It's not worth being his queen one day if you're his victim the next.
Fall 1993

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Looking Backward — Moving Forward

The time has come for me to say good-bye.

Nearly 10 years have passed since I came to On the Issues, which had just published its first edition: A small newsletter produced for the patients and staff of CHOICES Women's Medical Center. Today, after many evolutions, it is a respected alternative press publication with faithful subscribers, and available in bookstores and on newsstands throughout the country. Until 1989, Merle Hoffman and I were the sole editorial staff and we published twice yearly. Today we have two additional editors and publish quarterly. Among the little-known, remarkable things about On the Issues: The editorial staff is only part-time and the art directors are off-site.

Despite the operational challenges, we have had many firsts, including: Three articles on women and AIDS before AIDS was considered a woman's issue; an in-depth piece on lesbian healthcare when no one discussed the subject; and a spectacular interview with the late Petra Kelly. We have also had a number of exclusive firsthand accounts: Carlos Wilson on the plight of the Saharawis and how the indomitable women made an oasis in the desert; Amy Goodman on the abortion war in Guam; Patricia Golan on the effect of the SCUDs on Israeli family life...I could go on and on, but let's move forward.

In this issue there are also firsthand accounts such as that of Christine Schaack McGoey who monitored the infamous Glen Ridge rape trial every day as a member of NOW. McGoey brings you right into the courtroom in the way no newspaper article could. We also have Mary Lou Greenberg's report on how the staffs of Florida abortion clinics refuse to be intimidated by the murder of Dr. David Gunn; Helen M. Stummer documents in photos and prose the story of a remarkable woman who rises above her desolate, crime-ridden world to benefit the lives of those around her; and Jeannine O. Howitz discusses how the denigration of stay-at-home mothers impacts on everything considered "women's work."

Although I am moving on, I know that in the years to come On the Issues will continue to advance and I anticipate its steady growth. So keep up the fight, old friends; we've weathered a lot of storms together and sometimes we wondered if we'd make it to shore, but — all in all — it's been exhilarating.

Beverly Lowy
Executive Editor
On the day I would be visiting the newly dedicated Holocaust Museum, I awoke at 4 a.m. and found myself waiting for the sun to rise. It was as if observing such a daily miracle could act as some sort of emotional or spiritual inoculation against the assaults I anticipated.

I had been keeping up with the politics, challenges and questions that riddled this particular project since the announcement of its inception over 10 years ago. How, for instance, to enshrine pure evil without turning the monument into a Holocaust theme park or a multi-media event. How to avoid having it denigrate into pure kitsch — how to bridge the distance between memory and history, between those memories that remain personalized and mutable, and those which become collectively reified — how to portray the Holocaust as something "outside history" as Elie Wiesel describes it, a pathology apart from and outside of any known human parameter but at the same time showing its most quintessentially human (as in man's capacity for evil) and therefore potentially enduring face. And the question of whether a museum dedicated to chronicling the murder of six million Jews was the appropriate vehicle to express a permanent Jewish presence in Washington's memorial culture.

For, in this time of intense secularization coupled with varied styles of spiritual journeys seeking meaning, the Holocaust has become an experience of Jewishness that everyone can relate to: "Never again."

Nonetheless, as Elie Wiesel reminds us about the Holocaust, "Not every victim was a Jew, but all Jews were victims."

My journey begins as I step out of the taxi and face a concrete wall with words that admonish me to "stare this evil in the face" for only then "can we be sure that it will never rise again." I read quickly as I enter the building and have to retrace my steps to discover who wrote them, only to find it was Ronald Reagan. To me it signified a strange but ironic connection between Nazism and Reagan's policies on reproductive freedom. I recalled that one of the first official acts of the new Nazi regime was to ban abortion. It was a connection not easily erased by Reagan's tribute to the victims; Reagan — the same man who stood at their killers' graves at Bitburg. To insure bipartisanship there is a quote from Jimmy Carter: "Never again will the world fail to act to prevent this terrible crime of genocide."

Never again?

As I write, Bosnia still convulses from genocidal and nationalistic violence while the world debates the merits and risks of intervention. Bosnia is not Auschwitz, but then, what is? As Peter Schneider wrote in the New York Times in May: "If Auschwitz is our standard of measurement, there's no point intervening anywhere in the world because none of the crimes currently being committed against human rights attains the scale of Auschwitz."

Once inside the museum I am surrounded by tourists dressed casually and wearing sneakers. I feel that they, and not I (I am dressed all in black), are out of place in this place. I am directed by a guard to stand on line to get my "identity card." Every visitor is matched by age and sex with a real individual who lived during the Holocaust. The card is meant to be updated twice during the visit and is supposed to attempt to change the
number six million into one so that the Holocaust gains some understandability through reduction.

My "victim" is Channa Morgensztern, born in 1896 in Kaluszyn, Poland where she lived with her five children until 46, in 1942, she fled with her family to escape deportation. I never did discover Channa's fate as the machines on the other two floors were broken. She was most likely gassed at Treblinka; I'll never know now, but I do know I'll keep the record.

I enter an elevator with a television screen that shows footage of the liberation of the camps at the war's end. At the doors open I am facing an eight-foot mural of a mass burial pit at the Ohrdruf Camp. I turn and see a green neon sign that tells me there are three minutes to go until the next showing of the documentary, "The Rise of the Nazis to Power." Death and technology — the pillars of the Nazi genocidal vision — become the leitmotif of the exhibit.

As I exit the filming, a glass case full of the meager blue-and-white-striped cloth worn by the death camp prisoners, comes to face me. I instinctively picture myself in one of them. I enter a crowded hallway with both walls full of things to read and see. Here some Nazi propaganda, there banned books, a violin, a gypsy cart, a steel vice-like device used to "scientifically measure Aryans" by the size of the skull — placards and placards of copy — so much to read that the people distract.

I think of this gift as I look at the body of a young woman. I now find myself in a corridor of TV, videos. I am moving through a dimension of technology and distance and death. People walk as if in a trance and the almost total silence is punctuated only by sharp intakes of breath. The structure forces you to interact with it and not with anything else. Your eyes, mind and consciousness are held hostage by the onslaught of the images. Real people abstract.

A placard faces me: "A desire for knowledge for its own sake, a love of justice that borders on fanaticism, striving for personal independence. These are the aspects of the Jewish peoples' tradition that allow me to regard my belonging to it as a gift of great fortune." — Albert Einstein.

In the end I didn't "see" the architecture in the usual sense. Even though I had read so much about the brilliance of James Freed's design, of which Cathleen McGuigan wrote: "He has made a space of terrible beauty, created a place that tries to embrace the enormity of the nightmare — an echo of a world gone mad," and Freed himself said "I wanted to make a screen." I didn't see it until I realized why. There was in that museum only one interior space and that was my mind, my head, the sound of my heart-beat in my ears, the feel of the dryness of my mouth and the palpable mounting pressure of the journey through to the end of the exhibit.

Every corner a new pain, or a familiar sad image like the Roman Vishniak photos of the inhabitants of a destroyed Polish village. There are no ambiguities here and I find poignancy in the oddest places, like the exhibit of old toothbrushes taken from the victims before they were gassed.

The museum is relentless and unlike others there is little if any eye contact with fellow viewers. I feel a need to touch something, but almost everything is behind glass or wire. The only interaction allowed is with the machines and videos. I am moving through a dimension of technology and distance and death. People walk as if in a trance and the almost total silence is punctuated only by sharp intakes of breath. The structure forces you to interact with it and not with anything else. Your eyes, mind and consciousness are held hostage by the onslaught of the images. Real people abstract.

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Oscar “Honors” Women?

The announcement, last winter, that the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences was planning to make "Oscar Celebrates Women and the Movies" the theme of their 65th annual awards ceremony nearly knocked me off my chair. It was bad enough that the rest of the media had conspired to create the widespread illusion that 1992 had been "The Year of the Woman" primarily (as far as I could tell) because we had elected a president who admitted he valued his wife's abilities, and defeated a vice-president who couldn't win an argument with a sitcom heroine.

At least some strides were made in the realm of electoral politics and television drama. The movie industry, in shocking contrast, has rarely had a worse annual record for its treatment of women. And that is really saying something for an industry that is, even compared to such less-than-egalitarian institutions as Congress and TV, a dinosaur in its commitment to retrograde, patriarchal policies and its near blindness to rising consciousness among women audiences. Talk about guys that "don't get it," these guys have never even heard about it.

In Hollywood today, women play only 34 percent of the roles in studio films. Across the board, they earn 33 percent less than male counterparts for comparable industry jobs ranging from the most illustrious to the most mundane. One reason, of course, is that most Hollywood movies these days target children, men or morons as audiences. On the week the nominations were announced, for example, the top 10 box office draws included only one film, "The Crying Game," that wasn't either a cartoon or an action/adventure.

So medieval is the film industry in its attitude toward women that at a time when women now hold important jobs as writers, directors, producers and camera operators in television, it is still possible to name on a single hand the number of women allowed to direct Hollywood films. And of those few, the most prominent — Penny Marshall, Barbra Streisand, Jodie Foster — gained their clout through their longstanding bankability as stars, hardly a necessary apprenticeship for men.

This has all been true for some time, of course. But what made 1992 the most bizarre choice of a year to celebrate women were the Oscar nominations themselves, which revealed just how far the shaky ground upon which women have always stood in the industry has recently sunk. Of the five films nominated for Best Picture, the two with strong female roles, "The Crying Game" and "Howard's End," were foreign. (It is worth noting, now that the "secret" is surely known by everyone who might care, that even in this category, the juiciest, most politically daring feminine role went to a man.)

As for the other nominated films, the ones with the huge budgets and promotional campaigns — "A Few Good Men," "Scent of a Woman" and "Unforgiven" — were all old fashioned, macho genre pieces produced by, for and about the most traditional male audiences and heroes. In fact, there were so many such features last year, starring lots of men and boys and supported by mostly marginalized females and animals ("Glengarry Glen Ross," "A River Runs Through It," "Hoffa," "Malcolm X," "Chaplin"), that there weren't enough nomination slots for all the major releases to fit into.

As for the women's roles, to make the comparison is to invite tears of frustration. Two of the five leading actress nominees came from foreign films,
"Indochine" and "Howard's End." As for the others, each played in a film so small and limited in distribution and promotion — "Passion Fish," "Love Field," "Lorenzo's Oil" — as to make them negligible. Some industry apologists (and there are way too many of those, about which more below) took to exclaiming that it was "just wonderful" that "at last" independents and art films were being honored. Don't bet on that interpretation. The truth is there were so few major roles for women in big budget, blockbuster, highly-promoted films last year that the Academy was forced to look outside the commercially viable to find any women at all to nominate.

The industry's real attitude toward independents and art films was loudly heralded in the Supporting Actress category. That award went to the only nominee playing in a mainstream Hollywood feature, the young, inexperienced Marisa Tomei, running against a slate of accomplished, remarkable actresses in far meatier, mostly independent or foreign, roles: Vanessa Redgrave, Joan Plowright, Judy Davis and Miranda Richardson. That these women were all, amazingly, passed over in favor of a relatively unchallenging performance in a really trivial film was enough by itself to make the awards ceremony a travesty.

But wait, it gets worse. The ceremony itself was an exercise in sheer tastelessness and gall. As the celebrities were ushered into the sumptuously-appointed hall, for example, the orchestra played a rousing rendition of "Thank Heaven for Little Girls." And it was downhill from there. The people who put this thing together were so confused or desperate in their search for female role models, on-screen or off, that they actually chose the job of editing as the place where women, historically, were supposed to have shone.

We were subjected to an embarrassing montage of images of women slaving over editing machines, cutting and splicing images of cowboys, gangsters and Marines. If they had gone on to show the picture, didn't even balk at being made to read lines in which women's roles were described as "to tease, to seduce, to flirt, to ..." — well, you get the picture.

Which brings me to the matter of the famous "Hollywood Left" the mainstream media has been so agitated about lately. If we are to believe the New York Times and its lesser satellites, we are in the grip of a wave of "politically correct" popular culture orchestrated by the very powerful likes of such Hollywood activists as Geena Davis herself, a prominent member of the Hollywood Women's Political Committee and ardent crusader for the Clintons.

We have already seen how preposterous the claim that Hollywood movies reflect "left" political biases really is. But that is not to say that the stars themselves are not, in fact, serious activists. Or is it?

The behavior of these much-touted "radicals" at this so-called feminist event raises questions. There are many stars who, in their private lives, spend much money and energy in the service of progressive causes, some of them feminist. That they have the cash and the visibility to do this is commendable and should not be underestimated. Stars carry great weight with fans and their endorsement of positions to the left of center, such as reproductive and gay rights, helps to shift public attitudes in more liberal directions.

Nonetheless, as the Oscar debacle made clear, these celebrity "leftists" and "feminists" have a far more marginal role in productive politics than one might assume from all the hype surrounding them. And what little influence they do have may in certain instances do more harm than good. Certainly the many momentous pronouncements from the stage, jewel-encrusted AIDS lapel pins, and after-hours "benefit" parties associated with the Academy Awards ceremony bear this out. The Hollywood Left believes its own PR, sees itself as political and even noble and heroic. But when called upon to do something even marginally threatening to the actual workings of the industry that pays and glamorizes them so excessively, such as calling attention to the treatment of women in Hollywood, their behavior was neither noble nor heroic.

To be sure, empowered political speeches were heard. The powerbrokers
STUDENTS HIT HOMER—TEACHER STRIKES OUT
Sheila Thomson, NY Newsday: The teenage girls of Markham Intermediate School in Staten Island, NY declared a turf war.
Ever since Markham opened 34 years ago, the boys' physical education softball class had sole access to the large softball diamond, complete with dugout and painted baselines. The girls always had to play on a field half the size, with faded baselines and no benches. Now, thanks to a petition initiated by 13-year-old Felicia Stocco and a group of friends in the seventh grade, girls and boys will share the same ground.
"We learned that if we don't stand up for what we believe in, we wouldn't have gotten what we wanted," said Felicia, who had just made her debut in feminist politics by fighting for equal sports facilities for girls and boys.
Andrea Berek, 12, added her own lesson on discrimination laws, penning a letter to the principal with the petition, which was handed in with 88 signatures, mostly from girls.
"I looked up discrimination in Black's Law Dictionary," said Andrea, whose letter said: "If we do not have access to the field, it is considered discrimination... As we see it we're being denied our rights under the laws of discrimination."
The girls' gym teacher, Debbie Slara, said she was happy the girls won the right to the bigger field. When asked if she had encouraged the girls, she added, "I'm not into equal rights, politics or fighting. The girls asked for the field and they got it. They deserve it."
"And the teacher deserves an "F.""

NO JOB SECURITY, NO RETIREMENT PLAN
H.J. Cummins, NY Newsday: Middle-aged women recover remarkably well from divorce in every way but their finances, according to a nationwide survey.
In an otherwise encouraging report by the National Center for Women and Retirement Research, women detailed financial problems so severe that most said they see no prospect of retiring.
Among the findings:
• Household incomes dropped from an average of $40,000 to $45,000 before divorce to $10,000 to $15,000 a year later.
• Two-thirds of the women could not afford to keep the family home.
• Eighty-five percent got nothing from their husbands' health or pension benefits.
The center polled 352 women across the country, mostly white and middle class. The study focused on women who were ages 40 to 70 and who were divorced after long marriages.

Marriage: The only full-time job without unemployment benefits.
PAIN FOR ANIMALS IS GAIN FOR SCIENTIST

AP dispatch: A former government wildlife scientist has been convicted of smuggling animal skins into the U.S., but the jury has cleared him of misusing his job for financial gain.

Richard Mitchell, a former scientist with the Fish and Wildlife Service, was convicted in the Federal District Court in Alexandria, VA. He could be sentenced to a maximum of five years' imprisonment and fined up to $250,000 at his sentencing in August. Defense lawyers said they planned an appeal.

Mitchell was indicted after a five-year investigation into his connections with big-game hunters. He was working on a temporary assignment at the Smithsonian Institute when the investigation began.

The government accused him of using his position as a government worker to organize sport hunting for rare animals, but the defense maintained that his work, including his interest in hunters, was scientific.

MEDICAL SLAUGHTER OF THE INNOCENTS

Leslie Helm, Los Angeles Times:

Four years ago, Kyoko Kawabe took her 17-month-old son to the doctor for what was supposed to be a routine vaccination. A few weeks later he developed meningitis. After three weeks in the hospital, the weakened toddler died of pneumonia. Hana Ueno received the vaccination three years ago before her second birthday. She contracted encephalitis. The child survived but is partially paralyzed and can't speak.

The two families are among many who have become victims of a dissonous government effort to support Japan's pharmaceuticals industry. Although safe products were already available in the U.S. and Europe, the government, industry and academic elite banded together to develop a Japanese vaccine and promote its use based in large part on safety studies of a similar, but not identical, vaccine made by Rahway, NJ-based Merck & Co. and others. Studies showed that the Merck product has been used to inoculate more than 100 million children, with no confirmed cases of serious side effects.

The issue has drawn attention in Japan because of charges that the government continued to promote the vaccine long after its dangers had become clear. What has yet to be reported is that the government promoted the development and use of the risky vaccine even though it knew a better alternative had been available overseas since 1975.

"Rather than use foreign products, we wanted Japanese products, because they are of better quality," said a woman who answered the phone at the Association of Biologicals Manufacturers and declined to be identified.

Of better quality than what?

WILL THEY DEVELOP AN ANTI-VIOLENCE VACCINE?

News dispatch: The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention plan to launch a program aimed at curbing what researchers call a growing epidemic of violence against women. Dr. Mark Rosenberg, an injury-prevention specialist, said the CDC will assign 10 experts to the new program.

Research shows that children who grow up in homes where mothers are battered are prone to such behavior as adults, he said.

Researchers also said nine of 10 U.S. women who are murdered die at the hands of men—half are killed by a husband or boyfriend.

And up to four million American women are beaten by husbands or boyfriends each year, while up to one-third will be physically assaulted by a husband or boyfriend at some time during their lives, researchers said.

We wonder when they made these startling discoveries.
NO TIME FOR (GAY) SERGEANTS
AP dispatch: A highly decorated sergeant who publicly acknowledged his homosexuality was demoted to Specialist Four just three days after local military officials at San Francisco gave preliminary approval for his honorable discharge.

Army officials said the sergeant, Jose Zuniga, who was the Sixth Army's 1992 Soldier of the year, was demoted because he wore a medal he had not yet been awarded. Zuniga, 24, wore a Meritorious Service medal at the Washington reception where he declared his homosexuality, said a spokesman, Lieut. Col. Steven Fredericks.

