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UNSOLICITED MANUSCRIPTS
All unsolicited material will be read by the editors. For return, enclose self-addressed, stamped envelope with proper postage. Articles should be not more than 10 double spaced, typewritten pages on health, social or political issues by people with hands-on experience in their fields. Professional papers are acceptable. All editing decisions are at the discretion of the editors. Feminist cartoons are also acceptable under the same provisions.

ON THE ISSUES does not accept fiction or poetry.

PUBLISHER'S NOTE: The opinions expressed by contributors to our publication and by those we interview are not necessarily those of the editors.

ON THE ISSUES is a forum for ideas and concepts and a place where women may have their voices heard without censorship or censorship.

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Above: © H.L. Schwadron
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I have this fantasy. It’s a variation on that wonderful scene in the movie “Network,” when the eccentric, somewhat mad character played by Peter Finch attempts to wake the slumbering masses from their television-caused stupor and into revolution. He opens his apartment window and screams: “I’m mad as hell and I’m not going to take it anymore.”

When he starts, he is just a lone voice crying out in the cavernous wilderness of Manhattan, but then, slowly, one window after another opens, until the screen is full of heads screaming: “I’m mad as hell and I’m not going to take it anymore.”

But in my fantasy, it is women who are screaming. They are screaming about the recent Supreme Court decision, commonly known as the Gag Rule, denying medical information on abortion to poor women treated at federally funded clinics.

It could start like a round — beginning with the 32 million women who have had legal abortions since 1973, then move on to all their lovers, friends, husbands, mothers, fathers, families and, finally, to all the thousands and thousands of women still living who risked their lives to have illegal abortions prior to the Supreme Court Roe v. Wade decision.

The whole country would be screaming — a massive constituency of conscience. But the reality is that it’s quiet — too quiet — and considering the entire state of women’s health in this country, it’s far too passive.

There is a disease festering in the body politic of American women and it has been growing for years. The disease is pandemical, touching all but the privileged few. Its mode of transmission is government edict, Supreme Court decisions, denial, ignorance, cynicism and lack of funds and attention from the highest to the lowest levels of government. It goes by many names: Racism, poverty, discrimination, but its real face is Medical Misogyny.

American women are sick, getting sicker all the time, and unless we do some radical social surgery, the prognosis is poor. Women of majority of health care consumers, visit physicians 25 percent more often than men and frequently control a family’s medical decisions.

Most American women are in continual contact with the health care system throughout their entire lives. The relationship of a woman to her doctor is a powerful, intimate dyad and one that is started early in life. Many young girls are taken to the doctor when they begin to menstruate, and, from that moment on, are engaged in a passive/receptive role with an institution that has input, if not control, of almost all of the reproductive, sexual and biological events in her life.

From menstruation, choice of birth control, childbirth, in treatment for cervical and ovarian cancer, hysterectomies and mastectomies, depression, addiction, menopause and, recently, AIDS, women and doctors are engaged in an ongoing, unequal and sometimes deadly partnership.

This was, and still is, particularly true for poor and minority women who lack basic preventive health care and enter the system most frequently in crisis.

As a patient class, women are continuously abused by a Medical Industrial Complex that systematically ignores their needs. Women are caught among insurance companies, providers, regulators and government bureaucracies, all moving on non-parallel tracks. The end result is an arbitrary and discriminatory health care environment where women and children always lose. For example, the National Institutes of Health spends only 13 percent of its budget on women’s health and routinely excludes women from clinical studies. When the entire health care system is economically driven to reward high-tech procedures rather than ongoing preventive care, results are devastating. AIDS has become the leading cause of death among women aged 20-39. Syphilis, gonorrhea and other STDs are rising exponentially, and according to the CDC, the rate of ectopic pregnancies (a life threatening condition nationally in 1987 was almost four times higher than in 1970.

Twice as many women as men are diagnosed with depression and far more are addicted to prescriptive and non-prescriptive drugs. The incidence of breast and cervical cancer is on the rise particularly among low income and minority women, many of whom are diagnosed in the later stages when survival rates are far lower.

To make matters worse, women have become the fastest growing population of the uninsured.

The lack of attention to women’s health needs is nowhere more blatant than in the area of reproductive health. The issue of contraceptive use, misuse and development is critical, not only in terms of the millions of unplanned and unwanted pregnancies American women experience each year, but in terms of women’s health care in general. It is symbolic of the fact that women are the majority of health care consumers in this country yet have almost nothing to say about how funds or Research and Development monies are spent. It is interesting to note that since the introduction of the Pill and the IUD in the early 1960s only one fundamentally new contraceptive method, Norplant, has been approved for use in the United States. It is even more interesting to note that Norplant costs the consumer approximately $700 and is not reimbursed by Medicaid — insuring that once again poor women are discriminated against by the medical establishment.

The fact that only one new contraceptive was developed in the last 20 years while, at the same time, millions of dollars were spent developing high tech devices like artificial hearts, which basically serve the interests of the research establishment, point out more clearly that the words “women’s health” are becoming an oxymoron. It also points to a political problem — that of women as a majority constituency — lacking the money, clout and political leverage to have their needs met. The new abortifacient RU 486, which, usually, safely and effectively induces abortion before the ninth week of pregnancy and
has been called "The Moral Property of Women" by the French Minister of Health, has been blocked from being tested and distributed to American women by threats of antiabortion boycotts of the drug company that manufactures it. Called a "human pesticide" by fundamentalists, RU 486 remains on hold. Even more disturbing is the fact that this drug can also be used to treat breast cancer.

The pervasiveness of sexism in the medical establishment does not stop at withholding treatment and education from patients. Physicians themselves are often targets of harassment and discrimination. Dr. Frances Conley, one of the nation's first female neurosurgeons, resigned from her tenured professorship at Stanford after 25 years, charging sexual harassment. Dr. Conley, 50 years old, said some male colleagues called her "honey" in the operating room and some fiddled her legs under the table or made demeaning or sexual comments. "The most frustrating part of this whole thing is that most of the harassment is an attitude where male faculty members are in this time warp. They believe in male superiority and female subservience." (New York Times, 6/4/91)

The Gag Rule, the latest salvo in the ongoing attempt to reinforce medical "female subservience," is draconian in its formulation. Preventing physicians in federally funded clinics from even mentioning the word abortion as a possible alternative to an unwanted or unsafe pregnancy, it effectively succeeds in destroying the meaning of family planning for poor women.

Created by Congress in 1970, the purpose of the program known as Title X was to provide poor women with medical care as well as information about family planning. The populations that Title X serves have disproportionately high rates of teenage pregnancy, STDs and infant mortality. In many of these communities, the clinics receiving Title X funds are the only source of family planning services and information on general health care that these women have.

By dictatorially interfering with the doctor/patient relationship, the rule allows the government to create ghettos of medical ignorance, places the lives of over five million poor and minority women at risk, and potentially succeeds in forcing poor women to have unwanted children. It also severely endangers free speech. More than any other recent restrictive ruling surrounding abortion, the Gag Rule cuts to the core of the meaning of Roe v. Wade by placing physicians in an even more powerful and potentially propagandistic role with their women patients than they have historically enjoyed.

As with other legislative initiatives regarding abortion that have sprung up since the Webster decision in 1989 allowing the states more leeway in regulation, the Gag Rule displays an alarmingly negative creativity. From the Utah legislators who were so hot to outlaw abortion that they forgot about a law on the books that could put women in front of firing squads for having them, to spousal consent, parental notification, 24-hour waiting periods, "right to know" bills that require women seeking abortions to be given information on fetal development, to Louisiana passing the most restrictive laws calling for 10 years hard labor for any doctor caught performing an abortion, the message is clear, direct and legible.

If abortion will not become totally illegal in every state in the union, the agenda and strategy is to make it almost impossible — even if that means interfering with other fundamental American liberties like free speech. In their strongly worded dissenting opinions on the Gag Rule decision, Justices Blackmun, Marshall, Stevens and, in part, O'Connor, wrote "We must wonder what force the First Amendment retains if it is read to countenance the deliberate manipulation by the Government of the dialogue between a woman and her physician."

Walter Delinger, writing in the New York Times on May 25, said that "Thirty years ago, Justice William O. Douglas voted that the "right of the doctor to advise his patients according to his best lights seems so obviously within First Amendment rights as to need no extended discussion."

Thirty years later we are left to embark on a discussion whose possible ramifications are enormous.

Nat Hentoff, writing in the Village Voice 6/11/91, says that "Rhenquist was aware that some people, doctors for instance, were very concerned that preventing physicians from giving complete advice to the pregnant women in these clinics could greatly endanger the health of some of them." But for Rhenquist this was not a great problem, "because, patients who go to these clinics ought not to expect comprehensive medical advice." Comprehensive advice like telling a woman that continuing a pregnancy with placenta previa, severe diabetes or high blood pressure is life threatening.

Many physicians practicing in federally funded clinics, concerned about the consequences of going against medical ethics and the possibilities of malpractice suits if they cannot adequately inform a woman of all available options surrounding a pregnancy, don't have to worry. Government lawyers for the administration assure them that malpractice suits would be very unlikely because the physicians would be only "following orders" if they withheld information on abortion.

By their decision, the Rhenquist Court has reinforced the traditional gynecological view of women as disparate parts. To assume that pregnancy is not a condition that affects the entire physical system of a woman along with her psychological and spiritual health, is to reflect that most narrow of Cartesian dualistic universes. But this kind of thinking can be found in many antichoice theories of fetal rights which elevate a fetus (no matter what the gestation) to a place deserving more consideration and legal protection than the woman carrying it.

Restricting a physician's speech on abortion may be the first step in a domino effect of further restrictions. Ruth Marchs of the Washington Post writes, In the President's proposed school choice programs, for example, could the government support vouchers only for those schools that agree not to discuss abortion in their sex education classes?"

At least one other community is concerned that the Rust v. Sullivan decision could have a chilling effect on other areas of American life. "It's a big issue," according to Kathleen Sullivan, a Harvard Law School professor who helped prepare the brief on behalf of the clinics. "Rust has revived major concern in the arts community over whether content restriction is going to rise like a phoenix from the ashes. I think this will look to the right like a green light for more restrictions on funding." The actual implication of the decision for the arts, Sullivan said, "depends on whether the court will follow the theory of this decision or the practice."

In the case of women's right to have full and appropriate information regarding their medical condition and options, the issue of whether or not this is a case of theory or practice is moot. If physicians are forced to practice medicine according to government edict, women's lives are directly at stake.

By attacking federally funded clinics, the Supreme Court has continued the political and legislative strategy of targeting the most vulnerable in society.

continued on pg 39
LOVE AND DEATH

An AP dispatch in the NY Daily News:

A young man and an upper-caste teenage girl were hanged from a banyan tree, then thrown alive on a funeral pyre before their families, after village elders ruled they had eloped in violation of rigid caste taboos.

"My son and the girl tried to drag themselves away from the fire, but they were tossed back into the pyre," the man's 70-year-old father Shayama, told The Times of India.

The Mehrana village council decreed that 20-year-old Brijendra, an outcast, eloped with 16-year-old Roshni, the daughter of a landowning Jat caste family, in defiance of age-old prohibitions on contact between outcasts and caste Hindus, Indian newspapers reported.

The practice of "untouchability" was declared illegal when India became independent from Britain in 1947, but the custom is often far stronger than law in rural villages like Mehrana.

Not surprising in a country where bride-burning — also illegal — is still prevalent.

THE ACID TEST?

From several sources:

Georgia almost had to repeat an election at a cost of $23,000 because the candidates didn't take urine tests.

State officials discovered that the six candidates in a special election held May 14 for state House District 25 had not been tested for drugs. The race was the first to fall under a 1990 Georgia law requiring candidates for state office to have urine samples tested for illegal drugs, at the time they qualify.

How about a blood test for alcohol while they're at it?
**THE MOST DANGEROUS GAME**

An AP dispatch from NY Newsday:

Underground video games circulating among Austrian and German students test the ability to manage a Nazi death camp and to distinguish between Aryans and Jews, according to a Holocaust study center.

Eight copies of the programs, designed for home computers, were obtained by the Simon Wiesenthal Center in Los Angeles, and two were demonstrated for reporters.

Rabbi Abraham Cooper, the center's associate dean, said the programs are based on the Holocaust but often substitute Turks, many of whom work in Germany, for Jews.

In one program, "KZ Manager," the player must sell gold fillings, lampshades and labor to earn enough money to buy gas and add gas chambers to kill Turks at the Treblinka death camp. "KZ" is an abbreviation of the German word for concentration camp.

The game "Aryan Test" says it is by "Adolph Hitler Software Ltd." The game "Anti-Turk Test" says it was made in Buchenwald by "Hitler & Hess."

Distribution has been by electronic mail, under-the-counter sales, word of mouth and in deceptive packaging on store shelves.

Sold just like the worst violent pornography — which is what it is. Word has it that this virulent cancer has now spread to the U.S.

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**WOMEN GAIN IN WRONGS, NOT RIGHTS**

From an article by Marvin Howe, NY Times:

Although there have been important changes in the lives of women around the world over the last two decades, with some significant regional gains, "the majority still lag far behind men in power, wealth and opportunity," Secretary General Javier Perez de Cuellar concludes in a new United Nations report on women.


It is the first global attempt to measure women's place in society statistically.

Reporting on the health of women, the book shows that women tend to outlive men almost everywhere. The life expectancy of a woman is now 75 years or more in the developed regions, or 6.5 years longer than that of a man; over 70 years in many developing countries; or about five years longer than a man's; even in Africa, where a woman's expectancy is only 54 years, it is four years higher than a man's.

Yet, there are more men in the world than women. In the developed regions, the ratio is 106 women to 100 men. In Asia and the Pacific, there are only 95 women for every 100 men.

Explaining the discrepancy, the report notes that in many areas, girls and women are denied equal nutrition, health care and other support. Other reasons suggested include widow-burning, dowry deaths, female infanticide and a new phenomenon, abortion based on male-preference.

The reduction in infectious and parasitic diseases, improved primary health care, safer water and sanitation and better nutrition have increased women's life expectancy in developing regions. But maternal mortality rates in Africa and southern Asia are more than 30 times those in developed regions. In what is described as "the dark side of equality" in developed regions, women's deaths from chronic diseases, accidents and violence are coming closer to the levels for men.

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**HOW'S THAT AGAIN?**

A dispatch from NY Newsday:

The Supreme Court has ruled that a jailed suspect represented by a lawyer in one criminal case sometimes may be questioned by police about another crime without the lawyer present.

The 6-3 ruling in a case from Wisconsin gives police more power to question people outside the presence of their lawyers, but the court said its decision does not weaken suspects' Miranda rights, which require police to tell suspects they have a right to remain silent and be represented by a lawyer.

Excuse our confusion — we seem to have missed something here.

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ON THE ISSUES FALL 1991
TEACHING SUBSERVIENCE EARLY
From an article by Bill Carter, NY Times:
When ABC announced this fall's schedule for Saturday morning children's programming, Jennie Trias, the network's vice president for children's programs, had some bad news for girls: Their favorite Saturday morning show, "The New Kids on the Block," the cartoon adventures of the rock band with an enormous preteen following, would be canceled.
"Only girls were watching the show," Trias said. "And you have to have boys watching a show for it to succeed."
The landscape of Saturday morning will not simply be dominated by programs featuring male characters; it will be an exclusive male preserve. ABC's sole series with a lead female character, "Little Rosey," featuring a child character based on the comedy star Roseanne Barr, is also being canceled. Barr had previously complained that ABC was insisting that she add more boys to the cast; she refused.
Children's television is, most network programmers agree, a boy's world. And they aren't fighting it anymore.
"Children's television has always been male dominated," said David F. Poltrack, the senior CBS vice president for research.
Network executives say the fact that male characters dominate children's shows is based on pragmatic business judgments and has nothing to do with sexism on the part of network programmers.

TO BE ANTI-GAY IS OK FOR BOY SCOUTS
UNWANTED RAPIST
From an article by James Brooke, NY Times:
Many Brazilian feminists see rape as the issue of the 1990s, and speak of the case of Eduardo Luis Carneiro Ximenes, a successful Recife businessman and lawyer. After a local television station broadcast a confrontation between Ximenes and seven women who accused him of raping them, the police received rape complaints against him from 63 other women and took him into custody.
But noting that an arrest warrant was never issued, a local judge, Marcelo Carneiro Fernandes, freed Ximenes. By the time an arrest warrant was issued, the suspect had fled Recife.
Considering the publicity, length of time and number of rapes, someone seems to have slipped up badly or did they?

