THE DANGEROUS MISOGYNY OF MTV

WHY MEDICAL RESEARCH IS BAD FOR WOMEN'S HEALTH

THE LIFELONG ORDEAL OF THE HIDDEN CHILDREN

YUGOSLAV WOMEN UNITE AGAINST VIOLENCE

DEFIANT GUATEMALAN WOMEN

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All unsolicited material will be read by the editors. For return, enclose self-addressed, stamped envelope with proper postage. Articles should not be 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.

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I never really wear the things: Political buttons, T-shirts with messages, designer-labeled bags. I don’t like to advertise my politics or buying habits by turning myself into a walking message for someone else’s consumption — except when I conduct my own special social/psychological experiments and decide to become a political catalyst. There was the time in 1980 when I got a button that read “Impeach Ronald Reagan.” Reagan had just been elected by a landslide, Carter left the White House in near disgrace, the hostages came home from Iran, the country was awash in an orgy of expectations, and I was wearing this “Impeach Reagan” button the day of his inauguration.

As a psychological test, the “Impeach Reagan” button delivered the expected results: From friends and sympathizers of the left there was agreement and approval; non-politicians thought it cute or just strange; supporters of the President had no sense of humor about it. But this year, with this button, things were not quite so predictable or consistent. The button was small with white letters on a dark blue background that proclaimed: “Thelma and Louise Live.”

A stewardess handing me my jacket before landing bends down and whispers “Fantastic button — right on,” a middle-aged clerk in a food store spots it and says: “They gave those bastards what they deserved;” my mother, who is renowned for sleeping through movies, loved “Thelma and Louise” and asks me if I can get her a button. Strong positive responses abound — knowing nods, winks, non-verbal “right ons” that cut across race, class, age and political affiliation. I am beginning to feel that something is definitely going on here.

The plot in brief: Thelma and Louise are women seemingly trapped in the morass of bourgeois female suburban existence, who are suddenly catapulted into an extraordinary road adventure by the radical act of thwarting an attempted rape by killing the rapist. The film follows the unlikely heroines in their wild attempt to escape the law and shows us how, in that process, they find themselves and each other.

In a very real sense, “Thelma and Louise” is a morality play, one in which the characters are informed and driven by a sense of personalized justice rather than lawfully bound definitions of “right and wrong.” It has a kind of karmic cause and effect immediacy of response. You rape me or my friend — I kill you. You mess with my freedom — I leave you. You block my escape routes — I stop you. And, ultimately, you try to kill me, I kill myself because death is superior to your laws around me. This then is not really about women taking the “law” into their own hands; it is about redefining and actualizing “justice.”

Unfortunately, or necessarily, the film’s ending has the two women achieving their ultimate self-revelations by speeding off the cliffs of the Grand Canyon together in a green convertible, holding hands. They achieve their freedom, transcendence and fusion through a violent death that we do not witness. Our last view of Thelma and Louise has them suspended in flight, hair blowing against the wind, stopped in time and space.

Interestingly, the two film characters, their adventures and their ending have become both metaphors and lightning rods for different populations for different reasons.

The reactions of the mainstream press to the film have ranged from discussions of whether or not it portrays the existence of a feminism turned “toxic,” to sounding alarms over the film’s catalytic possibilities for general female revolt. Questions and a myriad of associations abound. Are Thelma and Louise really lovers? Is their coupling, unlike Bonnie and Clyde’s, a kind of mythological prototype of best friends, a female version of Damon and Pythias who would rather die together and for each other than make a date with the men — in this case
the criminal justice system? Or, are the two women just another Hollywood creation whose ultimate value lies in their box office profitability?

The button, however, seems to proclaim a survival fantasy, as if by our collective wills we could rewind and reverse the tape, re-do the ending and freeze the frame where we want it so that, indeed, Thelma and Louise do not perish in the fiery crash and live to revenge themselves another day. The message is layered with symbols and symbolic meaning. It is the two outlaw women giving the ultimate "fuck you" to the patriarchy — the triumph of life over death, the oppressed over the oppressor, the masculinist, the misogynist. Shall we film and the fantasy then function as a counter-revolutionary, co-opting force that allows all of us so-called good girls to sit back and let Thelma and Louise take care of all our dirty business? To let them become our own avenging angels?

Are avenging angels needed? Considering the war song that millions of American women live their lives in, a massive strategic military initiative may be more to the point. Actually, when viewed in this realistic context, Thelma and Louise killing one man for attempted rape, leaving another rather than marrying him, putting a cop in a car trunk and blowing up an oil truck is relatively mild stuff.

If we search out the "law" that pursued and ultimately destroyed Thelma and Louise for their "crimes" against patriarchy, it is often either nowhere to be found or in hiding when it comes to crimes against women. A reflection of the society that spawned it, the criminal justice system functions more often than not as a support and reinforcement of perpetrators rather than as a protector of victims. Indeed, the system in all of its complicated intricacies, assumptions, precedents and formalized rituals has been unable to either stem or quell the ever-increasing tides of violence against women.

A study by the Justice Department found that while violent crime against man dropped about 20 percent from 1973 to 1987, violence against women has stayed constant with about 2.5 million women a year becoming victims of robbery, assault or rape. According to the study, which was recently made public, 25 percent of the violent crimes against women are committed by family members or men they have dated. (WIN News Vol. 17 #3 Summer)

A study of the National Crime Survey conducted between 1976 and 1982 found that an estimated 2.1 million violent crimes against women were victims of domestic violence at least once during an average 12 month period.

The National Women's Law Center reports that FBI statistics indicate 50 percent of female homicides of women are killed by their husbands or boyfriends. This translates into the fact that every day in this country four women are killed by batterers. In fact, murder is the second leading cause of death for young women.

For the women who are not murdered by their husbands or boyfriends, statistics report that up to three or four million experience severe beatings and batterings by their intimates.

This near-and-present danger for women is compounded by the fact that in four college women a victim of rape or attempted rape on campus, most often by someone known to the victim.

Date rape actually accounts for 50 percent of all reported rapes with the majority of victims between 16 and 24 years of age. "Regular" or "violent" rapes (by strangers) occur every six minutes in this country, while according to FBI estimates only one of 10 rapes is ever reported. In 38 states, under certain circumstances, it is legal for a husband to rape his wife. (National Center of Women and Family Law, Aug. 1989)

If the names of all the women who are victims of all the crimes against their sex, from rape to battery, to murder, to abuse, to incest, to inadequate health care, to economic deprivation were put on a wall, the list would be far longer than the Vietnam War Memorial.

Although it was attempted rape that provoked the male killing in "Thelma and Louise," in "real life" it is extremely rare, given the statistics on occurrence of rape and battery, that women ever fight back at all. Some studies have found that at least 40 percent of women who kill do so in self defense. (WIN News)

A California state prison study found that 93 percent of the women who had killed their mates had been battered by them; 67 percent of these women indicated the homicide resulted from an attempt to protect themselves or their children. (National Women's Law Center, 1989)

While most of these women put in prison with long sentences, it's not uncommon for wife-killers to be accorded on film or "provocation" defenses such as accusations in court that the dead woman nagged or committed adultery. Legally, these resemble post-mortem witch trials in which the victim, not the murderer, is blamed.

One only has to look at the case of Jean Harris, who killed her physician lover in a fit of drug-induced paranoia and rage, and Robert Chambers, the young "preppie" killer of Jennifer Levin. For Harris there was no mercy, not in the courts, not in reality. She sits in jail — victim of two heart attacks — while Chambers received refuge and support from the Catholic church and press headlines that implied he killed Levin in self-defense; that he was a victim of "rough sex."

But places of rage are coming to the surface. A radical feminist, Nikki Craft, formed "Always Caring Legal Unrest" (ACLU), and joined hands with a small company, "Pushing Buttons" to produce a new line of what they term "feminist mood-matching buttons." In their own type of social-psychological experiment, they say that "talking about killing using Thelma-and-Louise's style, is protected under the First Amendment, isn't it? It should be, shouldn't it?" They describe their political action in terms of trying to see if they can "saturate the mainstream media with real man-hate," as a response to the plethora of woman-hating images.

In order to frame the debate where they think it belongs and focus on the consistent institutionalized and conditioned misogyny in the society, they produce buttons with messages like "How Dare You Assume I'm Not Violent," "I Think, Therefore I am Dangerous," "When Justice is Gone — There's Always Force," "Patriarchy: 5,000 Years of S/M — Are We Bored Yet?" "The Woman at Your Throat Today Will Be at Your Throat Tomorrow," "Stop Bucking and Start Bitting."

After all, if Bret Ellis, author of "American Psycho," can speak about cutting and slicing vaginas and fucking women's decapitated heads, be on the best seller list and be protected by the parameter of free speech, so can messages like "Men and Women Were Created Equal and Smith and Wesson Makes Damn Sure It stays That Way."

While experiments by their very nature 

continued on pg 36
WIN SOME • LOSE SOME
A Compiled Adaptation of News Items with Editorial Commentary by Beverly Lowy

OH, SUCH BIG, BRAVE HUNTERS!
A Reuters dispatch: A California rancher, Floyd Lester Patterson, III, has been sentenced to six months in jail for arranging the killings on his ranch of Bengal tigers, leopards and lions — some while still in their cages — by self-styled big-game hunters. Patterson's wife, Dawn Patterson, was sentenced to three months probation. The two were fined a total of $42,300.

An accomplice who testified against Patterson, Kenneth Orvasky, a taxidermist, said he was hired to stuff and mount the animal skins as trophies for customers who paid between $3,000 and $10,000 to shoot the animals to death at point-blank range, either in their cages or just after the doors of their cages were opened. Orvasky was earlier sentenced to three months in jail for his role in the killings.

According to court testimony, the animals were smuggled to the Patterson ranch by an Arizona livestock dealer.

We think they and their customers should be sentenced to go on a real safari and meet the "game" in their natural habitats — but without weapons.

A THEFT OF DIGNITY
Reported by David Kocieniewski in NY Newsday: John T. Brown, 50, was brutally attacked during an apparent robbery near an automatic teller machine in Brooklyn shortly after midnight last New Year's Day.

Although he was carrying identification, Brown was listed as an unidentified person for five months as he lay comatose in Kings County Hospital Center.

Brown's sister, Cookie Hauser, said she reported her brother as a missing person on Jan. 2, but a sergeant at the 78th Precinct refused to file a report once he learned that Brown was gay.

With the help of Assistant District Attorney Liz Garro, Hauser finally found her brother in June, just after he had died of head injuries suffered during the robbery. It was only after he died that hospital officials noticed that he had been carrying identification.

"The police told me John had probably 'shacked up with a nice piece of ass,'" Hauser said, her voice breaking and her eyes filling with tears. "They robbed my brother of his dignity, his identity, and they left him to die alone."

Protesters said the Brown case is part of a lingering pattern of anti-gay bias by police.

Police said they are investigating Hauser's complaint but haven't yet substantiated the anti-gay remark.

How can it be substantiated — by asking other cops?

MAKING UP IS HARD TO DO
A news dispatch: A woman who battled Continental Airlines over the carrier's cosmetics policy has resigned from her job. Teresa Fischette, a ticket agent at Boston's Logan International Airport, was fired in May for refusing to wear makeup on the job. She was rehired less than a week later, after she vowed to fight the mandatory cosmetics policy. Fischette, 38, said she wasn't forced to leave the company, but admitted there were "problems" after she made her cause public.

Somehow, whistle blowers are never made to feel welcome when they're reinstated. Just company policy, we suppose.
OBVIOUSLY NOT THE DECADE OF THE CHILD

Sen. Mark O. Hatfield (R., OR), reported recently in the Congressional Record: "As good as the 1980s were for the military, what has happened to the children of this country? Many of the key measures of children's well-being dramatically indicate that the 1980s were a terrible decade. Child poverty, violent deaths among teenagers and births to unmarried teens all increased substantially.

"One American child in five now lives in poverty. Another one in five lives with a single parent. By the year 2000, both numbers will be one in four if current trends continue. Every day, 155,000 children take a gun to school. Every 32 seconds, a 15-to-19-year-old woman becomes pregnant. Every 65 seconds, a child is born to a mother who does not even hold a high school diploma. And, finally, every 14 hours, a child the age of five or younger is murdered."

Meanwhile, children in inner-city schools are being taught to "duck and cover" to avoid stray bullets and the number of homeless families is escalating while the military continues to thrive. So much for the next decade.

WITH JUSTICE FOR NONE

An AP dispatch: A judge has dismissed 19 malpractice and fraud lawsuits filed against a hospital and a former gynecologist by women who said the doctor injured them with self-described "love surgery."

The women contended that the doctor, James Burt, injured them with unauthorized surgery on their sex organs. They said the hospital, St. Elizabeth Medical Center in Dayton, OH, should have stopped him.

But Judge Robert Nichols rejected the women's claims, ruling that they sued after a 1987 state law gave hospitals immunity in certain cases and that they sued Dr. Burt too late, after a one-year statute of limitation.

The women said they suffered a variety of problems, including incontinence, painful intercourse and bladder and vaginal infections, after Dr. Burt operated on their sex organs without their consent during a hysterectomy or other procedure. Dr. Burt has said he altered female sexual organs to make women more sexually responsive. He surrendered his Ohio medical license days before the State Medical Board was to hold a disciplinary hearing on charges of gross immorality. His lawyer, Earl Moore, said he was living in Florida.

So while these women are imprisoned by pain, James Burt lives a comfortable life and the hospital gets off scot free. This is true gross immorality.

WHO'S SHIELDED NOW?

Tamar Lewin in The NY Times: The Supreme Court of Canada has ruled that the sexual history of rape victims may be offered as evidence in court at the trial judge's discretion.

The seven-to-two decision struck down part of a 1983 law shielding rape victims from intrusive questioning about past sexual behavior. The judge may allow such evidence, the court said, where it is useful and is not being raised simply to imply that the victim was more likely to have consented to the sexual conduct.

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"In achieving its purpose — the abolition of the outmoded, sexist-based use of sexual conduct evidence — it overreaches the mark and renders inadmissible evidence which may be essential to the presentation of legitimate defenses and hence to a fair trial," wrote Justice Beverley McLachlin.

"The price is too great in relation to the benefit secured, and cannot be tolerated in a society that does not countenance in any form the conviction of the innocent," the opinion said.

A wonderful way to further victimize victims — and to ensure that fewer rapists will be prosecuted.
BYE-BYE BARBIE!

From articles in NY Newsday and The NY Times: Cathy Meredig, a Minneapolis industrial engineer, has started her own company to enter the highly competitive toy market with a fuller-figured fashion doll she's named Happy To Be Me.