Zuniga said he was sure the award had been approved. He said he called the military personnel office at the Presidio, where he is stationed and somebody told him the commendation had been posted in his record. Now, he said, people working in the personnel office are signing statements saying that conversation never occurred. Fredericks said the medal had not been posted in Zuniga's record.

Zuniga said: "I came out because I didn't want to live a lie. It doesn't make sense for me to be about something as basic as one's identity. I have five Army Commendation Medals. Why would I add one more and put myself through this horror?"

Fredericks said the action had nothing to do with Sergeant Zuniga's homosexuality. "It was deal with in an appropriate manner. It would have happened if he was gay or not. Anybody who links those two together does not understand anything about the military."

Oh, we think the military has made itself perfectly clear.

LESS RESTRICTION = LESS ABORTION
AP dispatch: A report published in England by the International Planned Parenthood Federation indicates that abortions are more common in countries that ban or restrict the procedure than in those where it is widely permitted.

In western Europe, where abortion is legal except in Ireland, there are about 14 abortions per 1,000. Abortion rates are lowest in countries that not only permit the procedure, but offer family planning and sex-education services.

Meanwhile, saying the right to life begins at conception, Germany's highest court threw out an abortion law intended as a compromise between the liberal rules in the former Communist east and the more restrictive western practices.

Liberals and women's groups criticized the ruling as a sign that back-room abortions could return. But Bishop Karl Lehmann, head of the Roman Catholic bishops' conference, said, "The true winner is mankind."
WHEN "REGULAR GUYS" RAPED THE GLen RIDGE FOuR

On March 1, 1989 "Susie,"* a 17-year-old mentally retarded girl who functioned on the level of an eight-year-old, was lured by a childhood acquaintance into a basement in affluent Glen Ridge, New Jersey. She was sexually assaulted by at least eight of the 13 men waiting there. The assailants — all white, middle-class, high-school athletes — raped Susie with a broom handle, baseball bat, and dirty stick and forced her to engage in other sex acts.

By Christine Schaack McGoey

PHOTO BY DAVID PLAZOZ/ART, INC.
When the trial of four of those men began on September 21, 1992 nobody guessed that the "Glen Ridge case" would run six months to verdict. Nobody would have wanted to believe that the case would be tried on rape myth or that the prosecution's hard-won convictions would be gutted by a sentencing judge voicing his concern for the defendants' pain. The clues were there, however, for anybody who wanted to look.

From the moment charges were filed against the defendants, the public and the media were captured by the case's awful-you-can't-look-away quality. The extremely vulnerable victim, the betrayal by those she trusted, the implements used in the rape, but as awful as those elements were, the root of this horror-fascination went deeper: "Nice boys" committed this rape. Popular, well-educated and well-to-do suburban, white guys from "good" families stuck a baseball bat into a retarded girl's vagina for after-school fun and joked about it the next day. The reality of who the Glen Ridge rapists were slammed head on into one of this society's most strongly held and promoted myths about rape — that "regular guys" don't rape. That, as Robin Warshaw wrote in I Never Called it Rape (Ms. Magazine/Sarah Lavin Books, 1988), rapists are dangerous strangers, preferably from some minority group, who ambush women from dark secluded places.

The "regular guys" myth drove the defense and shaped its courtroom tactics. "Take a good look. Take a long look," attorney Michael Querques challenged the jury as he yanked his client defendant Kevin Scherzer by the arm and shoved him up against the jury box, eye to eye with the jurors. "What you see, because he is up close...is who I have been calling a young man...I brought him up here because yesterday [during opening arguments] I heard Mr. Goldberg [the prosecutor] tell you that he is a heinous, venomous person, that he is guilty of first-degree crimes, which is a bunch of crimes that are exceeded only by murder." Kevin Scherzer, Querques was saying, doesn't look like a rapist.

When the jurors looked at the defendants Christopher Archer, twins Kevin and Kyle Scherzer, and Bryant Grober they saw the raw material for a Calvin Klein ad — four tanned and 20-something men with the hard, square shoulders of weight-lifting athletes. Archer appeared daily in a blue blazer, button-down shirt and tie, khaki trousers and loafers. The Scherzers and Grober stuck to dark suits. All of the defendants and their attorneys quickly became friendly with the courtroom's male bailiffs. From time to time, as the jurors filtered through the courtroom on their way to the jury room, they could catch a glimpse of one of the defendants or their attorneys joking with the uniformed officers.

The defendants also filled the first three rows reserved for their use on the "defense" side of the courtroom with well-dressed family members and friends. A few days into the trial, pretty young women with lots of hair and an abundance of bows also appeared — one noticeably pregnant. Another of these women, supposedly the girlfriend of Kyle Scherzer, took to weeping during the closing hours of the trial and wiping away her tears with rosary beads she kept conspicuously wrapped around her fingers. To complete the picture, two men in clerical collars who identified themselves as Episcopal priests sat with the defendants' families on a regular basis. (As witnesses, Susie and her family were barred by court order from the courtroom until their testimony was completed and it was certain that there was no need to recall them to the stand.) The implication was clear: God, family, and acquaintances stood behind these men; they couldn't be rapists.

There was only one problem with the picture, and it was a big one. The defendants did not deny that the "sex" acts had occurred. In fact, some of the 13 participants had given police incriminating statements. The defense out, in keeping with the myth, not only was Susie consented to the assault, but that she engineered it — all of which presupposed that the functional eight year old had the mental capacity to consent, a point contested by the prosecution. Since "nice" guys wouldn't think of using objects to rape a woman, Susie had to be a nymphomaniac slut who deserved what she got. She had to be blamed for her rape.

The defense assault on Susie began with opening arguments and quickly grew to dominate the months-long trial proceedings. Since each defendant was represented by his own attorney, and each attorney had the right to argue any point as he wished and to fully question every witness, the defense attack was multiplied four times. The effect was staggering. Direct testimony of prosecution witnesses receded from memory linking the four Marines to the Aug. 1991 attack.

**SEX CRIMINALS GET LIGHT SENTENCES**

According to a 1989 survey by the Department of Justice, the median sentence in state prisons for those convicted of rape was 22 months, but the average time served was 29 months. Rape victim advocates said that the moderate sentences reflect the persistent doubt with which rape victims are regarded by judges, particularly when, as in the majority of cases, the victim knows the attacker. According to a study conducted last year by the National Victim Center, only 27 percent of all rape victims are assaulted by strangers. (NY Times, 5/2/93)

Some examples in June alone:

- In Montgomery, NY, five men who admitted being sex on an unconscious woman in a restaurant avoided jail time. The five were each fined $200 after accepting a controversial plea bargain in connection with the Oct. 26, 1991 attack on the then 23-year-old woman.
- In Lubbock, TX, a screaming confrontation between an enraged mother and a boy accused of raping her 13-year-old daughter has led to charges of assault and disorderly conduct for the woman. Reiko Phillips and the boy were shoplifting and she was hanging her daughter, "making fun of her and telling everybody that they raped her and that she liked it." Phillips is scheduled to be tried on a misdemeanor assault charge and four counts of disorderly conduct. Each count is punishable by a $500 fine. Phillips and two boys repeatedly raped the daughter at a neighbor's house. Under Texas juvenile statutes laws the boys were allowed to plead not guilty and given probation.

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*The name Susie is a pseudonym used throughout this article for simplicity's sake.
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The defense further argued that what happened in the basement was normal male sexual expression.
Querques, who demonstrated a special flair for inflicted injury on a retarded rape victim, Susie even conceded that she wasn't retarded.

"Some people say you're retarded, but that's not true is it?" asked Querques.

"A lot people call me that at school," Susie answered, hanging her head.

"But you're not retarded...if you were retarded you couldn't answer these questions, right?"

Susie vehemently agreed. Querques then pointed to the prosecutors. Those people, he told Susie, the ones you think are your friends, they're telling "the whole world" that you are retarded. Susie went white with pain.

The contrast between Susie and Paul Archer, defendant Christopher Archer's brother and the only major witness called by defense, could not have been greater. Paul Archer moved with the easy confidence of someone convinced of his own good looks. He turned his blue eyes on the jurors and told them Susie had not been tricked into the basement. Instead, Paul said, Susie offered to give Grober a "blow job." Grober accepted against the advice of Chris and Kevin who told him, "You're crazy." The oral sex supposedly made Susie so "horny" that she then begged for intercourse. Since none of the men were willing to comply, Paul claimed that she then "asked to have something put in her." She asked for a beer bottle, but Kyle refused. Kevin helpful suggested a broom, which the allegedly inserted into herself: "She was moaning," Paul claimed, "saying this feels so good...I want something bigger...She asked for something bigger," and was given a bat. (Paul's testimony contradicted the statements he had given at his in-court plea bargain where he said that Kevin and Chris inserted the broomstick and Kevin attempted to insert the bat.)

Stretching the myth, the defense further argued that what happened in the basement was normal male sexual expression. It was an "erotic episode" according to Thomas Ford, Archer's attorney; boys "taking license with their friends" according to Querques. Remember, Querques told the jury, "boys will be boys." "You people," he asked, "are you going to forget about the girls you knew in high school who were loose and the boys took? Are you going to forget, hey, I got a girl who is loose, do you want to join me?" At Paul Archer put it, in his opinion, no crime had been committed in the basement. Susie "wasn't being mistreated." She wasn't being "physically injured." The question was whether the jury would buy into the myth too.

The case finally went to the seven-woman, five-man, racially-mixed jury on March 4, 1993. In an inspiring victory for the prosecution and for Susie, the jury rejected the "regular guys" defense. The jury convicted Chris Archer and Kevin and Kyle Scherzer of first-degree sexual assault (rape) and second-degree conspiracy in connection with the assaults with the implements.

These convictions were especially strong statements. At trial, Judge Cohen had allowed the jury to hear testimony that first- and second-degree crimes carried "substantial" prison terms. The admission of that evidence was widely contested, since juries are usually sheltered from sentencing information to prevent them from deciding cases on sympathy. Even though the jury was keenly aware that its convictions meant prison time for three defendants, it did not hesitate.

The jury, however, only convicted Bryan Grober of a third-degree conspiracy charge—a probation offense. The defense seemed to have raised enough doubt about this more "normal" sex act to prevent the jury from convicting. As one juror reportedly explained to the press, he thought that if Susie had been open to performing fellatio in the past, she might have done so willingly again. On the other hand, on a TV morning show the day after the verdict, juris Michelle Crimes stated that the convictions were about "respect." She explained that the jurors felt you just couldn't do that to another person and get away with it, no matter who you were. Unfortunately, the judge didn't see it that way.

"The defendants are young men, not hardened or vicious, not without redeeming values," Cohen said just prior to reading his sentence. "I understand the pain of the defendants and their families as well as the victim's." His sentence, however, showed that he gave much more weight to the defendants' pain than to the crime committed against Susie. Under New Jersey's sentencing guidelines, the first-degree convictions carried 10- to 20-year sentences with a presumptive term of 15 years. The second-degree convictions carried 5- to 10-year sentences with a presumptive term of 7 years. Cohen crafted a sentence that evaded these guidelines. Although Archer and the Scherzers had been tried as adults and were over 21 at the time of trial, Cohen sentenced them as Young Adult Offenders to determinate sentences not to exceed 15 years in the Youth Correctional Facility. Failure to set a minimum means that the length of the defendants' sentences are totally within the discretion of the Department of Corrections and the Parole Board. As Essex County Prosecutor Clifford Minor explained at his extraordinary April 23, 1993 press conference expressing outrage at the sentences, "theoretically these defendants could apply for parole the day after they are incarcerated and be out in six months."

To add insult to injury, Cohen also refused to revoke bail pending appeal or to set bail higher than $2,500. Cohen stated that he didn't believe the convicted rapists posed a threat to the community, despite the fact that a second woman had submitted an affidavit stating she had been raped by Archer. Cohen dismissed the affidavit as a "mere allegation," even though the woman was prepared to testify at sentencing and had subjected herself to civil and criminal liability by swearing to the affidavit's truth. As described in court papers, the sealed affidavit described an eerily similar rape during which Archer proclaimed that he was a rapist. Unless a higher court overturns Cohen's bail ruling, the convicted rapists will remain on the streets and won't serve even their lax sentences for years. The sentences were designed to sound good, but to ensure that the men would serve no time. Cohen gutted the jury's verdict and gave the "regular guys" a pass.

It's hard to imagine Cohen designing such a sentence if the defendants were not privileged, white males. Harder yet to imagine him going against what prosecutors report is standard procedure by refusing to remand such defendants to custody immediately upon conviction for a first-degree felony. Unthinkable that Cohen would refuse to consider evidence that another type of defendant had raped again while his case was pending.

The lesson from the Glen Badge case is simple: As long as rape myth controls rape trials, rapists will walk free. Judges, if not jurors, will see it.

Attorney, writer and activist Christine Schaeck McGory daily monitored the Glen Ridge, New Jersey rape trial as an Essex County NOW member.
Reflections of a Feminist Mom

By Jeannine O. Howitz

I am seven months pregnant, slithering along my kitchen floor. The ruler I clutch is for retrieving small objects lost in the dust jungle beneath my refrigerator. After several swipes I come up with a pile of dirt and a petrified saltine, so I get serious and press my cheek against the floor, positioning my left eye just inches from the target zone. I spot it — the letter “G,” a red plastic refrigerator magnet. “Here it is!” I cry, hoisting myself up to offer this hard-won prize to Sophie, my momentarily maniacal toddler. Her face collapses into a sob as she shrieks, “NOT THAT ONE!”

Sophie is 22 months old, and in the final stages of potty training, which I remember as I feel a gush of warm and wet on my outstretched leg. Wet clothes bring more tears (hers, not mine), and I quickly strip off her clothes, then pull off my own with one hand while I slice and peel an apple with the other. I might have barely enough time while she eats to run upstairs, grab dry clothes, and toss the dirty ones into the basket before I’m urgently missed.

That was how I came to be standing in the middle of my kitchen with the magnificence of my naked abdomen hanging low and wide on a clammy June afternoon. The sweat of my exertion had just begun trickling between my breasts when the phone rang. It was an old friend, with whom I’d been out of touch for a while. I panted hello, eyeing Sophie as she climbed up and out of her booster chair to totter precariously on the table top. “What are you doing home?” my friend wanted to know. “Don’t you work anymore?”

Don’t you work at all anymore? Again and again since entering the life phase which positioned my work in the home, I have encountered the judgments, however unconscious, of those whose definition of work excludes most of what I do. The same system that discounts my labor scoffs at its rewards, which, like my productivity, are impossible to measure by conventional standards. By limiting our view to one which allows only for paid employment, and usually only that located outside the home, to be included in the understood meaning of the word “work,” we support the process through which all that we do and all that we are as women is ultimately devalued and despised.

Like most labels applied to women’s roles, “working mother” is extremely inaccurate and defeating, because it foolishly implies that there is another type of mother. The non-working variety. Being a mother is work. On the other hand, it is equally absurd to call mothers who are not employed outside the home “full-time mothers,” as this unfairly suggests that employed mothers are only mothers part-time. Ridiculous as they are, these labels go largely unchallenged, even by many feminists. They are a sinister trap, imprisoning women in feelings of inadequacy about whatever roles we have chosen or been required to perform.

The same process that forces a woman to say “I don’t work” when she performs 12-to-16 hours of unpaid labor every single day at home ultimately transforms most female-dominated professions into mere chores that women and men alike come to consider less desirable and important than other types of work. Once stamped with the kiss of death “women’s work,” we can forget entitlement to the same respect and fair wages a man would get for equivalent labor.

Before motherhood, I sold advertising at a newspaper, with hopes of working my way into editorial. However, my sales performance exceeded standards, and I was quickly promoted to a well-paying position in management which required me to build a classified department from the ground up. I forged ahead until my daughter was born, when, after reexamining our options, my husband and I decided one of us should stay home with her. Although he was happily working in his chosen field, John’s income as a schoolteacher was half that of mine, which rendered him the financially logical choice for at-home parenthood. But it was I who jumped at the chance, albeit scary, to shift the gears of my career and of my life.

When my maternity leave was up, I told the publishers that I wouldn’t be returning to the office. Surprisingly, they offered me the chance to bring my daughter to work with me. I was thrilled; those long days at home with an infant weren’t exactly what I had imagined. I
had discovered that although I didn't always enjoy my job, I did enjoy the recognition it provided me — something I had found was not a part of the package for home-working moms. While my sister spoke with unspoken envy about all the reading and writing I would now be accomplishing, in reality I was lucky if I brushed my teeth. So I took the deal.

Seven weeks old on her first day at work, Sophie fascinated the staff as only a newborn can. A two-minute trip to the copier often turned into a half-hour social ordeal as one person after the next stopped to exclaim over her. She was a great diversion for a young and predominantly single staff. I had no idea, as a new mother, how fortunate I was to have an extroverted baby. It was my own introverted nature that suffered from the constant sensory bombardment. I was uncomfortably aware of my special status, and fighting a losing battle to hide how much time it actually took to care for Sophie on the job.

In a culture where women feel guilty to call in sick to work when a child is sick, it was tremendously difficult to be in an office setting, drawing a full salary, and to say, "Sophie's crying now — this phone call, this meeting, this project, whatever it is, will have to wait." In a society that expects workers to give 150 percent dedication to the job, and considers motherhood a terrible detriment to productivity, it was incredibly stressful and even painful at times to experience such a personal conflict in a very public setting when the two worlds collided.

For six months, I tooted a baby, a briefcase, and a diaper bag back and forth from home to my office, which at first housed the crib and swing, after which came the walker, the play gym, and the toy box — not to mention the breast pump equipment and mini-diaper pail. I could hardly see my desk, let alone get to it. Not that it mattered, because by that time, I wasn't doing any work that required a desk. It had gotten crazy, and I knew it. The circles under my eyes and my continued weight loss told me it was time for a change.

I explored every alternative I could think of, from researching and visiting daycares to negotiating with my employers for a part-time or home-based position, or a combination of the two. However, my key position on the management team required a full-time presence in the office.

Offering my resignation was an extremely difficult decision, particularly in light of my gratitude for the progressive opportunity to have my daughter onsite. My employees and I finally agreed to view my departure at the beginning of an indefinite unpaid leave that left the door open for my possible return at some unpredictable future date.

A two-month notice allowed me to finish up the last big sales project of the quarter, while my daughter was cared for by a neighbor. I got an unforgettable taste of the superwoman syndrome, rising at 5 a.m. and dashed out the door by 6 to drop Sophie off and commute an hour to the office for a grueling nine-hour day. This was followed by a long drive in Minnesota winter rush-hour traffic to pick my daughter up and go home, and

Like most labels applied to women's roles, "working mother" is extremely inaccurate and defeating

topped off with a couple of frantic hours that my husband and I spent getting everyone fed and Sophie hushed to bed so that we could start all over again after what felt like a quick catnap. Relief overcame me at my last day at the office, and I packed my diaper bags for good.

