

excludes other kinds of feminist practice. However, Showalter is probably less influential than Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar.

To understand Gallop's antagonism, it is necessary to recall Showalter's comment on Gallop: "Some feminist critics have taken upon themselves a revisionism which becomes a kind of homage; they have made Lacan the ladies' man of *Diacritics* ..." (*Writing and Sexual Difference*, 13-14; a note cites Gallop's "The Ladies' Man," *Diacritics* 1976). After a lengthy contrast of Showalter and Cheri Register, Gallop writes: "I do not wish to demonize Showalter for her enviable success nor do I mean to idealize Register for her marginality. Register spoke out of turn and was dismissed; Showalter has an exquisite sense of timing" (118). Nonetheless, her severe treatment of Showalter is at least partially at odds with Gallop's own warnings against disparaging academic success, even if it is consistent with her resistance to centralizing tendencies. Then, however, Gallop insists that no subject is free of conflict and contradiction. She is even suspicious when others attempt to relegate Showalter to an earlier stage of feminist criticism: *Making a Difference* "would go beyond the definition of feminist criticism as the study of writing by women, beyond gynocritics, beyond Elaine Showalter. The latter, however, with her own excellent sense of timing, in 1989 edits an anthology entitled *Speaking of Gender*" (242).

That last sentence cannot be wholly ironic, for, in its historicist self-consciousness and its attention to institutional politics, *Around 1981* is nothing if not timely.

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Sister Woman. J.G. Sime's (with introduction by Sandra Campbell). *Nepean, ON: Tecumseh Press, 1992 (1919), Pp. 293 paperback.*

It is a welcome sight to see J.G. Sime's *Sister Woman* come back into print more than sixty years after it was first published in London. Described in 1921 as a "seemingly inspired interpreter of womanhood [who] has already made a unique place for herself among Canadian writers" (*The [Montreal] Gazette*, 23 Apr. 1921, n.p.), Georgina Sime was a vital part of the Canadian literary scene in the first decades of the twentieth century, serving with Montreal P.E.N. for over twenty years, lecturing extensively throughout Ontario and Quebec, and bringing the messages of literature to popular audiences. Of Scottish descent, Sime grew up in the fashionable London suburb of Chiswick. (Her family consorted with the literary personalities of Jane Welsh and Thomas Carlyle, Daniel Macmillan, William Morris, and "Willie" Yeats.) She lived for long stretches in Europe and in Edinburgh, and immigrated to Canada in 1907. Once in Montreal, Sime supported her writing first by a day job as secretary in a gynecologist's office, and later by some prudent investments in the stock market. Indeed, she was so pleased with her success in this unusual territory that she compiled a treatise — not surprisingly left unpublished — entitled "Market Maxims by the Monna Lisa of the Market-Place." "Play the market long enough, and it will catch you in the end," and "the end of a market-career and the close of a passionate love are alike in this: one never ceases being thankful to be done with both, and one is never finished longing to be in the thick of the two once more" are but two of these collected aphorisms.

A complex and elusive person and likely quite a difficult personality, Sime's politics ranged through the years — and there were many of them, for she died in 1958 at the age

of 90 — from the radical to the reactionary. In her youth, she attended some of the Sunday afternoon meetings in William Morris's Kelmiscott stable, which were also attended by the likes of G.B. Shaw and Oscar Wilde. Later, she wrote for the *New Statesman*, composed *Mistress of All Work* (1916), a domestic manifesto to give professional women practical solutions to the problems of juggling work in and out of the home and, later still, in *Sister Woman*, she explored the lives of immigrant women in Canada during the first world war. Her highly acclaimed 1921 novel, *Our Little Life*, although completed when she was over 50, marks the end of this "early" period of her writing.

As the years wore on, her sight deteriorated and she was forced to rely more heavily on editorial assistance and, eventually, on the facility with the pen of her best friend and literary amanuensis, Frank Carr Nicholson. In a complicated collaborative arrangement that saw Sime's drafts moving from hand to hand across continent, she would send page upon page of barely legible pencil marks on yellow paper from Montreal to Nicholson's home in England's Lake District. Here, he would patiently transcribe the bits and pieces into his own hand, edit the handwritten text, and send it to the typist who, incidentally, lived on the Isle of Man. The typescript would be returned to Sime in Montreal to be read to her by a woman hired for this purpose or would wait at Nicholson's home for Sime's yearly visit. Fortified by Nicholson's wife's food and ministrations, Nicholson and Sime would sit in a book-lined den overlooking Derwent Waters and read over the creations of the previous year, pausing to alter the text as necessary. It was in these later years of virtual blindness and declining health that Sime's early political engagement seemed to all but vanish. In 1945, she wrote in one of her almost daily letters to Nicholson: "I might here state that I am NOT

a democrat. I am a hierarchist of the First Degree. I want everyone in his place and made to stay there, myself included. Do you agree?" (Letter of 1 April 1945).