Her hope is to offer both parents and children an alternative to the many dolls — represented for more than 30 years by the ubiquitous Barbie — that emulate slender fashion models.

"I want to offer girls a healthier body image than what's currently available with today's fashion dolls," said Meredig, who's formed High Self-Esteem Toys Corp., but spends most of her time running a computer-programming firm.

"By giving children positive images, there's a chance to change the way girls look at a woman's body. This way, they can grow up feeling good about the way they look."

While Barbie is known for her extraordinary proportions, the Happy-to-Be-Me doll is shaped more like an average woman, with a wider waist, larger feet, shorter neck and shorter legs. Assuming a bust measurement of 36 inches, Barbie's proportions would be 36-18-33, while the Happy to Be Me doll would be content with 36-27-38.

Meredig says of Barbie: "What they're trying to sell little girls is a very dead-end fairy tale, which is that you have to be thin and sexy to be loved and accepted."

This may be one small step to combat the escalating eating disorders in young girls. Here's a good doll for Holiday giving.

MILITARY INJUSTICE

Jason DeParle, NY Times:

After touring six American military bases in Germany, the chairman of the U.S. Civil Rights Commission said he found evidence of pervasive racial discrimination.

The chairman, Arthur A. Fletcher, told senior Pentagon officials that the discrimination was occurring in the hiring and promotion of both enlisted personnel and civilian defense employees. He also said racial discrimination was endemic in the schools for employees' children.

Mr. Fletcher said Blacks at many levels were afraid to complain about discrimination, fearing retaliation.

"Lo and behold, when I got over there I found complaint after complaint," the chairman said. "I was surprised."

Mr. Fletcher's conclusions, which were first reported in The Washington Post, come at a time when the military is being widely celebrated as one of the least discriminatory institutions in American life. A recent cover story in The New Republic magazine, for instance, sought to explain "Why the military is the only truly integrated institution in America."

Despite his findings, Mr. Fletcher said, "There is reason to believe that Blacks do better in the military than they do in civilian life."

"Maybe the military no longer segregates but it still seems to exercise the same old biases."

BLOOD AND SAND

Reported by Patrick J. Sloyan in NY Newsday: The U.S. Army division that broke through Saddam Hussein's defensive frontline used plows mounted on tanks and combat earthmovers to bury thousands of Iraqi soldiers — some still alive and firing their weapons — in more than 70 miles of trenches, according to U.S. Army officials.

In the first two days of ground fighting in Operation Desert Storm, three brigades of the 1st Mechanized Infantry Division — "The Big Red One" — used the grimy innovation to destroy trenches and bunkers being defended by more than 8,000 Iraqi soldiers, according to division estimates. While 2,000 surrendered, Iraqi dead and wounded as well as defiant soldiers still firing their weapons were buried beneath tons of sand, according to participants in the carefully planned and rehearsed assault.

The unprecedented tactic has been hidden from public view. Reporters were banned from witnessing the Feb. 24-25 attack that occurred near the tip of the diamond-shape neutral zone that straddles the border between Saudi Arabia and Iraq.

Not a single American was killed during the attack that made an Iraqi body count impossible.

"We wonder how many more discoveries are yet to be made from our nasty little war."

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Goodbye To White Male Privilege: Women Challenge Health Care Research

By Elayne Clift

The National Institutes of Health (NIH), America's premier institution for health research, is having its own pulse taken these days. Under pressure from the Congressional Caucus for Women's Issues, women scientists and others, the complex of institutes is being scrutinized for its treatment of women as research subjects and researchers.

NIH, which supports most of the medical research done in the U.S., first said in 1986 that it would encourage greater inclusion of women in its studies, but it did not issue guidelines on its new policy until July, 1989. Those guidelines stated that while "most researchers adequately and appropriately consider gender representation in clinical research design...public concern requires that clinical studies include both genders in such a way that results are applicable to the general population." One of the most publicized omissions of that policy was the now famous aspirin study financed by NIH which showed that an aspirin every other day could prevent some heart attacks. The study involved 22,071 subjects — all male physicians.

Largely because of pressure brought by the increasingly powerful Congressional Caucus for Women's Issues, co-chaired by Representative Patricia Schroeder of Colorado and Olympia Snowe of Maine, an effort is now underway to focus attention on U.S. women's health. For example, the federal government's Office of Technology Assessment has begun to study the state of knowledge and research on menopause and hormone replacement therapy. The Women's Health Equity Act, a set of 22 separate bills addressing research, services and prevention, has just been reintroduced in Congress. And last spring, the Government Accounting Office's report on the lack of clinical trials that include women prompted formation of the Office for Women's Health Research at NIH.

Headed by Dr. Ruth Kirschstein, acting Director of the National Institute of General Medical Sciences, the Office has several goals in addition to setting a research agenda on women's health for the next decade.

"One goal is to make sure we put the appropriate monitoring system in place to be able to retrieve data and analyze it to see if there is appropriate inclusion of women in clinical studies," Kirschstein said. "The second is to work with the Institute of Medicine on whether or not it is possible to design clinical studies so that women within childbearing age can participate in therapeutic trials. We know that the reasons for excluding them in the past have been good and valid — the concerns about drugs such as thalidomide causing teratogenesis. What we're not sure of is whether or not this has been a convenient excuse or whether, with the new activities related to contraception and some of the lifestyles and choices of women in modern day America, it would be possible to design such studies. The third goal is to bring in the chairmen of what are called the institutional review boards of the various medical centers who have to review clinical research, and talk with them about why more questions are asked about including women in studies than there may be with men, and whether we can develop a methodology to improve that."

Kirschstein believes that her office has already had an impact. Notice has been given that women be included in clinical trials, she reminds us. Closer monitoring, she adds, will look at research grant proposals to see if women are included, and if not, to ask why the study should go forward. "If the justification is not sufficient, then those studies, regardless of how scientifically meritorious they are, will not be funded."

Whether or not women are included in research studies is only one critical issue. The other question is: Are they included as researchers? According to Dr. Margaret Jensvold, a psychiatrist who has filed suit against the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), the answer is a resounding "no." Jensvold has charged that NIMH engages in a systematic pattern of sex discrimination against women researchers working on women's health issues. She has a compelling case. In a lawsuit filed in federal district court in...
Maryland, she alleges that her male superiors harassed her, denied her opportunities for research and writing provided to male fellows, fired her before she could complete her third and final year of the fellowship program, and attempted to destroy her promising academic career. To hear Dr. Jensvold recount her experiences is chilling.

"I was a medical fellow at the National Institute of Mental Health from July 1987 to July 1989. I was the only woman among a group of male physicians studying premenstrual syndrome. I had a background in studying PMS and was looking forward to studying it at this institution where I'd be able to do biological psychiatry research which really can't be done elsewhere. This was the premier place to be doing what I want to be trained in. So I was optimistic starting at NIMH, but what I found was that it was, in fact, two years of hell.

"It was layer upon layer of awful, painful experiences," she recalls. "Over the course of six months, my boss told me that the reason I was being excluded from doing valued things was because I'm competent and attractive.

Then, at the end of her second year, Jensvold was "non-renewed," a technical term for fired. It was then that she decided to file an Equal Employment Opportunities Commission (EEOC) complaint, believing that an objective third party could help to negotiate a third year so that she could write up her research. Following the filing of the complaint, serious retaliation set in. According to Jensvold, her boss began to claim that she was incompetent and didn't deserve to have a final year. "At the same time, of course, barriers were being put up so that it was impossible for me to complete anything," she says.

To add insult to injury, Jensvold had previously been ordered to undergo psychotherapy by her boss. "I was given a list of psychotherapists to start with, all of whom were male, and when I asked whether a female psychiatrist could be recommended, I was told that, no, it wasn't possible to recommend a female psychiatrist. So, I went into psychotherapy with the number one person on his list, who turned out to be an employee of NIMH, working out of my boss' office, and who refused even to assure me of confidentiality."

Margaret Jensvold was the third woman to do menstrual cycle research at NIMH. The other two had been treated similarly and the first one had, in fact, filed a successful complaint against NIMH. But rather than serve as a deterrent, it has simply fueled the fire. "The fact that all of this was happening at the National Institute of Mental Health, the premier organization for research on mental health, and the fact that it was happening in the women's mental health programs, that this was the clinical director of NIMH, this was the person who was responsible for the quality of clinical care of all of intramural NIMH, this was just extraordinary to me, and impossible simply to walk away from," says Jensvold.

Jensvold filed suit because she felt that any woman in her position would be treated in the same way. "There's a need for institutions to no longer tolerate harassment and discrimination. There's an absolute need for institutions to indicate that they really do care about the careers and well-being of their women researchers, and of their women employees."

Jensvold also offers an historical perspective on current events. "I think we've..."
There is a growing problem in protecting health-care workers, especially when it comes to women. This is especially true if women come in complaining about fatigue, aches and pains, depression, etc., and no known cause is revealed in their blood work, chest x-rays or other tests. I was told by an internist at UCSD [University of California at San Diego] Owens Clinic [which is an AIDS facility] to 'pull myself up by my bootstraps.'

"I have refused to accept what many doctors have said either outright or alluded to me — that I have a psychological problem. I have consulted with many non-A.M.A. persons, otherwise known as holistic health practitioners. Both the A.M.A. and holistic practitioners tend to blame their patients for being sick and to put heavy restrictions on how they should live in order to get well. Their message is, 'If you don't get well, it's your fault' — and if you die, it is your fault!"

"My view is that there is an epidemic of viral infections that surround us, and that the health-care community, in many respects, sidesteps dealing with it. First, we must recognize that 'Chronic Fatigue Syndrome' or other obfuscatory labels do need to be scrapped. We must attack this epidemic that is viral specific, develop programs to afford dignity to victims and not cast them off as outcasts. The health-care establishment must be required to take responsibility and acknowledge that viruses are alive and well in our hospital community."

— Meghan Shannon
San Diego, CFSD Support Group
THE FULL EXTENT OF THE DAMAGE

The Hidden Children of the Shoah
By Beverly Lowy

"Childhood is a time when a young person learns to love and trust. You were taught a brutal lesson at an early, early age, that the world of mankind was not to be trusted. You began a life without a childhood — call it 'hidden childhood’ — but you know you were old before you were young. You lost so much so early, even before you had a chance to know what was lost."
— BENJAMIN MEED, Founder/President American Gathering/Federation of Jewish Holocaust Survivors, addressing the First International Gathering of Children Hidden During World War II.

“We have kept silence for 46 years in the shadow of our parents and concentration camp survivors. Now, at last, we are coming out of hiding. We have been silent too long.”
— NICOLE DAVID, Hidden Child Committee.

They lived in convents, monasteries; they lived with Christian families, sometimes with one or both parents; sometimes they survived on their own. They lived in sewers, woods, attics, crawl spaces. They lost their names, their identities, their religion. And when they emerged from hiding, no one wanted to hear their stories. After all, they were not camp survivors, their lives had been spared, they had not really suffered. And so these silent children have kept their
Jewish boys are among the altar boys in this rare 1943 photo taken in a Belgian Jesuit school.

Left: A small part of my husband's large family, 1931. Only he (the baby, 2nd row), his mother (seated, 2nd row right) and his father (standing, 3rd row right) survived the Holocaust.

silence into middle age. Many will keep it the rest of their lives.

Because the world trivialized their or-deals, the hidden children began to believe that their experiences couldn't be terribly important. Daisy Miller, co-founder Child Survivors Group, Los Angeles, recounts that people who were in concentration camps often told her that she was "lucky."

"Can you imagine 'lucky'? We were not lucky at all. It was horror all the way. When people asked me about myself, I found there was very little interest really. Sometimes I would be at a gathering or at a dinner party with some people and they would ask, as everyone does, 'Where do you come from?'

"I'm from Europe. I was in Italy during the war—in hiding." And that person would very often say, 'Oh really? Would you please pass the sugar to me?'

The enormous outburst of laughter and applause that followed Miller's statement showed that it was a very common experience for the people at this gathering.

Miller then expressed what many of the other speakers implied: "Somewhere, we all have felt strangers in
every land—strangers everywhere.”

Abraham Foxman, National Director Anti-Defamation League of B’nai B’rith and himself a hidden child, spoke of remembering the “monstrous past that robbed us of our childhoods and cast shadows on our lives ever since.” It is important for them to remember, to break the silence that has enshrouded them for so many years; but how can lessons so early taught, so frightenedly learned—to lie, to trust no one, to always think carefully before speaking, to reveal no personal weakness, to constantly expect disaster—be reversed by people whose ages today range from approximately 47-62? The damage has been done and it affects not only those who were hidden children but their mates, children and even grandchildren. After nearly 50 years, the fallout from the Holocaust—referred to at the gathering as the Shoah—lives on.

I attended the conference not as a journalist but as the mate of a hidden child, seeking to understand the complex relationships that both my children and I have experienced with my husband—they for their entire lives, I for most of my adult years. Although I didn’t come away with any answers, I did gain a far deeper awareness of the factors that shaped his life and carried over into all of ours.

THE BARRIERS: STILL UNBROKEN

I collided with the barriers of mistrust and silence almost immediately. The first person I spoke with was a pleasant woman who asked where I was from. New York, I told her, and added that I was married to a hidden child but was not one myself. Then I asked where she was from. “North Carolina,” she replied, with a heavy European accent. “I meant, where in Europe are you from?” Silence. Thinking she might not have heard me, I repeated the question. More silence. I decided then not to ask anyone even the most innocuous questions.

So secretive are these survivors that I was surprised to see at the conference people I knew, some of them casually, others very well. One woman had been my closest friend in high school. Although I knew she came from Europe (this was in the late ’40s), I knew nothing of her experiences. She never spoke of them and I was hesitant to ask. Another attendee was the sister-in-law of a man I’d known later chose to repudiate or hide their Jewish identities. It’s small wonder that these children were confused and that so many later chose to repudiate or hide their Jewish identities.

Speaking with participants at the gathering, I sensed with a number of them an underlying fear: Even if they don’t really believe there will be another Holocaust, in some way being Jewish will always make them targets for hate or even death. Considering the increase in anti-Semitic incidents in this country and throughout the world, this fear is not unreasonable.

THE RIGHTEOUS AMONG THE NATIONS

An estimated 1.5 million children were slaughtered in the concentration camps. The estimates of hidden children are from 10,000 - 100,000. About 2500 were located by the Hidden Child Committee; approximately 1600 came to the conference.

