HUNTING WITCHES
300 Years & Counting

WHEN A “BAD” WOMAN KILLS
The Trials of Aileen Wuornos

SEX, LIES & SUSPICIOUS SOURCES
How the News Becomes the News

DANGEROUS LOVE
“Our Mother was a Childbeater”
Too often, kids get the worst off their parents' bad day at work. In the form of verbal abuse at home. If that's been happening to you, you've got to work to change things. Words can hit a child as hard as a fist. And leave scars you can't see. Think about what you're saying. Stop using words that hurt. Start using words that help.

Stop using words that hurt.
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I was a drama major in the early '50s when Senator Joseph R. McCarthy was at the height of his witch-hunting frenzy. I remember circulating petitions (a daring thing to do in those days) to reinstate professors who had lost their positions because they refused to take the loyalty oath. I remember watching former heroes fall from grace as they named names to save their own skins, and forever loving people like Lillian Hellman who refused to knuckle under. I remember, too, a man named Ronald Reagan who was then president of the Screen Actors Guild and in that capacity, in 1947, had fed names to the F.B.I of those in the Guild he believed to be communists."Believed" was enough to finish off a thriving career.

Most of all, I remember where I was on June 19, 1953. My friends and I were walking down Thompson Street in New York's Greenwich village when we heard the news that Ethel and Julius Rosenberg had been executed. We stood there in shock, tears rolling down our faces, as much for us as for the Rosenbergs. Until that moment, we hadn't believed it could happen—not in our country, not in this day and age. The horrors of World War II were just a few years past and suddenly we knew how people in Nazi Germany must have felt. This was beyond petitions or buttons or speaking out: Our own government could kill us and we were helpless to do anything about it. At the invincible age of 21 we realized how vulnerable we were. In short, we were terrified.

This was a harsh learning experience for those of us who came of age in the '50s, the era of Mom-at-home-and-apple pie-and-Father-knows-best-and-shiny floors-and-sparkly laundry—and now, death to two people who hadn't killed anyone or, from our point of view, perpetrated a heinous crime. For if it were true that the Rosenbergs had given secret information to the Russians (and many of us didn't even believe that!), it was done when the Russians were our allies. Certainly the witch-hunting years of the '50s left most of us politically-involved young people with a healthy skepticism and cynicism that has lasted all our lives. This extends to anything fed to us by the government, industrial polluters of our world and, most definitely, the media. "All the news that's fit to print" really means "All the news we want you to know," and we see through their half-truths and cover-ups.

So now Salem, Massachusetts is celebrating the 300th anniversary of the witch trials: Celebrating the persecution, disenfranchisment and sometimes death of innocent people. Cutesy signs are everywhere; drinks are "amusingly" called names such as "Witch's Brew"; miniature gallows are a hot-selling item. It's all just one big joke—and a neat lure for tourist dollars. Meanwhile I can't help believing that as long as there are people who don't play by society's rules or who hold unpopular beliefs or who are different in some way, there will be witch hunts.

Beverly Lowy Executive Editor
It was one of those defining moments: I am watching the finals of the Miss USA pageant and the tension is palpable. Dick Clark reaches into the large glass fish bowl and chooses the question, the answer to which will decide the winner from the six semifinalists. Miss Kentucky is up — her blond hair cascading wildly down her shoulders as she faces her judges. "Would you rather be President or First Lady?" I hold my breath — is it possible? Not a moment of hesitation as the young woman flashes a brilliantly toothy smile and says, "First Lady of course. We all know how important it is for any man, especially the President, to be kept in line, and I think that would be one of the most important jobs in the world." Enthusiastic applause greets her as she basks in the righteousness of her response. Miss Kansas was next. "If it were a hundred years from now and you could look back at this century, what woman do you think made the greatest contribution and why?" Her answer, just as fast and breathless, comes effortlessly: "Barbara Bush because she keeps George Bush in line."

I sighed the sigh of the damned, a defining moment indeed, "define and conquer" — just another reinforcement of the historical and collective realities. These young women have learned their lessons well and fleshed the "myth" of woman — given form to the continual creating and creation of the archetypes known as female and feminine. For as Simone de Beauvoir has written: "One is not born, but becomes a woman. No biological, psychological, or economic fate determines the figure that the human female presents in society. It is civilization as a whole that produces this creature, intermediate between male and eunuch which is described as feminine." (The Second Sex)

This "myth of woman," this "mark of gender" that is placed on the female form is taught early and well and has at its core the concepts of derivative power, masochism, low self-esteem, sex, sexuality, self-effacement and the reproductive imperative. It is by and through these vehicles that stereotypes of woman are realized and it is within these categories and qualities that women are defined and judged.

Both Miss Kentucky and Miss Kansas, along with millions of their sisters, started their education in "woman" very young in a school system that has been proven to systematically shortchange and discriminate against girls. A new report by the American Association of University Women (A.A.U.W.) presents data which gives lie to the myth that boys and girls receive equal education. "The wealth of statistical evidence must convince even the most skeptical that the gender bias in the schools shortchanges girls."

Among the findings were that "teachers draw less attention to girls, that reports of boys sexually harassing girls are increasing, that textbooks still ignore or stereotype women, and that girls learn almost nothing about many of their most pressing problems, like sexual abuse, discrimination and depression." In a previous study, the A.A.U.W. reported that girls' self-esteem drops markedly as they approach adolescence, as "students sit in classrooms that day-in-day-out deliver the message that women's lives count for less than men's."

And it is not only in school where one learns how to wear the subservient mark. Reinforcement comes through...
Dems' front-runner lied to filmema, says his former lover. Films, media, pornography and even toys. Mattel has created a new toy that simulates pregnancy, "My Bundle Baby," that consists of a mechanical kicking device and tape recorder that thumps inside a pastel-colored knapsack containing one or more baby dolls. Worn around the waist, "it feels like there is a real baby inside," teaching girls at a very young age that there are two basic categories — good girls who reproduce and have babies and bad girls who fuck.

So Miss Kentucky doesn't want to be President. President is not what a really good girl should want to be. If Miss Kentucky wants role models to teach her how to be a good girl and get ahead, she doesn't have to look far. Indeed, the Barbara Bush, Hillary Clinton and Marilyn Quayle phenomenon attests to the recent glamor and attraction of secondary power for women. These women, all ambitious, intelligent and accomplished, have placed their achievements and fortunes at the feet and in the hands of their husbands. They have created, formulated and scripted the role of "Number Two" in its penultimate form. Barbara Bush, the contestants' heart-throb, typifies this. Her extraordinary self-effacement was described in People magazine in 1988: "Confronted with persistent rumors of Bush's supposed extramarital affairs and stung by mean-spirited gibes of her white hair and matronly figure, she deflected the attacks with breezy self-assurance, all the while tirelessly tending to her husband's reputation."

Reputation tending is a major part of being Number Two. Marilyn Quayle, an attorney and by most definitions brilliant and tough, in the Washington Post describes herself in equestrian terms: "I ride hard, I ride fast — there is no room for error and if there is error, you hurt yourself very bad." Her fear of failing is second only to her anxiety about failing to adequately protect her husband's image.

In 1988, when Dan Quayle was nominated as Bush's running mate, Robert D. Orr, the then Governor of Indiana, confirmed that the Senate seat her husband vacated was hers for the asking. "It was mine if I wanted it," Quayle says, but she could see that if she ever voted against the administration, she would create a "big story" that would be "hard on the President." (Washington Post 1/27/92)

Hillary Clinton also plays the Number Two slot — both are tigresses who guard their men and their families. Hillary, described as brilliant and a lawyer, is, according to the Wall Street Journal, "so accomplished and an advocate so polished that she sometimes left audiences wishing that she and not her husband was the candidate." According to the Journal, Hillary was also a good student of the "feminine." After her husband lost his re-election bid partly because she had not changed her last name from Rodham to Clinton, she publicly became Mrs. Clinton and the voters rewarded the Clintons with re-election. Hillary Clinton also practices the subtler aspects of the supporting role: She beams at her husband on stage a la Nancy Reagan and even changes the way she speaks to sport a southern accent, to underscore the point that she has absorbed and been absorbed by her husband's persona. She also has learned, as Barbara Bush did before her, to bear her husband's public infidelities with grace under pressure. Hillary's denial that she "unlike Tammy Wynette was NOT standing by her man," was obviated by actions which proclaimed loyalty at all costs.

Hillary Clinton, Barbara Bush and Marilyn Quayle have all taken the road more traveled to power — the supportive, derivative road. They are evaluated only in relation to how their husbands' careers are affected, and therefore judged by a different moral standard — held accountable for their actions on a purely reflective basis. Unable to exist continued on pg 54
THE HIGH COST OF POLLUTION

From the Baltimore Sun: In less than 36 hours in spring, 1990, three children were born without brains at Valley Regional Medical Center in Brownsville, Texas.

Two of the babies were stillborn. The third hung on for three days, doomed by a gruesome, fatal defect that leaves infants with an open skull and only the rudiments of a brain.

The deaths from the rare defect, known as anencephaly, puzzled Margaret Diaz, an occupational health specialist. She thought the three cases could have been a statistical fluke. Then she had a chance conversation with a radiologist.

He had recently performed ultrasound examinations on seven pregnant women. Each, he said, was carrying a child without a brain. Doctors soon learned of at least 10 more cases, most of them clustered in this city of 98,000 along the Rio Grande. The outbreak here and in a surrounding county may be the largest ever in the United States.

Across the river in Matamoros, Mexican health officials are worried, too. Two anencephalic children were delivered at the general hospital in 1990, but 10 were born last year.

Diaz' alarm prompted full-blown investigations by the national Centers for Disease Control, three Texas agencies and a local group of lawyers, doctors and chemists. So far, they have few answers. But some have their suspicions. Long uneasy about the heavy pollution in their sister city of Matamoros, Brownsville residents now fear an environmental time bomb has gone off.

Like other Mexican border towns, Matamoros is struggling under the residue left by years of unchecked industrial growth. Its open sewers contain toxic wastes and human refuse. Its factories spew fumes and leak chemicals.

While CDC experts are considering environmental factors in their investigation of the outbreak, they say that the inquiry is in its early stages and that they do not yet have any evidence linking the strange deaths to the chemical stew in Matamoros.

And in 1990 in Pampa, Texas, an unusual number of Down syndrome births propelled an investigation of pollution and set up the country's first legal test of an emerging medical theory that toxic chemicals could cause the birth defect.

Separately, a lawyer suing a Hoechst Celanese chemical plant where a 1987 explosion killed three workers and injured 37 others has uncovered evidence that the plant for years spewed toxics into the air and contaminated the region's principal source of drinking water.

But Brent C. Stephens, the plant manager, said there was no scientific evidence supporting the assertions that illnesses and birth defects were caused by the enormous plant, which was rebuilt and reopened in 1989.

And if they think we'll buy that, THEY have anencephaly!
DISPOSABLE PEOPLE

A news dispatch in NY Newsday: Police in Bogota said they had found the remains of 30 bodies at a Colombian university, thought to be victims of a gang that murdered down-and-outs and sold the bodies to a medical school.

The macabre discovery was made after a badly wounded garbage collector escaped and told police he and several other garbage collectors had been attacked by security guards who lured them to the campus of the Free University in the Caribbean port city of Barranquilla.

In our civilized country we just cut off financial and medical aid and let nature take its course.

KIDS FOR SALE

An AP dispatch: The fear of AIDS is increasing demand for much younger prostitutes, contributing to a worldwide increase in the sale of children, said the author of a United Nations human rights report. Vitt Muntarhorn is a law professor in Thailand.

Vitt said that children nine or 10 years old were frequently forced into prostitution and the numbers are increasing daily.

In some areas, he said, customers are opting "more and more" for younger prostitutes, particularly virgins, in the belief that they will protect themselves from the threat of AIDS. But Vitt noted that many child prostitutes in India, Thailand and the Philippines had tested positive for the HIV virus.

Boys are being increasingly used for prostitution, but girls are exploited first, because families in many societies prefer to keep boys, Vitt said.

In past centuries the same thing was believed about preventing syphilis. Suffer the children!

TRIANGLE SHIRT-WAIST REVISITED

By Brian Murphy, NY Daily News: Decades after labor reforms wiped out so-called sweatshop factories, some garment shops are throwbacks to another time, experts and officials say.

In New York, the hub of the U.S. "needle trade," state inspectors reported an apparent rise in the number of illegal shops - dingy and dangerous places where elderly workers may toil alongside schoolchildren for wages well below the $4.25-an-hour minimum wage.

Some of the problems are traced to low-paid foreign competition, which has reduced New York's garment work force to about 100,000 from more than 150,000 in the late '70s. But the stumbling U.S. economy also has pushed clothing retailers and designers to cut costs, and garment-making shops have followed suit by dropping wages and increasing hours.

LICENSE TO KILL

An AP dispatch: A judge gave back a chronic speeder his driver's license on the condition that he drive only American-built cars.

Alexander Zelikov, a 25-year-old professional test driver, lost his license to suspension in July after getting too many speeding tickets in his own car.

When he appeared at the end of January in Oakland County Circuit Court in Pontiac, Michigan, Judge Hilda Gage called Zelikov a "menace to the county." But she restored his license on condition that he drive to and from work on a single route, carry increased liability insurance and test only American-built cars for his employer, the Dalkin Clutch Corporation, which supplies manual-transmission clutches to the Big Three and foreign automobile makers.

The order was prompted "by a sense of patriotism and a concern for the economy," said Gage, who drives an Oldsmobile.

"What can I say," said Zelikov, "except that I have to drive and I'm not going to contest it. I have to go to work."

So in an American car he's not a menace? We think we've missed something here.
COMMUNICATION
IRON CURTAIN
An AP dispatch: A janitor accused of tricking a woman into making a night visit to her doctor's office, then raping and stabbing her, has a history of sexual assaults and had been ordered to undergo psychotherapy after his release from prison.

But the local police and the doctor's office where Elbert Harris, of New Haven, CT, had worked for a year and a half, had been unaware of his violent past, the Police Chief, John Ambrogio, said. Harris was arrested on charges of attempted murder, kidnapping, sexual assault and reckless endangerment.

Ambrogio said a day of research found Harris had a history of violent crimes dating to 1969, mostly involving sexual assaults. The state was under no requirement to notify the local police about his presence, the Chief said, adding: "Something needs to be changed. It's a classic case of a lack of communication."

This comment receives our "Understatement of the Year" award.

SILADES OF THE '50s!
An AP dispatch: Officials of Senator Jesse Helms' 1990 re-election campaign signed a consent decree to settle a Justice Department complaint that the campaign was involved in a mailing intended to intimidate Black voters.

The Justice Department began its investigation after postcards were sent to 125,000 North Carolinians, most of whom were Blacks eligible to vote, suggesting to them that they were not eligible and warning that if they went to the polls they could be prosecuted for voter fraud.

Senator Helms, Republican of North Carolina, was opposed in the election by Harvey Gantt, the Black former mayor of Charlotte, N.C. The race had been considered close but Mr. Helms won a third term by a comfortable margin, receiving 1,080,208 votes to Mr. Gantt's 974,701.

The Justice Department civil complaint, filed in Federal District Court in Raleigh, NC, charged Senator Helms' re-election campaign, the North Carolina Republican Party and four campaign-consulting and marketing firms with violating the Voting Rights Act.

The complaint asserted that officials of the Republican Party and the Helms campaign planned the mailing after a poll published by The Charlotte Observer showed Mr. Gantt with a lead of eight percentage points and after state election officials reported a 10.6 percent increase in Black voter registration, compared with a 5.3 percent rise in White voter registration.

What's next? Police dogs and fire hoses?

officials said.

In more than 5,000 investigations since 1987, the task force has uncovered about 2,100 unregistered shops and more than 600 child labor violations, according to state records. There have been 500 minimum-wage violations and about 2,000 reports of unsafe working conditions.

Each violation carries a maximum $1,000 fine. "But the bosses just close up, move down the block and open under a different name. As long as there is work, they'll find a way to stay open," said task force supervisor Charles DeSiervo.

And as long as there's a buck to be made, poor women and children will be exploited.

TEACHING THE RUSSIANS OUR WAYS
From Wendy Sloane, Associated Press: Like a growing number of Russians, a 20-year-old student is turning to sex for profit to survive soaring prices and a worsening economy. The country's opening to the West helped the sex business blossom.

Several nights a month, Viktoria Galkina goes to Night Flight, a Swedish-run disco frequented by Western businessmen. She accompanies a man to a hotel room for a minimum of $200. At the current exchange rate, the $200 per trick is far more than the average annual Russian salary of $115.20.

Many young women are now working as hard-currency prostitutes or nude dancers in nightspots, including clubs frequented by foreigners.

The trend is helped by Russia's opening to the West and the weakening of its prudish mores. Pornographic books and newspapers, strictly forbidden in the pre-glasnost era, are now sold on street corners.

In a country where the local currency is all but worthless, prostitution offers women the chance to earn fast dollars. It also gives them a glimpse into the lives of Westerners.

It doesn't take long to proliferate our values, does it?
A 34-Year Problem Was Treated (by male physicians) With Pats On The Head

by Lois Greene Stone

How does this remark grab you? "Myomectomy is the operation of choice when it is necessary to save the uterus for reproduction, or for sentiment." (Textbook of Surgery, 6th Edition, 1956)

Okay, men can't really understand why some women are reluctant to have a hysterectomy, but why make female feelings seem irrational?

Occasionally, when I was younger, I'd been content to play "Me Tarzan, You Jane," but the feminist movement, coupled with my own aging process, has given me freedom at least to have a swing on Tarzan's rope. Though I lost the war, I did put up some pretty good battles.

In 1943, when I was nine, a booklet called Growing Up and Liking It instructed me to not get chilled, wash hair or walk in the rain during my menstrual period. My mother prepared me for its onset with positive philosophy and wonder about my body eventually housing a human.

In 1945, secondary ovarian failure that became a 34-year problem was treated (by male physicians) with pats on the head. Iron-deficiency anemia from prolonged periods was met with pills. In high school, the swim teacher wouldn't believe anyone could "normally" bleed for more than 10 days at a time, so a sympathetic physician had me drop swimming to spare me humiliation; at least 10 days, for me, was normal.

Allergic to my own progesterone, I monthly vomited, sweated, bled. My mother, however, did such a superb job with my attitude about being female, I accepted, coped, and didn't give in to the disability of twisting cramps or excessive blood flow.