Our plans had always included my return to full-time paid employment upon our children's entry to school, which meant that, for the benefit of our financial solvency, we should have another baby quickly if at all. We chose "quickly," and shortly after our daughter's first birthday I was pregnant again.

I started stringing for our local newspaper, rushing out to city council and school board meetings as soon as my husband dragged through the door at seven o'clock. I got paid a measly 25 dollars a story, but since the meetings were at night and I could write the stories at home, I didn't have to pay for childcare. Moreover, it was the first time I saw my writing published, and it signaled a turning point for me as I finally made the leap from advertising to editorial.

Since then, I've stuck to what I'm passionate about as I navigate the uncertain waters of these transitional years. I've redefined my priorities, and am using this time to lay the groundwork for a career that is going to work for me long after my children are grown. Like the many women who grow home businesses while growing young ones, I've discovered meaning in my personal work that was previously absent.

These days, since I do perform paid work from home, I could have an easy answer to "Don't you work at all anymore?" I could say that I am a freelance writer, working at home. It's true, and since I know based upon my own research that it gains me a great deal more respect in the eyes of the asker than saying that I'm home with the kids, I'm tempted to offer it up. But I won't, because every time I do, I'm perpetuating a system that defines work only in terms of what men have traditionally been paid to do, and discounts most of what women have traditionally done for centuries.

I have to make perfectly clear when I say that I work at home. I'm talking about the childcare and the home maintenance activities which utilize my talents as a manager, nurturer, healer, wise woman, acrobat...and retriever of small objects lost in the dust jungle beneath my refrigerator. Otherwise, people automatically dismiss these activities, and conjure up a false image of an orderly day spent at the computer doing paid work. This strain toward clarity requires a lot more effort than calling myself a "full-time mom," or proclaiming that I'm taking "time off" to be with my kids (motherhood is not a vacation), or, worse of all, conceding that no, "I really don't work at all anymore." It demands concentration and patience, but it can be done.

We must find new words, or new combinations of and meanings for old words that more accurately reflect our reality. When we don't — when we resign ourselves to the old words that apportion less worth than we deserve because it's less awkward and just plain easier — we are validating a description of ourselves that we know to be false. This danger is like that of looking into a fun house mirror, without challenging the falsehood of the contorted stranger staring back at you. Eventually, you're going to believe what you see is you, and that twisted version of yourself becomes the only truth you know.

Jeannine O. Howitz is a Minnesota-based writer and home-based working mother of two. Her articles have appeared in many publications, including The Ladies' Home Journal.
SHE JUST DOESN'T UNDERSTAND

The Feminist Face-Off on Pornography Legislation

By Ellen Levy

Listening to feminists wage war over anti-pornography legislation is a bit like watching characters face off in David Mamet's controversial new play "Oleanna," in which a student accuses her professor of sexual harassment: Plaintive and impassioned, both sides seem unable to understand each other. On one side are anti-pornography feminists who contend that pornography is sex discrimination, and want civil legislation which will allow women to bring suits against producers and distributors of sexually explicit works that "subordinate" women, if they can prove they have been harmed by the materials. On the other are feminists who fear such legislation will inhibit constitutionally-protected speech without addressing the root causes of gender inequality and violence against women.

The debate has driven a deep wedge into the feminist community. Anti-pornography feminists are derided as neo-Puritans, by their Second Wave sisters, while those who oppose legislation are labeled "First Amendment fundamentalists" and "Uncle Toms." As Patricia Ireland, president of NOW, has said, "They can't even agree to disagree." Relevant to understanding this face-off is the often overlooked work of feminist philosophers Monique Wittig and Carol Gilligan, who have critiqued binary models of conflict and argued the need to reexamine the very assumptions on which the legal system is based.

For while the struggle over porn testifies to the complex intersection of sex, symbols, and speech in our culture, it may also be compounded by a misunderstanding of the issues. With few exceptions, the feminist anti-pornography debate has been read through a liberal lens as a clear-cut conflict between censorship and free speech. Yet this framing masks the fact that the two sides are in fact grounded in radically different conceptions of justice and conflict. Anti-pornography proponents argue for law based on an ethic of care and harm, while their opponents argue on the basis of rights. Opponents of pornography legislation argue that we must choose between absolute free speech and censorship; proponents of the legislation deny that it is an either/or choice.

For anti-pornography adherents, constitutional rights do not represent absolute, universal principles protective of all equally, but specific historical inscriptions of power. "Highfalutin legal principles have masked and protected privi-
Dworkin. The Minneapolis ordinance in 1983 by MacKinnon and MacKinnon/Dworkin model of anti-pornography legislation, "Pornography and Civil Liberties: A New Day for Women's Equality." "Our Constitution was designed to protect slavery and to keep women chaste. The 'rights' guaranteed to white men were grants of freedom that established a civil and social dominance over Blacks and women."

This stance reflects the poststructural understanding of language. MacKinnon/Dworkin model was introduced in Indianapolis by an anti-pornography, an Ohio-based alliance of religious and private organizations, the Packwood (R-OR), the bill in its original form would have allowed suits against any object, universal merit, prevailing conduct, and to keep women chaste. The 'rights' guaranteed to white men were grants of freedom that established a civil and social dominance over Blacks and women."

As critic Deborah Cameron asserts, "the First Amendment precludes the ascendancy of ideas has always awared it." On the contrary, explains Cameron, "legal principles, like those protecting speech, are seen as mere rhetorical power plays: Without any objective, universal merit, prevailing legal ideals are simply those privileged by the mostly white ruling class.

But the anti-porn stance also reflects feminist skepticism of justice in a society that has been decidedley unjust to women. As critic Deborah Cameron asserts, "the problem of pornography is not reducible to questions of censorship. It is part of a broader and deeper cultural politics - the politics of meaning and definition."

The feminist debate over pornography renewed last year with the battle over the Pornography Victims Compensation Act, a federal bill which would enable victims of sex crimes to sue the producers, distributors, and sellers of obscene materials or child pornography adjudged to have caused the crime. Introduced in 1991 by Senators Mitch McConnell (R-KY), Charles Grassley (R-IA), Strom Thurmond (R-SC), and Robert Packwood (R-OA), the bill in its original form would have allowed suits against sexually explicit materials. However, in an effort to appease opposition and get the legislation through committee, its language was amended to apply only to so-called "hard core" porn - obscene materials and child pornography - which do not have constitutional protection.

The bill was the latest incarnation of model legislation first introduced in Minneapolis in 1983 by MacKinnon and Dworkin. The Minneapolis ordinance defined pornography - which currently has no definition under the law - as sex discrimination, and made provisions for women to sue civil suits for damages. Its principal innovation was to shift the focus of obscenity law from the vague notion of "injury to morality" to a specific recognition of harm to women. The federal bill represented a merger of the feminist model with a conservative agenda. Unlike the Minneapolis model, it did not mention sex discrimination and the traditional definition of "pornography" as obscene material and child pornography was maintained. MacKinnon and Dworkin were not active in this legislative battle, although legislators did consult them years ago when the bill was first being developed.

The Pornography Victims Compensation Act was not the first time the MacKinnon/Dworkin model was adopted by the Right. In 1983, a modified version of their model ordinance was introduced in Indianapolis by an anti-ERA, anti-choice, Eagle Forum city councilwoman. And the following summer, in Suffolk County, New York, conservatives so thoroughly adopted the Minneapolis model to a rightwing agenda that even MacKinnon and Dworkin opposed the bill.

The recent federal model attracted strong opposition from many feminists. In a Valentine's Day letter to the Senate Judiciary Committee, some 180 members of the ad hoc Committee of Feminists for Free Expression - including Adrienne Rich, Betty Friedan, Jamaica Kincaid, and Elizabeth Murray - spoke out against the bill as a distraction from the substantive issues affecting women's lives. In their letter they argue that the bill "scapegoats speech as a substitute for action against violence" and promotes "porn made me do it excuse for rapists and batterers." "Violence is caused by deeply economic, familial, psychological and political factors," they wrote, "and it is these that need addressing." "To demand censorship is the wrong strategy for giving women the power and right to make decisions in the area of sexuality," says Leanne Katz, executive director of the National Coalition Against Censorship and coordinator of the Working Group on Women, Censorship and "Pornography. "Sex education, information on women's sexuality, and lesbian erotica, are totally under attack as pornography. Suppression has never served women's interests and it's not about to start."

Even psychologists Edward Donnerstein and Daniel Linz, whose laboratory research on the effects of pornography was cited in the Senate bill as support for the bill's provisions, are critical of the legislation. Writing in the Chronicle of Higher Education, they cautioned that "the wrong material...is targeted in the Victims Compensation Act. Sexual explicitness per se is not a causal agent for antisocial behavior in any research study that we have examined. Rather, violence, whether presented in a sexually explicit or non-explicit context, seems to be the crucial variable."

Despite the eventual defeat of the Pornography Victims Compensation Act, which died on the Senate floor last year without coming up for a vote, its passage by the Senate Judiciary Committee has enhanced the legitimacy of such legislation and helped fuel a wave of third-party liability bills across the country which aim to use victim compensation legislation to fight pornography and ostensibly win women rights.

In the first five months of 1993, bills appeared in state legislatures in Missouri and California which would hold sexually explicit materials responsible for crimes. Assembly Bill 490, introduced this spring in the California legislature, is even more restrictive than the Pornography Victims Compensation Act, because it would allow suits against producers and distributors of "material harmful to minors" - which has a looser standard than obscenity - as well as "hard core" pornography. Backed by the National Coalition Against Pornography, an Ohio-based alliance of religious and private organizations, the bill is another example of the rightwing appropriation of the MacKinnon/Dworkin model. Meanwhile, Senator McConnell is considering reintroducing the federal bill.
Many of us know that if we didn't have due process as a fundamental guarantee, our criminal code could be misused. Any legislation can be used against anybody," Mahoney acknowledges. "All of our criminal code can be misused.

The question is, 'how much risk are we willing to take to protect women's equality, self-esteem, and physical safety?" She adds, "This classification in the law is moving toward 'reasonable balance.' You have to weigh the harm to women's equality, self-esteem, and physical safety against the benefits of the law.

Debates about speech rights "keep the discussion on a very abstract level," says Mahoney. "We want to look at the law in terms of a context of harm, in the context of the reality of women's lives." It is this emphasis on harm rather than rights which distinguishes the anti-pornography position and signals that a qualitatively different perspective may be at work.

Listening to the anti-pornography debate, it often seems the two sides are not speaking the same language. And perhaps they aren't. In 1982, Carol Gilligan's research on moral development, published in her book In A Different Voice, described a different moral voice among females. Though not peculiar to girls or women, and affected by educational levels, this different voice nevertheless testifies to the existence of two qualitatively distinct conceptions of morality and justice between the sexes. In her research, Gilligan found that females by and large assessed situations in terms of harm, which is an ethic of care, while males appealed to abstract rights. Gilligan was careful to point out that this 'different voice' was characterized not by gender but theme, and she did not suggest an 'essential' female morality. "The contrast between male and female voices are present," she wrote, "to highlight a problem of interpretation rather than to represent a generalization about either sex."
Gilligan describes. On one side are those arguing the primacy of abstract speech rights, on the other, those arguing an ethic of care and harm. As Gilligan has explained, “While an ethic of justice proceeds from the premise of equality — that everyone should be treated the same — an ethic of care rests on the premise of nonviolence — that no one should be hurt.”

Like Gilligan’s different voice, the different perspective of anti-pornography proponents may signal the existence of an alternative to the oppositional model of conflict and the difficult choice between valuing rights or limiting harm. “By positing...two different modes,” Gilligan speculates, it becomes possible to develop “a more complex rendition of human experience” — and potentially a more complex rendition of law as well. The intersection of these different voices is predictably problematic because the fact that they are different may go unrecognized.

Gilligan believes that the failure of social scientists to recognize this different moral voice stems “in part from the assumption that there is a single mode of social experience and interpretation” — just as it has been assumed in the battle over porn, that no viable alternative exists to liberal legal discourse.

Clearly there can be no perfect correlation made between Gilligan’s psychological research and the current legislative battle over pornography, but Gilligan’s work does offer the possibility of a less antagonistic reading of the issues by feminists on both sides. Rather than provoking enmity, their differing perspectives could provide the ground for new feminist legal theory that combines the strength of the “rights” approach with the compassion of an approach based on care.

However, it remains to be seen whether this different voice even would be heard once installed in U.S. courts and legislatures. The brief history of the MacKinnon/Dworkin model offers ample evidence that its principles are readily adapted by those with anti-feminist agendas. There is also the possibility the law would be used to silence feminist analysis. After all, Kate Millet’s groundbreaking treatise Sexual Politics opens with a rape scene a la Henry Miller, and Dworkin makes use of sexually explicit texts to chart the intersection of sex and power in her inclusive literary critique Intimacy.

And so pur in place laws which could even potentially be used to silence honest sex talk could be a death knell for Third Wave feminists, who have come of age in the era of AIDS “AIDS and HIV, as sexually transmitted diseases, forced me into talking about safer sex and I can’t talk about safer sex unless I talk about sex,” says lesbian videographer and activist Catherine Saalfield. Saalfield helped organize the sold-out “LUST” (Lesbians Undoing Sexual Taboos) conference last year, the first women’s sex conference since the Harvard “Towards the Politics of Sexuality” conference 10 years ago.

“People are hungry to talk about sex,” says Saalfield. “People like porn. We live in such a repressive, anti-woman, anti-sex society, we need all the venues we can get for honest, open, safe discussion about sex to increase our own honesty, open, and safe sex play and practices.” She is particularly concerned about the ramifications of anti-pornography legislation for lesbians. “We’re the ones who are going to be targeted,” says Saalfield, “Because we’re the people with [recognized] sexuality in this culture.” And given the limited imagery available to lesbians, the loss could be significant.

In Canada, for example, police raided Toronto’s lesbian and gay bookstore Glad Day Bookshop on the heels of the Butler decision and confiscated the lesbian magazine Bad Attitude. The bookshop fought the confiscation in court, but lost in the end when one story in the magazine — a rape fantasy — was deemed illegal.

Mahoney maintains that discriminatory law enforcement, not Butler, is responsible for the confiscation of lesbian erotica. “There has been a homophobic response to this material since time immemorial,” she says. The ACLU acknowledges that confiscation of sexually explicit materials by Canadian Customs without due process or judicial determinations of obscenity was commonplace long before the Supreme Court decision, yet notes an increase since Butler. Bruce Walsh, a member of Censorstop — a Canadian coalition which is fighting censorship and Butler — asserts that the incidence of Customs seizures “has increased a thousand-fold” since the ruling. Whereas in the past lesbians and gays were targeted as a vulnerable minority, now, according to Walsh “about half of Canada’s bookstores have been harassed” as “Customs has gone after political dissidents” in general.

The anti-pornography legislation proposed by Dworkin and MacKinnon would not target queer material according to Pornography and Civil Rights, since under the ordinance “harm cannot be a moral one.” But neither would it offer any special protection to lesbian and gay materials that blend sex and subordination or violence.

Ironically, some feminists believe that pornography itself could be a key to winning women’s equality. As the late British author Angela Carter argued in The Sadeian Woman and the Ideology of Pornography, “Sexual relations...always render explicit the nature of social relations in the society in which they take place and, if described explicitly, will form a critique of those relations, even if that is not and never has been the intention of the pornographer.”

For Carter, porn provides a unique arena for the analysis and reinscription of sex and power. As she imagined it, pornography could provide a map for sexual equality, the key that unlocks a sexual utopia. “The moral pornographer,” she proclaimed, “would be an artist who uses pornographic material as part of the acceptance of the logic of a world of absolute sexual license for all the genders, and projects a model of the way such a world might work.”

Whatever the future of anti-porn legislation in this country, one thing is certain: The debate around porn is forcing a reconsideration of legal and philosophical premises and as well as the function of images, words, and law in the construction of meaning. Arguments on both sides of the issue have driven home the points made by professor Anita Hill in a speech earlier this year. As she stated, “Who gets to tell a story and how it is told, who tells it and who listens, is a matter of power.”

Ellen Levy was formerly managing editor of The Independent Film and Video Monthly. Her writing has appeared in The Nation, In These Times, and many other publications.
Jawole Willa Jo Zollar: The child is born at midnight, a time of no time between the dark shores of two distinct days. The young mother can't understand why she is being badgered to choose a proper birthtime for the certificate — 11:59 or 12:01? She just wants to know if her baby, the child she will soon give away, is a boy or a girl. Exhausted, she finally settles on 12:01. Moving forward means hope.

Supported by the members of her performance troupe, Urban Bush Women, Jawole Willa Jo Zollar tells a theater audience her bittersweet story of giving this baby girl up for adoption and reuniting with her many years later. In LifeDance III... The Empress (Womb Wars), Zollar explores issues of women's oppression and empowerment. The African-rooted way of life, so often evoked in this African-American company's work, here again forms the basis for compelling, kaleidoscopic theater integrating the personal and the political, the ancestral and the contemporary.

In its bravery, Womb Wars may remind some viewers of Alice Walker's searing novel, Possessing The Secret of Joy, a crusade against the practices of female genital mutilation and infibulation. Womb Wars takes up women's cry against sexual violence, medical butchery, and the denial of women's rights to control our own bodies. Zollar made the choice to go public with personal experiences because, she says, "the stories I tell are other women's stories, more women than I'd ever imagined. I think women have thought 'This is something that's happening just to me, and I have to cope..."
with it. Every woman I know has been through some kind of sexual abuse. It used to be a dirty, deep, dark secret."

Zollar's LifeDance series takes its inspiration from the Major Arcana of the Tarot. This latest installation, Womb Wars, derives its vision from The Empress, a matriarchal symbol of divine spirit in matter, expressed in the fertility and diversity of the natural world. In Zollar's Tarot readings, The Empress kept coming up reversed, a sign she related to unresolved issues around her abortions.

"I started reading about the tradition of the abiku [a Nigerian religion that has influenced many spiritual and cultural beliefs and practices throughout the African diaspora] in Yoruba. The abiku spirit is born to die, does not want a full life. If you are at all ambivalent about carrying life, this kind of spirit might be drawn to you."

In Womb Wars, Zollar calmly but firmly counsels a friend to perform her own natural abortion — using herbs and accupressure — and to spiritualize it with candles, crystals, and chants. In this way, she advises, the woman may affirm the spirit's right to leave and her own right to choose to help it do so. It is a very African approach, Zollar realizes, stressing the nature of abortion as a transition like any other requiring a spiritual process — some rite of passage, of mourning and releasing.

