

international dialogue between Canadian and Vietnamese women from both North and South Vietnam, when VOW brought them to Canada during the Vietnam war, to share their stories of the devastation and to create a better understanding of the need for diplomacy.

A central achievement of *Muriel Duckworth: A Very Active Pacifist* is the contribution it makes in recording Muriel's experiences within the Canadian women's peace and feminist movements in the latter half of the 20th century. As a founding member of the Nova Scotia chapter of the Voice of Women (VOW), Muriel played a significant role in integrating peace issues with community issues, including anti-racism, social justice, feminism, and environmental issues. The many stories of protests, lobbying and organizing give the reader a sense of the struggles faced by women activists in this period

In addition to this however, Kerans has provided a "window" into the conditions and experiences of Canadian women in the 20th century. Using the methods of oral history, this narrative sensitively portrays Muriel's experiences as a young woman growing up in rural Quebec, launching her university studies at McGill in the mid-1920's, and gradually "evolving" throughout marriage and motherhood, into a passionate pacifist, feminist and community activist. A leading strength in this work is Keran's ability to profile Muriel through interviews and other primary sources such as personal letters. This chronicle of Muriel's life has highlighted some of her most formative influences. Her mother Anna had a strong influence on her social conscience and feminism, as did Muriel's spiritual and intellectual journey in the Student Christian Movement (SCM) in Montreal and in the Union Theological Seminary (UTS) in New York City. Kerans has succeeded in weaving together a narrative which underscores the connections between the private and public, the personal and political, the spiritual and the social.

While we are fortunate that Marion Douglas Kerans has laid the groundwork in this eloquent and timely account of Muriel Duckworth's life, there is a need to broaden the

story by placing it in the context of Canadian women's history, and more specifically, the history of Canadian women's peace movements. This narrative would have benefited from such a perspective. The significance of Muriel's life far outreaches her achievements as an individual, and would be better understood by locating it within the fabric of Canadian society, especially prominent Canadian social movements. From the "social gospel" to civil rights, as well as spanning two generations of feminist and women's peace movements, Muriel's experience as a resourceful and privileged Canadian woman bears further examination.

While the Kerans' biography provides a rich description of Muriel Duckworth's life, and yields precious primary research in a hitherto unmapped territory of Canadian women's history, a more thorough analysis of Canadian women's peace activism is a task which remains for future historians.

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Aborting Law: An Exploration of the Politics of Motherhood and Medicine. Gail Kellough. (University of Toronto Press, Toronto, Ontario, 1996); bibliography; index; x + 340 pages; ISBN (paper) 0-8020-7741-2; \$19.95

Gail Kellough's *Aborting Law* sets out to explain the abortion debate in Canada through a meticulous analysis of the discourses and codes that form both the terms of the debate and the material conditions for women who seek abortion services. She succeeds, showing how and why reproductive autonomy for Canadian women remains trapped in "rhetoric about rights and responsibilities" (5), while the material conditions for autonomy remain elusive.

Kellough argues that legal "choice" for women is configured through either property or welfare rights, a dialectic that cannot reconcile

legal theory and daily reality. She argues persuasively that pregnant women are "granted the 'choice' of normal human subjects" only if a doctor declares them incapable of "the 'responsiveness' of normal women" (155).

Aborting Law is both theoretical and practical. Kellough focuses her analysis of legal, medical, reproductive, and social discourses through a concurrent analysis of feminist practice in action. She follows the Ontario Coalition for Abortion Clinics (OCAC) in their struggle to ensure access to abortion services during the Morgentaler hearings in Ontario and Manitoba during the 1980's. Texts from legal proceedings are used to bring out the "masculist" assumptions underneath discourse, and Kellough demonstrates that basic assumptions on the "nature" of women contaminate all discourses, that "discourse itself is gendered" (299) and that it defines the terms in which we can speak. Furthermore, "[i]mplicit in all the Crown's arguments was the underlying fear that allowing women the normal legal right to decline to empower others would ultimately lead to a loss of all care and concern" (132).

Kellough shows that the state wants to "maintain and reinforce the structural separation of choice from access" (199), while the medical profession wants to remain as the legally designated arbiter of female reproductive "health." The complex interactions of ideological systems have created this situation by making women's reproductive labor invisible. Masculist discourse depends on this invisibility; legal theory cannot describe an autonomous subject (self-interested and active) who would choose to "care" (defined as passive). Women do not partake of the rights of normal legal subjects *vis-a-vis* maternity, and are compelled by definition to "perform reproductive tasks that create the conditions of fetal autonomy" (89). Ironically, doctors are the legal subjects capable of making rational decisions in the interest of women and the law, while "women are forced to consent to their own subordination" (167) to gain access to abortion services.

In the public mind, the abortion debate has become polarized into choice versus moral responsibility, but feminist activists must respond to another legally constructed barrier. The OCAC

women found that actions for choice (legal autonomy) restricted possibilities for actions on access (medical services). Kellough cites passages from OCAC meetings, conferences and interviews where she analyses their political actions, making concrete and intimate their struggles on the front lines. This is an important component of the text, bringing out the difficulties as well as the successes of feminist practice.

In conclusion Kellough offers direction for feminist praxis: to "elaborate care from a position that does not essentialize" (301), and to develop new strategies that change our reproductive code assumptions. Kellough calls for women to work together with a new awareness of the issues at stake. *Aborting Law* it is a must read and would be a valuable addition to many curricula. Ironically though, the language of the text would make it inaccessible to many women it could benefit.

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Motherland: Tales of Wonder. National Film Board (Studio D) video directed by Helene Klodawsky. 1994; 89 minutes and 50 seconds; order # 9194 087. ***Feminism, Breasts and Breastfeeding.*** Pam Carter. (St. Martin's Press, New York, 1995); ix + 266 pages; ISBN 0-312-12625-5.

These two sources present issues of current interest in studies of mothering. They may prove useful in academic settings, but are also accessible to those not involved in academic work. The book more directly relates to theoretical debates within the academic forum, assessing breastfeeding as a feminist issue.

The video provides insights into women's experiences of mothering in the 1950's and 1960's in Canada. It is useful in the current context because many of the myths that surrounded mothering during that time period persist today. The video follows one woman's search to find out about her mother's experience of motherhood, in