

about the Mistress's relationship to her parents, to her women friends and finally to herself. How is self acceptance achieved? How does one learn to live alone? How does one combust all that garbage in the head? We will not find the answers to these questions in The Mistress Condition.

What we will find is a quick shot in the arm, an exciting uplift, but little real nourishment to sustain us in the actual process of living and coping as a single independent woman in this world. It's a bit like getting a petit four when what you really wanted was a thick steak.

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But Can You Type? Jill McCalla
Vickers and June Adam. Toronto: Clarke,
Irwin, 1977. C.A.U.T. Monograph Series.
Pp. 142.

Years ago, when I was a working single parent with a high school diploma and no marketable skills, "Can you type?" was a question I frequently encountered. I could not type: I spent years at a series of low paid monotonous jobs. Then I moved into personnel work and the other side of the desk. Women came to me for jobs and I asked them, "Can you type?." Most of them

could and did, including those with a B.A. or an M.A. or even an M.B.A. That was ten years or so ago. Since then I have been mostly in the academic world and had assumed things must have changed out there. They haven't--at least not for many of us. Last week I was asked, "But can you type?." (I still can't.)

It hasn't changed enough for us in the universities either, as many of us know from years of attending conferences where our colleagues have presented study after study demonstrating that women are discriminated against in Canadian universities, as students, as faculty and as support staff.

The authors of But can you type? document the existence and the extent of the discrimination, "practised daily and on a nationwide scale." The study was done by Vickers of Carleton and Adam of Calgary for the C.A.U.T. series on the place of the universities in Canadian society. General series editor Naomi Griffiths comments about the series briefly and usefully in this volume. This particular monograph is outstanding by reason of its clear discussion of a useful selection of disturbing statistics, as well as by its subject.

Adam and Vickers argue that it matters that women are discriminated against in the universities because these institutions have a "virtual monopoly on the field of professional and higher

occupational training." They believe that the partial exclusion of women from certain areas of higher training in the universities is "an important factor contributing to the overall ability of Canadian women to gain a status and condition equal to that enjoyed by Canadian men," certain groups of whom they acknowledge are also excluded. They argue that although the position of women in the universities is a concern of upper middle class women, a change for these women would help to improve the status of all Canadian women because there would be women in positions of power helping to prevent the making of laws and policies injurious to all women.

Improvement in the status of women in the universities may be a necessary condition for improving the status of all women in Canadian society, as Vickers and Adam would have it; I am not convinced that it is a sufficient condition. Nor am I convinced, as the authors are, that it is possible to achieve. The authors recognise that our universities are still institutions supporting the status quo, under the guise of autonomy and academic freedom. Universities are not committed to social change. But they can be forced to contribute to social change because they are dependent upon government money to survive. Universities may be isolated from society to some degree, the authors point out, but despite their pretensions to the contrary, they are not autonomous.

Vickers and Adam survey the dismal situation of women as undergraduates. More women are entering the universities than ever before, but the increase does not compare favourably with that of some other countries or with that of men. Most are from the upper middle classes, many are marking time until marriage, few have an appreciation of a wider range of possibilities and fewer are encouraged to develop such a view. Few enter the sciences or professional training. The universities do virtually nothing to change societally based channelling of women into traditional fields and roles. They do all but nothing to serve the differing educational needs of women based on the different female life cycles. Most have no daycare. Few have family housing and women are often discriminated against in its use. Student financial aid programmes are overtly discriminatory against women students. Universities are replete with sexist attitudes based on widely held stereotypes.

If women do get into and through undergraduate training, then what? We know the answer to this one: But can they type? We are taught to believe, in this free, liberal, democratic, open society that education will open doors for us--but it doesn't, necessarily. Women are now more than a third of the paid work force. (A third of all women old enough to work for pay now do so, mostly because they have to.) Yet women are nearly non-existent in



"We don't discriminate against women here---all of our secretaries have Ph.Ds."

the higher professions and in politics. Many women with first degrees do low pay, low status work, just like the majority of non-degreed women. They work in female job ghettos where the administrative jobs are held primarily by men. (Teaching and librarianship are obvious examples, and nursing looks like it may become one.) Much fewer than 3% of Canadian engineers, architects, dentists and lawyers are women. 10% of all our doctors are women, 13% of academics, 15% of pharmacists. Those few women in the professions tend to work in institutional, rather than entrepreneurial areas, reflecting a more general cultural pattern. In North American society, the entrepreneurial professions are the roads to power. Women are actively and passively discriminated against along those roads. (From 1917 to 1970, fewer than 1% of Canadian women have achieved federal or provincial elective office.) There is much resistance among members of the higher professions to increased numbers of women in those fields.

In the academic world, women are discriminated against as M.A. and Ph.D. students, just as they are as undergraduates. Women face many hurdles, and academics have developed far more subtle mechanisms to exclude women than the crude quotas of the earlier days of the professional schools. Women need Ph.D.s to get jobs far more than men do. Yet admission to doctoral programmes is often harder for

women than men. There are few part time programmes. Scholarships and grants for women are often less than for men. A higher level of achievement is generally demanded of women than of men. The situation is not getting better with the passage of time. A lower percentage of doctorates was awarded to women in 1969-70 than in 1930-31! It is not just a matter of degrees, either. Women have trouble plugging into the old boy networks that lead to jobs. (Aside from questions of morality, there are not enough influential women around to create effective old girl networks.) If women are not aggressive, they are not seen as serious, thus not worthy of acceptance. If they are aggressive, they are seen as unfeminine and as competitors for jobs wanted by men. This double bind is one we all know! Anti-nepotism rules are usually used to insure that the men get the jobs and the women get the shaft.

In 1969-70, no doctorates were awarded to women in engineering and applied science and only 4% of those awarded in math and physical science went to women. 9% overall went to women, mostly in the humanities, education, and social sciences. Less than 20% of all full time teaching jobs are held by women. Those who hold them get lower pay, heavier teaching loads of undergraduate courses, slower advancement, less chance of tenure, regardless of their qualifications. Women are badly exploited as part time aca-

demics, working at disgracefully low pay, usually ineligible for benefits, without any job security.

What is to be done about this? Vickers and Adam make five recommendations. The universities must provide a good range of programmes on a part time basis. They must counteract sex stereotyping and attempt to recruit women into traditionally male fields. They must provide redirection, upgrading and re-entry programmes to aid women entering those fields. They must give women students equal and adequate funding and other forms of assistance, including access to family living facilities, day care and other support services. The academic profession must clean up its own house, too. Here is where we are to come in: women academics must be prepared to act more assertively, to further their own interests and those of their female students. It would be better if the universities would act themselves to make the necessary changes, but they probably will not--not unless we force them to, from within and without. This means utilizing every means of power within, and working to create pressure in our communities to push governments into action.

As Griffiths points out in her foreword, this book raises questions about the role of universities in our society. Are they merely to reflect the values of contemporary society or to provide leadership in changing those

values? What is the nature of the control of the community over the university? What is the nature of the responsibility of academic communities to the community at large? The issues raised in this work are more than philosophical. In his comments on the university as an institution within an ideological system, Anthony Wilden reminds us that "all knowledge is political. The refusal of politics is itself a political act." The universities control our reality by legitimizing and creating an ideology from which women are excluded. This book helps to describe the extent to which women are excluded. We can make good use of the information it provides, if we will. We now understand the situation: it is time to change it.

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