 1995

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THE WOMEN'S LIBRARY INC. PO BOX 271 NEWTOWN NSW 2042

What you will find at The Women's Library

FICTION COLLECTION

An extensive range of Australian and international women writers. See the profile at the end of this article, on page 6.

NON-FICTION COLLECTION

The Non-Fiction collection contains a variety of material relevant to women. It is divided into subject areas including: Health and Body Politics, Sex, Race and Ethnicity, Visual and Performing Arts, Representations of Women, Self-Help, Violence and Humour. Librarians involved with The Women's Library aim to make this collection as accessible and user-friendly as possible.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE VIDEO COLLECTION

An extensive range of available videos addressing the issues of domestic violence. Ideal for teaching or use in self-help groups. See catalogue on page 3 of this newsletter.

MULTICULTURAL LANGUAGE COLLECTION

This section will be built up slowly, as the need and opportunities arise. Currently the library houses a large and varied range of feminist and lesbian fiction and non-fiction titles in German.

RECORDED MUSIC COLLECTION

The Women's Library is currently in the process of establishing a recorded music collection, consisting of compact disks and tapes. 1995 will be the time to initiate funding to enable the library to house a complete collection of Australian women composers and performers. This will be expanded in the future to include all styles of music from around the world, and form a unique Australian collection.

OPENING HOURS

TUESDAY TO FRIDAY - 11AM TO 8PM

SATURDAY AND SUNDAY - 11AM TO 5PM

CLOSED ON MONDAYS

73 GARDEN ST, ALEXANDRIA

PHONE (02) 319 0529

ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER COLLECTION

For ease of location, all titles about, by and of interest to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women are kept in a separate section of the library. The Management Committee has recently submitted a funding application for \$2,500.00 to increase the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander collection.

BIOGRAPHY AND AUTOBIOGRAPHY

This collection contains many titles about and by women of interest, for example Hazel Hawke, k.d. lang, Martina Navratilova and Gertrude Stein.

POETRY AND PLAYS

The Women's Library keeps many volumes of poetry, some of which are now rare, as the original print runs were so short. The library also houses a small collection of women's plays and scripts.

REFERENCE COLLECTION

Currently the Women's Library has the beginnings of an important women's reference collection including feminist dictionaries, women's directories and various bibliographies.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6

TWL INFOPAGE

How The Women's Library works

MEMBERSHIP

You must become a member of The Women's Library to be eligible to borrow books.

Membership fees per year are:

- \$50 funded institutions
- \$30 unfunded institutions and waged individuals
- \$20 unwaged individuals
- \$5 high school students

LOAN PERIOD

2 weeks for all books except required women's studies texts, which can be borrowed for one week. Videos can be borrowed for one week only.

LOAN DEPOSIT

Members must lodge a \$10 deposit with us before borrowing. This deposit is retained by The Women's Library if a book is not returned or is returned damaged. It may also be retained if a book becomes very overdue. This deposit is held by The Women's Library until you are no longer a member. Members who have done volunteer work for the library on a number of occasions (active members) are exempt from this deposit.

PERIODICALS

Serials, magazines, journals and reference materials cannot be borrowed, but may be read in the library. We have a photocopier for library users.

BORROWING BOOKS

Members can borrow up to six books at a time, of which no more than three can be required women's studies titles.

BORROWING VIDEOS

Videos are available for loan by members for a period of one week, and require a refundable holding deposit for each loan of \$50 for institutions and \$20 for individual members.

RENEWALS

Loans may be renewed in person or by phone, unless they are on reserve.

Ways You Can Support The Women's Library

BECOME A MEMBER

Please fill out the form on the back of this newsletter and become a member of The Women's Library. At this stage The Women's Library is unfunded and membership fees keep the library alive. As a member you are entitled to borrow books from the library and receive The Women's Library newsletter four times a year.

BUY A BOOK TO JOIN THE LIBRARY

You can buy a book to donate to The Women's Library in lieu of membership fees.

THIS IS HOW YOU DO IT...

The only books we can accept in place of fees should be purchased from the list of titles lodged with The Feminist Bookshop (address below).

This list contains titles that are required reading for Women's Studies courses, and this system will ensure that we do not receive multiple copies of some titles and no copies of others. Simply bring your book, membership form and receipt to The Women's Library during opening hours and we will be happy to process your membership on the spot.

BOOK DONATIONS

If you would like to donate books for the library's collection, drop off points are:

- The Women's Library
73 Garden Street, Alexandria
- The Feminist Bookshop
Shop 9, Orange Grove Plaza, Balmain Road, Lilyfield

Please contact us on 319 0529, if you need us to pick up your donation. Please note that The Women's Library has a no-strings-attached donations policy. The Women's Library reserves the right to decide whether a donated item will be integrated into the collection, discarded, exchanged or sold.

TAX DEDUCTIBILITY

To make it more inviting for you to donate money to The Women's Library, your donations are tax deductible. Similarly you can donate a collection of books (which must be valued by an approved valuer) or any item that has been purchased by you within the last twelve months, and claim the value of that donation as a deduction on your tax return.