There is no doubt that thousands upon thousands of Jewish children survived because so many Christians hid them. Sometimes whole families were hidden by people who risked their lives and the lives of their own children because they couldn’t just stand by. Abraham Foxman put it well. “Even in that hell called Holocaust there was goodness, there was love,
there was compassion." Yes, many of the Christian families received remuneration for hiding Jews, but no amount of money would have been sufficient had there not been true humanity and righteousness in these people.

Much has been said about the silence of the Catholic church during the Holocaust, but the fact remains that thousands of Jewish girls and boys were hidden in convents, monasteries and seminars as well as in the actual living places of nuns and priests. Rabbi Harold I. Saperstein was an army chaplain and with the first division to enter Belgium. He recalled Father Andre, a priest in a small Belgian town, who hid whole families of Jews in his lodgings. According to Rabbi Saperstein, throughout the entire German occupation, Fr. Andre never slept in his own bed. When he ran out of space, he placed families with trusted members of his congregation.

My husband, who was hidden in a seminary, recalls that priests were taken away to concentration camps as examples because the Germans knew they were hiding little Jewish boys. A woman I met at the conference spoke of finally getting her husband to return to Belgium in 1987 and to go to the monastery where he had been hidden. There they found a priest who remembered her husband. In the ensuing conversation her husband said, "You'll never know how it felt to be here knowing that I was the only Jewish boy." The priest replied, "When you were here, we were hiding 87 Jewish boys, just as we hid you."

The clergy who hid these children certainly did not receive any financial benefit. My husband speaks warmly of the priests who risked, and sometimes lost, their lives to save them. "Perhaps they were out to save our souls for the Church," he says, "but they certainly saved a hell of a lot of Jewish bodies."

I spoke with Grace Caporino, an English teacher who teaches high school and college students about the Holocaust. Grace serves on the Teachers' Task Force of the United States Holocaust Memorial Council and is a member of several Holocaust committees. A Catholic, Grace became involved in studying the Holocaust after reading Viktor Frankl's book, *Man's Search for Meaning*, shortly after she had brought two babies into the world. The book, she said, made her stop and think about just what kind of world she had brought children into.

At the conference, Grace was appalled when she heard over and over again how the Nazis used the catechism—something she could recite without thinking about it—most of her life—as a way of determining whether a child was really Catholic. If the child could not recite the catechism unhesitantly in front of a selected priest, that child was shot. Grace said she felt "anguish that identification was made in that way; that another religion was used as a test whether you live or die."

I mentioned to Grace that in reading over the *Hiding Experience Directory*, so many of the children appeared to have been saved by nuns and priests despite the non-intervention of the church. She replied that "institutions failed, not individuals."

So these children were saved by those who cared enough to risk dying for what they thought was right. One of the most interesting entries in the Directory was by a woman who, as a child in Budapest, was saved by two German soldiers. And despite the anti-Semitism in Poland, both then and now, among the Righteous Among the Nations, one-third are Poles. In cataclysmic times, stereotypes fall.
I entered the room with a mixture of trepidation and anticipation. This workshop was the main reason I had come to the conference. Although two oversized rooms were being used, both rapidly filled and people spilled out into the hall. Obviously there were many who felt as I did, who needed to exorcise the ghosts that haunted our lives. We wanted validation of our personal experiences and to speak with others who could relate to them. Here we could be candid, our honesty assisted by anonymity. I have always considered myself very bad at "trading war stories." Now I was anxious to begin.

The section leader told us that we would go around the room and that those who chose to could pass. (Several people did.) Then she began by saying: "The hardest thing to deal with, at least for me, is the wall."

Everyone understood exactly what she meant. No matter how much you care about your mate or want to share her/his life for better or worse, the wall is always there: Impenetrable, insurmountable, rejective of any real intimacy. No matter how long you live with this person, you will never really know her/him.

As we circled the room, each person who spoke spoke for all: Difficulties with trust; insecurity; excessive anger over trivia; inability to deal with rejection, real or imagined; refusal to speak of the hiding experience, except superficially; fear of abandonment; insensitivity to those who are closest to them. Also, many give the word "workaholic" new meaning while others find it difficult to stick to one career and either become proficient in many areas or drift. They make excessive demands on their mates and children without either being aware of it or mean-
In that room we heard many stories...some too terrible to write

Sixteen members of her family were hiding in an attic in Poland she had never seen. Sixteen members of her family had been hidden there during the Holocaust. Because she had been unable to get her family to really speak of their experiences, she resolved to get a group of them together to travel back to Poland and revisit the scene. At the last moment, her mother and one of her aunts decided they couldn’t bear to take this journey to the past; she went with several cousins, her remarkable aunt, Sally Frishberg, and Sally’s husband. The result is an incredibly moving documentary.

Unlike many documentaries, there are no “talking heads.” The viewer goes on a step by step journey to the small Polish village, seeing the same scenes of nearly 50 years ago, meeting many of the neighbors who had known Sally’s family and, eventually, the woman who hid them. Finally, we enter the attic itself. That 16 people could have occupied that space, never able to speak or walk for two years is incredible. The attic was not an enclosed room but a kind of crawl space, exposed to the elements, with large gaps between the slats. There was no running water or toilet facilities and the only light was through the cracks. In winter, the snow blew in, coating them. Two people died there.

When they finally left the attic, they had to be carried. They had lost the use of their legs. While they are in Poland, the group finds out the true stories of what happened to various family members—and how they were killed. Through everything, Aunt Sally is the translator as well as the backbone of the experience. Better than any I’ve seen on the subject, this film explores the conflicting feelings of the rescuers and makes you stop and wonder whether you, for any amount of money, no matter how compassionate you may be, would have been willing to risk the lives of everyone in your family to hide innocent fugitives when you knew that discovery would result in certain, probably very painful, death for all.

This documentary really is as it’s described: “A haunting, and ultimately liberating, voyage of discovery.” A wide distribution is long overdue.

—B.L.

Food took her to the hospital, saying the child was a relative. After surgery and two weeks in the hospital, she returned to the attic, only to discover that her entire family had been found by the Nazis and killed. For the rest of her life she has wondered why she was spared. The attendant guilt has been unbearable.

As far as therapy is concerned, many spoke of having their mates involved in individual and/or family therapy, sometimes for many years, but it never touched the root of the problem.

One of the men, a survivor of the camps married to a hidden child, said that he was able to cope better with his experience than she with hers. “I knew I suffered,” he said, “and the world knew I’d suffered. No one really believed she suffered. After all, she was safe in a convent.” Several other camp survivors agreed.

Another man spoke of his wife who, at three months of age, had been placed with a Christian family. After the war, when her parents came to retrieve her, she began to scream and fight, not wanting to go with these strangers. To this day, although they are now very old, she has never called them mother or father and when she speaks of them to others, she calls them “the kidnappers.”

In that room we heard many stories: Children hiding in the woods alone; hiding in sewers where they nearly drowned; children who sneaked out of their hiding places at night to glean whatever scraps they could from garbage pails. And there were some stories too terrible to write. But even the “good” stories were terrible if you see them through the eyes of a child.

As an example, I was going to relate my husband’s story, which, on the surface, was one of the “good” ones, but he is still not ready to have it told. However, I do have permission to tell the story of a longtime friend, whose experience closely parallels my husband’s. Nevertheless, the agreement is that I won’t use his real name. He, too, is ready to come out of “hiding.”

I must say here that both men were extra lucky because far fewer males than females are believed to have survived. Circumcision made Jewish males easy to identify.

On the face of it, “Manfred Blum’s” account does not sound very traumatic. He was with his parents, they lived with a family, they had adequate food and he was able to attend school. But this is what lies beneath the surface.

He was nine years old, living in Germany. His mother paid dearly for them to be secreted in a truck that was headed for France. There they were to be joined later by his father.

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lean over the developing tray, agitating a print with bamboo tongs. Slowly, two figures darken on the paper. A woman, her back to me, walks towards the door of a church. Behind the woman walks a small girl. They are mother and daughter. Both are wearing the wrap-around handwoven corte of the Guatemalan Indian woman. Their heavily embroidered huipiles are tucked into the skirt's waist beneath a woven sash. Long double braids hang down both backs. The mother's are plaited with ribbons ending in bows just above her hips. Mother and daughter wear western shoes: Imitation leather with low heels. Twenty or 30 years ago they would have walked barefoot.

These days, poverty, terror, and loss are central facts of these women's lives. The government has forced them to become resisters. In numerous, indigenous languages, words like “torture,” “disappearance,” “strategic hamlet” and “hunger,” have become new mainstays of their vocabularies.

This is also about 10 women from the United States, most of whom had never met before this trip. It happened in August, 1990 and we traveled together to visit the Guatemalan women. We, not the Guatemalans, set the terms of these encounters. Few of the Guatemalan women with whom we met could conceive of traveling the great distance to our terrain.

We went under the sponsorship of the Washington-based Guatemala Health Rights Support Project, a non-governmental organization that channels funding to community projects there and does educational work in the U.S. How we were chosen to participate, whom we would speak to when we got to Guatemala, and what kind of information we would share, was worked out from a feminist—and new—agenda for what we hoped would be a positive experience for both the Guatemalan and the American women.

Gretchen Noll, the tall, slender young woman who heads the Project, and Marie Moore, a red-haired, freckled Maryknoll nun who has worked for the past 20 years with Guatemalan women (often in exile), originated the idea of experimenting with a different type of visit. They no longer believed that the standard fact-finding mission—where presumed experts arrive, ask questions, fill notebooks, and leave—was the most useful. Women, Gretchen and Marie knew, could talk to one another; even women as foreign to each other as feminists from the U.S. and Indian women from Guatemala could share our stories.

The qualities they looked for in participants were: An active interest in popular
Embroidery of the overblouse tells village of origin and civil status.

struggle in Guatemala; a frustration at our government's role in perpetuating a terrorist state in that country; a feminist consciousness; the sense that we have something to give as well as learn; and a respect for women's stories—our collective memory.

We would travel and meet with women engaged in resistance. We would use public transportation wherever possible. And we would bring our own lives as offerings.

Along with Gretchen and Marie, we were Beth Brant, a grandmother and lesbian who calls herself a Bay of Quinte [in Eastern Canada] Mohawk and is a community worker in Detroit; Annette Finestone, at 73 a grandmother as well as the oldest in the group, who, with her husband, owns a small resort in upstate New York; white pony-tailed Harvard Professor Emerita of Biology, Ruth Hubbard, who lives in Cambridge and writes about feminist science and women's health issues; Sister Carmen Lazo, a Latina member of the Missionary Catechists of the Divine Providence, an educational order in San Antonio, Texas; Lauretta Rivera, a young Seneca woman who lives with her son and works with battered women and children in Minneapolis; Sunny Robinson, 40ish, a tall, capable, sophisticated geriatrics nurse in Boston who has long been involved with Central American solidarity work; Lisa Diane White, a handsome African-American freelance journalist, at 30 the youngest, who represented the National Black Women's Health Project in Atlanta, and me—age 54, photographer, poet, professor of women's studies and American literature, feminist, socialist, lesbian, mother and grandmother.

I lived most of my adult life in Latin America, first in Mexico, then in Cuba, and finally in Nicaragua. I am fluent in Spanish and, though I had never been to Guatemala, in 1969 I translated a book called Let's Go! by Guatemalan revolutionary poet Otto-Rene Castillo. Two years earlier, he and a woman named Nora Pais had been captured and burned alive by government forces.

Upon our arrival in Guatemala City, a grimy old colonial town, we are immedi-
ately aware of the violence that pervades the earth, the air, and is reflected in people's eyes. We are struck by how close it is to the surface when our taxi gets stuck in a tangle of traffic en route to our hotel. This is no ordinary traffic jam. It's stuck in a tangle of traffic en route to our hotel. This is no ordinary traffic jam. It's a demonstration. Crowds of people hold up their arms in V's for victory and chant in a mammoth show of support for Efrain Rios Montt, a demagogue, right wing general who was the country's president during one of its most violent periods. Although Guatemala's constitution prohibits an ex-president from running again, these demonstrators don't look like they'll take no for an answer.

Rios Montt is a hard core member of the Church of the Word, one of several politically right-wing fundamentalist sects that claim 30 percent —some say 50 percent — of Guatemala's once solidly Catholic population. As is true elsewhere in the world, religious fundamentalism spearheads the far right's repressive thrust. The General puts forth a rabid line of "law and order." It is depressing that many of the peasants and working poor who suffered most during his regime have been won over by his promises of an end to corruption, misery, fear.

Not surprisingly, political violence and that of ordinary crime seem to mesh here. We settle into our hotel and go to a street fair. Returning on the city bus, we are absorbed in recalling the smells of roast corn and herbs, children laughing on the ferris wheel. It is not until we are back at the hotel that Beth realizes that deft fingers have unzipped her small fanny pack, and taken all her money and prescription sun glasses. Then Lisa discovers that her cloth shoulder bag, worn inside her jeans jacket, has been slit and some of its contents stolen. We had been warned: Life in Guatemala is desperate; such thefts are common.

We are in Chimaltenango in the central part of the country. Women sit on tired wooden benches and folding chairs in a Presbyterian Church. The church is a three-walled structure with a dirt floor and a tin roof. "La Invasion," the Invasion —says Margarita, an Indian woman. She is not talking about 1944 or '54, when the C.I.A. backed invasions against the only democratically elected governments in this country's modern history. Neither is she remembering the Guatemalan government-sponsored scorched-earth and strategic-hamlet invasions of the early 80s that claimed 442 rural villages and resulted in 38,000 disappeared (almost half of the total disappeared in Latin America). La Invasion refers to 1492. Margarita knows we are on a mission of solidarity, and she is trying to bridge the distance between us by describing some well intentioned, if ignorant, Spanish women on a similar mission. They were talking about "re-enacting Columbus' voyage after 500 years," she says as her voice grows hoarse with emotion. "A celebration, or maybe a commemoration of some kind. They even mentioned three ships modeled after the Nina, the Pinta, and the Santa Maria. So she asked me again. Finally I told her, I am not going to be able to be gracious about your commemoration, because for us these 500 years have brought nothing but abuse, rape, genocide. The death of our cultures."

Religious fundamentalism spearheads the far right's repressive thrust

Back briefly in Guatemala City, we meet with a group of Indian women at the headquarters of an ecumenical Christian group called Confregua. Increasingly, the women who work through this organization run programs that address consciousness-raising, popular mobilization and the struggle for basic social needs. The conversation turns to the women's richly-embroidered dress. One of them is Josefinia, whose fingers smooth the complex weave that is her corte, three yards of dark fabric wound and wrapped about her lower body. The corte and particularly the huipil, the richly embroidered over-blouse, proclaim her region and village of origin and her civil status among other things. Two hundred-fifty different trajes (traditional dress) are worn throughout this country.

