

In my childhood I experienced oppressive women and oppressed men. My father was highly oppressed by my mother and by me as taught by my mother. He may have committed suicide; if so I am partly to blame for it. Most of the men in my family have been severely oppressed by their wives. This is my experience! I guess basically I don't like women very much including myself. I know what we are capable of.

Take the case of a man who submits to driving 70 miles to Kamloops in order to buy his wife a particular kind of candle for a Christmas celebration which will not take place because she will not permit anyone in the neighbourhood to come into the house; and when he gets green candles and it turns out that she wants red candles but she didn't say so - she screams and hollers about it for twenty four hours until he drives back 70 miles to exchange that damn candle. I consider that oppression.

My mother was much more intelligent than my father and he bored the life out of her, and she taught me to feel the same way. We tormented him until he died. I don't like women very much. I didn't like my father because I felt a physical aversion towards my father which I think had no basis in any logical reason. I think it was my mother's teaching.

I think my father was very much in love with my mother when he married her. I know he was because I've read letters he wrote to her before they were married. My mother wanted to be married before her younger sister and she wanted financial security, and she was dumb enough even at the age of thirty seven not to think that for a very delicate intellectual woman to take up ranch work was really stupid. The fact is that a small rancher's wife cannot live a liberated life. She has to do certain things. There is no choice about it. I gather that she never thought about the role she'd be called upon to fulfill until she found herself in it; whereupon she began, in insidious ways, rebelling.. Eventually she became a tyrant and a monster towards both my father and myself..

I feel a lot of sympathy with my father now, after his death. But I didn't. I found him stupid. He couldn't help it but he was; and I always wanted a real father who could instruct me in things; who could teach me things; who could be a real father to me. But I was so much more intelligent.

I was listening to Schumann by the time I was seven. That was my mother's doing. Everything I know about books and music she started me on. But I guess I wanted some sort of instruction in understanding things. I was asking very tough religious questions by the time I was nine and I was not getting any answers. My mother was likely to fly into a fury, but my father was just baffled. Neither my mother or my father could answer my questions. I had a very philosophical theological frame of mind from very little. I cannot think of myself as being a child from the age of seven on. Also that I was totally isolated. I had no friends. My father had friends when he was away from my mother and she couldn't prevent it. My mother didn't. My mother brought me up to think that my father was almost an alcoholic. But that was an absolute lie. He couldn't take a drink with friends without her thinking it was disgusting. It would have been alright if they'd drunk sherry, but beer was low - that kind of thing. My mother's family is upper middle class with vague vergings on nobility and my father's family is lower middle class, almost lower class, and there was a lot of distinction there.

She was very innocent, I think, as a young woman. She lived in a place called Anyox when she was about twenty. She was a teacher there, and Anyox which is along the coast somewhere was one of the hotbeds of both liquor and vice at the time. My mother lived there for a year and did not even realize this. She could be with people who were drunk out of their minds and not know what was the matter with them. Mind you, when she was nineteen she thought that if a man kissed her she would have a baby. In fact, I think my mother once thought she was pregnant because she had kissed someone.

I think my mother and father had a very unhappy sexual life. I think my father was probably very strongly affected this way and also very clumsy. I don't really suppose he lived to be thirty seven while remaining a virgin; but I should think that any sexual experience he would have had would be very clumsy, very limited, very abortive. Any my mother was not strongly inclined this way. I think I resemble her in this way. He was probably clumsy with her and she didn't like it, and the whole thing was a flop. Definitely there was sexual resentment between them. But I don't know quite how to explain it. My father would never have talked to me about such a thing. He was much too shy. But I remember my mother saying to me once, "you know it is really pathetic and shameful ... he still likes to expose himself to me". I think this happened when they were about fifty of fifty five, something like that.

My mother was born in 1902; she was thirty five when she married and thirty seven when I was born. My father was born in 1900; he was thirty seven when he married. After me, my mother could not have had any more children if she'd wanted to. The doctor in our home town was an idiot. Taking on the case of a thirty six year old woman who was pregnant, he didn't even examine her. He knew nothing about her until she came into labour. He couldn't even bring himself to say the word "pregnant" to her - he was that dumb - that is, prudish and silly. Those doctors would really be struck off the register now if they were around. This meant that she had a hideous time when I was born, and probably she should have had a caesarian. Probably that idiot doctor did not know what a caesarian was, and she was very sick after I was born and nearly died, and she couldn't have had any more kids if she'd wanted to. It wasn't until close to her death that she had the surgery that corrected the condition that was left when I was born. She was too scared to do anything about it. She was sixty seven by the time she had it corrected.