BEQUESTS

Maybe you would like to consider making provisions for leaving your personal library and/or a donation to The Women's Library in your will. Please contact the library if you need details on how to do this.

NEWSLETTER PRODUCTION

EDITOR VICKI HARDING

TYPING DONITA SHADWICK

LAYOUT INGRID URH

TWL DOMESTIC VIOLENCE VIDEO COLLECTION

With many thanks to the *NSW Ministry for the Status and Advancement of Women* and particularly to Vanessa O'Mara, Librarian at the Ministry, The Women's Library now houses a unique and extensive collection of videos dealing with Domestic Violence.

Following are the titles currently available:

- **Domestic Violence** – Produced by Seven Dimensions (25 min)
- **Domestic Violence – Quandary** – Produced by Seven Dimensions (includes booklet) 1989 (60 min)
- **Domestic Violence trigger tapes** – Produced by Seven Dimensions (7 min)
- **Loved, honoured and bruised** – Produced by Educational Media Australia 1980 (25 min)
- **No Myth** – Produced by Australian Film Institute 1987 (27 min)
- **Devrim** – Produced by Australian Film Institute 1984 (13 min)
- **Guns and Roses** – Produced by Australian Film Institute 1990 (28 min)
- **Homefront** – Produced by Australian Film Institute 1983 (24 min)
- **Something's Wrong At My House:**
Children in Domestic Violence – Produced by Educational Media Australia (includes booklet) 1990 (20 min)
- **Marching Orders** – Produced by Pictures of Health Video Production Company 1990 (20 min)

These videos are available for loan to members of The Women's Library for a period of one week. A holding deposit of \$50 for institutions or \$20 for individuals must be lodged with each loan.

The Women's Library Aims

To house a comprehensive range of feminist and lesbian novels, texts, journals and magazines, and in particular to house all Australian lesbian books and magazines

To house all required reading for tertiary courses in Sydney that focus on women's issues

To house the works of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women

To house a collection relevant to women of non-English speaking backgrounds

To provide a comfortable and accessible space for borrowing, reading and relaxing

To act as a local women's resource centre

To provide a children's room with a range of great children's books

GARAGE SALE AND BOOK FAIR

The Women's Library is having a combined bookfair and garage sale and it's going to be **HUGE**. It will be held **on the corner of Australia and King Streets, Newtown on Saturday 1 April, from 9.00am**.

There will be heaps of feminist titles for sale as we have culled many of our duplicated titles so that we can make room for more wonderful books. There will also be lots of furniture, bric-a-brac, clothes etc.

If you have anything you would like to donate to the sale, or if you would like to help out, please ring the library on (02) 319 0529.

Speak to Wendy, Vicki or Suzanne.

WOMEN'S STUDIES FORUMS

We are looking for women students involved in research to present at the inaugural **TWL WOMEN'S STUDIES FORUMS**.

The forums will be held on the last Wednesday of the month from **APRIL TO JULY** (26 April, 30 May, 28 June, 26 July) at The Women's Library, starting at 7.00pm. Each forum will consist of 3 twenty minute presentations, plus question time.

IF YOU ARE INTERESTED phone ANNABELLE (02) 289 9133 (w) or (02) 799 9934 (h) or send a brief summary of your work to:

TWL PUBLICITY/OUTREACH COMMITTEE
C/- 49 Cecil Street, Ashfield 2131
PO Box 271 Newtown 2042

GROWING UP



Wash your hair if you want to. But dry it quickly and thoroughly, and stay out of draughts so that you won't catch cold.



Dance with moderation. Even the most glamorous creatures sit down once in a while. Take it easy the first few days.

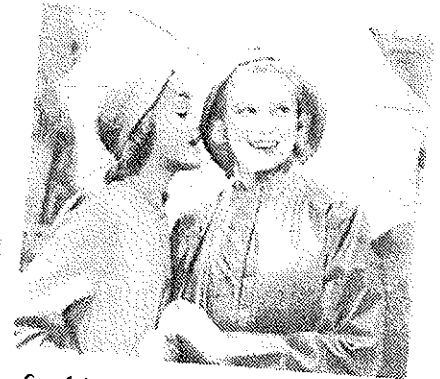
What's taboo? What's OK on "those days"?

Laugh off those "old wives' tales"!

You will hear many old ideas and superstitions about menstruation. None of them are true – so laugh them off!



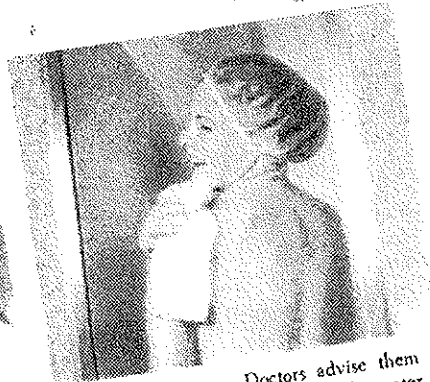
Riding, skating, skiing are perfectly okay if you're used to them. If not put them off for a day or two.