Judge, Sally G. Disco of Superior Court in Los Angeles, said that requiring the Scouts to accept the man would interfere with their freedom as a private organization to tell their members that homosexuality is wrong.
The Boy Scouts, based in Irving, TX, have a national policy that defines homosexuals as poor role models.
The case that challenged that policy dates from 1980 when Timothy Curran, then 18 years old, was asked to leave the Scouts after he had taken a young man to his senior prom. When Curran's request to return to the Scouts as an adult leader was rejected the next year, he brought the suit that Judge Disco decided.
Judge Disco wrote that "the issue, of course, is not whether the defendant's view is correct, or enlightened, or even best calculated to achieve the organization's broader goals."
She continued, "The Supreme Court has long recognized a right to 'engage in association for the advancement of beliefs and ideas.' The converse, a right not to associate, or the right of the group to exclude unwanted members, is also recognized."
Suppose they exercise that right against people of color, Jews, those with disabilities, etc? Will that be recognized too?
Sisters is a community where people come to be nurtured and have their human dignity restored

By Shannon Moon Leonetti

"I don't spend as much time in the restaurant actually serving and cooking like I used to," says Genny Nelson, co-founder and executive director of the Sisters of the Road Cafe.

Sisters of the Road is a small diner located in the heart of Portland, Oregon's Burnside community. It's a place where the warm atmosphere overpowers the cold of life on the streets. "Running 'Sisters,' the women's group, meeting with social service agencies, and dealing with the expected problems, keeps me up here, instead of down there," reflects Nelson.

"Up here" is the top side of a narrow, winding staircase that exits into a small, compact office. Nelson fondly refers to it as an "anthropological dig." Before climbing these stairs, Nelson stops and points to a picture of her mentor, Dorothy Day, the one person who has influenced her work in the Burnside community. Day founded the Catholic Workers' Movement during the Depression, and has been called one of the greatest women of the 20th century.

The smell of freshly-brewed coffee and just-baked cornbread floats up over the open railing. With the good smells that drift up the stairs come the sounds of conversations, pans rattling, the front door continuously opening and closing. Ten years of conditioning have developed in Nelson a constant alertness; regardless of what else she is doing, she listens.

"We do more than feed people," says Nelson. "We simply do whatever needs to be done."

"Doing" for Nelson includes running a restaurant that serves more than 200 meals a day, supervising a job-training program, looking for new ways to meet the needs of the poor and homeless, answering phone calls from other social service agencies and providing shelter and a weekly support group for homeless women. Every activity is carried on with the aim of helping people feel good about themselves and cope with what, for many, has been a dismal life.

Portland's Burnside Community is typical of "skid row" neighborhoods across America. It is named for the avenue that separates it from the tall, clean, shiny buildings that house bankers, brokers and retailers such as Nordstrom's and Saks Fifth Avenue.

Also known as the Pearl District, it is Portland's melting pot. Inside a red and gold Chinese gate that was donated by one of Portland's sister cities, one can find Chinatown, businesses large and small, restaurants that represent every ethnic flavor, and small shops selling everything from fine art to roller skates to car alarm systems.

This color and diversity does not camouflage the fact that the area is, primarily, a residential neighborhood for the very poor. Its taverns, doorways and covered
buildings have been renovated into fashionable "left" apartments, the majority are low-rent, dilapidated tenements and flop houses. The line-ups for meals or beds include women, men, young children and street youths, white, African-American, Native American and Latino.

The yellow sign announciing "Sisters of the Road Cafe" is sandwiched between a Chinese laundry and Ma's Community Inn. Once inside, its gray linoleum floors, counters and swivel stools, the chalkboard advertising 15-cent coffee, and men in flannel shirts and high-water blue jeans are like a step back into the 1960s. This image of an old-fashioned diner ends at the top of the stairs. Nelson's office is cluttered with paper bags marked "maternity," recycled stationary boxes marked "needles and thread," toys and boxes of condoms. Her electronic secretory records messages - a request for diapers from a resident of a local woman's shelter sounds urgent.

Nelson looks younger than someone in her late 30s. With no makeup, big round glasses, and a bobbed haircut, she looks as if she could still be in college, or like a newly-hired school teacher.

But despite appearances, she is immersed in a relentless struggle to aid a small group of the down-and-out. When she talks about Sisters, how it came to be and what it represents, there is no question that Nelson belongs here and no place else. "Sisters is more than a restaurant or a food bank. Sisters is a community where people come to be nurtured and have their human dignity restored. I know people are best able to help themselves, we just want to provide a safe place for them to do it," says Nelson.

Nurturing from Nelson includes a special drop-in group for homeless women to work on self-esteem, personal power and skills to deal with personal and parenting issues. Nelson becomes a "surrogate" mother when she comes downstairs with a new toy or crayons for a patron's child.

While Nelson plays, men get a well-deserved time-out and a chance to see new ways to interact with her child.

As the need for these types of services has grown, Nelson has not forgotten that Sisters' primary responsibility is to serve food. She began with recipes from Portland's public schools and lots of inventiveness to cook up cheap but tasty breakfasts and meals for government commodities. There are no handouts at Sisters. If someone does not have $1.25, food stamps or a voucher, a little hard labor will buy a hearty breakfast of pancakes and eggs or biscuits and gravy or a lunch of spaghetti and cornbread. No one goes away hungry.

The smelly of freshly-brewed coffee and just-baked cornbread floats up over the open railing.

The needy have gained more than a place to eat thanks to Nelson's insightfulness and hard work. One of the first things she realized was that food stamps were of little benefit to the homeless because they had no stoves or refrigeration. Nelson and former Sisters' Executive Director Curt Links petitioned the U.S. Department of Agriculture to be a pilot project to accept food stamps from the homeless in a non-profit restaurant. This was a policy already in place for the elderly and after a tough battle they won.

The policy is now nationwide.

More recently, Nelson introduced a solution to lessen the conflict between panhandlers and the rest of society. She has initiated a meal-coupon program that consists of food vouchers to be purchased by the general public for meals at Sisters. When panhandlers ask for money, they can give a voucher. No money changes hands, so the pan-handler can't buy alcohol or drugs; instead, they get fed and donors can stop feeling guilty about ignoring the hungry. "This creates a safe encounter between those who have something to give and the homeless," says Nelson.

Nelson first started working in the Burnside neighborhood in 1972. A junior at Portland State, majoring in sociology, she had tired of the secretarial jobs that were part of her work-study assignments and requested something different. She was offered a job with the Burnside Projects in an all-night shelter on Everett Street. At that time, the visible homeless population was older, while male, primarily with alcohol problems, while Nelson was young, native and innocent.

"Burnside Project was really different then; it was funded by the churches and run by volunteers. I felt really awkward," said Nelson. "That first night I was sitting with a man on a church pew and he started asking me questions about why I was there. So, I asked him and others why they were there and it was this storytelling process that got me hooked on the people and the Project."

In October of the next year, she was offered a job as the Volunteer Coordinator. She left Portland State and never went back. Innovative from the start, she started an evening drop-in clinic and helped to start a neighborhood newsletter, the Burnside pipeline, which is now These Homeless Times.

It was while working with the Burnside Projects that Nelson was introduced to the life and work of Dorothy Day. Outraged at the brutal and impersonal treatment of the poor, Day argued that society should not simply help, but challenge the State, its responsibility to care for its citizens. Day has been labeled both an anarchist and a vanguard leader for social justice.

According to Day, "It is you (the people) who must perform the works of mercy - often giving only the price of a meal, or a bed... Each person must combat the growing tendency to give the State the job of each of us to do." To do this, Day established communities called houses of hospitality. Like the early Christians' hospices, houses of hospitality aimed to give shelter to needy members of society.

Nelson was raised in a Catholic family and attended local Catholic schools. Although she no longer practices that religion, the theological concept of "community" is an inherent element in both her personal and professional lives. For Nelson, the Sisters' community should provide the support system necessary to restore a person's dignity, their sense of self-worth, and the encouragement in beginning changing their lives. Sisters is Nelson's emulation of a house of hospitality.

While Nelson does not see herself as another Dorothy Day, she has embraced Day's rudimentary definition of human obligation: To take personal responsibility for each other, to be self-governed and not rely on any government. Nelson wants Sisters to take care of its own, with as little involvement from the government as possible. When asked whether she believes the state has any obligation in caring for the poor or homeless, Nelson says that the government and individual responsibility go hand-in-hand. "We are all responsible. As individuals, we have to begin by asking really hard questions of the government."

For example, Nelson believes that the government has a clear responsibility to ensure adequate housing for all citizens. "The problem is that, at this point, we are not talking the same language," says Nelson. "If we want to end homelessness, we have to start by communicating with each other. The government's idea of low-income housing is simply too expensive. A single mother with a child only gets about $400 a month of supplemental income. Our job as individuals is to challenge government officials to walk a mile
in that another’s abuse and show us a way to live on that. If they can’t, then something has to change.”

Nelson understands the value in meeting with state and local officials. In a visit from Oregon’s governor, Barbara Roberts, Nelson’s goal was to impress Roberts with the importance of listening to the homeless. Nelson knows that “for there to be real change, we need to ask the ones who are living it. These people know what the problems are and how to solve them. Conversations and cooperation generate ownership in the solutions.”

For Nelson, her personal, public and community lives are all one. When she left her job at the Burnside Project to stay home with two newly-adopted babies, she opened a miniature version of a house of hospitality in her home. She and her husband took people in, sometimes for the night and sometimes for as long as two years. At the same time, Nelson volunteered in a soup kitchen and taught nonviolent civil disobedience methods. “My philosophy of gentle-personalism evolved from the Catholic Workers’ Movement and my conviction to nonviolence is my way of life,” she explains. Nonviolent strategies are part of Sisters’ character.

In the fall of 1978, Nelson returned to Burnside Projects to run a night shelter. The demographics of the area had changed. There was a growing population of women and children without shelter. Because most of the hotels were closed to single women, in a cooperative effort between Burnside Projects, CETA and local business women, Women on Burnside was formed to provide information, referral and personal service to local women. It was run by Nelson and Sandy Gooch, her partner at the Burnside Projects. The number of women needing services continued to grow but CETA funds were short-lived, so with a little experience, a lot of enthusiasm and the willingness to take a chance, Nelson and Gooch opened the Sisters of the Road Cafe. Nelson said that Sisters “started with a $10 donation, a barter on the rent and a strong philosophy.” Sisters was to be a cafe that provided a safe place for women and kids, offered high nutrition, low-cost hot meals, maintained an atmosphere of dignity and personal regard for patrons and employees, and provided job-training and work experience, “necessary ingredients,” according to Nelson, “for any road to self-sufficiency.”

It took five years for the stress and burnout to force Nelson to let go. “It was just like raising a child, I needed to let Sisters grow without me for a while. I had to go to counseling just to learn how to say goodbye,” she admits. While remaining on the Executive Board, Nelson worked at the N.W. Pilot Project and at the West Women and Children’s Shelter, as a Child Advocate, coordinator of the Family Program and, finally, as the interim director. Both Sisters and Nelson survived the breakdown but she was back at the Cafe by November, 1988. “Over time, I have learned to leave my work at Sisters,” says Nelson, “and when I forget I have a husband and two children (ages 15 and 19) who constantly remind me that I have a life of my own.”

Sisters has struggled along without adequate finances and made its share of mistakes while continuing to meet the growing demands for services for women, employment training and community education. In the full of 1989, on the eve of their 10th anniversary, Nelson thought Sisters was going to have to close. A last minute fundraising event pulled them through that crisis. Now, a more experienced Board of Directors is working on ways to provide Sisters with a solid financial foundation, insurance for employees, clothes and expanded referral services for patrons.

“Partnering is the new buzzword for the ‘90s,” says Nelson. One example is the social service providers who are becoming partners with the business community, working together to solve problems. “On the surface this is a great idea,” she explains, “but, in reality, they still aren’t talking the same language. Many of the business people see a victory over homelessness when people are out of the doorways and out of sight. The social service agencies see the end of homelessness only when there is permanent housing for everyone.”

“I think that is why what has happened with Sisters has been so successful,” she continues. “We were partners with the community before it had a label. I can go to the table and talk with business leaders because I have to run a business. I am not a social service agency nor a mission, but I can work with both of them. They see me as a partner because I do case referrals and offer shelter. We all have responsibilities in common. We need to do a better job of sharing knowledge and resources.”

Nelson knows that one important service that she and the Cafe must continue to provide is that of educating the public about the homeless and the poor. “For example,” she says, “we have given a whole society of people a great big label of homeless and we no longer think of them as individuals. One day a young man said to me, ‘Don’t call me homeless. Say this is Peter and he doesn’t have a home.’ Nameless perpetuates a feeling of worthlessness. Everyone who walks through the door at Sisters is called by their given name.”

Success is not easily measured, but Nelson has confidence in Sisters and its purpose. She has been there long enough to see real changes in some of the local people. According to Nelson, the merit of a place like Sisters is that it gives each person the space to learn to cope with a world in which she has not been part of for a long time. “There are people who want a night and they are not going to go away any faster,” she says, “We have to learn to wait for people.”

“Some people can just come here, learn a skill and go off,” says Nelson. “That is what we want. But, Sisters also works with people who are marginal and take a lot longer.” Longer may be just enough time to learn how to balance a job or school with family, or trips to doctors, counselors or welfare offices. There was one woman who was offered schooling at a suburban community college. She wanted to go to school but she eventually dropped out and returned to work at Sisters because she spent so much time on the bus she had no time to study, work, or be with her young daughter. Without support from Sisters, she would have easily fallen back into street life.

Using the security of Sisters and the opportunity to talk through the problem in the drop-in women’s group, she worked out her own new plan, one that she could handle.

“Another woman came in to Sisters homeless and a junkie turning tricks. But, she had a smile that was contagious. She looked at the people here and realized that she could do the same things they were doing. She asked for a job and got it. During her seven months at Sisters, she moved from living on the docks to the West Women’s Shelter. She had arrived desperate, she left happy and on her way to life on her own without the fear of long-term dependency on drugs or the government.”

The Sisters of the Road Cafe is all about feeding and nurturing people while they regain their physical and emotional health. It is a very traditional, maternal solution to problems. Nelson finds its success curious in a time when women are trying so hard to dissociate themselves from women’s work.

“Sisters works because it is all about empowering people to help themselves, not enabling them,” says Nelson. “Both the employees and the customers are working towards the same goal and when they leave here, their stomachs are full, their self-esteem is in place and they have a skill.”

Sharon Moon Launetti is a freelance writer from Portland, Oregon with a doctorate in adult learning and development.
Of all the hypes ever imposed on a people, none has been more insidious than the U.S. government's 50-year promotion of atomic and nuclear substances. The nuclear age, so the argument went, would lead to innovations in medicine, fuel sources and other means of progress geared to the good life. Today, the hype extends to the promotion of food irradiation which the nuclear industry would have us believe is an effective and safe way to preserve food at minimal public risk.
Many scientists disagree. They argue that irradiated foods are depleted of nutritional value and that irradiation masks bacterial contamination. More importantly, they say, irradiated foods expose consumers to an entirely new range of carcinogens. Writing in *The Ecologist* in 1988, Dr. Richard Piccioni, a senior staff scientist with a New York research group, said “food irradiation should be seen for what it is, an unscrupulous attempt to find a commercial use for nuclear wastes.”
Food irradiation is a preservation process in which food is conveyed through an irradiation chamber where it is exposed to gamma radiation from radioactive materials (usually cobalt-60 or cesium-137, by-products of nuclear waste) or to an electronic beam. Radiation penetrates food and destroys harmful organisms. The food itself does not become radioactive. Proponents claim that the process extends shelf life, destroys insects, controls bacterial growth, sterilizes food and controls ripening time.

A growing number of consumers, along with many scientists, just aren’t buying it. They are convinced that radiation is indiscriminate in its effects, impacting the wholesomeness of food, and posing serious health hazards, including chromosomal abnormalities and reproductive failures.

Betty Long, a resident of Cleveland and Chair of the food irradiation issue for the Northeast Ohio Sierra Club, summed up the sentiment in her recent testimony to a city committee. “Personally I feel it is a privilege to live in a country where fresh food is bountiful. A constant supply of fresh, edible, non-irradiated food is available at our food markets. Why this urgency to introduce a questionable technology? More consumers want organic, untreated food. There is just no justification for [food irradiation].” Long and others in Ohio were successful in stopping the sale of irradiated foods in Lakewood, Cleveland, Brook Park, East Cleveland and Parma. Long now says she will take the issue before state legislators. “The industry is doing its best to get on line, but public acceptance is not there. Consumers, more than ever, insist on safe food.”

Joanne Smith of Ridgefield, CT has the same spirit and energy. Co-founder of Fairfield County for Safe Food, Smith and others organized a lobbying effort focused on getting legislation passed to ban the sale of irradiated food in that state. Their efforts have paid off. Rep. Barbara Ireland has said she will sponsor such a bill next year. In developing strategy, Smith asked herself and others some key questions. “Why do they want to irradiate food? It’s not the consumer coming in saying ‘I really want you to irradiate my food,’” she says. “There is some suspicion that this is a technology looking for a use.” Smith also points out that the food irradiation industry stands to make an enormous profit. She and her colleagues are concerned about a growing number of plants around the country, and the transporting, storing and use of dangerous radioactive substances in communities. “What’s going to happen to the environment and the people around these plants?” she wants to know.