"The antiabortionists imagine that abortion is a flip thing," Zollar says. "They imagine a woman thinks, 'Oh, I'm pregnant! I think I'll go have an abortion!'" But proponents of choice, she feels, fear giving antiabortionists ammunition. She hopes that other people who support a woman's right to choose will not misunderstand her meaning, her interest in the complexities behind the decision to abort a fetus.

"I don't see the political and the spiritual as being separate," she explains. "Among people of color and within feminist spirituality today, it's a political act to be aware of yourself and to carry your spiritual traditions with you."

Launched in 1984, Zollar's group Urban Bush Women has become known for its celebration of the survival of African culture throughout the diaspora, manifested in religion and folklore as well as popular and theatrical dance, music, visual arts, and the spoken word. Zollar has worked with many noted figures in the arts — among them, filmmaker Julie Dash (who directed the film Daughters of the Dust as well as the nationally-televised film of Zollar's Praise House) and performance artists Laurie Carlos and Robbie McCauley. Last year, Zollar and her ensemble received a BESSIE (New York Dance and Performance) Award for their entire body of work. Through extensive touring to perform, teach, and offer interactive community engagements, the ensemble has won national and international acclaim.

Here in New York City, Urban Bush Women performances are always eagerly anticipated, especially by those who value the company for its vision of women's strength, creative brilliance, compassion, sensuality, and solidarity. In an intriguing section of Zollar's Nyabinghi Dreamtime — a work-in-progress which dips into the non-linear, spiritual consciousness of the Nyabinghi Rastafarian tradition of rural Jamaica — the choreographer suggests the existence of an unknown 13th tribe descended from the Biblical Jacob. The source of this line, she was once told, is not one of Jacob's sons but, rather, a daughter. And the tribe, as Zollar might have dreamed, is a tribe of women — 13 — the number that inspires fear in all but those who honor the Goddess. Zollar wisely asks, "Now, what if women were to reclaim that power, the power of the 13th tribe?"
Merian Soto: As the performance begins, we are being forced to watch a graphic film of a surgeon cutting a woman open. Her fallopian tubes — slick with blood — are pulled out of her body and quickly tied and cut. On-stage, in real time, a dancer puts on his doctor costume and proceeds to roughly manipulate the body of his innocent patient like a shop window mannequin. Each body part is an obstruction, a problem to be solved. He will not look her in the eye. Like so many others, she will end up flat on her back, sliced open, and changed.

Pressure and intimidation, lack of adequate information, or lack of access to birth control options. The policy, initiated in the 1930s, is widely regarded as the consequence of an attitude that blames poor women of color for the economic and social problems of their communities.

In the dance, the bodies of women absorb a trauma while their minds have been put to sleep. Like astral bodies, these expressionless forms slip away from the flesh-and-blood objects thrashing on the floor. Recovering from their surgery, the women seem haunted by the notion that something is very wrong about them. This evokes, too, the “amnesia” of which Soto speaks. Historias is meant to be a gift of awakening and remembering.

“I work a lot with improvisation, energy modes, accessing emotional states,” Soto explains. “All of our emotions are in our bodies, and we can channel that. There is a history of our bodies.”

The body must also be the site of emotional healing, as the dance suggests in its beautiful conclusion. A wave of dancers advance across the stage. One member of each same-sex pair holds and softly comforts the other, knowing and remembering and guiding the waking body with compassion.

Like Urban Bush Women, Soto and Osorio make it a priority to work with communities, and their work thrives on public interaction and feedback. When they tour, they invite local performers to appear in their works, contributing their own insights and material. After performances, they take the time to engage their audience in discussions about what they saw.

One male high-school student who saw the conclusion of Historias said, “I was totally disgusted when I saw two guys hugging each other, and then I tried to remember the last time my father hugged me. It made me realize we hadn’t been close.” Another member of the audience felt moved to speak out about being a victim of birth control experiments in Puerto Rico that had left her sterile.

When one woman, bewildered by Historias, asked, “Is there no joy in Puerto Rico?” the artists took her question seriously and thought it over.

“But we decided that we would not change the piece to make it happier,” Soto asserts. “It’s said [about Puerto Ricans] that we’re the people who save the best jokes for the wake. We face adversity with humor. In this piece, we didn’t want to do that. In order to become whole, to move on, we have to first work on the pain.”

Jawole Zollar notes that artists have been speaking out more about experiences of child abuse, rape, and other traumatic histories that were once cloaked in silence and shame. She wonders why it has taken dance so long to begin to tell these stories. Both she and Merian Soto demonstrate how artists — particularly artists who know and honor the body — can reclaim the ancient, earth-rooted role of healer as the shield of our individual and societal denial begins to crack.

Eva Yaa Asantewaa, a freelance writer and dance journalist based in New York City, teaches writing meditation and stress management for people with HIV-AIDS, women in shelters, and organizations in the lesbian community. She is the founding director of Spirit Center, holistic education for women.
For the past 13 years, photojournalist Helen M. Stummer has been documenting the people of the devastated Central Ward of Newark, NJ. During this time she has focused on a woman named Carol, her family and friends. Stummer describes Carol as being “a very important person” in the neighborhood. Carol strives to bring hope and comfort into the lives of those around her. She is a woman of courage and determination who firmly believes you can succeed against all odds if you keep on trying and never give up. In January, 1994 Carol will graduate high school after years of attending at night. Her grades have consistently been all As and Bs and she will graduate with honors.

Photographs and Story by Helen M. Stummer
While on her way to Head Start with a sack of toys Carol takes time out to find a home for a stray kitten

In 13 years, Carol has moved about 150 feet — two rubble-filled lots and a razed building separating her former and present apartments. Maybe because I feel gray days go with the Central Ward of Newark, or perhaps it's coincidence, the majority of times I photograph in this area the weather matches the bleak landscape: Foggy, rainy, cold or windy. Little grows here except weeds and some old broken trees. Only a few desperate children play in these lots where hundreds of rubber tires have been dumped, or jump on mattresses alongside the abandoned building, where carpets and blankets hang out of some windows and cover others. Because of the surrounding gloom, garbage, weeds and rubble, the place feels wild, dangerous and joyless.

This area was productive at one time, before the remaining whites fled. Now the landlords come in from the suburbs to collect rents that vary from $250 to $550 a month. Maintenance is minimal and it is always jarring for me to see Carol's landlord pull up in a Jaguar. "Is that his car?" I once asked. "No," said Carol, "that's his wife's. He has a Mercedes."

Since Carol lives in a basement apartment, she is isolated from the other tenants in the building. To get to her door I must walk past a long line of garbage cans, down a narrow sidewalk, a brick wall on my left and a cyclone fence on my right. The fence is supposed to keep people from dumping into the lot. It doesn't work. The lot also includes a burned-out building, its skeleton silhouetted against the sky. In front of me is an old uprooted tree laying across the fence; beyond that, more empty lots and groups of people huddled together. In the distance, a few low buildings sit alongside some that are burned-out.

I'm no longer apprehensive when approaching Carol's basement apartment. She told me that people were looking out for me. "They're anxious to see what you're bringing," she said. My car is always full of clothes, food, toys or furniture that others in the suburbs have given me to take to Newark. Later, as Carol goes through the bundles, dividing the clothes into piles for the neighborhood, her soft and soothing voice goes down the list of people who will receive them. "This is just Margo's size," or "Brittny would love this," or "I'm gonna cook this ham for Anthony's mother. She and the children aren't well."

Sometimes Carol struggles with a dilemma. Most of the people use the food to feed their families, but she is alert to the possibilities that some will sell the food for dope. In those cases, she cooks the food first and then sends small amounts to the family, or she feeds the children in her own place.

During the years I have seen Carol hug dozens of children and I know these hugs are remembered; hugs that are as filling as the food she gives them; as filling as the words of encouragement she gave to 18-year-old Margo the week before. "I worry about you! You hear! Don't you ever run away again." Holding Margo, with tears running down her face, Carol continued, "If you have another argument with your aunt, come here, or at least let me know where you are. I was
Carol’s “backyard” — where children play amidst garbage, weeds and rubble.
Carol's kitchen is filled with sacks of clothes and food that she will distribute to her neighbors.
Carol comforts Brittny, one of the many neighborhood children she feeds, clothes and cares for.

crazy worrying about you. Promise!” Margo was raped by two men when she was 10 years old. “She’s not like a normal teenager,” says Carol. “There’s something dead in her.”

“Hello baby!” says Carol as she opens the door with her shining smile, hugging me against her massive body, filling my heart with safety, warmth and love. She’s wearing a long black dress, her head is wrapped in a colorful scarf and her red toenails shine on her bare feet. At 33, Carol has always been large, but when she moves is surprisingly light and graceful. Her fingernails are always polished red or black, her hands eloquent as they accentuate her stories. As Carol brings me up to date on the goings-on in the neighborhood, I notice her cat jumping in and out of a large hole in the ceiling. “That’s her home,” says Carol. “She stays there for hours.” Hanging from the ceiling is one bare light bulb, next to it a full fly paper. Knickknacks are crowded into small spaces and the light coming through the blue curtains gives a soft blue glow throughout the room. The linoleum floor is old and uneven and the walls are finished with Contact in an attempt to cover hundreds of cracks and old layers of paint. The clean kitchen is filled with boxes and bags of clothes that either need to be sorted out or are on their way to different families. Throughout the small two-bedroom apartment with its iron window grates, it is dark, orderly and comfortable.

Photographs of family and children fill Carol’s living-room walls. Many are of her three children: Keisha, 12, Keonda, 10 and Kason, 8. Others are of her many godchildren and neighborhood children she usually feeds, clothes and takes care of. As I give her some photographs that I had taken the last time I visited, Carol gets out her wide silver duct tape, pulling off long sections to adhere the photos to the wall. “That’s my frames,” she says, as she puts the tape around the photographs. “I love this stuff.”

We begin sorting out the clothes into sizes, putting some toys aside to give out to the neighborhood children at Christmas. As we make up packages of food, the iron door clangs. I get up and let in two-year-old Brittny and her mother. “Don’t worry,” says Carol to the woman, “I’ll take care of Brittny for the month; you get on your feet. It’s hard with a new baby and a new place to live.

“It’s sad,” Carol murmurs after Brittny’s mother leaves. “There’s so many mothers overwhelmed with responsibility. Some even use the little money they have on drugs or alcohol. The children go hungry. They don’t have proper clothes. I love them to pieces. I would take them all if I could. Actually, I’m thinking about taking in some foster children—not for the money, even though God knows I need it — but because I feel sorry for them.”

As the conversation continues, I focus again on the neighborhood. No one here knows the feeling of going out into the backyard and quietly relaxing, or even taking a walk, without plugging into their “survival record.” This is the record that “plays in your head every time you get on the street,” Carol explains. “Survival is the click to every ghetto. It’s like a jazz record that you can hear and is drummin’ every day that you step out there. When I get out on that street I know I better pump that survival music ’cause I know I gotta get home. You never put your guard down. You can’t keep your eyes down. You need to watch everything. Only the strong survive in the ghetto.”

Some sections have been adapted from the book No Easy Walk/Living on the Edge by Helen M. Shimmer (Temple University Press, 1993). Stummer’s award-winning photographs have been exhibited at galleries, museums and universities throughout the United States.
The murder of David Gunn was just the warning shot in a right-wing campaign to cleanse America of “abortionists”

The antiabortion protest was proceeding as usual, with a handful of demonstrators swarming the sidewalk in front of the clinic. Inside, neither the doctor nor clinic staff paid them much mind—they were by now accustomed to the commotion—until a man pushed his way into the waiting room carrying a sawed-off shotgun and fired.

This was not Pensacola, Florida; the doctor was not David Gunn. This was Springfield, Missouri, last December 28, three months before Dr. Gunn’s assassination by a member of Rescue America launched antiabortion violence onto the front pages. In fact the Gunn murder, say abortion-rights activists who track such activities, was not so much an isolated attack as the latest in a trend towards overt violence by the antiabortion movement, most of it directed at doctors and clinic employees. It’s no coincidence, some might say, that the antiabortion forces have become commonly known as the “antis”—English for contras.

“There’s been so much violence directed at abortion providers for years that people simply were not surprised” when Gunn was killed, says Ann Baker of the National Center for the Pro-Choice Majority. Baker, who for some years now has functioned as a sort of one-woman clearinghouse on antiabortion activities, has chronicled three separate attacks by gun-wielding clinic assailants prior to Gunn’s murder, including the assault in Springfield, which left the clinic manager permanently paralyzed and forced the clinic to close down. And doctors who provide abortion services have been prepared for even longer. Says Baker: “When I was in Wichita, the summer of the Wichita siege [in 1991], I walked up to Dr. George Tiller my second time back, and gave him a hug. And I thought, something has come between George and me—namely, his bulletproof vest.”

Various explanations have been proposed for the rise in violence: The Supreme Court’s Bush decision in January, which may have been interpreted as giving a green light to antiabortion activism; the election of Bill Clinton ("the Antichrist," in antiabortion parlance), and his subsequent reversal of several Reagan-era antiabortion measures; the rise of new, more "militant" groups from the ashes of Operation Rescue (though these are invariably front groups involving the same people, as was documented by the Washington Area Clinic Defense Task Force recently when they videotaped anti leaders telling supporters to make checks out to “O.R. or O.R. National— we can cash either one” — evidence that helped pin a $100,000 fine on O.R. National for violating an injunction against O.R. blockades).

But according to Baker and other antiwatchers, the current wave of violence is as much a response to the successes of clinic defense efforts as anything else. Violence had always been part of the anti repertoire, of course: The first reported clinic bombings occurred in the 1970s, and vandalism and harassment have long been commonplace. But for several years after Randall Terry founded Operation Rescue in a Pensacola Sizzler Steak House in 1986, the antiabortion movement had focused much of its energies on large-scale blockades of abortion clinics, coupled with aggressive “counseling” of women entering clinics, to reframe their image as a sort of later-day civil rights
movement for the unborn.

As increasingly coordinated clinic defense mobilizations were mounted, however, and jail terms and especially fines built up, scattershot blockades began to pale as a tactic. The siege of Wichita in 1991— as O.R. forces took advantage of a supportive mayor and police chief to get arrested time and time again in front of that city’s three clinics, ballooning a few hundred demonstrators into headline-grabbing thousands—marked both the clinic blockade’s high water mark and its last gasp. When last April’s Spring of Life campaign in Buffalo fizzled in the face of massive prochoice resistance, it was clearly the end of the road.

“The day of the large blockade is dead,” agrees Gina Shaw of the National Abortion Federation. “What we’re seeing a lot more now are the really frightening guerrilla tactics, which include intense, localized harassment of physicians and staff. We’re seeing a lot of what you might call ‘war of attrition’ tactics, where they specifically target one particular clinic and focus all their efforts on it, hoping to drive them out of business.”

Bombings and arson have been part of the antabortion repertoire since the 1970s—NAF records a total of 117 incidents at last count, the most recent being in Missoula, Montana in March. More recently, these tactics have been joined by such innovations as butyric acid, a noxious, foul-smelling liquid sprayed under a clinic’s door or through a hole drilled in a wall. “We’ve seen an increase just in general vandalism—more broken windows, glue in locks, hoses being stuck under doors overnight and flooding the clinic,” says Shaw. “But butyric acid accounted for nearly 50 percent of last year’s vandalism.” The week of Gunn’s murder, six San Diego clinics and doctors’ offices were hit with butyric acid.

All this was a direct result of efforts by anti leadership to focus their movement’s efforts on doctors providing abortions. As Terry began proclaiming that “we have found the weak link” in abortion providers, the focus on antabortion attacks shifted from harassing pregnant women to open warfare against physicians. “Wanted!” posters featuring doctors who perform abortions have been a staple of recent campaigns—Gunn was featured on one in the weeks before his murder—as has stepped-up picketing of providers’ homes. (NAF figures show reported picketing incidents up nearly 900 percent, from 292 in 1991 to 2,898 last year.) In a recent mailing, Operation Rescue National leader Keith Tucci bragged about the by now well-known statistic that 83 percent of U.S. counties have no abortion provider, as well as the decrease in medical schools teaching abortions.

Possibly the most bizarre salvo in this campaign is the Bottom Feeder, an anti-abortion 'zine put out by Texas-based Life Dynamics that consists of a deluge of childish jokes and cartoons ridiculing “abortionists” and suggesting what to do with them. (“What would you do if you found yourself in a room with Hitler, Mussolini and an abortionist, and you had a gun with only two bullets in it?” asks one cartoon. “Shoot the abortionist twice.”) Life Dynamics mailed copies of the Bottom Feeder to 34,000 medical students across the country in early February.

The impact of such tactics can already be seen in Wichita, where, two years after national O.R. and the national media left town, continued harassment has forced one of the city’s three clinics to stop performing abortions, and another may be soon to follow. Jean Postleth-Waite of Wichita National Organization for Women recites the litany of harassment: “One doctor had all four tires slashed on his car. There was a woman doctor who was being harassed, and they threatened to harass her at her wedding. One of the doctors had their house up for sale, and the antis went in and left bibles at the open house. They have followed the children, they have gone to neighborhoods and told other children, ‘Did you know that the person down there kills babies?’” Under these conditions, the medical residents

ON THE ISSUES FALL 1993
The Abortion Issue: There is No "Choice" Without Providers

No other medical procedure comes with so much politically and socially flammable baggage

For a moment, after 12 years of Ronald Reagan and George Bush's antiabortion policies and their winking, indulgent attitude toward antiabortion groups' violence against abortion providers, it looked like the prochoice community had finally gotten a break with the Clinton administration. Just moments into office, Bill Clinton repealed the Title X "gag rule," reversed Reagan's 1982 Mexico City policy — that any monies allocated for international family planning could not be used for abortion or information on abortion — and lifted the bans on abortions performed in military hospitals, the importation of RU-486, and the use of fetal tissue in research. But sentiment about abortion simply won't be legislated, as indicated by the shooting of Dr. David Gunn outside an abortion clinic in Pensacola, Florida, just two months after Clinton's actions.

The problem runs deep — and it starts in the medical community. Volunteer clinic escorts stand in freezing cold and sweltering heat to shepherd clients past aggressive antiabortion "sidewalk counselors" who shove photos of burned, mangled fetuses in their faces. In some cities, prochoice women will turn out by the thousands to keep clinics open when Operation Rescue threatens to blockade them. But, in too many small metro and rural areas in this country, while clinics remain open, there simply aren't enough doctors willing to perform the procedure. According to the Alan Guttmacher Institute, as of 1988, 50 percent of all urban counties and 93 percent of all rural counties had no identified abortion providers.