Careful when it rains! You're more apt to get a chill at this time.



Picnics, movies, or spectator sports are more sensible than violent exercise. Make dates ahead to avoid strenuous doings.

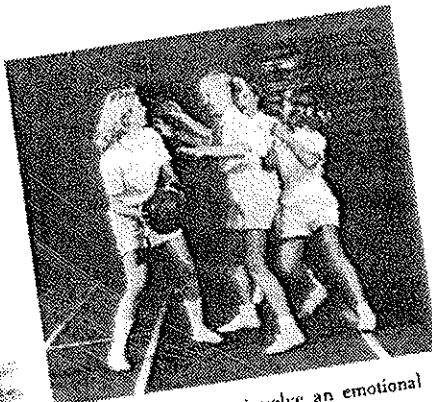


Baths or showers: Doctors advise them for cleanliness' sake. Just be sure the water is warm – not too hot or too cold.

Actually you can and should keep on doing whatever you are in the habit of doing, just so long as you feel comfortable about it. Most girls soon find out their own limitations. So, for the most part, let your own good sense be your guide.



Swimming may be okay, on the latter days of the period...but not in icy water. In consideration of others, stay out of pools.



Competitive sports involve an emotional strain. If you find the excitement gets you in a dither, better sit on the sidelines.

"Stay away from water"

Poor advice – you need plenty of baths and showers at this time... just not too hot and not too cold.

"Spend a day or two in bed"

Bad for you. Better for your spirits and your 'insides' to be up and active.

"You never look your best on those days"

You should – and most girls do! Make up your mind to be as gay and attractive as usual, and somehow right away you are!

"Flowers wilt on you then"

If they do, it's only because you've got overwarm, tense, and perspiry. Keep cool...keep dainty... and your orchid will appreciate it, just as your friends will!

Adoption

In the post-war period it became convenient in the Western world to forget the Victorian construction that the unwed mother and the illegitimate child were congenitally tainted, irredeemable and therefore best left to 'fend for themselves'.

Instead, a psychological interpretation became popular, allowing both to be victims of environmental and emotional disorder. Unwed mothers should therefore consent to being 'cured', the only sanctioned cures being either wedlock or separation from their children 'for their own good'. Illegitimacy could then be a blessing to the one in ten childless couples who were anxious to meet the post-war imperative of the nuclear family. The unmarried mother was encouraged to simply 'forget', and was often prevented forcibly from even seeing her baby.

The Women's Library was recently donated a collection edited by Jennie Burrows titled 'For Too Long: Writings by Mothers Who Lost their Babies in the Adoption Scandal. Mothers for contact in adoption'. The preface opens with a quote from the NSW Law Reform Commission's Review of the Adoption of Child Act 1965 (NSW) — 'For too long birth mothers have been treated as irresponsible and incapable women who need social workers and adoptive parents to order their lives for them'.

This anthology is testimony to the absurdity of social policy and practice which overnight delegitimised the feelings and experience of birth mothers. The fourteen contributors of poetry, letters and articles have in common an experience of grief and rage which for most of their adult lives was allowed no forum or resolution.

In Australia there is another dimension to the separation of mothers and children — the State and Federal policies of assimilation which from the early 1900s actively separated Aboriginal children from their families. This was a largely unacknowledged attempt to erase the fabric of indigenous culture and one which covertly encouraged denial of Aboriginality.

As well as the mass removal of children to institutions, many were fostered and adopted by white families. While most adoptive parents were motivated by genuine altruism, many Aboriginal children faced the denial of access to Australian citizenship if they chose to associate with any Aboriginal people beyond their immediate family. The questions of identity that exist for adoptees could only be exacerbated in the case of Aboriginal children.

Adoption remains a contentious issue. For individuals who cannot conceive, adoption or fostering provide a solution to the desire to experience parenthood. Adoption laws have undergone major reform over the last twenty years.

The provision of supporting parent's benefit, access to birth control and the availability of safe abortions has provided women with more genuine choice about childbirth and parenthood. The statistics for NSW (from 2,000 newborns offered for adoption in 1972 to only 65 in 1990) speak volumes about the greater control that women exercise over their own fertility.

Adoption and fostering still provide a preferable alternative to institutionalisation for children who are the victims of abuse or neglect or whose birth mothers may simply be unable to provide or care for them. The majority of adoptions in Australia are now on this basis, whether of Australian or overseas children.

Adoption is a complex and emotionally difficult subject. Of great help to people affected by adoption is the Post Adoption Resource Centre. The Centre has an extensive library of books, articles, tapes and videos on adoption which they lend to visitors or via the post. The centre is located at **Hardwick House, 171 Glenmore Road, Paddington** and has a toll free number for any enquiry about adoption: **008 024 256**. Counsellors are available on this number. The Women's Library Reference Collection contains a bibliography on adoption provided by the centre.

