

of Women, the work presents a wide ranging, basic introduction to Canadian federal legal rights, providing brief explanations of individual laws. A number of areas are addressed, including universal human rights, *The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, employment, immigration and visa rights, marriage, separation and divorce, discrimination and harassment, legalities concerning abuse, and the rights of the elderly. Many sections include practical guidelines intended to enable women to protect various individual rights but these guidelines suggest no specific alternative measures if the action taken proves unsuccessful. For example, although seeking a restraining order against an abusive partner is a valid suggestion, such legal restraints are often subject to repeat violations. Rahat Kurd's most helpful advice in this and other situations is to seek out professional advice so that alternate measures can be explored.

A second valuable suggestion is to make accurate, detailed records of incidents where individual or group rights are violated. The writer does not suggest that consulting the Canadian legal system is always successful, commenting that rights violations sometimes go unprosecuted, jail times for crimes against women are frequently inadequate, and the legal system often lags behind or (less frequently) leaps ahead of public opinion on certain legal issues. Despite the inadequacies of the system, Kurd reports that documentation submitted to the appropriate authorities is a significant component in constructing a successful legal case.

The author also discusses *The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* although there are some puzzling gaps in this commentary. Kurd lists only six of the seven categories of rights defined under the Charter, excluding mobility rights (the rights of Canadian citizens to enter and leave the country and to move to and work in any province). Of the six categories listed in the text, the writer defines and explains only

four types of rights: fundamental freedoms, democratic rights, legal rights, and equality rights. Absent is an explanation of the rights accorded the official Canadian languages and minority language education rights. No explanation is given for these omissions, although possibly the author's intended audience are female Muslims with the perception that the French/English languages and associated education rights would be of little interest to this group. However, given the mobility of Canadians, it is highly probable that many women will at some point be directly affected by such issues depending upon the environment in which they live. One might argue that all Canadians are affected in some manner by the contentious issue of French/English language rights, a subject that continues to shape our politics and culture. Therefore, it is surprising that Kurd does not provide an introduction to this issue in her work.

Reading Rights is a short, simply-written text which can be used as a resource manual or educational tool for those seeking an introduction to Canadian federal legal rights. It does not provide detailed information about legal history, legal rights, or how to cope with rights violations, and generally excludes provincial legislation from discussion. Women searching for such information should seek professional advice or they can check the listings at the back, which include addresses where one can obtain legal pamphlets and information regarding public legal education and family and civil law issues. The appendices also contain copies of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, *The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* (Part I), as well as listings for human rights' commissions and women's organisations across the country.

Throughout the text, Kurd emphasises that women as individuals and as a group need to take a proactive role in asserting and claiming their rights, noting that many laws that previously discriminated against

women were changed by the intervention of women in their struggle for justice. Today's woman needs to continue that fight for the betterment of all.

CASTING STONES: PROSTITUTION AND LIBERATION IN ASIA AND THE UNITED STATES

Rita Nakashima Brock and Susan Brooks Thistlethwaite. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996

BY SHARON
FERGUSON-HOOD
AND MARIE TOVELL
WALKER

Brock and Thistlethwaite are feminist theologians who are skilled in analysis. Before writing *Casting Stones*, they undertook an exhaustive study of the sex industry in five Asian countries—Korea, Japan, Taiwan, Thailand and the Philippines—as well as in the United States. This broad context offers the reader insight into the worldwide ideologies that allow prostitution to flourish and that allow women and children to be victimized.

The authors begin their book by relating the ethos of the military to the practice of prostitution. Military success depends on a de-humanization process. In a pattern that is ancient and persistent, military personnel are socialized to objectify people, devalue relationships, and value extreme masculinity. Not surprisingly, prostitution flourishes in areas where there are military bases. *Casting Stones* describes this pattern in detail and also explains that these locations involve increased risk for sex workers. Violence against sex workers is higher in military zones

than elsewhere. As well, military personnel often bring venereal disease and AIDS to developing countries although in both developed and developing countries, prostitutes and not johns are held responsible for health risks.

