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Anthropology male-biased, argues Reed

By GARY KINSMAN
"It was women who transmitted social nature to men," according to Evelyn Reed, a noted left-wing anthropologist, speaking at York last Thursday.

Reed has written widely on the question of women's oppression and anthropology. Her two best known books are *Problems of Women's Liberation* and her latest work, *Women's Evolution*.

According to Reed, the mainstream of anthropology has become "male biased", and attempts to postulate an unchanging human nature which justifies warfare. Reed, turning to Friedrich Engels of the last century, would rather see an evolutionary view of human nature.

MATERNAL INSTINCTS

"Women, because of their maternal instincts alone, could provide for others, while males are condemned by nature to be solitary," according to Reed. Women therefore led in making men into social creatures and transforming primate into social nature, she said. She also pointed out that in early societies, "women were the major food suppliers, were the first domesticators of animals, and developed the rudiments of art and science."

WOMEN'S OPPRESSION

In Reed's view, the origin of women's oppression comes with the destruction of the "matriarchy" and the development of private property and class society. It is only with socialism, she feels, that women's liberation can be achieved.

Reed's presentation sparked a lively discussion among the audience as some saw her postulating an eternal female nature, and others disputed her reliance on eighteenth century evolutionary thinkers.

Spotlight



By MICHELINA TRIGIANI

When delicate, soft-spoken, 98 pound Helen Freedhoff enters predominantly male classrooms, she admits students look twice the first time. "Perhaps they're surprised," she says, "but it wears off after a while."

An associate professor in the department of physics and the acting director of its graduate programme, Helen enlightens students daily with talks on electro-magnetic and radiation theory, quantum mechanics and calculus.

One of a mere handful of female scientists at York, Helen explains how she "drifted" into her field. "I never did any great soul-searching. I enjoyed and excelled in sciences and along the way, was never discouraged or told it was unfeminine."

Nowadays, after nine years at York, Professor Freedhoff admits she's too involved in her work to

get out. "I'm basically a ham," she says, "I must be, I like teaching."

But in spite of her dedication and contentment, at five o'clock, "Henchy" puts aside her professionalism and transforms into full-time wife and mother.

Whereas at York she divides her time between lecture halls, libraries and radiation research, at home she reads, raises vegetables, cooks "good" kosher food and mothers two children and one husband.

She cites her greatest achievement as watching her children being born and is proud at being able to combine three traditional careers successfully.

"I definitely put my family first," concludes Helen, "but if I didn't feel I was pulling my weight in the physics department, I'd quit — and I haven't yet."

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