

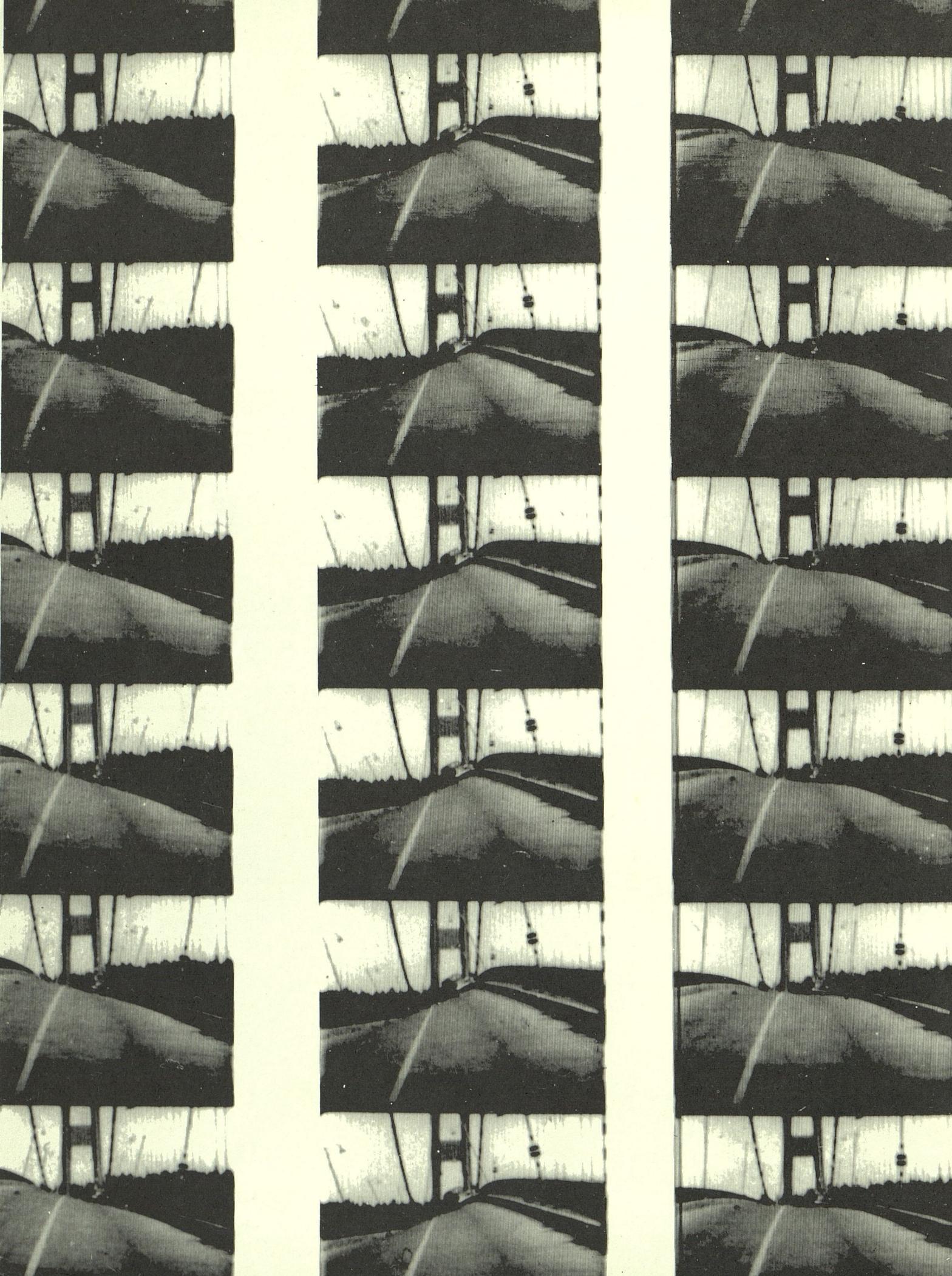
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# HERESIES #6 ON WOMEN AND VIOLENCE

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Liam  
Scott

2/6/79



*Herstory*

We came together almost a year ago to examine violence. We operated as a study group, a work group and a support group. Our individual reasons for joining together to work on this issue included years of involvement in workplace organizing, work with tortured political prisoners in Chile, work with battered women in New York City, three years' work as a whore; to substantiate a psycho-sexual curiosity in violence; being molested and beaten by a father, being raised by working-class communist parents, being lesbian, being Indian in a White supremacist society. And all of us shared a commitment, as women, to the radical restructuring of this society.

Readings and discussions about our individual experiences have helped us clarify the inextricable connection between power, control and privilege: that violence, in its broadest sense, is essential in maintaining any unequal relationship. We were forced to abandon linear notions about the causes, functions and manifestations of violence and to replace them with an understanding that was both multidimensional and itself a process.

In one-to-one relations, most of us at times have felt in control, *powerful*: mothers over children, whores over tricks, females withholding something a male wants. In a larger sense, however, this power is relative. If the laws, jobs, money, and values that affect our lives are determined by men with power, then the personal power we experience as mother, whore or girlfriend is never outside of this context.

Actual power can be elusive, not something you can hold in your hand. Power does not have a life of its own, but is established over and over again through interaction. The power of some individuals, whether a caseworker, a husband or a boss, and some institutions over others is culturally sanctioned and enforced.

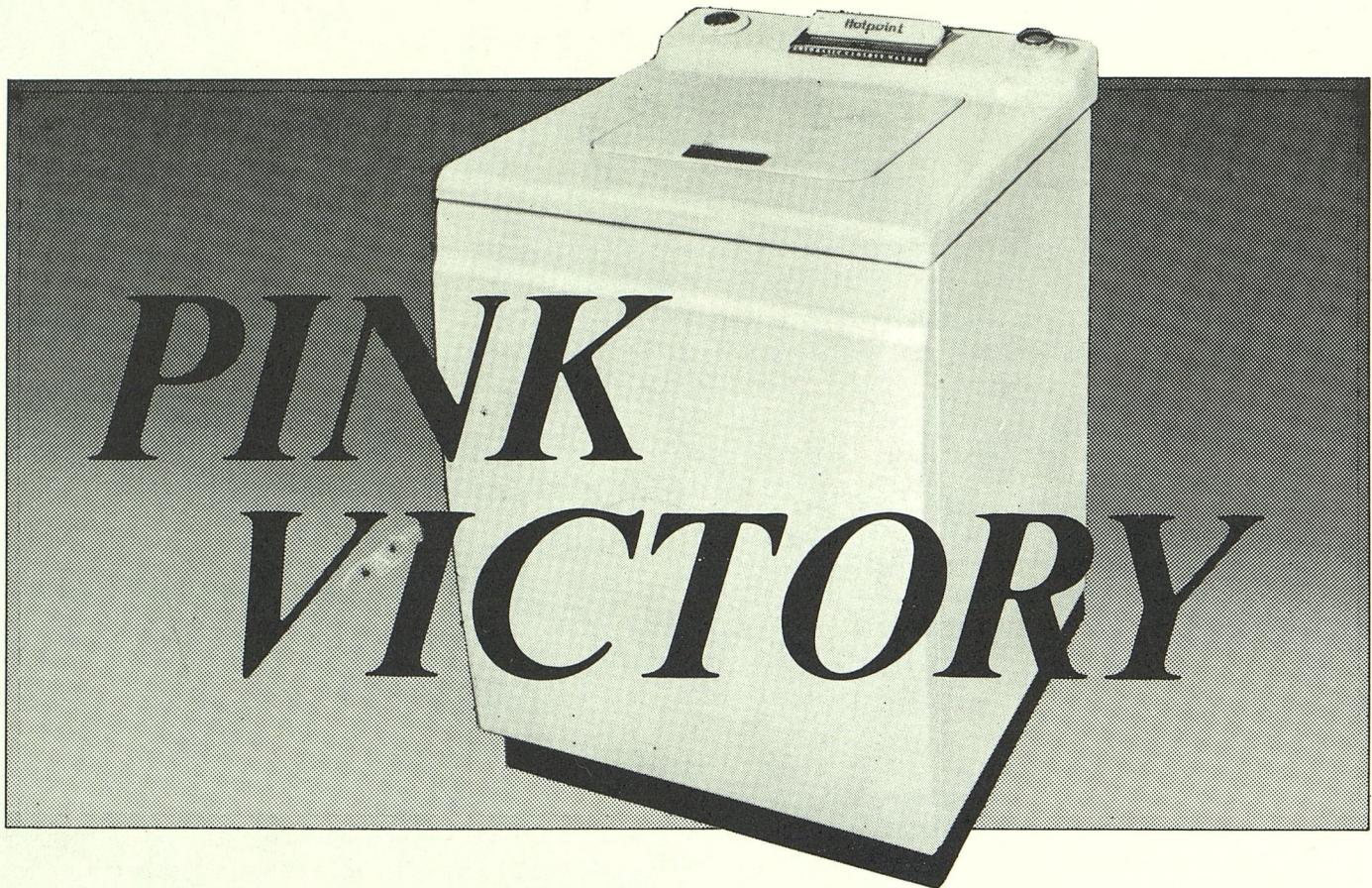
We recognize that violence is woven throughout the fabric of all social structures and that this violence is experienced differently according to cultural, racial, sexual, class, ethnic, age and national identity. Those of us who are poor in a classist society, Third World in a racist society, female in a sexist society, homosexual in a heterosexist society know daily the violence directed at us because of who we are and the importance of uniting along these lines. But to examine class and not race, class and race but not sex, or sex and nothing else, perpetuates our isolation and undercuts the clarity of our analysis and the strength of our united action.