In many ways, the reluctance is understandable: No other medical procedure comes with so much politically and socially flammable baggage as abortion. Certainly physicians in other fields are not routinely picketed outside their hospitals, nor are their faces plastered on "wanted" signs, their families or patients harassed, their offices trashed — nor do they face the very real threat of being murdered. Early on, antiabortion groups targeted doctors as the weakest link in the prochoice community, and doctors have buckled under the pressure. Recently, two doctors quit the Aware Woman Clinic in Melbourne, Florida after Operation Rescue began an intensive picketing and harassment campaign. The antiabortion movement's greatest success is that they have succeeded in bullying an entire generation of physicians into not providing abortions — or, if they do provide them, not to publicize it — no matter how the government safeguards a woman's right to choose.

In much the same way that many artists and art institutions began censoring themselves with regard to "objectionable" art after harassment from Sen. Jesse Helms (R-NC) and the Rev. Donald Wildmon, the medical community in many instances has closed its ranks to abortion providers. According to notes from a 1990 symposium sponsored by the National Abortion Federation (NAF) and the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists: "Some state medical boards have pursued their oversight and peer review functions more zealously with abortion providers than others, and..."
some hospital boards have disaffiliated with physicians because they perform abortions.”

Such pressure has, understandably, taken its toll. Patricia Anderson, special projects director at NAF, first noticed a shortage of doctors willing to perform abortions in 1988 when NAF members began calling, looking for doctors to staff their clinics. At the time, Anderson remembers, calls were coming in at a rate of perhaps one or two a month. A noticeable trend then, she says. Now it’s gotten worse. These days NAF fields such calls once or twice a week.

Some attribute the current shortage to the “graying phenomena” — the aging and retirement of sympathetic physicians who witnessed firsthand the life and death effects of botched, illegal abortions and dedicated themselves to providing safe abortions to women in need. By itself, this “graying” would not be so worrisome. It’s to be expected that a generation of doctors will eventually retire. The problem is that as these doctors leave their practices, younger ob/gyns are not stepping in behind them to take up the slack.

The Shrinking Pool of Abortion Providers

The subject has found a wide forum from the pages of Self to Family Planning Perspectives and has been the topic of many physician seminars. Now that the country is seemingly on a more liberal backswing from 12 years of conservative rule, how is the medical community going to address this glaring hole in women’s healthcare?

According to Trent MacKay, an associate clinical professor of obstetrics/gynecology at the University of California, Davis, who firsthand “dealt with death and complications from illegal abortions,” the need for abortion providers has never before been this great. “For a long time there was a sense that safe, legal abortions were being done by a subset of doctors, and if that’s being taken care of, why should I do it? That’s been fine up until recently.”

Thomas Easterling, associate professor in the ob/gyn department at the University of Washington in Seattle, agrees. “As we got an influx of people doing abortion in the communities, patterns of care got...”

Likewise, another young woman ob/gyn, also recently out of her residency and now in private practice in south Florida, stated that she, too, would only perform abortions for longterm patients. Not wanting to link her practice with abortion’s attendant controversy, this doctor spoke only on the condition that her name not be used.

The sensitizing of ob/gyns and the training of abortion providers is a complex issue, apart from the antiabortion timbre of the Reagan/Bush era and the scare tactics of antiabortion groups. This probably owes something to the centralization of abortion services in clinics, away from the learning ground that hospital-based residency programs provide, as well as to low prestige and payment factors that may stem from abortion’s illegal past — that it was something “abortionists,” not physicians, performed.

Even more alarming is the disquieting lack of interest on the part of many faculty physicians and ob/gyn residents, who perceive abortion as a relatively simple, rather humdrum procedure and want to move on to more “exciting” surgeries.

“But by the end of your residency, it gets to be routine to do abortions, and it gets pushed off to other people,” says Bruder, who during her residency at a New York hospital did the requisite number and moved on. “It’s not that difficult. They’re quick to do, and there are a lot more fulfilling and exciting things to do than abortions.”

But the fact is that first trimester abortion, even more than second trimester abortion, is actually complex. Seemingly simple, the first trimester procedure, which accounts for 89.4 percent of all abortions according to the Alan Guttmacher Institute, is fraught with subtleties that experienced practitioners say can confound beginners. According to Easterling, the first trimester abortion learning curve flattens out at about 500 to 1,000 procedures, while the second trimester abortion learning curve is about 25 procedures. He described “more subtle, intuitive, kinesthetic” nuances that can...
make learning to do first trimester abortions difficult to pick up. Plus, research conducted by Philip Darney, director of the family planning clinic at San Francisco General Hospital, indicates that complication rates are higher when residents perform first trimester abortions than when experienced doctors perform them. "That says to me that training is helpful," Darney says.

Many attending physicians and residents also believe that if residents are taught D&C techniques to deal with miscarriages, they can then extrapolate the skills to perform abortions. According to experienced ob/gyns, that's not particularly accurate. States Darney: "D&C is a lousy way to do an abortion."

"It's astounding when people tell you that, because abortion is the most common outpatient surgery women have," says NAF's Anderson. "You wonder what they're learning."

Easterling shed some light on the situation: "[Abortion] is not felt to be at the core of ob/gyn. The core is normal and high-risk obstetrics and outpatient and operative gynecology."

Lex Karlin, an internist in Madison, Wisconsin who performs first trimester abortions, agrees. "What residents are learning is hysterectomies, cryosurgery, cancer operations, chemotherapy — operation-based specialties. Residents don't see abortion as a prime area."

So, how does the number one women's outpatient surgical procedure vanish from the teaching curricula? Simply put, lack of motivation on the part of ob/gyn residents to pursuit training in abortion training. According to Family Planning Perspectives, a survey conducted shortly after abortion was legalized revealed that many university departments had not fully integrated elective abortion training into their programs. A follow-up study done five years later reported little improvement. That study revealed that 20 to 40 percent of all ob/gyn residents had no clinical experience in first trimester abortion.

"After 1970 when New York legalized abortion and 1973 when abortion was legalized nation-wide, hospitals were not eager to add abortion to their curricula," says Alex Sanger, president and CEO of Planned Parenthood of New York City. "The staff objected. There's a small minority of gynecologists who have strong pro-life feelings. And doctors being a collegial club, those who are prochoice don't want to offend them."

Apart from simple antiabortion sentiment, Karlin says she's experienced a pervasive "prudential attitude" that cuts across all facets of women's reproductive healthcare, not just pregnancy termination. In fact, she says that many of her abortion requests come from older women whom she says were originally refused tubal ligations. "A lot of gynecologists will say, 'I'm here to produce life, not terminate it,'" says Karlin. "Folks on medical school faculties don't look toward the health of the mother, but to a narrow view of gynecology. It doesn't occur to them that abortion is a natural part of life, unfortunate or not, and it needs to be done and done well."

Training in abortion is actually required of all ob/gyn residency programs seeking accreditation, according to Bruder, a former junior fellow on the Residency Review Committee for Obstetrics and Gynecology. The trouble is, the language of the ob/gyn specialty requirements states that ob/gyn residents demonstrate proficiency in "family planning." There is no mention of abortion, and the language is vague enough to allow programs to skirt the issue. "It's meant to include abortion, but it's not specific," Bruder says. She adds that if new programs leave out abortion, that simply opens the door to begin leaving out other components of medical practice that residents either aren't interested in learning or doctors don't feel like teaching. "If you're going to be an ob/gyn, you need to know the whole breadth of the specialty, even if you're not going to do it later."

"Every residency program in ob/gyn should not only offer it, but make it a routine part of training," Darney says. "They should not force it over religious objections, but also not require the person who wanted it to do it in their spare time. Residents work 80-100 hours a week. There is no spare time."

But because the RCC is not a punitive body, it can only cite programs for being delinquent if they do not offer abortion training. And although the RCC can rescind a program's accreditation, which means the resident's work with that program will not count toward her or his board requirements, according to Bruder, it takes a lot more than the absence of abortion training to lose accreditation.

Interestingly, abortion is the only medical procedure taught that residents are currently permitted to excuse themselves from learning. And moral dilemmas aside, directing an ob/gyn residency program in which abortion is not offered at all or merely as an optional component of the study of women's reproductive
healthcare sends a disturbing message that abortion is not an important procedure, especially when the control of one's reproductive life is considered a core tenet of women's self-actualization and liberation. The responsibility lies with the faculty doctors and program heads who create and staff the curricula. According to the south Florida ob/gyn, receiving training in abortion "depends on whether the doctors in the program are providers. You do what the doctors on staff do because you learn their cases. If they do abortions, you do them."

If attending physicians lead, residents will undoubtedly follow. In fact, Darney's study also revealed that if program heads expect their residents to participate in abortion training, most usually do. But again, it goes back to a desire to teach the procedure. MacKay says that of the 268 ob/gyn residency programs in this country, only 20 to 25 have doctors on staff with a "real serious interest in abortion."

The good news on this front, however, is that the Accreditation Council is considering changing its requirement to include the words "induced abortion." According to Bruder, this discussion has come up from time to time over the last two years. But when the R.R.C. met in January, she said the committee discussed it at length. "The R.R.C. wants programs and residents to know that we consider abortion a necessary part of training.

"We are discussing making the language more explicit to get the message across that we think abortion is important," confirms Paul O'Connor, a Chicago, Illinois ob/gyn and a member of the Accreditation Council. "It's an evolutionary process, and we're slowly turning it around. But the committee is reluctant to change without discussion, and it takes time."

Which brings us to the question of adequate learning opportunities—something that Darney found were severely lacking in many hospital-based ob/gyn residency programs. It's not surprising. Centralizing abortion in specialized and certainly more cost-effective clinics has meant that hospitals provide fewer abortions. Only about 10 percent of abortions are currently performed in hospitals, while outpatient clinics handle approximately two-thirds of the procedures. Although Darney maintains that this was not strictly economics, but also a response to antiabortion pressure, the end result is that hospital-based residents actually have little opportunity to practice the procedure. The logical solution is to send the residents to where abortions are performed—clinics.

According to Darney, however, many program heads also object to their resident moonlighting in abortion clinics. "Residents should be given opportunities to work in freestanding clinics if that's where the training is available," he says. "Programs should develop relationships with these clinics."

Planned Parenthood of New York City has developed such a program. Started in September 1992, at a cost of approximately $300,000, it's certainly not the first to provide links between hospitals and abortion clinics—Vermont Women's Health Center, and for years many private practices have offered residents the opportunity to moonlight to gain abortion training. But with its solid network of clinics, Planned Parenthood is in a position to provide other opportunities as well. According to Sanger, the program is open to third-year ob/gyns and family planning residents and provides both "didactic and clinical training." Residents spend one week or four Saturdays in Planned Parenthood clinics.

Sanger admits a week isn't a long time. "Having someone for a week doing 50 procedures is a start. The idea is to have them continue when they get back to their residencies. And if hospitals refuse to go along, residents have to take matters into their own hands." Sanger added that residents are always welcome in Planned Parenthood clinics, which have, along with many other clinics, felt the physician shortage, frequently having to cancel appointments if they cannot find replacements when doctors call in sick. "Residents are part of the staff and from an administrative standpoint, we really need the doctors there."

Three residents have already been trained through this program. On June 18 the program was launched on a large-scale basis and Sanger hopes to train approximately 35 residents a year.

But in addition to training, seasoned ob/gyns say support from the public in general and the medical community in particular will go a long way toward helping retain abortion providers. "It's going to be easier if there's a sense of organized support," says MacKay. "Not only has the federal government been a negative factor, but the American Medical Association, which might have been supportive, has not been supportive."

And restructuring the clinic model so that doctors have more than minimal contact with the patients, may alter the perception that abortion is unfulfilling work, not worthy of a physician's time and interest. "Part of the gratification you get is realizing how much you're helping the person involved. And you don't get that when you do it in a factory mode," MacKay says. "You're the one that hurt them and all you did was hurt them. You're the most obvious person to transfer emotions to. The counselors get all the smokes."

But if ob/gyns continue to avoid training and then performing abortions, there may be other medical and lay people who will shoulder the load. Says Katin, "Eventually, if gynecologists feel that it's not their area of interest, family practitioners will take over, and they're more receptive to this as general healthcare. The presumption is that abortion is a filthy job and someone has got to do it, but it's far more rewarding and exciting than internal medicine."

Physicians' assistants have been performing abortions at the Vermont Women's Health Center for more than 20 years and teaching others to do it through a two-month community rotation at the center. The University of Vermont, which has no on-site abortion training, uses this clinic as a training ground for its second-year residents. The 1990 NAF/ACOG symposium also recommended training mid-level clinicians, nurse practitioners, and midwives in abortion to replenish the pool of providers. Too, there's been a resurgence of self-help groups. These women-only groups tend to be involved in total healthcare, of which gynecological healthcare is a part. They are teaching themselves to perform manual extractions—early removal of the uterine contents using a homemade suction-aspiration device—as a way of maintaining their independence from the frequently fickle medical establishment.

Meanwhile, although the situation will...
In Pensacola, Florida March 10, for the “crime” of providing abortions for women, antiabortion protestor Michael Griffith shot Dr. David Gunn in the back as he was about to enter the Pensacola Medical Services Clinic. Gunn’s murder, while a leap in the level of reactionary violence directed at women and those who assist them in their reproductive choices, was on the same continuum as firebombing clinics, stalking providers, blockading medical facilities and assaulting women who try to enter them.

In the wake of the murder, I traveled to Florida to participate in clinic defense efforts and learned firsthand about the state of siege which besets these clinics and their staffs every day. I also met some truly heroic women and men who are on the front lines of the abortion battle and who are determined not to give an inch.

While somewhat concentrated in Florida, the situation is similar in a number of places, particularly smaller and medium-sized cities where there are fewer abortion providers to begin with, a less developed and active prochoice movement, and where there exists what Operation Rescue (O.R.) or any of their affiliate organizations deem to be a more receptive (i.e., more socially conservative) climate. In fact, 83 percent of counties in the U.S. have no abortion provider. The right to abortion may still exist on paper, but if abortion is not accessible, that right means nothing. Today, for millions of young women faced with parental notification or consent laws, poor women who cannot get Medicaid funding, and women who live in those vast stretches of the country with no abortion provider, the right to abortion is a cruel joke. And O.R., et al., has declared its intention to increasingly target providers.

In January 1993, O.R. set up a training school in Melbourne, on Florida’s mid-Atlantic coast. (Other O.R. boot camps have been scheduled for other parts of the country.) The 12 women and 10 men ranged in age from 16 to 67 and tried out their newly-learned harassment tactics on clinics in a 150-mile radius. These tactics included picketing the homes, churches and hangouts of doctors and other clinic workers; stalking and harassing clinic workers and “counseling” their children about the “morality” of abortion; and getting information on staff and patients by sifting through public records. Melbourne’s Aware Woman clinic was the target for many of their field exercises.

On Easter weekend, typically a time for major actions by the antiabortionists, these trainees were due to “graduate,” their final exams being clinic blockades. Prochoice forces in Melbourne, assisted by the Fund for a Feminist Majority, called on people for clinic defense. So, at 6 a.m. April 10, I found myself linking arms in a human defense line with several hundred other women and men outside the Aware Woman clinic. I talked to a blond 13-year-old youth whose mother is a family-planning educator at the clinic. He told me how he had been accosted at a Burger King restaurant by several O.R. women who told him his mother would “burn in hell” for working at the clinic. His family has also received numerous threatening
phone calls. "But I support my mother," he said, "and she supports me coming out here to defend the clinic."

Medical personnel in white uniforms came out to bolster the defense lines, and I asked one nurse what her reaction had been to the news that Gunn had been killed. She paused, then said, "I still can't talk about it, it's too upsetting." She said she was particularly concerned for her children. One day her nine-year-old daughter opened the door to two well-dressed people. "Your mother's a killer," they told her. "She murders babies. You must make her stop." But this nurse, like other clinic personnel on the lines that day, was determined not to back down. She pointed at the "antis" who were beginning to gather on the other side of the street and said, "All this just makes me stronger."

When clinic owner Patricia Baird-Windel came out to speak to the defenders and to the press, she was accompanied by a bodyguard. She said that since February 7, the clinic's 800 number had been jammed with some 10,000 crank and threatening calls. On the day of Gunn's murder she got several phone threats, including one from a male who said, "God is going to get you..." On the 4th, they purchased a house across from Aware Woman for $48,000 cash and have announced plans for a "counseling" center there. The only thing that prevented them from blockading Aware Woman over Easter was the massed strength of several hundred clinic defenders. Across the country, experience has proven that only by massively mobilizing against the antis, by stepping up to the front lines to defend clinics and the women who go there, will O.R. attacks be stopped.

From Melbourne to Pensacola
North and west from Melbourne into the Florida panhandle, Pensacola has been under another siege. While Gunn's murder sent shock waves everywhere, in Pensacola it had an immediate chilling effect. When the president of Escambia County NOW (which includes Pensacola) announced plans for a demonstration, she received threats on her life and resigned. John Baumgardner, a grand dragon of Florida's Invisible Empire of the Ku Klux Klan, told the Pensacola News Journal that he "understands" why an abortion opponent would kill to "defend his beliefs." "If Christians really believe abortions are murder," Baumgardner said, in not-so-subtle encouragement to his followers, "they need to do something about it — not just chain themselves to a door."

John Burt is head of a group called Rescue America which was demonstrating outside Pensacola Medical Services...
“RACIST, SEXIST, ANTI-GAY...”
How the Religious Right Helped Defeat Iowa’s ERA
By Heather Rhoads
Phyllis Schlafly and long-time ERA proponent Ellie Smeal came head-to-head in Iowa last year, where "shocking" commercials of gay men embracing marked the shifting landscape in the century-old struggle for women's equality.

"Homophobia defeated us," concedes Harriet Trudell of the Feminist Majority Foundation, one of the several women's organizations campaigning for the passage of the state's Equal Rights Amendment. "People were terrorized by the whole litany that the Robertson-Schlafly forces said would happen when 'those degenerates' took over."

As the first public ERA referendum in the country in six years, Iowa's vote rejecting women's inclusion in the state constitution was a grim reminder of how easily the Right uses anti-gay sentiments to block women's liberation — and a signal that the feminist movement must confront homophobia both within its organizations and in the larger society if any real gains for women are to be made.

When the Rev. Pat Robertson sent out his now infamous fundraising appeal for the Stop ERA Committee last summer declaring that feminism "encourages women to leave their husbands, kill their children, practice witchcraft, destroy capitalism, and become lesbians," the Iowa Women's Equality Campaign hurriedly faxed copies of the letter to the national press, feeling certain that publicizing what they considered "absurd" accusations would help their cause.