She always said that my father refused to let her go to a doctor. It's true that my father's whole family have a great fear of doctors; but not so much now with my old relatives. Now they are really old and have had a fair amount of sickness. But it's true that my father was very frightened of doctors and would never see one himself and would try to avoid other people having them. But I really think my mother could have had that surgery if she'd wanted to. He wouldn't have stopped her. He would only have been very frightened.

I don't remember my childhood exactly, but I was very happy and I was living completely in a world of my own. At that time I was not conscious that my parents were not happy together. I only knew that I lived in an incredibly beautiful place, surrounded by mountains and sage brush, and horses and the whole bit. I don't remember it very clearly except it was very beautiful.

When I started school that was perfectly horrible. The teachers in my school were prepared to dislike me because the rumour had gone around that my mother had wanted to send me to private school, which was true, and it was considered an insult to the school that anyone would want to send me anywhere else. So my teachers expected to dislike me. I was one of the two smallest children

in the class and I was nearly blind. Without my glasses, even then, I couldn't see. I didn't have glasses because my father's family didn't approve of glasses, so I didn't have any until I was 10 and I was nearly blind. You can imagine how I got knocked around. Also, I regarded adults as my natural allies because I had never been with children, so if anything went wrong I went and told the teacher. You can imagine how popular that made me. But to me it was completely natural. I thought of myself as an adult and the children as aliens.

All the teachers were women until I was in grade 7, then I had a male teacher. I liked my grade 5 teacher very much. I met her again about three years ago. She's really a very nice woman - she helped me a lot - she tried to get me into playground activities with other children. But it was a flop though she tried hard. She tried to find me books, in our so called school library, that would interest me. Though I was incredibly shy at the time and could hardly get a word out to anyone except my own family, at the end of the year I did manage to tell her that I liked her. It was very hard.

I was terrified of the boys and girls at school. They lived in a world I didn't understand. I knew all kind of things they didn't. They weren't interested in me and they knew what was going on in the community - and of course with the isolation of my family I had no idea at all and later on when kids started inciting me to say four letter words I just became terrified. I realized there was something wrong with this; that it was done specifically with the intention of tormenting me, and it frightened me very badly. Also I was useless at sports, naturally, being nearly blind, and most of the time when we were playing games I couldn't grasp the rules.

I was more afraid of the boys. They were bigger and could beat you up better. But the boys and the girls didn't play together anyway - that was just sort of the rule - not until we were about in grade 7 or 8. I found the girls pretty frightening too. A lot of them were a lot bigger than I was, and they too could beat me up much better.

By the time of reaching high school I was so much living in a world of my own. When I was fifteen I was an Irish revolutionary - not according to any kind of history book because I never bothered to read any Irish history. I was living somewhere in about the second century AD I think in my head. I firmly intended to learn Gaelic and go and live on an island off the coast of Kerry when I grew up. It's hard to explain, I wasn't living in the real world at all, but in a complete fantasy world. I had to; it was the only way I could survive. That's why I have been soured on revolutions ever since. The Irish revolution was such an incredible mess and eventually when I was about 23 and I was teaching Sean O'Casey, I had to learn some Irish history. I realized what a mess it all was. This beautiful revolution sounded just gorgeous to me when I was a kid, and look what it turned out to be. That's why I've really not cared much for revolutions ever since. Once was enough, thank you very much.

I had no religious interest until I was 14, and then I attended the United Church because I wanted to sing and there was a choir; but the music was lousy and the minister was an idiot who mostly preached about his gloxinias. When I was 17 I became an Anglican, largely I think to anger my father who didn't like Anglicans. Also I had seen a service conducted by a rather High Church man which fascinated me by the ritual. I guess there was something already beginning to go on because I remember Mr. Atkinson, this idiot minister who was supposedly preparing us for confirmation, giving us the prayer book to read. I took the prayer book home and he didn't even suggest we should read it, and I read the 39 Articles and I went to him afterwards and I said, "Look, here it

says this and here it says that, and I don't believe any of that and how can I be confirmed? And you know the 39 Articles were written under Henry VIII, largely against the Catholics". Naturally I didn't like them very much, and he sort of said something vague with the general intent that it didn't matter what I believed as long as I was a good person. I thought that was very unsatisfactory. All my Christian leanings started when I was 19, when I started reading C.S. Lewis. I'm surprised you aren't horrified by C.S. Lewis. By your standards he must be such a male chauvinist. I'm always fascinated by his attitude towards women. I can't help a sort of sneaking feeling that maybe he's right.