Women have always fought back. We have fought for survival, for change and for revolution. Recognizing and examining our identity as a gender class enables us to challenge one of the most deep-rooted and long-lasting instances of domination: that of men over women.

Feminism takes as a central assumption that women as women are everywhere oppressed. The nature of this oppression may be modified by the particular male-dominated social system that a woman is part of, but as variable as male domination may be, the central feature of the relations between the sexes is differential access to societal resources and expropriation of one group's labor power by another group. So not only are women oppressed by social custom and laws that deny them economic self-sufficiency, political visibility and social status vis-à-vis men, but the labor power of all women (including productive and reproductive) is ultimately under the control of men.

We have been working toward an issue that is more than a documentation of the violence endured by women throughout herstory or a simple collection of individual solutions. We have been working toward an issue that will stimulate debate and contribute to the momentum of women effecting radical change. Within the intersection of gender, violence and power exists one of the keys to understanding oppression and resistance.

—The 6th Issue Collective



# PINK VICTORY

Washing machine went downhill slow, like my marriage. Each time it got worse, I wasn't sure: Hadn't it worked like that before? After all, like me, it was a small machine had to do a big job. No wonder it clanked. No wonder it shook, rattled, and rolled on dry spin, shaking the dishes in my kitchen cupboard like it was ready to send them and me heavenward. Baby Jesus, I'm ready, listen, I'm ready.

The way that machine made a racket, I'm telling you, it scared me sometimes like I scare my kid. Maybe that's why I didn't call the repair company for so long. Knew I wouldn't hurt my kid—that I'd keep feeding and rocking him no matter how mad he made me. Guess I thought the machine had my same mentality: What I mean is, in my idea, it would grumble and holler but it would keep on washing. Or maybe since I knew there was no repairman coming around for me, I felt hopeless in the same way about the machine. Yesterday, though, sun broke out and I called the company.

Now another reason I couldn't believe my machine was breaking so bad: It was practically new. Bought it three months short of two years ago. I was still working but I was pregnant. Bought it on time. Knew I'd need it, what with the kid. And I have given it a working out, I'll tell you, not enough to account for it breaking down so soon, though, don't try that line on me, I don't want to hear it. One thing I

made sure of: I got a guarantee. It was for one year, renewable for one more year, with nothing said about how many washes.

I had a sinking feeling trouble was coming when I called that repair company. First thing, they interrupted my story with, Did I have a contract. I went, You kidding? Of course I have a contract. You think they even bothered to pretend to look for it? Not on your. Right away they went, Sorry, we don't have a guarantee for you on file. I knew there was a reason I hadn't called. They always try that number. I said, Well, I *have* a contract. They said, You got a copy? I said, I'll check my records and hung up fast to keep from saying something nasty. You get mean with the guys on the phone, you're finished, no matter if you got a contract signed in blood.

Thank God for my mother. I'm going to say three extra Hail Mary's for her tonight before I got to bed. See, it's because of my mother that I have records. She was really a case about records. Records and washing machines. Those were her two numbers. I remember one Christmas dad gave her a washing machine. Mom was kid-pleased up until she looked inside and didn't find any guarantee. Her face fell. Old dad, he got mad. He didn't like how she went straight for the evidence. I don't know what he expected. Something rick-dick. He was always wanting her to put on

a happy-happy act. Never did understand how she wasn't phony, how she never put on an act unless she had the goods to back it up, that was one of the best things about mom, but old dad couldn't understand what was good about that. Women were supposed to be phony, how he saw it. That was what they were for. To put a goddamn gloss on life. Which was exactly what she wouldn't do, not anymore than she would shut up about the guarantee, which she needed for her "records."

When old dad didn't come up with it immediately, she started in saying about how he must have lost it, or maybe he bought the machine hot on the street, didn't he know it wasn't worth the money you saved if you didn't get a guarantee, plus having to worry about cops coming to check the registration. Old dad almost slammed her into the washing machine but then he must've remembered how it was Christmas or else he couldn't resist proving her wrong for once. Anyway he pulled the guarantee out of his pocket and waved it in front of her face. Soon as she saw it, she quieted down like a hungry kid's just got a bottle. Thank you, she said, saint sweet. Then she showed me how to file the guarantee in her records. "This guarantee is for five years, honey," she said. "If I should die before five years and the washing machine breaks, you look right in here and get out the guaran-

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# THE VICKI TAPES

**Martine:** Do you find it difficult to use guns? Because you're a girl? Do you feel you need a lot of strength to use them?

**Vicki:** Not really, because since my brothers were *Nomads*, which was before they were *Roman Kings*, they had guns. So the first gun that they had lent to me was a .22. It was small, and my brother, I think it was Ace, told me, "You never shot a gun, right?" and I told him, "No." So he told me, "Come with me up to the roof." He shot and says, "Now is your turn." I didn't know what the hell to do, so I said, "What do I do with this?" "Just do straight," he says, and I shot it. The first time you feel kind of nervous after you shoot a gun because it kicks a lot. From that day on, every time I'd get a gun I'd start shooting on the roof. And that's how I learned. But a big gun isn't easy for me to handle.

**Martine:** Like a .45?

**Vicki:** A .45 gives you a lot of kick. Like a rifle. I couldn't handle that.

**Martine:** How old were you then? When you learned?

**Vicki:** I was small. I was about eleven. But from that day on I have a .32 automatic on me. They're getting it fixed for me now. I always carry it around, especially when I get my check . . . or when I'm coming home alone at night. You know,

somebody is going to jump me and stuff, so I just pull it out. I won't shoot to kill, but I'll shoot them so they know not to fuck around with me no more. That's how I am. But that time, with that girl, I didn't want to take up the gun because I feel, boy, I'll just slap her around a few times and the girl will shut her damned mouth. I don't like to talk when I argue with somebody. I'll swing first. I lost my temper fast . . . even with a guy [laughs]. That's why most of my boyfriends, they left me. I'm serious. It's not that I'm a manhandler but it's the type of thing where I don't like nobody to slap me around. My mother don't hit me. My own mother, she hit me only twice and that was when I was small.