ANNELIESE FRENCH

For Too Long was donated to The Women's Library by the editor, and copies may be purchased by writing to Mothers For Contact in Adoption Inc. PO Box 33, Dulwich Hill, 2203.



PRIDE

INFORMATION

Please contact
PETER WOOD
PH (02) 360 5667

PRIDE, the new lesbian and gay community centre is in the midst of opening as this newsletter is being produced.

The Pride committee is keen to let all lesbians know that there will be space available to hire for meetings or more permanent events.

The centre, which will open after six years of planning, will be situated in **Hutchinson Street, Surry Hills**.

THANKYOU

STAFFING

The Women's Library Management Committee and Alena Casey, Amanda Riley, Angela Sokialis, Anna Fitzpatrick, Astrid Przeziecki, Carole Neal, Claire Koetsier, Clare Walsh, Christina Perham, Deb Worsley-Pine, Donna Wilcox, Elizabeth Fitzpatrick, Elizabeth Smedley, Gillian Little, Helen Garnaut, Inez Gershon, Joanne Roddis, Julie Earney, Karen Dubb, Kate Fearnall-Heath, Kate Pritchard, Kylie Cochran, Leanne Hodges, Leticia Rankine, Maja Berilazic, Margaret Smith, Marny Kilby, Mary O'Brien, Megan Williams, Melinda Conry, Meredith Connie, Nerida Wood, Nicola O'Shea, Nicole Moore, Nikki Twentyman, Paula Major, Rose Bollen, Roslyn Feltham, Ruth Carman, Samantha Beaty, Sandra Coleman, Stephanie Sparke, Sue Williamson, Susan Bowra, Sylvia Martin, Tamaris Cameron, Trish Spears, Ute Greiving, Wendy Ferguson, Wendy Holz

NEWSLETTER MAILOUT

Paula Major, Fiona Kerr, Megan Williams, Veronica Lockner, Amanda Marlin

MEMBERSHIP CARD LAMINATING

Sydney Gay & Lesbian Mardi Gras - Finn Drury

LADYBIRD LADYBIRD FUNDRAISER

TWL committee members and Dendy, Martin Place - Nicole and Emma,

Karen Dubb, Nikki Twentyman, Donna Wilcox, Amanda Riley, Angela Sokialis

HIGHEST TICKET SELLERS

Liz Ireland and Mary Karekos

PREPARATION OF GRANT

SUBMISSION

Emma Synnott, Eva Cox

COLLECTION OF NEWSPAPER CLIPPINGS

Annie Bonney, Sam Beaty, Ann Hocking

BOOK REPAIRS

Laural Walter

LAYOUT AND DESIGN

NEWSLETTER, SUBMISSIONS,

MEMBERSHIP CARDS

Ingrid Urh

ANNUAL REPORT, ADVERTISING

Jill Segedin

7 WOMEN ARTISTS EXHIBITION

TWL committee and Lesley Watson,

Tracey Baglin, Nikki Twentyman,

Sue Best, Newtown Festival, Rachel

Appino, Robyn Dorey, Gabrielle

Kitsch, Trish Leen, Patricia

Todhunter, Tiffany Winterbottom,

Ngaira Worboys

COMPUTER DONATION

Carol Haybarger

PRINTER DONATIONS

Women's Legal Resource Centre,

Annie and Scott

SPECIAL THANKS

...and special thanks to Marilyn McCormack who donated a large collection of books and magazines which she had been collecting with Kim Back. They were collecting women's material with a view to establishing a women's library, until Kim died ten years ago. Marilyn was finally able to part with the collection this year.

SCHOOL OF WOMEN ARTIST'S NETWORK

To commemorate the fiftieth Anniversary of the end of the Second World War, SWAN (School of Women Artists Network) is preparing a touring exhibition to collect women's perspectives on War.

As well as written and oral history, the exhibition will include photographs, appropriate memorabilia, news clippings, visual art and creative writing. The emphasis will be on 'The Home Front' and the effect of the war on women and family life, but will feature stories of the war overseas and the experiences of servicewomen.

On the tour's conclusion the material collected will be archived in the Jessie Street National Women's Library as source material for future generations. If you have stories or material you would like to contribute to this important social document, contact:

JAN WOOD on (02) 555 1061

PO box 143, Balmain 2041 or

BARBARA WRIGHT on (02) 608 2410

PO Box 207, Miller 2168

Reproduced below is a copy of a painting recently on exhibition at The Women's Library as part of SWAN's Women's Travelling Suitcase Exhibition. It is titled *Me, Birth, Death, Metamorphosis* by CAROLE GRIFFIN.

B E L V O I R

Steve Martin's outrageously funny play

Picasso at the Lapin Agile

returns to Belvoir Street by popular demand.

"It is mad. It is absurd. It is wildly funny - so funny that your cheeks will hurt."

- Sydney Morning Herald.