"I was eight years old," Josefinia says, "when my mother taught me how to weave the cloth. And then the embroidery." Her syllables are soft and clipped, the accent of an indigenous woman speaking in Spanish, her second language. "I was allowed to choose the colors that would give me joy. My traje is a part of who I am."

In another part of the country, unnamed to protect the people with whom we spoke, we spend an afternoon with a woman I will call Sara. In one corner of her room is a small altar upon which the blessed corn and Christian cross share equal space; the faint fragrance of copal incense is also present. A lone rooster crows, a counterpoint to the incessant noise of large trucks and low-flying planes.

Sara studied for a time to become a priestess in the Mayan tradition; then decided to become a nurse. "At the college there were four of us who insisted upon wearing our trajes," she tells us. "The administration tried to get us to westernize our dress the whole time we were there." She says that insidious racism, through belittling remarks and attitudes, is meted out to Quiche, Kechchi or Mam women who appear in traditional dress.
Market day near Lake Atitlan.

at government offices or other official institutions. Sara adds that in her work in hospitals her traje often paves the way for valuable healing connections with Indian patients.

Sara is Kekchi. She works among her people as a community nurse, and is involved in cataloging the herbs, roots and other plants cultivated for medicinal use by the old people. Indian women, Sara tells us, have different attitudes toward menstruation and menopause. From what she says we realize that long-term menstruation is a fairly recent western phenomenon. In Guatemala, between pregnancies followed by long periods of nursing, women live their fertile years without bleeding every month. Menopause marks the end of childbearing rather than menstruation.

Our group learns more about the importance of language when we return to the capital city and visit a modest colonial house. The house has been leased for a year by CENTROCAP, an advocacy organization. Two energetic Ladinas from wealthy families, Gloria and Eugenia, have been organizing women who work in private homes. This characterization—women who work in private homes—is one increasingly adopted by domestic servants in several Latin American countries.

In Guatemala, Indian women may work as maids from the age of eight and we see several women whose labor-lined faces suggest that they are 60 or older and have lived lives of constant toil. Some of the women study basic first aid, some read, others cut dressmaking patterns. But the shared experience grabs and holds us most profoundly when we gather in the open interior courtyard. Here, after brief formal introductions, one after another of these women step forward, eager to tell their stories.

They come fast, breathlessly and full of rage: I came to the city as a child; I did not know what awaited me here; my patron raped me; his sons think they have a right to my body. My patrona did not believe me when I told her what was going on. She accused my baby girl of wetting the bed. They accused me of stealing money I didn’t take and threw me out at night; I had nowhere to go. It’s hard to find work when you have a small child. My other children are in my village; I haven’t seen them in four months.

Women who live in the homes of their employers, who are on call 24 hours a day for an average $20 a month salary, women who are lucky to get one day off out of 15 and who enjoy no job security or benefits of any kind, have found a place at CENTROCAP where they get support and advocacy. A meeting programmed for one hour turns into two hours of testimonial sharing.

Gloria and Eugenia who run the center, will not be co-opted by the Guatemalan government agencies that falsely claim to address the needs of poor and working women. They know they have taken their stand on the side of danger. Both beg us to publicize the work they are doing “so that when the repression comes, and we know it will, we may be able to garner support from people on the outside.” Eugenia adds “We know we’re not going to get any help from our own class; we’re organizing the very women they treat as slaves.”

Virginia is my old friend. She is in her late 40s, Chilean by birth and Guatemalan by marriage and the fact that she raised her children there. We met 10 years ago when I lived in Havana and she arrived there from Guatemala in search of medical help for her oldest son who had
“DREAMWORLDS” HOW THE ME
By Fred Pelka

It's easy to understand why the executives at MTV wanted to suppress the work of professor Sut Jhally. Jhally, a media critic at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, is the creator of a 55-minute video called "Dreamworlds: Desire/Sex/Power in Rock Video," which examines images from more than 150 rock videos, minus the music. In it he concludes that MTV, especially in its heavy metal videos aimed at adolescent males, systematically uses women's bodies in ways that ultimately help to foster a social context which encourages violence against women.

In "Dreamworlds" most graphic sequence, Jhally juxtaposes the rape scene from the movie "The Accused," in which a woman is gang-raped on a pool table, with scenes from popular MTV videos like Bryan Adams' "Cuts Like a Knife," in which men shove, pull and wrestle women to the ground, until the viewer is unable to tell where the rape ends and MTV begins.
Women on MTV are most often used as props, put there to entice male viewers.

"It's a powerful sequence," says Jhally, "I wanted to make it an emotional experience."

Since its first broadcast in 1981, MTV has been both a financial mega-success and a cultural influence of extraordinary proportions.

Movies, television, advertising, all have been recast in ways directly attributable to the cable music network.

"Say those three letters," notes Jhally, "and people instantly recognize what you're talking about. It's a cultural aesthetic as much as a cable network. The impact has been astonishing."

Jhally is the first to admit that his analysis of MTV is not original, though it may be more systematic than anything previously attempted. And in parts his video may seem overlong and polemical.

With its repeated examples of the "dreamworld gaze," in which women's bodies are scanned and undressed and consumed by the camera, the video poses a dilemma often faced by anti-porn activists: How do you illustrate the ways pornography objectifies women without indulging in that same objectification?

How are women used in MTV? What roles do they play? What are the women of "dreamworld" like, what do they desire? Women on MTV are most often used as props, put there to entice male viewers. One frequently used technique is to simply flash images of women's bodies at random while a rock star sings his latest hit. From the way Rod Stewart's face is framed by anonymous female legs (while he jams his microphone up between them), to the mannequins-women of David Lee Roth, women are objects, with no identity apart from that bestowed on them by men. Women's sexuality is at once duplicitous and obsessive: Women center their lives around men and are always seeking sex, but they often say no when they really mean yes. Even when women
flee this male dreamworld, they hope to be pursued and recaptured—in one video a woman is pinned to a car hood; in another, women are imprisoned in a cage; in yet another, they are wild with sexual desire (for misogynist comic Sam Kinnson, no less).

Jhally ends his video with a discussion of the effect of this dreamworld on the real world. Superimposed over an MTV video of a young woman crawling toward the camera on her hands and knees are a few selected statistics: One in eight college women has been the victim of a rape, one in four the victim of an attempted rape; 84 percent of those raped knew their attackers; 57 percent of the rapes happened on dates; one in four rapes involves multiple attackers; 60 percent of men surveyed believed that women provoke rape by their dress and behavior; 30 percent thought it would do some women good to get raped.

It's no wonder then that MTV has demanded that Jhally recall and destroy all copies of "Dreamworlds," or else.

Sut Jhally earned his Ph.D. in communication from Simon Fraser University in Canada. He is the author of The Codes of Advertising: Fetishism and the Political Economy of Meaning in the Consumer Society (St. Martin's Press, New York 1987), and co-editor of Cultural Politics in Contemporary America (Routledge, New York 1989), as well as numerous articles on the media and advertising.

Rod Stewart's face, framed by anonymous female legs as he jams his microphone between them

What follows are excerpts from a conversation we held this summer, on the eve of the 10th anniversary of MTV.

FP: The dreamworld that you describe seems to resemble, in a lot of aspects, the dreamworld of pornography. The messages about rape, for example, that women enjoy being mistreated, that women can be reduced to their body parts.

SJ: A lot of it comes from pornography. And pornography also, I think, doesn't just exist in a vacuum. It also draws upon existing themes within the culture, it draws upon male fantasy, as well as creates it, it doesn't simply reflect it back. But no popular cultural form creates new meaning out of nowhere. Any popular cultural form, to be popular, must, in some way, draw upon values that already exist within the culture. And, in that sense, MTV could look very much like pornography. I normally hesitate to discuss it as the same thing, because I think there is a crucial difference. Pornography, when it's consumed, is consumed consciously, and it's normally a private act. [MTV] images are different, and I think the context of their consumption changes their meaning. The advertising images and the music video images are public, they're in spaces we live in on an everyday basis. They become almost invisible. They become the air we breathe, we don't even notice them, and they work their influence in that sense in an even stronger way than pornography.

FP: There's also a difference in intent, isn't there? Pornography is its own product, while MTV is trying to entice the viewer to buy something else, a record or tape or CD?

SJ: I think that may be true as well. Actually, you wouldn't find pornography like MTV, for the simple reason that, as you said, they're selling different things. If you were going to sell a videotape on sex, you wouldn't use MTV techniques. What MTV does is use sex to sell something else, which is why the images of sexuality are so fleeting. One of the things I focused on was how the camera consumes women's bodies, moves up and down, etc. But even

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"We Don’t Want a Country of Invalids and Fresh Graves"
Yugoslav Women Against War
By Jill Benderly

In July, I received this letter from my best friend from Yugoslavia, a lesbian feminist activist from Belgrade (the capital city of both the republic of Serbia and the Yugoslav federation):

Dear Jill,
The situation here is hell. I don’t know any more which is better or worse: Political campaigns like Bush’s, so highly programmatised up to details and psychological impressions; or this one where you cannot count on any rational principle we assumed is in the political game. I mean, people are dead on both sides, and both of these types of politicians inflict hate in me. It is enough to see Bush or Baker on TV, the way they hold their bodies, the color of tie they choose, the tone with which they say certain words....Or this one where, in one day, politicians change their decisions, the country is in chaos, control is lost, and lots of spontaneous groups of people are doing whatever they want: Taking guns, offense, defense....There is not one law or constitutional order which one can count on being respected.

It comes out in little things like this: There is a local order to send small planes to spray against mosquitoes. But in certain places pilots are afraid that someone will mistake them for army planes and shoot and they refuse to go on duty. So people cannot live on account of the mosquitoes!

Yesterday in famous Centinje (the old capital of Montenegro, way up in the mountains) there was supposed to be a religious meeting because of St. Paul or St. Peter’s Day. In the middle of the crowd there was an old Montenegrin partisan who fought in the last war, and he screamed, “Long live Tito and long live Yugoslavia!” That was the end of the religious part — men started to fight with each other, there were lots of guys dressed up as Chetniks (Serbian monarchist guerrillas) and the whole fighting started and two men were injured!

The famous traditional Yugoslav film festival from Pula is now a Croatian festival with guests invited from other republics. The new director of the festival, who is stupid like a wood, said that before the festival was everybody’s and therefore nobody’s-everybody’s is not an idea where everyone can start with equal opportunity. (Ah, the old communist ideas, some of them will never come...
back and I will have these sentimental journeys about them, and some of them were just great!

Every day a few men are dead and many hundreds of domestic animals, and if they don't stop the fighting in Slavonia there will be hectarises and hectares of untended crops — in the moment when the economic system is about to collapse.

Somebody banned the 17th meeting of Albanian Studies which was to take place in the Serbian-ruled province of Kosovo this year. And still there are 60,000 Albanians in Kosovo out of work.

Some Croats are claiming that the difference between the Ustashes (Croatian fascists) and Chetniks (Serbian monarchists) is that during the Second World War the Ustashes were killing on a more civilized level.

The woman dentist, who filled some of my cavities last week, said of a colleague, "Dr. Rodic is probably Croat!" Just that.

The mothers’ protests set off a wave of antivar actions across Yugoslavia

The Yugoslav civil war that broke out after the republics of Slovenia and Croatia declared independence on June 25 is my hell, too. A hell I adopted when Croatia declared independence on June 25. And still there are 60,000 Albanians in Kosovo out of work.

During the Second World War, Yugoslavia benefitted from its bargaining position between East and West. Yugoslav intellectuals described for us their experiences with the shortcomings of reform in a one-party system. They convinced me of the need for political pluralism. I told them my skepticisms about our two-party system.

Meanwhile, I heard ethnic distrust bubbling up from the "ordinary people" I met. This federal state of 24 million people, pulled together after WWI, is made up of 21 republics and autonomous provinces, the largest being Albanians in the Serbian province of Kosovo, and Hungarians in the Serbian province of Vojvodina.

The women's movement was unfolding. The winds of democracy blew hot and cold. I could smell the uncorked nationalist hatreds brewing. My feminist friends felt the chill when, at his inauguration, Croatia's new president Franjo Tudjman blessed an "unborn children."
A HUNDRED FLOWERS BLOOM

The year 1991 saw the mushrooming of women's initiatives. I flew on a short trip to Yugoslavia in June, in and out of the storm clouds that seemed a metaphor for the political tempest that would erupt only a week after I left. In that climate, the Yugoslavs hosted the Network of East-West Women, the first international conference of East European feminist activists. In Zagreb, the city where the first antiviolence hotline opened in 1988, Women's Aid Now opened a shelter for battered women and children in late 1990. They had to start the shelter the hard way — by occupying an apartment that was promised to them but seemed fated to go into some politician's private hands.

The new republican parliament in Belgrade has the lowest number of women representatives in all of Europe — four women, or 1.6 percent. In response, feminists founded a women's parliament to propose initiatives concerning women and to react with a women's perspective to all relevant measures in the "male parliament of Serbia." The women's parliament was started by ZEST, the name of the new women's party; the Belgrade Women's Lobby, and the feminist group "Women and Society." They have called for the formation of a women's ministry, and new laws on marriage and the family.

ZEST, an acronym for Women, Ethics, Cooperation and Tolerance, adheres to principles of "democracy and against all forms and aspects of discrimination and authoritarian power and authority in society, for peace, tolerance and cooperation among nations and peoples, and for the quality of life as the crucial aim of development." Programmatic goals include creation of a mixed economy, an independent judiciary, health-care reform, a health environment with clean technologies and alternative energy, radical reform of the educational system — especially regarding sex role stereotypes — equality of family life including "individual freedom to choose, according to his/her [sic] needs, a form of community life with equal legal treatment," autonomous and democratic culture, and equal opportunities for communication via the media.

Women's parliaments have also been established in Croatia and in the Serbian province of Vojvodina. A few Albanian Moslem women have begun a dialogue with feminists from other parts of Yugoslavia.

Zagreb women connected with the new feminist magazine Kreta put on a women's self-health weekend. They also initiated a Witches' Night on April 31, Walpurgis Night, the traditional date for a witches' sabbath. Masked women and children (some from the battered women's shelter) handed out leaflets and danced and sang at the site where witches were once burned at the stake.

In Belgrade, a lesbian/gay pride forum in June was sponsored by the newly-organized lesb/gay group Arkadia. In Ljubljana, the lesbian group LL and the gay group Magnus joined together to form the organization Roza Klub, which is publishing a gay magazine. Revolver.

TO BE OF USE

I have been living among Yugoslav feminists on and off for the past five years. They have brought me the high energy and outspoken honesty I remember from my first days in the U.S. feminist movement. The questions they ask me often feel like a shot of truth serum.