**Martine:** You think guys leave you for that. They can't take it?

**Vicki:** They can't take it because they argued with me—I get mad fast. Especially when they cuss at you, say, "Ah, fuck you" or something like that. And I say, "What?" They don't have to swing at me first because I'll turn around and I'll swing at them and we just fight right there. I know you know I'm not as strong as a man and really they kick my ass, you might as well say. But I've proved to them that when you raise a hand on me, I'm going to raise one back. Because he would lose respect for me just as much as I am losing respect for him. We just fall sliding all over the place until one of us gives up

. . . and most likely he's going to give up because I lost my temper and if I grab their hair, whatever I got, I won't let go.

**Martine:** You are lucky to have brothers teaching you how to fight.

**Vicki:** Yeah. Like when we was the *Young Nomads* they used to put me up to fight with the girls.

**Martine:** For initiation?

**Vicki:** Yeah. If I would lose a fight, they'll make me fight her and fight her until I win. I could be dead on my feet and, boy, they tell me to go ahead and fight, fight until I'm going to get real mad and I'm going to whip her ass. That's how they taught me. Don't be scared of nobody. Especially if they raise their hand to you. So, that's what happened.

**Martine:** And that's why you want to teach your little girl to fight?

**Vicki:** Right. Now she gets real mad. She starts swinging at anybody that's there, whoever bothers her. I teach her. I tell her, "You hit back because they only going to fuck over you if you don't hit back." She's like that. [laughs]. She's like that and I'm like that. But I don't tell her go, go around hitting everybody in the head . . . I just tell her, "When somebody hits you, you hit back. And if they argue with you, you argue with them."

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"I've proved to them that when you raise a hand on me,



"I'm going to raise one back."

## PINK VICTORY

tee." Nowadays guarantees are only for one year, with one renewable. Not much chance I'll die before then unless my ex comes back to finish what he started so I haven't shown my son where I keep my records. Besides, he can't read yet. And what do men need to know about washing machines. They've got women to keep them clean.

Looking for the guarantee, I remembered: They didn't send me the contract back when I sent it in. Did I hold my breath until I found my cancelled check! You better believe. When I found it, I held on tight and called them back. Listen, I said, you guys didn't send me the contract back in the mail. He said, If you don't have a contract, what can I do. I said, Forget that line, I've got my cancelled check. Do you know what he had the nerve to try to get away with? He said, If you cancelled the check, it don't prove anything. I said, *You* cancelled it, smart guy, what are you trying to pull. How much is it for? he said. I told him thirty-seven dollars. He said, Who is it made out to. I read him the name of his own company and his bank too, just for good housekeeping. Sorry lady, he said. Bookkeeper must have slipped up. I'll send a man out tomorrow. Like hell she did, I thought, but I didn't say it. Enough was said already, the way I saw it.

All the same, I was furious. Doing me that way was bad enough, those blow joes, but at least I had records. Listen: Other women in this town didn't have my mother. I bet they even pull that number on the doctor's wife. Only difference is, She's got money so she pays the extra fee, while the women around here they just end up with a broke machine in their kitchens. Then they start decorating it up because what else is it good for and the social workers come and make fun, those player pianos, they've only got about two tunes inside them, and you can't dance to either one.

Well, wouldn't you know it, sun was still out today and the snow was all melted. For the first day in months, I could take my kid out in his stroller, and I had to wait inside for the washing machine repairman. Then I remembered, some of those wishywashies made a law that says the repair places have to tell you if they're coming morning or afternoon and stick to what they tell you or else. So I called the place to find out when the man was com-

ing. You called the wrong number, he grumped the way my husband used to when he had to work Saturdays. My bad moods come on later, when the day starts getting to me, so I apologized and asked for the right number. The guy got all of a sudden kind and said he'd go over and find out what time the man was coming. When he came back, he said, The repairman has five calls before you so it'll be afternoon. So I can stroll my kid this morning? I said to make sure. You heard me, he said. Glad I'm not married to you, I said, and he laughed, gruffy soft, the way that kind of bear-man can be sometimes.

Well, I wished that hadn't happened because all the while I was stuffing my kid into his bunny snowsuit with the white tuftballs on the front and behind, I was feeling that love longing. It's just spring, I told myself, but it kept on. Listen: I don't like that feeling. It's landed me in trouble one time too many. So when the sun had gone under a gray rippled cloud by the time I got my kid downstairs and stuck the bottle in his mouth and the grahamcrackers in his fist and rolled on outside, I was glad. It's a lot easier to stomp out longing when it's gray out. Hey, I said to my kid, sky looks like your diapers the way they come out of the machine nowadays. He spit some milk my way and we set off.



Hardly any good things about the wop slum I live in but one of them is: Wops like good food. For instance, there's a homebake place where they got a long bread with a crunchy top. I got some of that and then I stopped at the butcher too and he'd just finished making that sausage you can only get at Eastertime, the kind that tastes like black jelly beans. Well, I packed my groceries alongside my kid in the stroller and headed back home. About halfway, the sun came out again (inagainoutagainfinnegan, my mom used

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**"This is Black Gold. She's 97. She was the first Black woman wrestler in the U.S.A. They pulled her teeth and made false ones from gold which she wore each time she went in the ring."**



## VICKI TAPES

If they talk back to you, you talk back to them. Just don't let nobody talk about your mother or your father or your family." One thing I don't want anybody calling me is a mother-fucker . . .

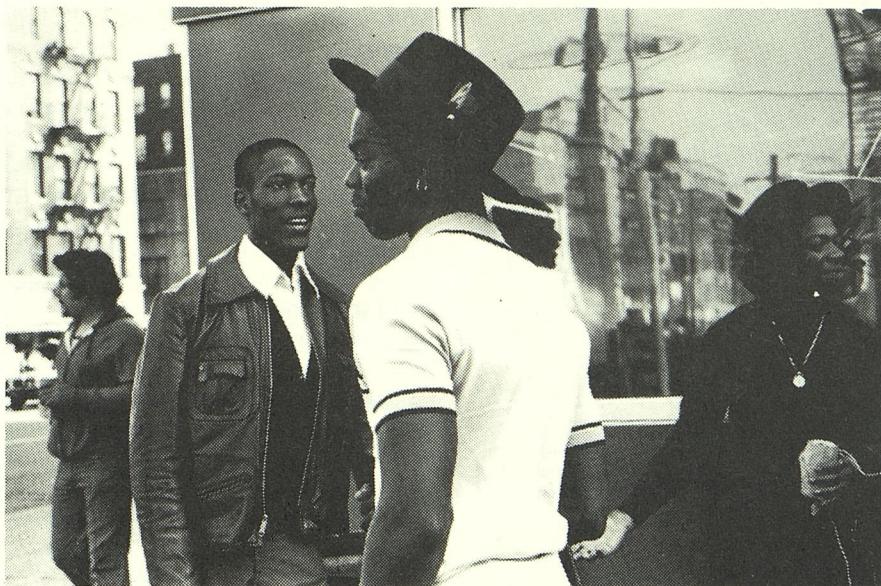
**Martine:** When there are rumbles between cliques, are they between cliques of girls or do they involve the guys?

**Vicki:** It was mostly with guys because there wasn't a lot of trouble with girls. Really and truly.

**Martine:** You think girls fight as much as guys?

**Vicki:** Well, guys fight a lot. Girls don't fight as much. Like if it was all up to them we'll fight. The guys, they got to fight because their prez tells them to fight. But if it was up to us girls, we'd hang-out together. We would like to have a brotherhood. But sometimes it's the girls. I'm the one who started rumbling with the *Immortals* because I have something against that girl from school, Nancy. We fought and then she told the school I pulled out a

**“Roman Kings—Pearl, Bernard, and Billy—on their first day out of jail.”**



**“They wanted me to take pictures of Vickie and the new baby after her Caesarean. Instead when we got to the house they took out their guns and set up pictures they wanted me to take. Baba (the father) was in jail then.”**

knife on her and they threw me out. I couldn't go to school no more so I had something against the *Immortals* because of her.

**Martine:** Um-hum.

**Vicki:** I start messing with her and messing with her until, you know, we rumbled. When I have something against somebody I take it out in one fight. One fight. As long as I get my shit off. After that if she want to talk to me, she talk to me but she could go to hell, too. I tell her, “I was born in this world by myself . . .”

