

before women began to realize that if they worked together their future in Hollywood would be more productive. Meryl Streep was one of the leading figures in pulling women together to work for their own betterment. Barbra Streisand and Jane Fonda played a lesser role in this piece of history. It appeared that there was always great difficulty in understanding what feminism meant, or perhaps that there was no benefit in understanding feminism. Feminism does not support the styles of politics, power or interpersonal dynamics that happen in Hollywood so how could one be a feminist and succeed? Women who wanted even a low-key position in Hollywood had to fight with everything they had to get there. For many years the only ones who succeeded followed the models of male power that they saw around them.

In contrast, Australian women were earlier in finding ways to work together. This had paid off and women were both writing and directing much sooner than women in Hollywood.

There were many women in the American movie industry who wanted to create strong roles for women in movies. As women, they had no power to protect their work, and it was written over by male screenwriters, often at the demand of directors and actors. The stories became strong male movies with women as victims or as the ones blamed for all that was wrong in the world while the men became the good guys, the heroes. Callie Khouri was the first woman to write a script with strong female characters that didn't get changed in the making of the film. She wrote "Thelma and Louise" and insisted that the story not be changed in the screenplay. She wanted to direct "Thelma and Louise" but that did not happen. The film debuted in 1991 and women directors were rare until later in the '90s.

Lansing became the first woman director to survive the "Hollywood old boys club." She attained execu-

tive positions. Lansing is interesting because she attained her success behaving in the male fashion, yet she wanted change for women and she said that women were responsible for ending violence against women.

Lansing might have been successful but most women lagged behind their male counterparts when it came to both dollars and film roles. In 1989, 71 per cent of feature film roles went to men. The combined income of all male actors, at \$644 million, was twice the money paid to all women actors.

Abramowitz goes to great lengths to explain the lives of women in Hollywood. She wants the reader to understand just how difficult this

journey has been. And while she is doing this, she helps us to understand how men and women are defined through films. Not only are the people working in the movie defined through their movies, but also the people who watch movies come to understand society and the world through what they see on the screen. With irony, she also points out that the Columbia symbol is the only female symbol in the entire movie industry.

This book reads like a novel. It is long, and the reader is anxious to find out what will happen when the story gets to the '90s. It is worth the read—all 446 pages. It documents yet another struggle against sexism.

AMANDA NASSIF

Family

In the beginning
silence
fed by the old hands
whispered throughout the hallway
lined with dark wall paper
that bandaged these lips
which cried for the beaten truth
resting in empty corners
where the fire flamed again
others tried to put it in a water bottle
my sister walked past again
still wearing glasses.

In the end the days were nights,
uncovered pain I did
crawling on the cracked glass
they had laid down for me,
numb limbs crippled to these
artificial names bound by blood
clotting some more everyday.

Amanda Nassif lives in Australia.