Starts March 17! Book now on 698 3344



REVIEWS

Here is a sample of the kind of books you will be able to find in *The Women's Library*. All of the following titles have been donated by the publishers or the author. Thank you to the following publishers, authors and reviewers for your support.

MARY MACKILLOP:

AN EXTRAORDINARY AUSTRALIAN

PAUL GARDINER SJ

EJ DWYER/DAVID ELL PRESS, 1994

There is much in the press on the life and time of Mary MacKillop, and as I write Pope John Paul II is winging his way to Australia to begin the process of Sainthood for this nun. I come to this book as a novice myself. That is, I have no understanding of the complexities nor hierarchies of the Catholic faith.

I began this book not knowing what the author's 'SJ' stood for (Society of Jesus – therefore a Jesuit) and throughout references are made and terminologies used, (Mother Generals, Your Maternity, Postulators) that are foreign to me (I hesitate to say they seem funny) and probably anyone else not educated in Catholic lore.

Notwithstanding what seems to this reviewer to be a grave error in this assumption, the book gives an extraordinary detail of Mary's life and times. Up against a formidable male bureaucracy, Mary fought her whole career to gain autonomy from an anachronistic group of men dominating the Catholic church in Australia at the time. So persistent was she that she gained notoriety and was summarily excommunicated for her insistence that the order which she had founded, The Sisters of St Joseph, answer directly to the Vatican.

As I understand it, it's pretty unusual, if not down right revolutionary, for a woman's order to bypass the superiority of the Catholic male hierarchy, though this is never explained successfully in the book. Altogether, this biography, though detailed, is too encumbered with the heaviness of religious admiration by the author to give what might be a less biased and probably more accurate description of a woman undoubtedly energetically feminist in her way.

RENÉE BITTOUN

IN A TIME OF VIOLENCE

EAVAN BOLAND

WW NORTON AND CO, 1994

In this Irish writer's seventh volume of poetry, she continues to mine what she has called 'the meeting place between womanhood and history.'

Eavan Boland is a poet both formidable and accessible. She has the elegance and resonance of a T S Eliot while retaining a very female warmth and intimacy. At times her cadences are classical, traditionally evocative, at times she is modern, innovative, playful even. She is never sentimental or sententious. And there is intellectual rigour and learning worn lightly in these poems which do what the best poetry ought to do – move the heart and the mind all at once.

IN A TIME OF VIOLENCE divides into three parts, the first eponymous section contains diverse 'political' poems, ranging from the Irish famine of 1847, to Irish emigrant seamstresses in St Louis in the second half of the nineteenth century, to the Dolls Museum in Dublin. These subjects are never raised vicariously or as self-conscious vehicles. The Boland speciality is a cunning mix of emotion, historical reference and a personal and passionate sense of the political.

Thus in the poem about the seamstresses:

*"... We are sewing a last
sight of shore. We are sewing coffin ships.
And the salt of exile. And our own
death in it. For history's abandonment
we are doing this. And this..."*

And commenting on the cracked paint and fixed stares of the dolls behind glass in the Dolls Museum:

*"To have survived. To have been stronger than
a moment. To be the hostages ignorance
takes from time and ornament from destiny. Both.
To be the present of the past. To infer the difference
with a terrible stare. But not feel it. And not know it."*

The second section, LEGENDS, is more domestic, personal, lyrical, although a sense of the universal, and of the political dimension in all things is never absent. The poems about her daughter, her husband, her mother with her old-fashioned way of tying parcels, all have these other resonances.

Boland also has a sensuous feel for suburban life, its limitations and small beauties:

*"Those are afternoon when the Dublin hills are so close,
so mauve and blue, we can be certain dark
will bring rain and
it does to
the borrowed shears and the love-seat in the garden where
a sparrow hawk was seen through the opal-
white trees
after Easter."*

In the final section, ANNA LIFFEY, there is a marvellous synthesis of themes in elegiac poems that fuse feelings about love, ageing, and womanhood with a complex love of Ireland.

*"Make of a nation what you will
Make of the past
What you can -*

*There is now
A woman in a doorway.*

*It has taken me
All my strength to do this
Becoming a figure in a poem.*

Usurping a name and a theme."

The best compliment you can pay a writer is to keep on wanting to quote her. If I had more space, I'd quote you lots more Eavan Boland.

SUSAN VARGA

LANGUAGE OF THE ICONS

DIPTI SARAVANAMUTTU (*donated by the author*)

ANGUS & ROBERTSON, 1993

Generally the poems represent what some may regard as the poet's private musings on a wide range of subjects including the many localities or relationships she happens to be involved with during her many travels. Such innermost thoughts are succinctly couched in a language that portrays a private world which may only be entered into by savouring each word of every poem.

The poems are undoubtedly highly polished works of literature which need to be re-read many times in order to extract their full flavour. Tender references, some oblique, some obvious, occur in respect of her lovers. Gender conscious, she doesn't beat about the bush regarding where her sympathies lie. In her ALL THE CAPTAIN'S MEN, pointedly she could never be the kept heterosexual woman of the corporate rich. Far far better to daily wrest herself from her female lover's soft arms to brave the inclement weather of an English winter.