In college, tampons represented freedom to swim, and certainly more comfort during classes when combined with a protective pad. Painful cramps were endured.

"When you get married your periods will be within average normal limits," a patronizing internist stated. He thought my cramps and irritability were products of my active mind. Later, I heard "when you have children," then, "when you're older." Even my husband, a medical student when we married in 1956, was taught dysmenorrhea was mental and some menstrual problems a product of penis envy.

Three planned times, with temperature chart and drugs, my uterus swelled with life. Again, grateful to my mother, I went through many physiological problems but was emotionally high. Giving birth without anesthesia, unusual in 1959, was an incredible act my aware
Every cycle was worth the excitement and privilege to bear down and see an infant's head in a mirror while most of its body was still housed inside me. The transition between fetus and baby, done with an explosive push, showed the sex of my child. Why, this pain was productive!

I had an endometrial biopsy, also a D&C to shock my body to cease prolonged bleeding and secretly continued to smile at the wonder of being female. I also refused advice for surgical removal of my uterus.

Endometriosis planted itself in my uterus, and for 14 years I'd been stubborn as I heard "What do you need it for? You aren't having any more children." But the choice was still mine, I quietly considered; I MAY not have any more, but I CAN....

An operation threatened as, when prone, my growing-with-fibroids uterus collapsed my bladder. My husband asked if I'd feel less like a woman and was this a reason to reject surgery. Ha, too, couldn't comprehend why I wanted to hold on to my uterus. What a mixed message men give, depending upon a woman's age.

Why did I want to keep it within me? I was nearly finished with my predestined cycle and, oddly enough, the bleeding was more regular than ever. If I could just make five more years, I questioned, might it shrink? We'd been dealing with one another since 1945. It had given biologic immortality to generations that preceded me. It withstood a placenta hole once, and a possible placenta praevia another time, action from pitocin, yet still housed-nourished-injured-by-contraction three humans who see, hear, think, feel, smell, taste. What did I want it for? It was a friend, not a curse. It gave me an edge: I may not command salary for service a man gets, but I've given birth. Some men must feel threatened by this, though none would ever admit it.

Sentiment? Maybe. Its action governed 35 years of my life, 35 years of circles on calendars savoring the few comfortable days a month and accepting still the rest. There was a harmony, an order, a routine, that began with a body message I'd hoped would end same way.

Why hold onto it? Did I really need to give a reason? It took over a year to adjust to the emptiness after the inevitable surgery. Now, almost 12 years later and with three grandchildren, I touch the slender scar and remember the cynical surgeon's words "get rid of it; it was just a baby carriage."

Lois Greene Stone has been a freelance writer/poet for over 30 years.
What Really Happened During Those Dark Days In The Puritan Colony—And Why Are We Celebrating?

Go to Gallows Hill Park in Salem and you will find no indication that 14 women and five men were hung there as witches. The rolling terrain is punctuated by grey boulders, covered with graffiti and the shards of broken beer bottles. An asphalt basketball court and a children’s playground cover the most likely site of the executions. An American flag snaps in the wind, over the faint sounds of traffic on Proctor Street.

From this spot the sisters Rebecca Nurse and Mary Esty proclaimed their innocence, and George Burroughs, in a final effort to save his life, recited the Lord’s prayer, knowing that common wisdom held a witch incapable of uttering those sacred words. When the confused crowd threatened to stop the hangings, Boston minister Cotton Mather rode up declaring, “There will be no reversal of justice in this place.” And here too, Sarah Good was defiant to the end, telling Salem Town minister Rev. Nicholas Noyes, “I am no more a witch than you are a wizard. If you take my life away, God will give you blood to drink.”
Between March and November of 1692, 22 accused witches lost their lives in eastern Massachusetts. At least 150 were imprisoned, with accusations outstanding against some 200 others. In the town of Andover, at least 50 out of its estimated 500 inhabitants were arrested. Fields stood abandoned during planting season as families trekked to Salem courthouse to watch the trials, or were jailed, or fled to escape the hauntings, until the authorities began to fear a famine. The vast majority of the accused were women.

This year marks the 300th anniversary of the Salem witch trials, and a number of commemorations are planned — by the neo-pagan/wicca community, by feminists, by the official Salem Tercentenary Committee. But the mainstream response to the witch hunt remains ambivalent: Part self-righteous condemnation of Puritan superstition; part Halloween hucksterism. Salem Village (today called Danvers), where the witch hunt began, marks a few of its historical sites with unobtrusive plaques, others are ignored entirely. Salem Town, by contrast, calls itself “the Witch City,” and local bars offer a “Witch’s Brew” of Kahlua and Bailey’s Irish Cream. The logo of the Salem Police Dept. is the profile of a witch on a broomstick, while the high school athletic teams are called “the Salem Witches.”

“Witch business,” writes Wilma Bullard, of the group No More Witch Hunts!, “has become big business. This must be the only town in America that has built a major tourist industry around the abuse of women.”

The history of the witch hunts is primarily a history of women’s oppression. It is estimated that anywhere from several hundred thousand to nine million people were tortured to death in the massive European witch hunts of the 15th, 16th, and 17th centuries, 85 percent of them women. In “The Burning Times,” Donna Reed’s excellent film documentary, this era is called “the women’s Holocaust.”

The causes of “the witch craze” are varied and complex: The desire of the urban Catholic elite to suppress the mother goddess/pagan traditions of peasant culture; the nobility’s efforts to deflect blame for plague and war onto suitably powerless scapegoats; the rise of a male medical profession with its need to eliminate competition from women healers and midwives; the disdain of women too old to bear children and too poor to feed themselves; the expropriation of women’s property; male fear of women’s sexuality; and so on. Carol F. Karlsen, author of The Shape of a Woman, believes that to understand the witch hunts we must “confront the deeply embedded feelings about women — and the intricate patterns of interest underlying those feelings — among our witch-ridden ancestors.”

The witch hunts in North America never reached the murderous enormity of those in Europe. And in the English, French, and Dutch colonies, the notion of a vast satanic conspiracy with women as its primary agents took hold only in Puritan New England. Here a radical religious sect had fled persecution in Europe, only to found a rigid theocracy which by the 1690s was under pressure from the Anglican royal government and an increasingly secular merchant class.

Sally Smith Booth, in The Witches of Early America, describes Puritan Massachusetts as a place “where almost every facet of an individual’s life was closely regulated by church dogma: games, dancing, social gatherings, and physical recreation were all forbidden as evil practices. Repression of sexual activities... was stringent and open display of affection was frowned upon.” It was considered eccentric, even suspicious, to name and show affection for a pet, or to enjoy a walk in the forest. Court records tell us of lower-income women arrested for wearing silk, other women for “walking disorderly.”

In this Puritan patriarchy, women were seen as “helpmeets” for men: Docile, obedient, and above all uncomplaining. This standard was rigidly enforced. Immigrating Quakers, who believed in the equality of women and men, were arrested before they could leave the boat in Boston harbor, then imprisoned and expelled. Those who persisted in returning were hung. When Anne Hutchinson questioned the orthodoxy, she was tried for heresy and driven from Massachusetts.

The traditional Christian notion of woman as the “daughters of Eve” also played a central role in Puritan thought. Women were seen as morally and intellectually inferior to men, sexually depraved, continuously dissatisfied and thus easily tempted by Satan. Any exercise of women’s power was suspect, and so healers and midwives were especially vulnerable to charges of witchcraft. Under Puritan law, women were the chattel of their fathers, husbands, or brothers, and a woman without male supervision was regarded with suspicion and dread. For a woman to voice dissatisfaction was immoral, since God Himself had blessed the social order. When church elders accused Anne Hutchinson and her followers of heresy, they also began a whispering campaign charging them with fornication, adultery — and witchcraft.

It was in this context that several girls from
Salem Village began, in November 1691, to meet at the parsonage to have their fortunes told by a slave named Tituba. Eight-year-old Betty Parris and 11-year-old Abigail Williams were the daughter and niece of the Rev. Samuel Parris, a failed merchant turned minister who had alienated half his new congregation with his insistence that the parsonage be devoted to him in perpetuity. Tituba had been purchased by Parris in Barbados, and she brought north with her beliefs and customs considered little more than "devil worship" by white Christians. She cared for the girls while their elders worked or went on visits to Parris' far-flung congregants. Using eggwhites in a glass bowl as a crystal ball, Tituba tried to answer what for Puritan girls was a question of maximum importance — what sort of man will I marry?

Though the girls tried to keep it secret, word of their sages spread, and Tituba's circle expanded to include girls, and young women from nearby Salem Town. By some accounts, the younger girls became frightened when they saw floating in the eggwhites the image of a tiny coffin.

Sometime in January 1692, Betty Parris and Abigail Williams began to suffer seizures so violent that eyewitness John Hale believed them "beyond the power of...natural disease to effect." The sickness spread to others in Tituba's circle, chief among them 12-year-old Anne Putnam Jr., and the symptoms proliferated — intermittent blindness, deafness, and loss of speech and appetite, amnesia, choking, hallucinations. "The afflicted," as they came to be called, cried out that they were being stabbed, bitten, pinched, burned, mutilated by specters only they could see. Several developed stigmata — actual bruises or welts — as if in response to these invisible assaults.

Modern medicine might use terms like "hysteria" or "conversion reaction" to describe what was happening, but Salem physician William Griggs told Parris that "the evil hand" was upon his girls. When Betty cried out for Tituba, Parris took this as an accusation. He beat the slave until he had a "confession." Tituba admitted to being a witch, implicated village residents Sarah Good and Sarah Osborne (whom Betty and Abigail had also cried out against), and spoke of other witches and "a tall man of Boston" whom she couldn't identify. Tituba, Good and Osborne were arrested.

Accusations, hearings, trials and executions followed in rapid succession. Bridget Bishop became the first accused witch to die on Gallows Hill on June 2, 1692. On July 19, Rebecca Nurse, Susannah Martin, Elizabeth Howe, Sarah Good and Sarah Wilds were executed, followed on August 19 by George Jacobs, Martha Carrier, George Burroughs, John Proctor and John Willard. On Sept. 19 Giles Corey was tortured to death in a nearby field for refusing to cooperate with the court. On Sept. 22 came the turn of his wife Martha, executed along with Margaret Scott, Mary Esty, Aliza Parker, Ann Pudeator, Wilmot Redd, Samuel Wardwell, and Mary Parker.

By November, the witch hunt was spent. In part, this was due to the behavior of the afflicted girls. By accusing "respectable" women like Rebecca Nurse and Elizabeth Proctor, and men (not to mention a former justice of the court and the governor's wife), they made the ruling elite itself vulnerable to accusations of witchcraft. Governor Phips ordered an end to the sessions of the special court he had appointed, and within months a new court, with different rules of evidence, acquitted almost all those still in jail awaiting trial. Those convicted were pardoned, but some of the accused — too poor to pay the required fees for their imprisonment, would remain in jail for years. Lydia Dustin died there. And the Commonwealth of Massachusetts would not exonerate those executed until 1654.

As with the European witch craze, the reasons for Salem are diverse and complex. Puritan society was under great strain, its very survival in doubt. The original Massachusetts charter, which had given the colony unprecedented freedoms from the crown, was revoked in 1684, the new charter imposed in 1692 lessened this autonomy and doomed Puritan hegemony. For the first time, non-Puritans would be allowed a role in government, and there would be no more hangings of Quakers. This threat came at a time when Native Americans, allied with the French, were making successful attacks on Puritan settlements, and both Salem and Boston were filled with refugees from the threatened frontier. Salem Village itself was torn by the choice of Parris as minister, and by commercial and property disputes.

Little of this figures in contemporary accounts of the trials. The first of these was by Boston minister Cotton Mather, the leading cleric of the day. Although Mather privately opposed the court's reliance on the versions of the afflicted — so-called "spectral evidence" — he also feared that public revulsion at the trials' excesses would undermine an already tottering Puritan theocracy. His book The Wonders of the Invisible World was rushed into print in late 1692, or early 1693, despite a ban imposed by Governor Phips on works...
related to witchcraft.

Mather takes every opportunity to excoriate the accused. Bridget Bishop, for example, was "notorious to all beholders," as a woman of loose morals. Phrases such as "old witch," "old hag," and "ignorant old woman" pepper the manuscript. The accused, said Mather, had conspired with Satan to achieve nothing less than the destruction of that one commonwealth, on Earth founded in accordance with God's law, Puritan New England. He notes too how many witches made "most Voluntary Harmonious Confessions," not mentioning the use of sleep deprivation, psychological abuse and physical torture during interrogations. The accused had the added incentive of knowing that confessing would save them from immediate hanging, their executions stayed as long as they agreed to implicate others. In her letter to the court "confessed witch" Margaret Jacobs wrote how "they told me if I would not confess, I should be put down into the dungeon and would be hanged, but if I would confess, I should have my life..." One accused wizard, William Barker, alleged that 307 fellow residents of Essex County were minions of the devil.

The confessions, especially those by children, make for pretty sad reading. Booth recounts how "seven-year-old Sarah Carrier freely admitted she had been practicing witchcraft since age six and announced that she preferred to afflict people by pinching them." Children often had "no idea what they were confessing to, and may have accused others simply on the basis of whether or not their names were familiar." Among those imprisoned were five-year-old Dorcas Good (daughter of Sarah), eight-year-old Abigail Faulkner, and 11-year-old Abigail Johnson.

Still, Mather has had many sympathetic readers. Chadwick Hansen, for instance, makes much of the fact that Tituba did indeed engage in "white magic," and concludes that it is "extremely probable that Bridget Bishop was a practicing witch." He admits that the "evidence" — the discovery by workman of dolls "with headless pins stuck in them" in the walls of her house — is "circumstantial," but asks us to consider how "evidence is hard to find in witchcraft cases." Hansen's book, Witchcraft in Salem, was published in 1969.

A more widely accepted explanation of Salem is that the afflicted, motivated by malice, boredom, or guilt over their meetings with Tituba, were simply lying. For Puritans this was a much safer way to criticize the trials than attacking Chief Justice Stoughton, the clergy, or the court. George Jacobs may be excused for calling one of the afflicted a "bitch witch" — he was after all accused and hung. But the refrain of the "bitch witches" recurs thereafter with remarkable consistency. Robert Calef, in his vitriolic response to Mather published in 1700, described the afflicted as a "parcel of possessed, distracted, or lying Wenches, accusing their Innocent Neighbors, pretending they see their Specters..." Many historians note with pleasure how John Proctor temporarily cured the affliction of his servant Mary Warren by threatening to beat her and setting her to work at a spinning wheel. Thomas Hutchinson wrote that "the whole scheme was a fraud and an imposture, begun by young girls..." while Charles Upham speculated that the afflicted wanted to "gratify a love of notoriety or of mischief by creating a sensation..." Upham dismisses the possibility that the afflicted might themselves be "victims of the delusion into which they plunged everyone else," because of their "deliberate cunning and cool malice."

There may have been "deliberate cunning and cool malice" at Salem, but the afflicted, especially the youngest in Tituba's circle, were hardly the principal culprits. It is true that Mary Warren told the court that she and the others "did but dissemble," while one witness testified he heard one of the afflicted cry out "There goes Goody Proctor! Old witch, I'll have her hang." But consider this excerpt from the notes taken by Parris at the trial of the same Elizabeth Proctor, as the court questioned the afflicted witnesses.

"Q. Mercy Lewis! does she hurt you? Her mouth was stopped! Q. Ann Putnam Jr., does she hurt you? She could not speak! Q. Abigail Williams! Does she hurt you? Her hand was thrust in her own mouth." At this point John Indian, Tituba's husband and one of the few afflicted males, testified that Proctor "came in her shift and chocked me." (Indian's affliction began after Tituba's confession. His motivation seems obvious — the husband of a confessed witch, and a slave himself, he faced certain death unless he could distance himself from his wife's guilt. He became one of the court's most articulate accusers.) Quizzed again, Parris records how the girls couldn't "make any answer, by reason of dumbness or other fits." It is only when questioned a third time that 12-year-old Ann Putnam Jr. finally gave her inquisitors the answer they so obviously wanted.

A post-Freudian version of the "bitch witch" theory appears in Arthur Miller's "The Crucible," without doubt the most widely
read account of the Salem trials. Miller modernized Upham’s thesis by adding female lust and jealousy to the list of motives. Specifically, he purports to show how a sexual affair between John Proctor and Abigail Williams turned sour after John spurned Abigail to return to his wife Elizabeth. Out of spite, Abigail accuses Elizabeth, and then John, of witchcraft. In this 17th-century “Fatal Attraction,” the ultimate persecutors are women, their victims wrongfully accused men like John Proctor, or well-meaning but gullible clerics like the Rev. Sam Parris. Of course, to make all this plausible Miller has to raise Abigail’s age, from 11 to 17. She becomes a conniving temptress, a true “daughter of Eve,” while her 19-year-old friend Mercy Lewis is described as a “fat, sly merciless girl.”

Historian Carol Karlsen has a different view of the afflicted and their role at Salem. Pointing out how it was the authorities, spurred on by Parris, who first insisted that the girls name names, she then describes how Sarah Churchill, coming out of her fugue, sought to stop the trials — until threatened by the court with trial and hanging. We should also remember that the majority of accusations came not from the afflicted girls, but rather from “confessing” witches bargaining for their lives, while all of the corroborating evidence — accounts of spoiled milk, vanished beer, sickened livestock and murdered infants — came from adults not among the afflicted. The trials became a way for these adults, most especially the elder Putnams, to settle long-standing scores against the Nurse/Esty clan over poerty, politics and status.

An affidavit filed with the court by one Samuel Barton gives us a clue as to how this worked. “I being at Thomas putnams a helping to tend the afflicted puts...I heard them tell mercy lewes that she Cryed out of goody procter and mercy lewes said that she did not Cry out of goody procter nor nobody...and Thomas putnam & his wife & others told her that she Cryed out of goody procter and mercy lewes said if she did it was when she was out in her head for she said she saw nobody...” This troubled adolescent, badgered by the adults around her, bears little resemblance to the “sly and merciless girl” of “The Crucible.” The court ignored Barton’s sworn statement.