In their discussion of religion and prostitution, Brock and Thistlethwaite address more than Christianity. They also examine the effects of both Buddhism and Hinduism on prostitution. It is interesting that they find support for practice of the sex trade within all of these "higher" religions even though the dynamics differ. All of these religions value men over women, and place the responsibility for sexual behavior on women who cause loss of control in men. To understand prostitution, Christianity looks at sin and the major Asian religions look at karma. Both of these concepts see the behaviours of prostitution as individualistic. From this perspective, the victims are blamed for what happens to them. They are considered to have made poor choices. However, Brock and Thistlethwaite state clearly that the sex trade must be seen as a complex system that will only change as economic, military, legal and justice, ideological, religious, and social systems change. Change in these areas can be brought about through social action that is done in the community. In their analysis the authors do not presume to be experts in all religions and cultures but they refer to the work of Asian theologians.

The authors consider the impact of various possibilities in the area of law and justice and present the reader with the pros and cons of systems ranging from strict control to non-involvement on the part of lawmakers. Decriminalization of prostitution is seen as necessary, but only as part of a larger change. The need for sanctions against johns, pimps, traffickers, and brothels is essential if women are to be protected.

A strong point of this book is its consistent analysis of the cultural and social differences that apply in

the countries discussed. In social systems less individualistic than we are used to in North America the motivation for prostitution can vary. For instance, in some areas of Thailand young girls offer themselves freely to the sex trade to improve the economic situation of the entire family.

Continually present in all aspects of this analysis of prostitution is the authors' assertion that the sex trade is economically based to the point that it underwrites the economy of some poorer countries. Threatened economic collapse following the closure of military bases has resulted in the burgeoning of the tourist sex trade. Worldwide estimates (likely low) of the value of the sex industry reach five billion dollars per year. On an individual basis, poverty is a driving force behind the entry of many women into prostitution.

Brock and Thistlethwaite are to be commended for this extensive, detailed and daring piece of work. They name the systems that create, benefit from, and maintain prostitution. The stories they relate are often heart wrenching. However, in a summary that does leave some room for hope, the last chapter addresses the question, "What are we to do?" Instead of a list of academic possibilities, we are given examples of work that is actually being done in community.

UNDERGROUND

nathalie stephens. Laval: Éditions Trois, 1999.

PAR DORETTE HUGGINS

Ce petit livre de nathalie stephens arrive en plein milieu de ma lecture

des oeuvres complètes d'Anne Hébert dont la syntaxe et le style reposent aux antipodes de ce quatrième ouvrage de l'auteure qui s'intitule, «Underground.»

La lectrice est d'abord frappée par la syntaxe qui n'est pas du tout irréprochable. En effet, non seulement impose-t-elle aux lectrices des phrases marathons comme des voies ferrées sillonnant des plaines arides mais l'auteure semble avoir du mal à savoir où s'arrêter. Au nom de quel sport de la pratique de la langue doit-on débiter une phrase, très belle d'ailleurs «La douleur appartient au champ lexical imprononçable, ...» avant de trébucher, épuisé quelque 205 mots plus tard, sans point à la ligne? En outre, la lectrice doit faire face à des pléonasmes, tels que «voire même» qui ponctuent le trajet du livre à intervalles réguliers comme des arrêts du métro.

De manière fort originale, l'auteure utilise la métaphore de l'«Underground,» le métro, pour mettre en relief les corps de deux femmes seules, livrées à elles-mêmes dans le ventre souterrain de la vie urbaine. Des paradoxes, il y en a. Bien qu'elles soient unies dans le regard qu'elles portent sur elles-mêmes et sur leur environnement clos, Madicole et Ernestine demeurent séparées, «Entre elles, deux voies ferrées effilochent la ville.» Elles se trouvent sur des quais opposés et arrivent néanmoins à s'attacher l'une à l'autre en dépit du gouffre qui les tient à part.

L'auteure réussit à nous faire rire de la façon de vivre de l'une ou de l'autre. On partage leur frustration, leur silence interrompu par des coups de violence. Le téléphone sonne. Chacune de son côté court vers la cabine téléphonique sur les quais. Elles décrochent et parlent; pourtant la sonnerie du téléphone persiste. Elles détruisent les appareils. Ensuite, Ernestine se penche sur un journal qui cache un téléphone portable, source de leur délire spontané. N'ayant pas pu arrêter ce téléphone, Ernestine jette le portable sur les rails