It’s a question worth asking, as the people of Decatur, AL well know. On the morning of June 6, 1988, an internal safety device detected a radiation leak and automatically shut down the Radiation Sterilizers, Inc. plant there. Decatur is densely populated. Experts had said, before the accident, that such incidents were simply impossible. Yet, clean-up took more than a year and several million taxpayers’ dollars, and the exact cause of the accident is still unknown.

The Decatur accident is foremost in the minds of residents in Mulberry, FL where Vindicators of Florida is building a food irradiation plant despite enormous opposition from community activists. First planned for Lakeland but defeated by residents there, the Mulberry facility seems to enjoy wide support from city officials despite public outcry. In spite of well-organized efforts by the Polk County Coalition to Stop Food Irradiation, Vindicators is moving forward and has recently applied to Health Rehabilitation Services (HRS), the government’s regulatory agency, for its license.

The citizens of Mulberry are considering whether to take action against the city, which, they say, violated their rights in allowing Vindicators to build. “There are three issues here,” says Helga Druguet, a spokeswoman for the Polk County Coalition. “First, there’s how people feel about their food being irradiated. Then, there are the environmental issues. No one wants this in their backyard. It’s also a home rule issue. The community should be able to vote on something and have its vote honored. Our community rights have been violated and that’s a dangerous precedent.”

But the people of Mulberry have even more to worry about. There is serious concern that political corruption involving the building of the Vindicator plant is so pervasive that even talking about it is dangerous. The facts are foreboding. Two years ago, Mulberry’s commissioners passed a one-year moratorium on the building of the controversial plant. Subsequently, a 4-to-1 vote banned businesses handling hazardous materials. Then, the State Attorney’s office issued an opinion that only the state could pass judgment on such matters. Based on that, a circuit court judge overturned the building ban. But the intriguing piece of the puzzle is this: Sam Whitney, who as head of Vindicator denies that there is any real opposition to the irradiation plant he is building, was for 35 years in the phosphate industry in Mulberry, where he “made his money” before taking the lead at Vindicator.

Understandably, the Mulberry case has drawn national attention, and activists everywhere are watching what happens...
next. As one resident put it, "the battle will now be found in the grocery stores and at the dinner table."

The people of Santa Cruz County, AZ had a better experience than their counterparts in Florida. They were successful in blocking construction of a planned irradiation facility in Nogales that would have been the largest such facility in the world. A resolution drawn up by the Board of Supervisors of Santa Cruz County was passed unanimously last May. The resolution also urged the U.S. Congress to pass bills that would place a moratorium on the sale and processing of irradiated foods. The Board's action has been applauded by environmental groups throughout the country as well as by other Arizona groups.

The resolution was the culmination of action taken by Citizens for Safe Food, whose organizers rallied citizens and educated residents and elected officials about their concerns. Virginia Dean and Carol Soth led the drive, realizing early on that organizing at the community level was essential. Food and Water, Inc., the Tucson Cooperative Warehouse and the National Coalition to Stop Food Irradiation were contacted. These organizations provided the local group with support, speakers and videotaped information for the planning meetings. Says Dean, "with increased community awareness, the more we understood what was happening to our food sources."

Carol Soth saw the issue as big enough to warrant the monitoring of actions taken by the facility planners and to enlist the support of legislators and community leaders. "I was tired of being used as a guinea pig," she recalls. "I was tired of them telling me things are safe only to find out 20 years later that they are not. The studies used by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) are inadequate and there are so many health issues and environmental concerns relating to food irradiation."

Nogales Mayor Jose Luis De La Ossa cited a number of environmental concerns in a letter he wrote to the Arizona State Lands Department. In addition to worries about the planned residential location of the plant and its access to the border, the mayor raised these environmental concerns: What is the risk associated with potential hazardous waste or industrial waste exposure to the surrounding residential area? What is the risk of groundwater pollution from such a facility? Are there airborne emissions? What mitigative studies and measures will be undertaken to minimize potential impact to the environment or health of [our citizens]?

It is a list of questions others would be well-advised to raise if food irradiation plants are suggested in their communities. Concerned citizens can also:

* Write or call your local Congressional representatives to express your opinions about food irradiation;
* Support Food & Water, Inc. (255 Lafayette St., Rm. 612, New York, NY 10012), the leading consumer activist group working to end food irradiation in the U.S.;
* Register your opposition by calling the United Fresh Fruit & Vegetable Assn., the trade association that represents fresh fruit and vegetable growers, shippers, processors and distributors in the U.S. (1-800-336-3065).

Elayne Clift is a writer in Potomac, MD specializing in women, health, environment and international development issues. Her collected essays, Telling it Like it is: Reflections of a Not So Radical Feminist, has just been published by KIT Publications.

**FOOD IRRADIATION FACTS**

So far, the FDA has approved irradiation for treatment of fresh fruits and vegetables, pork, wheat and wheat flour, nuts, seeds, teas, dried vegetable seasonings and extracts, spices and, most recently, poultry. In its ruling on irradiated food labeling, the FDA now requires that the words "irradiated" or "treated with irradiation" appear on whole foods that have been affected. (Past rulings had proposed that the wording be dropped and replaced with only the radura, a flower symbol representing irradiation.) The policy still allows all irradiated ingredients in processed foods to go unlabeled.

Maine, New York and New Jersey have banned the sale and manufacture of radiation-exposed food and many other states, including Alaska, Connecticut, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Oregon, Pennsylvania and Rhode Island are considering similar legislation. Australia, Germany and Japan have enacted national bans on the sale of irradiated food.

A Louis Harris poll revealed that almost 80 percent of consumers consider radiation-exposed food a hazard. Over 1,000 corporations including General Foods, A&P Supermarkets, McCormick Spices and McDonalds Corporation have pledged not to use or sell irradiated foods.

—E.C.
VELVET INTUITION

An interview with writer Eda Kriseova, advisor to Czechoslovak president Vaclav Havel

PRAGUE — I'm in the waiting room of Czechoslovakia's Royal Palace, a lavender Baroque edifice perched above the city on Castle Hill. Eda Kriseova dashes in to greet me, her red hair flying.

The last time I stood on Castle Hill, three years ago, I felt I was in the palace of the Snow Queen. Prague was a city of too much and too little. Too much glorious architecture, so that my neck stiffened from staring up at gargoyles and friezes. Too little conversation in public — the human spirit was in the deep freeze.

The last time I met Eda, in New York in the spring of 1989, she was reading her stories to a gathering of women from PEN, the writers' group. Six months later Czechoslovakia unfroze for the first time since Russian tanks flattened the Prague Spring of 1968. Suddenly, dissident playwright Vaclav Havel became president — an artist reluctantly called to public duty — and Eda Kriseova was drafted to his team of advisors.

Eda and I rush along the Castle's corridors of power, which have been transformed by Havel's Civic Forum movement into a government of gentle spirits. She stops to sympathize with two young foreign policy advisors, unhappily on their way to Moscow.

We arrive at Kriseova's office. The president's advisor-at-large shares a tiny room with her secretary and a young volunteer named Dusan. On her desk are piles of messages and letters and a little candle in the shape of Lenin's head. Both of her telephones are ringing off the hook. "No, Mr. Ambassador, I can't speak at the PEN event," she apologizes. "All our writers are busy in the government these days."

I steal Eda away from the Velvet Revolution for an hour. We sip coffee in the vast lounge, still stuffed with the sumptuous furnishings of the previous regime. Her white embroidered Indian-cotton dress settles into the green velvet armchair; her flat-sandaled bare legs are planted on the oriental rug. She begins to tell her
You cannot write some stupid short story, you have to serve the nation.

Troubles, as I was the family’s main provider. My husband was a student and we already had one child. I went to help out in a mental asylum, where the patients told me their lives. Later, I wrote about them.

I started writing fiction. Eight books in 20 years, four volumes of short stories. Four novels, plus two children’s books. For eight years, nothing was published. Writing was a sort of psychotherapy and obsession. After that, I worked, started circulating in the world. But here in Czechoslovakia, I was not a writer, but a housewife. The only people who knew my things were said to read readers of underground publications. And those were board members of our stories on Radio Free Europe. Later, some books published in Czech in London and Toronto were smuggled into the country.

I’m not a political person. I prefer philosophy to politics. Politics makes ideas short. They’re current for a short time, and then they die. I wasn’t so much involved in politics, but in such a climate of life, I learned from my life. (Maybe it’s the end of my life?) I have kept writing and being alone. Now I could actually be earning some money for writing.

One of my books will be published here this year. I’m forbidden by my agent to publish more than two a year. The first is too much; the fourth is suicide, he says. I have no time to write now, so I will have a reserve. It’s good to publish at once, even if I’m popular. Like in love, you can’t be at the disposal of others. I’ve walked for 20 years so I can wait now.

How is it for women in Czechoslovakia? For women here, life is complicated by the 1960s ideology of emancipation. We were told by the Communist that we’re completely free and not dependent on men. Quickly we found out it was a lie. We work two full-time jobs.

Many ladies in the ’50s were involved in politics and put their kids in creches or gave them to grandmothers. Years later they found that they didn’t enjoy their children. Then it was too late. I put my two daughters into nursery school after they were three years old because they wanted to play with somebody and it was nice for them.

People in this country are materialistic and not spiritual. They work two jobs to buy something completely stupid. If they can renovate their sense of life and find their own interests instead of being environs of their neighbors. But we must cultivate this spiritual and moral life.

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A large woman clutches a ragged teddy bear to her chest. An older woman caresses the arm of a man who watches his tears fall to the floor. A college-age woman sits alone, trying to calm herself with deep breaths. These people and hundreds of others have gathered in a midwestern high school auditorium to hear author Laura Davis remind them that healing is possible for adults who were sexually abused as children. Before the lecture, and over a bowl of chicken soup, Laura Davis, herself a survivor of incest, spoke about her own healing and about the process of healing others.

How did you come to write The Courage to Heal?

My own discovery that I am an incest survivor and my move toward being in the public sphere were tied together. When I remembered [the incest] I went immediately to my local feminist bookstore, Old Wive's Tales, in San Francisco. The only books available were / Never Told Anyone, Conspiracy of Silence, and The Best Kept Secret. They were saying, "This is a terrible problem; this is a horror; it is a political nightmare; it is inbred in the fabric of our society; and it's a horrible, tragic crime." But nothing about what I could do once I remembered it had happened. I said, "Well, I am a journalist by profession; I need this information, so I am going to write this book." It was only six months after I first remembered I had been abused that Ellen Bass and I started to write The Courage to Heal.

How does the fact that you are a survivor influence your work?

I have something I want to say to people and I say it in a responsible way. When I do a lecture, I want there to be therapists in the audience or in a safe room where people can go. I don't want to do a lecture unless a resource list is handed out at the door. I have a consciousness about what it means to be a survivor. I can talk from a peer level. A lot of therapists who go out on the road to do this kind of work are bound by the constraints of being a therapist. The fact that I'm not gives me a tremendous amount of latitude and freedom to be political in what I am doing.

How do you see what you are doing as "being political?"

I am raising people's consciousness all the time. From the very beginning, Ellen and I made a decision that whenever we spoke publicly, we would come out as lesbians. It is one of the things about writing The Courage to Heal I am proudest of. We were able to write a mainstream book that included gay and lesbian lifestyles as just a normal part of life. I think that is a very radical thing to do. I made that commitment, but I don't stand up and say, "Hi, I'm Laura Davis, I'm 34 years old. I'm Jewish lesbian from California." It is much more integrated into my presentation. And I talk a lot about the politics of the issue of sexual abuse. I don't just talk about it like we should create a healing industry. Abuse is still going on, and I speak to that issue as well. I have tried to use the opportunity in what I consider an ethical way. I did not start this work because I wanted to be a self-help guru. I don't want to be a self-help guru. I am a writer. And I am an activist. I followed this to its logical conclusion which led me to be public and political about it.

How has being public about such an intense issue changed your life?

It has been mixed. It is an incredible feeling to know that my work has saved lives. Ellen and I get letters from people who say, "I would be dead if it wasn't for your book." After lectures, I sign books for people and often a survivor will come up and open her book to the page that reads, "Don't kill yourself," and she will say to me, "I want you to sign on this page." I write a few words knowing what I say may make a difference in a decision to live. It is also humbling.

You have been called "a model for survivors." How does this role as "model" affect your healing process?

It has been hard for me. As a child subjected to incest, I was objectified and not seen for who I was. When I travel around the country and people only see me as that person on the stage, in many ways it is a repeat of that experience where I feel I'm not being seen as a whole, complex human being but as an icon. Yet I know that people need role models. It is just hard to be the role model because I know my life is more complex than that.

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TORTURING WOMEN AS FINE ART: WHY SOME WOMEN & MEN ARE BOYCOTTING KNOPF

By Robert Brannon

Enjoy reading fiction? Try to read if you can (skip if you can’t) a few passages from a “serious” new American novel from a prestigious publisher, Knopf, a Division of Random House:

“In my locker in the locker room at Xclusive lay three vaginas I recently sliced out of various women I’ve attacked in the past week.”

“The mouth opens and not even screams come out anymore, just horrible, guttural, animal-like noises, sometimes interrupted by retching sounds. ‘Scream honey,’ I urge, ‘keep screaming. No one cares, no one will help you...’ and with the same pair of scissors I cut her tongue out, which I pull easily from her mouth...Blood gushes out of her mouth and I have to hold her head up so she won’t choke on it. Then I fuck her in the mouth, and after I’ve ejaculated and pulled out, I mace her some more.”

In case you aren’t perceptive, the young male author has explained that this nightmare of woman-abuse is “Equal amounts of black comedy and satire of the 1980s.” “I used comedy to get at the absolute banality of the violence of a perverse decade,” the author told the New York Times in April. “Look, it’s a very annoying book. But that is how as a writer I took in those years.”

Still following the plot? Here then is the story-in-progress of how this unprecedented celebration of sexual violence against women, American Psycho from Knopf-Random House, soared to the Best Sellers’ list, made a few wealthy men a little wealthier, and has finally triggered a national boycott of Knopf, Inc., by people who are saddened and angered by the rising visibility and respectability of real and simulated sexual sadism.

How Knopf Embraced Torture: The Story So Far

Several years ago, another large N.Y. publisher, Simon & Schuster, gave a 26-year-old “literary bad-boy” a $300,000 advance, rather unwisely as it turns out, to write a novel. This ivy-educated youth, Bret Ellis, eventually turned in a bizarre first-person account of a rich male yuppie who happens to be unbelievably sadistic in torturing and murdering women. Though there were other themes, and a few other victims (one child, one “bum,” one dog), the literally dozens of savagely-detailed, gut-wrenching scenes of sexual tortures and dismemberment of young women were the basic refrain, the “art form” with
which the author had chosen to work. So detailed is the narrative ("It takes very few blows, five or six, to smash her jaw open completely and only two more for her face to cave in on itself") that it reads as a how-to manual, with endless variations in raping and torturing women. The story's rich male hero, who also enjoys watching "rape-slasher" movies on his hi-tech VCR, is never apprehended.

An unsolicited manuscript of this nature would have quite certainly been rejected, but a "serious" novel for which a (non-refundable) $300,000 advance had already been paid was apparently a different matter. The assigned editor, Robert Asahina, saw "no major problems" (later citing the large investment) and asked for only a small, "structural" rewrite. Division president Charles Hayward also saw nothing problematic here. On the authority of these men, the book was accepted and scheduled for publication. But at a Spring, 1990 company meeting, Asahina had to show a sample chapter to the rest of the staff. In the sample, a woman's breasts were hooked to a high-voltage battery and they exploded and burned; in another sequence, a starving, live rat was stuffed into a woman's vagina. Women employees, seeing the text for the first time, were stunned and horrified.

Xeroxes were leaked to feminist groups, the word spread, and *Spy* and *Time* magazines ran advance stories about how misogynist, sadistic and badly-written the book would be. These caught the attention of Simon & Schuster's Board Chairman, Richard Snyder, who then called for and read the manuscript. On November 14, he announced that Simon & Schuster was exercising its legal right not to publish the manuscript it had earlier accepted and paid for, on the grounds of "taste."

The public explanation was a bit lame, but this was obviously an important decision. Within the company, it was a clear rebuke by corporate leadership to Hayward and Asahina for accepting such a manuscript. More importantly, it was a principled statement from a major publisher that sadistic woman-abuse had no place in serious literature. Women's groups and women in publishing collectively breathed a sigh of relief.

Just 48 hours later, however, *American Psycho* found a new sponsor. "Sonny" Mehta, President of Knopf, Inc., a Division of Random House, announced that Knopf's Vintage division would buy and publish the book. "It seems to me appropriate given the immense coverage and curiosity," said Mehta, "that we bring out *American Psycho.*" Mehta had calculated that Knopf could make a nice profit from the "coverage and curiosity." In this decision, Mehta obtained the strong backing of current Random House CEO, Alberto Vitale.

And finally, to underline that Knopf/Vintage was not merely publishing Ellis' work, but actively sponsoring and promoting it, the company announced a five-city author's tour for Ellis to meet the public and read from his book. (Try to picture it: A well-dressed audience nods appreciatively as the tuxedoed author intones: "I slap her hard and hiss "Dumb bitch,' spraying her face with spit but it's covered with so much mace she probably can't even feel it and so I mace her again and then I try to fuck her in the mouth once more but I can't come so I stop.")