The poems embrace a wide range of subject matter, ranging from intimate romantic verse to abstract thoughts on Hindu deities, contemporary political events, socio-economic concerns and in/famous public figures whilst others reflect travel experiences as, for example, when in the Turkish bathhouse. The realism which pervades this particular poem is a common feature of the collection.

That she is dedicated to a feminist philosophy is implicit in her AUDRE LORDE FLIRTS WITH HINDUISM in which she implores Kali, the fierce goddess of Hindu mythology, to *"Do something violent to the inside/of the heads of some women academics/And make them stop writing novels in which the black women are stereotyped, or/stereotyped as fat, vulgar and sexually voracious if they're lesbian: these are the most feared appearances/of their own female being."*

THE SULTAN'S LIBRARY: A FABLE is the only piece of prose in the collection. Its inclusion is warranted because it indicates how the so-called good man can do a 180 degree shift from good to evil when it suits his interest. She thus makes it clear that women should not be deceived into thinking that men who appear to be good (ie sympathetic to feminism and women's varying circumstances) will remain so for long.

It is clear that Saravanamuttu is not only erudite but able to focus unflinchingly upon any subject that captures her attention. Perhaps she can be summed up in her own words, as the pariah who is not given to fanciful airs and graces, preferring instead a life of simplicity and truth. Such is the style of her poetry – original, lyrical and highly recommended.

KHARLA INGRID KEDGLEY

BRIDGES OF POWER:

WOMEN'S MULTICULTURAL ALLIANCES

EDS ALBRECHT AND BREWER

NEW SOCIETY PUBLISHERS, 1990

This truly international anthology, two years in the making, came out of an association which goes back several years between the National Women's Studies Association (NWSA) of North America and a group of women at the University of Minnesota.

Much of the material is the product of a NWSA conference in 1988. To this material have been added five more essays, to 'fill in critical gaps' as the editors say.

This is a wide ranging and inclusive collection. As well as essays by indigenous women and women from racial minorities based in North America, contributions have also been made by women living in Hong Kong, Peru, Palestine and Canada.

The underlying theme of all the essays is that of women working together. I found it heartening to read of so many alliances of women which have been successfully weathered storms and flourished, I hesitate to say 'in spite of' differences, as these stories seem to indicate that difference in terms of ethnicity, culture, class and secularity, when acknowledged and negotiated, will contribute to the strength, vibrancy and creativity of women's alliances.

Acknowledging and negotiating difference, as part of a process, seemed to me to be the critical issue after reading several of these essays. But as many of us know to our cost this is not so easy to actually carry out. Gail Pheterson's ALLIANCES BETWEEN WOMEN: OVERCOMING INTERNALISED OPPRESSION AND INTERNALISED DOMINATION makes this abundantly clear. This is an account of the Feminist Alliance Project undertaken in the Netherlands *"in order to study and interrupt psychological processes that divide women from one another"*.

Using a framework based on the work of, among others, Paulo Friere and Albert Memmi, black, white, Jewish, lesbian and heterosexual women committed themselves to meeting in groups fortnightly for five months. Reports of the content of the meetings made for gruelling and evocative reading for this reviewer. But the various emotions felt and expressed by the participants – fear, guilt, anger, confusion – did seem to give way to important discoveries and illuminating insights for many of the women.

By the end of the essay, I began to feel that undergoing such a process might be what is required for women seriously wanting to deal with racism, anti-Semitism and heterosexism. It seems also to explain why, as a black woman who has run anti-racism workshops, I've always felt a nagging scepticism about the effectiveness of one-day workshops. But that's another story.

An ultimately heartening and uplifting book, BRIDGES OF POWER contains many, many accounts of women accepting diversity and getting on with what they are

TWL Fundraiser

The Women's Library presents a special fundraising screening of **BHAJI ON THE BEACH**

DATE

Thursday, 16th March

Check newspapers for time – approx. 7.00pm

VENUE

MANDOLIN CINEMA, 150 Elizabeth Street, Sydney

TICKETS

\$11.50 and \$8.50 concession

Tickets must be purchased at The Women's Library



supposed to be doing. Furthermore, some of the accounts are of women doing precisely this in our mothers' and grandmothers' time, eg the all women's bands of North America in the 1930s.

I found these accounts particularly refreshing for the concentration on friendship, solidarity, support and, importantly, creative expression. Indeed, several of the essays explore the issue of women working together on creative projects such as artwork and film making and it is good to see these alongside the more familiar accounts of women working on political issues and in 'welfare' situations.

An additional feature of this text, in keeping with its Women's Studies base, and I daresay of interest to Women's Studies students here in Australia, is the extensive footnoting and inclusion of filmographies, bibliographies and international resource listings.