In June, I got my first real chance to return the favor. After hearing some vague accounts of problems among my feminist friends, I soon encountered them head on. The feminists in Zagreb threw a party for me that became an all-night, open discussion of problems between the four women's groups in town. I was happy to find myself of use, sitting between the four women's groups in town. I was happy to find myself of use, sitting at the table with them, listening and occasionally asking questions that seemed to affect them like truth serum.

My friends on all sides that some of this seems an unavoidable corollary of a movement with growing influence. As work branches out into multiple initiatives guided by different visions, strategies and personalities, we fall more easily into competition and resentment than into cooperation. This worries me, because the Croatian ruling party hopes to get an antiabortion amendment (protecting the sanctity of unborn life) into the courts. How can the four groups get together to organize the opposition to this? The power of a crisis conquers factionalism — for a few moments.

As Slavica Jakobovic from the Zagreb hotline/shelter for battered women put it, "Let's try to understand one another and respect each individual effort. Not to snub or undervalue one another. Not to fall into the old story about women's gossip being the only possibility for female subversion."

WOMEN FOR PEACE

As the civil war eats up Yugoslavia, the one bright hope is a peace movement started by mothers of soldiers. In July, Serbian parents marched on the Belgrade parliament demanding that their sons be sent home from army duty in Slovenia. That same evening in Zagreb, Croatian mothers demonstrated with banners reading, "Mothers of soldiers, unite! Save our innocent children! We don't want a country of invalids and fresh graves." The protesters were joined by eight busloads of Serbian parents. Together, Serbs and Croats confronted Gen. Zivota Avramovic, telling him, "We won't let you manipulate our children."

The mothers' protests set off a wave of antiwar actions across Yugoslavia. And feminists are playing a big part in peace marches in all republics. A delegation of women from the Italian parliament traveled throughout Yugoslavia on a peace mission, along with Yugoslav Greens and feminists.

In Belgrade, the Women's Party announced that it "resolutely and vigorously raises its voice of protest and embitteredness against all present and any future national-chauvinist madness and hate which leads to the destruction of society and universal violence. ZEST appeals to women to unite against all actions disastrous to peace and security on all levels — from family and closest environment to mass associations and presentations."

In Zagreb, feminists helped kick off a petition campaign saying, "We citizens of our republics, Europe and the world resolutely reject violence and war. We will communicate and cooperate regardless of political differences and regardless of how relations between republics are resolved. Individually and together, on local, regional or global levels, we will oppose those who call for war and plead for freedom, justice and prosperity for all."

Amen.
IN THE IVORY TOWER:
Aggression Studies on Animals

By Betsy Swart

In Winston-Salem, North Carolina, 90 macaque monkeys are fighting. The aggression they are displaying does not, however, come from a dispute arising naturally within a family group or social system. This aggression is deliberately created by scientists who are studying violence in a laboratory. The scientists are quantifying data. The animals are dying.

The grant that funds this experiment comes from the Department of Health and Human Services. J.R. Kaplan and S.B. Manuck of Bowman-Gray School of Medicine at Wake Forest University are inducing aggression and violence in a group of 30 monkeys by continually disrupting the animals' social groups and then regrouping them. This constant shuffling insures that the animals' living situation is always characterized by stress, competition and turmoil. The researchers are distinguishing and quantifying 27 different kinds of aggression displayed by this species of monkey in captivity. Grants like this are funded around the country to the tune of hundreds of millions of dollars each year. Often aggression is induced by electro-shock, by fear, or by pain. At Bowman-Gray, researchers are also dosing the animals with sedatives in an experimental attempt to block or attenuate the aggression they've created. So far, the experiment has been unsuccessful. The drug has shown no effect on the monkeys’ violence.

Young people, however, are not only perpetrators of violence — they are just as often its recipients. Officials estimate that between the ages of 16 and 19, 87 out of every 1,000 children in the state will become victims of violent crime. Many will not survive. Those who do will be traumatized for years. There are few adequate social services in North Carolina to alleviate this desperate condition. In fact, social service providers across the state are begging for money to fund their shoestring programs. But instead of funding worthy operations — such as hotlines, summer job programs and afterschool recreation programs — our federal funding agencies are pouring millions of dollars into aggression studies on animals.

Today, more teenage boys in the United States die from gunshot than from all natural causes combined. In 1988, 3,226 kids between the ages of 15-19 died from firearms. The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) has recently released a study on violence in the U.S. which includes statistics so staggering that it ought to occasion a national call to action on the part of the government and the American people. But, sadly, Health and Human Services Secretary Louis Sullivan has announced that the study will generate no new government programs. In fact, says Sullivan, the federal government will continue to see its role only as that of an “encourager” of local and private service organizations. Nevertheless, Sullivan’s HHS continues to pour millions of dollars into animal research on violence. (The Washington Post, 3/14/91)

Another example of how federal funding agencies under the aegis of HHS are missing their mark is in Massachusetts. The Alcohol, Drug Abuse, and Mental Health Administration (ADAMHA), one division of HHS, is spending more than a million dollars to study violence — primarily induced by alcohol and drugs — in monkeys. Tufts University psychology professor, Klaus Miczek, Ph.D., for example, has several federal grants. One — for $264,888 — sponsors experiments with stimulants and aggression. Among other things, Miczek compares the varying abilities high levels of stimulants

PHOTO: COURTESY FRIENDS OF ANIMALS

ON THE ISSUES WINTER 1991
Animals go through the highs, the tremors and the anxieties these drugs produce. Finally, they are subjected to organizing drug withdrawal as the experiment quantifies the degree and kind of violent behavior that takes place during the various stages of drug abuse. Another Miczek grant—this also in the six figures—subsidizes the addiction of monkeys to alcohol and attempts to determine the relationship between alcohol, testosterone and violence.

Meanwhile, in Massachusetts, there are more than 95,000 admissions each year to state-funded alcohol and drug treatment centers. Nevertheless, the state’s Division of Substance Abuse receives only $59 million annually (from state and federal agencies combined) to cover all of its services and operating expenses—youth programs, treatment, education, referrals and staff salaries. Of that total budget figure, only about $4 million—or about eight percent—can be spared for prevention programs.

At the Yerkes Regional Primate Center in Atlanta, the federal government is sponsoring an ongoing experiment in “sexual aggression in the great apes.” In this experiment, female chimps, orangutans and gorillas are locked into a “free male access” cage with males of their species. The experimenters then quantify the “frequency of copulation” in this cage from which the female cannot escape. This “copulation rate” is compared with that occurring in the wild or in a captive environment where the female is permitted some control over the situation. The conclusions are obvious. There is more male “sexual aggression” when the female has no control over her body or her environment—when she is rendered “vulnerable to the male by the absence of spatial prerogatives.” This experiment, while doing nothing to help women who are victims of battering and rape, costs the American taxpayer hundreds of thousands of dollars annually.

Outside the Primate Center, on the streets of Atlanta, 695 rapes were reported last year. Officials of the Sex Crime Unit of the city police force estimate that hundreds were not reported. The Rape Crisis and Battered Women’s Programs of Cobb County received nearly 1,500 calls in 1990 but were able to serve only 745 women. Cobb County programs receive only about $1,500 annually from federal agencies. For the rest of their operating needs, they must depend on state and county agencies as well as on private fund raising. They sponsor 5K runs, educational forums and bake sales to make ends meet. Down the street, the Yerkes Primate Center’s annual budget is in the hundreds of millions of dollars.

Why does our federal government look backwards to fund animal research while refusing to fund necessary social service programs? One reason is that the federal bureaucracy and the scientific bureaucracy think alike. Both systems buy into a kind of dualistic thinking that sets up artificial and destructive dichotomies (i.e. us/them; subject/object; emotion/intellect). These dichotomies work against both people and animals. Setting up these kinds of polarities enables granting officials to distance themselves from real problems happening to real people. It permits them to quantify statistics on violence inside a laboratory but to neglect a wounded child on the street outside. It gives them a way around the messy, emotional details of people’s lives and deaths by giving objective “hard” data priority over its subjective interpretation. Consequently, grants to study violence in captive groups of monkeys get funded. Social service programs, ethnographic studies and epidemiological studies don’t.

Dualistic thinking of this sort leads naturally into the objectification of entire social groups and populations. How much easier it becomes to refer to crime statistics among “Black urban youth” than to talk or think about real kids with real names and real street addresses. In fact, objectification renders these “Black urban” kids as nameless and faceless as the “captive group of male macaques” in the North Carolina lab. The same impersonality that makes the animals “research tools” makes the kids nothing but statistics on crime sheets or toe tags in the morgue.

But this thinking serves a purpose. It enables the scientific and the grant-giving bureaucracies to take problems out of their social context. Grants such as those described above don’t do anything to solve human problems. But they are certainly publishable. And the statistics they contain provide a reassuring illusion that something is actually being done to meet pressing social needs.

But to try to solve this country’s violence problem inside the sterile confines of a laboratory with artificially created animal models instead of in the ghettos, single-parent homes, and unemployment lines is the height of lunacy. Researchers are actually spending time and money attempting to find a chemical cure for violence. Are our federal funding agencies and our scientists just misguided and bungling? The director of a mental health program in a major East Coast city thinks so. He once remarked that when researchers and bureaucrats are confused, they pump dollars into animal research.

But, more probably, the cause of the gross misappropriation of funds is that animal research is a very profitable business, bringing big bucks to universities, pharmaceutical companies and other industries. Unfortunately, there is little money to be made providing social services. Consequently, those hurt most by animal research—besides the animals—are the elderly, the poor, minorities and others who are dependent on social programs.

Bureaucracies that are grounded in dualistic and impersonal policies are perpetuating the problem of violence in this country—violence toward both people and animals. What is the solution? First, our culture must devalue violence. We teach our children that war is noble, we encourage them to play with war toys, we foster nationalistic pride. Then why are we surprised when those same children cast off the toy guns and replace them with the real thing? We will not eradicate violence as long as we continue to call some forms of it acceptable. In the lab or on city streets, violence only breeds more violence.

Furthermore, we must replace polarized thinking with empathetic thinking. Imagination, identification, and creativity are effective problem solvers. Dichotomizing, labeling and distancing are not. The former qualities set up bridges between people of diverse groups, thereby opening up communication and increasing imaginative possibilities. The latter make communication and understanding impossible.

Our culture needs alternatives to violence that are real and workable. We must call on the Secretary of Health and Human Services to develop grant lines that will help create alternatives to violence. In the meantime, we must foster a new ethic that condemns all violence as unacceptable on the street, on the battlefield, or in the laboratory.

Betsy Stewart is Director of Special Projects in the DC office of Friends of Animals. She has written and spoken on a wide variety of animal protection issues.
Andrea Dworkin is, without question, a great writer, a writer's writer: as "masterful" as Miller or Mailer; as passionate as Fanon, but as gentle, as world-weary, as Baldwin; as much a troubadour as Whitman or Ginsburg or Kerouac — only more so; philosophical — no, far more philosophical than either Camus or Sartre; raw and rough and cynical and fierce, really fierce, like Genet or Celine; pitiless, without mercy, as she challenges God on His lack of "mercy" (the book's title is from a passage in "Isaiah"); blasphemous, like Baudelaire or Rimbaud, when they were new in the world; patient and thorough, like de Beauvoir or Eliot; Lessing; brave, heartbreakingly brave, like le Duc or even Levi — except the truth is, Dworkin really has no exact predecessor; I only wanted to put her in her place, where she belongs.

Reading Dworkin is like reading something the visionary Cassandra might have written — had she escaped her life as Agamemnon's slave-prostitute and turned military tactician, had she escaped from History and become an "avenging angel," a 20th-century Joan of Arc, leading an army of women, an "army of raped ghosts" into heroic battle. ("We surge through the sex dungeon where our kind are kept, the butcher shops where our kind are sold; we break them loose; Amnesty International will not help us, the United Nations will not help us. The World Court will not help us; so at night, ghosts, we convene; to spread justice....They [the rapists] don't stop themselves, do they?....[We must] stop them....One day the women will burn down Times Square; I've seen it in my mind; I know; it's in flames....I am an apprentice: sorcerer or assassin or vandal or vigilante; or avenger; I am in formation as the new one who will emerge.


Something is wrong, obscenely wrong here and it's what *Mercy* is all about. However, *Mercy* is not really "about" any one thing; like all great books, Mercy (with its experimental and compelling use of language, its power to transform how we perceive reality), is greater than the sum of its parts. For example, we would not ask of Dostoevski's *Crime and Punishment* or for that matter, Richard Wright's *Native Son*: "But what's his point? Is he saying that murder is justified?"

*Mercy* is not about women killing men; it is about the far more pervasive phenomenon of men killing women, in every sense of the word, and getting away with it; about women, including many feminists, supporting and justifying their right to do so. The book opens and closes with two such academic, feminist voices. ("It's, of course, tiresome to dwell on sexual abuse. It is also simple minded....I like doing it and the men I know like doing it to a woman; they are pro-gay. I'm an ally and I will get tenure....I am not simple-minded. Rape so-called is [not my] problem.")

The problem is that most women, including *Mercy*'s narrator, would rather be raped and/or killed — anything to avoid having to kill a man in self-defense. ("If I'm attacked I don't really believe in hurting him or anyone. I never wanted to kill anybody and I'd do almost anything not to."

Dworkin's *Mercy* is part automythography, part prose-poem, part meditation on the themes of time and memory, sexual violence and sexual pleasure, the Holocaust, American racism, Vietnam, the nature of political freedom — and about being born after Auschwitz, after the atom bomb. ("I was born in 1946 in Camden, New Jersey, down the street from Walt Whitman's house, Mickle Street, but my true point of origin as a sentient being, is Auschwitz II, or the Women's Camp, where we died, my family and I....I consider Birkenau my birthplace. I consider that I am a living remnant.")


Dworkin's is the first book to take us inside the experience of serial sexual abuse. This happens every day, but most women quickly forget, minimize, misunderstand it, never sure it has really happened, never sure that we ourselves haven't "provoked" or "wanted" it. Or that we haven't "enjoyed" it. Dworkin reminds me of things I've made it a point to forget: what it's like to be treated like a "cunt," like prey: At age nine, in a darkened neighborhood movie theatre, at home, by our Daddies, from infancy on, in grade school, high school, college, and then, forever after, by the boys we ourselves are crazy about.

Dworkin is not "anti-sex", only "anti-sexual abuse," her descriptions of female sexual desire and pleasure are Lawrencean but not pornographic, polymorphous, but not perverse. ("We hold each other the way fire holds what it burns; and everyone looks because you don't often see people who have to touch each other or they will die.")