Just two days after Simon & Schuster's announcement that this femicide was too repulsive for mainstream publishing, the decision had been effectively reversed.

Mehta, Vitale, and the once-respected Knopf-Random House firm had seen a way to make a windfall profit; Ellis had been rescued from dis-
Women Fight Back

By early December, a letter to Mehta and Vitale from New York feminist leaders Gloria Steinem, Phyllis Chesler, Andrea Dworkin, Merle Hoffman, Kate Millet, Sidney Abbott and others exploded: "We are appalled by your poor taste, bad judgment, and inability to hear what feminists for at least 20 years have been saying about violence toward women, what causes it, and what it causes in return." And within weeks, from the west coast, Los Angeles National Organization for Women president Tammy Bruce announced a national boycott of all Knopf and Vintage publications.

Ms. Magazine editor Robin Morgan joined the boycott, even though her classic Sisterhood Is Powerful has sold over half a million copies as a Random House/Vintage book, and is still selling. "I won't buy Random House titles for the duration of this boycott, and I urge all women, if they want Sisterhood to really be powerful, to do the same," she said. (The boycott has now been officially defined to apply to all Knopf and Vintage titles except those few by feminist writers.)

President Molly Yard and other NOW leaders asked for a discussion meeting with Mehta; Mehta refused to speak with them. "Bret inadvertently offended a certain feminist sensibility..." Mehta explained to the press. In January, 1991 the National Board of NOW voted that the boycott of Knopf "encourages women and men of conscience to protest the massive and unrelenting violence against women." Additional motions applauding the boycott were passed at the NOW Young Feminist Conference, by New York State NOW, and by other feminist groups. The National Organization for Men Against Sexism also strongly endorsed the boycott.

A Look At The Issues

While this brief history makes rather clear what the "sides" are, it does not answer a number of important questions that many have about this action. Isn't boycotting a publishing company rather unusual? What is the actual harm in publishing such a book, even if a lot of women don't like it? Here are some questions and answers about some of the deeper issues behind the Knopf boycott.

Torture In A Book Is Not The Same As Torture In Real Life. What's So Bad About Violence Against Women In Fiction?

At the most obvious level, choosing to seek out, publish, and sponsor an author's
secretly want to be raped." (Much of this scientific research is summarized in Pornography and Sexual Aggression, Malamuth & Donnerstein, Academic Press, 1984.)

So, You Believe That A Book Will Cause Women To Be Assaulted?
No, the facts above don’t necessarily mean that this book will directly cause additional assaults; however, it might. There are often "copy-cat" crimes against women after highly-publicized media portrayals.

The major concern is not that one novel will lead to more abuse in itself, but that it is part of a growing pattern of legitimation and proliferation of "chic" sexual woman-abuse, which has already appeared in fashion photography, Bloomingdale’s catalogs, rock videos, movies made for teenagers, general Hollywood movies, and TV soap operas. Serious fiction is simply the latest frontier for this concentrated misogyny, but it’s a part of a much, much bigger phenomenon that, taken together, contributes to the epidemic of rape and violence. And Knopf has chosen to jump in and make profits from this tragic situation.

But Didn’t Ellis Have The Legal Right To Write Such A Book, and Knopf the Legal Right To Publish It?
Absolutely. Ellis has the right to write anything he wishes, and to publish it himself or submit it to a commercial publisher. A publishing company never has to accept, but has a legal right to accept and publish, whatever it chooses. We have no "censorship," or prior regulation by any governmental authority, of what can be published. Knopf violated no laws.

Then Why Try To Punish Knopf, Just For Choosing To Publish It?
Companies are responsible to the public for what they do. Publishing companies aren’t sacred, they’re corporations which exist to make money. Their future decisions will probably be based on the profitability of current decisions. Like other large corporations, such as Exxon and Union Carbide, they should be held accountable by the public if they are harming society. Women and their supporters have an equal right to express their views in the only language that corporations understand: By choosing not to give Knopf their money.

Is It Legal To Boycott A Publishing Company?
Of course. A consumer boycott of a company or product is a tried and true, typically American, and totally capitalistic form of expression by consumers. Also, the U.S. Supreme Court has clearly held that boycotts are protected by the First Amendment, as a form of political expression.

Won’t All This Backfire And Boost The Sales Of The Book?
Unfortunately, more of these books will probably be sold because of the controversy. Soon after its release, American Psycho hit the NY Times Best Seller list. Literary woman-abuse will be profitable, at least in the short term. However, the boycott is of all Knopf products, not just one book. Over the months to come, the boycott will begin to slowly erode the huge profits made on American Psycho, and to gradually push the total balance of Mehta’s cynical decision into the red.

Can This Boycott Succeed In Changing The Publishing Industry?
Perhaps. We must try to do something about the growing popularity and legitimation of violence against women — to work together as human beings to stop it. In a boycott, time, word of mouth, and publicity become our allies. And, unlike waiting for Congress or the courts to act, a boycott empowers us, as individuals. Many people have felt powerless in recent years to stop the spread and commercial exploitation of sexual violence. We can each resolve for ourselves to not spend our money on books from Knopf and to tell them why.

In my own case, as a college teacher, I discovered that I had been assigning a textbook published by Knopf. The book was quite adequate, but there are good alternatives. Knopf makes a lot of profit from textbooks, and I’ve probably required 300–400 students to buy this text over the years. So I thought: “I’ve just joined the Knopf boycott.” I will no longer buy or ask others to buy any book published by them, and that feels good. In this way I’m adding my economic vote to stop the legitimation of sexual violence.

Now, the obvious conclusion. If you want to buy a book, please check first to see that it’s not from Knopf or Vintage. Freedom of expression isn’t only for corporations; you and I have a right to be heard, too. Let’s just say “NO” to Knopf.

Robert Brannon is a psychologist specializing in sex role research and theory at Brooklyn College CUNY, and is Co-Chair of the Task Force on Pornography for New York State National Organization for Women.

If you really want to be heard, call the two men most responsible and talk it over with them: Sonny Mehta, president of Knopf: (212) 572-2506; or Alberto Vitale, CEO of Random House: (212) 572-2221.
WHY BOYCOTTING BOOKSELLERS IS A BAD IDEA

By Marjorie Heins

The goal of boycotting a bookseller is to suppress, or censor, some literature because of its offensive content, or its poor taste, or both.

Robert Brannon's article ("Torturing Women as Fine Art...") makes an impassioned case for boycotting the publisher of American Psycho. Brannon, like many others horrified by this book, advocates a boycott of all Knopf and Vintage titles, "except those few by feminist writers." Let me suggest some reasons why feminists should think twice about boycotting books.

The Goal is Censorship

A boycott is a powerful economic weapon whose purpose is to punish the target — in this case, for publishing a book — and to deter it and other booksellers from disseminating similar literature in the future. Therefore, the goal of boycotting a bookseller is to suppress, or censor, some literature, because of its offensive content, or its poor taste, or both.

Although censorship by private individuals or groups doesn't raise the same legal questions as government censorship (because the First Amendment only applies to "state action"), it does raise some of the same moral and political questions. Whether done by government or by private individuals, censorship has the same dangerous purpose: To shrink the expressive landscape. Here, the boycotters hope, through economic coercion, to persuade Knopf, and, by example, other publishers and booksellers, to impose an ideological litmus test on works that they consider for sale or publication.

What's wrong with suppressing literature as foul as American Psycho? One problem is that it will be the publishers, not the boycotters, who apply the litmus test. And because there are many other pressure groups in society that wish to impose very different ideological tests, the likely result will be that publishers and booksellers develop censorship apparatus with no clear standards except an inclination to avoid anything controversial. Thus, publishers are as likely to steer clear of homoerotic art or literature, works dealing with sexual abuse in a critical way, or feminist groundbreakers such as Our Bodies, Ourselves, as to censor only those works that the organizers of this boycott would consider unacceptable.

Indeed, part of the problem with ideological tests is that creative works are amenable to such differing interpretations. Andrea Dworkin's Pornography, for example, is chock full of descriptions of sexually-charged violence and perhaps, for censors, difficult to distinguish from literature with similar subject matter but a different message. Likewise, Madonna's sometimes sadomasochistic
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imagery carries a heavy load of sexual and religious meanings. Brannon's article itself contains extensive quotations from the very work he wants to suppress. Who is to decide, in short, whether Andres Serrano's "Piss Christ" is blasphemy or a cry of protest against the commercialization of religion; whether 2 Live Crew's lyrics are deeply misogynist or satirical exaggerations; or whether "Huckleberry Finn" is racist, a protest against racism, or just a great work setting forth the racial and cultural texture of its time? Like Wellek and Minkoff's Essays in Criticism and the Los Angeles novel A Sea Change are other examples of works with sexually violent content but certainly ambiguous themes.

History bears out the view that censorship, seemingly designed to protect women, has often ended up perpetuating sexist stereotypes and depriving women of the freedom to choose what to read, see, and think. Anti-obscenity laws in the United States were used repeatedly to silence Margaret Sanger and suppress the information and views she expressed about birth control.

The fundamental point is that no group should have a monopoly on orthodoxy or the power to decide what ideas are fit for public consumption. Humane, progressive people may be seduced into thinking that if such a power is acknowledged, it will be wielded wisely to shield the public from evil and dangerous ideas. That's not how it usually turns out. The notion behind the First Amendment is that instead of suppressing noxious ideas, we should respond by contesting them, as Justice Louis Brandeis said, "The function not only of evil counsels is good ones." The battle for the hearts and minds of Americans on the issue of sexual violence, as on other urgent feminist issues, will not be won by driving images of rape and torture underground. Indeed, it is only by examining and understanding the images as well as the reality of sexual violence and torture - as Brannon does by quoting American Psycho at some length, as Wellek does in Pornography, and, by analogy, as human rights activists have done in alerting the public to the graphic atrocities of torture worldwide - that we can even talk about the roots of violence and misogyny.

The terms of the boycott, as described by Brannon, dramatize the dilemma created by ideological litmus tests. The boycotters are exempting "feminist" authors. But who will decide whether an author meets that standard? Will there be a list of approved books? And if so, how can an excluded author make a case that he or she should be on it? Once you set yourself up as an arbiter of ideological correctness, you are no different in concept from the American Family Association, the Christian Coalition, or, indeed, the blackлист of the 1960s who published "approved and disapproved" lists of approved and disapproved authors and other artists.

The Argument About Causation

But, it is argued, works like American Psycho and the Savages are different. They do not just depict or advocate horrific crimes, they cause them. Brannon cites "scientific research" to argue that there is (or at least may be) a causative link between images of sexually-charged violence and actual sex crimes. But when examined, the evidence cited does not support the conclusion he tries to draw, as he himself acknowledges.

The studies by Professor Edward Donnerstein, and others that Brannon cites, show at best desensitization, that is, a change in attitude, by small samples of males who are shown sexually violent images in laboratory tests. Brannon omits the fact that the same tests showed the desensitization effect can be remedied by post-experiment "debriefing." Moreover, as Donnerstein has pointed out, it is not the sexuality but the violence that desensitizes, and he has publicly distanced himself from those who misuse his work to promote censorship of sexually explicit material. Donnerstein has written in the December 1984 issue of Films and Filming: "Censorship is not the solution to the problem of sexual violence. Education, however, is a viable alternative."

Finally, even accepting laboratory findings of a link between desensitized attitudes and prolonged exposure to violent material, there is a long distance between attitude and crime, between fantasies of violence and actual violence. Violent imagery saturates modern society, yet most people do not commit violent crimes, including sex crimes. Many personal and cultural factors contribute to violence against women, as experts have observed.

In Japan, for example, pornography is more violent, and violent pornography is more widely available, than in the United States, yet the incidence of rape and other violent crime is lower. Societal factors probably account for the difference.

In short, despite the noisy pronouncements and prefabricated conclusions of the Meese Commission in 1986, no causative relationship between pornography and actual violence has been proven. What studies have shown is that when countries stop suppressing sexually-oriented literature, as in Scandinavia, the rate of sex crimes goes down. And so, eventually does consumption: People become glutted, and ultimately bored, with treatments of sex that are repetitive, grotesque, or unimaginative. By contrast, societies that repress pornography often have a high incidence of violence and discrimination against women.

We should be careful about loose arguments for banning antisocial literature on the theory that it causes crime. In the 1910s and 20s, people went to jail for opposing U.S. entry into World War I or advocating revolutionary social change; the Supreme Court permitted it on the theory that such speech was dangerous and might cause violence or other crimes like draft resistance. In the 1950s, people were sent to jail for advocating communism; the Court linked advocacy and action without requiring proof of direct incitement to crime.

The Supreme Court has since rejected these cases, and our society is freer because of it. Under current First Amendment doctrine, expression cannot be punished or suppressed unless it is proved to incite imminent harm. Without a requirement of such direct causation, Americans could quickly lose their freedom to think, hear, create, and receive information. For any provocative or controversial literature can be viewed as giving people bad ideas and creating dangerous attitudes.

Brannon rightly points out that the publishing industry is commercially motivated. Because selling books is a relatively generous trade, publishers and booksellers are highly vulnerable to pressures from both governmental and private groups. Witness the shocking acquiescence of Waldenbooks a few years ago in removing The Satanic Verses from its stores after Islamic fundamentalists pronounced a death sentence on Salman Rushdie. Record and video store chains have also caved in to pressures to remove material with sexual themes.

We depend on publishers and booksellers to get our messages across. Forcing them into self-censorship won't help.
One word comes to mind after a few minutes in the company of Jane Lazarre: Intense. She speaks slowly, weighing each thought carefully before giving voice to the ideas that inform her writing, her life. Forty-seven, married and the mother of two sons, she is the director of the writing program at the Eugene Lang College of the New School for Social Research in New York City. Her most recent novel, *Worlds Beyond My Control*, has been called "sublime," "a literary adventure," and "wise, brave and enthralling."

Since her first book, *The Mother Knot*, was published in 1976, Lazarre has been writing about the relationship between motherhood and society. "Of course, mothers are generally obsessed with their children since they are completely responsible for their welfare," she says. "Finally, there's a developing literature on this: Sarah Ruddick's *Maternal Thinking* and novels like *Beloved*. There's so much to pull apart. What it means to be so completely responsible for the life of another. How it's affected by the lack of social support and the dominant discourse on motherhood that makes us feel even more responsible than we are."

In *Worlds Beyond My Control*, Julia, the protagonist, is obsessed with being a good mother to her children. "She's obsessed with how to bridge gender and racial differences [Julia is white, Jewish; her sons are Black] while still feeling more connected to these people than to anyone else in the world. She is obsessed with writing and not writing, what it means to have a family and a home in the face of so much homelessness."

Anxious, obsessed, sad — all are emotions Lazarre acknowledges both in the novel and in her life. "The problem is that obsession in relation to women is often used as an insult. Most writers are obsessive. Julia is a writer."

So who is Julia? Who is Jane? Where does one begin and the other end? Or does it matter?

"I've written and worked in autobiography all my working and writing life," she says. In *Worlds Beyond My Control*, "I was working with my own life very clearly. There is no attempt to disguise the fact that Julia is me, yet, I was trying to write about the relationship between autobiography and fiction in women writers' work, and this Julia — an imaginary character — can never be completely me."

The conflicts leave women, Lazarre believes, feeling like outsiders. "That sense of being an outsider has permeated women's fiction for hundreds of years. I think that's why women writers have always been involved with autobiography."

Lazarre suddenly stops speaking. Then, just as abruptly, she smiles and paraphrases poet Muriel Rukeyser: What would happen if women told the truth about their lives? The world would split open.

"I have been a passionate reader all my life. I've always read for meaning in my life. But when I became a mother, I realized no one had prepared me emotionally. I was almost in love with my baby, but I was also lonely, confused and isolated."

Then several things happened. "The tension of women working and women mothering, the tremendous struggle to learn and be able to say 'I have no control over this. I cannot manage this.' There is a tremendous demand on women to manage so much in the face of an often hostile world, to make a home for others, to find work which is creative and self-expressive. This demand takes a tremendous toll. Many women are doing brilliantly, yet we all fall apart at times or are paying a terrible internal price for it," she says.

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at the time of my first child's birth, in 1969, I formed a group with five new
mothers in New Haven, where I was living in married-student housing while
my husband went to Yale. None of the women were early feminists, nor
mothers. There was an anti-mother crit-
tique, but I felt supported, enabled by
women who were early feminists were
my husband went to Yale. None of the
women's lives, sexually, in terms of work.
feminism and the whole analysis of
mothers. There was an anti-mother cri-
1969. I started a group with five new
intellectual life. It still is. My relation-
It was extremely important, definitive in
writing from women writers. I never went
school for writing, but I've studied
Doris Lessing, Tillie Olsen, Toni
Morrison, Virginia Woolf and Charlotte
Bronte. These five are enormous influ-
tances. I teach students about these
women. But there was no voice for what
we new call the 'subjectivity of the mother. '
Eventually, I found that voice in Tillie
Olsen and Grace Paley. They had tremen-
dous impact on me. I realized my
experience of motherhood had been felt
before and that the experience of mother-
hood could be a literary theme."