Generically unstable, *Sister Woman* could be described as a short story sequence (as Campbell does in her introduction to this volume) or as novel loosely tied by the framing devices of prologue and epilogue, as both a novel *about* process and a novel-*in-process*. Twenty-eight stories are told in answer to a question posed in the prologue by an anonymous male speaker who addresses the author with the injunction to "be articulate" (7) about what women want. At novel's end, however, the task of the woman writer is far from complete, for she confesses in the epilogue that she has "not even started yet ... I've got reams and reams to say ... what we women want is simple — but the world isn't simple" (292). A nameless woman who "wasn't a bad girl" (138) is one of the many stories gathered to stand within the frame of the woman writer's beginning attempt at articulation:

There were times in the night when she would wake up terrified. She would be there in the dark in the attic room that was reserved for the maid, and she would huddle herself together and lie quaking. She was terrified. What would she do! She would lie awhile and think the same things over and over again and strain her eyes into the darkness, and then she would turn so as to try to sleep again, and in turning she would feel how heavy and unwieldy she was becoming ... and she would be terrified again. (141)

The housemaid's pregnancy "seemed a lot to have to pay for a minute or two of warmth and contentment.... It seemed to her sometimes ... that she had bartered away all she had to give for just nothing at all" (139). Her story of lonely fortitude is like that of the charwoman

who is slowly losing her sight, or of the 39-year-old sales clerk who has worked on shop floors for most of her "long life" (151) and who scrimps and saves so that she might buy for herself the ingredients to mix a single gleaming topaz cocktail each week, a balm that allows her to rest, to forget the drudgery that is her life:

No customers to worry you, ask questions, be discontented, complain of you, perhaps. No shopwalker to pass you over with his eyes for something younger, more attractive, no girls to spy your grey hairs out, note your lines and wrinkles — nudge one another — pass remarks. None of that. Nothing but peace — quietness — serenity. (152)

Individually, the stories are but pieces of this fascinating palimpsestic text that gains its resonance through addition upon addition of tales of experience.

Sister Woman is at once realist and sentimental and politically engaged — truly an unlikely triad of fictional possibilities — and, given Sime's virtual invisibility to the canon of Canadian literature, one that provokes questions about generic purity and the ascription of value to women's writing. Aside from a few typographical inconsistencies — two lines from the bottom of a page of explanatory notes stray onto the otherwise blank page which follows, at first glance appearing to stand as an epigraph or inscription framing the tales which follow — this facsimile edition is a sound one. The introduction by Sandra Campbell provides a useful contextualization of Sime's work within its historical moment and social milieu, which concentrates specifically on the economic and moral realities of the early twentieth century in Canada — a time when Sime's explorations of women's tentative independence and her articulation of the richness and hardship of licit and illicit

sexual unions was striking, particularly against the nationalist and imperialist discourses of maternal feminism and moral purity that characterized this period. *Sister Woman* is a profoundly political text, for it stages a pause, a moment of speaking and listening in which the complex negotiations of women to adapt and embrace new personal, social and economic roles can be heard.

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Women's Writing in Latin America: An Anthology. Sara Castro-Klarén, Sylvia Molloy, and Beatriz Sarlo (eds.). *Boulder: Westview Press, 1991, Pp. 362 hardcover.*

This is that rarest of volumes: one which lives up to the compliments the publisher has gathered to sprinkle about the bookjacket. For instance, Gregory Rabassa, translator of Cortázar and García-Marquez, is quoted on the jacket as saying, "This anthology will give English-speaking readers a whole new trove of top-drawer writers and their fine work." That is certainly true. More than three dozen voices of women are represented in this volume, some of them like Gabriela Mistral, well known north of the Rio Grande. Other voices, some of them peasant women, are not widely known.

Mary Louise Pratt of Stanford University is quoted as saying, among other things, that this anthology is "a powerful and original contribution to the field of Latin American writing in translation." So it is: powerful because of the texts selected, and original because the editors have employed a provocative method of text selection. Moreover, in some cases, they have provided fresh or first-time translations of texts. Even Nobel Prize winner Gabriela Mistral is looked at freshly.