ARLENE CHATTAKAR-AITKINS

A BODY OF WATER

BEVERLEY FARMER (*donated by the author*)

UNIVERSITY QUEENSLAND PRESS, 1990

Upon reading A BODY OF WATER, one discovers that Beverley Farmer is a well-read author with a very agile and lateral mind. The book is interesting in form for it is part diary, part volume of short stories – all written within a period of a year from February 1987 to February 1988.

Principally set in Victoria, A BODY OF WATER is a gentle, measured and realistic piece of work. The author is suffering from writer's block ("*two-year drought*") and is using the diary as a way to work through thoughts, feelings, both current and unresolved, and writing dilemmas. She is conscious of her friends' opinions and endearingly exposes her insecurities and inevitable justifications through her diary entries.

The author devotes much of the diary to relating her daily life. Like most of us, she is interested in age and death. She also reminisces about past love affairs, her marriage, her relationships with her child, her mother and with other cultures. One confusing aspect of these entries is the time shifts and the author's deliberate ambiguity in regard to names and identities. Sometimes names are spelled out, at other times only an initial is used.

The five short stories are an intriguing mix. They reflect the author's experiences and concerns – in particular, Buddhism, love, death, solitude and most importantly, fish. In VASE WITH RED FISHES, we discover that the protagonist, and presumably the author, is a Pisces and as such, she has a fixation with fish in any form or state, whether in their natural habitat, in captivity, in art or as food.

This is obvious when one first looks at this University of Queensland Press volume for it features a representation of Henri Matisse's INTERIEUR, BOCAL AUX POISSONS ROUGES (1914). Both this painting (as a framed print) and its principal subject receives a lot of energy from the author. It is a quirky fixation which illustrates both the focus and lateral qualities of Farmer's mind.

Another interesting aspect of the book – the diary in particular, is the fact that it is almost 'stream of conscious' in style. One thought quickly leads onto a related topic with references that are eclectic, abundant, and lengthy. Farmer quotes from diverse sources such as Woolf, Plath, Paz, Rilke, Whitman, Byatt, T S Eliot, Lawrence, Durrell,

Berger, Handke, Camus, Lacan, Proust and Joyce. The sources of these quotations are listed at the back of the book and, if not already on the shelves, would make interesting and valuable additions to The Women's Library.

MARTEL OLLERENSHAW

MIDDLE-AGED MAIDENS

GWEN KELLY (*donated by the author*)

ANGUS & ROBERTSON, 1976

Before The Women's Library opened I had a method of selecting books to borrow. Firstly, the book had to be written by a woman. Secondly, it should preferably be written in the first person. Thirdly, I would read the first page and if I wanted to turn over I would borrow the book. Gwen Kelly's novel fulfilled all three requirements and even had a great title, but an important ingredient was missing for me: an urgent desire to read the book. I love to read a book and when the characters stay with me and I just can't wait to continue reading. MIDDLE-AGED MAIDENS did not have that effect on me.

The story is about Miriam, who reluctantly returns to her home town in the country to look after her invalid mother. She has to accept work in a private girl's boarding school as a deputy headmistress who is exploited and poorly paid. Every second chapter is written in the voice of Miriam – her views of the events at home and school. Every alternative chapter is written in the voice of the three headmistresses who Miriam works with and gives their views of the same events.

Gwen Kelly very ably writes the different voices – her change in writing style quickly convinced me a different character was speaking. While this was impressive, it meant the story was slow moving at times. It's hard to identify with Miriam and she's not especially likeable.

When I don't particularly care about what happens to the heroine it's hard for me to see the point of reading the book (except when I have been asked to review it!). In contrast the character of Ina (the first headmistress) was much more interesting and I found myself wishing the book had been written about her. I was sorry she disappeared after the second chapter.

There is a myth in our society that middle-aged 'maidens' do not have sex, and in this book they don't. None of the five main female characters had an intimate physical relationship. There was a glimmer of hope when a wonderfully described butch carpenter arrived at the school and the word 'lesbian' was used but nothing happened!! Disappointing...

This is a story about a closet lesbian who finally gets her act together. I just wasn't too excited when it happened.

ANNIE HOLSTOCK

The Bookshop

Specialists in lesbian literature. We also stock an eclectic range of feminist and women's titles.

