

## UP AND DOING: Canadian Women and Peace

Janice Williamson and Deborah Gorham, eds. Toronto: Women's Press, 1989.

By *Kim Hume*

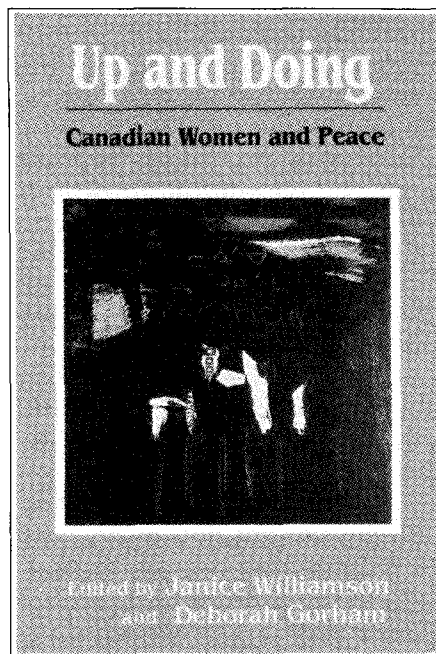
"Do not despair. Act. Speak out.... In cases of emergency, it is folly to fold one's hands and sit down to bewail in abject terror. It is better to be up and doing."

This quotation from Margaret Laurence's well-known essay, "My Final Hour," provides the title for this volume on Canadian women's struggles and successes in the peace movement. The peace movement is driven by fear; fear of nuclear war and the end of human life. This book is a collection of history, autobiography and poetry documenting the ideas, actions and feelings that have resulted from women's fear of war and consequent participation in the peace movement.

The first section, "Peace History," briefly outlines women's activism before, during and after World War I. Beginning with an article on Nellie McClung, R.R. Warne examines McClung's attitudes to peace and war, in an attempt to justify her contradictory position as a member of peace organizations while supporting the war effort during World War I. The following chapter presents portraits of Francis Benyon and Laura Hughes, two of the few women who opposed war during World War I. Thomas Socknat then discusses Canadian feminists and interwar peace activism, identifying the seemingly inherent connection between peace activism and feminism.

The second part, "Thinking About Peace," is a collection of essays, reprinted articles and speech extracts focussing on theories of peace, theories of war and explanations as to why peace activism is predominantly a feminine activity. Included is Kim Echlin's disturbing and powerful account of the fallout from U.S. testing of nuclear weapons in the Marshall Islands that began in 1946. These people's innocent suffering is a rude reminder of what atrocities we, as a human race, are capable of.

The section "Acting for Peace" includes a selection of articles on contemporary peace activism. Today, the peace move-



ment incorporates a wide range of issues and activities. Shelly Romalis provides an account of the lives of non-violent activist women protesting nuclear weapons at Greenham Common. Ann Hansen, a violent social activist, is serving a life-term in Kingston penitentiary for her part in the bombing of Litton Systems. Her statement to the court is included in this section to explain the rationale behind this form of peace activism.

The final section of this book, "Imaging Peace," uses the narrative, the poem and the lyric as forms for illustrating life in a nuclear age. With contributions from poets, writers, professors, feminists and peace activists, this section presents images of peace. It is an elusive thing; we do not live in a peaceful world, and so cannot know what it really is, which makes peace a difficult thing to strive for. It may be easier to imagine the horrific aftermath of sterility and barrenness that would result from nuclear war, as some of the writers for this section have done. By depicting the alternatives, these images provide the most forceful argument for peace.

Individually, each section in this anthology contributes to the discussion of Canadian women and peace. Unfortunately, the parts do not form a cohesive whole. While the intentions of the editors, to "explore the experience of Canadian women with the issue of peace" is fulfilled, the book lacks a focus. The introduction includes a resources list of printed materials, films and peace groups, which suggests the book is to be considered a resource. However, the absence of an

index considerably diminishes its value as such.

It is difficult to define an audience for *Up and Doing*, save perhaps the already-converted. This book will be an informative and interesting read for feminists and those involved in the peace movement. It is to be hoped that the material included in this volume will prove useful for discussion with those who have yet to be convinced of the necessity and importance of peace.

## THE HYSTERICAL MALE: New Feminist Theory

Arthur and Marilouise Kroker, eds. Montreal: New World Perspectives CultureTexts Series, 1991.

By *Jennifer Henderson*

Pee-Wee Herman, who figures somewhat prominently in *The Hysterical Male*, was recently arrested for "exposing" himself in a California cinema. His action makes the naming of this collection of essays particularly apt, given the thematic focus of the work around a concept of male hysteria as nostalgia for the lost penis/phallus. The exhibitionist's game of now-you-see-it-now-you-don't enacts the anxiety of male subjectivity in profound crisis — as the editors put it, "that fateful point where the specular coherence of unitary male subjectivity shatters, and what remains is but the violent residues of the death of the old male cock."

This book does not deliver the unified picture of the end-of-century male hysteric promised by its title. The conjunction of feminist theory and cultural criticism of most of the writers, however, provides a way of making connections between what might be called the sensibility of post-modernism and the material reality of a "penile power" which erects itself on the abused bodies of women and children. The book is dedicated to the fourteen women murdered at the École Polytechnique in 1989. Male violence, it is argued throughout, is the end of a process in which the hysteric converts a fundamental lack into emotionally cathected ideas.

The essays are framed with the provocative suggestion that Freud's nineteenth-century theory of the hysterical female must be read in reverse image at