**Vicki:** Yeah, like that girl. I grab her alone and we straightened it out and now me an' her don't have no trouble. I see her. She's in jail right now when I go to see her.

**Martine:** Why is she in jail?

**Vicki:** She was selling drugs. She sold drugs to a cop and now she's facing ten to twenty-five.

**Martine:** Were there many fights with knives and guns at the time you were in school?

**Vicki:** No, just with the hands. No guns or knives, we just fight with the hands. Most of the time that there's fights is because someone don't like you or someone try to take my boyfriend away. So, they fight and scratch each other up.

**Martine:** But you've fought with knives and stuff. Was that outside of school?

**Vicki:** Yeah, outside. That's right. Put it this way, if I was to rumble with somebody, right? Say I wanted to use my hands but before we fight we don't search each other. So, let's say I fight somebody and I beat her up. She ain't going to like that. So she know if she fights with me again, I'm going to beat her up again. So she'll bring something to stab me with or she'll bring a gun and shoot me with it. We don't trust them just like they don't trust us.

**Martine:** So you think that's one of the reasons why kids in the clique carry guns?

**Vicki:** Yeah. That's why. Because we don't trust them. God knows what they going to do when we turn our backs, just like God knows what we going to do when they turn their backs. That's all.

**Martine:** Do you remember when Charlie organized that big meeting with all the

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Black and white reproductions from a series of colored posters by Toni Robertson



## PINK VICTORY

to say) so I stopped by a bus waiting place where there was a patch of light just big enough to warm me and my kid and I sat down on the peeling green bench, tore off a big hunk of bread for myself and a little one for the kid, and we sat there in the sun chewing. These little breezes got to me between the bench slats, you know, and I felt these small human chills. If God ever asked me what I wanted out of life, I'd tell him to feel like a human being all the time. He probably wouldn't like that. Doesn't seem like a whole lot to ask, though, does it? I mean when you think of all the things I could ask for. Doesn't seem like the kind of wish you get turned into a fish for.

Well, it was getting late, so I started back. Noticed my kid was looking behind us, so I looked too: The sidewalks were all dry, you know, pale dry, and hardly any people had walked yet, so you could see these clear dark footprints caused by me walking in a puddle and then stepping on the dry walk and there were stroller tracks too and it was like we had had an effect, my kid and me, and it was like our path behind us and my kid was smiling and so was I. We went most of the way home like that, going forward but looking back. I felt like a kid in the back seat watching the road, you know. I wanted to drive then so bad. I never did know when I had it good, still don't, and I felt that longing again, and I wished my husband back so bad, lying on top of the white chenille spread, in the sunlight, that time of spring when the light goes from white to yellow, the whole room smelling of thesex that was all we did in those days. We never fought. All the time we were going out we never fought. The slapping didn't start until we got married, and then when I got pregnant it was all over. He acted like I was a punching bag and I told him, Cut it out or get out. It was his fault anyway I got pregnant. He wouldn't let me use anything. Well, it wasn't his fault entirely. I let him be that way. Listen: I loved him better than myself. But not better than my kid. It was for my kid I told him, Cut it out or get out. Listen: You probably think I asked for it, the way I've been shooting off at the mouth but I didn't. I was too scared to talk out in those days. It's only since I've been on my own with my kid to fend for I've gotten so tough talking. I figure, Things can't get any worse. I might as well speak my mind.

Time we got home, my kid was crabby.

At the door, this repairman was punching the doorbell like he thought it would let him in if he hit it hard enough, an attitude I am all too familiar with. All too. The name of the washing machine repair company was embroidered in shiny red thread on his blue hat and shirt so I knew it was him. I greeted him real friendly even though he was early. He didn't return the courtesy. He says, Where the hell have you been? I'm going to have to charge you extra for waiting. Well, I remembered how they acted about my contract on the phone and what that meant for all the women who didn't have my mother and I tell you my Irish started going up. I said, Listen, there's a law that says you people have to say whether you're coming morning or afternoon and I called and they said afternoon so you better shut up about charging extra or I'm reporting you to the Better Business. Now, I know the Better Business isn't worth shit, but I wanted to give him the idea to be scared of me. Sometimes they quiet right down when you go at them like that, but not this one. He was so perumpety you'd think he was trained by the power company. Only thing shuts him up is my kid starts in howling. My kid is like a dog almost, the way he picks out meanness. I say, You stay outside while I put my kid in for a nap, okay? He says, If you don't let me in now, I'm not fixing your machine. I said, Listen, I can't watch you while I'm putting my kid in. I'm not going to steal nothing, he said. I said, I know, but if I let you stand around and anything goes wrong, my husband will kill me, you know what I mean?

What can you do? With men, lies work a lot better than the truth. He tamped himself down and hung around the doorway while I stuck my kid in bed and gave him a bottle. Then I went out and let the washing machine man in, thinking: You know, this isn't so great. I protected my belongings but who's going to protect me. He was a short, stumpy man, kind that keeps hair growing stubby on his face to remind you he's a *man* because he's so small otherwise you might not treat him with proper respect. Course, when you treat them with proper respect, you don't get any bonus back except maybe they aren't quite as lousy as they would be otherwise, but you don't know that because they're so lousy already it's hard to imagine them worse. One thing for sure: You don't keep them around long enough for a comparison, not unless you're married to them.

Think he asked me any questions about

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## VICKI TAPES

cliques after Benji got killed? To try to get them together so they wouldn't fight anymore?

**Vicki:** I was upstate at the time. I heard about it. By the time I got back everything passed and everybody was walking the streets again. All the cliques.

**Martine:** You're a leader of a clique, too. Did you ever think about getting all the cliques together?

**Vicki:** Yeah. I tried to do that a lot. I would talk to my girls and tell them we should get all the cliques and the girls together. You know, make truce and then throw parties. It would be nice having all

the girls coming down to a party and shit. But it could never happen that way. Because of the guys . . .

**Martine:** You know, Vicki, you were telling me about the Outlaw Marriages in the cliques. You told me that the girl who gets married in certain cliques has to get down with all the guys in the clique. Do you feel that the girls feel like that is like being raped?

**Vicki:** I feel that they do, yeah. It's just like rape. When a girl has to get down with all of them. I wouldn't do that. I couldn't walk in the street proud. They

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## PINK VICTORY

what was wrong with that machine? Fat chance. He was the kind of a man doesn't think women know anything. He started right in fiddling with it, ignoring me completely. Well, that got my goat. I am a specialist in what's wrong with that machine. I've got two years' experience. I said, Don't you want to know what's wrong with it? (You big lunk, I almost added; tell the truth, he reminded me so much of my ex, it was all I could do to keep myself from talking to him that same old way; might've in fact, except I didn't want him slapping me across the room, bad enough when your own husband does it, let alone a stranger.) What's wrong with it? he said, real sarcastic. I told him best I could about how it goes on different cycles than the dial says and it jerks around the wash so much acts like it wants to kill it instead of just clean it and when it goes on dry spin it bangs around something awful. Unplugged itself last week. (A lot like my marriage, that machine. A lot like everything in my life, that machine. Good thing I'm not superstitious.) You finished? he said. I nodded. He opened the machine. Half my last week's wash was still in there stinking. I didn't know what else to do with it. You got this wash in wrong, he said. It wasn't like that before, I said. I wanted to leave the scene of the crime exactly as it was, but my kid had to have some clean clothes so I've been taking stuff out piece by piece, rinsing them myself and drying them on the radiators. The clothes were even before. Honest. You got this wash in wrong, he said again in exactly the same tone. I got it, I thought. You're that kind of man can't even hear a woman talking. So I shut my mouth and backed up.