But like the anti-gay fight in Colorado, provoking homophobic hysteria proved to be a winning strategy for the Religious Right. Although polls initially showed Iowa's equal rights clause with more than 80 percent approval, by election day talk of gay marriages, adoption rights, and even "hiring quotas" under the ERA succeeded in catching the spotlight and stirring up enough fear to kill the referendum 52 to 48 percent, a difference of a mere 45,000 votes.

Same-Sex Marriages Under ERA?
While the Stop ERA camps declared victory (and even sang "Ding dong the wicked witch is dead" at its Des Moines headquarters election night), feminist organizers pointed out that their share of votes increased substantially from the state's last voter ballot on the issue — a 44 percent approval rate in 1980 — in some rural countries gaining more than eight percentage points. The pro-ERA forces did amazingly well considering Iowa is a major Christian Coalition stronghold — with a base built on Robertson's primary win here in his 1988 Presidential bid.

"We won handsomely in most of the major cities," notes Women's Equality Campaign organizer Cynthia Terrell. "Polls indicated that the majority of people voted against it simply out of uncertainty, not necessarily out of a belief in the rabid agenda of the Eagle Forum or Pat Robertson."

Terrell asserts that the equality campaign tactic of presenting Iowans with personal stories of discrimination was quite successful. "Voters seem to have really responded to the material on the wage gap, the fact that a [male] high school drop-out makes more money on average than a female college graduate," she says. "That kind of thing if we had more time and money we could have put out there more in the media and door-to-door canvasses."

Still, the lesbian-baiting, along with charges that the ERA would "destroy the family" and lead to gays kissing in the streets, contributed significantly to its defeat, as Iowa feminists were either unable or unwilling to address those arguments. Officially attempting to keep the debate focused on discrimination against women, ERA campaigners assured voters "those things wouldn't happen" but avoided challenging the misrepresentations and stereotypes of lesbians and gays.

"I was working with older women, and a woman at Meals-on-Wheels told me her minister said if they supported the ERA, homosexuals would take over her church," Trudell recalled. "I certainly told her that would not happen."

Many campaigners, she said, considered the whole anti-gay sideshow a "problem area." Promoting gay rights through the ERA was seen as risky, and at the time legally suspect, Terrell noted: "There was no legal precedence for any gay marriage being legitimized by ERA, so intellectually we couldn't say 'Yes, this is going to help gays and lesbians.' That
creased the tension."

But a recent ruling by Hawaii's Supreme Court that the ban on gay marriages violates the state's ERA could "change the whole landscape of the debate," says Ronnie Podolefsky, coordinator of the Northeast Iowa National Organization of Women. The 3-1 decision calling marriage a "basic civil right" could have implications beyond Hawaii, since each state recognizes marriages performed in others. "It won't matter if a state has an ERA because lesbian and gay couples will be able to go to Hawaii to get married," she notes.

More importantly, the decision finally shows that ERA-backers cannot continue to deny the connection, much like how the 1986 Contra case upheld state funds for abortion legally linked equal rights for women to reproductive rights. While the women's movement has faced homophobic attacks for decades in its struggles for everything from pay equity to ending sexual harassment and abuse, middle-of-the-road feminists have historically been reluctant to openly embrace lesbian and gay rights, and have even worked against having abortion rights. "This gave the appearance that we had much to hide, that we were afraid to talk about real issues," notes Suzanne Pharr, author of Homophobia: A Weapon of Sexism. "What you have to do is education: You have to change the hearts and minds of people so they understand that it's about gay men and lesbians, and it's about democracy, and it's about civil rights for everyone, and it's about attacks against affirmative action, and it's also about attacks against reproductive choice."

In fact, Iowa legislators wording the ERA amendment attempted to avoid the gay rights debate by referring to "gender" rather than "sex." But Evan Wolfson, an attorney with the Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund working on the Hawaii case, argues that an ERA should provide protection from discrimination based on sexual orientation, since gender discrimination is one of the forms heterosexism often takes.

Podolefsky admits that the pro ERA forces haven't "tackled the issues" well enough. Feminists who are afraid of muddying up the waters and who think they don't understand lesbian and gay realities have "tip-toed around" too much. "This same thing has been fought over and over again, and people knew that arguments were going to be used against it," she points out. Adda Terrell: "We needed to have a more creative, positive response."

Last year's Colorado and Oregon campaigns against anti-gay ballot measures have come under similar criticisms. Colorado's Equal Protection Only campaign decided not to respond to such inflammatory condemnations as gay being "promiscuous pedophiliacs" leading a "diseased lifestyle," fearing the accusations would become the campaign's focus. Oregon's "No on 9" campaign worked to create an atmosphere where people who were strongly anti-gay could still vote against the measure by promoting the message "no on discrimination," and "it's a danger to us all." In $1 million worth of media advertising, the campaign never used the words "lesbian" and "gay," because polls showed they couldn't win as a lesbian and gay issue.

"This gave the appearance that we had much to hide, that we were afraid to talk about real issues," notes Suzanne Pharr, author of Homophobia: A Weapon of Sexism. "What you have to do is education: You have to change the hearts and minds of people so they understand that it's about gay men and lesbians, and it's about democracies, and it's about civil rights for everyone, and it's about attacks against affirmative action, and it's also about attacks against reproductive choice."

**Unless they want a church state, they're going to have to get out there and fight back**

The Rising Right

Iowa's ERA defeat is a perfect example of how the Religious Right's intensifying crusade against lesbians and gays is a strategy to advance their broader agenda—abolishing reproductive rights, ending affirmative action programs for people of color and women, maintaining Eurocentrism in academia and an "English-only" society, cutting funding for public education and libraries, censoring books and art, mandating prayer in schools and government, and teaching only abstinence and creationism.

"The New Right has recast itself as the new oppressed minority; its leaders as revolutionaries seeking to recreate the world the they imagine existed before feminism and the civil rights movement. "While gays and lesbians represent a wedge for the Religious Right to penetrate the mainstream and to build their official entities and institutions, the point of that wedge is racism and sexism," asserts Scott Nakagawa, organizer of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force's Fight the Right campaign.

When fundamentalists talk about upholding "traditional family values," he says, "they're talking about the batter of women in their homes, about incest, about child abuse. They're attacking reproductive rights. public support for childcare programs, parental leave, and equity for women."

The Religious Right now occupies a particularly good position to attack the gains of the women's movement, the lesbian and gay movement, and the civil rights movement through its political ascendency in important second- and third-tier governing levels throughout the country. Christian conservatives have won hundreds of seats on school boards, neighborhood advisory committees, city councils, and state legislatures, establishing key power bases state by state. Already, school systems from New York to California are throwing out multiculturalism, sexual development courses and evolution.

Even Republicans are feeling the Religious Right's growing control within the party. In addition to taking strong anti-ERA and anti-gay positions last year — marking a shift from the party's century of official silence on such issues — the GOP adopted the toughest abortion platform plank ever, even forbidding ending pregnancies due to incest or rape. "These people are diehards," warns Ann Stone of Republicans for Choice. "They are well-organized, and all they do is fight. We have to get people to understand that unless they want a church state, they're going to have to get out there and fight back. Forget about gay rights and abortion rights in the kind of society they have in mind."

The Religious Right's resurgent success vindicates the 1988 decision by the Christian Coalition — Pat Robertson's $13 million, 725 chapter, 400,000 member political empire — to shift its drive from presidential to local elections, joining forces with other right-wing "family" groups such as the Eagle Forum, the Traditional Values Coalition, and Citizens for Excellence in Education, the fundamentalists have created a viral junta to mount their escalating attacks on lesbians, gays and feminists — which Robertson calls the "Second Civil War."

As much as a third of the U.S. public is evangelical Christian, and the far right is working hard to convert their "worship" into active political participation. In Iowa, it was simply a matter of the Religious Right turning out large numbers at precinct meetings to take control of the state's Republican committee and platform, thereby making it the most
who want "special rights" to all these through the country — anti-gay bro-

tions" and are "recruiting" women from the "femi-Nazis" want "special protec-

tions," and get "taxpayer funding of homophile groups on college cam-

rabid about passing the ERA" because that the "militant feminists" were "so

In Iowa, Stop ERA leaders declared that the "militant feminists" were "so

In Colorado and Oregon — and now throughout the country — anti-gay bro-

ERA foe Phyllis Schlafly declared, but the "femi-Nazis" want "special protec-

In Iowa, Stop ERA leaders declared that the "militant feminists" were "so

in white Americans. "It's not that people

Christian conservatives have won hundreds of seats on school boards and neighbor-
In his first solely anti-gay action, Terry mailed out an election-time appeal to Christians to vote against Clinton, citing scripture at length but mentioning nothing about abortion. Declaring Clinton the "Anti-Christ," Terry recently joined forces with the Christian Coalition in a movement he calls "the Resistance" to hold public anti-gay demonstrations across the country.

Just as the Stop ERA campaign very effectively mobilized Iowa's vast profile network to distribute its anti-gay propaganda, on a national basis the Religious Right has already enlisted abortion foes in its full-force campaign against lesbians and gays in the military. With Terry coming into the anti-gay "movement," many activists predict Operation Rescue-style protests against lesbians and gays. "The sense of moral outrage is growing, and that's going to lead to more extreme and visible activity," says Divine. In mid-March, key OR leader Pat Mahoney and other Christian Defense Coalition leaders held a "war council" in Washington, DC to map out their "political terrorism" against lesbian and gay rights.

Reproductive rights activists familiar with the pro-life organizations, strategies and networks throughout the country can use this knowledge in countering the Right's latest attack on lesbians and gays. During her work in Oregon, Pharr realized that our side, too, has an existing network in almost every state — the Battered Women's Coalition. "What other group is represented in small towns or cities all over the country and has a 15-year history of work against sexism, racism, and homophobia?"

One of the strongest organizing tactics to come out of the Oregon campaign, Pharr's outreach to shelters across the state helped create "Human Dignity" organizations in 33 towns which are still working for justice and standing up against the Religious Right. Likewise, the women's movement has been strengthened in many ways by the Iowa ERA defeat, as feminists are challenging their own homophobia and realizing more and more that open support for lesbians and gays will ultimately help the cause.

Pharr asserts that progressives of all stripes must now come together like never before. "We have to focus on building a movement, which means we have to stop responding crisis to crisis," she says. "We have to stop putting out brush fires, seeing them as isolated incidents rather than being pieces of something connected with a vision, and learn how to use those crises, that kind of publicity, all over the country."

The Colorado Citizen's Project, Divine notes, a predominandy heterosexual, pro-gay group, often has an easier time doing grassroots education and reaching out to the mainstream than lesbian- and gay-identified groups. "People look at us and say 'Why are you involved with this?' That's a natural platform, because it's not vested interest based on personally being persecuted, but vested interest in civil rights."

And heterosexuals are most needed in helping to create a positive climate for lesbians and gays to come out, so they can begin breaking down the lies and stereotypes. "I've certainly always supported the rights of gays and lesbians, but I never made it a part of my conversation when I was a journalist," says Trudell. "Lesbians and gays must stand up for their rights, but heterosexuals must also stand and say 'for shame.' I really believe that, and I'm now practicing it. I came out of Iowa with that as an absolute mission. That's what Schlafly did for me."

Heather Rhoads has covered the Religious Right for The Progressive. She writes regularly about women's issues and activism for the alternative press.
You can always sell a sensational story, but that doesn’t mean you’re actually satisfying the public

By Fred Pelka

Helen Benedict wasn’t able to cover sex crimes when she started out as a staff reporter for Weekly News of London— it wasn’t permitted. Crime reporting, after all, has until very recently been a man’s job.

“The tradition was that women weren’t allowed to work on that beat, because it was considered too gruesome for their sensibilities. You’re supposed to be able to look at a mutilated body and not flinch.”

Benedict has spent the 15 years since then writing books and articles on crime, particularly rape, for publications as varied as Glamour, Quill, Ms., and the Soho News. Her books, Safe, Strong, and Streetwise; Recovery: How to Survive Sexual Assault; and most recently, Virgin or Vamp: How the Press Covers Sex Crimes (reviewed in this issue), have earned her accolades from both the feminist and mainstream press. She is also a published novelist (A World Like This, about life in prison), and a noted literary critic and biographer (Portraits in Print).

I read Virgin and Vamp just as the press launched into its latest rape fad—false-memory syndrome—demonstrating the truth of Benedict’s observation that all the old rape myths are still with us: In this case that women (and now children) cry rape out of spite, or simple gullibility.

You can find the other myths out there too, if you read your newspaper closely enough: That women provoke rape, that rapists are usually working class or men of color, that some women even deserve rape. The central thesis of Benedict’s book is that the press, playing to these myths, divides survivors into two broad categories, despoiled victims or deserving whores, and then imposes “a set of mental and verbal cliches on the sex crimes they cover. . .forcing the crimes into proscribed shapes, regardless of the specifics of the case or their own beliefs.”

And so, for example, the survivor of the Big Dan gang rape in Massachusetts became an alcoholic welfare mother, and William Kennedy Smith’s accuser was characterized as a social climber.

I spoke with Benedict on two occasions for a total of two hours. What follows is an edited transcript of those conversations.

Fred Pelka: In what way is crime reporting seen as a macho field?

Helen Benedict: To be a police reporter you’re supposed to be tough. And it’s very important to be able to get on with the cops, who themselves are a very traditional male group in their values. . .

I send my students out to do police reporting every fall, and they’re constantly having to deal with the macho attitude. The women are often flirted with and disparaged, and the men are tested. It’s almost like the military, and when you’re a crime reporter you’ve got to play that game.

Were there any particular news stories or events that sparked the writing of the book, or was it a more subtle process?

Well, there were several things. Concretely, it was the Jennifer Levin “Preppie Murder” case that gave me the idea.

As I started to read about the case, and how she was being covered by the New York Times, I just became so angered at the bias against her that I began to really notice the language. The headlines in the tabloids were obvious and predictable, but the New York Times, which is supposed to be more careful, was committing the same sins, in a more subtle and insidious way. In an article on the lifestyle of the two preppies Levin was described as naive, implying the victim didn’t know something she should have. But in a more general way I had already been writing about rape and sexual assault for many years, and trained as a counselor as part of my research for my first book, and had already been feeling strongly about the various injustices to which sex crime victims are subject.
I was struck by your comment on how, while we expect sports writers to know something about sports, and political writers to know something about politics, it seems as though pretty much anybody can cover a rape trial, knowing little or nothing about rape. Is that the fault of journalism schools, or editors, or tradition?

It’s both the fault of journalism schools and of newsrooms. A lot of journalists don’t go to journalism school. But awareness of what sex crimes actually are, why they happen, what they do to people and their families, and the games that the lawyers play, the strategies that they use, are not taught anywhere. Crime reporting is very often the first beat that you’re given when you join a newspaper, so it’s often the greenest reporters who are doing it, and who are also scrambling the hardest to get some attention and rise up the ladder. So they’re working very hard, they haven’t got much experience, and they’ve entered the tradition of the most macho type of reporting, other than sports, that exists on the paper. They have all those pressures, and nobody even thinking of training them about the points of view of the victim. So they perpetuate all these stereotypes, and don’t question things, and don’t realize what they’re doing... One of my suggestions is that newsrooms get some sensitivity training from the local rape crisis center, that a rape crisis counselor be invited into the newsroom to do an in-service. In some places that’s already begun to happen, for example at the Philadelphia Inquirer, where a woman reporter named Dianna Marder was bothered by the way the paper covered the most spectacular and unusual crimes, and missed the day-to-day reality of crime. I think reporters also need to watch the vocabulary they use, and to ask themselves: Would I use this word for a man? And they need to do more background articles, instead of just breaking crime stories — to interview people who know about rape, or even past victims who are willing to talk about just how horrible it is, how frequent it is, and what it does to people and their families.

Have there been any recent events or trends since you finished the book that you might want to comment on?

Well, the date rape thing really has taken off. I did get the Kennedy/Smith case in there, but the whole flavor about date rape on campus has really arisen since then, and of course that brings up all the same old questions about the believability of the victim that I talk about in the book. And then Anita Hill happened after my book, which raised awareness in a lot of cases, and it also raised a defensive backlash....

It seems there are fashions or trends in press coverage, for instance the issue of whether or not the press should publish the names of rape victims without their consent arises periodically. Why the naming issue in particular, of all crimes around rape?

Well it came up when it did because of Geneva Overholser [editor of the Des Moines Register]. In 1991 she ran an editorial arguing why it was a good idea for

Reporters love names more than anything, because they’re always afraid that people will think they’ve made things up

rape victims to agree to be named, because it helped expose the crime for what it really was, and gave a face to the anonymous victim. And then because of that, Nancy Ziegenmeyer, who was a rape victim, decided that she would come forth and tell her story for the sake of other victims. And so she did that, and the reporter who wrote up her story won a Pulitzer for it, so there was a lot of fuss about how this is a great thing. But the reason that story was so good is because the woman was honest, and very graphic about what had happened to her, and the paper allowed the reporter to give the graphic, realistic description of the rape, and how it affected her marriage. The name was a good thing too, but it wasn’t the reason the story was so good. But the media went "Aha, you see what happens when a name is used — it makes it a Pulitzer Prize-winning story, so we should all think about doing that too." Reporters love names more than anything, because they’re always afraid that people will think they’ve made things up.

David Nyhan, who is a columnist up here in Boston, wrote at the time that naming victims had less to do with removing any stigma or withholding the names of alleged perpetrators, at least until they’re convicted. What’s your opinion on that?

Some people have suggested that if we withhold the names of victims, we should also withhold the names of alleged perpetrators, at least until they’re convicted. What’s your opinion on that?

At the moment, sometimes they mention names of people being investigated,
Many reporters and editors try to justify the worst of what they do by explaining that that's what sells, it's what the public wants. How important is that sort of self-justification to the persistence of rape myths and bad reporting about rape?

It's a constant refrain on the part of editors and reporters, that we have to give the public what they want, ignoring all those polls that show how unpopular the press is because of those things I mentioned. The press is seen as exploiting people, as invading people's privacy. I mean of course reporters are also criticized because they're often the deliverers of bad news, which is an important role that has to be done, but in ordinary life, just because you happen to be a victim of a crime, rather than being a politician who's done something crooked, the public isn't anything like as keen on [talking about that] as the press is. The confusion comes because those stories sell well, and what I always say is, you know you can put a box of donuts in front of people, and they'll eat it, but that doesn't mean that's really what they want for dinner, or that's all they want. They can't resist it because it's sugary and easy to go down, but that doesn't mean they don't want something more nourishing as well. You can always tell a sensational story, but that doesn't mean you're actually satisfying the public. The opinion polls about the press show that it's not satisfying them, because the public is constantly criticizing the press for not getting into the issues more, for exploiting people, for being vulgar, for dwelling on the wrong things, and so on.