When Lazarre, her husband and son
moved back to their city of origin,
New York, in 1971, she became a
freelance writer. One article,
co-authored with Rachel Cowan and pub-
lished in the Village Voice, argued
that motherhood and feminism were
compatible, essentially related: "Out
of that I got a few letters," Lazarre
recalls, "telling me that I should write
a book about this. I wrote a few cha-
acters, a memoir on motherhood, which
became The Mother Knot. " It was criti-
cally acclaimed and widely read.

This effort was followed by two other
works, a collection of autobiographical
essays, On Loving Men, and a novel,
Some Kind of Innocence.

"In The Mother Knot, I wanted to tell
people about the experience of mother-
hood, to write what it was really like.
Later, I wanted to explore sexuality, the
relationship made conscious by the
women's movement between autonomy
and sexuality. On Loving Men was vali-
died, that a woman would write about
sexuality so openly. Men reviewed it and
read it only as a woman writing about her
sex life, whereas I was trying to explore
the relationship between sexuality and
autonomy. The response was very strong. It
was my first experience with negative,
contemplative reviews, and it took me a
long time to publish again. Partly, I wasn't
ready to take the risk, but at the same
time the industry changed. It was the
late 1970s and the conglomerates were
beginning to form and a lot of women
writers were finding it very hard to pub-
lish. There was a tremendous backlash
towards women, especially feminist
women writers."

This confluence of factors led Lazarre
into the classroom, first as an adjunct
professor at Yale and City College, then
later at the New School.

While adjuncting, Lazarre started writ-
ing The Powers of Charlotte "It was a
rebirth for me, a book not bound by the
facts of my life, but about my life in a way
I'd never written before, a real story in
the sense that I wasn't trying to bring
autobiography and fiction together, some-
thing which had obsessed me and still
does. The characters are not really my
family, even though it comes out of my
pressures. I try to write out of my
politics. There's a politics to mother-
hood that I try to write about, as Sarah
Ruddick puts it, the politics of remem-
bering."

Many women are
doing brilliantly, yet
we all fall apart at
times or are paying
a terrible internal
price for it

life, my growing up in the left, a child of
a father in the Communist Party."

But there is one area of the book in
which truth and fiction merged. Char-
lotte, like Jane, lost her mother when
she was a very young child, and spent
much of her childhood, adolescence
and teen years longing for a relation-
ship she could not know. "I was seven
when my mother died. Emily, my sis-
ter, was four. My mother was sick for
many years. We watched her die. It
took me at least four books to write
that out of my system. I spent my
entire adulthood longing for a mother.
There were aunts, a stepmother, but
it was not the same. No one could
replace her. I was given a lot. I got a
lot of attention, but my life has been
defined by this central loneliness. My
own dedication to my children comes out of this loss."

Lazarre's experience — as a mother
who has never been a mother's daugh-
ter — frames her life, her personality.
But Lazarre is not one to get caught
up in exclusively personal concerns.
"At the heart of my life, at the heart of
my words, to affect history with a
spark flung into a pile of dry rubble, it is
possible to hope to soar.

"I wanted to control the world with
my words, to affect history with a
sentence perfectly framed. If I wrote
well enough, I thought, the world
would see me, hear my meaning; my
dead parents might hear me and know
me perfectly at last."

Julia, the Jewish protagonist of Worlds
Beyond My Control is, like Jane Lazarre
herself, a teacher, a mother and a writer.
Her agony and anguish — in the face of
racism, warming, poverty and per-
sonal frailty — forms the core of this
exceptionally moving, if at times obser-
vative, novel.

While words are Julia's stock-in-trade,
she has for the moment, ceased to write.
Troubled by the impending loss of her
oldest son to a foreway college, she is
slowly scrutinizing the many aspects of
her life. Her marriage, her friendships,
her sexual longings, her upbringing and
career goals, all are studied in meticu-
rous detail. So, too, are her dreams for
the two Black sons she has nurtured into
manhood.

Duel needs, dual impulses — to dig or-
to, to dominate or ignore, to silence or
urge boys-now-men to scream at the
heels of their lungs, a rage within Julia.
Can she be a good mother? Can she be a
devoted, loyal friend? Can she be honest
with others and true to herself? Can she
be politically progressive without reini-
quishing her hold on comfort and
security? Or must she lapse into over-
whelming sadness, unable to climb
the rungs of emotional self-possession
and safety?

The honesty with which Lazarre
grapples with these dilemmas and po-
tential dilemmas is haunting, born of
Chinua Achebe's injunction to "break the
silence about difficult things."

And this is a difficult, painful novel.
While Lazarre's language is precise and
often beautiful, her anger and inscrut-
able worry make the book tough going for
those of us with similar concerns. Like a
spark flung into a pile of dry rubble, it is
possible to hope to soar.

But this is also the book's strength, for
in holding a looking glass to persistent
conflicts, it opens our eyes and hearts to
new possibilities. In the end, there is only
one rational conclusion: Should Julian
 triumph, we too can hope to soar.
Jill was four months pregnant when she and Alex arrived in The Bahamas for a winter vacation. The Islands, a mere 50 miles off Florida’s east coast, provide an almost picture-perfect vacation milieu: Radiant sun, sparkling water, glistening beaches, an incredible choice of activities. The first few days couldn’t have been better, but Friday, after lunch, Jill doubled over with sharp abdominal pains. The frightened couple rushed to find a doctor. A kindly cab driver steered them to Doctors’ Hospital, a private facility in Nassau, the capital city.

Emergency Room personnel summoned an obstetrician who prodded and poked and recommended an overnight stay for tests. "Before you check in," he said, "the hospital requires a $2,000 deposit. Don’t worry, we accept all major credit cards."

Tests revealed a small ovarian cyst but no malignancy. Twenty-four hours later the pain had subsided and Alex and Jill returned to their seaside apartment.

Later, Jill said she had nothing but praise for both hospital and doctor, but admitted the demand for a $2,000 deposit and a $980 bill for her overnight stay were a shock. "We are Canadians. Had that emergency happened in Canada, the cost to us would have been free because Medicare covers the majority of medical services and is paid for by income and other taxes."

But Alex and Jill were lucky. Bahamian health care is a two-tier system and the cab driver had steered them to the top tier where patients with money receive immediate hospital admission, early surgery and therapy. Had the cab taken them to the nearby Princess Margaret, the largest public hospital in The Bahamas, Jill might have waited hours to see a doctor or find an empty bed.

The enormous obstacles impeding good health care for 250,000 Bahamians have not been overcome by an annual expenditure of $90 million. The population spreads over 29 islands; at least a third live in homes without electricity or running water, and 10 doctors and 1.5 dentists strain to care for each 10,000 people.

"Doctors cannot deliver adequate care when they attend more than 40 patients a day," says one official. "Under such conditions health education, maintenance and preventive care are largely ignored."

Bahamians, like people the world over, are addicted to unhealthy life styles: Indiscriminate eating, lack of exercise, cigarettes and excessive alcohol consumption. Twenty percent have high blood pressure and elevated cholesterol levels. Alcohol and drug-related problems represent more than one-third of all admissions to the only psychiatric facility in the country.

As long as a decade ago, the country’s health system was severely overtaxed; now, with rampant drug abuse and AIDS, the system seems stretched to capacity. The ratio of AIDS infection is said to equal that of New York and San Francisco, and is not only killing men but impacting on mothers and babies. Concerned people shake their heads as they say, "We have lost a whole generation of our children to drugs."

The Ministry of Health has now singled out women and children for priority care, that care delivered through a network of 119 hospitals, clinics and health centers. There is at least one such center on every island that is accessible by road.

A NICE PLACE TO VISIT, BUT...

By Irene Davall

PHOTO: F. M. KEARNEY/IMPACT VISUALS
inhabited island. Nearly 6,000 babies are born annually; one-fourth to unmarried mothers and 32 percent to teenagers. Young women who plan to clean or smoke or drink during pregnancy often bear sick babies, contributing heavily to a high infant mortality rate. Six years ago that rate was 36 per 1,000 births. An aberration says one official. 1985-86 coincided with the cocaine epidemic and AIDS infection; still 1986 saw infant mortality fall to 21.4, a sizable reduction. But, add perinatal and neonatal deaths, and the rate jumps to 53 per 1,000 births, a tragedy since improved prenatal care and prevention of accidents in the home could reduce the rate quickly and cheaply.

Bahamas Planned Parenthood Association (BPP)

Six years ago the Association opened its doors; today it owns a building in Nassau which houses a national headquarters and the government's clinic. At the invitation of Patricia Francis, the Executive Director, I visited the BPP one February afternoon. Colorful posters decorated a large, bright, cheerful reception area: Today's Woman Plans for Tomorrow; Don't Blame Us For Teenage Pregnancy — Tell Us How To Avoid It; Sex Education Teaches Us About Our Values, Our Bodies, Our Future.

Posted near the check-in counter, a list of services and fee scales reminds patients that services are free only to proven hardship cases. The clinic services over 10,000 clients annually: 4-5,000 are repeat visits.

The annual budget of $259,500 does not stretch to staffing government clinics but the Association sells contraceptives to the Health Ministry and offers counseling and education programs for schools, civic organizations and corporate employers.

Abortion

Abortion is as ambiguous as it was in the States before Roe v. Wade. A young, single mother said “I don’t think it is legal but I really don’t know. If I wanted an abortion I would fly to Miami where it’s legal and not very expensive.” A male newspaper reporter said: “I don’t know, but I think it is illegal. I don’t know any woman who has had one.”

The newspaper margins have no chippings on abortion, but at the library I paid dirt. Although some articles were several years old, they doubtless describe today’s situation accurately.

“Abortion is slowly becoming an accepted household word,” wrote Dorothy Frank in 1976. “The new trend among young unwed mothers is to sit and decide whether or not to have the child is indicative of liberation of Bahamian female attitudes...Although there are no actual statistics because the act is not legal, it has been estimated that more than 50 percent of all pregnancies end in abortion in Nassau. If abortion should become legalized here, the question of increased promiscuity, population control and women’s liberation will be some of the major issues facing our society.”

An article dated 1981 claimed one in every five pregnancies on New Providence (home of half the Islands’ people) ends in therapeutic abortion and the rate of abortion in 1980 tripled the number of those recorded in 1976. Abortions account for almost 26 percent of all gyn procedures and over 12 percent of all surgical procedures. These are perhaps the first and second most common surgical procedures done in Princess Margaret Hospital.

Patricia Francis at BPP said: “It is illegal, but that is not the complete answer. Abortions are performed in family planning clinics and some women do not raise the question in those clinics. When a woman asks, we give her options: Go to a government clinic or to a private physician. Some doctors do abortions, others do not. The Bahamas prides itself on being a Christian nation; sex outside marriage is considered bad. I don’t expect to see legalized abortion in my lifetime.”

Double Trouble

Drug abuse and AIDS are the double trouble clogging good health delivery. The Islands are transshipment points between South American producers and North American consumers. As one would expect, drugs which “fall off the ships” in considerable quantities are sold and consumed on the Islands. The exact amount is unknown, but 56 to 60 new cases of cocaine abuse are treated every 90 days.

Because of opportunistic infections, multiple hospital admissions and long treatment periods, the AIDS epidemic has had a devastating effect on health delivery. “Overall, the average number of admissions for AIDS has been three per week, but hospitalizations of two to three weeks are not unusual and one patient stayed three months.”

In general, males are AIDS-infected almost twice as commonly as females, but most infected women are childbearing age and engaged in high-risk behaviors: Intra-venous drug use, unprotected intercourse with IV drug-using men, prostitution, or prostitution for drugs without protecting safe sex.

Saman began using drugs at 12 and became sexually active at 12. At 13 she asked the clinic for treatment. Because of the perceived association between drugs and promiscuity, the doctor screened her for AIDS, found her HIV positive and dubbed her “double trouble.” Saman could only give first names of her sexual contacts and didn’t know their addresses. Her mother, a single parent, has three other children who abuse drugs.

Janet, a 25-year-old woman, had two children by her first boyfriend. After they broke up she had one child by a second man. The baby died shortly after its birth in 1983. Janet got pregnant by a third partner and had another baby who was admitted to the hospital at eight months for “failure to thrive” and several episodes of gastrointestinal. In 1985 the child was found to be HIV positive and died.

“We have a third generation of AIDS victims as infected mothers pass the disease on to their babies,” declared a member of the Task Force on AIDS. The Task Force, established four years ago, believes it is making some headway against the epidemic as the population gets more informed.

What is the future?

Newspaper headlines often tell financing the greatest health care problem in the country, but The Ministry lists some impressive achievements as indicators of their progress:

- 34 new nurses graduated in one year;
- Nurses are taking advanced training in midwifery both locally and abroad.
- Those who believe early education is the best, perhaps the only, solution are delighted with new Family Life Education Classes mandated in all grades since September 1980. Blessed by the Anglican Bishop, the courses are endorsed by most churches. Taught by nurses and homeroom teachers, the classes teach students about health issues, drugs, life skills and family planning. With over 60,000 students enrolled in more than 200 schools, these classes should have considerable impact in a year or two.
- Another hopeful indicator is the number of women enrolled in colleges. “Over the years women allowed themselves to be used sexually with near-disaster results, but now attitudes are changing mainly due to better education,” says Patricia Francis of BPP. More women than men are studying at the college level. Females outnumber males in classes in business, English and law.

Two decades ago Betty Friedan commented that young women “...only need a little more experience to understand that the goal issues of this revolution involve employment and education and new social institutions. Who can doubt women’s liberation will work near miracles in The Bahamian Islands, one of the more beautiful places on earth?”

For the past 24 years, Irene Davall has spent three weeks of each winter in a yoga retreat in The Bahamas.
BY PEACEFUL MEANS

An Interview With Ellen Moore

By Susan Bristol-Howard

Sixteen years ago Ellen Moore traveled to California to visit friends and recover from a painful divorce. The morning after she arrived, she and her friends went out with the United Farm Workers to picket a mushroom grower. It was that event that helped her realize, and set the course for, her future.

Two weeks later, Ellen walked into the Amnesty International (AI) office in San Francisco to begin work as a volunteer. The route she subsequently followed had led her to the forefront of the human rights movement. Ellen Moore is currently co-coordinator of Amnesty International's United States Urgent Action Network (UA).

A confirmed believer in nonviolence, she chose Amnesty because of its commitment to human rights and peaceful change. For 16 years Moore has championed that agenda, shaping the Urgent Action Network into a powerful counter to governments that willfully violate, both publicly and privately, the basic rights of their citizens.

The Urgent Action Network deals with situations that require immediate intervention. Each day, the UA office receives telegrams from Amnesty's London headquarters — messages that bring news of human rights violations that could result in unjust imprisonment, torture, or death to the accused. For the most part, those affected are unknown to the world, peasants and ordinary citizens caught in the middle of a harsh political situation.

Without the intervention of Ellen Moore and her Urgent Action co-workers, these people might never be able to enjoy family, friends, or freedom again. Within hours of receiving the telegrams, she sends thousands of telegrams to government officials of the offending country. The bottom line request is consistent: immediate release for prisoners of conscience and humane treatment, due process, proper diet and medical care, and access to family for all prisoners, whatever their alleged crimes. In other words, she demands adherence to international standards of decency.

Despite the fact that Amnesty deals with more cases involving men, the "crimes" of men and women are not substantially different. In truth, more political activists are men who manage to run afoul of their governments, a reflection of the reality, Ellen claims, that has been true from 1975 through the present.

She does not believe, however, that there is any male bias in the way cases are handled by Amnesty International and the Urgent Action office. In fact, sympathy for women's concerns runs strong within the organization and there is a move, at least in the United States, to highlight particular cases involving women. They are not all that difficult to find, especially these days. In areas of the world such as South Africa and Central and Latin America, women are taking to the streets to demonstrate against their governments. They are leading meetings and running organizations that actively promote anti-government sentiment.

It is these women, the highly visible activists, who face the most immediate threats to their safety. Although many cultures will not execute women, torture is routinely practiced in the forms of rape and mutilation of female prisoners. Often a woman's only crime is belonging to an ethnic group currently being harassed, or being married to an opposition leader.

A staunch feminist, Ellen Moore has added her voice to the many others who argue that it is valid to use the concerns of feminist groups to call attention to the plight of women. To involve people in specific issues and move them toward a more general theme allows for a broader base of support for human rights organizations like AI. This is essential since membership can ebb and flow with the times and the issues. The organization, however, must be able to stay its course even if individuals within it cannot.

The death penalty is a classic example. Amnesty is opposed to the death penalty because, in principle, murdering someone is the most inhumane act one can commit. Such a position inadvertently creates the confusion misconception that the desire to eliminate the death penalty is equivalent to condoning hardened criminals.