Next thing I know he's throwing wet stinking clothes at my belly. Thanks a lot, I say, catching some socks and gray diapers. He doesn't do all the clothes like that, just enough to get me wet, then he hooks the washer to the sink and starts turning it off and on. Next he whips a kitchen knife out of his tool belt and uses it to press some button that isn't in the instructions and it lets water out. Then he takes the dial off, then he lets some more water out with the kitchen knife, then he puts the dial back on and says it's all right. Yeah? I said. Show me. He puts it on spin and water starts going in. It's not all right, I say. Water's supposed to be going out not in. This machine's mixed up. So he

opens the top of the washer, not the top that usually opens but the whole top, and he fiddles with something, I don't know what, I'm too horrified by how dirty the machine is outside and I'm grabbing for my sponge and starting to clean. That's the only time he looks nice at me the whole visit. Then he spins the dial again and takes it off and puts it on again and sets it on rinse and pushes with his knife and lets out the water and then he says it again: It's all right. You're going to have to show me, I said. He's not happy but he puts it on spin and it makes a peculiar noise but it spins all right and hardly any new water goes in but some does and I say, More water is going in and he makes up some cock and bull story about how that always happens and I make him run it all the way through spin and it gets to the end and in this real ass-in-your-nose fashion, he says, Satisfied? Well, I'm not and I say, We'll see how it works in real life. He says, Yeah? It doesn't work in real life, you're in real trouble. I say, What're you talking about? He says, I'll tell you what went wrong here. I say, So tell me. He says, You took this dial off and put it back on wrong. I said, I didn't take no dial off. He said, *He* took this dial off and when he put it back on wrong that was the problem. I said, He? Who's . . . and then I remembered I couldn't say I didn't have a husband because I already said I did have one so I changed it to, My husband's always out with his shit girlfriends, fat chance he'd lay a hand on my washing machine.

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## VICKI TAPES

guys will be saying, "Oh, I got to her. She was a good piece." I can't stand that. I think a good man is the type that will make love to a woman and won't talk about it to nobody. It's his personal thing. The thing he should keep inside. A man that lays with a woman and then tells every guy, "Oh, I lay with that girl, she's a good fuck," he's bad. That make you feel like a piece of shit on the floor.

**Martine:** You think that will change one day?

**Vicki:** Yeah. It will change. Like now. Most of the cliques ain't that way. I got married Outlaw. We don't do that in the *Roman Kings*. We get married and say the things that they say in church.

**Martine:** Can you describe the marriage to me because I've never been to one?

**Vicki:** Well, the *Roman Queens* are on one side and the *Kings* on their side and everybody flies their colors. We're clean. We're never dirty. You know, we have our dungarees, our tee shirt, our jackets with the colors on it and our boots. The guys have on their Outlaw pants, a tee shirt, all their colors. Their hats, whatever. And their M.C.'s. And the girls are on one side and all the guys on the other side and we get in the middle. Me and him. Well, when I got married to Baba, his twin brother got married too. So it was me and Baba and in the back of us was

### "Uncle of Jennifer on the street."





**“This Maria and Blood. She is so beautiful. Blood is a King. His brother was shot by the police.”**

Batusi and Marlene. Behind them was the bridesmaid and the . . . what you call . . . best man. They was in back of us and then we walked down the aisle. You might as well say the aisle. We walked down there. Like in a church. The guy that married us was Husky Pekiching. So we walked up to him. We stand there because it was like a double wedding. And Husky was there telling us, “I now pronounce you man and wife,” like all the things that they say in church.

**Martine:** Because you were a bride did you wear something different?

**Vicki:** No, we all had colors on.

**Martine:** Did he hold a book like a priest or something?

**Vicki:** Huh? Oh, yeah.

**Martine:** What kind of book?

**Vicki:** Let me see. It was a Bible. He was holding in his hands. We even had rings. You know, I’m no saying expensive wedding rings but they was real Sterling. Anyway he say, “Kiss your bride and put the ring on the finger,” and it was just like a real church. Except that afterwards, instead of throwing rice like they do in church, they’re pouring beer all over us. While we’re walking down the aisle. Three quarts.

**Martine:** Did you sing?

**Vicki:** No. But the *Roman Kings* they buy beer and they get us real high and then we’re allowed to stay in the club. The club

was our apartment for three days. It’s in this wrecked building. It was our honeymoon. We stayed there for three days . . . without coming out [laughs]. If the *Roman Kings* would have seen us out before three days they would have sent us back in. Yeah.

**Martine:** The two couples?

**Vicki:** Huh?

**Martine:** You were four people having a honeymoon in that apartment?

**Vicki:** Yeah. There was two rooms, yeah [laughs]. There was two rooms. And we have fun [laughs].

**Martine:** Did you cook?

**Vicki:** Yeah.

**Martine:** And love?

**Vicki:** Yeah [laughs].

**Martine:** And care for each other?

**Vicki:** Yep. And from that day on, this happened four months ago, we’re still together.

**Martine:** And where was your little girl?

**Vicki:** Huh? My little girl? My mother was with her. I told me mother about it. She didn’t say nothing. My mother would take care of her and take her outside.

**Martine:** Did your mother come to your wedding?

**Vicki:** Are you crazy?

**Martine:** There were no parents?

**Vicki:** No, just us. But I feel it was nice, you know, because I’ve been raised by gangs. So to me it was nice. It was very nice . . .

**Martine:** You were telling me about your sister who got raped in your building. What happened?

**Vicki:** Well, she was going to school and she forgot her wallet. She came back up and this guy was in the elevator with her. They’re friends so they was talking to each other. When they got to his floor he pushed her out and then he raped her right there. She stayed in her room after that. She didn’t want to talk to nobody. She didn’t want to tell nobody until long after. She told me. I told my mother. And till this day he still lives in the building. My sister, she always remember that. Right now she’s living with her husband and when she has sexual, you know, intercourse with him she thinks of that and that fucks her up. But at least she told him. She told him what happened to her and he don’t blame her. He knows what’s happening. Some guys sooner or later get rough with you when that’s happened but he takes care of her. He knows what she went through. Now they’re all right. The rest of the rapes ain’t around here. They’re a few blocks down . . . on Fox Street. I never heard of none around here.

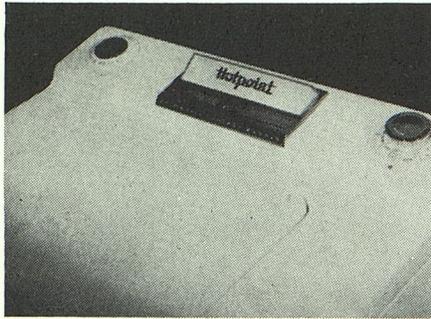
**Martine:** There are a lot of abandoned buildings there?

*(continued on page 10)*

# PINK VICTORY

I thought this would get some sympathy out of him, but you know what my mother used to say: You can't get sympathy out of a stone. Next he blames my kid. Then he makes me sign a receipt and then he says, I don't care who did it, happens again, you pay. We aren't making free service calls when it's the customer's fault. Free service calls? I said. Listen: I paid \$37 for that crummy contract that you people are dodging and I haven't called you once in a year. He said, you took that dial off and that's what I'm writing in my report. Well, I got furious. He was heading for the door. I was hollering. Creep, thinking he could scare me with his big-man report. Fat chance. Well, I'm writing in *my* report, I said, that's going to the Better Business and to the company that franchises your company and to the newspaper, that your company lies and that you came in here and were rude to me and insulted my husband and called my kid a destroyer . . .

Well, water starts coming out of me when it shouldn't, same way it comes out of the machine. Meanwhile, he pockets the receipt and takes off. I breathe twice and start making up the letter in my mind and all the people I'm going to carbon in and then I remember I don't have his name or a receipt either so I go out in the street and run to catch up with him and I can hear my kid crying from the bedroom and I yell, What is your name? and he says, I don't have to tell you my name, and I say, Yes, you do, you work for a crummy company tries to gyp people but you do have to tell me your name. He kept on walking stone silent. I could have killed that jerk, I mean it. And I yelled, TELL ME YOUR NAME. He looked around to see if anyone on the street was going to attack him on my behalf, fat chance, but he didn't know that and he gave up half his name. He said, Bill. Well, this cool happy chill went right through me along with the words from that song, my kid sister used to sing it to me when I was practically still a baby, that just plain bill song, you know that song. I almost lost it thanks to that song, but I got it back and remembered his last name was on the receipt so I said, Give me the receipt. And he said, You don't get no receipt. And I said, Yes, I do, yes, I do. Give me my receipt. And he pulled the receipt he'd waved in my face before when he was going to give *me* a bad report and



he tore a copy off from under the carbon paper and I thought for a minute he was going to punch it into my mouth the way he punched at that doorbell but he didn't, he let go of it, and he got in his truck and drove off and I watched him and all the time I clutched the receipt in my hand and when he was gone, I looked at it, and it was pink, baby girl pink.