My first time away from home I was living in one of the UBC residences and my parents were living in Merritt.. I suddenly realized I was in an environment in which people could not come and scream and fight in my room without my permission, and that I had some kind of peace. That was a great relief. I did have a room mate but she wasn't in the habit of screaming and fighting. I had one close friend - she was blind - I loved her very much. I had a boy friend of sorts, but he was a schizophrenic and pretty freaked out and he scared me. The whole thing wasn't very fortunate. He fell madly in love with me at first sight and it took me a little while to realize this. When I did I didn't know how to handle the situation at all because he had no sense of humour and was just sort of a pathetic person. I didn't know how to deal with the situation at all. It took me a couple of years to really get rid of him; although obviously, as I know now, I could have done it in the first week if I'd really wanted to.

I did very well. I had come into University with the highest marks in the province. I won some scholarships at the end of my first year, and I kept winning scholarships. At that time I was still so shy and so caught up in my own problems that I was very unaware of what was going on around me. I couldn't possible describe what UBC was like in 1957, or 1961, because I was living in my own world. I have always, to a fair degree, lived in my own world rather than the one that is commonly accepted.

I was very lonely. I was afraid to ask any other girl to go with me for coffee or something. I didn't think anyone would want me around. I belonged to a thing called the Music Circle. I met the only boy friend that I ever had that I really liked there, and I liked the Music Circle. It was the only thing I belonged to; I was too shy to join most of the other things. I would like to have been in International house. When I got to know East Indian students I really wanted to be part of the East Indian community, as you can be, on the fringes. But I never really quite made it. I made a few friendships as an undergraduate, not many.

Then I went to University of Toronto for graduate school in English. It was horrible, the first year was not too bad. There were a number of graduate students from different countries of the world. I had a good friend who was Jamaican and others who were East Indian and so on, but in my second year there, there were only six graduate students living in the college and two of them decided to drive the rest of us crazy. They'd be sitting in a room and I'd walk into it. They'd start roaring with laughter the minute I walked in. Anything I said they would repeat after me in ridiculous voices. Their way of taking out their unhappiness was to show it on other people, anyone they could get at. I was a natural for that kind of thing at that time. Anyone could do anything to me. All it would do was make me burst into tears.

I had seen a psychiatrist twice in Toronto; she died shortly thereafter. I remember her as a very odd, eccentric, rather delightful woman quite unlike anyone I have ever met before or since. I think her name was Ruth Frank. She was a real eccentric. I was having very severe headaches and Fran's father was a child psychiatrist in Vancouver and he recommended me to her. But I couldn't possibly have kept on seeing her even if I'd wanted to because it would have cost too much money - and as I say, she died.

I hated Toronto and I wanted to be back in Vancouver and the only friends I had were here and Beth was here and I could live with her - so I came back to UBC to do my PhD. I was very glad to be back in Vancouver - very glad to be back with Beth. I was really lost in teaching for a long time. I gradually began to get some conception of what I was doing but I did it all out of secondary sources. I had very few ideas of my own. When I was really stuck I would go to Beth or somebody else and say "What does this mean?", and they would give me something I could teach from. I have rather a limited imagination, I think, for some things - particularly for modern literature. It is not really my field, and that was what I had to teach. Teaching was a frightening experience. I had to keep talking to a class full of people who wouldn't talk. When you get a class full of 40 elementary education students you're not going to get much conversation out of them, and I had to keep saying something, and most of the time I had nothing to say. I also knew from my own experience as a student how incredibly critical students are of teachers - even to the most unreasonable degree - and I knew all of this was going on about me behind my back and it really petrified me.

I didn't break down until the following year. That was when Beth and I were going to live together - that next year. I chose a place while she was out of town. It was the first time I had to choose a place. It was always better that she should choose because she was so much fussier about moving than I was. I found this marvellous place and just as I was about to sign a lease on it she phoned me up and said that she thought it was a place she had looked at earlier in the summer and she couldn't stand it and couldn't live there, and to forget about the whole thing. So I lived in a little hole in the wall, and I really started to crack up. I was very dependent upon Beth. She is eight years older than I am. She is still a pretty powerful force in my life, and I was accustomed to her. Beth didn't try to tell me how I should think, but I took the things she said that way. I can still talk to her better than I can talk to anyone else in the world. We have the same language, and I have never had the same language with anyone else before or since. I always thought somewhere in the world there must be someone who spoke the same language as I did, and I've only ever known the one person - and that was Beth.

The separation from Beth was the main thing, but it would have happened sooner or later. I was very lonely. I hated the whole academic thing. I was petrified of teaching. The other graduate students I met scared me stiff. I started having a lot of psychosomatic symptoms - really severe ones which were very hard to describe except I had a lot of pain around my heart and I was running a temperature most of the time. I found there was a kind of health insurance I could get called Mutual of Omaha which would pay half the psychiatrist's fees, so I got myself lined up with that, and I got my G.P. to recommend me to a shrink.