Instead of seeing the afflicted girls as malicious liars, Karlsen describes their “possession” as “a special, altered state of consciousness which some women enter as an involuntary reaction to profound emotional conflict. This conflict emerges from the need simultaneously to embrace social norms and to rebel against them...With no legitimate way to express this conflict directly, the unbearable psychic tensions are expressed physically — through women’s bodies.” The afflicted could have done no harm to anyone had it not been for Parris, Noyes, Mather, the court, and the willingness of Puritan society in general to accept an essentially hateful view of women. Had their elders been less repressive, and less misogynist, the girls might not have been afflicted at all.

Still, the “bitch witch” and “hysterical girls” theories remain the most popular explanation for Salem. It is, for instance, the line taken at the Salem Witch Museum. For four dollars, visitors are led into a darkened room, with a red lit circle at the center of the floor inscribed with the names of the martyred. After a “Phantom of the Opera” type organ fanfare, a Vincent Price sound-alike begins his monologue. One moldy diorama after another is illuminated while the afflicted are described as “hysterical,” “restless and resentful...wild and destructive...” To hammer home the point that the witch trials were simple insanity and not repression, we are told that Gallows Hill today stands “in sight of a mental hospital,” managing in one breath to blame the afflicted and demonize the mentally ill.

After the show, the doors open into the museum gift shop. Items on sale include “Good Luck Kitchen Witches,” “Stop By for a Spell” T-shirts, “Witch Travel Mugs,” “Scooting Skulls,” and “Brewing Bucks”—witch-shaped ceramic piggie banks. Witch-dolls, (like the puppets that condemned Bridget Bishop?) are a popular but relatively high-priced item: $16.95, tax not included.

The afflicted eventually recovered. As an adult, Anne Putnam Jr. publicly apologized for her role in the trials, telling the congregation at Salem Village, “I desire to lie in the dust and be humbled for it.” Only one of the justices who presided at the trials, Samuel Sewall, was as public in his repentance, and no judge suffered politically for his part in the witch hunt. Booth points out that in 1693 every one of them won a seat on the Governor’s Council, the highest elected post in the Commonwealth. Samuel Parris was forced out of his pulpit in Salem Village and disappeared from history, his only monument a stone-rimmed hole which today marks the site of his parsonage. Tituba was sold south. And Nicholas Noyes, taunted from the gallows by Sarah Good, died years later of a throat hemorrhage. Perhaps God (or the Goddess) had indeed given him “blood to drink.”
BLACKLIST,

Richard Lyndon, the author's father, being sworn in as an unfriendly witness before HUAC in 1953.
Recent Major "Witch Hunt" by Patricia Lynden

The House Committee on Un-American Activities (HUAC) had been in existence since 1937, but it was not until 10 years later that it came into its own. World War II was over and the Soviet Union and the United States had begun their "cold war" for the rest of the world.

In the spring of 1947, "the List" was drawn up by the Justice Department as an internal guideline to help administer Truman's new loyalty oaths and to screen prospective government employees. It held the names of all organizations with ties to communism, fascism or other "subversive" ideologies. Later that year, in a serious breach of civil rights, the Justice Department allowed the "Blacklist" to be published.
It wasn’t long before the public, made increasingly anxious by Washington’s propaganda blitz about the Communist “enemy within,” came to see the List as a guide to dangerous people and groups. Blacklists sprang up in many industries and they carried the names of anyone who had become tainted by the donation of money or attendance at a meeting of “un-American” organizations even decades before. Those included civil rights groups, peace groups, anti-fascist organizations and socialist groups. Guilt by association was established and the witch hunt was on. By 1950, Joseph R. McCarthy, a Republican senator from Wisconsin, saw the opportunity to make his name and, as chair of the senate committee that investigated “un-American activities,” announced his first batch of “subversives.” Soon he was out of control, casting suspicion on anyone who disagreed with him. His rabid pursuit of communist “witches” gave the era its name.

In 1953, the United States had its modern version of a burning at the stake. Ethel and Julius Rosenberg were electrocuted for giving secret information to the Soviets during wartime. It was a sign of the times that those in power overlooked the fact that the Russians had been our wartime allies. Had the Rosenbergs committed their crimes in peacetime, by law they would have received a lesser sentence.

Throughout the McCarthy era, many people testified against friends and neighbors to save themselves; others seized the opportunity to settle old scores. At great personal cost, some people refused to incriminate others in order to protect themselves. They used the privilege under the Fifth Amendment. One was writer Dashiell Hammett who chose instead to go to prison. Playwright Lillian Hellman told the committee that she would answer any questions about herself, but would not talk about anyone else. In a memorable letter to the committee she wrote, “I cannot and will not cut my conscience to fit this year’s fashions.”

By 1954, McCarthy’s rampage had peaked. The senator himself was under investigation for using his influence to procure favors from the Army for his young friend, G. David Shine, and President Dwight D. Eisenhower made it clear he had had enough of his fellow Republican. But by then many lives were ruined, careers were finished, families broken.

The legacy of a witch hunt.

Throughout my childhood, a profile of Stalin, hammered in relief out of copper, stood atop the china closet of my maternal grandparents’ dining room in southern California. As a child,
The following year, Joe McCarthy died, formally ending the dismal and infamous decade that took his name.

Nearly 40 years have passed, but the emotional legacy of those days remains deeply embedded in my psyche and the psyches of everyone I have ever known who was a kid from a left-wing family in those days. And the legacy is powerful.

On the positive side is the pride in a political tradition that stands for egalitarianism, the rights of minorities, economic justice and civil liberties. But we are also a subculture that will always feel vulnerable to the powers that be. We will always believe that we are irrevocably outsiders; we often wonder when the government will, once again, need political scapegoats and choose us. As a consequence, we have very little faith in, or regard for, duly constituted authority. We also know that friends are often friends only to a point. I'm sure many of us wonder from time to time — as I do — whom among our good friends we can really trust; which of them, if pressed, would point a finger at us to save their own skins as, for example, choreographer Jerome Robbins, director Elia Kazan, actors Lee J. Cobb (who even named his ex-wife), Jose Ferrer and Lloyd Bridges, and playwright Clifford Odets (to name a few famous ones) all did before the Un-American Activities Committee.

One of the most central and sobering lessons of my youth occurred in the early 1950s and was the result of my uncle Archie's Communist Party membership. It was my first and most dramatic experience of being an outsider. One afternoon, when I was about 13 and the McCarthy era was at full tilt, I was called into our living room by my father. Archie was about to "disappear," he told me; in fact, he was probably gone already. "What do you mean 'disappear'?” I asked. “The Party has chosen some leaders to stand trial and go to jail, and others to stay free. But they have to go underground so they won't be arrested," was my father's reply. “Where's he going?” “There's an old revolutionary principle,” my father said quietly, “that you should never know more than you have to about what your fellow revolutionaries are doing. If they arrest you and torture you, you can't betray anyone because you can't tell what you don't know. It's better that way. I don't want to know either.” Few conversations have impressed me more.

That night, as my father predicted, the FBI showed up. There were two agents, in fedoras no less, sitting in a pale blue car parked in front of the house. "They'll be tapping the phone,” said my father, “so don't use it to discuss anyone in the family, and be careful of neighbors who ask too many questions because the FBI has probably found stooges among them." Even at the rebellious age of 13, I knew enough to listen well and do as he said.

Such conversations were universal among parents and children of the left in those days. We all recall the gratuitous harassment, so frightening to a child, of strange, unfriendly men in dark suits ringing the bell and asking to speak to our parents, tailing family members, sometimes even us, bugging our phones and making spies of our neighbors. One of my friends remembers an awful night when the FBI shone a powerful beam of light through the windows of her house, and with it scoured every piece of furniture, the floors, and walls of every room that wasn't curtained. "Even the ceilings," she later said indignantly. "Maybe they thought we had the atom bomb secret hidden in the chandelier?"

The biggest fear, though, was whether your father would lose his job. My father, Richard Lynden, was an elected official of the International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union, the small, independent, politically radical union founded, and for many years led, by Harry Bridges. His job was safe, but that was not enough to make us feel secure — even if we put up a pretty good front.

The night the FBI came to camp in front of our house, my father grandly announced that he was taking us all to dinner at Amelio's, then one of San Francisco's finest restaurants. He took a long, out-of-the-way route there while my sister and I, in our finery, made faces and stuck our tongues out at the two agents in the car that never got more than 20 feet behind us. Playfully, my father drove as though he were being elaborately courteous to two nitwits, very, very slowly to the outskirts of the Mission district and then up a lonely dirt road. At the crest of the hill, which was flat and just big enough for two cars, he drove around and around and around in a circle. You couldn't tell who was following whom, and my father played the game for 10
minutes, chuckling as he occasionally slammed on his brakes, forcing the agents to do the same to keep from rear-ending us. Finally, he took us to dinner. The blue car stayed with us for a month, and left.

For those kids whose parents did lose their jobs, the feelings of persecution and terror were a constant in their lives for years. "Dangerous," is how my friend "Marcus," now a tenured professor, sums up his view of the world. "I still have a very strong sense of it." That is why he requested a pseudonym for this story. He was once a member of the Labor Youth League, the youth organization of the Communist Party, but these days he keeps a low political profile. Both of his parents were once Communists. "I still have, even today, an intrinsic notion of myself as a minority person who is an easy target for persecution." Marcus' parents were blacklisted in the late '40s, his mother from the New York public school system, where she was a teacher, and his father, a well-known Party intellectual, from the literary profession. Marcus' father finally got work thanks to a "resume ring." "Someone like my father had to create an entire history that would stand scrutiny," says Marcus, "and the resume rings were friendly businessmen who would say, 'Yeah, he worked for me 10 years.' My father worked in Manhattan under an assumed name never knowing when he might come to work and have his boss call him in and say 'We know who you are,' and can him. Why couldn't it all happen again?" And, he adds, "That's the kind of baggage I carry."

Bettina Aptheker's father was too famous to disguise himself. He was the Party's star intellectual. Columbia-trained in American history, Herbert Aptheker was blacklisted in 1938 after which he could find no work outside the Party. Except his World War II service in the Pacific theater. Bettina, a lesbian feminist who is professor of women's studies at the University of California's Santa Cruz campus, recalls that her mother worked as a travel agent at Bryn Mawr and been one of their top students and the university had published his dissertation on the Black Consciousness. "As long as you're a member of the Communist Party, you'll never get a job anywhere." And he never did." That is, not until 1965. That year, recalls Bettina, who was herself a young, nationally-known Party activist at the time, "some Black students at Bryn Mawr conducted a sit-in and got him a job. He was a visiting professor there for a couple of years." By that time the Blacklist, which outlived the McCarthy era, had finally run its course.

The social consequences were tough for some of us, catastrophic for others. My father, who had been radicalized while he was an undergraduate at Stanford in the early '30s, helped organize the workers in his father's wholesale grocery business. My grandfather was a bedrock conservative who disagreed violently with my father's politics, although he never disowned him, as some other parents did. But I was always acutely aware of the tension between them, which sometimes erupted into furious fights that made my grandfather cry and caused my father to go on weeks-long drunks.

I will never forget the day my father's subpoena to appear before HUAC was delivered. It was brought by a middle-aged woman carrying a shopping bag. She looked like one of those ladies who often came around in those days to collect money for one cause or another. "Hello, dear, is your daddy home?" she inquired sweetly. I said I'd call him. When he came to the door, she reached into her bag, threw the subpoena at him and, with bitchy saccharinity, said, "I'm sorry it had to be this way, Mr. Lynden." I was miserable. I felt as though I had betrayed my father and my guilt lasted for weeks.

We children were not left without means to protect ourselves in socially troublesome situations. Our parents taught us a political perspective, some theory and history to back it up, and we were secure that ours was the right view of the world. With that we were armed with feelings of both intellectual and moral superiority. When my father's appearance before the HUAC came, I was well prepared with my knowledge of the history of the Fifth Amendment.

At school, after my father's unfriendly testimony made the front pages of the local newspapers, there were just a few unpleasant remarks from schoolmates. Only Miss Quinn, until then my favorite teacher, said, "Aren't you embarrassed?" I was humiliated and enraged. My best friend was forbidden to come to my house anymore, but she lied and came anyway. Although these memories are fresh today, I know they are nothing compared to what other kids went through.

Julie Garfield believes the Blacklist killed her father. He was John Garfield, one of Hollywood's top stars and money-makers for almost two decades until he suddenly found himself blacklisted. Unable to get work, he left Hollywood and returned with his wife and
They had furious fights that made my grandfather cry and caused my father to go on weeks-long drunks


The resume rings were friendly businessmen who would say, “Yeah, he worked for me for 10 years”

they had it in for me,” she recalls. She was called to the home of her LYL youth advisor, and told, “If I wanted to be a good Communist I would have to toe the line.” Rebelliously, she recalls, “I said I didn’t know if I wanted to be a good Communist.” And she was out.

When Janet got home, no one spoke to her. Her parents would no longer discuss political matters with her. At school, where all her friends were in the LYL, “nobody looked at me, nobody spoke to me, nobody telephoned, even my best friend would not call me.” On top of that, the FBI was always watching, listening in on the phone, talking to neighbors. Simultaneously, the rabidly anti-Communist columnists and radio personalities, Westbrook Pegler, Walter Winchell, and Victor Reisel, regularly broadcast Bernard Ades’ name as a “Communist in our midst.” Janet was an outcast everywhere.

Conrad Bromberg, a New York playwright, is the son of Joseph Bromberg, the acclaimed character actor who also died too young because of the Blacklist. Like Garfield, he too was a Hollywood prince, though not as big a star. Bromberg was blacklisted in 1948. He died in 1951 at the age of 47. Conrad, now in his early 60s, whose preoccupation with his father’s fate is expressed in his play, Dream of a Blacklisted Actor, that has had several off-Broadway incarnations, recalls how the Blacklist worked in Hollywood. His play, he says, is the story of his father, but the main character is a composite of Garfield, Bromberg and Edward G. Robinson. “Robinson was vaguely left,” recalls Conrad who went to high school with his son Manny Robinson. “He signed petitions for this or that. I heard from my mother and her friends that he bought his way out of the Committee.” But Garfield was in a different situation. “Garfield was the first actor who ever started his own movie company and the big studio heads saw him as competition.” Those moguls were also loudly anti-Communist. Bromberg continues, “In my play I call him ‘Boxcar Johnnie, a gutter guy you can’t beat.’ He fought back. But, the Committee was on his tail right up to his death. That motherfucker Victor Reisel was always putting stuff in his column like, ‘Is it true that John Garfield gave money to the Stockholm Peace Appeal? John, who are your friends? The whole New York and Hollywood entertainment communities read that stuff.’ It was impossible for Garfield to fight that.

There was also what Bromberg calls “this terrible contradiction of being Communists in Beverly Hills.” There was a rule among mon-
What is modern witchcraft, and why is a specifically feminist witchcraft needed?

Many people who consider themselves to be contemporary “witches” or “pagans” feel they are reviving a millennia-old spirituality. Some harken back to cultures that worshipped Goddesses as well as Gods, and were led by priestesses and wise elder women. Others see their origins in Paleolithic ceremonial magical groups. Some identify with “New Age” thinking; many do not use that label. It is generally believed that all witches are pagan (in worldview), but not all pagans are witches. (For more details, see Drawing Down the Moon, by Margot Adler, revised edition.)

As a religion, witchcraft focuses on working with nature, on psychic development and on direct personal relationships with Deity (Goddesses, or Goddess and God). It emphasizes balance, learning, and responsibility. As a pre-Christian, Goddess-oriented religion, witchcraft encourages female leadership, and many of its practitioners are feminist or sympathetic to feminism.

Witchcraft is often called by its older Anglo-Saxon names: wices or wicas. The Old English neutral plural for witches is wiccan, although some witches today say “wiccan.” Although the masculine term wicce is most often used (which I consider symptomatic of the internal
siasm of modern witchcraft, the Anglo-Saxon Old English term for the religion, and the term I use, is wiccer.

Witchcraft is sometimes viewed as being "evil." This mentality fueled the witch-huntingquisitions centuries ago, and is responsible for attacks against real witches and powerful women around the world today.

For instance, in 1985, three women in Zimbabwe were shot and killed by a group of men who accused them of being witches. At least 20 women in West Bengal, India were killed as suspected witches in 1987. In 1989, women in eastern India were murdered after they were accused of being witches and casting "evil spells," one of them was dragged from her hut, tied to a tree and slaughtered with an ax by two male neighbors, only one of whom was apprehended by police.

In 1990, in Venda — the nominally independent Black homeland set up by South Africa — an angry crowd set fire to an inhabited home, fatally burning two infants, because they believed the parents were involved in witchcraft.

By the late 1980s, witchcraft was a crime in several nations. In 1987, the West African nation of Benin declared that practicing witchcraft or magic was punishable by death or 10 to 20 years hard labor. The South American nation of Ecuador banned witches, fortune tellers and natural healers in 1989.

Beginning in the mid-1980s, right-wing groups in the United States attacked "witchcraft" in an attempt to disrupt and control the public right to freedom of expression.

In 1985, parents' groups in at least 20 states, under the leadership of right-wing anti-feminist leader Phyllis Schlafly, demanded that public schools get parents' written permission for classroom discussions and curriculum material on a variety of topics, including witchcraft, abortion, social roles of men and women, homosexuality, human sexuality, and Eastern mysticism. A lawsuit filed by one such group, Citizens Organized for Better Schools' (COBS), which needed fundraising and publicity to the public right to freedom of expression.

In fall 1989, the couple laid down two Native American "medicine wheels," or rock configurations, for the healing of the land. John died of cancer the following April, but Karina continued the work. She had a guest house built and a pit burned in the yard.

When Singer had two other women visit the
farm in the summer of 1990, she was unaware that rumors about her had been circulating for years. As Mercer County State's Attorney Alan Duppler later reported, "There have been rumors flying around Mercer County that these three ladies are witches and they're sacrificing animals and doing general cult-type things." According to the story, the guest house was a church, and visitors were seen dancing around a pit fire. (The "dancers" were apparently construction workers putting out grass fires started by sparks from the newly-burned pit in the yard.)

When Jim Reppen, who worked for a tire service company, and Dean Unterseher, a farmer, heard the story, they "decided they were going to go down and eliminate the problem," says Duppler. Reppen and Unterseher, both armed, were arrested on Singer's farm in August and charged with conspiring to murder her.

