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Views on feminism discussed

By **SUSAN LUNN**

ON JAN. 16, A PANEL CONSISTING OF four women and one man gave their personal and professional views on feminism and their perspectives for 1986.

Dr. Sue Sherwin, the chair, began the discussion. Sherwin is an associate director of Philosophy at Dalhousie. She is a board member of Bryony House, and she serves on the Canadian Society for Women.

Sherwin viewed the feminist movement as a response to sexism and oppression of women. She sees the last 20 years as a new wave of feminism, which is one in a long series of waves.

The next speaker was Dr. Marilynne Bell, a general practitioner in Halifax. Bell reported some recent statistics on the Status of Women. She said that 60-70% of the world's work is done by women, yet women receive only 1/3 of the world's wages.

In Bell's personal views on feminism she mentioned that she experienced that she had the potential to be "a man amongst women or simply one of the boys." Bell declared that she chose rather, to be a feminist. From this point on, Bell realized that one could accept the point of view or confront it, and as a feminist, Bell was often confronting it. As such, Bell realized that she was labelled as aggressive or a "bad girl" since "nice girls don't challenge the status quo."

As a general practitioner, Bell has had to deal with women who have been abused either mentally or physically. She discovered that women opened up to her but not to her male partner. She says it is "much easier to be invisible than visible" for these women.

Bell refers to abuse as the "sleeping bag/punching bag syndrome used to keep women silent" and said "silence has been a real problem for women for many years." In a survey done on abuse, it was seen that 77 per cent of all women do not provoke arguments leading to violence.

Dr. Tom Sinclair-Faulkner, of Dalhousie's Department of Religion, was the next to speak on the feminist perspective. Feminism, he says, "means re-thinking what it means to be a woman and ultimately what it means to be a man." And, says Faulkner, "the man and woman are two poles of humanity."

Feminism, says Faulkner, is hard on men. They (men) have privileges they do not yet wish to relinquish.

From a religious and historical perspective, Faulkner says one reason for our male-dominated society is the fact that we worship a male God. Since this began there has been an effort to submerge any females in religion.

Faulkner believes that, "humanities are founded on language. As such it is harder to relearn our own language which is a sexist language."

Dr. Jane Gordon, a Sociology professor at Mount Saint Vincent University, gave her personal

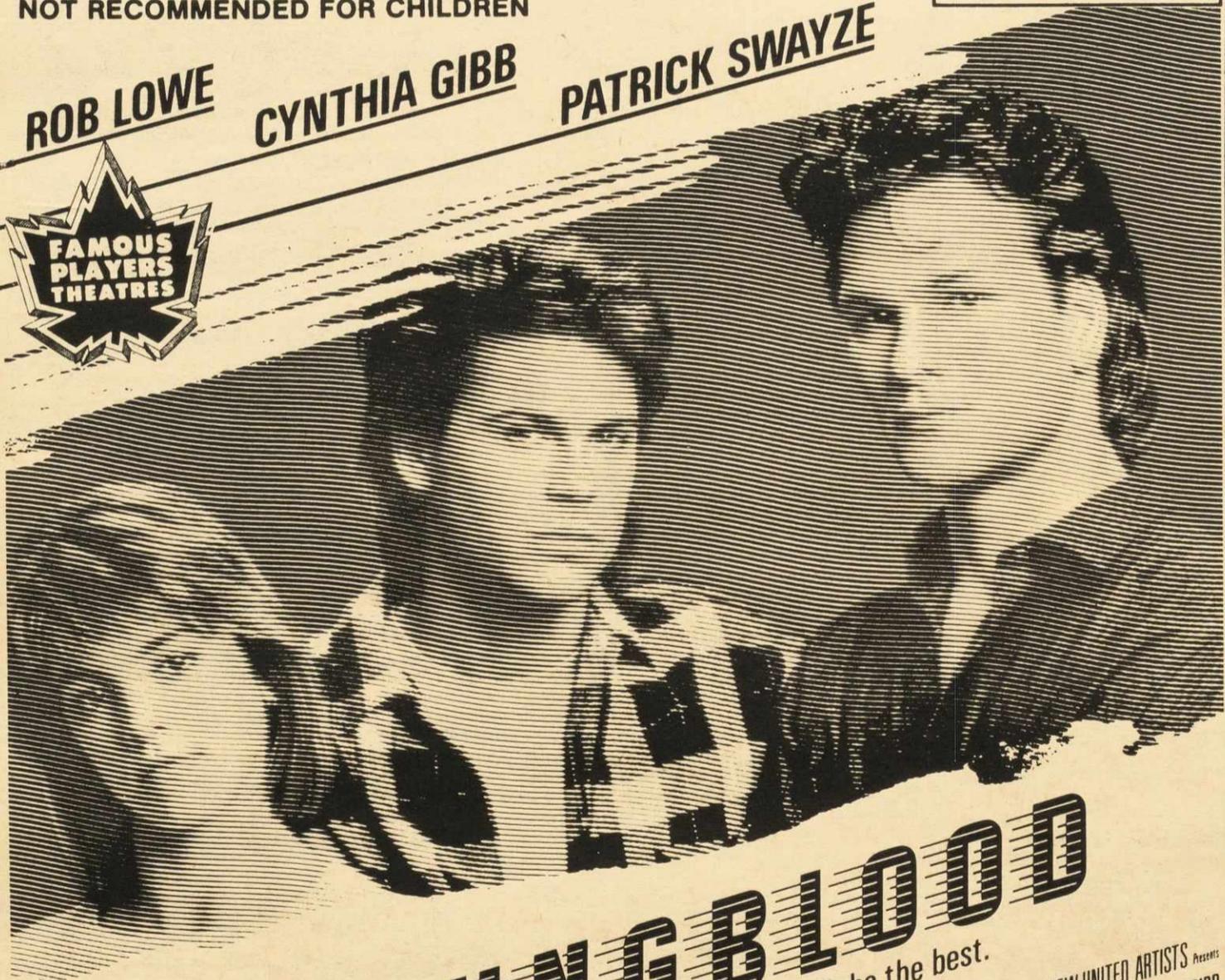
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