

inactivity of psychologists. The more interesting question of how psychological theories may positively shape social relations is thus avoided, preventing any comprehension of why Kleinianism took root in Britain. Further, this suggests that psychology's inherently right wing tendencies cannot really be prevented save by leftist interventions, which may be passable strategic advice, but leaves one wondering how mainstream psychology "works" the way it does.

The fact that Riley is unable to maintain the high standards of analysis which are established in the final sanctions of the book, is a testament to the contribution which she makes in an area which has been under-theorized. As she demonstrates so clearly, it is all too tempting to perceive a seamless web of collaboration during periods when political decisions are made that are later justified by a seemingly unquestionable ideology. To this extent, detailed historical deconstructions are needed, but always constitute an arduous task as they demand that nothing be taken as a given. Riley's example with respect to the ideological currents present during the closure of the nurseries is highly valuable and makes the book's inconsistencies easier to accept as it provides the tools with which to overcome these shortcomings.

NOTES

1. The legislative history can be found in Status of Women Canada, *Report of the Task Force on Child Care*, (Ottawa, 1986) and Ontario, Ministry of Community and Social Services, *Day Care Policy: A Background Paper*, (Toronto, 1981). For feminist articles on the issue, see Patricia Vandebelt Schultz, "Minding the Children," in Maureen Fitzgerald, Connie Guberman and Margie Wolfe, eds. *Still Ain't Satisfied!*, (Toronto, 1982), Genevieve Leslie, "Childrearing as a Social Responsibility," in Kathleen Gallagher Ross, ed., *Good Day Care*, (Toronto, 1978). For the American situation, see Rosalyn F. Baxandall, "Who Shall Care for the Children? The History and Development of Day Care in the United States," in Jo Freeman, ed., *Women: A Feminist Perspective*, (New York, 1975).
2. Indeed, governments have frequently commissioned more research on day care as a means of forestalling any action on the issue. In Canada, this strategy was most recently employed by the Mulroney government when it set up its own day care task force just as the former Liberal government's task force made its report public. For the proliferation of research in the United States with the same aim, see Stevanne Auerbach, *Confronting the Child Care Crisis*, (Boston, 1979).
3. Denise Riley, *War in the Nursery: Theories of the Child and Mother*, (Essex, 1983).
4. Juliet Mitchell, *Psychoanalysis and Feminism*, (London, 1974).
5. Denise Riley, *op.cit.*, p.11.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 119.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 4.
8. *Ibid.*, pp. 80 ff.
9. The necessity of this form of analysis is clearly stated by the author when she rejects the equation of popularization with the vulgarization of a theory. For popularization to be intelligible, the social context in which the theory is received must be provided. *Ibid.*, p. 85.
10. *Ibid.*, pp.194-5.

11. *Ibid.*, pp. 10-11.

12. *Ibid.*, p. 115. See also chapter six on the ideology of pronatalism after the Second World War.

Stephen Milton

Lovhers. Nicole Brossard, Barbara Godard, translation. *Montreal, Quebec: Guernica Editions, 1986. Pp. 109.*

Lovhers is a radically feminist, radically new, radically poetic text which sings the energy of women. It is a text which excludes men, totally, as it brings together women who will celebrate their be-ing, in Mary Daly's sense: Be-Dazzling, utopian girls naturally unanimous, grappling with the "question of vertigo" (86) in this "spatial era of women" (90).

And of course Mary Daly is named, with all the others that have nourished, challenged and touched Nicole Brossard:

Djuna Barnes, Jane Bowles, Gertrude Stein, Natalie Barney, Michèle Causse, Marie-Claire Blais, Jovette Marchessault, Adrienne Rich, Mary Daly, Colette and Virginia, the other drowned ones, Cristina Perri Rossi, Louky Bersianik, Pol Pelletier, Maryvonne so attentive, Monique Wittig, Sande Zeig, Anna d'Argentine, Kate Millet, Jeanne d'Arc Jutras, Marie Lafleur, Jane Rule, Renée Vivien, Romaine Brooks (108).

A gallery of feminist writers and poets, of Lesbian thinkers, of clairvoyant women, conscious and expressive, joyful, delirious (in the sense also of Brossard's French "dé-lire" which is delirium and un-reading simultaneously), enraptured, vital, intelligent, daring.

