

Women of colour

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critic and physician Morton Schulman commented on the testing of the Pill in India on the nightly CBC news saying "there's enough of them over there. We won't miss a few so why should we test it on our wives and sisters."

Depo-provera is the newest in the line of dangerous contraceptives. It is the most frequently prescribed birth control method among black women in Namibia and South Africa, who are not given a choice in the decision. Use of this injectable contraceptive sometimes results in sterilisation, a result much desired by the white supremacist government in South Africa.

Although there has been a recent trend to-

ward acceptance of black and Third World women's literature, one gets the feeling that it is only because we are 'different' that the writing is read. It is unnerving that people would accept absolutely anything written by a woman of colour simply to show acceptance.

Indian lesbian writer Suniti Namjoshi who now lives in Toronto says: "I'm wary of the statement that cropped up recently, 'Black women's literature has become the flavour of the month, and has been taken up by white feminists' because it doesn't take into account all the prejudice that has worked against the Black woman being published in the first place. So as a black woman you are made to feel that you are only being read because you are black, that you haven't written anything good. To make someone into a token like that is insidious, deadly." For women in the Third World, problems also

arise from the position of men within the feminist movement. For women of colour it is often more important that men be included within some of the deliberations that are ongoing. The men are, after all, also an oppressed group.

However, this inclusion of men often stops at the point of oppression on the grounds of race. Most "women of colour" agree that it is they who should decide the direction and outcome of their actions.

The inclusion of men is of importance in the Third World, especially in those countries just celebrating independence. For women in Mozambique and Zimbabwe, admittedly inequality still exists. Yet prior to independence all citizens were forced to defend against the common colonial enemy. Women fought alongside men; although many were not commanders they were acknowledged as a vital force.

A Taste of Power

New book explores black activist's life

A Taste of Power is the autobiography of a very extraordinary black woman named Elaine Brown. Elaine Brown began life in a poor black neighbourhood, but spent her childhood developing a repertoire of "white" things. Elaine's desire to be the same as her friends in the private school she attended overpowered her "blackness"; that is, until she hit college.

After a succession of white lovers gone awry, she encountered a group of black men and women who were proud of their black heritage. This pride was eventually passed on to Elaine and she felt compelled to join the Black Panther Party, a militant black action group.

In her time with the party Elaine witnessed and experienced many things that made her a strong woman. She saw death, lived poverty and experienced war.



She lived through terror and pain that would have killed lesser people, but not Elaine Brown. Instead, she became the leader of the Black Panther Party. She took control of the money, the weapons and the people and led them well.

This book is well written, and enjoyable in its own strange way. It details the struggles of growing up in a black neighbour-

hood, but perhaps romanticizes a bit too much. The book makes one think- if I, as a woman, were given that kind of power, how would I deal with it? Would I be able to lead as well as other women have? Should I try for a place of power? These questions all lead to one good thing, women in leadership, something that we as a society desperately need.

CA SCHNEIDER

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THE
PROBLEM
WITH
WOMEN
IN THE
MEDIA IS...

*there aren't
enough of us.
Write for the
X-Press.*