But I won you know, anyway, I won.

When I go to sleep tonight, I'm going to think about that instead of thinking about my ex on a chenille spread, and I'm going to think about him going home at five o'clock and hitting his wife because maybe she cooked something he doesn't like and then after he's had some beers and cooled off he'll go upstairs where she's lying in bed feeling sorry for herself, watching TV, and he'll say he's sorry, honey, and see he had this bad day, some crazy woman tried to cheat his company and was yelling at him in the street, and she'll pat his shoulder and say, It's all right, snooks, she knows how he feels, he works so hard for her and the kids, and he shouldn't take so much to heart. To heart! As if he had a heart. And then I guess they'll "make love," what a joke, and I'll go to sleep. I wonder who'll have worse dreams, her, or him? Not me, that's for sure.

Tomorrow, if the sun's out again, I'm going to take the kid to the store and get me a frame for that pink slip, and if anybody asks me why it's hanging on my bedroom wall, like that social worker, for instance, who's always snooping around trying to find out that I'm committing adultery so she can throw me off ADC, I'm going to tell her it's a symbol of my victory. I don't care either if she writes maybe I'm making it with a washing machine repair man. She can't prove anything because there's nothing to prove. I don't care if she does throw me off either. My kid's almost old enough to go to day-care. I can go to work. I can do almost anything. Listen: I got something out of a man he didn't want to give.

—Sharon Thompson

# VICKI TAPES

**Vicki:** Yeah. Most of Fox Street is abandoned. The buildings are standing up by surprise. The gangs go there and forget it. First they use the basement and from the basement they move up and up and up. Then they have the whole building. In a few months the whole building is condemned.

**Martine:** Like after a war. Your mother and people who live in places like that call those places "Korea." Do you think it's getting worse?

**Vicki:** Oh, it's getting worser and worser. I've been living here for about eleven years. Since I was small. I seen buildings that just get put up and then I seen them get knocked down. I seen this place we live in when it was pretty. Yeah, pretty. When there was nice pretty buildings all over and now that I'm older they're not pretty anymore. When it was first built it was nice. Locks on the door in the front of the building and everything. But now it's all knocked down. I remember when that store [down the street] was built. They knocked it down. They ain't nothing there no more. There was a movie house up here. Right up the block but it burned down. It ain't a movie no more. People that are very close to me moved away because of the neighborhood and things like that. But you got to live through it because everywhere you go people are going to move away. There's going to be trouble no matter, where you are. Trouble always follows. Like I got a friend that died. She was close to me. Her name was Edna. She was going out with my brother and she ran away with him for a while. Her mother brang her back home and she was working. As a matter of fact she was working down Kelly Street where she died. They shot her four times in the back and she's dead.

"Vickie's daughter Jennifer."



AUGUST 2nd

I am frightened by large men—muscles, or possibly it is fat, the men who make noises at women to prove that they are men.

I am frightened by these seemingly strong hunks—but whose strength is spent at proving themselves thru Women.

I am frightened of these men in reality and abstract alike.

It frightens me: their size, their hatred, their lack of love or passion, their absence of spirit.

But . . . then I realize, the substance or glue that holds them together, that is responsible for their looming presence in my mind—is my fear.

They are really no more than hollow shapes—kept intact and in the dark shadows I see at night—by women's fears.

For every woman who overcomes her fears— one of these men dies. Their comrades secretly attend the burial. Secretly.

That is how they reproduce themselves— making women frightened. That is their birthing process. Delivered by all mankind.

Doctored by fear. Nursed by women's fear of men.

Women's silent scream of terror and fear is their scream of life.

So the world screams alike. Silently.

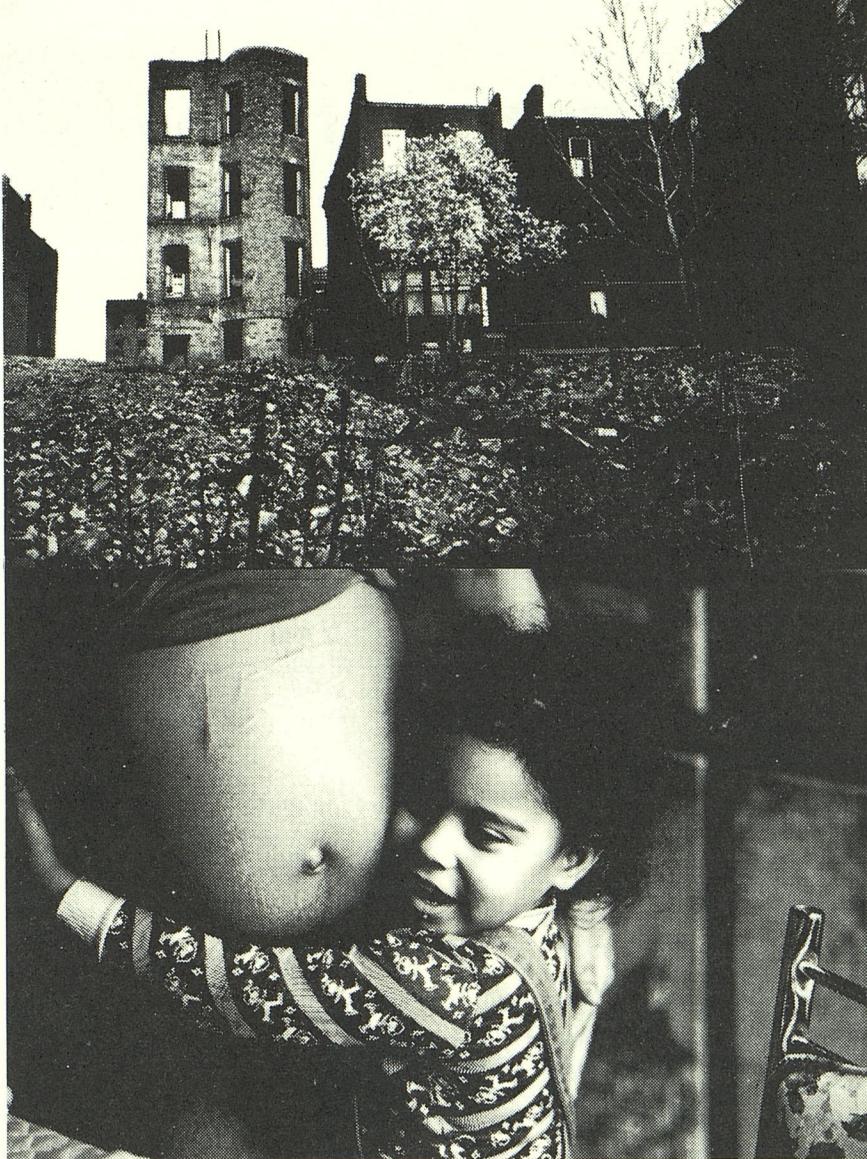
Women, by overcoming their fears, will take the glue (that holds these men together) away.

far far far far away.

And yet . . . I'm still frightened— even though I think I understand.

Give me the strength to become stronger—so I too can overcome my fear, then there will be one less. Of them.

--Lou McDonald



**Martine:** Who shot her?

**Vicki:** We don't know who shot her. They said she look like another girl that they had a contract out on and they shot her four times in the back with a .38. She was in a different gang but she was close to me. Very close to me. When she died I felt it for a long time. I wouldn't be as happy as I was. I wouldn't talk a lot. I'd just stay to myself and sit alone. I felt like I lost one of my family when she died. I went to her funeral. I used to go down there to New Jersey and look at the grave. Now there's nothing. Just her name. But she was only fourteen when she died. Fourteen. Every time four days before my birthday I think about her. I just get real high and drunk. I try to forget about it because if I keep on thinking about it it would be worse for me. That girl. I'll never forget. They thought she was another girl. They shot her because they thought she was the other girl. They shot her. We still don't know who it was . . .