"I'm stunned my neighbors could believe these things when we lived here 21 years," Singer said. "And instead of calling me to find out if they were true, they circulated them around until they became like an atomic blast mushrooming out of the prairie."

Karina Singer was an independent landowner, with different spiritual interests from those of her neighbors. She is one of many women -- including feminist politicians -- who are faced with modern-day witch hunting.

In reality, witchcraft is far from negative or evil. My definition of "witch" is a priestess or priest of wiccecraft: A person skilled in healing and psychic work and occult magic: A person able to bend or reshape universal energies, or an independent, mighty, powerful, or daring woman.

I define a "feminist" as a female or male who is female-centered or female-oriented; or a person who is not prejudiced against others because of their gender or sexual preferences; or anyone who, in a patriarchal society, works toward the political, economic, spiritual, sexual, and social equality of women.

Modern witchcraft includes a variety of denominations, or "traditions." The root feminist of these is the Dianic tradition, named for the Roman Goddess Diana, woodland Goddess of Freedom, huntress, and patroness of witches. One branch of Dianic witchcraft includes women and men as practitioners, and honors the God (of Nature, Love, etc.) as well as the Great Goddess. Another branch is overtly involved in feminist issues (though a portion are in peace or ecology groups).

During the past two decades, American feminists have changed much of the outward look of witchcraft. There are more female leaders visible, and there is a great deal more emphasis on Goddess culture. But, despite the long human heritage of Goddess worship around the world, and despite the reality that European witch hunts that lasted for centuries were primarily directed against women, contemporary witchcraft includes and accepts sexists, people who have conducted internal witch hunts, and other kinds of bigots. And witchcraft too often tends to speak in male terms, to assume a greater importance for male deities and male spokespersons, and to assume antifeminist or antigay rights stances.

Feminists involved in witchcraft have made a difference, however. The foundation of witchcraft is rooted in female power and female concerns. Much can be learned from feminist witchcraft that one can find useful as a feminist. Because Dianic witchcraft emphasizes the perception of universal creativity and energy as feminine, as the Goddess, women are thereby empowered as vital and important beings in the universe. So, it becomes natural to assume that: Women are creative in all ways; women are leaders; women have the deceding voice in all that matters to them; women are responsible for their actions; women are able to communicate directly with Deity (or universal energy or Nature); and women have sexual freedom, reproductive rights, and the right to define their bodily lives.

Feminist witchcraft encourages the development of intuition as an effective part of human life. Each human being has intuition, an inner voice, a way of deciding quickly what is right or wrong for oneself, and what to do...
about it. Western culture denies the intuitive judgment, and favors a rational, logical, statistical, or factual approach. Both intuition and logic are necessary for a well-balanced life. My intuition has helped me stay out of potentially dangerous situations, has led me to teach myself to meditate and to learn something about Yoga and T'ai Chi.

Feminist witchcraft also offers positive ways to view and change body images. Witches believe in self-blessings. Each of us is seen as being part of divine energy, of the Goddess and the God. And every part and process of the human body is considered sacred. So, one way to pray to the Goddess/God is to bless one's self and the basic parts of one's body.

As I have learned to trust myself and appreciate my body more, I have come to respect the functions of my body. In blessing my body, I learned that my flesh is really alive, composed of living cells that do respond to my needs. I also learned to bless the coming and going of my monthly period of blood by honoring the Goddess in myself: "She who bleeds, yet does not die."

Feminist witchcraft focuses on the cyclical patterns of our lives: The moon, the sun, other stars, and the universe. As I became more aware of my personal patterns, I grew more tolerant of my need for solitude, for writing, and for periods of fervent feminist political activity and meetings. I learned to balance more evenly the processes of giving and accepting love. And I learned to do something I thought impossible — to perceive the artist in myself. Cultural creativity — work educated to the Muses and Pan — is encouraged in feminist witchcraft.

Witches are very interested in herbal knowledge and in learning to heal oneself, others, even the earth. And many witches are in various kinds of healing professions or vocations.

Witches generally believe in reincarnation, in a cycle of life after life filled with learning. As I learned to see my life as one of a number of lifetimes, I also learned not to be afraid of death. I now see death as brother to the Goddess of Life and Love (as in the myth of Ishtar and the Lord of Death), or death as the sister-self of the Goddess-on-Earth (as in the Egyptian view of Nephthys below and Isis above, or the Greek views of Persephone underground and Demeter aboveground).

The knowledge of healing methods can include not only ways to make life easier and healthier, but also ways to ease the passing of life into death. Sometimes death is a peaceful passage from one stage of existence to another. In 1970, my 30-year-old brother died of cancer. I priestessed him — counseling him, sending him energy, advising him, sharing with him the psychic experiences that often occur to the dying person. I aided my brother to face death as a journey, neither frightening nor extraordinary. I discovered that many Americans don't know how to deal with dying and death. Though many nurses are aware of the needs of a dying person and try hard to help, most of the doctors I contacted were unwilling or unable to deal personally with dying patients. The process of dying is made much more painful than it need be for many people in hospitals in this country.

When I perceive death as brother to the Goddess, I feel He is kind to Her daughters, and understanding, and helpful to all who need to pass on to her levels of being. When I personify death as sister to the Goddess, I feel she welcomes her children and renews us, readies us for rebirth, and helps us learn in harmony and peace. We are always moving from living towards dying and beyond, as trees and flowers in nature move through stages of existence and seeming (but only temporary) nonexistence.

Feminist witchcraft offers the feminist movement other helpful theological or philosophical perceptions of life: The process you use is as important as, or even more important than, your goal; balance is important in the ways we live; the energy you send out will return to you at least threefold (whether the energy is in thought or deed); learn to perceive the cycles of events (for example, the Equal Rights Amendment will not die, but efforts to place it into law go through cycles that wane and then wax forth); and human beings need the mystery and security of identifying with Mother Nature or Mother Earth.

Although modern witchcraft reflects some of the basic societal ills of our time, and although many witches today do not practice all they preach, there is much that feminist witchcraft offers to feminists and the feminist movement. If you are drawn to it, be careful and don't check your principles or your feminism at the gate. For those not so inclined, there is still much to be learned from witchcraft about ourselves and our place in nature.

Ann Forfreedom, a feminist witch, is the publisher of The Wise Woman feminist journal, Executive Director of the Institute for Feminist Studies, and a lecturer on women's history, feminist issues, and feminist witchcraft. This article was originally published in On the Issues, Vol. VIII, 1987, and has been updated and revised.
By the late 1980s, witchcraft was a crime in several nations.

On December 5, 1484, Pope Innocent VIII declared a “Holy Inquisition” against “witches” — i.e. against those who had “strayed from the Catholic Faith” and through “incantations, spells, and charms” caused “horrid offenses.” The pope proclaimed:

Witches have slain infants yet in the mother’s womb, (including the offspring of cattle), have blasted the produce of the earth, the grapes of the vine, the fruits of the trees, nay, men and women, beasts of burden...corn, wheat and all other cereals, these witches furthermore afflict and torment men and women (and animals) with terrible and piteous pains and some diseases; they hinder men from performing the sexual act and women from conceiving."

The European witchcraft trials were based on the Malleus Maleficarum (The Witches’ Hammer). The Malleus claimed that most witches were women because women are innately inferior and innately predisposed to “evil.” Three general vices appear to have special dominion over wicked women, namely, infidelity, ambition, and lust...when a woman thinks alone, she thinks evil."

According to the Malleus, witches were responsible for male impotence, male fornication, male adultery, and marital infertility. Thus witches, not men, were responsible for the births of illegitimate and unholy children and for the non-conception and deaths of legitimate (father-owned) children....

The anecdotes in the Malleus are frightening to read. Heinrich Kramer and Jakob Sprenger support their claim of “witch”-induced male impotence anecdotally. For example, they tell the story of a “certain young man of Ratisbon who had an intrigue with a girl:"

[When he] wanted to leave her [he] lost his member [i.e.] some glamour was cast over it so that he could not see or touch [anything] but his smooth body. In his worry over this, he [decided to] use some violence to induce [the witch] to restore [him] to health. [The witch] maintained that she was innocent and knew nothing about it. He fell upon her, and winding a towel tightly around her neck, choked her, saying: "Unless you give me back my health, you shall die at my hands." The witch [then] restored his “member”....

Witches are so powerful that they can cause one man to kill another man from afar. In 1651, in colonial America, Thomas Allen accidentally shot and killed Henry Stiles in the presence of many witnesses. Allen was charged with “homicide by misadventure,” fined, and “bound to good behavior for a year.”

But this is not the end of the matter. Presumably, Stiles’ death remains a topic of local conversation — and three years later, it yields a more drastic result. In November 1654, the court holds a special session to try a case of witchcraft — against a woman, Lydia Gilbert. The court in effect is considering a complicated question. Did Lydia Gilbert’s witchcraft cause Thomas Allen’s gun to go off so as to kill Henry Stiles? Depositions were taken from eyewitneses and others with information bearing on the case....Probate documents show that Stiles was a boarder in the home of Lydia Gilbert — and her creditor as well. Perhaps there was trouble between them, even some open displays of anger? And if so, perhaps their neighbors suspected in Goodwife Gilbert a vengeful motive toward Stiles.

In due course, the trial jury weighs the evidence and reaches its verdict — guilty as charged. The magistrates hand down the prescribed sentence of death by hanging.

Excerpt from Mothers on Trial by Phyllis Chesler (published by Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1991)
Many studies have shown that at least 90 percent of all violent crime and 99 percent of mass and serial murder is committed by men, not women. However, women are not rewarded — no cash, no political power, no freedom from violence — for being “good girls.” Perhaps a woman’s only reward is in knowing that as bad as things are, they’re even “worse” for “bad girls.”

A “bad girl” is any woman who’s poor, (or too rich or ambitious for a woman), non-white, unwed, not young, not thin-and-pretty, without strong family support, and who is therefore vulnerable to accusations of mental illness, lesbianism, drug addiction, sexual promiscuity or witchcraft, i.e. feminism, paganism, socialism, etc.

Enter Aileen (Lee) Carol Wuornos — a prostitute and lesbian accused of killing at least five men — a really “bad” girl.

On January 31, 1992, in Daytona Beach, Florida, Wuornos, described by the media and countless experts, including the FBI, as the world’s first female serial killer, was sentenced to die in the electric chair for the murder of 51-year-old ex-convict Richard Mallory. I believe that if the state of Florida could, it would electrocute Wuornos once for each man she’s accused of killing. But what, really, are her true crimes?

Is Wuornos guilty of not having killed herself — the way all “good” sexual abuse victims and prostitutes are supposed to do? (Wuornos says she was abused in childhood and serially raped as a teenage prostitute.) Or is Wuornos guilty of daring to defend herself in a violent struggle with a man and, by example, encouraging other prostitutes to do likewise?

Most people — and this includes judges, jurors, and lawyers — value men’s lives more than women’s and empathize with, sometimes even romanticize, men — but not women — who sin. In fact, lawyers, both male and female, often defend male — but not female — killers pro bono.

A woman’s story is rarely believed, by men or even by other women: Less so if she’s accusing a man of being the ag-
gressor. This is true for both "respectable" women like Anita Hill, Patricia Bowman, or the accused in the St. John's gang-rape case, and for less "respectable" women — like prostitutes.

Wuornos claims that she killed in self-defense. Apart from her own testimony, the jury never got to hear any evidence that might have helped them evaluate this much-derided claim. For example, according to police who interviewed Mallory's ex-girlfriend Jackie Davis and Chastity Lee Marcus (one of two prostitutes Mallory partied with the night before he picked Wuornos up): Mallory served 10 years in prison for burglary, suffered from mood swings, drank too much, was violent towards women, enjoyed the strip bars, was into pornography, was erratic in business and in trouble with the IRS, and had undergone therapy for some kind of sexual dysfunction. Judge Uriel "Bucky" Blount did not allow Jackie Davis to testify about Mallory's violence towards women.

Wuornos was indigent and was assigned a public defender. The original judge (who later recused herself) replaced Wuornos first public defender who, Wuornos charged, had negotiated the movie rights to Wuornos' story. At Wuornos' request, her new public defender was a woman.

The most idealistic and hard-working of public defenders is still too overworked and lacks the resources to do more than a perfunctory job. Wuornos' new public defender had 12 other capital cases in addition to Wuornos'. She asked the judge: "Do I spend all my time on Ms. Wuornos' case and let the others slide? Or do I do it in reverse? I am in a bind." One reporter I spoke with about the case kept needling me for not being cynical enough: "C'mon, Wuornos is not entitled to the kind of lawyer that William Kennedy Smith had. Get real!"

Now, I'm not about to crusade for "equal rights for serial killers" but if this reporter is right, why does Jeffrey Dahmer, accused of torturing, raping, killing, cannibalizing and dismembering 15 young men, mainly of color, attract a private pro bono lawyer? Furthermore, why did Dahmer, unlike Wuornos, merit many national experts, skinheads demonstrating on his behalf in Chicago ("He got rid of the filth" they chanted), and, reported by various media, a growing number of women supports, some of whom have formed a Jeffrey Dahmer Fan Club?

Or let's look at another Florida serial killer: Ted Bundy, who killed at least 30 and possibly 100 women. Several lawyers offered to defend Bundy pro bono, an expert advised him on jury selection pro bono; at one point, no fewer than five public defenders assisted Bundy, who insisted on representing himself. Several lawyers would have defended Wuornos pro bono in the first of five trials, but only if at least $50,000 in expenses could be raised.

Even more interesting: The state of Florida offered Bundy a life sentence without parole; Bundy refused the plea bargain. Wuornos' lawyers tried to set up a similar arrangement for her but one county prosecutor thought she deserved to die and refused to agree to a plea bargain.

Do we have different standards for evil, violence and insanity: One for men, another for women?

Wuornos' first trial was exceptionally speedy: Only 13 court days. A review of the court papers and media visuals show that Judge Blount, who was coaxed out of retirement for this case, granted all of the prosecution's and denied most of the defense motions. The jury would see excerpts from Wuornos videotaped confession — minus her repeated statements that she killed in self-defense. Under Florida's Williams Rule*, the jury would also hear about the six other alleged murders. (Contrast this with William Kennedy Smith's jury that, under the same rule, was not allowed to hear three other allegations of rape.

Blount did not grant the defense a change of venue based on the enormous, local, pre-trial publicity, which included Wuornos televised confession. Blount felt that he could seat an "impartial" jury even if they'd seen or heard about the confession — and he did so in a day and a half! Given the gravity and the notoriety of the case, the 68 prospective jurors might have been polled individually; none were. (Bundy did get a change of venue, from Tallahasee to Miami, for a similar reason.)

During the first part of the trial, Wuornos herself was the only witness for the defense — despite the fact that more than 10 mainly pro bono experts were ready to testify for the defense. I know because I organized them. These included a psychologist, a psychiatrist, experts in prostitution, battery, rape, lesbianism, alcoholism and adoption, among others. One is considered this country's leading expert on women who kill in self-defense. Wuornos' attorneys turned down these witnesses. No reason was given. Incredibly, they allowed no one to testify for the defense except Wuornos herself.

Her testimony on the stand about Mallory's murderous behavior was dignified, credible and very moving.

In the penalty phase of the trial, the jury heard from two psychologists who diagnosed Wuornos as a "borderline personality" suffering from "organic brain syndrome." In my opinion, they might as well have testified for the prosecution.

Attorney John Tanner, a born-again Christian, was Ted Bundy's death-row "minister" and tried to have Bundy's execution delayed. Yet, as the lead prosecutor in the Wuornos case, Tanner

*Williams vs. State 1959 allows evidence of a defendant's other crimes or alleged crimes if the court determines that the facts are sufficiently similar.
A strategic use of the insanity plea might have saved her from the death sentence

merely that a strategic use of the insanity plea might have saved her from the death sentence. It is still justifiable — even for a seriously traumatized woman — to kill in self-defense and Wuornos’ claim of self-defense against a violent john is plausible. Her claim certainly merited far more thought and consideration than the deliberate neglect it received from those who heard and tried her case. Blount refused to let the jury hear the special instructions fashioned by the defense to reflect these considerations.

Wuornos has been under attack all her life, probably more than any soldier in a real war. For years people said: “How can a prostitute be raped?” Now, given what we know about how often prostitutes are raped, beaten, robbed, arrested and killed, often by real serial killers, people say: “Well, it’s part of the job description. If she doesn’t like it, why doesn’t she get out?” Wuornos has turned this question around. “If men don’t want to be killed, they should stay away from prostitutes — or at least stop degrading and assaulting them.”

Note: As we go to press, Wuornos has requested no further trials and demanded immediate execution.
And Other Reportorial Sins

By Laura Sydell

omen would love to see Thelma and Louise use their pistols on the management of the New York Times, the Washington Post, NBC and a host of other mainstream media outlets. Although women may have come a long way since the days of hoop skirts and foot binding, this doesn't seem to be reflected in the kind of press coverage they're getting.

According to a study by the media watchdog group Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting (FAIR) that looked at the front page photos of three major dailies, the New York Times, USA Today and the Washington Post, women don't seem to be very important. In the Post, only 13 percent of front page photo subjects were women; in the Times it was 11 percent. The Times really showed its reluctance to put a photo of a woman on the front page when it illustrated an article on women's tennis with a photo of Boris Becker.
Surprisingly, the more conservative USA Today placed more photos of women on the front page (30 percent). But while 55 percent of white men on the cover were government or business officials, this wasn’t true of women: In all the papers FAIR studied, most of the women who were not sports or entertainment figures were wives, daughters or mothers of prominent men.

What effect does the media’s disregard of women have on the public’s perception of an issue? Let’s look at a few examples. Take one of the 1991’s big media events, the coverage of the Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas’s nomination hearings. According to the polls, the public found Thomas more credible than Anita Hill, whose accusations of sexual harassment were made public only after several media outlets got hold of her FBI testimony. However, there were stories about Thomas circulating among reporters that were never made public, stories that might have made a difference in the perception of the nominee’s credibility. Let’s look at a couple of these stories. Remember Angela Wright? She was the other woman who accused Thomas of sexual harassment when she was on his staff. During the early morning hours on the last night of the hearings, after we’d heard John Doggett proclaim his irreversibility to women, especially Hill, the Senate Judiciary Chair Joseph Biden announced that we would not hear Wright testify. However, transcripts of testimony previously given to the Judiciary Committee and later released to the press contained evidence that would have been truly damning to Thomas. According to Wright, Thomas repeatedly made comments to her, much like those made to Hill. He asked her about the size of her breasts and commented on her legs and other parts of her body. Although none of the papers FAIR studied, most of the women whose stories were widely reported, were women who were not sports or entertainment figures. However, some years later he gave her a glowing recommendation—a fact, confirmed by her current employer, the Charlotte Observer, and reported by Lyle Denniston of the Baltimore Sun. However, this fact didn’t seem important to the rest of the media.