She shows how it feels to be sexually violated, what it means, what it does to us. ("Years later there are small suicides, a long, desperate series of small suicides....If you are adult before they rape you...you've got all the luck; all the luck there is. The infants; are haunted; by familiar rapists; someone close; someone known; but who; and there's the disquieting certainty that one loves him; loves him. There are these women — such fine women — such beautiful women — smart women, fine women, quiet, compassionate women — and they want to die; all their lives they have wanted to die; death would solve it; numb the pain that comes from somewhere....Nobody remembers the worst things....There's no words for the worst things....It's the only thing God did right I seen on earth: made the mind like scorched earth. The mind shows you mercy.")

Dworkin's narrator, like the author herself, came of age during the anti-Vietnam War movement. Dworkin describes the immolation of the Buddhist monks during the Vietnam War: "You'd see a plain street in Saigon and suddenly a figure would ignite; a quiet, calm figure....He burned himself to say there were no words...because the war was wrong and words weren't helping....I will undergo the anguish there, an anguish to communicate anguish...there are no words."

Dworkin still communicates the anguish with words. I hope she is heard before the fire next time.

—Phyllis Chesler


*Deborah, Golda, and Me* is as "chutzpahik" [very nervy] as its title suggests; it is also modest, moving, informative and exceedingly reasonable. Letty Cottin Pogrebin treasures Judaism, traditional family life and feminism. Precisely...
because these traditions matter so much to her, Pogrebin carefully, and with great dignity, challenges both Judaism and feminism, the United States and Israel, women as well as men, in ways that are even-handed, compelling and self-revealing.

Pogrebin is the Mother of all Raleighettes, those formidable energetic women of my tribe, who sanctify daily life with their well-set tables, home-cooked meals and inspired holiday preparations. For Pogrebin, whose mother died when she was only 15, this is also a way, as she says, to keep her mother nearby, alive.

But there was also Pogrebin’s father: An unemotional, ambitious, and supremely efficient man who, like our ex-President Ronald Reagan, wasn’t “there” for his children; a man utterly devoted to his own comfort, surface appearances, and above all, to secrets. For example, both Letty’s father and our ex-President neglected to tell their “new” children that they actually had older, half-sisters from a previous, but never-before-mentioned paternal marriage.

In this book, Pogrebin breaks her own silence for the first time and “tells” some family and tribal secrets. In so doing, she questions the religion and customs of the fathers that unthinkingly, arrogantly, devotes and renders invisible Pogrebin’s (and all our) mother’s contributions, and at the same time, hide Pogrebin’s (and all our) father’s failings, even sins. She does this, acknowledging that some women are as invested in covering up the sins of the fathers as men are. Pogrebin’s critique of American Jewish organizations is perhaps too mild; most non-profit and volunteer organizations in America, tend to cater to wealthy men and to exploit, humiliate or ignore those who are less wealthy. Their mistreatment of women and women’s issues — by both men and women — is so pervasive as to be invisible.

Pogrebin’s book confirms the experience of Jewish women throughout the 20th century. She documents the ways in which the most profound anti-Semitism can be disguised in political terms as anti-Zionism — by socialists, feminists, capitalists, you name it. She delves into the profound sexism among Jews and Zionists, both in America and in Israel, and, of course, among non-Jews everywhere, both male and female. Finally, as she points out in example after example, there exists everywhere the most self-destructive exclusivity, racism and intolerance (for instance, the male resistance in the synagogues toward women’s desire for spiritual equality).

Here, Pogrebin is talking about both Jewish and African Americans and above all, among many (not all) Many Jews, Christian and Muslim fundamentalists.

Pogrebin writes lovingly, respectfully, about women’s recent struggle to pray at the Western Wall with a Torah, and about the creation of a feminist seder. She also writes very persuasively — though I wish it were with more historical perspective — about women in Israel and the importance of the Israeli-Palestinian peace process.

This is a brave and useful book.

—Phyllis Chester

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**ON THE ISSUES WINTER 1991**

**Review of Women’s Words**


This important and accessible study marks a coming of age for feminist scholarship and oral history. As scholars have moved beyond the celebration of women’s experience, particularly those women silenced or ignored in traditional accounts, new and troubling questions have arisen about the practice of “research by, for and about women.” Interviewing women about their lives is not a simple process and the purpose of this book is to explore the complexities inherent in the collection of oral narratives, their interpretation and eventual dissemination to the public. In 13 essays by contributors from across the disciplinary map, this book takes up broad themes: The ways in which language is shaped by gender, class and race; the negotiated relationship between the researcher and the narrator; interpretive conflicts between researcher and text, reader and text; the ethics of feminist practice and the possible contradictions between scholarship and advocacy. This clearly written book will be indispensable in history or women’s studies classes as a guide to the theory and methodology of feminist oral history.

The first of the volume’s methodological preoccupations — the interview as a linguistic as well as social and psychological event — is explored in the first three essays. Each explores the interview process, one that is shaped by women’s patterns of non-verbal interaction as well as language. Gwendolyn Elter-Lewis draws on her research on older Black women professionals’ life stories to reveal how their representation of self is shaped through narrative styles particular to Black women. Her sociolinguistic analysis challenges the feminist oral historian to attend to differences — of
class, race, and ethnicity — as well as the similarities between women. Issues of interpretive conflict and authority frame the book's second section. After the interview, who decides what was meant? Essays from different national contexts — Guatemala, France, and the United States — explore different points of potential interpretive conflict, the relative authority of the narrator, the scholar, and the reader to determine meaning. Part three challenges feminists' assumptions that rejecting traditional research models and perspectives grounded in neutrality and distance for sisterhood, empathy and commonality has resulted in adequate methodology. Essays by Judith Stacey, Sandra Hase and Daphne Patai point to the ethical dilemmas generated by a research model that does not examine carefully inequalities of power, structural and personal between researcher and subject. Nowhere is feminist methodology feminist and one's subject a sister does not resolve the messy questions generated by research across class, race and culture. The fourth and final section of the book continues the debate about the possibilities for ethical research by discussing several alternative models that propose collective work, collaboration, empowerment and community-based projects. Three essays focusing on very different research areas — the El Barrio Popular Education Program, a Montana public history project on women, two projects on working-class women and men, discuss the possibilities for researchers to subvert their positions of privilege by developing common political ground with the communities they study. The final essay, by Sherrie Leigh on Palestinian women directly confronts the possible contradictions between advocacy and scholarship, issues raised directly by sharing a political perspective and agenda with the community she studies. The editors, representing two generations of feminist oral historians, are careful to affirm the continuing value and democratic potential of both oral history and feminist practice. The long-term value of oral history will surely remain what it has been from the beginning: The expression it gives to our abiding interest in, and sympathy with, other lives, times, places. However, they argue this sympathy needs to be interrogated to better inform the objectives of oral history research and the nature of the connection between researcher and researched. In the afterward, the editors remind us that the work — the words of the speaker — must come first, before criticism, analysis and utilization and that the interviewers' interest in refining their professional tools should not disguise the speaker.

Barbara Balliet
Barbara Balliet is Associate Director, Assistant Professor Women's Studies, Rutgers University.

FEMINISM WITHOUT ILLUSIONS: A CRITIQUE OF INDIVIDUALISM by Elizabeth Fox-Genovese (University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, NC) I started Elizabeth Fox-Genovese's Feminism Without Illusions the day the Supreme Court made a sham of free speech and trampled the rights of woman reliant on federally-funded (Title X) clinics for decent, full-option care.

Where, I wondered, was the spontaneous show of fury? Where was the collective sisterhood? Would the women's movement again put women of lesser means, or would we finally make our actions match our rhetoric to proclaim a justice to use an injury to all? A book on feminism — especially one that critiques the individualist tendencies of so much of the movement — sounded like the perfect antidote. Unfortunately it was not. Feminism Without Illusions is an arrogant, ponderous, heavy-handed and politically questionable body of work. Take the author's treatment of abortion. According to Fox-Genovese, "The fight for women's right to choose is being misguided wages in the name of women's absolute right to their own bodies and, in fact, on the grounds of reproduction as a private matter. It qualifies as ironic since so much feminist energy has been devoted to an insistence that familial relations are not private matters, that the personal is political, and that women have the right to abortion, war, the death penalty, nuclear proliferation and corporate-generated pollution. For Fox-Genovese discounts the fact that particular situations require particular solutions, that one rigid, "non-individualistic" approach cannot be imposed across the board because real people will be hurt.

Abortion, however, is not the only
bugaboo in Fox-Genovese's treatise. Pornography, that ever-divisive issue, is back in Feminism Without Illusions and is targeted as a prime example of feminism's capitulation to the individual's right to consume and exercise free speech. The curtailment of pornography, which does depend upon the implementation of standards, is, ultimately, a matter for the collective — and, accordingly, a matter that requires collective principles," she writes.

"What do we mean by pornography? The simple answer is sexually explicit, violent materials intended to provoke (frequently sadomasochistic) sexual response. Or, to paraphrase what has been said of art, I don't know much about it, but I know what I hate."

Without repeating the pro's and cons of the pornography/free speech debate, it need only be said that in 1969 more than 170 attempts to ban books took place across the United States. Among the offending works: Webster's Ninth Collegiate Dictionary, Our Bodies, Ourselves, Huck Finn and Catcher in the Rye. One would think this would give Fox-Genovese occasion to pause and take stock. But she does not. Nor does she confine herself to issues taken up by feminist activists. Instead, feminist history and theory, poststructuralism, postmodernism, the "censor" as the basis of education in U.S. colleges and universities, and ethnic studies come in for a lashing. In the process, she throws some punches at many respected feminist thinkers, among them: Riane Eisler, Linda Gordon, Gertrude Himmelfarb, Joan Kelly, Gerda Lerner, Ruth Milkman, Sally Ruddick, Joan Scott, Dale Spender, Christine Stansell and Louise Tully. But it is not that Fox-Genovese argues with these women that rankles. Rather, it is the tone of moral superiority she employs, as if she has a monopoly on political correctness.

This attitude permeates the book to such an extent that even when she airs provocative ideas I find myself wanting to dismiss her. And that is a problem, for if feminism is to flourish, if feminism is to take on the Supreme Court and demand that women's rights be affirmed and expanded, we need to engage in as much healthy, causing debate as we can muster. Fox-Genovese needs to be taken on politically, for the debate over which direction feminist politics should travel — if it can be done without racism — can infuse tired, longtime feminists and confused newcomers with energy and fire. To do otherwise cedes power to the misogynists, the Supreme Court majority and the Bush mentality.

The debate over how much and when to stress individual rights and where and when to draw ourselves together as communities of conscience is an urgent one. If Feminism Without Illusions gets rapid and factual this discussion will have served a valuable purpose. I only wish it were less abstractly written so that a wider group of readers would pick it up.

—Eleanor J. Bader

GLORIA GOES TO GAY PRIDE by Leslea Newman (Allyson Wonderland Book, Allyson Publications, Barren, MA: $7.95 paperback)

This is a good introduction for the preschool set to the annual lesbian and gay pride/freedom events held in many U.S. cities in June. To establish the legitimacy of the day and draw on what children already know, Newman sets it in the context of other holidays like Valentine's Day and Halloween.

Her tone is upbeat, emphasizing feelings of excitement and community. After several scenes of supportive neighbors, Newman depicts a group of anti-gay protestors and Gloria's reaction to them. This is actually the most dramatic scene in the book, which is more a series of images than a plot-driven story, and Newman handles it well.

"Why do they want us to go away? I ask. Some people think Mama Rose and I shouldn't have such each other, Mama Grace says... Some women love women, some men love men, and some women and men love each other. That's why we march in the parade — so everyone can have a choice."

There are several good books about children with gay parents, among them: Lots of Mommies, When Megan Went Away, and Jenny Lives With Eric and Martin. But Newman is the first author I know of to write specifically about children adopted by or born to lesbian couples, and her stories are particularly welcome in such households. (Her first children's book, Heather Has Two Mommies, is about a child conceived through donor insemination.)

Newman has long been a writer of adult books, and to some extent Gloria reflects this. At 35 pages, the book is too long to hold many preschoolers' interest, and some of the images, like a sign reading, "Gay Mechanic Healing the Plant," are too sophisticated for them. Newman and others like her keep writing, though, more and more children will have a richer, more positive, and more realistic image of life in lesbian and gay households.

—Tracy Scott

MEMORY OF KIN Edited by Mary Helen Washington (Anchor Books, Doubleday, NY: $12.95 paperback)

Above all else, Memory of Kin is about love, love of family and loving family. The short stories and poems of this collection are not about sentimental love, but the kind that empowers a daughter to make a religious choice that all but rejects her minister-father; the kind that pulls an estranged piano player back into the musical community; and the kind that gives writers space to tease without alienating one another.

Subtitled Writings about Family by Black Writers, such a dry description fails to capture the stunning breadth of this fourth collection by Mary Helen Washington, an English professor at the University of Maryland. Including male writers for the first time, the prose and poetry here deal with the relations between extended family members, aunts and uncles, even grandparents. The historical range is great, stretching from the late-19th century fiction writer Charles Chesnutt to Rita Dove, the 1987 Pulitzer Prize winning poet.

While a few stories, such as James Baldwin's "Sonny's Blues" or Ernest Gaines' "The Sky is Gray" have been widely anthologized, most are called from lesser known works of their authors. It is helpful that Washington has interspersed biographical information throughout the stories, giving us a sense of the lives that inform the writing. Most unusual for a popular anthology, she has included critical commentary that places the stories in a literary perspective.

Outstanding here is John Wидeman's "Little Brother," told completely in dialogue and Black English. It is a masterful piece of storytelling — devoid of the narrator's voice, yet utterly revealing of the physical details and the circumstances of the characters' lives and emotions. With deft artistry, names, relationships and activities are gradually revealed — much as they would be in a conversation — until the picture is whole. Another triumph is...
Andrea Lee’s “Mother.” Its richly nuanced prose is intensely poignant and reminiscent of the best of Baldwin when she describes the visit of a mother and her young daughter to the home where the father has committed suicide.

Inevitably, in any collection of stories there are less successful works. One is John McCluskey’s “Forty in the Shade” with its pointless structural complications and inconsistent voice. This undercuts an otherwise entertaining tale about Caesar, a slave who bought his freedom but carried with him a note he couldn’t read that said, “Return this boy to me.” Another near-miss is Alexis DeVeaux’s short-short story, “Adventures of the Dread Sisters” which, like its characters who are stuck in traffic on the Brooklyn Bridge, is too bogged down in its plot or character development to go anywhere.