**Martine:** Do you think of moving out when you get older?

**Vicki:** Sometime. But in a way I can't move because I was raised here so I'm always going to come back. Either I'm going to come back to look at the place or I'm going to come back and wind up living down here. I'm never going to leave the place because I'm used to it. I'm used to one place and if I go to another I'm not going to get used to it. I love this place no matter how fucked up it looks. I was born here and raised here and I guess I'm going to stay here. Ain't nobody and no one going to stop me from doing what I want to do. If your mind is set up to do something, you going to do it. I guess if I'm going to become something or if I'm going to get fucked up I don't have to go out of state to do it. This is the South Bronx and you take it the way it is. When you come down here you got to live it.

—Excerpted from *Vicki*, a videotape by **Martine Barrat**

# with no immediate cause

every 3 minutes a woman is beaten  
every five minutes a  
woman is raped/every ten minutes  
a lil girl is molested  
yet i rode the subway today  
i sat next to an old man who  
may have beaten his old wife  
3 minutes ago or 3 days/30 years ago  
he might have sodomized his  
daughter but I sat there  
cuz the young men on the train  
might beat some young women  
later in the day or tomorrow  
i might not shut my door fast  
enuf push hard enuf  
every 3 minutes it happens  
some woman's innocence  
rushes to her cheeks/  
pours from her mouth  
like the betsy wetsy dolls have been torn  
apart/ their mouths  
menses red & split/ every  
three minutes a shoulder  
is jammed through plaster &  
the oven door/  
chairs push thru the rib cage/  
hot water or  
boiling sperm decorate her body  
i rode the subway today  
& bought a paper from an  
east indian man who might  
have held his old lady onto  
a hot pressing iron/ i dnt know  
maybe he catches lil girls in the  
park & rips open their behinds

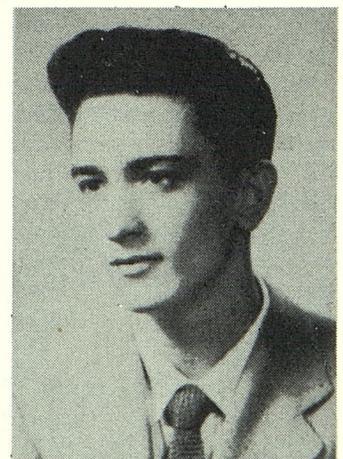
with steel rods/ i cdnt decide  
what he might have done i only  
know every 3 minutes  
every 5 minutes every 10 minutes  
i bought the paper  
looking for the announcement  
there has to be an announcement  
of the women's bodies found  
yesterday the missing little girl  
i sat in a restaurant with my  
paper looking for the announcement  
a yng man served me coffee  
i wondered did he pour the boiling  
coffee on the woman cuz she waz stupid  
did he put the infant girl in  
the coffee pot cuz she cried too much  
what exactly did he do with hot coffee  
i looked for the announcement  
the discovery of the dismembered  
woman's body the  
victims have not all been  
identified today they are  
naked & dead/ some refuse to  
testify one girl out of 10's not  
coherent/ i took the coffee  
& spit it up i found an  
announcement/ not the women's  
bloated body in the river floating  
not the child bleeding in the  
59th street corridor/ not the baby  
broken on the floor/

"there is some concern  
that alleged battered women  
might start to murder their  
husbands & lovers with no  
immediate cause"

i spit up i vomit i am screaming  
we all have immediate cause  
every 3 minutes  
every 5 minutes  
every 10 minutes  
every day  
women's bodies are found  
in alleys & bedrooms/  
at the top of the stairs  
before i ride the subway/  
buy a paper or drink  
coffee from yr hands i must know  
have you hurt a woman today  
did you beat a woman today  
throw a child cross a room  
are the lil girl's pants  
in yr pocket  
did you hurt a woman today  
i have to ask these obscene questions  
i must know you see  
the authorities require us to  
establish  
immediate cause

every three minutes  
every five minutes  
every ten minutes  
every day

—Ntozake Shange



# Editorial

There are a number of traditional ways of explaining violence in human culture. The perspective on violence is usually congruent with a set of beliefs about the sources of human motivation and behavior. The argument has often been drawn along the Nature/Nurture divide, with biology and culture placed in opposition to each other. We need to question explanations based on erroneous assumptions and explanations which cannot account for the male use of violence against women in specific historical periods and social contexts. We need to be critical of simple answers whether they are presented by male scientists or feminist authors. The stance of a self-reflective movement requires a careful evaluation of answers that mask ideology or refuse to include counter-examples, including the ways in which women participate in violence and oppression. Locating the cause of violence within biology, socialization or a violent society posits the cure for that violence within its own terms. Biological explanations demand biological treatment. Implicit in all theories of causation are the appropriate remedies or "cures." There are three broad theories about the causes of violence.

1) *Biological Explanations*—Socio-biology, a newer version of biological determinism, seeks to explain human behavior as the result of complex interaction between genes, drives and instincts and social environment. In this view, based on

hormonal differences, male aggression and violence is inevitable and natural: "boys will be boys." The only appropriate treatment is short-circuiting these drives by lobotomies, physical or chemical castration or a eugenics program that will breed gentler men. Some women would dispense with men altogether and institute a program of parthenogenesis. Similarly, those who attempt to explain women's subordination as a result of physiological differences in strength offer a biological determinist argument. This view reinforces the status quo, as violence is seen to be inherent in the human race.

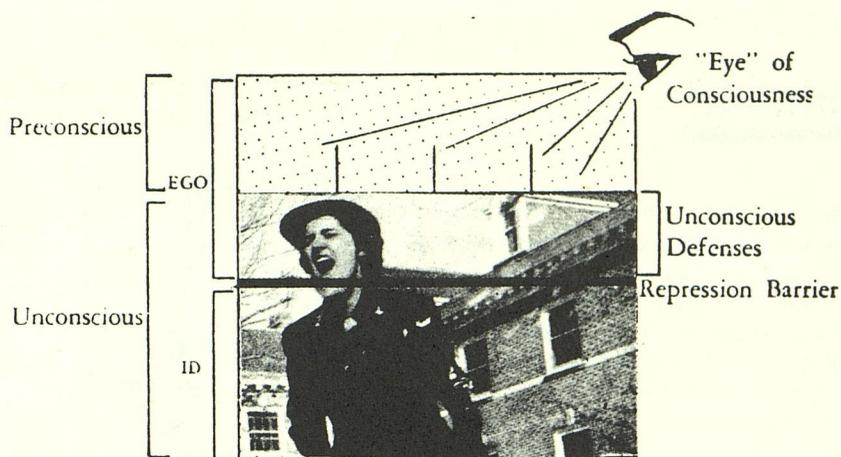
2) *Psychological Explanations* — Here violence is not seen as a species problem but an individual problem. Usually violence against women is termed an illness or pathology, an unfortunate deviation from "normal" male behavior. While some psychologists might believe it is *natural* for men to be aggressive and violent, some forms of violence are "sick," like rape and child molestation. The choice of

treatment depends upon whether the violence is seen to be deeply embedded in the unconscious during childhood or the result of learning inappropriate behavior.

If the key to male violence is to be found in the unconscious then only an examination of intrapsychic structures can explain its occurrence. This model claims that the Unconscious is basically unbounded by history or culture, though influenced by socio-economic factors. Unconscious structures are seen to be universal and as deeply embedded as language.