My first male psychiatrist was a funny man. I guess he must have been pretty close to retirement age by that point in his life. He was more like a nice kind of very sensible G.P. instead of a shrink. He didn't like talking about anything very deep. He was very kind to me, but he missed the boat on many things. The

funniest thing you know, most of the shrinks I have known have been all in favour of my hopping into bed with the nearest man regardless of who it is and regardless of the fact that all my convictions were against such behaviour. This guy, I tried to mention sex to him once - he said, "I wouldn't worry about that - it's not all that it's cracked up to be". And if you saw that guy, he looks like Humpty Dumpty, no wonder he doesn't think sex is important. If I looked like that I wouldn't think sex was important either.

I saw him for a year and he separated me from my mother. My father died during this period. He wrote to her to tell her to leave me alone. She never really forgave either him or me for that, but he did at least serve the function of making my mother back off for a while and stop bullying me. At the same time it was a very bad thing for her. When she lost my father, of course, things changed completely in her mind. She imagined she had loved him very much, and it was true that she had been totally dependent upon him for practically all physical things. She had made him do everything for her; therefore she was left completely helpless. And of course, without friends, because she had cut herself off from everyone. I remember when I was about 20 going to a New Year's Eve party at some neighbour's house, and this man who had gotten rather drunk describing my mother as Mrs. Screen Door. He said that when he came to see my father, she always looked out at him through the screen door, and she wouldn't let him in, as if she were afraid of him - and it was quite true.

Well my shrink made it quite plain that he didn't think that anyone should go along with one shrink for too long. If something didn't happen after one year, you should go along with someone else. So I really had no choice but to go on with someone else as though he'd throw me out if I didn't move along of my own volition. I didn't give a damn. I was so stupid that I didn't have the faintest idea what was important to tell him, and what wasn't, and the whole thing just wasn't fizzing. He didn't know anything about me. It never occurred to him to ask if I liked the academic work that I was doing. He just assumed that I did. He really threw a scare into me by telling me that no one could expect to have more than a handful of friends in their whole life and that life was a very lonely business, and if I expected many friends I was just asking for unhappiness, and that really upset me a great deal. I was too shy. I saw him once every three weeks for about an hour.

I was in hospital during this period - in VGH Psych ward and I loved that. The guy finally realized I was feeling pretty bad and he happens to believe in insulin subcoma treatment, which is given to very underweight people who need to regain appetite and so on. I don't think they are a bad idea either. They did me a lot of good. I gather from what nurses inferred in the hospital that Dr. Stevenson was regarded as incredibly old fashioned in doing this kind of thing, but I don't think it was a bad idea. I was very happy there and I loved it. I'd never been with ordinary people before and I've never been with people who had time to listen to me or wanted to hear what I had to say. I was in for six weeks, and I was sorry to leave.

For a while everything was fine. For a couple of months I was teaching and I think I was teaching really well because kids would come up after my class and say that was a terrific class. But I still had the problem of being very isolated. I was living in residence, and I had friends around, but they didn't seem to have time for me. They were so occupied with their studies and so on. Then my father died. I didn't love my father, I didn't miss him, but the whole mess that happened around his death really rocked me pretty badly. That was the point that my doctor said that I should break off with my mother. My father died, either by suicide, or by a freak accident with the exhaust of a car - no

one will ever really know which. He may have just fallen down and fainted beside the exhaust. There weren't the obvious signs of suicide, such as locking the garage door; it's really hard to know what happened. The thing is, my father was in perfect health and there was no reason why he should have fainted. I can't say I ever missed him; I hardly remember him. He was never real to me.

2nd Male Psychiatrist

My first shrink recommended me to my next shrink. Well, everything started coming apart and I started going to pieces, and unfortunately at that point I had for a doctor, dear Dr. B. of UBC, Health Sciences, who was notorious for saying there was nothing wrong with people who afterwards turned out to have an awful lot wrong with them. He was quite sure that I was only pretending to be sick. I don't know why he thought that. He never explained it to me. He never gave me more than five minutes of his time - this sort of thing. The first time he interviewed me he gave me about an hour, and took all sort of notes, and one thing he asked me was if I masturbated. I really wasn't quite sure what he was talking about. I hesitated for a minute and said I don't know - and he just glowered at me and said, "Are you trying to be smart, young woman?" I wasn't; I didn't know what masturbation meant at that time.

His whole attitude with me was that I was just being a smart-ass. I don't know why. I know there was another friend of mine that he was quite sure there was nothing wrong with who ended up in Riverview for four months having shock treatment and ultimately committed suicide. Dr. B. was swearing blue murder to this guy's whole family and friends and everybody, "There is nothing wrong with Ward ... he is just pretending to be sick, he is just showing off, pay no attention". That was just Dr. B. for you.