In her commentary, Washington attempts to endow this story with a political significance that eludes me. But that may explain its inclusion: The two principals are lesbians, and the important point may be that these women, too, are members of the Black family. Whatever Washington’s reason, the story’s presence attests to the broadness of her definition of family.

The notion that poetry is inaccessible is given the lie here. The general reader can immediately connect with the grittiness of Lucille Clifton’s father with “the pocket that was going to open/and come up empty any Friday,” or with the incandescence of Rita Dove’s description of dawn shattered by the field of slaves who “spill like bees among the fat flowers.” The poems need no commentary, and Clifton has indeed told it like it is and we should all be delighted that she has shared the telling with the rest of us.

—Beverly Lowy

GAY VOICES FROM EAST GERMANY by Jurgen Lemke; English-language version edited by John Borneman (Indiana University Press, Bloomington and Indianapolis, IN; $35 hardcover)

The Berlin Wall came tumbling down November, 1989. Reunification of the post-World War II Germanys heralds the rebirth of a single German culture, and as part of that, one German gay subculture. The 14 compelling interviews constituting Gay Voices from East Germany were conducted between 1983 and 1988 and chronicle gay male experience prior to the dramatic events of the last two years. What is apparent from this collection of interviews is that 50 years of East German socialism and highly-controlled exposure to the West did not make gay life behind the iron curtain substantially different from its Western counterpart. Gay men come out of the closet, fall in love, face homophobia, work and make lives for themselves.

Although social, economic and political environments in which these men lived for 50 years seemed different, Judeo-Christian cultural legacies die hard. Erich, an 84-year-old survivor of Concentration Camp Sachsenhausen, notes that the Nazis “had to organize
hatred against Communists and Jews...with a massive propaganda effort,” whereas “whole centuries of Christianity handed them home hatred on a platter.” Eighteen-year-old Theodor echoes Erich, saying that prejudices now “come from there not being enough explanation about it, but also because there’s a lot of history connected to it, the Nazi era, the church.” The Holocaust became an ominous point of reference on either side of the Wall.

All of the accounts touch on specific instances of day-to-day homophobia. Theodor, who remains in the closet at his restaurant job, endures ignorance and condescension toward gay men among his co-workers. Although homosexuality in East Germany was legalized in 1968, Dieter’s sexual orientation leads to his divorce and the court-ordered loss of visitation rights with his children. Even so, he must continue to make child support payments.

Author Jurgen Lemke shows that homophobia may come from within, too. Gay men and lesbians have internalized centuries of ridicule and persecution. The result is a paradox between the liberating and positive sense of self that incites people to come out and the adopted self-hatred that lies deeply embedded. Rheinhold, a dairy farm worker, foresees a grim end should his wife and children learn of his homosexual life. “I’d hang myself...I couldn’t handle the disgrace.”

Many of the subjects, especially the older ones, use vague terms to describe their sexual orientation — such as “it” and “like that” — as if there might be guilt by association. Neither a gay interviewer nor his gay-themed book made it safe to say the word.

The shame implicit in such avoidance often overpowers the charm of the older men’s youthful remembrances, the triumph of surviving the Holocaust, and the startling, plain wisdom of each man. Lemke does not use his own voice. He has written the interviews as autobiographical narratives. Such a format compromises dramatic tension.

The stories lack the sensory excitement of prose or poetry because people giving oral histories generally omit the role of the five senses in their tales.

Each of eight American scholars and Germanists has written an introduction to the stories he translated. The introduction by John Borneman, a lecturer in anthropology and political science at the University of California, San Diego, is informative and provocative. “Our expectation of a ‘socialist difference’ is difficult to reconcile,” he writes. “In part we can avoid this reading discomfort by not falling victim to the Marxist assumption that our most essential identities are economically determined.” Borneman, seeks to define deep divergent trends between American and East German gay experiences. His supporting rationales, while interesting, seem infirm. Since its 19th-century conception, “homosexuality” and its counterparts “heterosexuality” and “bisexuality” have become crude rhetorical devices used both authoritatively and popularly to confine human behavior. But sexuality is fluid and seeps out of the partitions. The notions of cultural averages and majority norms defy reality. When it comes right down to it, difference is the norm and may demand a wholly new way of considering humanity.

—Benjamin Sonstein

Benjamin Sonstein is a San Francisco-based writer working on a non-fiction account of German and Austrian migration through France during World War II.

**MUSIC REVIEWS**

**MONICA LOWY** (Chimes at Midnight Productions; 99 Bank St., New York, NY 10014, Suite 4A); Cassette, $7.98 ppd.

Beautifully blending truth and technique, Monica Lowy makes an original statement in contemporary music on her first recording. On Monica Lowy, folk rock is the metier for her emotive voice and its incredible melodic instincts. The songs on the tape have many antecedents from the ‘60s and ‘80s but her authentic sound is her own. If folk rock has a collective unconscious, these songs interpret it for us. The strong lyrics are written by Lowy and are social commentary via personal concerns. Mark Nastasi writes the music and balances Lowy’s complexities with crafted guitar rhythms.

“A Good Liar’s Hard to Find” opens the tape with an acerbic punch. Trapped by the hypocrisy of a lover Lowy sings: “You spread your words like butter/It’s always worked before/Now success is poison/There’s no exit on this floor.” The strength resides in Lowy’s impassioned voice. Although the music is slower to reveal itself, the guitar supports the emotional impact of the singing.

Shifting perspective, “A Million Colors” is the positive flipside to the black and white world of relationships. Here, Lowy and her musicians hit on all levels. The successful result is a melody comprised of great vocal and instrumental flourishes akin to the 10,000 Maniacs. Speaking to the changes of a promising relationship and the fears that ensue, Lowy sings: “It was much easier when I knew there was nothing/Now I know there’s something all the time.” It’s an expression of one woman’s personal intensity saying that normalcy isn’t what it’s cracked up to be and what do I want anyway? Hope is difficult to negotiate in a changing world. Percussive accents and electronic touches meld with the harmonies of Lowy and Nastasi to create a memorable song.

The sarcasm and mannerism on “Who’s To Blame?” share Elvis Costello’s mordant sense of humor. Lowy’s voice deftly moves higher, matched in dexterity by her lyric.

Paradoxes abound: Commerce and Christmas, Visa bills becoming paper planes, the reality of acid rain filling begrudging ups, not to mention the threat of war. Folk meets post modernism. The acoustic guitar work shines with great twists. Tambourine punctuates the deadpan humor. “Crystals that signal a new age/Hang in the shop half-price today...” Even gurus have to pay the rent.” Exploitation comes full circle and, as Lowy gracefully sings, “Who’s to blame?”

“Distinguished and Postponed” is the most riveting. It is a plaintive call for help from the numbing effects of personal depression, the alienation of one woman, but implied is the alienation of all women and, perhaps, all of us who live in this disjointed time. “Please open my eyes/Pull the pennies out.../...A stone’s throw away from an ordinary day.” The nimble bass leads the dramatic chord changes. The chilling quality of the song forces the experience effectively. Lowy’s voice haunts with the same vulnerability as a Janis Joplin song.

Monica Lowy ripens folk rock. It’s an emotional journey traveling an intellectual route. Her delivery abounds in honesty and that translates into an arresting performance. Although the music opts at times for precision rather than risk it works as a formidable partner.

—Maura Grotell

Maura Grotell is a writer and critic living in New York City.

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and definition are not reality but attempts to elucidate aspects of reality through artificial situations, they can inform us. If there are seeds of female unrest and resistance, there is also the beginning of minimal institutional understanding. The New York Times reported that following the lead set by the Governor of Ohio,
William Schaefer of Maryland is computing the prison sentences of eight women convicted of killing or assaulting men who battered them. Women's rights groups, criminal justice groups and legislators in several states have begun seeking clemency for women now in prison for such killings. "Some of those stories are hard to believe - difficult, horrible stories," said Governor Schaefer, adding that some of the women would probably have been killed themselves if they had not struck back.

However well-intentioned, these few cases are small flickers of light in a very dark tunnel. If a film merely depicting a fantasized version of a woman standing back against her attacker can be threatening, the reality strikes a blow at the heart of not only the established power structure but of most women themselves. Alone, isolated from each other, facing economic inequality, lack of support services for their lives and their children, continual assaults on multiple political fronts, women are in a consistently defensive posture - a posture requiring that most energies be used for personal survival as opposed to pro-active political strategies that can benefit their sex. Additionally, there are many voices in the media that continue to blame feminists for the problems that women face. Camille Paglia, Associate Professor of Humanities at Philadelphia College of Performing Arts, who has enraged feminists for her theories of classical biological determinism, becomes a media heroine for writing things like "Rape is a mode of natural aggression that can be controlled only by the social contract," and "Modern feminism's most naive formulation is its assertion that rape is a crime of violence but not of sex. Sex is power and all power is inherently aggressive. Society is women's protection against rape." Meanwhile, a young feminist, Susan Jane Gilman, in The New York Times "Voices of the New Generation" writes that "We need to improve the way we communicate. Today, universities are the hub for feminist discourse. Yet, much of this discourse is irrelevant to everyday life. If women are uncomfortable with the connotations of feminism, it is up to us to stop perpetuating the stereotypes."

But feminism has no corner on stereotypes. Indeed if there are any at all, their power to coerce, control or dictate behavior is minimal compared to the stereotypes perpetrated and institutionalized by the system. Particularly the one in which the view and role of women is determined by their biological reality. When we lift our heads from the "methods of the universities" to the pillows of our bedrooms we find that woman no longer have a constitutional right of reproduction.
have brought their infants to supply five days of home. They will have spent five days away from their families in order to spend three or four hours with us.

Xionona nurses a two-year-old baby girl who looks no more than a year. The child, a twin, was given away by her natural mother who couldn't care for both infants. Xionona had just lost a child of her own and her breasts were full. The other twin was a boy and was stronger; his sister was "intended for death," Xionona explains. "But now she is healthy. And now the birth mother wants her back. But," says Xionona smiling down at the little girl, "I gave her her name. She is mine."

Maria is a midwife. I mention that I, too, have been a midwife. The women smile; language and experience are linking us.

Lucia tells us about some goats she once had. As Mary Jane translates from Quiche into Spanish, and I turn the Spanish into English, Lucia begins to sob and her body shakes. Her wonderful female goat gave birth to twins. The twins were female too.

"Yes, a promise of many future goats!" she says. But her father one day forbade her to keep them. Why, we ask? He drinks. And some of us speak of the alcoholism so common in our own communities.

We eat together, join them in singing hymns. I feel a communication independent of words. But suddenly something shifts slightly. Before we part, Lucia asks me for money "to buy some fruit." Xenia approaches Annette, the oldest member of our group, and asks for her watch. Later, when we try to process our feelings about the destitution of these women's lives, we are troubled by the two women's requests. Neither Annette nor I responded positively to them. We are unsure how we feel about making gifts to some and not all. Beth says it seems reasonable to her that these women asked us for things. She wonders why it surprised us. We take a moment to wonder as well.

We ride a packed second-class bus down the mountain from Chichicastenango to Chimaltenango west of the capital. Fixed seats built for two carry three in this nation of small people. We American women, large by their standards, take twice the room they do. Parrots, chickens and an occasional pig accompany us. In the narrow aisle, more riders are wedged in between the overlapping thighs of passengers with seats. A boom box blares in the back.

The driver is all composure, maneuvering the top-heavy vehicle around hairpin curves through the breathtaking lushness of this country. His helper climbs and pushes his way back and forth through the aisle collecting fares and reminding passengers when they should get off. Courtesy and hospitality are basic values in Latin culture. I have squeezed in beside a young woman wearing the white dress of the Ladina. Her young son asleep by the window while she shifts an infant on her lap. I smile and ask if she can make a bit more room for me? She informs me flatly that she can't. Or won't. Her anger is barely masked, her body rigid. From behind us, a male voice booms, "Hey, move over for the foreigner. There's room enough." But she cuts him off: "I hate every last one of them."

This trip takes four-and-a-half hours. Half of me is literally sitting on air. Though logic says that the bodies in the aisle will prevent my slipping to the baseboards, my sense of imminent imbalance makes me try to claim a bit more territory. Each time the bus careens around a curve, passengers and baggage slide with it and my adversary—for that is how she has defined herself—intentionally jabs my ribs. I try not to lose my precarious perch. Unwillingly, my eyes fill with tears. In a quiet voice I try to reason with my seat mate. But I cannot. She will not even address me directly. I am reminded of a scene which has inhabited my inner landscape since 1974.

Back then, I traveled with another North American woman through what was still North Vietnam. Everywhere we were greeted with that special tenderness only the most divinely gifted of nations under attack can offer to visitors from the country trying to wipe them from the map.

But one morning we stood beside our jeep as a fiery brought us across a river whose bridge had been bombed out for the 20th time. A peasant woman asked our translator where the tall women were from. I recognized the response: "America." For an instant the woman's eyes held the deepest hatred I had ever seen. Then, the instant controlled, she smiled, all courtesy once more, and turned away. I have never forgotten the look of that woman's eyes, nor my feeling of helplessness and frustration. Now, I struggle to deal with the same utter frustration.

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government's policies.

Most of us are involved in solidarity work at home. Those who haven't been will now. We have seen and heard about so many of our Guatemalan sisters' projects: weaving cooperatives, a health clinic in a shanty town where nothing will change until a sewage system is installed (and only the Guatemalan government can do that); the nuns' goats in San Andres, a widows' sewing project, in Coban. Here in Guatemala City, the woman of Tierra Viva have asked us to read and criticize their literature. We will keep in touch with those women.

But our real job is to work to expose and change our government's relationship with the government of Guatemala.

Since 1983, the United States has cynically backed the brutal Guatemalan attempt to improve its international image so it can get multi-lateral funding. We have injected the country with a large dose of economic assistance in the form of special balance-of-payments consideration in counterinsurgency areas, euphemistically called the "conflict areas." We have given development assistance and local currency funding to support the military-controlled pacification campaign. People of the resistance movement call it "inviability." Our support of export crops, like the sesame seeds for our Big Mac buns, has undermined the people's traditional planting and made their hunger worse. And our military aid, which has increased in spite of complaints from Congress, heavily underwrites the Guatemalan government's counterinsurgency efforts, making the country more dependent upon the U.S.

I watch a woman in trance and with statistician make tortillas over an open fire. I think of the vast differences in our relationships to what is happening here, the living of it, the assignment of responsibility. And I long for a different language, brand new words with which to say what must be said.