You talk about how editors and writers, during the Jennifer Levin case, in some ways almost identified with [Levin's murderer] Robert Chambers, but you don't go very much further into how that might work, or the possibility that some reporters or editors might be preoccupied, that behavior they see being condemned might be behavior in which they've indulged at an earlier time, date rape, say, or sexual harassment. For instance, during the Anita Hill/Clarence Thomas hearings, when there was a spate of stories on sexual harassment in the workplace, one of the worst places that was almost never mentioned was the newsroom. Do you see male reporters and editors being threatened by the stop-rape movement, by the thought of being suddenly held accountable for their behavior?

I don't like to say that. I don't think that's fair, I really don't. For one thing, it makes all turn the enemy. It's like saying, the reason you men don't like to face rape is because you're all secretly rapists.

The reason that story was so good is because the woman was honest, very graphic about what had happened to her.

What would you see as the most effective way for people who aren't reporters or editors to affect the quality of reporting on sex crimes? How can we have an impact on our local papers?

They can certainly write in and point out offensive or biased language. Write letters to the editor, or call, and also write to the local papers to do more background and explanatory stories about sex crimes, their prevalence, the real dangers versus the mythological dangers, or articles on educating children to not be sexist. If people wrote in to the local media with stories they'd like to see, not only would editors have to have some fresh story ideas coming in over the transom, but then you might be able to have an affect. I think that might be a positive way of approaching it.

At the moment I'm writing a novel, because I'm a fiction writer as well, and so it's back to fiction for the time being, I have two main specialties. One is all this sex crime stuff, and the other is the literary world. It was my interest in literature that gave me the idea of analyzing the press through its language. I took a literary critic's approach to newspapers and analyzed their sex crime coverage in that way. But my fiction is social realism, and focused on the nitty-gritty side of reality, so to that extent the two tend to overlap.

Finally, were there any major surprises while you were writing the book, anything that happened, or anyone you talked to who changed your thinking about the topic in a radical way?

I think the only surprise really, which was a pleasant one, was how receptive most of the reporters were to my criticisms, how open they were to discussing how they could have done better. They were very willing to be self-critical and to improve. Some of the New York reporters were more defensive, but the majority of them were extremely pleasant to talk to and very open minded, and it did actually give me some optimism, while I was doing the book, because I felt that these were not consciously prejudiced or bad people by any means. Their intentions are good, and therefore that gave me more hope for change.
RAPE: IT SELLS PAPERS

VIRGIN OR VAMP: How The Press Covers Sex Crimes, by Helen Benedict
(Oxford University Press, NY; $25 hardcover)

"[The murder of Jennifer Levin] was one of the most fun stories I've ever covered, and I've been reporting for 11 or 12 years now. You'd see the words 'Preppie Murder' and jump for joy that you were involved in it. As a tabloid newspaperman, you thirst for a story like this....Even if you're writing garbage, as long as people read it is the main thing."
— New York Post reporter Bill Hoffman

It's difficult to argue with Helen Benedict when she writes, in her latest book, Virgin or Vamp: How the Press Covers Sex Crimes, that "the quality of sex crimes coverage has been steadily declining" during the 1980s and 1990s. With the re-emergence of feminism in the 1960s and '70s, and the establishment of rape crisis centers and a stop-rape movement, there was at least some willingness on the part of the mainstream press to look at rape as a political and social issue. But the backlash of the '80s and '90s has given new life to the old myths and stereotypes about sexual assault and rape survivors. These myths, according to Benedict, together with "the habits of the newsroom have led the press to consistently cover these crimes with bias and, sometimes, even cruelty" — as, for instance, when the Washington Post during its coverage of the Big Dan gang rape in New Bedford, Mass, ran a story quoting speculation that the victim was a prostitute.

Benedict's central contention is that the press divides all rape survivors into two broad categories: Victims or vamps. If a survivor is white, upper-class, and "a good woman," that is, if she doesn't deviate from patriarchal gender norms, she is seen as a victim. If she is of a lower socio-economic class than her assailant, or the African-American victim of a white man, or if she has a lifestyle outside the accepted norm, she becomes a "vamp" — of limited credibility or even deserving of her assault.

Much was made, for example, of the "poor academic record" and "little wild streak" of William Kennedy Smith's alleged victim, while her success in moving beyond her "modest working class family"—due to her mother's remarriage some 10 years before the assault—was described in the New York Times, no less, as a "leap up the social ladder."

The majority of the book is devoted to examining four specific cases that illustrate a particular aspect of the virgin/vamp paradigm. The Rideout case in Salem, Oregon, in 1978-79, was the first widely publicized prosecution of a man charged with raping his wife, and thus a radical threat to the view of women as the property of their fathers and husbands. The infamous Big Dan gang rape was quickly turned into an ethnic issue when the press focused on the Portugese background of the assailants (ignoring the victim's Portugese heritage), the coverage of the Jennifer Levin "preppie murder" in New York emphasized the upper-class status of both victim and killer, and their "swinging" lifestyle, while the rape/beating of the Central Park jogger was seen as a racial incident in a city already deeply divided along racial lines.

Different rape myths were of varying importance in each of the four cases. Greta Rideout was depicted by much of the press as a lying hysteric, looking for attention and a way to get back at her husband, while Jennifer Levin became "a voracious vamp" whose sexual appetite drove Robert Chambers to murder. Even the Big Dan victim — gang raped on a pool table — was transformed from the survivor of a brutal assault into a victim of race and class.
were few stories on Robert Chambers’ cocaine addiction, his poor grades at school, and his propensity for lying to friends) to the paucity of women and people of color in America’s newsrooms. “The biases of race, class, and gender so rife in the press now,” she concludes, “can only be rectified if members of all races, classes and genders work side by side in the newsroom and on the editing desk, adding their unique access and understanding of their groups to the new pool.”

Benedict ends her book by suggesting ways the press might achieve more accuracy and balance in its reporting on sex crimes. She recommends that reporters be aware of their vocabulary (stop using words such as “flirtatious” and “pert” to describe survivors, for instance), that newspapers invite local rape crisis counselors to do in-service training for their crime reporters, and that the press in general should “stop disregarding feminism” and feminists, especially rape crisis workers, who offer the most realistic view of rape, rapists, and survivors.

Given the current intensity of the backlash against feminism and the stop-rape movement, most recently reflected in the spate of stories on “false memory syndrome,” it seems unlikely that the bulk of the press will adopt Benedict’s proposals anytime soon. And so, well intentioned or not, Benedict concludes: “As long as the press is still stereotyping sex crime victims as virgins or vamps...it will continue to do victims and the public irreparable harm.”

Fred Pelka is a freelance writer in the Boston area and a Contributing Editor at O.T.I.

A SOUL TORTURED


Lovers of Anne Sexton’s poetry have long been easily seduced by the passion of her artistry into an easy admiration and idolization of Sexton the person. Always ready to forgive her anything — extreme narcissism, neglect and cruelty to loved ones — both admirers and critics alike tend to support the idea that a certain despair, anguish of spirit, and madness even was perhaps necessary for Sexton’s creative vision to flourish. Luckily, we have evidence from her life; for one, the reissued collection Anne Sexton: A Self Portrait in Letters, edited by one of her closest friends Lois Ames and her eldest daughter Linda Gray Sexton, to document just the opposite. Rather than “suffering” for her art, Sexton found writing poetry to be one of the life-sustaining, healing forces in her life. Again and again in letters, she writes that “the thing that seems to be saving me is poetry.”

This collection opens with an introduction by Linda Gray Sexton that is a compelling confessional account of the difficulties she faces striving to maintain Sexton’s poetic legacy. To do that she is continually forced to move beyond her son’s death and attachment and face Anne Sexton, the complex and contradictory woman. Linda writes that working with her mother’s letters was a process “that was lonely and painful beyond description.” Organizing the letters, she read of her mother’s painful childhood, of her negative feelings about motherhood, of her low self-esteem: “I read of my own childhood, of a mother — my mother — who was capable of abuse, crippled by her illness, her immaturity, her worn emptiness. I read of her infidelities to my father, to our family. I read of her elation and desperation, her vibrant hates and love, her burgeoning sense of self. I read of her poetry, slowly raising its voice to lift her beyond herself.” It is the strength and power of Sexton’s poetic voice, of her growth and development as a writer, that makes the letters compelling.

They form a graphic portrait of a woman who was trapped in a psychic prison forged by her utter allegiance to patriarchy and reactionary bourgeois notions of female selfhood and identity. The portrait of Sexton one sees from the letters is a soul tormented by her struggle to live out the ‘50s idea of woman’s role while at the same time attempting to carve an autonomous individual identity. Most of the letters reveal that Sexton was utterly and completely self-absorbed, that an all-consuming narcissism ruled her life. Pre-occupied with being the traditional manipulative sexy woman who gains power over others through seduction, the self exposed in these letters is not an appealing personality.
Self-indulgent, demanding, consuming of friends, family, and peers, the portrait of Anne Sexton that emerges is that of a ruthlessly ambitious, monstrous female ego, tormentously adapting to a white patriarchal middle-class family norm. There are so many "I's" in these letters that the reader cannot help but feel that Sexton could have been a much more interesting, healthier person if she had been able to relate in a more intimate way to a world beyond herself.

Indeed the only world she could make room for was poetry. It is ultimately her conversations with other writers that give these letters moments of profound thought and passion. Particularly, the correspondence between Sexton and women writers — Maxine Kumin, Tillie Olson, Erica Jong and Carolyn Kizer, to name a few — is a marvelously account of the way mutual support and admiration affirm and sustain the writer as she pursues her craft.

Overall, these letters show that Sexton was a conformist, that whatever hedonistic tendencies she cultivated were not a radical opposition but rather rituals of rebellion made by a female who lacked the courage to challenge in any redemptive way the values and roles handed her by a generation that wanted to confine and control women. It was Sexton's allegiance to the status quo that prevented her from finding sanctuary in a growing feminist movement. It might have given her the strength to face reality and begin her life anew. The collection should be read by those of us who have forgotten the pain and sadness in women's lives when they struggle to create self and identity within the narrow space provided by a restrictive and oppressive patriarchy. Poetry was the space of her resistance. Through it Sexton was able to insist that her life not be seen as tragic for she left to bear witness poetic work that less the world knew she was more than her pain.

Bell hooks is a well-known cultural critic, and feminist activist.

**BIRDS DO IT, BEES DO IT...**

*Anatomy Of Love: The Natural History of Monogamy, Adultery, and Divorce* by Helen E. Fisher (W.W. Norton and Company, NY; $22.95 hardcover)

As human consciousness evolved through the millennia, so too has curiosity about the human condition. Why do we exist? Who or what is responsible for us being here? Why do we attach to and mate with one another? Scientists, theologians, philosophers, and artists never tire of grappling with these questions. *Anatomy Of Love*, the second book by Helen E. Fisher, author of *The Sex Contract*, attempts to provide an understanding of human bonding and love. When do the forces come from that motivate us to marry, procreate, divorce, become jealous, attract members of the opposite or same sex, and commit adultery?

As she pursues these questions, Fisher, a research associate in the department of anthropology at the Museum of Natural History in New York City, leads us on a whirlwind tour of human behavioral history. She asserts from the onset that, "I am an ethologist, one who is interested in the generic aspects of behavior. In my view, human beings have a common nature, a set of shared unconscious tendencies or potentials that are recorded in our DNA and that evolved because they were of use to our forebears millions of years ago." She continues, "We are not aware of these predispositions, but they still motivate our actions."

Fisher opens the book with a discussion of how and why humans, and other animals, are attracted to and repelled by one another. She discusses rituals of courtship, infatuation, marriage, divorce, and adultery in human cultures around the globe from past to present. It's interesting to note that "According to some recent estimates, over 50 percent of all married Americans are adulterous."

While discussing courtship she claims, "Despite the obvious correlations between the courting gestures of humans and those of other animals, it has taken over a century of investigation to prove that human beings around the world actually share many of the same nonverbal cues. Many of Fisher's observations about the similarities between human behavior and their animal counterparts are supported by scathing endless references to other anthropologists and human populations.

Only after we have become well versed in human and animal mating rituals, does Fisher state her theory of how we can explain our behavior: "The answer lies, I think, in the vagaries of our past." This begins Chapter 6, entitled "When Wild in Woods the Noble Savage Ran." According to Fisher our questions regarding love and sexual comportment are best answered by looking back to the origins of our humanity; from that look back we can glean why it was necessary for us to develop physiologically, emotionally, and culturally the way we have.

Because Fisher refers to the works of such famous anthropological predecessors as Margaret Mead and the Leakeys in presenting her own theories of attachment and separation, it begins to seem as if her work is almost solely derived from secondary sources. Why does Fisher, a seasoned anthropologist herself, not draw on more of her own field experiences in support of her ideas? She mentions having lived for a brief time on an Indian reservation, but aside from this event, makes reference to other people's work, from Darwin to Shakespeare to Jane Goodall. An example being, "It is generally admitted," wrote Darwin, "that with woman the powers of intuition...are more strongly marked than in man."

Nevertheless, the second section of *Anatomy Of Love* does provide an almost encyclopedic amount of interesting facts regarding human and primate ancestry and brain development. Fisher tries to make the evolution of love a riveting tale, but her aside about human evolution and science are much more fascinating. She notes in Chapter 8 that "psychiatrist Michael Liebowitz theorizes that the euphoria and energy of attraction are caused by a brain bath of naturally occurring amphetamines that pool in the emotional centers of the brain."

Equally interesting is the anthropological reasoning brought to bear on the question of why humans are born in what amounts to an embryonic state. "At some point in hominid evolution the brain became so large in proportion to the mother's pelvic birth canal that a woman began to have difficulty bearing her large-brained young...Nature's solution: To bear young at an earlier stage of development and extend fetal brain development into post-natal life." She also includes anthropologist Wenda Trevathan's theory that "regardless of their handihood, new mothers hold their infants in the left arm — directly over the heart, probably because the heartbeat soothes the child."

It is important to know about our hominid and Cro-Magnon ancestors, marriage rituals in both Greece and China, and how the !Kung people of the Kalahari Desert have sex, but much of the information Fisher delivers somehow falls flat. In her discussion on divorce, she begins, "Divorce rates were..."
very low through much of our agrarian past." Not exactly a fantastic book, it then continues by offering examples of divorce amongst and around "Teutonic peoples...pre-Kness Germany...pre-Chosuan Celtic..." The list goes on and on.

Despite my reservations about how useful Anatomy Of Love is in addressing age old questions about human and animal mating, or even in extending a cohesive overview of all the theories that exist on the subject, Fisher's presentation of so much history has much to offer a person who knows very little about our evolution.

You may be hard pressed to read through the 120 pages of notes, bibliography and index by the time you finish, but the body of the book proves a satisfying jaunt through our anthropological history.

—Elizabeth Ferber

Elizabeth Ferber is a writer whose work has appeared in the New York Times and the Washington Times, among other publications.

THE ART OF MAN HATING

MY ENEMY, MY LOVE: Women, Men and the Dilemmas of Gender
by Judith Levine (Anchor Books; $12.95 paperback)

The ad for BodySlimmers' body suit shows a shapely woman in a skimpy garment, from the neck down, her legs parted, her cleavage prominent. The text reads, "While you don't necessarily dress for men, it doesn't hurt, on occasion, to see one don't like the pathetic dog that he is."

This is the new male-bashing, a '90s version of man-hating perhaps, but a sign that the old grinding-of-teeth anger at men has reached the mainstream. For author Judith Levine it would be one more signpost that the emotion towards the other gender which used to make of its holder a social leper has achieved so much acceptance and recognition, it is now ready to enter the realm of humor! A milestone indeed!

Still, the very idea of man-hating remains a taboo in our society, the man-hater up there with that classic species of yore, the wicked stepmother. So dangerous an idea man-hating that Levine saw fit to change her hardback subtitle from "Man-hating and Ambivalence in Women's Lives," to the more tepid subtitle above. Levine, in a new forward, confessed she dropped the term man-hating because it "blinded" readers and turned them off from reading the book at all, thus defeating her purpose which was, in part, to document the ongoing presence and even salubriousness of man-hating in the post-feminist age.

More revealing and welcome in its honesty is Levine's reversion that while she was pursuing a subject that raised eyebrows and hackles even among her liberal friends, she somehow felt secure from having a finger pointed at herself because she had a boyfriend/partner when she embarked upon the subject and was, thus, immune upon the label that she was a masculine, unfeeling and very unattractive man-hater. What was her downfall, then, when she split up with the boyfriend in the course of her work and had to look at herself as a different, finally, than the woman she was formerly examining with something like clinical detachment. Thank goodness for the reader that she picked herself up, dusted off her own self-conscious fears and con-

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ON THE ISSUES FALL 1993
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ON THE ISSUES FALL 1993
...for the design has allowed for a path going around it, but I walk into the car and stop. You free — a model of the welcoming logo over the entrance to Auschwitz. I decide to enter. There is a choice here, for the design has allowed for a path going around it, but I walk into the car and stop.

Closeness engulfs me, dank air, too small, too small. I then remember that close to 100 people were stuffed into these hells for days and nights at a time, no air, no water, only terror, fear and loss. I think that it must have been spring when some of the Jews were taken — days very much like today. I thought of the birds and the colorful flowers adorning the city that I enjoyed on my way here. Was it like this as they were being herded into the ovens? A beauty made obscene by its natural indifference?

Now another multi-media exhibit. I want to scream to break into the cacophony of pain and terror and add my voice to the "Voices of Auschwitz" exhibit. Eye contact among those sitting to listen to this is futile. It's as if we were caught in the act of listening to the forbidden with our faces pushed up against some closed door. I want to speak to someone — to try, but how do you ever begin to cry for this? "Our heads were shaved" says one voice. I instinctively touch my hair, of which I am so proud and guarded, and I think of the special humiliation of the women in the camps — the particularly female indignities, the removal of the hair — that focus of so much vanity, care and individuality. It's a fitting way to begin the process of female dehumanization, so much so that I hear another voice tell of mothers and sisters standing side by side without recognizing each other. The voices ask "Is that you mother" or call out, "I am sister Anna.

The voices of "executions and suicides" and "medical experiments" are behind high walls to shield them from children. I am looking at pictures of one prisoner after another. They are hanging...
by a noose, usually next to a latrine. A woman with breasts mutilated beyond definition stands in a self-conscious apologetic way. But I am situated with death and violence, made numb by despair, and I find that these photos are not that much more horrible than anything else I have been looking at so far. Will they show me something I haven’t seen—am unable to imagine? There is no escape here and I began to understand the meaning of Freed’s design. The first feelings of resistance gave way to begrudging acceptance—-to despair and resignation.