The Sun was one of the few newspapers to publicize Wright’s statements. Denniston, in defense of the general media’s failure to publish the details of the Judiciary Committee’s conversation with Wright, points out that the press was handed the transcript at 11:00 on the last night of the hearings. But why didn’t the mass media publicize this information on the following day? Wright’s testimony has even greater impact when the affidavit of Sukari Hardnett is added to the picture. Although she made it clear she was not charging Thomas with sexual harassment, Hardnett, a former special assistant to Thomas, provided the Senate with a sworn affidavit in which she charged that Thomas’ treatment of women on his staff was more than that of a mentor to proteges. “In her affidavit Hardnett said, “If you were young, Black, female, reasonably attractive and worked directly for Clarence Thomas, you knew full well you were being inspected and auditioned as a female.” Hardnett, who worked for Thomas between 1985 and 1986, said she didn’t like Thomas’ attention and sought a transfer. Wright’s testimony, along with Hardnett’s, would have been important factors in establishing the pattern of behavior which is typical of harassers—a pattern which some senators and Thomas supporters, whose opinions were widely reported, claimed was missing. Taken together, the testimony of these three women is powerful evidence. Yet, the media neglected to give the public enough information to put the pieces together. Although Hardnett’s affidavit was widely reported, only New York Newsday considered her statements important enough to put in a headline and lead paragraph. Major national papers such as the Washington Post and USA Today buried Hardnett’s statement in the middle and end of articles. And, as anyone knows who followed the Hill/Thomas affair, the media continued to say the disagreement was between two “credible” people without mentioning of the other two charges against Thomas.

Other stories known by many reporters didn’t see the light of day—among them, Thomas’ attempts to undermine the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission’s (EEOC) sexual harassment regulation, his failure while a federal judge to excuse himself from a case in which his close friend and mentor Senator John Danforth had a $7.5 million interest, his denial of knowledge that his close friend Jay Parker had ties to the apartheid government in South Africa. Nina Totenberg of National Public Radio, one of the reporters who broke the Hill story, and Howell Raines, the New York Times national desk editor in Washington, both said that the most significant reason for their failure to report other Thomas stories was the Democratic senators. Although the Times had a team of six investigative reporters working on the Thomas affair, Raines says they didn’t bring out a lot of information because of the “tired nature of the Democratic questions. They didn’t ask the questions that would have elicited the kind of investigative reporting we wanted to do.” Why didn’t the press do their own investigation? The Baltimore Sun’s Denniston defended his colleagues’ failure to bring out information that the Senators didn’t mention. “There is a point beyond which the press won’t do the Senators’ job for them,” Denniston said. He criticized the Judiciary Committee for “massaging” the press with information and...
then failing to follow through during the hearings. But Tiffany Devitt of FAIR put it another way: "There is basically a pattern, particularly among the Washington press corps, of letting the people in power set the agenda and spin the story." Devitt believes the press should be more aggressive and go beyond those sources and do some real digging.

Jim Naurekas, also with FAIR, criticizes the limits that the press places on itself. "If that's their version of the press, then why do we have a free press? It's not up to the government to decide what's news, it's up to the press to decide." Naurekas says if it's up to the Democrats and the Republicans to dictate the stories, then why not just let them write their own newspapers?

Larry Bensky, a reporter for the progressive Pacifica national radio network who covered the Iran/Contra and the Thomas hearings, points out the reportorial differences in the mainstream media handling of the two events. In the Iran/Contra affair, journalists were willing to look beyond information given out by the major parties. Bensky attributes this rigor to the fact that it involved a potentially impeachable offense by the President. However, he also thinks sexism played a role in their failure to fully investigate the sexual harassment charges against Thomas.

Susan Faludi, whose best-selling book Backlash looks at media coverage of women, noted a lack of interest among the press corps "in truly getting to the bottom of the Anita Hill story." She attributes this in part to the media still primarily being run by men — a fact which takes on increased significance in light of a study published in the Washington Post that found six out of seven male reporters were pro-Thomas while two out of three female reporters supported Hill. Faludi believes men in the Senate and the press may have been on the defensive because they felt women were "ganging up on them." She notes the appearance of subtle biases. For example, the day following Hill's testimony, the media headlined Thomas' rebuttal and effectively "silenced Hill."

Coverage of the abortion issue also reflects many of the same biases found in coverage of the Thomas/Hill affair. Rarely does the media look at how women will be affected by restrictions on abortion. Instead the focus seems to be on Washington and the men in power. Tiffany Devitt of FAIR notes, "Though Governor Bob Martinez of Florida will never have an abortion, a Washington Post headline declared: 'Governor at Risk on Abortion Issue.' While it is individual women, not political parties, who confront the choice to terminate a pregnancy, a Wall Street Journal headline announced: 'Abortion Debate Proves Painful for Republicans.'"

One of the few times that women became the focus of abortion coverage was during the fall of many of the communist regimes in Eastern Europe. When it comes to coverage of a country that the U.S. views as hostile, there don't seem to be limits on the ways the media can vilify them. Newsweek published an article titled, "When Abortion is Denied: What of the 'Unwanted?'" which discussed the consequences of Czechoslovakia's ban on abortions. The Washington Post and the New York Times ran articles depicting the horrors women in Romania faced under the anti-abortion policies of the Ceausescu regime. But when women are harmed because of restrictive U.S. policies, it's rarely front page news. Each year over 200,000 women die worldwide from botched illegal abortions. Many of those deaths could be avoided if it weren't for U.S. pressure; in 1984 the Reagan administration announced that it would not fund any international or foreign...
family planning organizations that provide counseling on abortion. According to Sharon Camp of the Population Crisis Committee, hospitals in Bangladesh are even refusing to give women hemorrhaging from botched abortions medical care for fear of losing U.S. dollars. Camp also says there are countries in Africa where illegal abortion "is an epidemic. Everyone has a family member who has died of a botched illegal abortion." Camp explains that much of this suffering could be alleviated if the United States, the major funder of family planning services worldwide, would change its policies. But the plight of these women doesn't seem to be front page news here. Nor was the story of Rosie Jimenez, a poor Hispanic woman who lived in Texas near the Mexican border. In 1977, just after passage of the Hyde Amendment took away Medicaid funding for abortions, Jimenez, who already had two children, slipped across the border for a cheap abortion, a choice which ultimately killed her.

But why, one may ask, don't women's magazines take up some of the slack left by the news media? Gloria Steinem answered that in her article "Sex, Lies and Advertising" that appeared in the premier issue of Ms. magazine as an ad-free publication. In her piece Steinem reflects on the times when Ms. took advertising. Her stories of the demands made by advertisers are at once laughable and frightening. She tells how the magazine lost an ad schedule for Revlon products after it featured Robin Morgan's groundbreaking article on women in the Soviet Union producing feminist, underground, self-published books. The story won the prestigious Front Page award. "Nonetheless," writes Steinem, "this journalistic coup undoes years of efforts to get an ad schedule from Revlon. Why? Because the Soviet women on the cover are not wearing makeup." Steinem also cites instances of advertisers refusing to place their ads unless they are put next to stories that promote their products, and are not put in issues which deal with controversial issues like "gun control, abortion, the occult, cults, or the disparagement of religion." So through the pressure of the corporations that provide most of the money to keep magazines like Glamor or Mademoiselle on the stands, it looks like there isn't going to be anything "controversial" or for that matter terribly feminist coming from those fronts.

But it's important to understand that what is affecting the coverage of women's issues also affects the coverage of everything else. It isn't just women who get shafted — it's disenfranchised people everywhere. Reporters Amy Goodman of Pacifica radio's WBAI in New York City and Alan Nairn of The New Yorker magazine recently visited a country most Americans haven't heard of: East Timor. On November 12, 1991, they saw Indon-
Savannah pressed itself full-length against my windows at night, palm trees blowing, cicadas whirring, cars honking...

"All I ever wanted to do was write," says 39-year-old National Book Award nominee Melissa Fay Greene, author of Praying for Sheetrock. "But I didn't know how to make the connection between high school and college writing and making a living. After I graduated from Oberlin college in 1975, I sent letters to 20 newspapers and VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America). I never heard from the newspapers but I was accepted by VISTA." Greene was assigned to Georgia Legal Services (GLSP) and in no time flat became a skilled paralegal and community organizer. "Legal Services was part of the whole social justice movement," she recalls. Her assignments were complex and varied: Representing clients who were erroneously denied welfare, food stamps, Medicaid, Supplemental Security Income and disability; attending administrative hearings as a client representative; teaching public-housing tenants their rights; and organizing a coalition to stop cutbacks in health care. "It was wonderful work," she says, eye-opening, meaningful, rewarding. She did it for three years, one as a VISTA volunteer, two as a GLSP staff paralegal.

Greene's contentment during this period, her near total immersion in the lives of her clients, her increased sense of self-worth and joy at being on the side of racial and economic justice, was enhanced by geography, for Greene had long hoped to return to the state of her birth. "I went to Georgia every summer to see my grandmother and I'd always wanted to return there to live," she says. "I have vivid early childhood memories of it, the lushness of it, the dirt streets, the red clay, those childhood connections of loving the land, the mix of people, the accents. My main interest in school had been history, Southern history and intellectually understanding slavery. There were no longer "colored"
My main interest in school had been history, Southern history and intellectually understanding slavery

portraits of them, reconstructing, through their memories. Savannah in the 1930s, the 1910s, the 1890s. My oldest subjects were still immersed in worlds now all but extinct.

These worlds spanned much of the state, and introduced her to a wide range of people. In McIntosh County, for example, there was Miss Fanny, one of the area's most colorful and respected Black matriarchs, who spoke her own brand of English seasoned with Gullah, an oral language whose masters have, although diverting.
The area is called McIntosh County and encompasses Georgia’s coastal islands: Broughton, Butler, Queens, Sapelo and Wolf. Humans, numbering about 7,000, struggle to tame swamp, marsh and forest. The lion’s share of the area’s workers find employment in the fishing or timber industries. Most, save a few local drug dealers, are poor; slightly more than half are African-American. Many speak Gullah.

Most Blacks, says Melissa Fay Greene, still live in “slave or sharecropper shacks — made out of wood and wind — or in trailers on dirt roads that disappeared into the pine woods or in simple cinder-block houses.” Even a decade ago the majority lived “without plumbing, telephones, hot water, paved roads, electricity, gas heat or air conditioning. Their tiny hamlets offered no goods or services other than a nailed together church, a rundown laundromat, a juke joint, a beautician working out of her side porch, a palm reader, and maybe a ‘shine’ house.” Not surprisingly, until the mid 1980s not a single African-American mayor, council member, county commissioner, sheriff, judge or grand jury member had been elected or appointed. Furthermore, there were no Black salespeople, cashiers, bookkeepers, bank tellers, librarians, fire fighters, letter carriers, welfare workers, phone company employees or courthouse staffers to be found. In short, reports Greene, “For most of this century the McIntosh County Black people lived much as they had since emancipation. They relied on the Lord, the sheriff and the neighbors.”

And therein — in a deep and trusted sense of community, neighbor to neighbor — lay the beginnings of the unraveling of the white McIntosh powerbrokers. The “season of change,” as Greene calls it, began in 1972 when a white policeman shot a Black man named Ed Finch for allegedly disturbing the peace. A local factory worker, Thurnell Alston, along with a preacher and a former NYC police officer now residing in McIntosh, seized the moment, organizing the Black community against police violence.

Although their victory was short-lived — while Finch was given medical treatment at City expense and the police chief was removed from office pending an investigation, the chief was ultimately reinstated by the City Council and Finch was rearrested and served six months in jail — the lessons gleaned from the experience were not. For the first time, African-Americans publicly articulated dissatisfaction with the way of their world, and began to meet regularly to discuss the civil wrongs that had rocked other parts of the U.S. years earlier.

Shortly after the Finch debacle, the school board voted to displace Chatham Jones, the only Black on that body. Alston and cohorts responded by starting a chapter of the NAACP and founded the McIntosh County Civic Improvement Organization. Meetings were lively, filled with the songs of choirs begging for divine guidance, as ideas prompted by newfound anger were debated. The retired NYC cop, Sammie Pinckney, the most politically savvy of the three leaders, contacted legal services lawyers about systemic electoral fraud and other improprieties that rendered Blacks second class. Voting irregularities were investigated, demands were voiced, and Blacks, empowered by the momentum around them, began running for office. Alston, himself, was elected to the county commission in 1978.

Although Alston served for 10 years — and succeeded in overseeing the creation of a hospital authority, a physician-staffed medical building in one of the county’s most remote areas, and brought plumbing and electricity to settlements where people had always used wells and outhouses — he also found himself tempted by the power of his position. His ultimate downfall, however, was tempered by the fact that his personal disgrace was not met with a return to the past. In fact, by 1989 the tables had begun to turn. Not only were Black men gaining entree into previously all-white arenas, but women, too, were staking a claim to dignity. Evella Brown, an African-American, was elected to the school board; a Black man displaced “a longtime white county commissioner in a racially mixed district; a Black woman runs the tourism office; and a Black woman teller works in the Darien bank.”

Equality reached? Of course not. But in prose rivaling the most dramatic and compelling of novels, Greene brings us deep into the gut of McIntosh County and reaffirms several old truisms: Power concedes nothing without demand, and the wheels of change grind slowly, but they grind.

— E.J.B.
I Was Battered And Abused. The Perpetrator Was My Mother
Although I didn't realize it at the time, for me the destructive, generational, abusive cycle that was our family heritage began to rupture that day I phoned my mother. Phoning her is itself a noteworthy event, given the nature of our relationship and the way we communicate. In the past 12 years we've talked on the phone less than a dozen times, and I've initiated most of the calls. Via the conduit of my father, my mother has let it be known it's my duty to call her. After all, she's the mother and I'm the daughter.

My mother is a guidance counselor, working one-to-one with elementary school kids who have emotional problems. During this cataclysmic phone conversation, she shared a recent professional triumph of which she was extremely proud. In an exuberant voice she told me about Joseph, an engaging, gentle child of eight, unable to express himself in anything louder than a whisper because he's scared to speak up. Joseph is a battered child: Physically battered at home and verbally battered at school. Acting as his advocate, my mother took action against his parents and intervened with his teacher and the school's principal.

As I listened to the voice that makes my hair stand on end, my throat swelled, preventing me from swallowing. I had to hang up because I was overcome by the irony of this situation. At one time I too was barely audible. Like Joseph, I was battered and abused. The perpetrator was my mother.
She was 22 when I was born; by today's standards, a child herself. Then, two years later, my brother was born. I used to believe my brother and I were at fault when she lost her patience and lashed out. I thought we deserved the beatings, that if we hadn't behaved so badly, Mom wouldn't have beaten us with her fists, or whatever household object was close at hand. When, as an adult, I found the courage to step back into the terror of my childhood, I discovered that we weren't bad kids. I realized my mother's rages had been unpredictable and, for the most part, unprovoked by anything we'd done. My brother and I were just regular kids. It was my mother who was "irregular."

From the onset, she couldn't cope with motherhood. She was burdened by a fury against unnamed, therefore, overpowering forces. She had been an emotionally deprived child and seemed compelled to pass that on.

My brother and I were beaten every day. He bore the brunt of her anger because he was unable or unwilling to give in to her show of force. When she smacked me, I cried, and she'd stop hurting me when she felt my humiliation was complete. My brother was different — tougher, maybe, or more stubborn. When she'd pummel him, he'd laugh in her face or he'd sing a nursery rhyme over and over. His seeming indifference to the pain fueled her fury. She'd hit him harder. And the stronger her punch, the more raucously he'd laugh.

I'm 37 years old and have had recurrent nightmares, haunting flashbacks I can't exercise where I am forced to relive the horrors of the past. In these memory-dreams, my mother pokes me up and flings me against the wall. My head smacks the edge of the bookshelf and the impact sends books cascading to the floor. Aiming for whatever part of my face she can reach, my mother uses a book as a battering ram. Instinctively, my arms fly up to protect my eyes but they're ineffective. My brother and I plead with her to stop and she relents for a moment. Then she redirects the attack onto my brother.

I watch as she yanks him by his ears and wrestles his pliable body to the floor. This hefty 29 year old sits on her small son's chest, pinning his arms to the floor with her fat knees. She curses him, clawing the hair above his forehead. Using the thick strands as a lever, she bangs his head against the floor in an insanely syncopated rhythm. First I hear the profanity, then, unmistakable and frightening, the dull thud of my brother's head against those wooden parquet tiles she's so proud of. Apparently unfazed he chants, "Mary had a little lamb" as if to ward off the evil befalling him and to invoke the protection of the patron saint of five year olds. I'm frantic. Terrified she'll kill him, I jump on her back and try to pull her off, but it's futile. With a swift of her arm she dislodges me. I pitch books to no avail. She stops bashing his head only in her own time, when my brother's silence speaks to something in her that might be greater than her anger.

It was clear to me we needed protection. I went to my dad first, but he didn't believe me. My mother reminded him that I was a storyteller, though she needn't have interfered because my father rarely paid attention to me, unless I disturbed his peace and quiet or my mother reported that I'd been bad. Then he'd mete out extremely humiliating and entirely inappropriate punishments. It did no good to beg for leniency.

This was the man who made me wear a too-large, traffic-paint-yellow rubber raincoat and chunky, over-the-shoe, knee-high galoshes for four consecutive sunny days, to and from school — just because he'd "caught" me carrying my rain boots instead of wearing them. He escorted me to class all four days, not only to make sure I kept this ugly gear on, but also to remind my teacher that, because I was being punished, I had to wear this outlandish garb during lunch recess and free play too.

In reality, I had little hope that he'd help us. I was invisible to him, not because of my age, but because of my gender. My father has always been king of the male chauvinists. Because he has no use for women except when we serve his needs, I was discounted and disregarded. My mother fared no better. He treated her with condescension and disrespect. Though he never hit me, I was terrified of him and I'd mutter "mean old man" under my breath to his receding back.