Lovhers was first published under the title *Amantes*, in 1980. It took as sensitive and innovative a translator as Barbara Godard to come up with this word l-o-v-h-e-r-s, to render the French word for female lovers in all its power. Bravo, indeed. With this book we are in the centre of Nicole Brossard's writing and at the same time in the very centre of women's existence, women no longer being for men, but women being for themselves and for each other. The patriarchal world has been left behind. Here in *Lovhers*, women only wish to be with and celebrate each other. Brossard continuously combines traditionally opposing ideas. Thus the celebration is not only exuberance, it is also quiet recollection, bringing together polarities of the female being. We read of rejoicing in lesbian love and love of text, text to read and text to write. Loving, reading

and writing are of the same importance, are simultaneous, "lire" and "délire" are confused, brought together, intellectual discourse uses kisses for punctuation.

Where does all this take place? In the minds of women, of course, but also in the reality of the New York Barbizon Hotel for women, in its rooms, its narrow beds. The above list of names already made us understand that this truly québécois writer is not a nationalist, that Québec feminism became international quite some time ago (Brossard made with Luce Guilbault, in the seventies, the NFB film "Some American Feminists"), preparing the terrain for today's global movement.

The New York Barbizon Hotel for Women witnesses the lovers' encounter. The black and white images which accompany the text in its French edition, and which are unfortunately omitted in the English one, show the hotel rising like a clitoris in erection, against the geometrical map of the American city. The hotel is reality and myth or magic, at the same time, a place where the new witches meet to brew their magic potion of love and text, of the emotional and the cerebral, which they mix and stir with strength and joy.

To me, *Louhers* evokes the mandala of women's existence. A sacred space, with a sacred figure, woman (think of it: the French word "femme" does not include man!). In the rectangular building of the hotel, Brossard assembles four lovers into a circle, four women who constitute the four cardinal points of the universe. The sacred figure is female, of course, and she is represented here by her mouth, her mouth that forms words into speech and text, as well as into kisses, her lips which Brossard juxtaposes to the vulva.

Louhers becomes a re-calling of the ancient, the archimagic, as Daly would say, myth of Baubo. Baubo, who was either Persephone's or Demeter's nursemaid (the mostly male classicists have not yet managed to agree on one or the other) succeeded to make Demeter smile again, after Persephone had been abducted to her mother's despair. Demeter had long searched for her lost daughter. She meets Baubo, who lifts up her skirt and exposes her vulva and Demeter breaks out laughing and can finally accept food and drink again. For a long time, this myth was considered one of the obscenities of mythology, was silenced just like the thesmophoria, a woman's festival that included lesbian activities and was one of the most important festivities of Ancient Greece. Baubo, her symbolic gesture of female solidarity, and also the thesmophoria come to life again in Brossard's text. Brossard is

unaware of this "Greek connection." But clearly, it points to the universality of her writing.

Barbara Godard's preface to her translation of *Amantes* discusses with enthusiasm and clarity the difficulties encountered while rendering Brossard's text, with its frequent occurrences of ellipsis and parataxis, its neologisms and puns meant to liberate the French language from clichés and patriarchal customs. She calls Brossard's book "a study for the erotics of reading" (9), "a spiral of escalating desire and vertigo" (10), and reminds us that she started translating pages of this text in 1981, to be read in Toronto, at a "Writers in Dialogue" conference at York University, with Nicole Brossard and Adrienne Rich reading in counterpoint. It took Godard several years and many a working hour with Nicole, to be fully satisfied with her translation of the text and the "connotative wealth of each word on the page" (11). The result is according to this reviewer a work of art from which the reader will draw a lot of pleasure, a pleasure stimulated by thought, emotion and dream, again simultaneously. And her pleasure will be her own creation, for Brossard's frequent play with typography, with the spacing of her text on the white page, her interjections such as "turn the page" make the reader aware of the fact that, as Godard points out, "she is reading only black marks on a white page and that the meaning being produced is her own creation" (12). *Louhers* is intertextually at its best. Here, writer, translator, and reader are coming together in Brossard's "laboratory of emotions" to weave a feminist utopia in which to find a common strength and the inspiration to continue the feminist journey.

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Other Fires, Short Fiction by Latin American Women, Alberto Manguel, *Toronto: Lester and Orphen Dennys Limited, 1986. Pp. 221.*

To review an anthology of writers is a difficult task since the choice of authors on the anthologists' part may not coincide with our own; it is even more difficult when the material is in translation (in this case, Spanish to English) and it is written by women whose background and formation are quite unfamiliar to the average Canadian reader; it is finally next to impossible to review an anthology, presumably compiled for the purpose of making Latin American writing known in Canada which fails to offer that essential critical dimension on the authors it presents.