I leave Auschwitz and enter a room piled high with old leather shoes. They are all shapes and sizes with that smell so particular to leather, and even baby shoes that reminded me of mine that my mother had bronzed. Again I want to touch them.

“We are the shoes—the last witnesses and because we are made of stuff and leather and not of blood and flesh, each one of us avoided the hellfire” read some lines from a poem by Moses Schulstein on the placard next to them.

I have now been here for three hours. I move on. The Wall of Rescuers gives some relief. Here I read about the “Good Germans,” the “Good Poles,” etc., the ones who risked their lives to save the victims and often lost their own in the process.

But there is one last lesson, and this exhibit is the most poignant. Here on a large screen are the survivors giving oral testimony. Here they are trying to put names and definitions to memories that defy understanding.

Here they show their branded arms, interrupt their testimonies with shocked sobbing, and tell stories about the selections, and the mothers killing their just-born babies so that their cries would not alert the guards. Now the sobbing of the video is augmented by the muffled sounds of sobbing from the audience. And only here do I connect to another living being—hesitate to wipe my eyes and our eyes meet in recognition as she hands me one without taking a word.

At the end of the exhibit there is the marble Hall of Remembrance. A six-pointed structure with an eternal flame for “Meditation and Reflection”—there are candles burning all around. I move to fight one but find that I cannot and move away. Fire for sacrifice, fire for remembrance—the reality turned metaphorical—I feel repelled. Perhaps there should be a “Screaming Room” or an “Armen Room” or a room where the external reality would be strong enough to take me out of my head.

If there is indeed radical evil in the world—a phenomenon that exists outside and apart from us, but that can infect us if we let it—then part of its nature must include detachment.

That is a prerequisite to any form of oppression. The Me vs. You, the Us vs. the Not Us and then the Us vs. the Not Us.

According to their literature, the museum’s primary mission is to “inform Americans about this unprecedented tragedy, to remember those who suffered and to inspire visitors to contemplate the moral implications of their choices and responsibilities as citizens in an interdependent world.” The Holocaust Museum achieves this, because in attempting to portray the ultimate, inhuman evil of the Third Reich, it produces an experience opposite—an experience of inclusion, inclusion into the victims, inclusion into the nightmare of the prisoner in the cattle car, the heaped shoes, the toothbrushes, the pathetic remnants of humanity. The museum strives towards empathic connection with the victims, to break the barriers of denial so that we can ask ourselves, what would I have done if I were given choices? Would I have been one of the killers, one of the bystanders? But strangely, at the end I find myself still separated in my mind and heart—a survivor of a different sort.

I think of one of the survivors in the last video. Here is the story he told. He was a prisoner in Auschwitz when he observed another inmate praying in the middle of the day. He asked him “Why are you praying now? It is too late for the morning prayers and too early for the evening prayers.” “I pray to thank God,” came the answer. “What, are you crazy?” “How can you thank God in a place like this?” he asked. And the answer still echoes in me, “I am thanking God that he did not wake me like the murderers around me.”

RAPPING from pg 6

in the hall and the one billion-plus global TV audience were called upon to consider the plight of Haiti, Panama and Tibet by Susan Sarandon, Tim Robbins and Richard Gere, among others. But no one watching the proceedings would
have had any way of knowing that while these “leftists” were doing their “political work,” the streets outside the hall were filled with feminist activists protesting the awards with no support whatever from those on stage.

In fact, while no media report or coverage of the awards ceremony event except for MTV even hinted at this fact, members of WAC (Women's Action Coalition), a national 4400-member organization supposedly supported by the Hollywood Left, were out in good numbers, demonstrating all day (and for weeks before, organizing) against the idiocy I have just described. Indeed, they had called upon the very women prominent in the nominations and ceremonies, as well as the many others who were interviewed by the E! entertainment network (which ran continuous coverage for 24 hours before the event, and substantial promotional coverage at least a week beforehand) to support them. They asked, at the very least, that stars wear a WAC lapel pin symbolizing support of women in the industry.

Well, I looked and looked, and listened and listened, but I did not hear a single word or see a single WAC pin on the likes of any “politically active” Hollywood women seen and interviewed that night. In fact, Jodie Foster, Geena Davis and Susan Sarandon (the only ones whose interviews I heard), bent over backwards NOT to answer questions about the issue. Sarandon, the most visible female politico, was singled out in the mainstream print media as a “pampered celebrity” indulging in fatuous “do-goodism” in the interest of her own “smug, self-satisfied” ego. Yet again, we heard the dangerous right-wing propaganda that equates politics to a yuppie “lifestyle” and warns of “bleeding-heart liberals” running Hollywood. But as angry as I was at the press for pushing such nonsense, I was even angrier at Sarandon and the others. They have so much visibility, so much media access that it is understandable that they define what they define as “politics,” what they single out as a crucial issue (meat eating and fur wearing are very big these days) gets greater attention and acceptance among the American public. And so, the truth about movie industry sexism and about political activism itself—which involves commitment and personal sacrifice, not to mention collective, strategic planning for actual social change—were seriously distorted, to the delight, no doubt, of right-wing misogynists everywhere.

Not surprisingly of course, every celebrity on the Left and Right was wearing the ubiquitous red ribbon in support of people with AIDS, and the Black celebrities added a lavendar one to show they opposed urban violence. So important was it, I suppose, to be unequivocally on the Left and Right was wearing a tale about women, power and politics in Hollywood. While even female corporate executives, public officials and professional women of all kinds network, organize and share information, clout and skills, the women of the Hollywood Left, who are among the wealthiest and most culturally influential in the country, choose to maintain their outrageously token positions at the expense of the thousands of actresses, script "girls," wardrobe workers, secretaries, and would-be directors, writers and producers who serve them.

The truth is that there are about five women—Foster, Sarandon, Davis, Meryl Streep, Glenn Close—who are offered every good role (and they are few and far between) that comes along. To change that fact — to demand better roles, more roles, more opportunity and equity throughout the industry — they would need to organize on behalf of the other women and against the existing order on screen and behind the scenes. And that, it seems, is too risky.

In the wake of this embarrassing attempt to “honor women in film,” and the Hollywood Left's participation in the spectacle, the media were quick to yet again make fun of “political correctness,” activism and progressive people generally. Sarandon, the most visible female politico, was singled out in the mainstream print media as a “pampered celebrity” indulging in fatuous “do-goodism” in the interest of her own “smug, self-satisfied” ego. Yet again, we heard the dangerous right-wing propaganda that equates politics to a yuppie “lifestyle” and warns of “bleeding-heart liberals” running Hollywood. But as angry as I was at the press for pushing such nonsense, I was even angrier at Sarandon and the others. They have so much visibility, so much media access that it is understandable that what they define as “politics,” what they single out as a crucial issue (meat eating and fur wearing are very big these days) gets greater attention and acceptance among the American public. And so, the truth about movie industry sexism and about political activism itself—which involves commitment and personal sacrifice, not to mention collective, strategic planning for actual social change—were seriously distorted, to the delight, no doubt, of right-wing misogynists everywhere.

Elyane Rapping, Professor of Communications at Adelphi University, is the author of The Movie of the Week: Private Stories/Public Events (University of Minnesota Press, 1992). She is writing a book on women, addiction and the recovery movement to be published by Beacon Press next year.

SHOOT 'EM from pg 31

been forced to close as a result of harassment, but Ron Fitzsimmons of the National Coalition of Abortion Providers
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 Neil deMause is a freelance writer and activist living in Brooklyn. He has covered reproductive rights for The Guardian and Z Magazine.

THE GUN from pg 37

when Gunn was killed there. Gunn’s killer had gone to a Rescue America prayer meeting the night before and prayed that Gunn would “see Jesus.” Rescue America had also distributed a “wanted” poster with Gunn’s photo, personal data, and information about what clinics he worked at. Burt admittedly is a former KKK member and has a long history of violence aimed at abortion clinics. In March 1986, Burt, his daughter and two others had stormed into another Pensacola clinic, The Ladies Center, and extensively damaged medical equipment. In May 1988, a Kentucky man drove to Pensacola with a carload of bomb parts with the intention of blowing up The Ladies Center. Burt was later put under two years of house arrest for

People forget that there are little battles being fought all the time on the grassroots level

patchwork of abortion-free zones across the country, fertile ground for obstructionist “waiting period” legislation and for antabortion “crisis pregnancy centers,” which already outnumber real clinics 3 to 1 in the United States.

Legal remedies to the ongoing harassment are limited. Existing laws prohibiting “stalking” can easily run afool of First Amendment barriers and are difficult to enforce, especially if the local judiciary system is predominantly anti-abortion. And most proposed federal legislation such as the recently introduced Freedom to Clinic Entrance Act would handle only blockades, though Fitzsimmons expresses high hopes for the Reproductive Freedom Protection Act, a bill introduced by New York congresswoman Nita Lowey that would cut off funding “waiting period” legislation and for antabortion “crisis pregnancy centers,” which already outnumber real clinics 3 to 1 in the United States.

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driving this man by the clinic. When The Ladies Center, now in a new location, constructed a wooden eight-foot "privacy" fence around two sides of the center, Burt bought a strip of land on the other side of the fence and set up a scaffold. He leads his troops in standing on the scaffold and shouting imprecations and insults down to the women entering the clinic. He has also at times set up a wide-screen TV hooked up to a generator on which he shows antiabortion videos. Just behind the clinic, across a parking lot from Burt's strip of harassment land, is a fake abortion clinic to which Burt tries to direct women coming to The Ladies Center. An assistant administrator at the clinic told me Burt hadn't come around since shortly after Gunn's murder, but the scaffold was still in place, and The Ladies Center anticipates more harassment.

A small bouquet of flowers marks the spot behind Pensacola's other clinic, where Gunn was shot. The clinic's assistant administrator told me that the killer, Michael Griffin, was probably hiding behind a clump of pampas grass when Gunn got out of his car in back of the clinic while Burt and others picketed in front (the first time they'd demonstrated at this clinic). Pensacola Medical Services is in a fairly new shopping and business mall area with well-kept grass, sparkling clean sidewalks and strips of two-story attached offices. It is indicative of the deep rift in society over abortion that Gunn could be shot in such a placid setting.

I learned that the Friday before the murder, other businesses in the mall had received calls "exposing" the clinic. Then a vehicle, which I was told, has since been traced to Burt, backed up to their front door with a bumper sticker which read "Execute Abortionists." A few days later, Gunn was killed.

Clinic staff at both The Ladies Center and Pensacola Medical Services were introduced at the NOW-sponsored May 9 rally held in honor of Gunn and to defend abortion rights. They received thunderous applause from the 3,000 present. This event helped lift some of the repressive weight of prochoice forces there, and while some did not attend out of fear (one musician, for instance, said that some members of his group were afraid to come), for the many present (over half from Pensacola) it signaled a new day of prochoice activism and determination. Slogans such as "Protect and Defend Abortion Providers! Whatever it takes, the Christian Fascists Must Be Stopped!" (carried by the antirepression group Refuse & Resist!) to "I'm Prochoice and I Shoot Back" (worn on a T-shirt by an unidentified woman), indicated a new militancy and determination to take on all who would attack women and the clinics and doctors who serve them.

Mary Lou Oubre, a freelance writer living in New York City, has been active in the women's liberation and reproductive rights movements for over 25 years.

For millions of young women the right to abortion is a cruel joke
In the coded discussion of custody and child-support law, "family" is the code for men's rights. Decoding terminology is a starting point for feminist analysis of family law. When judges, legislators and lobbyists mean women, they say "custodial parent." When they mean men, the code is "family" needs.

Margaret A. Gannon
Oakland, CA

If there is still a link missing in the melodramatic chain of events involving Woody Allen, Mia Farrow and Soon-Yi, it might be found in a rather seminal essay Allen wrote, "Random Reflections of a Second-Rate Mind," which was published in a collection: The Best American Essays 1992, edited by Joyce Carol Oates.

This essay now seems a cognitive dissonant confession in subconscious anticipation of his [custody] trial. Why else would he reveal that the undressing of someone was an exciting act if he was not trying to justify the nude photographs he was supposedly taking of Soon-Yi at that time?

Or why else would he publicize that he had a crush on Lot's wife—a crush which emanated not out of any acts of virtue on her part but, as he says, because she was supposed to be having an extra-marital affair, keeping fully in tempo with the spirit of Sodom and Gomorrah?

L. Siddhartha Ori
Flushing, NY

While I agree with much of Elayne Rapping's insightful essay on the Rachel/Gregory Kingsley and Woody Allen/Mia Farrow cases, I feel it is crucial to point out elisions and conflations in her argument which tend to obscure the truth. Rapping twice uses the word "demonize" — in reference to women — and I see a rather timely irony in that. Although not all of the false claims of child abuse are clouded in the occult, many innocent people are being literally demonized by the growing regularity of "ritual abuse" allegations.

The hapless victims of this purge come in all types. In the name of stopping abuse, and fueled by a paranoia where "anyone" is a likely child bedeviler, constitutional protections are being foreclosed and censorship increasingly imposed. It's as if nonsensational, unepidemic abuse has become too bland for our jaded journalistic palates. Woody Allen may be sexist, looksist, and ageist, he may be more passive-aggressive than Mia, he may be a complete cad, he may even "hate kids." But none of that necessarily, nor even probably, makes him a pedophile or a child molester. Rapping's sole reference to what this case is about (in the banal, legal sense) is to say, "It is here that the thorny matter of incest, emotional and actual, comes in." (Italics mine.) It is beginning to look like Mia Farrow knowingly fabricated the child sexual abuse charges involving their daughter Dylan (who goes entirely unmentioned in Rapping's article). If this is so, I believe Farrow was able to take advantage of an atmosphere of hysteria to discover a daddy under every bed.

According to Richard Wexler in Wounded Innocents, the vast majority of untrue abuse interventions are due to the combined forces of poverty enforcement and foster care mismanagement. This, perhaps somewhat more than rich-white-male privilege per se, was the misfortune of Kingsley and many others like her. Whereas Mr. Allen's sin, it seems, was pissing off his girlfriend, and many others like her.

Carol Reid
Albany, NY

MADONNA — FEMINIST OR PSEUDO?

I especially enjoyed the Spring 1993 articles on Madonna scholarship. Like many feminists, I find Madonna's art to be challenging. I am writing, however, to urge feminist scholars to apply their attention to another media success: Roseanne Arnold.

Arnold, like Madonna, is commercially and financially successful in the mostly-male world of television producing. Like Madonna, she also brings feminist issues to her television programs, and challenges viewers about their usual con-
I just read your magazine — a friend of mine was wonderful enough to share it with me. As counseling coordinator at Women's Medical Center of Nebraska (an abortion clinic) I found your articles on Menstrual Extraction and Russian women absolutely fascinating! Thank you and keep up the good work!

Kelly Greoux
Omaha, NE

12-STEP ALTERNATIVE
I enthusiastically purchased the Spring 1993 On the Issues because I was impressed by the writers represented, as well as by your focus on empowering women's voices. I was not disappointed until I read the review of Charlotte Kasl's book Many Roads, One Journey. That a book of such great import for feminists in recovery was reviewed by a woman who could so thoroughly miss its point does a grave injustice to women who could benefit from the message of the book.

Many Roads, One Journey is not a blanket put down of the 12 steps but an alternative to them. The reactionary tone of the review "red-flagged" me that Kate Gilpin is too invested in 12-step programs to objectively report on a book that challenges them.

Women who buy a "feminist" publication are taking charge in their lives. When Gilpin worries that Kasl's book "may alarm readers who could be helped by a 12-step program," I feel alarmed. If Kasl's central message is that there is more than one "road" to healing from addiction, and no "right" way to heal. She encourages women who are invested in understanding and gaining control over their addictions to also assume control over their healing process. In no way does she try to persuade women for whom the 12 steps feel right to stop using them.

I am currently involved with a number of women whose particular 12-step groups did not meet their needs. We are grateful to Charlotte Kasl for providing us with a blueprint for empowerment, and for encouraging us to "take what you like and leave the rest behind."

Tem Smith
Missoula, MT

CHRISTIANS AND THE "JEWISH QUESTION"
In the article “The White Rose” (Summer 1993), Fred Pelka states: "Hans and Sophie both took solace and inspiration from a Christianity informed by the Anti-Nazi Confessing Church of Dietrich Bonhoeffer..." Not quite.

It's the fashion now for Christian apologists to claim that what was called the "Church Struggle" was some huge battle that right-thinking Christians fought against Nazism. The truth is, that it was basically a lot of deadly bickering between a group of Protestant churches, known as "German Christians," who were almost wholly supportive of the Nazi government's anti-Jewish policies, and the "Confessing Church," part of a larger Evangelical Church which was begun to oppose the "Aryan Paragraph," a law designed to prohibit the baptism of Jews and other non-Aryans.

The German Christian Declaration of Faith of the Confessing Church, written mostly by Karl Barth, says nothing about the "Jewish Question," and the leaders were actually only concerned about Jews who were baptized Christian. They differed from the German Christians who be-
Bonhoeffer himself stated, "The Church of Christ has never lost sight of the thought that the 'chosen people,' who nailed the redeemer of the world to the cross, must bear the curse for its action through a long history of suffering." In his lectures, Bonhoeffer instructed that the Jews were not "real" Christians, but by a group of people who were.

The above information came from a series of articles by Michael Hakeem, Ph.D., professor emeritus of Sociology at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, in Freethought Today, published by the Freedom from Religion Foundation, Box 750, Madison, WI 53701.

Jean Austin
Clinton, LA

NOT A PRETTY PICTURE

Merle Hoffman's "On the Issues" column (Summer 1993) could not have appeared at a better time—at least for me. As a poet attempting to gain greater access on the poetry performance circuit, I had just completed a two-and-a-half hour photography session trying to produce an image suitable to be included in my publicity packet. When the proofs arrived, I let friends and colleagues check them out, wondering if they would pick the photo I loved from the moment I saw it. What I got instead was a tremendously negative reaction to a photo that, I surmise, captured a woman—especially a woman of power. I chose to "boldly show" my face because I want my message to be exceedingly clear—I am a powerful Black woman who writes powerful poetry and I am not a woman to be fucked with.

Thank you, Merle, for acknowledging that women must "define their own images" while coming "into their own definitions of power." I chose to "boldly show" my face because I want my message to be exceedingly clear—I am a powerful Black woman who writes powerful poetry and I am not a woman to be fucked with.

Norine Dworkin is a freelance writer living in New York City.

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