There was just nothing about my life to make me very happy. I didn't really want to teach. I wanted lots of people around me, lots of friends, lots of people to talk to - and I wasn't getting that. I struggled through the year somehow or other. At the very end of the year just as I was completing my final classes, I ended up in Westbrook in the University hospital. Beth at that point recommended I see a G.P. called Dr. C. who would recommend me to a new shrink, since Dr. B. was refusing to treat me at all.

3rd Male Psychiatrist

So I went to Dr. D. all summer during that period of time. He saw me once a week, which was totally a waste of time because I was so freaked out that after our sessions I couldn't remember what we talked about. And I think it would have been a good idea to put me in hospital at that time, but he wouldn't. Then in the fall I gave up the academic thing, moved off campus, and I still had some money left. I moved into a house with kitchen privileges with other girls and at this point he gave me a kind of sleeping pill called placidil which has always had a bad effect on me although I hadn't had any before so I didn't know. When I take it I'm like drunk. I just keep on taking it and don't know what I'm doing at all - and that was how I came to be burned. And when I was burned I really freaked out. I heard voices and thought I was going to be murdered and all the rest of it.

I didn't discover this until about a month later and was more sane and people could tell me about it. I realized there was a very funny attitude on the part of people around me towards my shrink, and I discovered that my plastic surgeon had been phoning him three and four times a day and getting no answer, trying to find out what to do about me. This guy just never returns telephone calls, ever, from anybody, including another doctor. I did come out of that and lived with my mother for a month, which was pretty fair hell, but after the experience

I'd been through I was higher than a kite and I didn't mind too much. I began discovering that if I was willing to listen to an incredible amount of bullshit there were ways that I could manage my mother; that I could somehow force her into behaving occasionally like a reasonable being, although it was very difficult. She had an extremely strong will. I have an equally strong one, and I can be pretty damn mean. I was! I had to be - it was the only way to survive. And for the following year my mother talked me into taking a business course - a disaster - I didn't even go most of the time. So that sort of struggled on; I didn't graduate in anything except typing in the end but I continued seeing Dr. D. I tried to approach him about this thing of his of not returning telephone calls. He just smiled omnipotently, and said that he had never received any of those calls. Like if I called him a liar he would have just told me to go and get another shrink; but I knew he was a liar.

I continued to see him because I had it pretty well rubbed into me that if you continue to keep changing shrinks, you are supposed to be overly choosy, and there is supposed to be something wrong with you. Also he is a man of tremendous power of personality. He is a great huge man, I can't quite explain the effect the man had on me - I know he thought I was in love with him. I wasn't! But I was tremendously overcome by the weight of his personality. I found it exceedingly difficult to contradict him on anything; even when he got onto literature and made statements that were absurd. Somewhere along in there he started sort of necking with me. It sounds like somebody's fantasy, but it is not. He started holding me in his lap and feeling my breasts, and telling me how much he'd like to go to bed with me and things like that. I was so naive at the time that I thought he was doing this out of kindness to me, to convince me that I was attractive, and I liked it. I've realized since that he was just playing some little game of his own. I was 27.

I was 27 when I started seeing him; I suppose I was about 30 when I stopped. After I had been seeing him a year and a half the sexual part began. It took place all the time pretty well. I think he's a really pretty awful person. I mean a guy who never bothers returning any phone calls from his patients or any other doctors, what do you make of that? That's really irresponsible, and I think he was a very irresponsible man. I think I went to see him mostly so that he would keep on giving me my pills. I don't think I saw any importance in what was going on. The medication sort of subdued the symptoms I had; that was about it. And these were psychosomatic symptoms. They are really hard to describe; just an extreme feeling of tension. It wasn't ordinary tension; a really wierd feeling all over my body, and temperature, and that was about the only concrete thing.

One time the landlady I had invaded my room and said that Dr. D. obviously had no idea how sick I was and I should tell him. And I didn't have an appointment with him for five weeks, and I already knew from very good experience that phoning his office did no good, so I phoned him at home, which I had never done before in three and a half years. And which he had never told me I could not do. The way he spoke to me, I've never been spoken to in my life before. It was like talking to a dog. And I just decided I had about enough of this. The stupid thing was that he saw me about once a week when I was too freaked out to pay any attention to him, and later when I was feeling better and could really have talked to him he saw me once a month.

There isn't anything much you can get from a shrink. A shrink isn't there in your daily life. He doesn't really do things to help you. He isn't there when you need him. He is just a person, you go into the office and sit with or lie with or whatever damn thing - there is nothing to that. It is a waste of time.