Next, I told my maternal grandmother. I was seven years old and didn't have the savvy to realize my grandmother couldn't give credence to my reports,
She denied my account and my memories, accusing me of having an overactive imagination.

"Put that knife down."

Something in my brother's voice scared her. It scared me too. Gingerly, she placed the knife on the green felt table.

"If you ever touch us again I'll kill you. I'm going to break both of your arms and then I'm going to stab you. Don't come near us again."

Afterward, I stayed out of my mother's way as much as possible until I left for college. I had no idea where my affliction lay but I did know that to survive I had to flee. Books and school became my haven. Men too. At 17, I married the man I fell in love with. The two of us became family. It was all the family I wanted.

From the time I became sexually active until well into my late 20s, I was extraordinarily vigilant about birth control. Just one method wouldn't do. I used two and sometimes three different devices at a time because I was terrified of passing on my genes and my heritage. Just before my 30th birthday, my husband, the voice of sanity on this issue, suggested I examine the pain of my childhood in order to free myself from this fear.

It made sense. But I continued to sidestep the question of motherhood until my body, with an agenda of its own, flooded me with the desire for a child. Still, I shied away because I was afraid I, too, would be an abusive mother. I tried sedating myself with work, with food and then with alcohol. But ultimately, I knew, my past demanded attention.

I know so few of the details of my mother's history. Because both her parents worked outside the home, my mother was cared for by her great-aunt, a woman she loved and who loved her dearly. Her father, absent more often than not, was the family disciplinarian although he didn't believe in hitting kids. When she'd exceed the limits her folks set for her, her father would deliver excruciatingly lengthy lectures that my mother found agonizing. She said she'd have preferred a beating. My mother doesn't talk about her mom a lot, but I too know the sting of my grandmother's sarcasm.

For as long as I've known her, my mother's been in a state of siege—an enraged woman unable to admit to the volcanic anger churning beneath the thin veneer of her sociability. Her frozen emotions endangered us but the real devastation was caused by the denial of her feelings.

I have other siblings. None of us escaped unscathed. My brother had his first epileptic seizure at 19. Might his epilepsy be related to the beatings about his head? None of us knows. None of us talks about it.

My own recovery has been painful. My separation from my mother did little good because, unconsciously I'd assimilated her bitter legacy and her corrosive attitude about the world. Unconsciously, I'd internalized her spirit. My mother could wound with her fists or her words but I could perpetuate her self-denial, her masochism, her martyrdom. She was, after all, my first role model. From her I learned that a woman was a second-class citizen, slightly more valuable than the family dog because my mother, at least, earned her keep by tending to everyone else's needs. I saw that a woman's feelings and ideas didn't matter. My mother kept hers to herself because no one cared enough to ask what she thought. I watched my mother cower in the face of my father's aggression and learned that a woman never spoke up for herself; she wouldn't presume to challenge a man. My father was the head of the household, the breadwinner, and as such, he knew best. She taught me that a woman didn't dare harbor hopes or dreams for herself. What would be the point, since the best my mother could do would be to accept whatever place the men in her life, my grandfather and father in turn, allowed her? Above all, a woman was selfless, the needs of others always came first.
Like a girl scout, my mother was prepared, ready and willing to cater to everyone else no matter what the cost, no matter how great a toll it took on her physical, emotional or financial well-being. From her, I learned women were powerless and doomed to a life sentence of drudgery, dependence and depression. My mother was a good teacher and I am an attentive student.

Day in and day out, I mulled my- self, biting my nails to the quick and yanking strands of hair from my own scalp. Always anxious and afraid, I'd do anything to avoid speaking. Instead, I'd silently rehearse whatever it was I wanted to say, but by the time I finished practicing, the conversation had already passed the point at which my contribution would have been appropriate. So I remained mute. The rare times I spoke, I professed my words with a schoolgirl's ritual: I'd raise my hand, then ask permission to speak, and when it was granted, I'd whisper. When introduced to someone new, I'd duck my head and stare at the laces of my shoes. I'd extend my arm in a blind handshake. It embarrasses me now to admit that I behaved like this until I was almost 27 years old.

Because I felt helpless in the face of larger issues, I sought relief in such meaningless things as sorting my shoes by color and style and lining them up in rigid rows on the closet floor. Alphabetizing the books on my shelves made me feel better, composed; it gave me a false, but needed, sense of self-mastery. I was compulsive. I'd re-organize immaculate desk drawers and re-wash and re-fold clean towels. As if on a one-woman crusade against city grime, I'd scrub my apartment with a vengeance born of misplaced anxiety.

And I expected more from myself than I did from anyone else. While I'd forgive my friends their mistakes, I couldn't forgive myself. Essentially, I demanded the impossible — perfection which doomed me to failure. There was never a time when I was good enough, smart enough, talented enough, funny enough, attractive enough or competent enough. I was deeply distressed. Clinically depressed. And though the healthiest part of my psyche knew I was troubled, I didn't seek help until suicidal thoughts became a constant preoccupation.

What prompted me finally to phone a psychiatrist friend for a referral is what I now refer to as my "walking nervous breakdown." On my way to work one morning, a good samaritan stopped to ask if I needed help. Puzzled, I asked why.

"You seem upset. You're crying," he answered. And when I touched my face, wet and tear-stained, I was shaken. I knew then I was in deepest need of professional help because I was thoroughly out of touch with my feelings. When I confided in a trusted colleague, he wasn't at all surprised. In fact, he said that during the two years we'd worked together he'd never seen me smile. Because I'd pitiably myself a happy-go-lucky person, I was shocked. Obviously, something was "off."

Therapy was a time-consuming and difficult process. It required courage and large amounts of money. Often, I lacked both. I made a few false starts. The first doctor was a Freudian who insisted I free associate while lying on the couch. Uncomfortable with this method, I pushed for face-to-face "talk" therapy. Still, I touched it out three times a week for almost nine months, until the following unpleasantness convinced me that neither this method nor this doctor was right for me. During one 50-minute "hour," I was interrupted by an electronic beep. The noise prompted me to ask if my sessions were being taped. The psychiatrist responded, "Well, what do you think?" Unable to get a simple "yes" or "no," I finally walked out.

Next, a saw a woman who was extremely amnesic and helpful. Unfortunately, we worked together for only a month before she referred me to someone else who had more time available than she. I felt betrayed and had difficulty trusting the new therapist. When he asked about my childhood I told him it'd been idyllic. That's how I remembered it then. After more than a year of therapy he suggested hypnosis. With hypnosis, I recovered pieces of my past that I had long since buried.

After this, I worked with a woman trained in transactional analysis, then a therapist who helped me act out my anger and despair physically, in a protected environment. All told, I spent close to six years in therapy. At the time I was frustrated by the little progress I was making, but, looking back, I believe it saved my life. The high level of anxiety I'd always lived with (and therefore was unaware it was destructive) disappeared. As did my suicidal thoughts.

This phone call to my mother left me debilitated. Regressing to that once-familiar childhood behavior. I was speechless. I couldn't ask for details about Joseph nor could I ask about my memories. At a loss, I hung up and wandered aimlessly around my apartment, talking to myself. Angry and bewildered, I tried to make sense of our conversation. Who is this woman to whom I'm still tied? What motivated her to defend a child in her care when she'd been unable to tend to her own with compassion? And, most importantly, how could I put closure on the past? Temporarily incapacitated, I paced, repeating my personal mantra, "calm is the key." This worked. And with the advent of self-control, I sat down and wrote my mother a letter.

Dear Mom,

You often suggest we meet so that we can catch up and stay in touch. But when we're together I'm disappointed and uncomfortable. Disappointed because we're unable to have an authentic conversation and uncomfortable because I sense that you want something from me.

I was taken aback by our last conversation in which you were Joseph. Timid Joseph, afraid to speak up because his father beats him and his teacher calls him names. I was staggered by the irony because I was just like him. Unbidden childhood memories plague me still.

I can't begin to understand your be-
havior. What drove you to act as you did?

I know that, like every other woman, you had no preparation for motherhood. On-the-job-training meant following your instincts and relying on the models others provided. It must have been difficult having us so close in age when you were a young newlywed. Everyday chores must have been a nightmare when we lived in that second-floor walk-up. How did you manage the stairs with the two of us and a stroller? I don't remember a babysitter. I know Dad wasn't home to help. Did anyone relieve you? I can imagine how hard it was with an active toddler, and a chronically-ill newborn.

Isn't it absurd there's no training for parenthood? Unlike driving a car, no license is required. We spend years in school getting degrees, preparing for our future, but parenting isn't part of that. How bizarre!

Standing up for Joseph shows how much you've grown. Your brave deed gave me a chance to re-examine my idea of who you are. It made me think about your personal struggle. What made you decide to protect Joseph? How did his welfare become your priority? I'm glad you helped him.

Unlike Joseph, I'm an adult now and don't need protection. What you couldn't give me then, you can't give me now. I have to leave the past behind. It'll free me to envision my future and seize its possibilities.

Do my prospects include a genuine relationship with you? I don't know if it's possible to forge a new way to be together.

Today, I'm thinking about the sweater Grandma knitted, particularly the blue turtleneck she made when I was a teenager. The pattern gave her trouble, more than halfway through, she abandoned the written directions altogether to follow the promptings of her imagination. When she finished, the sweater didn't fit. Unhappy with the way it'd turned out, Grandma unravelled the wool. Holding my hands upright and parallel, I mimicked the function of a spindle as she rewound the blue yarn around them. First, she smoothed the once-used yarn, then tied it tightly into a ball. She began all over again.

Using her example, I want to re-weave the threads of my past into the tapestry, the work-in-progress, that is my life.

This is one of many letters I've written to my mother over the years. I've mailed none of them. But this time there was a difference. Instead, I decided to meet with her to talk about the past.

That evening was difficult for both of us. I felt guilty because she was at a distinct disadvantage. After all, she didn't know the evening's agenda. I tried to be gentle; still I wounded her. And her tears unsettled me. First, she denied my account and my memories, accusing me of having an overactive imagination. She suggested I talk to my brother to learn the truth about what really happened. I agreed he'd be a reliable source.

It was from my youngest sister and not my brother that I learned my mother, visibly upset, appeared on my brother's doorstep, unannounced, a week after our meeting. He said only that his childhood happened long ago and he thought it best left forgotten.

A month after our dinner, I phoned. During our chat, my mother touched on our meeting only once and very briefly, saying, she'd considered sending me a letter. Now, many months later, I've received no letter and she's never mentioned our talk again. Our relationship remains unchanged.

But something had changed — by finally confronting my mother with the truth, I had made a breakthrough within myself. I no longer felt like a frightened, abused child but like an empowered woman with the inner resources and resolve to break our deadly circle.

Passed from one generation to the next, this circling had seemed to be my legacy. Now, for my own sake and for the sake of the children I hope to someday have, I decided it must end. And so I have stopped it; because I am determined that my children's birthright will not be one of fear and abuse but one of love. And acceptance. And laughter.

Paola D'Ellesio is the pseudonym of a writer living in New York City. She is author of many articles on social and ecological issues.
against American Women by Susan Faludi (Crown Publishers, NY; $24 hardcover)
Like a CAT scan probing the American cultural brain, Susan Faludi examines the systemic undercutting of women in the 1980s. Her thesis of a systematic antifeminist campaign uncovers a related backlash propelled by fear of the "increased possibility that they might win it." From Hollywood to the American Psychological Association, from Washington to scholarly journals, from Madison Avenue to our own homes, the propaganda resounds: "You may be free and equal now but you have never been more miserable, and it's the women's movement that is to blame."
From this solidly-researched book, boasting 81 pages of notes, Faludi, a Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist, lays out a convincing and jolting societal overview. She dissects and debunks the most famous studies on the woebegone career woman such as the 1986 Harvard-Yale marriage study. Extrapolating from its findings, Newsweek placed the marital chances of a 40-year-old woman on a par with being shot by a terrorist. Faludi investigated and found the study was based on faulty data and untried methodology. Yet, the press hyped the statistics and never bothered to correct them. Similarly, when the New England Journal of Medicine claims an infertility epidemic in women over 30 and writes a three-page editorial on the benefits of having babies before careers, Faludi yells "backlash!" and cites numbers from the U.S. Center for Health Statistics which finds no epidemic whatsoever. These dry studies become fascinating reading as Faludi presents the names and stories behind them and traces their evolution from creation to media manipulation.
This vilification of women has its antecedents. Faludi says backlash politics are an American phenomenon that occur when a once all-powerful group has lost footing and looks for "the bitter solace of retribution." This time it comes from the new right, the first organized backlash propelled by fear of the "increased possibility that they might win it." From Hollywood to the American Psychological Association, from Washington to scholarly journals, from Madison Avenue to our own homes, the propaganda resounds: "You may be free and equal now but you have never been more miserable, and it's the women's movement that is to blame."
Faludi's disappointment in leaders of the women's movement is palpable and her journalistic distance blurs here. She rancorously accuses Betty Friedan of "yanking out the stitches in her own handiwork" when she said the women's...
movement left no room for motherhood. Faludi also thinks Carol Gilligan’s emphasis on the “connectedness” of women plays into the backlash’s advocacy of a familiar supportive role for women. But her most frightening point is powerfully made — women have begun to see themselves as the promoters of the backlash would have them see.

The backlash decade punished women for wanting progress in an inequitarian society. Faludi exposes Americans as a sadly fractured people. Her Backlash understands well the lives of American Women and an emotional charge underlies its careful arguments.

In Notes of a Native Son, speaking about the problems faced by African-Americans, James Baldwin said there are two opposing ideas that must exist together: Accept any of the world’s injustices for what they are along with the requirement to never stop fighting those same injustices. In Backlash, Susan Faludi’s prose and intellectual style reverberates with this most human dilemma.

— Maura Grotell

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

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CHARLES SCRIBNER’S SONS
An imprint of Macmillan Publishing Company
I love this but I want more of the nuclear ideology. Didion's passion is the sound of things, the look, the style, the words people use. At one point in "Pacific Days," Didion reports a conversation she finds illustrative of her own, and, by implication, Berkeley's odd mind set: "I remember trying to discuss Telegraph Avenue with some people from the English Department, but they were discussing a paper we had heard on the plotting of Vanity Fair, Middlemarch, and Black House. I remember trying to discuss Telegraph Avenue with an old friend who had asked me to dinner, at a place far enough off campus to get a drink, but he was discussing Jane Alpert, Eldridge Cleaver, Daniel Ellsberg, Shana Alexander, a Modesto rancher of acquaintance, Jules Feiffer, Herbert Gold, Herb Caen, Ed James, and the movement for independence in Micronesia. I remember thinking that I was still, after 20 years, out of step at Berkeley, the victims of a different drummer.

I, who live in Berkeley, can resonate with the insider references on her list, and I know that any place has its own range of arcane references. What is disingenuous of Didion is that she presents herself as a wounded bird, as if her own conversational proclivities are out of it. Good Lord, isn't that why we read her?

I found it curious that Didion's most passionate writing, her most committed stance in this collection is reserved for the writers' strike. At last, she writes with true class consciousness. Her, and the other writers' real enemies are the fat cats of Hollywood: The producers, directors and stars. Didion admits here that the strike was not really about money — they lost more being on strike than they gained in the settlement. It was about power and respect. In a bruised tone she reports every slur against writers by those fat cats. The kickers is the scene at the 1988 Democratic National Convention in Atlanta. As a journalist Didion could only secure a second-class badge that limited her access to the convention floor. Spotting a Hollywood acquaintance/friend, director Paul Mazursky, sporting the highest-ranking badge — an all-access pass — she asked him if she might borrow it for half an hour (so she could do her work, rather than just observe and hobnob, she hints, as the class enemies were doing). He said, she reports, that he would "really like to do this for me, but thought not. He seemed surprised that I had asked, and uncomfortable that I had breached the natural order of the community as we both knew it; directors and actors and producers, I should have understood, have floor passes. Writers do not, which is why they strike.

There are times, though, when Didion's more usual detachment can be a tonic. Faster than anyone, she analyzed everything around the "wilding" assault on the white stockbroker-jogger by a Black teenage gang. After it happened, racial hatred flowed through the streets and newspapers of New York like hot lava. Whites never understood why the Black press disclosed her name (which the white media had been "protecting"). Didion says it all had to do with the entire complex of loaded references around the question of "naming: Slave names, assailants' names, African names, call me by my rightful name, nobody knows my name; stories in which the specific gravity of naming locked directly into that of rape, of Black men whipped for addressing white women by their given names. That, in this case, just such an interlocking of references could work to fuel resentments and increase hatred seemed clear.

In the end, Didion is a clumsy writer for me. In certain ways she is reminiscent of Diane Arbus, the photographer whose lens seemed to revel in the grotesque and bizarre just for its own sake. It is, perhaps, a significant shared biographical career note that both Arbus and Didion first worked for fashion magazines whose aesthetic for years was the more bizarre and kinky the better. Aesthetic is the operative word. But in journalism, seeing is not enough. One must try to know and to help others know too.

-Kate Coleman

Kate Coleman is a Berkeley-based writer at work on a biography of the late Black Panther leader Huey Newton, for Times Books.

BEHIND THE INTIFADA by Joost R. Hiltermann (Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ; $29.95 hardcover)

In this book, Joost R. Hiltermann examines, in December 1987, after 20 years under Israeli military control, the unarmed Palestinians of the West Bank and Gaza suddenly and sponta-
neously rose up in mass protest. He also deals with how they have been able to maintain the intifada, or “shaking off,” now in its fourth year.

Arriving in Israel in the fall of 1984, Hiltermann spent five years studying popular organizations in the occupied territories. His main focus is on the labor and women’s movements, which he describes in scholarly detail, often including interview segments with activists. Hiltermann’s analysis of the Palestinian situation draws close parallels with the anti-colonial struggles in Asia and Africa earlier this century. In both places an “iron fist” policy similar to Israel’s provided the fuel for nationalist sentiment across class lines.