The video is something that emerged over a period of four or five years. I used to put stuff together just so I could talk about it in my class. And it went through a number of different decisions. The first time, I just stuck some videos together, and, the second time, I just stuck them together, a minute from here, a minute from another, and I left the music on. I found that the students sang along with the music, and missed the images totally. And so the first thing I did to de-contextualize it was to take that music off, and to put other stuff. Then I put in a narrative. That's what advertising does so well. The purpose basically is to keep you watching. If they made the whole video like that, you would watch it in a different way. That's what advertising does as well. The sex is fragmentary, the sex is there in concentrated forms, and you look at it, and it hits you, and it's gone. It's a strategy to make you watch harder, to make sure that they've got your attention, so they can sell you whatever it is they're trying to sell you. Pornography doesn't have to do that, because you've already bought it; the video is the product. That's why pornography, I think, is actually so boring, because they have to fill up the time, and there's so little imagination on how to fill it out, so that it becomes mechanical bodies.

I was involved in an organization called the Guatemalan Widows, have now placed women squarely at the center of the country's resistance struggle.

Our meeting heats up as we women open up. Our community health workers compare notes with their. Alcoholism, rape, battery and child sexual abuse are common threads. Homelessness, freedom of choice, incest, and drugs are special concerns of us North Americans. In Guatemala, rampant illiteracy, high infant mortality, desperate poverty, and violence which is on the rise, are problems. "Death," "disappearance," "displacement," "refugee" are household words.

Then one of the women, a member of Tierra Viva, a feminist organization, says to me, "Margaret, nine years ago an Argentinian friend gave me one of your books. I couldn't have said I was a feminist then. But history and experience have taught us. Today I proudly call myself a feminist." I think: The women who speak on the pages of my books are responsible for such interruptions. Most of us are involved in solidarity work at home. Those who haven't been will now. We have seen and heard about so many of our Guatemalan sisters' projects: weaving cooperatives, a health clinic in a shanty town where nothing will change until a sewage system is installed (and only the Guatemalan government can do that); the nuns' goats in San Andres, a widows' sewing project, in Coban. Here in Guatemala City, the woman of Tierra Viva have asked us to read and criticize their literature. We will keep in touch with those women.

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Margaret Randall is the author of more than 50 books including Sandino's Daughter, This Is About Inez and Walking to the Edge. She lives in the foothills of Albuquerque, NM.
gether in a way where I thought the meaning was obvious. At that point it was still without the rape scene.

People are not trained, they're not media literate, and the tape is an attempt to get people to be literate about the images with which they surround themselves. So, the decision to use the rape scene was a decision to make this experience not simply an intellectual one but an emotional one. I thought this was the only way to really get through to the consumers of these images.

FP: What's been the response to the video? How do your students react?

SJ: The response now is the response I want, which is to say, "I never thought about these images, and now they've been highlighted, I have a new way to think about them. The next time I watch MTV, and advertising, and see these images, I'll have a different way to understand them." Someone once said, "I'm not too sure who discovered water, but I'm pretty sure it wasn't a fish." And I think we're in a similar situation with regard to media images now. They've become such a part of our world that we don't even notice them. The videotape is an attempt to get people to pay attention to the water they live in.

The other response I get, largely from women, but also from some men, and this was mostly unintentional, is that it highlights the issue of date rape. They have to think seriously about it, and a lot of people, a lot of men especially, never realized that it was such a problem. It wasn't something they even thought about, they didn't realize that the statistics were so bad.

FP: You have a warning on the video.

SJ: I want to give fair warning to people. The first time I showed it to my class in its present form, I didn't give a strong enough warning. I said there's some stuff on here that people may not like, and it could be very disturbing, and they shouldn't stay if they don't want to. But I guess I wasn't clear enough that this was a voluntary activity. There was one woman who came to me afterwards, totally shaken, and said that she had lived through this, she did not need to be reminded of it. So I'm very careful now to really stress that this is a voluntary activity, that people know the extent of the images. The interesting thing is it depends what you think the violent images are. Because the rape scene from "The Accused" is one thing, but all the other images, of course, are what is on the media. They're normal. And to the extent that you can actually make them problematic, then the video works to the extent that these videos which are seen as normal become extraordinary.

FP: What kinds of connections do you see between the growth of the music video industry, and the rise over the past 10 years in violence against women?

SJ: There's not a simple, causal model. Behaviors and attitudes are focused within a particular environment; if you want to look at behaviors and attitudes, you need to look at what's in the environment. These images are a significant part of the lives of young people, and part of their function is to sell records, which they do really effectively. But another function is to provide models for behavior, not explicitly of course, but by legitimizing certain attitudes, by saying, "Look, here is how the world works." That will obviously have some impact on how people, young people especially, think about themselves, their own identity, and what it means to interact with other people. Again, it depends on what else is in the environment; it's not going to have the same effect on everyone. It depends on family background, it depends on what kinds of relationships we've had with women and men in the past, etc. But these images reflect a very consistent theme within popular culture. It's in slasher movies, it's in advertising. I use MTV to talk about the culture in general. If it were just MTV, who cares? But the question is not just MTV, it's MTV within the context of other popular cultural forms that reinforce the same perceptions.

The thing we can't forget is that these images are fun. They're images of pleasure, for both women and men, and I think young women are just as likely to buy into them as young men. Although it's directed at men, much of the female dreamworld also looks the same. Open up Vogue. It would be very difficult, at some points, to tell the difference between Vogue and pornography. The job of the advertising industry is to figure out the secret of desire, especially visual desire, and use it to sell products. The issue is not lecturing people on how they shouldn't like this stuff. I want to recognize how we can find this material pleasurable, and yet at the same time be caught up in structures of power over which we have no control. And to talk about pleasure and power as the same
experience, not necessarily separate experiences. To say, this is not about my version of sex is better than your version of sex, but pointing out that these images, which are highly pleasurable, are also very dangerous. For me the issue is always the system of images, and sometimes that gets lost in the video, because it's very complicated at that point.

So it's not a causal connection, but there is a connection between these images and violence against women, and it comes from how important these images are in terms of the environment within which we live, within which we learn about ourselves and the world.

FP: I understand MTV is not terribly happy with what you're doing.

SJ: Yes. I got a letter from them telling me to cease and desist from what I was doing, to destroy all the videotapes I had, to recall everything I'd sent out. They said, if you don't do this within seven days they would consider taking "appropriate legal and equitable remedies." They were threatening to sue me. My response was to send out a press release. The press coverage has been terrific, in the sense that the press has focused on this is an issue of censorship, rather than as a trademark violation, which is how MTV wanted to frame it.

FP: Which is ironic, isn't it, considering the history of pornographers defending what they do on the basis of the First Amendment?
THE DAMAGE from pg 15

As they rode along, they could see bodies lying in the road and hear and see people being shot. When they reached the French border, his mother was pulled from the truck and was about to be shot as a German spy. He doesn’t remember what saved her. Meanwhile, his father had been imprisoned in a French prison camp as a German alien.

Somehow, Manfred and his mother were able to reach Belgium. They were eventually reunited with his father, who had escaped from the camp. Then began the fleeing from place to place until they were finally given sanctuary by a family in Bruges. There his parents were hidden in a small basement room while he lived upstairs, was given another name, attended school, was baptized a Catholic and even became an altar boy.

Although he speaks very little about his experiences, claiming he really can’t remember, he does relate one:

The day he was in his room when he heard the tread of German boots tramping up the stairs. There then was a heavy pounding at his door. He opened it, expecting to be shot. The Germans were looking for a black marketeer who used to live there. Although he was a child, Manfred had the presence of mind to speak to the soldiers in bad German, with a heavy French accent. He got away with it.

After the war, for Manfred, his mother and father, as for all refugees, including my husband and his parents, the struggle began to find a place to accept them. After two years they succeeded in finding a sponsor and came to the U.S. As with my husband, out of two large families, these three were the only survivors.

AN EFFORT TO RECAPTURE THE PAST

As I left the workshop, I saw five large bulletin boards. They were covered with yellowing photos, with notes, with pleas and messages: “Have you seen my sister…” “I’m searching for my child. Hans would now be 50…” “Does anyone recognize the second girl from the left…” Message after message, whole lives on small slips of paper. Still searching after nearly 50 years. Much of the searching seemed to be for an identity—a link to the past—someone who could validate that once they had belonged.

As I stood there, the realization came that mine would be the last generation to really remember World War II and the Holocaust. That even those just a few years younger knew it only from documentaries, from photos of bodies piled up like cardboard, from pictures of mass graves. And I recognized just how important it is for these hidden children to break their silence. The time has more than come for them to speak out and for the world to listen to what happened to them.

On an impulse I tore a piece of paper from my notebook and wrote my husband’s name, his hidden name and the place and dates of his hiding experience. I added our phone number and looked for a place to put it on those overflowing boards. I saw a spot, then realized there was no available tack. As I was about to turn away, I felt something fall on my shoe. It was a push pin that had dropped from nowhere. I tacked up the message and headed for the escalator.

As I took my last look around at all the people, at the messages, at the aging photos, I had the feeling that I had seen only the tip of the iceberg; that the disaster spread by the Shoah will continue in ever-widening circles; and that it may take until the grandchildren of the hidden children reach adulthood before we can assess the full extent of the damage. Perhaps not even then.
ABUSE OF THE MENTALLY ILL
The forced treatment of homeless people espoused by physicians like E. Fuller Torre ("I Am Somebody: Barbara's Story," Summer 1991) means giving them psychotropic drugs.

You publish articles on the cancer-causing potential of many contraceptive drugs, but you have never examined the dangers of modern mental-health drugs. This class of drugs manipulates the brain and/or the hormones and their dangers are not yet known, especially their long term dangers. And must have grave side effects even with short-term use.

Many of the drugs are contraindicated for women of child-bearing age or pregnant women. Still, we hear too many disturbing reports of patients who are not advised of that risk, or not warned to avoid getting pregnant. Add to that the subjective nature of mental health diagnoses, and the prevalence of psychotropic drug prescriptions is really frightening.

Sadly, any move to recognize and respect the rights of mental patients is bogged down in a stereotypical view of them. Mental patients are seen as less moral and less intelligent than everyone else — quite deserving of our ire or, at best, patronizing treatment.

Linda J.M.H. Lilley
Muncie, IN

BLY SWATTING
Please accept an ecstatic hug and my belated thanks for Fred Pelka’s wonderful article on Robert Blight (Summer 1991). You covered every point that needed to be made splendidly. Moreover, Pelka’s a man, and people (read: Men) will listen to his criticism of Blight more than if a woman had authored the article.

Does Utne Reader have a copy of this essay? They’ve been giving Blight and his woman-hating lackeys lots of free press lately, and I’d love to see Pelka’s insightful ful analysis in there as an antidote.

I hope men grow to realize that they don’t have to struggle to reclaim their “lost masculine culture” a la Blight. God/dess help us if they do.

Nina Silver
New York, NY

IN WHICH WE ARE LAUNDED
I love your magazine. I’ve seen several feminist magazines, and, of them all, your perspective and analysis seems most astute by defining feminism as not exclusive to so-called “women’s issues.” Rather, you see the inter-connections of oppression based on race, class, age and species. Its broad perspective yields new insights into the nature and dynamics of each.

David Nanasi
Chicago, IL

QUEEN BESS’ LAMENT
A footnote to Merle Hoffman’s “Editorial” reference (Summer 1991) to Elizabeth I. Some 20-odd years ago, the Social Work Quarterly carried on its cover in bold type this remark from Queen Bess that she made to her council:

“Had I been crested not cloven, my Lords, you [would not have] treated me thus.” It might be cited as her contribution to the feminist movement.

Eleanor Manning-Utthoff
Seattle, WA

WHO CARES ABOUT ISRAEL?
The article, “When Terror Strikes” by Patricia Golan (Summer 1991), seems to be the same old garbage that we have been hearing from the mass media.

At first I thought this article must be a satire on the war: Dogs in gas masks, and the difficulties during the crisis of having sex, while the rise in domestic violence was virtually justified. The latter was because of the “enforced proximity of the families” and the damaged “male ego of the Israeli men” who “didn’t know what else to do with themselves.” But the author seems so serious and nowhere do I see an editorial comment on the emptiness of the article.

Has Golan and your editorial staff forgotten that at least 100,000 people were killed in Iraq? And that the near absolute destruction of Iraq’s civilized infrastructure will probably cause additional hundreds of thousands of deaths, mostly of women and children who lack food, sanitation, and medical help? Have you forgotten about the widespread rape of women by the “victors” of the war? Do you still not see that this war was fabricated by males and that Saddam’s alleged massive military might was simply hype to seduce Israel and the rest of the world into supporting another military slaughter? Whew! And Golan is worried about the psychological effects of disrupted males’ sex lives! Is this the best that feminism can come up with about the most destructive event of the decade?

Art Johnson
Park Falls, WI

Editors’ Reply:
This was Patricia Golan’s firsthand account. It was not intended as an overview of the war.

ANIMAL VS. PEOPLE RIGHTS
I read with annoyance the cutesy letter from Naomi Cowen (Summer 1991). Is there a National Alliance Against Animals, she asks rhetorically.

She has written a knee-jerk letter which sounds suspiciously like the garbage the American Medical Association is pushing as part of their $35 million media attack on the anti-vivisection movement.

In factory farming, among owners of companion animals, in the treatment of sea creatures, and in laboratory research, there is an alliance against animals. These creatures are constantly abused because our traditions and religions suggest that humans matter while animals do not.

In her arrogance, Cowen forgets that humans are animals too. There is no dichotomy between animals and us except in the schizoid either-or logic of the west. Other animals don’t vivisect. We do. As a number of great humans like Mahatma Gandhi, George Bernard Shaw and Albert Schweitzer have said, vivisection is the blackest activity of humanity.

Naomi, read Hans Reusch’s Slaughter of the Innocent. Your life will be changed by this exhaustive study of vivisection.

He provides evidence that not only is vivisection morally reprehensible, it is bad science and it is counter to what science, let alone medicine, is supposed to do. And we taxpayers are paying for this barbarity.

If animal research worked, why after 20-plus years of the “war on cancer” are the rates of cancer increasing? A 1986 report in the New England Journal of Medicine surveyed our cancer research and discovered it was a failure. Cancer was then, and continues to be, on the rise.

Wouldn’t it make even more sense to try to prevent the illness in the first place?

Recent reports also indicate that 80-90 percent of all cancer is preventable and yet we put 96 percent of our money into cures and screenings, not prevention! This is curious, unless you begin to see that there is much too much money spent in not curing cancer. We’ve given these thugs carte blanche; they are not accountable to anyone. In the process millions of animals die.

Janet Brown
Granada Hills, CA
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