Oh, yes, I was in Riverview during the time I was seeing Dr. D. I guess it was the first time since the time I got burned. I was discovered quite accidentally. I never intended to be discovered on any of these occasions. Dr. D. left me in VGH for five days without coming near me, without telling me what was going to happen to me, just left me stuck there. I didn't have a clue what was going to happen. Suddenly the ambulance turned up and took me to Riverview. He didn't have the nerve to come over and tell me himself. I didn't know where I was going. I didn't know if I was going home. I didn't know if I was going into VGH. I didn't know anything. He didn't tell me. He sent around about the only G.P. I ever had that I didn't like. I sort of inherited him from his partner when his partner went out of town, and this guy wouldn't tell me what was going to happen to me. He said, "I think Dr. D. has some plans for you". I said, "Well, I think he should come and tell me what they are", and he sort of looked very uncomfortable. He couldn't deny that Dr. D. ought to come and tell me what they were, but he just went away. And then the ambulance just came and took me away.

In Riverview Hospital I thought I was probably going into VGH psych ward because I'd been there before. I thought I was waiting for a bed. But I went to Crease Clinic at Riverview instead, for four months. If it hadn't been such an ugly place I would have been quite happy there. There were people around; but the ugliness of the place really got me down. I was in a female ward and my observation on that was probably contrary to what you think, and that is that most of the men I met out there were obviously a good deal sicker than most of the women. That a lot of the women in my ward had really nothing wrong with them at all, except they got a bit overborne by home troubles, and needed a rest. Whereas most of the men I met were really really freaked out. In some cases the women got there by mistake. There were a couple of women who came in with physical things wrong with them, and some stupid doctor had referred them out there by mistake, and they were sent home again after about four days. I still have a friend I knew out there who wouldn't explain how she came in, but explained her black eye and cut lip by saying she had fallen down a flight of stairs. It wasn't until about three years later that she told me that her husband had gotten medication surreptitiously, and fed it to her in her coffee, and when she caught him at it he tried to force some down her throat, and that was how she got beaten up. I've no idea how a lot of those women got there - they weren't saying - not really - or just giving very confused stories - or no stories at all.

The men I observed around - I didn't know most of them very well - were much more freaked out than most of the women. The impression I got from most of the women was they were in situations that they could, if they wanted to, just give up and go into hospital. Whereas the men had persisted at jobs and things like that until they reached the point where they were so freaked out that they were probably taken away by the police.

Well, I didn't see my shrink very often - or very long - he was quite a nice English guy called Dr. E. - very pleasant. There is one thing you really appreciate if you are a psychiatric patient, and that is if your doctor has good manners. Something I always remember about my first psychiatrist I thought was very sweet - if he wanted me in his office, he never told his secretary to call me in - he always came out to the door. I said something about it once and he said, "Well, I just wonder why anybody couldn't be so damn polite that they come to the door to bring their own patient in". You can really appreciate that kind of thing when you are a psychiatric patient; if the doctor has good manners.

I saw the hospital psychiatrist every couple of weeks for five minutes. How far could it get in five minutes? With the usual nurses and male nurses and people around; I remember a particular idiot called Mr. _____ whom a lot of the elderly,

more confused women on the ward thought was a doctor - when they did not realize that the real doctors were doctors because they were young. Mr. _____ was a man with silver hair who comported himself like the most portly of doctors, and he was an idiot - oh what an idiot - a big conceited ass. Some of the others weren't so bad; they varied. I used to have some quite healthy rows with the charge nurse. She had a good red-headed temper and we could explode all over each other and calm down afterwards and be good friends. I liked her rather. Some of them had no manners to speak of.

I talked to other patients and read a lot; took part in recreational therapy until I discovered I could dodge out of it by hiding out in the library; hooked a rug; went to movies; I learned to dance out there - something I'm very grateful to Riverview for - I couldn't dance before at all. They had dances with a very good patient band; which was really excellent. And for the first time in my life I was in a surrounding where people didn't avoid dancing with me because they didn't know I couldn't dance. So they took me out on the floor, and I found I could dance. The library was also terrific - for a very small library it was really something - I would like to know who chose those books.

But it was too damn ugly and too far from the city. I came in nearly every weekend, even so, I was so far away from everything. I wanted to get out, yes. So, I just asked if I could go home and they said, "yes, I guess so". But I didn't want to get out until I was feeling physically better and after getting on some medication that sort of calmed me down a bit, and also my period was very badly screwed up at the time - it was coming about every three weeks late or early, and I was feeling sick all the time. They put me on the pill eventually, that helped a lot; but it took a lot of insistence before I got to see a male gynaecologist to find out that I did need the pill.

I didn't actually request to go out until I had been in about four months. It was sort of planned for before I got out. I had to look around town and find a place where I would like to stay. I went to UBC and arranged to mark papers.