In view of Israel’s neglect of basic services for the people of the West Bank and Gaza, and its disregard of the rights of workers commuting to jobs inside Israel, it became a matter of survival for the Palestinians to create their own alternative systems of help and support. At the same time, it was in the interest of the PLO — the Palestinian government in exile — to promote the establishment of institutions in the occupied territories that would provide an infrastructure for eventual statehood. The labor unions and women’s work committees, founded in the late 1970s and 1980s, reflected the grassroots dynamics of the PLO. Hiltermann’s painstaking study demonstrates the importance of the grassroots networks to the success of the intifada’s survival despite the continual deportations and detentions of the leaders.

Unfortunately, what facilitates the national struggle may not benefit the individual. It is Hiltermann’s conclusion that the nationalist fervor which mobilized thousands of women to drop their traditional roles, take the place of imprisoned men, leave their houses and learn to earn money through their skills, may stand in the way of realizing a feminist agenda. He points out that “the public struggle of Palestinian women has been, throughout the 20th century, a struggle aimed primarily at obtaining national rights.... Whereas in other countries, such as Egypt and Tunisia, early women’s organizations fought for such typically sociopolitical demands as the abolition of polygamy and summary divorce, for the right to vote, in Palestine women demanded that the Balfour Declaration be re-

...
you encounter all the faces of the Goddess, and all the phases of the moon.

The modern day mother of the feminist-witch movement, Budapest is a mysterious, beautiful woman with a passion for bringing paganism and spirituality out of the oppressed darkness and into the open-air light of day. Her newest book urges all women to explore their deep connection with Mother Moon, Star of the Sea, Notre Dame, Egg Mother, Astarte of the Womb, the Beloved Queen of the Night — the Moon herself. (Her other books include The Holy Book of Women's Mysteries and The Grandmother of Time.)

Raised in Hungary by an artist-witch mother, Budapest was surrounded by psychics, painters and revolutionaries — a wonderful brew that launched years of exploration in communication, theatre and spirituality everywhere from Venice to Chicago, Los Angeles to finally Northern California, where she stars in her own cable TV show called "13th Heaven." Her courageous blend of activism and Goddess-centered spirituality is what distinguishes Budapest from other leaders in the women's spirituality movement, as well as her quiet, behind-the-scenes role as a teacher of the more visible women in the movement, such as Starhawk.

Gifted with an uncanny sense of genetic memory, Budapest has a knack for uncovering the historically-rooted sources of empowerment for women. She presents those ideas stripped clean of their centuries of patriarchal overlay. One such ancient finding — what appears to be a brand new idea — is the cornerstone of Grandmother Moon: Budapest "discovered" much to her surprise — and the surprise of every physician, biologist, researcher and historian she discussed it with — that human beings are lunar primates. Yes, we have a strong sense of lunar consciousness. It is well-known that women's menstrual cycles correspond to the lunar phases. But the idea of a species of lunar primates goes one step further.

She writes: "What was it that separated our species from the other animals? When was the moment of truth when we became humans?...We became humans when we separated the womb-cleansing menstruation (which in other mammals is called estrus, is seasonal, not monthly, and is immediately followed by ovulation and the production of pheromones that attract the opposite sex) from sexual receptivity. We became humans when we became sensitive to the rays of the Moon instead of the changing sunlight, which triggers estrus in all other animals."

The implications are far reaching. Women were able to become free-wheeling sexual beings, unburdened by mandatory breeding. Indeed, says Budapest, men who have managed to break free of their culturally-based distaste over the "messiness" of it all, report that sex with a menstruating woman brings a heightened arousal; likewise, many women report longer and greater orgasms during menstruation. Budapest cites researchers who postulate that men are unconsciously aroused by the menstrual pheromones, the sight and smell of blood, which may be a holdover from the days of twice-a-year breeding. Because women, unlike other animals, rarely have an egg present during menstruation, the likelihood that they will become pregnant is reduced. Budapest believes that once "women developed menstruation and freed themselves from the need to mate for procreation only," humans left the world of the primate and entered the world of romantic sentient beings. And now that moontime sexuality, rather than solar-estrus sexuality, is embraced, lo and behold, the Moon Goddess smiles upon your lovemaking. In other words, the sex is great.

Since women have followed the proddings of the moon, rather than the sun, and have separated the egg's ripening from menstrual bleeding by a full half-cycle, a complete 14 days, then certainly we should recognize in our bodies the ultimate wisdom of reproductive freedom. "Procreation became a choice for women, a choice won millennia ago," writes Budapest. We may, therefore, transfer any external authority over such issues as our family size to an inner authority, a deep knowing within ourselves. We should be able to recognize our unique heritage of menstrual wisdom, and live in accordance with Grandmother Moon's blessing. For she has shined her light on women as glorious sexual beings, not just "breeders," and it's time to dance under the full moon in gratitude and splendor.

This is just one of the lessons of Grandmother Moon. Z. Budapest sprinkles the entire book with empowering surprises for women. The activist is still alive and well in Budapest. She is merely filling the spiritual coffers of women so that the next wave of important social changes may occur. Her work is subtle yet enormous. She stirs the wind that gives women their voices once again.

—Peg Jordan

Peg Jordan is the founder of American Fitness magazine. She is a recent recipient of the Healthy Americans Reporting award from the President's Council. She is also a health commentator on Fox-TV in San Francisco.


I wish I'd known sociologist Barbara Katz Rothman back in 1973 when we were both experiencing pregnancy for the first time. If she had been there to inspire me, I might have confronted the medical mafia by birthing my two children at home, as she did. Rothman's revision of her 1982 book In Labor: Women and Power in the Birthplace begins and ends with the lively accounts of her own childbirth experiences. In between, she explores, with the eye of a sociologist, changes in maternity care and motherhood that have occurred since she first wrote In Labor a decade ago. Rothman clearly favors home birth, but writes so carefully that to call her biased seems unfair. The information she provides is clear, concise, and extremely user-friendly, and her book is a good read, even for those who aren't pregnant or contemplating pregnancy.

Rothman gives a balanced discussion of the differences between the medical
model of childbirth, and the midwifery model. For her, the distinction is this: "The medical model shows us pregnancy and birth through the perspective of technological society, and from men's eyes. Birthing women are thus objects upon whom certain procedures must be done. The alternative model currently being developed by the home birth movement combines elements of the holistic-health, back-to-nature movement. Equally important, it is a woman's perspective on birth, in which women are the subjects, the doers, the givers of birth." The author's lengthy description of her vision of the alternative childbirth experience will surely appeal to all women.

One of her most interesting discussions is the comparison between home birth midwives and nurse-midwives whose training and practices tend to fit the medical model. Rothman aligns herself with the home-birth movement and makes the case for the safety of home births. The American College of Nurse Midwives (ACNM) does not support the movement. Rothman says the fear of co-optation among home-birth advocates is not unfounded: "Nurse-midwives operating in the medical establishment, paid by that medical establishment, have a hard time as 'advocates of the childbearing couple.'" For instance, hospital policies sometimes demand that nurse-midwives use modern technology such as internal monitors and IVs, or that they perform episiotomies, all of which are considered bad midwifery by women on both sides of the profession. "For a nurse-midwife to stand firm," says Rothman, "ultimately would cost her her job." Opting out of the mainstream medical system may be the nurse-midwife's only road to professional autonomy.

If a nurse-midwife does decide to become a home midwife, she receives little cooperation from the medical establishment. Not only is home birth illegal in most states, but there is no accredited training for home birthing. Nurse-midwives are trained almost exclusively in hospitals. According to Rothman, home midwives are generally trained underground, by serving as apprentices to experienced midwives. However, she notes that it is almost impossible to arrange for physician and hospital backup should a problem arise.

Rothman also discusses the development of grassroots consumer movements that challenged the medical profession's monopoly on maternal and infant-care services, including Grantly Dick-Read's natural childbirth, Lamaze, the home-birth movement and husband-coached childbirth.

If I were forced to criticize this excellent book, I might note some unnecessary redundancies. Also, I wish she had talked more about home-birth safety—specifically what to do in an emergency that the midwife is not equipped to handle. In addition, I wish Rothman had included a discussion of the premature infant, particularly in terms of breastfeeding. The influence of the insurance industry on the medical establishment would also have been germane in examining the politics of current childbirth practices.

But the book certainly does not suffer from these omissions. In Labor: Women and Power in the Birthplace is an important new contribution to the literature on pregnancy and childbirth, and so well done that I recommend it to anyone concerned with health care, who cares about women of childbearing age, or enjoys a well-crafted sociologist's perspective on one of the important issues of the day.

—Elayne Clift

Elayne Clift is a writer specializing in women, health, environment and international development issues. She lives in Potomac, MD.

HEALING THE PLANET: Strategies For Resolving The Environmental Crisis by Paul R. Ehrlich and Anne E. Ehrlich (Addison Wesley Publishing Company, Reading, MA; $22.95 hardcover)

"The human economy is supported by natural ecosystems, without which we cannot survive but which we are heedlessly dismantling" say the authors at the beginning of this passionate and well-reasoned book. Written by two Stanford scholars, it argues that evolution has not equipped our species to cope with the creeping catastrophes that are adding up to the destruction of Earth's ecosystems. Yet instead of becoming pessimistic or passive, the Ehrlichs have been actively encouraging their concerns to fellow scientists and the public.

The book which complements the authors' previous and widely known book, The Population Explosion, outlines an agenda for urgent action. They advocate action for everyone from the individual...
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one of the most interesting proposals calls for changing the president's council of economic advisors (currently chaired by the authors' stanford colleague, michael booskin) who, in some criticism for his views on global warming, to a "council of ecological and economic advisors." while the present council sees its business as necessarily pro-growth, the erlichs argue that it was re-formed to consider the environment, its members might be forced to take a more balanced view.

then the u.s., the largest polluter of the world, might even slow down the "environmental roulette" it is playing.

— shanti s. tangri
shanti s. tangri is a research associate with the department of agricultural and resource economics at the university of california, berkeley, and professor of economics at rutgers university in new brunswick.

precription: medicide the goodness of planned death by dr. jack kevorkian (prometheus books, buffalo, ny $23.95 hardcover)

was jack kevorkian acting reasonably when he prodded flea markets looking for the clock motor, switch and solenoid he needed to build a death-dealing device? was he compassionate when he used his homemade device to help janet adkins die — at a time she chose?

if you answer both questions with a resounding yes, you will probably want to read prescription: medicide. if you answer no, you should read it to learn why so many americans do support euthanasia.

consider the evidence:

1. of 6,000 daily deaths in the u.s., 70 percent are negotiated with medical technology withdrawn or not applied at all.

2. 43 states recognize living wills by statute.

3. 28 states allow the appointment of a health-care agent to accept or refuse treatment for someone else.

4. maine is considering a law which would distribute living wills to individuals being issued driver licenses and hunting permits.

5. montana is debating which identification to choose for those who have signed a durable power of attorney — an id card, form, necklace, tattoo, or bracelet.

kevorkian, a retired michigan pathologist, spent 30 years researching the attitudes of societies — both ancient and modern — toward euthanasia. his findings are astonishing. he found that many individuals and groups chose death rather than suffer unbearable pain or renounce their passionately-held beliefs.

early christians "chose" to be killed by hungry lions rather than deny their faith. a thousand first-century jews zealously committed suicide at masada after "giving freedom" with knives and swords to their children and wives.

countless "sinful" japanese chose hara-kiri to gain "passage into the next life."

many of the 64-year-old kevorkian's ideas are surprisingly new and radical, others are based on ideas put forth a century or more ago. his proposal for professionally-staffed "suicide centers" was first made in 1919 by dr. c. binet-sangle, a french physician who claimed, like kevorkian, that such centers would afford a serene, dignified death and opportunity for harvesting transplantable organs.

another of kevorkian's notions probably came from king louis xi of france in the late 15th century who decreed that a condemned criminal should not be executed before contributing something to science. kevorkian wants to give condemned-to-die prisoners the option to choose execution by lethal injection so their organs can be transplanted and their deaths "bring about some good rather than just serving as an appeasement of society's need for revenge."

kevorkian also proposes that criminals condemned to life imprisonment be given an opportunity to choose early death so that medical experiments can be made on their anesthetized bodies. he says such a program would eliminate "the need for experiments on animals or on ill patients who volunteer to be test subjects."

kevorkian's research is extensive, his sources meticulously catalogued. both make prescription: medicide a valuable

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ON THE ISSUES SUMMER 1992
tool for promoting euthanasia and doctor-assisted death.

On a personal note, my husband, Dick, and I have executed living wills and enthusiastically support the Hemlock Society which actively campaigns to make public opinion tolerant of the right of terminally ill people to end their lives in a planned manner. Our decision was made after the horror of watching Dick's mother and aunt lie bedridden in nursing homes for several years. My own mother signed a living will in 1976. When, after several strokes, her nursing home talked of sending her to a hospital "for life-support systems beyond the home's capacity," we wavered her living will at the doctor. We told him she had insisted, "Don't make me die stuck full of needles like a tired old pincushion." We prevailed and she died peacefully at the nursing home in 1977.

I've recently become active in the right to choose to die movement. My first tentative steps produced interesting results.

While attending an Elderhostel at the Peabody Institute in Philadelphia, I met Nancy Robinson, a hosteler from Orlando, Florida who runs the local chapter of the Hemlock Society out of her home. Nancy and I invited other hostellers to an impromptu meeting to learn about the Hemlock Society and the death-with-dignity movement. Fifteen attended and eagerly accepted copies of the living will we had hurriedly duplicated on the student union photocopy machine.

Another project is on my drawing board:

A new Federal law effective December 1, 1991, requires all patients admitted to any hospital for any reason be asked if they want to plan for their death by filling out a living will. "The new law is so important it takes your breath away," said Fanella Reuse, director of Choice in Dying, a New York-based organization active in promoting living wills and passive euthanasia (removal of life-sustaining equipment rather than assisted suicide). "It's like safe sex. Once no one would talk about it; now everyone talks about it."

I plan to ask the Board of the Health Insurance Plan (H.I.P.) in New York City to inform its 35,000 members about the new law and to supply living wills which, when signed, can be placed in the member's H.I.P. medical record. When H.I.P. gets its program under way, I plan to contact friends in California, urging them to ask the Kaiser Plan — perhaps the world's largest prepaid medical plan — to do the same.

The new law is a stunning step forward, but isn't the time of hospital admission a tad late to consider such an important matter? Wouldn't it be more prudent to discuss it with your doctor while you are hale and hearty? Tennessee and Maryland are considering laws to permit health insurers to provide lower premiums to individuals who execute living wills. You can bet a similar offer from H.I.P. or Kaiser would spur members to sign their forms in a hurry.

Dr. Herbert Cohan, a general practitioner near Rotterdam, the Netherlands, might say an apt axiom for the 21st century would be: "If you want the best care and the most attention from your doctor, just ask for euthanasia." Jack Kevorkian's book is a goldmine of information on the subject.

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was followed by her most famous book Speculum (1974). Speculum and This Sex Which Is Not One were translated and published in English in 1985.

Irigaray sets a task for herself: To change the nature of discourse itself in order for the social and historical relations between the sexes, which are embedded in the structure of language, to be revealed. This, then, creates the possibility for women to speak outside the patriarchy. She writes very much in the French mode in which the text itself is used to embody as well as explicate the point. English-speaking readers who are unfamiliar with this style will be enormously helped by the editor, Margaret Whitford. Whitford's introductions to the Reader and to each section are scholarly and lucid. She has also included a sampling of Irigaray's work from the most accessible to the most arcane.

In the feminist papers, Irigaray reveals herself as an activist as well as a theorist, but many American feminists may find her attack on the notion of equality disturbing. Her point is that equality always includes the problem of competition: Equal to whom and to what? Irigaray has been attacked as an essentialist, meaning that she fixes women (a la Freud) into their biological destiny. This seems to be a misreading of her vision of a two-genre culture. In such a world it would be possible for women to become subjects of their own experience and of their own discourse. Then they finally escape the orbit of being "people of men" eternally defined by the other.

In the psychoanalysis section, Irigaray establishes herself in relationship to Freud and Jacques Lacan. Irigaray shows us that Freud revealed the indissoluble nature of discourse to sexual difference, and when describing the condition of women he created a method subversive to the patriarchy, yet at the same time he stayed fully entrenched in it. He never understood the cost to women of scientific sexism. Irigaray seeks to reformulate a psychoanalytic discourse rooted in sexual difference.

Nevertheless, when necessary, Irigaray is no slouch at patriarchal polemic herself, as in The Poverty of Psychoanalysis, Irigaray bitterly dissects the phallocentrism of the Lacanian School in which she had been trained and by whom she herself had been persecuted. A practicing psychoanalyst, Irigaray can attack as only an "insider" can, "Now it so happens that you enjoy prestige, power, love and transference because desire's yet-to-come-being is projected onto you. If you are not there to listen to that... all that matters to you is the unvarying reduction of all speech to the already-said or written, and its reinsertion into economy of repetition, your economy of death, then say so..."

But Irigaray's unique and profound contribution lies in the more erudite, dense work where she attempts to achieve her own women's voice; a daunting problem since she too must use the language of the father. In The Power of Discourse and the Subordination of the Feminine she put the problem as follows: "The architectonics of the text...confounds the linearity of an outline, the teleology of discourse, within which there is no possible place for the feminine..."

There is a childhood ritual/game where we repeat the same multi-syllable word over and over again until its cultural referents dissolve and we are left to fall through meaninglessness to the understanding that the phoneme is arbitrary. This is what happens when we give ourselves over to the texts of a mad woman. She demands that we yield to her if we are to discern her meaning, we must tolerate the anxiety of falling through the patriarchal order to her discourse. In this mad, hysterical demand lies a profound protest as well as the beginning of an answer.

Some hold that the construct of gender is for our time and for the next century what class and race have been in the 19th and 20th centuries. If that is so, surely the smart money will follow the intellectual fortunes of Luce Irigaray.

Leslye Russell

Leslye Russell is a psychotherapist in Berkeley, California.

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Madonna image — the mother — the all-giving nurturer who continually places herself second for the good of the family and by her omissions reinforces the status quo.