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INFORMATION PAGE

UPCOMING EVENTS

- **ONLY THE BRAVE** – TWL FUNDRAISING SCREENING
Mandolin Cinema, 150 Elizabeth St, Sydney
March 2, 7.40pm **ENQUIRIES (02) 319 0529**
TICKETS MUST BE PURCHASED AT THE LIBRARY
- **TRUST THE WOMEN - WOMEN ARTISTS
IN NATIONAL TRUST COLLECTIONS**
S H Ervin Gallery, Watson Rd, The Rocks
February 24–April 2
ENQUIRIES Sarah Thomas (02) 258 1074
- **TRUST THE WOMEN - ILLUSTRATED TALKS**
AUSTRALIAN CHILDREN'S ILLUSTRATORS
S H Ervin Gallery, Watson Rd, The Rocks
March 1, 6.00pm **BOOKINGS (02) 258 1074**
- **SYDNEY GAY AND LESBIAN MARDI GRAS PARADE**
Oxford St, Darlinghurst
March 4 **ENQUIRIES (02) 557 4332**
- **EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY
CONFERENCE**
Gazebo Hotel, Elizabeth Bay
March 7 and 8 **ENQUIRIES (02) 954 5844**
- **BHAJI ON THE BEACH** – TWL FUNDRAISING SCREENING
Mandolin Cinema, 150 Elizabeth St, Sydney
March 16, 7.00pm approx **ENQUIRIES (02) 319 0529**
TICKETS MUST BE PURCHASED AT THE LIBRARY
- **TRUST THE WOMEN - ILLUSTRATED TALKS**
BEYOND THE GENTLE ARTS – CREATIVE WOMEN
WHO DEFY CONVENTION
S H Ervin Gallery, Watson Rd, The Rocks
March 21, 6.00pm **BOOKINGS (02) 258 1074**
- **TRUST THE WOMEN - ILLUSTRATED TALKS**
THE NATIONAL WOMEN'S ART BOOK
S H Ervin Gallery, Watson Rd, The Rocks
March 29, 6.00pm **BOOKINGS (02) 258 1074**
- **THE WOMEN'S LIBRARY GARAGE SALE
AND BOOKFAIR**
Corner of Australia and King Streets, Newtown
April 1 **ENQUIRIES (02) 319 0529**
- **5TH WOMEN AND LABOUR CONFERENCE**
Macquarie University
September 29 – October 1 **ENQUIRIES (02) 954 5844**

BOOKS DONATED

BY AUTHORS/CONTRIBUTORS/EDITORS

- CONTEMPORARY AUSTRALIAN FEMINISM
Anna Yeatman
(ed Kate Pritchard Hughes)
- BUREAUCRATS, TECHNOCRATS, FEMOCRATS
Anna Yeatman
- POST MODERN CRITICAL THEORISING
Anna Yeatman (ed)
- FEMINISM AND THE MASTERY OF NATURE
Val Plumwood
- SOMEONE YOU KNOW
Maria Pallotta-Chiarolli
- I TOOK MY HARP TO A PARTY
Alexandra Long
- THE YEAR OF CHRISTINA CLEAVES
Alexandra Long

PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED

- Access – Positive Radio News
- Action News – Newsletter of Affirmative Action Agency
- AIDS Awareness Week Bulletin
- Australian Centre for Lesbian and Gay Research Newsletter
- Equal Opportunity Tribunal papers
- Gay and Lesbian Radio Information and News Service (GRINS)
- Macquarie University Union Annual Report
- Making Known (Older Women's Network)
- National Library of Australia News
- National Women's Media Centre Newsletter
- NSW Ministry for the Status and Advancement of Women
 - Annual Report
 - Guidelines on Mentoring for Women
 - Work and Family Phone-In
 - Domestic Violence Information Manual
 - If Motherhood is Bliss, Why do I Feel so Awful
 - Women's Jobs, Men's Jobs
- Sydney Women's Liberation Newsletter
- Victorian Women's Liberation Newsletter
- Women In Focus (with thanks to Deborah Stevenson)
- Agenda
 - Lesbiana
- Australian Feminist Studies
 - Mountain Lesbian News
- Belles Letters
 - Orana Newsletter
- Galaxy (GALTAS)
 - Queensland Pride
- Gayzette
 - Rouge
- Grapevine
 - Warm Up
- Griffin News
 - WEL Informed
- Hersay
 - Wicked Women
- Inner Voice
 - Women and Work
- Lesbian Space Newsletter

WOW Film Festival

The Women on Women (WOW) Film Festival will be returning this May and is calling for entries.

ENTRIES DEADLINE

April 3 is the call for entries deadline

ENQUIRIES

For enquiries and entry forms contact JO CADMAN at PERPETUAL MOTION PICTURES (02) 955 3188

CONFLICT RESOLUTION NETWORK

Thanks to the **CONFLICT RESOLUTION NETWORK** for the donation of a workshop kit including video, trainer's manual and several copies of EVERYONE CAN WIN. The Women's Library will be pleased to offer Conflict Resolution workshops to volunteers in the near future.

MEMBERSHIP FORM

To become a member of THE WOMEN'S LIBRARY please fill out this form and enclose a cheque or money order payable to THE WOMEN'S LIBRARY INC. Membership fees are \$30 for the fully waged and \$20 for others. Donation of a new title specified on a list at The Feminist Bookshop will be accepted in place of the membership fee. PLEASE LET US KNOW IF YOU CHANGE YOUR ADDRESS.

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HOW DID YOU HEAR ABOUT THE WOMEN'S LIBRARY?

- FEE ENCLOSED: \$50 FUNDED INSTITUTIONS PER YEAR \$30 WAGED PER YEAR
 \$20 UNWAGED PER YEAR \$5 HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT PER YEAR

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