When I got out, I went back to the city and I was living with a woman called Mrs. Walton - William Walton's sister-in-law, incidentally - I didn't discover that until I had been there about six months. I was marking this paper on Chaucer, as this kid had used William Walton's libretto for his subject. I said something to Mrs. Walton about - you know there's an opera about Treilus & Cressida and she said "oh, yes, my brother-in-law wrote one", and I said, "oh, yes, there was a William Walton who wrote an opera - Walton - is that your brother-in-law?" Anyway, I lived there, and part of the time I was just marking papers and stuff, and I went to Regent College for a while, which is an Evangelical College; and then I was taking a course in the following year. But I was still not in good shape - not sleeping, not eating - eventually about after a year of this Mrs. Walton said she thought I had better move somewhere else, and I got out of my course that year because by this time my mother was dying of cancer.

Fourth Psychiatrist

I think at that point I was still seeing my third shrink - and then I transferred to Dr. F. for about three sessions - and then he sent me off to someone else because he had just taken on that job as head of UBC hospital, and didn't have room for any new patients. He was pretty awful; he really was. For one thing he looks like Mephistopheles, which didn't help at all - for another thing, from the moment I walked into his office he treated me like an enemy. I suppose it was the idea of get them angry, and then you will find out what they are really

like. But I just found it insulting to be told that I was dirty, and I smelled badly, and things like that. The kind of things he said to me.

Comparing Psychiatrists

I'll tell you something else about my third shrink, as compared for example with my first. I met both of them by accident in public and the difference in reaction was so incredible: In the case of my third shrink, I was still seeing him but had not met him for about four months because I'd been in Riverview. I went to the movies one night by myself and I saw him across the lobby with some members of his family, and naturally I said "hello". I mean, who wouldn't - I didn't try to go over and join his party, I said "hello", that was all. I think it would be very rude to do anything else; and he just glowered at me and sort of mumbled hello and very deliberately turned his back and I thought, "what is this ... has he really known me this long and thinks I'm going to go and try to horn in on his party or something". But I think he had some funny idea in his head that the hour I spent with him was absolutely sacred to me, but the rest of the time I was supposed to pretend I didn't even know him - which strikes me as ridiculous.

On the other hand, years after I'd stopped seeing my first shrink I ran into him in the Queen Elizabeth lobby when my friends had drifted off someplace else, and I was standing alone. I wasn't sure if he was him or not, and I went up and spoke to him, and he was really nice. He pretended he remembered me even if he didn't; although I'm sure he didn't. I'm sure that he was just pretending; but he was really nice. He even introduced me to his wife when she came up. Such a difference! I just say that my third shrink is an ill-mannered pig compared with my first.

I only saw my fourth shrink three times, and the third time I saw him I don't know what the hell he was playing at. I really think he may be a slightly unbalanced person himself, because his manner on different occasions was incredibly different. The first time I saw him he asked a long series of questions while glowering at me and taking notes. The second time I saw him he insulted me - asked a lot of the same questions over again, apparently without referring to his notes. Between the first and second time I went to see him for an appointment somewhere out in the VGH building he had to cancel it at the last minute. He came up to me and said, "I'm very sorry but I've just received this new appointment, and I have to cancel this appointment with you. Is that all right with you?" "Sure", I said, what else could I say. And to my amazement, he clasped my hand very warmly and said, "Thank you, dear - God bless you". The next time he met me he was insulting me all over the place. I think the guy is as nutty as a fruit cake. The third and last time I saw him he was running all around the room looking in drawers for something he had lost, and every time I stopped talking because I was so distracted by his running around like a bee that I couldn't keep talking, he would look at me very impatiently and say, "go on". At the end of the appointment he told me he was going to have to cancel all his new patients. I was never more relieved in my life to see the last of anybody. I've met him since, you know, and on one occasion he would come beaming up to me and say "Do you know what ... I've just been to Israel ... isn't that marvellous?" The next time he sees me he's all close mouthed and wouldn't even speak. I think he's nuts. None of this has anything to do with my own behaviour; but just the mood he happens to be in at the moment.

Fifth Male Psychiatrist

It was about four years ago at this time of year that my GP recommended me to my fifth psychiatrist, and officially he is still my shrink. I never saw much

of him because my mother died, and I came into that money, and I started feeling much better. He didn't figure I needed to come back any more. I think he is a very nice guy. The trouble is that he is so frntastically busy you can hardly ever see him.