If the "Good Girl" and "Number Two" are the roles for which most of the Miss USA contestants are priming themselves, they also may at some time in the future find themselves in the position of "Bad Girl." Or, what has been recently categorized as the "Bimbo," the ultimate sex object. The Bimbo is usually a bleached blond, tall, buxom, with a "career" in some sort of entertainment field. Hillary Clinton describes Gennifer Flowers as "some sort of failed cabaret singer who doesn't have much of a resume to fall back on, and what's there she lied about." (Wall Street Journal)

She's the new female prototype. The newly created archetype. The Bimbo is sexual, she's bad, she fucks powerful married politicians or she knows about their hidden proclivities and she commits the cardinal sin of telling. Or we have the "Accuser," the role of women who often stand within that ambivalent gray area, that porous divide that separates the Good Girls from the Bad. The Accuser/Kennedy Smith had one, Tyson had one, Thomas had one and Bill Clinton's campaign almost went into a free fall because of one, is a version of the Bad Girl. She is often viewed as fatally flawed, ambitious, money grubbing, money hungry, gold digging, a girl who doesn't play by the rules, who cries foul or rape to get attention, publicity or money. The Accuser may be a good religious girl, she may be a virgin hitherto untouched, but her coming forward — her speaking against one of the patriarchy — immediately places her in the Bad Girl category. The only mitigating factor in this configuration is if the Accuser can position herself as much as possible as a victim — then and only then she may be given the benefit of the doubt. Anita Hill was too arrogant and self-asserted; Patricia Bowman too sexual and weak; even Deseree Washington had to confront questions about why she went out at two a.m.

The Bimbo derives her power, as does the Accuser and Good Girl Number Two, differentially and derivatively — often using a sexual incident or her sexuality itself as a weapon. Interestingly enough, these roles are not static but flexible. Women can pass from one to the other, frequently inhabiting more than one role at a time. The Bimbo may find herself in the role of the Accuser and the Accuser may in fact be a Bimbo who takes on the role of the Accuser (Gennifer Flowers) seeking justice, revenge and perhaps self-respect — some sort of recompense for laying her body down or for having it laid down against her will.

"Women are created and not born" — who is creating the Bimbo and Accuser? Are women creating themselves in these roles? Is there any choice or self-definition possible? Is Gennifer Flowers an artifact — a creation that comes fully equipped with tape recorders, bleached blond hair and the ability to turn men on by, according to the NY Post, "sucking on their lower lips."

Joe Klein, writing in New York Magazine an article entitled "The Bimbo Primary," believes that the Bimbo doesn't even exist in and of herself but is a political phenomenon, an artifact of recent campaign strategies. "There was some talk in Democratic circles that Clinton might steamroll his way to the nomination, and then he was confronted by the ultimate American political challenge — The Bimbo Primary." This involved much more than just the allegation of a 12-year extramarital affair leveled by a remarkable, if inevitable specimen named Gennifer Flowers. Klein also describes Flowers as a "failed cabaret singer if ever one walked the earth." He demeans her because she doesn't even play the role of the Bimbo accurately. "I loved him," she said, doing absolutely nothing creative with the word "loved." Gennifer not only failed the Good Girl test but the Bad One as well, which demands that not only are you a fallen sexual woman but that you fall, unlike Marilyn Quayle, "softly."

So now the Bimbo gains power and definition beyond the female. She — it — now, becomes the ultimate political test of a candidate's ability to manage the media storm created by her coming forward. As with all macho political games, everything is a matter of winning and losing. Klein feels Barney Frank wins (his Bimbo was a male homosexual prostitute), John Towers loses, and Clarence Thomas won — "con-
fronted by a woman far more formidable than a Bimbo.”

Indeed, there is even recognition that the Bimbo is also an advertising strategy. According to the Wall Street Journal “advertisers are finding their portrayals of women just aren’t ‘politically correct’ anymore.” Now a few are taking the first tentative steps to redefine women in advertising. Old Milwaukee Beer still hasn’t given up on its much maligned bikini team but Anheuser-Busch has launched a new campaign featuring women as “real people rather than sex toys.” Real people? — who’s deciding?

Hill, Bowman and Washington inhabit another new configuration of the female — that of the Accuser. The Accuser may be a Good Girl or Bad. Most often she combines both qualities, but just by becoming an Accuser she steps outside of the patriarchy and the traditional Good Girl roles. She becomes the ultimate “whistle blower.” Her definition and acceptability depend on her past history, her socio-economic level, her race and her class.

Hill stood on the divide between good and bad. A feminist heroine to many, she remains an enigma whose motives and character are still in question. A cover story in American Spectator entitled “The Real Anita Hill”, by David Brock, assembled evidence that Hill is weird, a radical feminist, at least mildly incompetent and, of course, that she lied about Clarence Thomas. bell hooks [as she styles her name], discussing Hill in Z magazine, says that rather than presenting her testimony as a feminist victory, it was the absence of either a feminist analysis on Hill’s part or a feminist response that “made this spectacle more an example of female martyrdom and victimization than a constructive confrontation with the patriarchal male domination.”

hooks thinks her long silence on Thomas happened because Hill was acting as a “dutiful daughter,” another variation of the Good Girl. “Hill never truly confronted the patriarchy because her discourse never stood outside of it. She was, to the end, a daughter of the system.”

Hill believed that the system would work for her — that she could tell her story of disrespect and abuse and have the Senate Judiciary Committee offer a collective rebuke. She did not predict, foresee or expect that the racial spectre of a Black man lynched was to prove a far more powerful bonding tool than any accusation any woman could make against a “brother.” The system worked. It worked to insure that any threat to its totems and agenda were to be removed, eliminated or destroyed. The tactics used on Hill were traditional and historic. A recapitulation and redefinition of the Good Girl/Bad Girl themes, but now to the mix of sexuality and masochism there was added a bit of the psychiatric; the myth of female madness along with the spectre of witchcraft. The only thing Hill was not accused of was having intercourse with Satan in an open field on a Sabbath night.

Hill has now entered the vaulted state of celebrity and has made the transition to media star with talk show appearances, interviews and magazine covers. She remains for some the heroine, others, an example of the long-suffering Black woman, and still others will always regard her as a woman who sold her honor for her ambitions. But she was, and will always remain, first and foremost Thomas’ “Accuser.”

During the Thomas hearings there was much talk of a “lot of anger out there.” The country went through a consciousness-raising session about sexual harassment, money flowed into the coffers of the National Organization for Women (NOW), and there were public cries for more women in government. Since Washington and Bowman, more rape victims have stepped forward and women now have role models (real women) for standing up to the system — ambivalent and imperfect as these symbols may be.
There is also talk now of a new “womanism” — a stand, a bridge, a realpolitik of feminism that would allow for brilliance, excellence and ambition, but with a difference. This brand of feminism would exist in a controlled, directed secondary (partnership) form. No longer the little woman behind the man or the power behind the throne, it is now the big woman next to the man — a radical traditionalism masquerading as feminism. After all, Hillary Clinton was not asked to be Bill Clinton’s running mate. She remains his bedmate even as she sits on six corporate boards.

But if feminists are to achieve even greater power — if we are to roll back the enormous wave of repression, specifically the potential loss of abortion rights, the “anger out there” has to be far more directed, focused, and on the surface.

Feminists and the feminist movement are society’s Accusers, and as such they are now poised to receive the same minimization, disbelief and directed aggression as any individual woman who stands up against a powerful man. They are poised in fact to be society’s ultimate Bad Girls.

Real revolutions, like great social changes, don’t happen just because Good Girls get angry. Anger is not enough. Good Girls have to get bad. Bad Girls do something. Bad Girls say no to the system, so to the historical definitions of female and not to the historical oppression of their class.

When Barnard college asked entering freshman to list women they most admired, Eleanor Roosevelt was on the top of their list. Mother Theresa, Golda Meir and Madonna were also named.

Good Girls or Bad? Who’s deciding?

BLACKLIST from pg 21

say left wingers, he remembers: “Communists don’t invest in capitalism.” The Brombergs tried to follow it. “My parents were naïve enough to try and act on it, and to get into terrible trouble with it. A lot of their friends who weren’t quite as honest got blacklisted and had no problems. They had made a fortune in investments and walked away cool. I remember a lot of conflict over that.” Unable to get work, Joseph Bromberg gradually went nearly broke.

One law that all of us left-wing kids lived by, and that I have lived by until now, is that you never, never discuss who is a Communist and who is not. Consequently, it has been with considerable anxiety and guilt that I have written here that my uncle Archie, even though he died in 1990, and one aunt, never left the Communist party. Growing up, we were all taught that belief in Communism and Party membership is a Constitutionally protected right; that our system isn’t worth anything if it only protects people with safe views. During the McCarthy years, anyone who “named names” was to us that lowest form of humanity, a fink. I still believe that. But right up to his death, Archie was a proud and unapologetic Communist, and my aunt was too, though she was never a public figure. If Archie didn’t mind talking about it, why should I? So why have all those feelings come rushing back, and why doesn’t my memory about writing this go away?

Like many kids from the left, I have no tolerance for the sustained political activism that was crucial in the lives of my generation’s parents. But its lessons live in me. In the broadest terms, it boils down to two basic principles. Josh Mostel elucidates one of them when he speaks of his father’s decision not to testify before HUAC. “See, my father was not a Communist Party member,” he says. “But he had to take the Fifth because he did not want to inform on anyone. For him being up there before the Committee was not even political. It was a human gesture. He just couldn’t do that to another person. I have always loved that about what he did.”

The other one is well said by Janet Ades, of all people, who, in spite of her bitterness, has found much of value in her left-wing background. “It is a respect for working people, for their needs, for what they suffer and what they have accomplished. They are people whom history usually doesn’t count, and yet large-scale unionization of the American working class is a major achievement. They do count. Egalitarianism is my heritage, and I wouldn’t give it up for anything.”

Nor would I. It’s a heritage to be proud of.

Portions of this article are adapted from one that appeared in New York Woman magazine, August 1988.

“The Miracle on 57th Street”

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THE WISE WOMAN, 2441 Cordova St., Oakland, CA 94602.
DENOUNCING COLUMBUS
The upcoming 1992 celebrations around the “discovery” of the Americas must be actively denounced. As women nationwide participate in the protests, I propose we consider linking the painful history of the film documentary “The Burning Times” with the horrific violence that was taking place an ocean away.

The connections exist. At the very same time Columbus et al were raping, pillaging, and massacring Native Americans, European women — many also practitioners of earth-based spirituality — were themselves being annihilated. It has been estimated that from the 14th through the 17th century upwards to nine million people (85 percent of whom were women) were persecuted as witches, tortured, and exterminated. Who knows what collective outrage European women would have summoned up against the atrocities in the “New World” had they not been struggling to withstand their own holocaust?

In solidarity with indigenous peoples, Latinas/Latinos, and African-Americans, women of European descent have equal reason to abhor the continued glorification of 500 years of white patriarchal conquest.

Cathleen McGuire
Ecofeminist Visions Emerging (EVE)
New York, NY

ARE THELMA AND LOUISE FEMINISTS?
In my opinion, Merle Hoffman, you just don’t get it. How can you deify “Thelma and Louise,” a trashy permissive, anti-feminist, antisocial movie, and claim it as a superhuman statement about how life should be?

This movie does not make any statement, and surely it doesn’t express my philosophy. Two bored women start out on an adventure and meet up with the most unlikely set of circumstances. The near-rape and the shooting are somewhat possible and believable; but what follows causes me to churn inside. How can these two adult women be so stupid as to compound their errors? How is it possible that the police didn’t find them sooner? How did they both become such excellent shots when supposedly they had never used a gun before?

How can you condone their actions? I am well aware that it takes some radical behavior on the part of a few to really change societal norms. But these two idiots wouldn’t even know how to define the term “societal norms.”

Maybe you are telling us that they are doing all these wonderful things unconsciously. Hogwash! You’ve built a case on a foundation of shifting sand. And your leaps to all the ills of the feminist causes are irrational and bedeviled with non-sequiturs. Your crime statistics, although probably accurate, are incomplete, meaningless, and inappropriately placed. For instance you state that 25 percent of crimes against women are committed by men or family members. What are the statistics about crimes against men? Are they committed by women or family members 25 percent of the time? And how does this relate to the “Thelma and Louise” escapade?

“Thelma and Louise” is a disgrace and does not in any way represent the plight of women and the war we are fighting.

Sue Frishberg
West Hollywood, CA

Thank you very much indeed for the copy of On the Issues. I’m circulating it around FPA. I found it very interesting and especially your editorial on “Thelma and Louise.” It is playing here in Australia and women are loving it.

Margaret McDonald
Chief Executive Officer
The Family Planning Association of NSW Ltd

PLAYING HARD TO GET
I picked up the Winter 1991 On the Issues when I was in San Francisco last November, and have found it stimulating and useful. I like your blend of national and international issues, and the effort you make to trace out connections and assumptions in your pieces. We need more places where good feminist writing, grounded in analysis of what is going on around us, can be found. However, the magazine is not readily available in Springfield, Illinois so I am writing directly to you to find out if it is possible to subscribe.

Barbara J. Hayler
Associate Professor
Sangamon State University
Springfield, IL

Note: Subscription information is now under the masthead.

IRRADIATION IS A WOMEN’S ISSUE
Re: The letter from Liz Washburn: Of course food irradiation is a women’s issue (Fall 1991). If we don’t know what the good old boy system is doing how can we fight it?

I think On the Issues is the best. The only publication I read cover to cover. It is time for another uprising where we say “enough!”

Norma Joyce
Eugene, OR

WILD MAN NEEDS HELP
Please send me a back issue of Summer '91 containing the Fred Pelka article on that Bly creature. I would appreciate your fast response as my husband is seeing a “deep masculinity” (quack) therapist, and watches “A Gathering of Men” tape every night. He even listens to Sean Keen while going to sleep. HELP!

Thanks.
Michele Dressler
Cleveland, OH

BRINGING HIDDEN CHILDREN TO LIGHT
I read with pleasure Beverly Lowy’s
most interesting article for On the Issues (Winter 1991) on the hidden children.

The stories recounted moved me as much as stories like them did when I first read them. I owe you a debt of thanks for keeping vivid this aspect of the Holocaust.

The article is important enough for readers of our magazine, Dimensions, to know about. I will make mention of it in our next issue.

Dr. Dennis B. Klein, Director
The Hidden Child Foundation/ADL
New York, NY

Thank you for sending me On the Issues with your article on "The Hidden Children of the Shoah."

I think it is excellent and have shared it with my friends, Shoshana Ron, and Ines Smigel, who are both active in the same field.

Hilda Schulman
Great Neck, NY

PLIGHT OF WOMEN PRISONERS WITH AIDS

Your "Win Some o Lose Some" (Spring 1992) commented that heterosexual AIDS has surpassed that of gays. Rarely mentioned are the most invisible victims of AIDS — women prisoners.

Women in prison with AIDS are dying every day. They are denied the right to fight to survive for as long as possible because they are denied decent and adequate care and the most elemental of needs — human dignity.

Women who are dying of AIDS in one of the 17 states that mandatorily segregate HIV-positive prisoners have no rights and are losing what little constitutional protection does exist. The overwhelming number of women in prison with AIDS are Black women and Puerto Rican women. This is a medical, economic, political and social crisis.

I have been in prison almost seven years. I have carried women from their cells on stretchers to jail infirmaries knowing they will not return. I have called families collect from pay phones with news of illness and then death. I have written messages for funerals and raised money for flowers. Sentence reduction motions and early medical release papers have been written, and letters to outside community organizations calling for solidarity have fallen on deafening silence.

Women prisoners who are HIV-positive or have AIDS face often horrifying conditions: In the DC jail where I was imprisoned in 1988, women who were known to be positive were redflagged by the medical department and segregated, fed from special diet trays served by other prisoners who were told to wear gloves while feeding them. As a result of this complete violation of confidentiality, the women were brutally stigmatized and bitterly harassed. There was no counseling or organized psychological treatment available to them.

Prison staff participated with prisoners in creating a climate based in vicious gossip; the greatest insult was to be "an AIDS-carrying bitch." One woman who was known to be HIV-positive was beaten up and her fingers broken for having shared a cigarette with another woman. Another prisoner died of AIDS after her appeal for a sentence reduction was denied. Like most states, DC has no form of compassionate or medical release for prisoners. The stories go on and the suffering goes on and on.

As a result of witnessing these experiences, I am now an AIDS prisoner peer advocate. Because of my educational background (I am a political prisoner) and access to resources on the outside, I am in a position to do legal and medical advocacy for women prisoners with AIDS.

In the Florida maximum security prison where I am now, I am involved in an AIDS awareness workshop to bring much-needed information to female prisoners. Being involved in this educational work, understanding how to break down information, and begin to build trust in order to challenge behavior is not easy. We need to communicate with AIDS activists on the outside, particularly those involved in prison work, who can help us demand medical release, parole release, compassionate release, and reintegration to the communities from which we come. Without active support, those of us advocating from the inside cannot overcome the conditions and the repressive restrictions.

Susan Rosenberg
Marianna, FL

Susan Rosenberg has been awarded PEN’s First Prize in the 1991 Prison Writing Poetry Contest.

MALL RAPE

"I really appreciate Fred Pelka's article: "Raped: A Male Survivor Breaks His Silence" (Spring 1992). I am a 25-year-old male who was sexually, physically, and mentally abused as a child. The abuse had a lasting effect on me that will never heal. Sometimes I have a good day when suddenly flashbacks and panic attacks hit me. I still wake up screaming after all these years.

I know I need help so I'm looking into finding a support group in my area.

I'm grateful to the women's movement for raising the country's consciousness on the horrors of rape, child abuse, and pornography. The so-called men's movement that is talked about has never offered anything to me.

On the Issues is the best magazine I subscribe to. Keep up the great work!

Name and address withheld

I know that men get raped in prison, but had no idea they were also assaulted on the streets. Fred Pelka's story is just as heartrending and infuriating, as any woman's story I've ever read. My heart goes out to him and all like him. However, the saddest part is that he had to find out firsthand how women are treated all the time.

Mary Davidson
Salley, SC

I was deeply touched by Fred Pelka's story (Spring '92). Iapplaud him for breaking the silence, grieve for all of us who suffer from our society's flawed patriarchal society which victimizes men and women both as he addressed. At the age of 42 I have so far been blessed with not having been a victim of rape or physical abuse, but have been active in the Stop Rape Movement and have heard far too many stories from those who are survivors.

I intend to share this article with others because I think it will help many. I want you to know that there will be people in Houston, Texas who will start the road to recovery, from victim to survivor, with the aid of Pelka's words. Thank you, Fred, for speaking up — I know you realize you help countless others by doing so.

Deborah Bell
Houston, TX

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