Once again, Ellen Moore is not beleaguered by that apparent dichotomy. She has the unique ability to separate the basic philosophical issues from individual actions. She defends principles, not defendants or victims. The basic tenants of human rights and dignity guide her. And although she, like the group for which she works, opposes the death penalty, Moore is fully aware of the need to punish offenders.

Moore assumes that the work she does makes an impact, although there are so few tangible shreds of evidence to confirm it. After all, not many governments, publicly accused of torturing and murdering its citizens, will openly admit to being influenced or pressured by peaceful human rights groups like Amnesty International. But she is able to stay involved by believing in what she does and continuing on the course that she has followed intuitively for a decade and a half.

Relaxed and possessing a gentle sense

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Less than 10 years ago, requests to patent animals wouldn’t have challenged the ethical and intellectual beliefs of scientists, politicians, philosophers and religious leaders.

Rapid advances in our ability to manipulate genetic material, however, have sparked interest in the commercial uses of living organisms. The “invention” of bacteria to gobble up the debris of oil spills triggered the movement and led to a 1980 decision by the U.S. Supreme Court that a live, human-made microorganism is patentable.

The debate over whether to permit such patenting goes beyond simple legal questions on [the humanness of] animal welfare. It involves the appropriateness of biotechnology itself and other ethical issues, such as the morality of creating novel organisms by transferring genetic information between species.

The “invention,” after all, is alive, although not human. Thus far the practice has resulted in efforts to amend the patent code and has fostered serious public policy discussions and debate on how old laws can come to terms with new technology.

Animal manipulation is a reality. So is patenting such animals. The question, therefore, isn’t just one of “is it right to alter non-human life,” but “if we do alter non-human life forms, is it right to patent the manipulation?” In 1988, following another broad decision that ruled polyploid oysters were patentable, Harvard University received an animal patent on a genetically engineered mouse that contained a cancer-causing gene, now known as the “Harvard mouse.” It was the last animal patent issued, although approximately 100 other animal patents are awaiting approval.

Whereas the oyster passed unnoticed, the mouse caused a stir, though perhaps, for the wrong reasons. Animal manipulation, scientists point out, was practiced by farmers for thousands of years under the guise of animal husbandry, implying that new technology, like genetic manipulation, simply speeds up the process.

Patenting, then, stands as the new kink in husbandry, and the one most debatable and controllable.

Congress enacted the first patent act in 1790, and has updated or reinterpreted it ever since. The Patent Act of 1952 clearly stated that “anything under the sun that is made by man” was patentable, but the U.S. Supreme Court has held that laws of nature, physical phenomena and abstract ideas are not patentable. Thus, patent laws, to say nothing of animal rights, can be subject to interpretation.

Before 1980, the Patent and Trademark Office (PTO) wouldn’t consider granting patents for “inventions” involving microscopic living entities because they were considered “laws of nature.” During this period, though, patents were given to certain food yeast compositions, vaccines, insecticides and dairy products that contained living things. Yet, in the eyes of the public, these “things,” like the oyster, didn’t resemble animals as we generally think of them.

Ronald R. Garet, professor of law and religion at the Law Center, University of Southern California, wonders how human beings can lay claim to any animal. He reflects on farm-style animal husbandry, but points out that it occurred on such a small scale and over such a long period, that “our powers were hidden from us.”

“When you look at the goats and pigs of medieval farms, they are nothing like nowadays. But when this evolution took place over a long time frame, no one would have had the arrogance to believe they could capture it for his or her family or themselves. Someone who had an abil—

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Hardly. In a clarion call for race and class inclusivity and a radical approach to organizing for female — indeed human — liberation, she exhorts us to agitate for what we want, not what we think we can get. “Our demands,” she writes, “should be nothing short of everything we need for every woman’s freedom.”

Here, here. The essays that follow Gerber Fried’s cogent introduction help lead the way. Organizers, well-known and little-known, discuss and offer differing viewpoints on some of the most salient and urgent issues confronting the reproductive rights and women’s movements.

There’s Angela Davis, whose “Racism and Reproductive Rights,” provides a stunning, if bitter, reminder that under slavery “abortions and infanticides were acts of desperation...Most of these women, no doubt, would have expressed their deepest resentment had someone hailed abortions as a stepping stone toward freedom.”

There’s attorney/activist Rhonda Cope- lon on the limitations of the “privacy” argument. “To protect a right to choose without assuring the social conditions necessary to foster an autonomous choice provides equality of opportunity in form but not in fact. Worse, this idea of privacy obscures the necessity for public responsibility to bring (social) transformation about.”

And, there’s Cynthia Peters’, “Every Sperm is Sacred,” a look at creative tactics employed from Atlanta to Boston to challenge Operation Rescue and other misogynist movements. Like virtually every contributor to the book, Peters calls upon us to adopt a multi-issue agenda. “Legal abortion does not stop sterilization abuse; it does not affirm the reproductive freedom of gays and lesbians; it alleviates the middle-class woman’s fear of unwanted pregnancies; but it does not address the fears of those who cannot afford abortions; it brings a degree of sexual liberation to the heterosexual prac-

ticing vaginal intercourse, but does not give us daycare, a lower infant mortality rate, safe contraceptives, or men who take responsibility for parenting.”

There’s even poetry. One particularly moving poem, “Before Roe v. Wade” by Sharon Cox, tells the harrowing tale of a nine-year-old child’s brush with the illegal procedure. In fact, a whole section of *From Abortion to Reproductive Freedom* deals with the past, calling up, again and again, the “bad old days” of back-alleys, sterilization abuse, and death from self-induced acts. “Just Call Jane,” by a former member of the “Jane” collective, recounts the evolution of one group’s effort to assist women pre-Roe. Women, it reminds us, can be trained to perform abortions safely, effectively and inexpensively.

Laura Punnert, in “The Politics of Menstrual Extraction,” offers a bold challenge to the powers that be: If abortion is recriminalized, women will again learn to do the procedures and bail their sisters out of unwanted pregnancies.

Other sections of the book discuss the impact of AIDS on a reproductive rights agenda and look at questions of disability as criteria for abortion. The efficacy of RU 486, the so-called abortion pill, is also addressed, and debates over mandatory drug and alcohol testing of pregnant women, and the imposition of forced medical treatment on them, are aired, if not resolved.

Women’s complex reactions to motherhood, choice, abortion and sexuality are fodder for Gerber Fried’s comprehensive analysis. As a result, *From Abortion to Reproductive Freedom* provides us with the tools we need to craft a meaningful reproductive rights agenda and build the coalitions we have given lip service to for nearly 20 years.

The bottom line, that U.S. women have terminated more than 26 million pregnancies since 1973, should jolt us into action. Women, for a host of reasons, will exercise reproductive control whether it is legal or not. But abortion is not the be-all and end-all. It is simply one essential element of the liberation we clamor for.

—Eleanor J. Bader

**THE NATION 1865-1990 by Katrina Vanden Heuval**

*The Nation 1865-1990* is an anthology of articles selected by editor Katrina Vanden Heuval as “representative of the Nation spirit.” By this she seems to mean the spirit of critical journalism, *The Nation* is not an attempt to show us history through the eyes of the magazine, nor is it an attempt to trace the historical development of a particular political philosophe. It is an eclectic collection of writings dealing with topics that range from Russian film to Hell’s Angels.

The fact that Vanden Heuval does not impose a methodical history on the articles is one of the strengths of the book. Instead, each piece stands by itself. The haphazard fashion of *The Nation*, in which the fall of Joe Louis is treated with the same urgency as the Spanish Civil War and the rise of fascism, gives the reader a glimpse into the contemporary mind in a way that histories never do.

But the book is more than this. It is a reflection on the tradition of critical thought in journalism. Many of the articles are ahead of the mainstream press by several decades. In 1941 we have I.F. Stone writing about corruption in government military spending. In 1964 we have Edgar Snow writing about Ho Chi Minh. In 1967 we have Jack Newfield’s critique of the hippie generation.

Jean-Paul Sartre’s article “Americans and Their Myths” may be more relevant today than when it was written in 1947. In it he states that “There is a myth of equality...There is a myth of liberty... There is an...insane love of gadgets.” How little has changed in the 44 years since he wrote. We still have not accepted the falsity of our democracy, the hypocrisy of our economics, and our love of gadgets has taken on new and terrible meaning in the form of “smart” weapons and video war.

These realizations make the collection somewhat depressing. It is disheartening that so much insightful writing has somehow taken on new and terrible meaning in the form of “smart” weapons and video war.

The articles on the abortion issue continue this tradition. In the face of an onslaught of right-wing hyperbole about the morality of abortion, Alice Walker responds with a biting condemnation of the men who champion the “Right to Life” in “What Can the White Man...Say to the Black Woman?”

Finally, *The Nation 1865-1990* is important simply because of the quality of the writing. It forms a kind of reference book of critical journalism which is at once useful and entertaining.

—Dylan Riley

Dylan Riley is a history student at the New School for Social Research.
COLLECTING SOULS, GATHERING DUST:
The Struggles of Two American Artists, Alice Neel and Rhoda Medary by Gerald L. Belcher and Margaret L. Belcher (Paragon Press, NY; $22.95 hardcover)

Alice Neel was a painter's painter until international validation in 1974. The retelling of her life was guest Rhoda Medary, for back in the 1920s, the two had become friends while studying at the Philadelphia School of Design for Women. At that time, the recognized star was Rhoda, with awards and a Fellowship for European study. Her hold portraiture also used broad brush strokes and an original outlining technique. After graduating, Rhoda invited Alice and another student to her bohemian atelier. The three lived and breathed painting. Then, their paths diverged. Lives differ at this vector: Neel paints, Medary marries and stops. And therein hangs the theme of Collecting Souls, Gathering Dust. Gerald and Margaret Belcher create a collage depicting the struggles of the two. The book is sectioned: Daughters, Artists, Choices and Triumphs. It's a fine concept, but it promises more than it delivers. From title onward, it pits rather than presents Neel's art against Medary's life. The background of controlling mothers, mailings, social circles and challenges are candidly tracked. Alice Neel painted in spite of despair and turbulence. She painted huge, outside portraits, utilized the black outline, pioneered genres of pregnant nude and exposed figures by snowing the effects of life upon one's living it. When fortune finally smiled, Neel's radical body of work was extensive. Isolation seems Rhoda's watchword through her husband Ben's silence and final suicide. Like grasshopper and ant, the spirited Neel and the dispirited Medary become models for someone else's moral. The Belchers do not seem to let facts speak. They skew evidence. Consider the report on Rhoda's husband:

Ben committed suicide in March 1963, on a Saturday, just as the daffodils in the back garden displayed their yellow promise of new life. He shot himself in the head in the third floor bedroom that had become his refuge from everything in the world that pursued him. He left no note and waited until Rhoda was away for a weekend, the very first time she had left the house overnight by herself. Or these quotes:

Rhoda: "I wanted to be the wife and mother that I had not seen in my family life." And the reprise: "What a waste for I was not a good mother or wife and I could have been a fine artist."

Alice: "I decided to paint the human comedy — much as Balzac had done in literature. I have painted 'El Barrio' in Puerto Rican Harlem. I painted the neurotic, the used and the raisable. Also, I painted the others, including some squares. I am a collector of souls."

The title and the work somehow make Alice Neel the figure and Rhoda Medary, the ground. The reader bristles at such judgment. Two similarly gifted women with choices and end results, what a good comparison it might have been if the same yardstick were used.

Chronicling the struggles of two talented women would offer clues to, not political solutions of, their lives. The factor is just that, the unknown and compelling mystery. The reader never quite understands how one artist survived to declare the self's ultimate truth, "I am good at what I do. I have the right to be doing it." Tracing any path to autonomy is still a brilliant idea and Neel's awaits its cartographer.

Claire M. Curtin

Claire M. Curtin is a poet and playwright with a special interest in art. She lives in New York City.

Winged Words: American Indian Writers Speak by Laura Cohall (University of Nebraska Press; $22.50 hardcover)

"...we always like to say, the women are tougher and rougher and live longer so chances are we'll live to tell our version, because we all know that there are different versions."

Winged Words is a series of interviews with prominent Native American authors. Differences are the focal point of many of the interviews, revealing the disjuncture between herstory and history, the multicultural richness that is Native American experience.

The common threads which weave their way through these interviews are the tradition of storytelling, the necessity of self-definition, the importance of both the female and male of a people, and Native American multicultural bounty.

The tradition of storytelling is addressed by both female and male writers. It is universally stressed that there is a difference in the storytelling (writing) of women and men. It is the story itself that is of prime importance to women and it is the manipulation of words that intrigues men. This knowledge does not negate the importance of words or story to the opposite sex. It is, rather, an acknowledgment of differences in experiences, each being seen as equally important in the development of whole cultures, and of societies. It is the recognition of the traditions of women and the traditions of men, with the awareness that they are not meant to be the same, that together creates the story of a people. But it is through storyteller's written or oral renderings that people define themselves. It is an often neglected form of empowerment, to be able to say "Look, this is who I really am."

The storyteller as historian is examined. Paula Allen's account of the changes that have occurred in the lives of Native American women also reflects in the changes that have contributed to the reconstruction of Native American culture. A shift has taken the female from positions of real respect and value in woman-centered (women-identified) cultures, to the present position of powerlessness and worthlessness that has come with the introduction of patriarchal following contact with Europeans. The low

From Labor Publications

The Mark Curtis Hoax

How the Socialist Workers Party Tried to Dupe the Labor Movement

Martin McLaughlin

Examines the case against Mark Curtis, a leading member of the Socialist Workers Party who has been convicted and jailed for the rape of a 15-year-old black high school student in Des Moines, Iowa. The SWP claims that Curtis was the victim of a frame-up, although he was arrested inside the victim's home after her 11-year-old brother called the 911 emergency number. Both children testified at his trial.

This book makes a detailed examination of the trial transcript, compares the Curtis defense campaign to those waged on behalf of genuine frame-up victims and shows that the SWP campaign is a fraud. The author, Martin McLaughlin, editor of the Bulletin, the weekly newspaper of the Workers League, attended Curtis's trial and interviewed the victim's family. The Mark Curtis Hoax is 253 pages with index, photographs and appendices reproducing condemnations of the Curtis hoax by labor, civil rights and women's rights activists.

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of the female in Native American religion illustrates the extent of cultural deterioration. This damaged portion of Native religion is also alluded to in an interview with Simon Ortiz. Ortiz comes from a matriarchal society that, even though it has been influenced by patriarchy, still holds onto its female-centeredness.

Laura Erick, Michael Dorris, N. Scott Momaday, Linda Hogan, Joy Harjo, Wendy Rose, James Welch and Leslie Silko all speak of the critical importance for Native Americans to define themselves as a people. It is necessary for the female to define herself as a woman, with knowledge of the power and beauty that it entails, and there is a need for men to focus less on the externally imposed, more on the attainable, realistic, human definitions of who they are. In redefining the self as opposed to allowing outsiders to define Native peoples in western European, patriarchal terms) the female, through the empowerment of self-definition, becomes reintroduced into Native religion and culture and a people will again rise from within themselves.

It is through the female that we are given a sense of non-linear time and the belief that “common ground” comes out of the respect and acknowledgement of differences, and from the knowledge that we are a part of a much larger whole, and only a part. Leslie Silko illustrates this point most succinctly by trying to reconcile the western concepts of time (the here and now; when you are here it’s right now, and when you are gone you no longer exist) and the knowledge that there is a place and a space-time that exists, whether we are born into it or not. Leslie Silko describes women’s influence and place in Native culture by illustrating the circular (non-linear) concept of time and space as the cultural recognition of woman as “physically and electrically” more in touch with the earth.

Strikingly, the male voices echo the female. Men’s stories are different in the particulars that are highlighted, but men’s experiences and traditions are different from women’s. These differences are not viewed as being in opposition but rather as creating the balance that is life.

—Christina Kiss

Christina Kiss, member of the Blackfoot Nation, is the Action Vice President of NYC NOW.

THE U.S. INVASION OF PANAMA: The Truth Behind Operation "Just Cause" (South End Press, Boston, MA; $25 hardcover, $10 paperback)

As I write this, hundreds of Kurds a day are dying in Northern Iraq, and the Gulf War is fresh in everyone’s mind. In comparison, the U.S. invasion of Panama (December, 1989) seems somewhat distant. In terms of lives lost — less than 5000 compared to perhaps a quarter of a million — as well as economic damage, they are not equivalent. Yet, this book is important on two counts: It helps show the breadth of Panamanian suffering, and it demonstrates that the invasion was a testing ground for the U.S.’s “new world order.” This fact is the more chilling because the book was written before the Gulf War.

Certainly the suffering of the Panamanian people deserves attention in its own right. Several thousand people, most of them poor or working-class civilians, were killed by the bombing and gunfire. Nationalists opposed in this attack on Panamanian sovereignty, and other progressive activists from many organizations, were arrested, kidnapped and tortured; many were killed.