Right now I'm going to a popular MPA medical doctor. I like him very much, but I wish he were a little more casual and talkative. I think he is a really good man and a really cautious man. If I turned up with any kind of symptom I didn't know the explanation of he'd give me every test under the sun before he said it was psychosomatic - and that really makes me safe - because it explains things. I know so many people who have had supposedly psychosomatic symptoms that turned out to be something else. Even to the extent of the case I heard of once of a woman who was inclined to complain a lot about herself, and when she started complaining about stomach aches everyone said "oh, nonsense" - including her doctor for several years, and it turned out she was dying of cancer. Mind you, that was a number of years ago, but this sort of thing really scares you. I'd rather go through all those tests than be wondering.

In the last four years I've been involved with MPA. Lanny Beckman wrote an article in the Georgia Straight a couple of months before MPA started in 1971, and I wrote a letter to him and he got in touch with me, and I went to see him and it went on from there. The first time I went to see Lanny I didn't know what the hell he was talking about. He had Bob Hunter over there and they were both babbling on about Maycuse and God knows what. I was wondering if I'd gotten into a nest of total nuts because I couldn't understand a word they were saying. But the truth was that MPA appeared to me as a place where I could find friends. I couldn't have had less interest in Lanny's political ideas. At that point in my life, when Marxism was purely a name to me, nothing they were saying made any sense to me at all. But that didn't matter, I liked him as a person.

Well, now I have people I can talk to. I have people I can go to the movies with. I have people I can have coffee with - people in my life - and it's given me more confidence in other areas, too, to approach people and make friends with them. It has given me something I can talk about. I think this is the most important thing. If someone asked me what I was doing before I'd say I was a student; but I hated it, so I didn't want to talk about it. Now if someone asks what I do I'm involved with MPA, and I love to talk about that. It's quite different.

Well, it was the same as at the hospital. People there had more patience to listen because, for one thing, a lot of us around MPA a lot of the time have very little to do but to sit around, therefore we can talk. That's why I'm sorry when a really good member becomes a coordinator. All of a sudden he doesn't have time to talk any more.

Now I get my pills from my GP, and I don't have much contact with psychiatrists. Mostly I just find somebody to sort of hang around with until I'm feeling a bit better. I still feel as though I were about 14 instead of almost 35, so that means I don't know if I think too much about directions. Eventually, sometime or other, I'm going to have to get a part-time job. I don't ever want to do more than a part-time one. Although I have a couple of very close friends that I wish lived here; I find that, except for a few people, most of the old friends that I have in Vancouver no longer mean much to me. I feel our contact was more or less superficial, and that it is maybe just as well forgotten about now.

When I got burned I was really pleased I had really done my mother one in the eye. Well, she had a total obsession with personal appearance. You just can't imagine it! She just wouldn't go out unless her hair was perfectly done; she would make my father drive her back and forth to Kamloops three times to exchange a coat that she decided she didn't like. Just total obsession with personal appearance as the absolute key to social success. And all my life she was saying to me "be careful with that ... you'll be marked for life if you spill it". Well, there I was, marked for life, and there wasn't a damn thing she could do about it. And in all decency she couldn't repudiate me because I was scarred. She was stuck. She had to put up with it. It really gave me a lot of satisfaction. It was the meanest thing I could ever have done to her.

I've had very close relationships with a number of women. In fact, really platonic love relationships with a number of women; that is, those individual people, and I think they were all extremely individual people. I mean, I think generally my choice of friends has been among rather eccentric people. Women in general is to me, meaningless, it's like saying people in general. I feel no sister-hood with other women, except for the instances I've described to you with shrinks I do not feel I have been oppressed by men, and no one ever suggested to me that I shouldn't go on and get a University degree because I was a woman or anything like that. Most really lib women I find very unattractive. I find them tiresome, boring, and sometimes rabid - really sickening - that expression "consciousness-raising" makes me so angry I could kick somebody. I doesn't raise my consciousness; it raises my hackles. You can present a new point of view to me if you like. You can present any point of view you damn well please, but to describe it as raising my consciousness is an insult and nothing else. It assumes that your point of view is right, and there is something wrong with mine.

I feel quite a bit of kinship with men in my family - I was an ally with, for example, my uncle and one of my cousins against their wives. That sort of thing. My kinship there was with the men in the family, not with the women - I was a secret ally. If one of my aunts was forcing food on me I didn't want, my uncle would surreptitiously take it off my plate, and eat it for me. And one time my cousin Ken and I decided we were going to start a men's liberation movement called Daddy-o - that was the time when his horrible wife kept him waiting for an hour outside Eaton's while she exchanged a present of baby clothes or something silly. It's a different kind of love it it's a man. I don't think I want to go into that one except that I notice around MPA, unless some man is really hassling me, I am not even aware of it if I am the only woman in the house. I just don't notice. I'm not very sex conscious. I don't mean I am completely without sexual feelings, but they are not as strong as they are with some people, and I could be with a whole mass of men and be the only woman, and never become aware of it until it was pointed out.