The Commission of Inquiry on the U.S. Invasion of Panama, the author of this report, argues persuasively that President Bush’s justifications for the invasion — protecting U.S. lives, defending the Panama Canal, restoring democracy and ending drug trafficking — were pretenses. The real motivation was to overturn the 1977 Torrijos-Carter treaties restoring control of the canal to Panama in the year 2000, and therefore to ensure continued U.S. military domination of Central and South America.

In many ways, the invasion of Panama seems like a staging ground for the Gulf War (and probably future ones). First, the Bush Administration mounted a campaign “demonizing” the country’s leader, with whom relations had previously not been hostile. Second, “the military strategy for the invasion was designed to minimize U.S. casualties by employing overwhelming and superior forces simultaneously against all perceived pro-government strongholds.” Third, the media (with the exception of alternative sources like Pacifica radio) was primarily a mouthpiece for the military’s analysis.

The Commission’s report provides an excellent analysis of the invasion, well-supplemented by the vivid recollections of a cross-section of Panamanians. Alberto Barrow of the Panamanian Black Congress describes the racism of an invasion where most of the dead were Blacks and mestizos. “...The first death reported was a friend of mine. His name was Torreglosa, a Black Panamanian. His brains were smashed by a bullet...” Edilma Icaza, an indigenous woman, describes seeing the man in front of her fall dead on the ironically-named Fourth of July Avenue.

I was quite convinced by the arguments in The U.S. Invasion of Panama. However, readers should be aware that the book is decidedly partisan. “Our Commission set as its fundamental task making public the truths about the deaths, destruction and suffering caused by the invasion — to break the conspiracy of silence.” Its 26 members, well-known activists, scholars, attorneys and others, are generally liberal to left-leaning.

At the time of the invasion, none could foresee that Iraq would be next on the list. (Several contributors predicted Cuba.) But the book shows that many elements of the U.S.’s strategy in Panama are transferable to other regions of the world. Chief among them are sharply limiting U.S. casualties and winning the domestic propaganda war. Challenging these elements will be critical for any developing antiwar movement, whether around Panama, the Persian Gulf, or the next hot spot. The U.S. Invasion of Panama makes a contribution to this process.

Tracy Scott

Tracy Scott worked for many years with Somos Hermanas, an organization in solidarity with Central American women.

UNCOMMON MARTYRS: The Plowshares Movement and the Catholic Left by Fred A. Wilcox (Adelson-Wesley Publishing Company, Boston, MA; $18.95 hardcover)

Uncommon Martyrs: The Plowshares Movement and the Catholic Left is a partisan look at Daniel and Phillip Berrigan and the clergy and lay people who share their commitment to spectacular, non-violent acts of sabotage.

Though written to popularize the people, actions and ideas of the Plowshares movement, Uncommon Martyrs is a catalyst for discussion of the role of individual acts of conscience within the left. The book consists of profiles of the Berrigans and other members of their movement; descriptions of their courtroom experiences which clarify the legal and moral belief systems of the defendants; and a fascinating appendix of all the Plowshares disarmament actions since 1980.

Participants in the anti-Vietnam war movement remember the Berrigan brothers, men of the cloth, for their outspoken opposition to the war and several invasions of Selective Service offices on the East Coast. These bold actions were very effective at a time of growing anti-war sentiment and activity in the country.

Since 1986, Plowshare activists, seemingly a loose network of like
minded people, have entered military installations to pour their own blood over, and hammer on, nuclear missiles or carriers ("beat swords into plowshares"). Then they wait to be arrested and routinely spend months, even years, in prison. These personal sacrifices are made in the service of a greater good, be it international law, the Bible, or history, in the conviction that "if you're not part of the solution, you're part of the problem."

Plowshare activists often point to Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Sojourner Truth and Harriet Tubman as forerunners of their movement. While commitment to nonviolence is a common thread, what gets dropped in these comparisons is the political context out of which these leaders arose. All were born of a time when a mass movement was on the verge of realization and these leaders were able to personify mass outrage and aspirations. As part of the broad movement against the Vietnam war, the Berrigans' startling actions were instrumental in highlighting injustice.

However, the '80s and early '90s are not the '60s. There is no mass movement waiting to erupt. In the absence of a truly mass anti-nuclear movement and the media recoding their activities, individual acts of conscience lose much of their effectiveness. The people in Plowshares have tremendous commitment and vision. Their analysis of the role of the U.S. in the world, the dangers of nuclear annihilation, and the relationship between militarism abroad and impoverishment at home is on target. They could be writing, educating and speaking, instead of getting socked away in prison for long periods of time. Perhaps if we can do the kind of pleading, painstaking work with people that this period seems to require, the time for daring actions will soon come again.

-Linda Roman

The authors' decision to study their own culture and time represents a departure from the traditional terrain of anthropology—the foreign and the primitive. There is also a departure from the focus within feminist anthropology in the 1970s around questions of women's universal subordination. Tsing, Ginsburg and the authors included in the book were spurred on by the revitalization of feminist theory by women of color and lesbians who have insisted on the recognition of different experiences as a basis for theory and politics. All have used their training as ethnographers to investigate particular locations—churches, courthouses, schools, clinics, workplaces and social movements—to reveal the complex and various ways gender is produced.

Gender, the way society organizes men and women, these authors contend, is intimately connected to other identities and differences. These differences—race, ethnicity, class, sexual preference, religion and politics define and are used in self-fashioning. One of the strengths of the book's use of ethnographic method is its ability to uncover the variety of "ways in which people learn, accept, negotiate, and resist the categories of 'difference' that define and constrain them in everyday life." The idea of negotiation ties this wide-ranging collection of essays together. Many articles explore the tensions between women's everyday experiences and a dominant American ideal of woman as selfless, nurturant Mother. Others reveal the complexity of female identities as members of families and communities, as workers and activists. The contradictions between this ideal, which historically has centered the division of labor between a male, public world and a female, private world, continues to shape female experience.

Motherhood emerges as the site where this contradiction is most apparent in contemporary American society. Not only is motherhood an ambiguous source of power for women, but universalizing cultural assumptions about it mask the very different circumstances under which women mother. Ellen Lewin's article explores the reasons why both lesbian and heterosexual mothers feel they must use similar strategies to argue for custody. Similarly, Rayna Rapp's article makes clear that women's responses to choosing a medical procedure, amniocentesis, is shaped by social, racial and class settings. Obscuring differences between women leads to a climate where legal, political and medical institutions and discourses punish women who do not meet cultural expectations of the "good mother."

The book is divided into five sections, each representing a theoretical and eth-
nographic theme. The essays in "Backtalking Feminism" challenge universal gender stereotypes to show how class, race and ethnicity shape women and men's identities. The second section, "The Convention of Tradition: Feminism in Dialogue with the New Right," examines responses conservative religious and political groups have made to the feminist challenge. In "Producing Gender In and Out of the Workplace," workers actively contest established gender identities, making new categories that better express their relationships to class, race and ethnicity. The fourth section asks how women negotiate these factors in their everyday lives and practices. "Unbecoming Women," the final section, explores the possibilities and difficulties of women who are declared marginal.

*Uncertain Terms* should be read by anyone interested in understanding the challenges feminism has presented to contemporary America. It will also be important reading for those who follow current debates within anthropology and women's studies.

—*Barbara J. Bailis*

*Barbara J. Bailis is associate director, Women's Studies, Rutgers University.*

**WOMEN'S PERSPECTIVES ON NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT: Housing to Meet Community Needs** by the Women's Housing Coalition, Inc. (Order from the Association of Neighborhood & Housing Development, 236 West 27 St., 2nd Fl., NYC 10010; 212-683-9600; $15 organizations, $5 individuals, paperback.)

Call it what you will — appalling, enraging, tragic — women and children bear the brunt of the urban housing crisis. In New York City, 85 percent of the approximately 3400 families living in shelters are headed by single women. Their average age is 27; most are African-American or Latina.

Some became homeless after fleeing a battering male. Others became homeless or Latina. Some became homeless after fleeing a battering male. Others became homeless as a result of arson, co-op conversion, owner abandonment of their buildings, or eviction. Some have had to leave their apartments; some have been evicted from their apartments. In addition, City rents, which skyrocketed to a median of $171 per month in 1976 to a median of $395 a decade later, left many poor households with an intolerable choice: Food or shelter.

Hansberry's Drama: Commitment Amid Complexity by Steven R. Carter (University of Illinois Press)

"The whole realm of morality and ethics... the human race' had something to say about this nature of its existence..." — Lorraine Hansberry

These words, written in 1957 and of ever-greater urgency today, are published for the first time in Steven Carter's *Hansberry's Drama: Commitment Amid Complexity*. This is the most comprehensive and the best informed survey of the playwright's dramatic writings to date.

Carter has had access to Hansberry's unpublished material and also gained valuable information about her life from Robert Nemiroff, her former husband and literary executor. The result is a volume full of fresh insights and fascinating revelations about Hansberry's work.

Carter starts with an overview of the playwright's cultural, sociopolitical and philosophical ideas, paying particular and rightful attention to her still too little-recognized intellectual and personal courage and dedication to women's rights. He also refers to her even less-known homosexuality, which profoundly affected her outlook. Absolutely committed to the struggle against racism and sexism in all their forms, Hansberry extended her concern to all victims of oppression. Indeed, she argued, in an oppressive society everybody was a loser, for even the oppressors were victims of their own oppression.

In his discussion of *A Raisin in the Sun*, Carter proves that a close reading of this now-classic play continues to yield new discoveries. His linguistic analysis of speech patterns, for instance, demonstrates Hansberry's meticulous attention not only to the African-American idiom, but to regional and class specificity within that idiom as well. "What she did was to take the play...into art of a high order," Carter says, "is Hansberry's ability to see our imaginations on fire about the extraordinariness of ordinary people, and therefore of ourselves."

In *The Drinking Gourd*, Hansberry celebrates the African-American heritage while exposing the impossibility of sound human relationships within the slavery society of the antebellum South. This is also true of her unfinished play about the Haitian Liberator, Toussaint L'Ouverture. Carter analyzes various drafts of Toussaint and the one completed scene, published in Wilkerson's *Nine Plays by Black Women* (1966). *Toussaint*, and an unpublished manuscript based on Jules Romain's Haitian classic *Masters of the Dew*, forms a chapter on Caribbean works, where Hansberry's strong sense of the African diaspora is evident.

What Are Flowers? Hansberry's "fable" about a hernia and a group of wild children as the lone survivors of a post-atomic holocaust, is, for once, not left out of the critical survey of
Lisbeth Vuorijarvi teaches English, German and French in Sweden. She is currently working on a dissertation on Hansberry.
tions. But, poignantly enough, even these groups reflect Klein's concern about the attitude of the majority of students.

We get to watch a rehearsal of a guerrilla theater troupe that "speaks a language few students understand" — political activism. And as if this point had not already been made sufficiently, when some Kent State students try and exit May 4th, one student answers angrily, "I think that those people are dead, and we should let them lay in their graves peacefully."

The strongest feature of this film is the way Klein uses footage to do his editorializing by letting the subjects tell the story themselves. In one scene, Dr. Edward Crosby, Pan African studies, states that racism is still very much alive at Kent State, students just "haven't been trained to see it." Klein then shows us the reaction he gets when he presents the same topic to a group of white students. Upset by these accusations, one woman ironically insists that "We're [white students] not aware of this. They have all their Pan African studies.

Klein's editing technique, presenting the viewer with an assortment of '90s-styled opinions alongside black-and-white footage and stills from the late '60s and early '70s, would work were it not for the enormity of the subject. Klein simply tries to digest more than we can swallow.

In fact, the tremendous amount of material that Klein tries to cover causes the film to fail in reaching and conveying the heart of its message. As a result, he only offers us the most cursory and rhetorical views on his subjects. In the end, when he tries to tie it all together, his very important message — we must get today's students off the American conveyor belt of "go to school, get a good job, settle into a family" — and show them that they are significant enough to make a change in the world — leaves us wondering how and with what tools we can accomplish this.

Klein ends the film by saying, "If we don't like what we see, we can do something about it." But, throughout the film, he never explores deeply enough the issues he has raised to suggest how we may deal with their intricacies. He only presents us with the obvious, unflattering appearance of a very complex, very real problem.

And if, like Klein says, this movie is a letter to the generation now growing up, its lack of exploration into what lies beneath the surface could, indeed, leave us wondering if it isn't a hopeless position.

—David Kammerman

David Kammerman is a philosophy student at The American University of Paris.

MUSIC REVIEWS

If you like women's music — or any music made by women — you should be getting the Ladyslipper catalog. Out of Durham, NC, Ladyslipper is a non-profit organization committed "to heighten public awareness of the achievements of women artists and musicians and to expand the scope and availability of musical and literary recordings by women." They celebrate their 15th anniversary this year!

Ladyslipper does more than just publish the most comprehensive annotated catalog of music by women you've ever seen. They also distribute recordings from many labels to book and record stores, and release a small number of recordings on their own Ladyslipper label. Among their 1990 releases are Libana's "Fire Within," Kay Gardner's "Sounding the Inner Landscape," and Alix Dobkin's "Yahoo Australia."

FIRE WITHIN by Libana (Ladyslipper 1990); Cassette $9.98, CD $15.98

This is one of the most beautiful recordings I've heard in a long time. The Boston-based 11-woman ensemble, Libana, has merged their two musical forms: Ethnic music and music for ritual. They deliver us an album of rounds and other songs from around the world, many a capella and few with traditional instruments or percussion. The selections draw from medieval and renaissance Spanish, African, Native American, Shaker and many other kinds of music. Best of all, you can sing along (they offer a songbook) and it feels like joining a female celebration. Music is the great healer of harried or hurting souls. Try singing, "I will be gentle with myself/I will love myself/I am a child of the universe/Being born each morning" or a wordless Swedish lullabye, and feel it for yourself.

SOUNDING THE INNER LANDSCAPE by Kay Gardner (Ladyslipper 1990); Cassette, $12.98

While you are healing yourself with music, let Kay Gardner guide you. This tape of guided meditation and music utilizes beautiful instrumental colors to energize and uplift the listener. "The drum is your heart-beat...the flute is your breath...slow down, let go."

My favorite meditation is called "Lay Your Burden Down." It really works! Kay composes for flute, harp, cello, vibraphone and percussion, and she introduces the nine musical healing elements: Intent, drone, repetition, rhythm, harmonics, harmony, melody, instrumental colors and form. You can learn a lot about your body, your mind, and music with this tape. A great one to play late at night after a nerve-wracking day. You can also buy Kay's book by the same name if you want more depth on the music-as-healing process.

YAHOO AUSTRALIA! LIVE FROM SYDNEY by Alix Dobkin (Ladyslipper 1990); Cassette, $9.98

Want to get rowdy? Follow lesbian music pioneer Alix Dobkin on her Australian tour! She sings one of my favorites, "Shameless Hussies" (to the tune of "Dixie"): "We're shameless hussies and we don't give a damn we're loud and raucous and we're fighting for our rights", plus other fun ones like "Crushes", "Lesbian Code," and "The Girls Want to Be with the Girls" (by David Byrne). Alix has great politics, and brings us material about struggles in Zimbabwe, Ireland and the garment industry (this one in Yiddish). Add to this a powerful song about Hedda Nussbaum and a sweet one about "Intimacy" and you've got a front-row seat at a remp with an enduring performer and her guitar.

While you're ordering from Ladyslipper, be sure to get their catalog. Out of 80 pages of recordings on a wide variety of labels, here are my favorites from each category. (Though there are so many more for me still to sample!)

1. FEMINIST MUSIC: Caselberry-DuPree, CITY DOWN

2. INTERNATIONAL: Everything by Mercedes Sosa; also LE MYSTERE DES VOIX BULGARES

3. REGGAE: Lillian Allen, REVOLUTIONARY TEA PARTY

4. ROCK: Catholic Girls

5. PUNK/New Wave: The Slits, CUT

6. SOUL/R&B/Rap/Dance: Queen Latifah, ALL HAIL THE QUEEN

7. COUNTRY: k.d. lang, ANGEL WITH A LARIAT

8. FOLK/TRADITIONAL: INDIGO GIRLS

9. BLUES: BIG MAMA THORNTON

10. JAZZ: Everything by Billie Holiday

11. CHILDREN'S: Sarah Pirtle, TWO HANDS HOLD THE EARTH
Healing from pg 17

People's expectations are incredibly high. I feel sometimes if people could take my tribe, they would. I have had to learn about setting boundaries and saying no. I needed a balance so that I could not just be Laura Davis who is up on the stage, but Laura Davis who cooks chicken soup and doesn't like to make her bed, and likes to go out for walks.

What do you think about the 12-step programs for survivors of incest (SIA and ISA)? Do you think the 12 steps are helpful for survivors? Do you see any difficulties or problems with a program for survivors modeled after programs for recovering addicts (AA, NA, OA, etc.)?

The greatest value in 12-step programs is that they are a free resource, readily available to people all over the country. The greatest strength of 12-step programs has been in the area of addiction. Yet we can't say, across the board, that every problem in life is an addiction. That is a mistake and it has weakened the integrity of the 12-step program. And being victimized is different than being addicted. There are certain aspects of the 12 steps, when taken in a traditional pantheistic way, that don't fit for survivors. I don't think a survivor should ever stand up and say she's powerless about anything. Some 12-step programs push for forgiveness, which I don't think is appropriate for sexual abuse survivors. What I tell people is pick and choose. Programs vary all over the country. Some of them have been flexible and have geared themselves to the needs of survivors. But others haven't made those adaptations.

In the last two years, therapy groups and support groups have filled up with adults reevaluating their childhoods and labeling their families of origin "dysfunctional." Do you have an answer to those who have called this trend an attempt by yuppies to divorce and label their childhoods and define themselves? Some 12-step programs push for forgiveness, which I don't think is appropriate for sexual abuse survivors. What I tell people is pick and choose. Programs vary all over the country. Some of them have been flexible and have geared themselves to the needs of survivors. But others haven't made those adaptations.

I know you are working on a book for partners of survivors. What are the special needs of a survivor's partner? How does a partner often help or hinder the survivor's healing process?

The book will be called Allies in Healing: When the Person You Love was Sexually Abused as a Child, and will be published by HarperCollins in September, 1991. I have been interviewing partners, both men and women, in heterosexual, gay, and lesbian relationships, and have found them an inspiring group of people.

Partners frequently have good intentions, are interested in being helpful, but are bewildered about what to do. Suddenly the survivor whom they love just falls into this hole called child sexual abuse. The survivor goes through an incredible crisis that has nothing to do with the partner. Partners often ask, "Why me? How did I get in this situation? Why am I having to live with the effects of something I had nothing to do with?" The second question most often asked is, "What about my needs?" Often times when you are living with someone who is beginning the healing process, you are with an extremely self-absorbed person, obsessed...
with healing and sexual abuse, having wild mood fluctuations, perhaps actively suicidal, certainly struggling to find purpose in life. Ancient pain totally disrupts daily functioning. Partners come to a workshop asking what can they do to be helpful. An equally important question partners need to ask is, “What can I do to take care of myself?” One of the biggest mistakes a partner can make is to discount their own needs because the survivor’s needs are so enormous. One man in a workshop said the first six months he held his breath, waiting for it to be over. When he realized it wasn’t going away, he had to learn to live with it. I want partners to see themselves as allies with the survivor, focusing their rage on the abuser.

Is there anything you would like to say to someone reading this interview and maybe remembering his or her own sexual abuse for the first time?

Get help right away. In most parts of the country there are good resources for survivors. Call your local rape crisis center and ask for referrals. Even if you are not sure it happened. Even if you think you are going crazy. You are not alone. There are millions of us who have been abused and many hundreds of thousands who are successfully healing. If you make the decision to face this in your life, although it will be an incredibly painful journey, you will be joining the rest of us who have gone before you and who have cleared a path to show you it is possible. It is absolutely worth it. Not dealing with it means it will follow you the rest of your life. Only by facing it head-on do you have the chance of leaving it behind.

Laura Davis, co-author of The Courage to Heal, has recently written Allies in Healing: When the Person You Love was Sexually Abused as a Child, which is scheduled to be published by Harper Collins in September, 1991.

Barbara Bolz lives with her partner, Kath, and their two black cats in Bloomington, Indiana, where she writes, teaches and works as an advocate for survivors of sexual abuse.

Peaceful Means from pg 29

of humor, despite her constant contact with pain and injustice, Moore continues to promote the idea of what is possible to achieve in the world today. As indeterminate as life is, she has learned to take it in stride and keep on going. Always impressed by the vision of Amnesty International, she has stood by the organization’s principles, and her own, as she worked her way from volunteer to co-coordinator of the United States Urgent Action office.

Happy with her life, Moore has done what she wanted. And she has made her mark in the world of those who care.

Susan Bristol-Howard is a freelance writer from Nederland, CO.

In July, 1989, the South Korean government banned all students from attending the 13th World Festival of Youth in Pyongyang, North Korea. Citing its belief that the sole purpose of the Festival was to engage in propaganda against capitalist countries, South Korean authorities arrested all students who advocated attendance at the Festival or who tried to cross the border into North Korea on foot... all but one: Im Su-kyong succeeded in secretly crossing the border into North Korea and attending the Festival as envoy of South Korea’s National Council of Student Representatives.

In public statements, Im called for the peaceful reunification of Korea while condemning the South Korean ban on attendance of the Festival. When she announced her intention to return to South Korea via the truce village of Penmunjon in the Demilitarized Zone, three priests from the Catholic Priests Association for Justice (CPAJ) stepped in to assist in bringing her back home. They sent Father Moon Kyu-hyun to accompany Im across the DMZ to South Korea.

The three leading members of the CPAJ were all arrested under the South Korean National Security Law. Later, Im and Father Moon were arrested while crossing the DMZ.

Two years later, all of the priests involved in this affair have been released. Im Su-kyong, however, is serving a five year sentence in a South Korean prison, under a government which is known to torture its detainees.

Amnesty International believes she was imprisoned for expressing her nonviolent political views, and recognizes her as a prisoner of conscience. They have added her to their Summer Postcard Action 1991. The prisoners featured in this program are allowed to receive postcards directly, as long as they are brief and non-political. Interested readers are encouraged to send appropriate postcards to:

Im Su-kyong
Chungju Prison
140 Mipyong-dong
Chungju-shi
Chungchongbuk 310
Republic of Korea
As it now stands, development and use of the altered life forms can continue unabated. "We have a vocabulary that we have spoken for a very long time. We hide the ongoing transformations from ourselves. Where is the natural baseline to measure things by?" he asks.

Of more importance than trying to establish this natural baseline or an "in-the-beginning concept," may be a responsibility or stewardship over the natural world. "While that is somewhat anthropocentric and places us at the center of the scheme, it also expresses a view of interconnections. We have, to some extent, abandoned that view of interconnectedness and obligation to other species. So the bonds to other creatures have deteriorated and haven't been replaced with anything to take its place," says Garet.

Norm Daniels, a philosophy professor at Tufts University, addressing the issue of "cheating" in relation to technologies such as new drugs that enhance performance, agrees with Garet that a natural baseline is nonexistent. "In a certain sense all the domesticated animals today are efforts at animal husbandry. In the past we've lived with interbreeding by doing it naturally without taking patents out on the products. I suppose if there is an element of cheating, it would only have to do with deviating from a past practice when no one took credit for it or had to take out a patent."

Patents for development of experimental animals, such as the Harvard mouse, provoke questions whose answers often lie in areas laced with mine fields. Because the issue of "manufactured animals" is not resolved, seven initiatives and bills were considered or introduced during the 100th and 101st Congress. All aimed to either prohibit the patenting of genetically altered animals or deal with infringement rights of altered animals. The bills died, and have not been reintroduced in the current 102nd Congress.

Meanwhile, a de facto moratorium exists on the animal patents awaiting PTO decisions that have effectively, even if momentarily, put a lid on the issue. It's a "hot potato" according to insiders close to coming out with some regulation.

"The government is very close to coming out with some regulatory measures that will allow us to go forward after many years of something like a de facto moratorium," says Elliott. "The administration "generally supports technology and believes we should regulate it rather than having a ban on it."

Of prime concern to the government is not animal rights activists, though the Harvard mouse caused quite an uproar and though the Humane Society of the U.S. has come out against animal patenting. It's the American farmer.

Farmers have always been free to purchase new stock and breed it to their own specifications. "Un-patented," a farmer might infringe on someone else's legal rights. Therefore, some bills previously introduced exempted farmers from an animal patent.

Former Rep. Robert Kastenmeier (D-WI) introduced a bill in the 100th Congress that would have exempted farmers from patents that would restrict them...
from reproducing or selling patented animals. Although adopted by the House of Representatives, the Senate took no action. He introduced a similar bill in the 101st Congress, but it, too, failed.

Kastenmeier, considered by many to be one of the most astute politicians conversant animal patenting, lost his office in the last congressional election.

Distasteful wording by the patent office in the 1987 ruling on animal patenting has blocked some of the proposed bills. In trying to make clear that non-human animals could be patented, but not human ones, the 13th amendment to the Constitution, prohibiting a human being from having a property interest in another human being, was cited. "When that case came before the House Judiciary Committee, the chairman took exception to that interpretation. He wasn't comfortable that the rationale would hold up," said O'Connor.

The de facto moratorium on animal patenting and the problems faced by bills addressing the issue, seem to illuminate the issues of animal rights, genetic manipulation, and technology. These issues, though, are only part of a much broader concept that humans must embrace.

There's nothing new in gene manipulation. Genetic alteration naturally occurs. The trigger now, however, is in the pull of human hands. The whole public debate is problematic because people on one side (scientists and geneticists) are highly trained and skilled in this area while the vast majority of those using the technology (such as farmers) have no basic grounding in it. That is a major chasm. So a fair number of people start thinking of it as a grade B horror film, and that can be a problem, says O'Connor.

Surveys in 1987 showed a high level of support by the American public on basic genetic engineering research. When people understood the benefits, about 80 percent said they would like to see that kind of research go forward. "But when you start speaking specifics, like releasing an organism into your neighborhood, or patenting an animal or using human gene therapy, the debate takes a different turn. Technology simply isn't neutral," says O'Connor.

"It isn't only the U.S. public that is concerned. We're looking at a history that is only a few years old and people are just starting to get their hands on it. Right now you can apply for a patent on an animal in the U.S. based on the Harvard mouse decision, but even so, it was rejected by the European Patent Office. Then, the European Patent Convention decided that the patent examiner had been incorrect and it's now on appeal," says O'Connor.

The issue of worldwide patent examinations and acceptability is becoming immensely important. It affects the world's trade and patenting policies. European countries remain the most skeptical of animal patenting on the grounds of animal rights.

"There is no problem with the issue of animal patenting. They simply don't care that much about animals," says Humanities Professor Daniel J. Kevles of the California Institute of Technology.

Kevles, who is writing a book on patenting technology, says that because of the de facto moratorium, there is nothing to stimulate the public into action. "They're using the technology. There are simply no further animal patents being issued. The principle has been established. The only thing that can overturn it is the people who oppose animal patenting, and they haven't made a sufficiently strong case," he says.

Elliott, who remains optimistic about most new developments in genetic engineering, says, "I can think of no instance in which collective risk aversion and fear of the unknown has succeeded over the long run in preventing (as opposed to delaying the regulating) the introduction of useful new knowledge or techniques."

Kevles, speaking at a biomedical ethics seminar at the University of Southern California, reminded participants that "Looking at this technology in the abstract doesn't get us very far. Looking back to the '20s and '30s, what could we have done about control of nuclear power then?"

Kevles and others debating the issues of modern technology at USC concluded that in those early years we weren't even aware of some dangers inherent in nuclear power, and that, despite misgivings about what is known, technology moves ahead despite rhetoric and debate.

It has only been through laws and regulations that nuclear power was curtailed to any degree. The greatest danger, then, may be in trying to completely stifle new technology. If we try to halt the progress, it proceeds anyway, but without regulations and controls.

There is a need to debate laws that will govern what's allowable and what's not in animal patenting. We're past the stage of determining whether to allow invention of new life forms. They're already among us.
FEEDBACK
Please direct all comments to:
Editors, ON THE ISSUES, 97-77 Queens Boulevard, Forest Hills, NY 11374.

PRO-ANIMAL RIGHTS
I didn't know whether to laugh or cry when I read Naomi Cowen's "Pro-Animal Research" letter in your Summer 1991 issue. Cowen "wonders" if there is a "National Alliance Against" animals. There are many.

There is the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture, which recently came out with a new "Eating Right" pyramid, that placed animal products right under fats, oils and sweets, and that subsequently backed down under pressure from the meat and dairy industries. And the Meat Board, that is the pleased recipient of the federally-mandated "dollar-per-head-checkoff" from all ranchers and farmers, bitterly resented by those using non-factory-farm methods because they are forced by an Act of Congress to support the competition. The American Medical Association, in June, 1989, kicked off a several-million-dollar campaign to "get the animal rights people." Then there are all the hunter/fisher/trapper welfare programs, created by legislators who vote tax money to manipulate the environment to provide more living targets.

Cowen asks if there's a "National Alliance For People." There is: "Putting People First," founded in September, 1989 by Kathleen Marquardt, who claims that PFP is just a bunch of folks who don't "represent any industry or special interest," whose husband, co-founder Bill Wewer, writes for Fur Age Weekly.

But what the hell, all the animal exploiters are part of the same old patriarchy that gave us the notion that victims cooperate not only willingly, but lovingly, with their own destruction.

Jean Austin
Clinton, IA

WOMEN CAUSE MEN'S PROBLEMS?
In the article "Robert Bly & Iron John" (Summer 1991) Bly is demonstrated to be continuing Hegel's and Freud's theme that women are the cause of men's problems and are hindering the growth of society. He is simply using different terminology.

Fred Pelka's article has changed my understanding completely from that obtained through watching Bill Moyers' "A Gathering of Men." Bly sugar-coated his message and my lack of familiarity with mythology made me suitable prey.

Freud warned us of the necessity to express our sexual instincts so that we don't become neurotic. Sounds good and feels good. Or does it? For Freud, pleasure is defined as the release of tension.

To Freud and his male followers, sex is an act of aggression of males against females. That's why he said women who enjoy sex are masochists.

I would like to believe Bly is riding "the crest of a new wave of anti-female backlash" but I was just taught last semester in a developmental psychology class, with Erikson as a primary text, that children must cease identifying with their parents, particularly the mother, and adult males must become mentors for males to replace the parents so that the male can achieve his own true identity. Erikson's book was written in 1968. Bly expressed these same concepts on "A Gathering of Men." I'm not sure Bly is as naive as we women have been.

Roxie A. Mason
Mars, PA

OTI RESUSCITATES
Bay City is a small town in Texas — very red-neck and conservative. Although almost everyone knows I am a feminist, I have not found anyone else who claims that description. So after a while I find myself becoming just as dull and unresponsive as everyone else here. Your publication brings me back to life and I again know that there are issues to be concerned about and to take a stand for.

Virginia M. Whiddon
Bay City, TX

I think the Summer issue of On the Issues the best yet! Congratulations.

Ruth Gutstein, Publisher
Volcano Press; Kazan Books
Volcano, CA

HOSTILITY IS NOT CONFINED TO POLES
The notable increase of anti-Semitism in Poland, particularly during the last election campaign, is truly revolting. Hopefully, the pastoral letter of the Polish episcopate, which condemns all forms of anti-Semitism, and the recent initiatives launched by President Lech Walesa will help eradicate this awful malignancy.

Unfortunately, analogous manifestations of irrational, blanket hostility are not confined to Poles. It is true, as Susan Cahn states in her otherwise excellent article ("New Poland, Old Problems," Spring 1991), that condemnations of anti-Semitism by American Jews are not responsible for anti-Semitism in Poland. However, Pole-bashing, as practiced by some American Jews, does lead to a belief that Jews, as a group, hate the Poles.

Here are some samples:
1) "Poles are responsible for the Chmielnicki pogroms." (R. Handelsman in Chicago's Reader, 2/9/91 and Rabbi Weiner in The Knoxville News-Sentinel, 7/25/90). Never mind that Chmielnicki was a Cossack chieftain, who revolted against Poland and slaughtered just as many Christian Poles and Polish citizens of Jewish faith.

2) "Poles helped in the murder of six million Jews." (B. Rosenthal in The Orlando Sentinel, 2/5/90). Historian Walter Laqueur of Tel Aviv University states that Poland's record in saving Jews is better than France's (The Terrible Secret, Little, Brown, 1980) and that 50,000 to 100,000 Jews were saved by Poles, who often paid for their heroism with their lives. (The Light Which Pierced the Darkness, by Nachema Tec)

Eva Jastrzebski
Polish American Congress, Inc.
Chicago, IL

JUSTICE FOR PALESTINIANS

Wiesel's rhetorical question, "What if I am wrong [in criticizing] and they pay the price?" is tragically misguided. No criticism that Wiesel could make could be more harmful to Israel than the Palestinian refugees' suffering caused by the Israeli occupation. To claim that Wiesel could make such a claim is a gross simplification.

Carl Rosenberg
Vancouver, BC

ZEROING IN ON POPULATION
Eleanor J. Bader makes some very good points in her article "Population Control — Out of Control" (Spring 1991) but she is absolutely wrong that Zero Population Growth (ZPG) advocates the reduction of world population "by any means."

On the contrary, ZPG maintains that the only acceptable solution to the problem of overpopulation is through expanded educational, advocacy, and service efforts that result in the voluntary reduction of birth rates, both in the United States and worldwide.

Despite Bader's characterizations of our organization, ZPG does acknowledge that decisions regarding family size are very personal, and that they may reflect cultural values and perceived economic demands. Bader is right that these are "complex dynamics," and that they cannot be sidestepped in the work to stop population growth.

ZPG, however, does not ignore these issues. We recognize and advance the truth, that social, political and economic justice — for all people — goes hand-in-hand with population stabilization and the environmental health of our planet.

Susan Weber, Ex. Dir.
Zero Population Growth
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