Many psychologists who do therapy with sexual aggressives, a clinical name for rapists and wife abusers, endorse behavior modification therapy. They believe that violence and aggressive sexuality are learned. The goal of treatment involves unlearning and relearning new modes of communication. Some programs teach volunteer rapists (those that are not in prison) how to have better heterosocial

(continued on page 14)



—Cynthia Carr



# Editorial

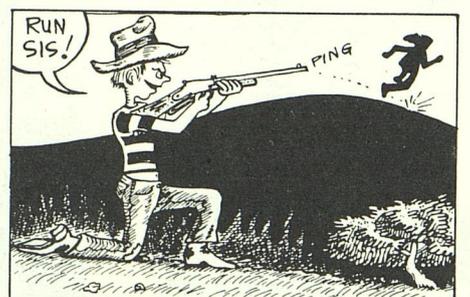
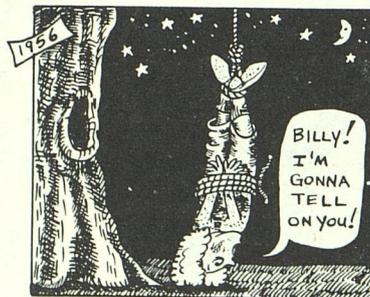
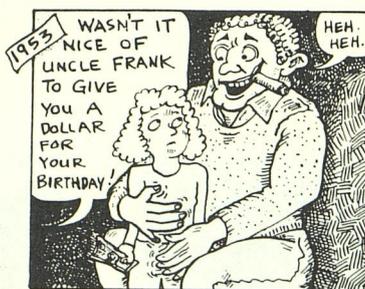
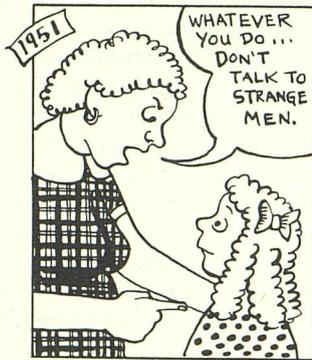
skills; the contention being that these men are often not assertive with women and fear rejection. Family therapists teach husbands new ways of communicating their anger to their wives . . . slamming a book on the table instead of hitting her, and wives are instructed in "negotiating" procedures. In this way their deviant behavior will be brought into line with that of "normal" men. Questions of power differences between husbands and wives in the family and men and women in society are ignored, as well as traditional sex role definitions.

3) *Sociological Explanations*—Here behavior is not simply a result of human nature but is primarily conditioned by the environment. Violence is not an irrational phenomenon, nor is it an individual problem (though it is experienced individually). Violence has a social function; as a resource to be implemented when other resources are lacking. It is often seen as a last resort, to be called into play when power and authority are threatened, as in the case of the State quelling revolts or rebellions. Violence can also be used as an interpersonal resource by individuals when others means of exercising control are blocked or lacking. This view interprets violence against women in the home as a husband's reaction to his questioned authority in the household. Women are often beaten when they are pregnant and also during periods of economic instability. It is assumed that violence can be used to buttress male status in the family and the community. If men rape women, if they terrorize us in our homes and harass us on the street it is because men are utilizing a behavior (privilege) that is available to them as men, social beings operating *within* the rules of a culture. Is violence the backlash of a threatened power-holder?

Another social explanation is that violence is the symptom of alienation. Men as workers are frustrated because conditions of labor are exploitative and social relations demeaning. The ultimate cause of violence then is an alienating social life under capitalism. This theory does not account for the direction of the violence by class, race and gender, nor does it explain male violence in non-capitalist societies. Certainly the social conditions facing women under capitalism are as frustra-

(continued on page 15)

## The Evolution of a Violent Act



ting. Women are socially and physically confined; our mobility, our life choices and life chances do not instill in us a sense of security or safety. We are paid less wages, have worse working conditions and do a double day. Yet we do not molest or rape men. Whatever the cause of frustration, be it shaky male privilege or alienation, neither view relates frustration/aggression theory to an analysis of gender relations. Violence is always related to the structure of power.

What most approaches to male violence share is the belief that sexual coercion and physical violation are somehow non-rational or uncontrollable. Pent-up frustration, whether it is sexual or political, must find its release. Women become the sacrificial victims as men work out 1. their alienation 2. their gender inadequacies 3. their inappropriate role modeling or 4. their instinctual drives.

Women, like colonized people, must decide how to approach the complex relationship between the system of male domination and individual men. We have found that our discussions about the function of violence in society often foundered on questions of assigning responsibility. Is the individual colonizer the enemy or the system that requires colonization for its survival? Are individual men the enemy or the system that requires male domination? If colonialism serves the interests of all colonials, then does male supremacy serve the interests of all men?

Theories abstract from the experience of women's daily lives to symbols and systems of asymmetrical power relations. Women who are daily fighting for survival, who are raped, sexually harassed on the job, tranquilized into passivity, and beaten cannot afford to make abstract theories. Merely blaming the system does not resolve the issue of individual responsibility nor does it expand the analysis of social responsibility. One need not be substituted for the other, but alone they are incomplete, disparate elements in the unfolding of patriarchal control.



# POLITICS OF IN PRIMITIVE

Although anthropology has contributed much important work on the status of women in non-state as well as state level societies, there remains the problem of interpreting what appears to be a universal asymmetry between sexes (Stack et al., 1975; Reiter, 1975). Questions of women's power and/or powerlessness vis-à-vis men have not been sufficiently addressed (Webster, 1975). One way in which our understanding of sexual politics has been limited, and even distorted, is by the omission of behavior that cannot be comfortably fitted into current theoretical models. I would like to suggest that violence against women (from wife-beating to gang rape) must be included in any general analysis of women's status in society. Models which ignore or minimize the significance of physical force used against women will have to be reformulated, refined, or discarded. To begin this process of "revision" I will discuss the theoretical implication of rape in so-called "egalitarian" societies. I would like to suggest that the egalitarian model has obscured the fundamentally unequal position of women in "primitive" society. Further, its unquestioned use by many anthropologists limits our understanding of the nature of non-state, pre-class society, and perpetuates a model of sexual equality which cannot possibly account for the data on the physical abuse of women. Because of its implications for social praxis it is vital to understand the factors which influence the relative power of women and men in society. To this end we must begin the long overdue analysis of the relationship between gender, power and physical force.

The notion of a politically egalitarian stage of social organization was posited by Morgan and then Engels almost 100 years ago. Since that time much ethnographic data have been collected which challenge this evolutionary model, especially as regards Engels's understanding of "matriarchy" as a stage of sexual equality. Engels's vision of reciprocity, complementarity and even harmony is marred by the accounts of wife-beating, rape and

gang rape that occur in foraging and horticultural society. While the contemporary model is not conflict-free, the major portion of ethnographic space devoted to conflict concerns violence between men. Male violence against women is used as anecdotal filler; episodes are merely described, without analytic comment.

I am not implying that all women in all primitive societies are raped, or threatened with rape; nor are they completely powerless, trembling before the majesty of men. The excellent work on Igbo women by Van Allen (1972), and Ardener's work on female militancy in the Cameroons (1973), provide evidence that women are not resourceless victims. Social power, being dynamic and diffuse, can be exercised by women, as well as by men, over particular areas of personal and social life, with greater or lesser amounts of authority or success. No system of inequality can rest on force alone; therefore if women are subordinate to men in a culture, this cannot be explained by men's greater strength or uncontrollable sex drive.

What I am suggesting is that the control over one's body and the right to resist or refuse its violation need to be included in any definition of social equality. In addition, I am suggesting that rape and other forms of physical abuse define an unequal relationship, even in egalitarian society. If, in all human societies regardless of mode of production, the authority to use physical violence as a means of social control is predominantly a *male* prerogative, then the asymmetry we observe is one of gender hierarchy that may be based in part on the threat as well as the use of physical force. This possibility is reason enough for anthropologists to begin an analysis of the significance and function of rape wherever it is found.

An attempt to understand the role of rape in human history has been offered by Susan Brownmiller, in her work *Against Our Will*. She suggests that:

From prehistoric times to the present, I believe, rape has played a critical function. It is nothing more or less than a con-







## POLITICS OF RAPE

flecting women's status in primitive society. It is those data which I would like to examine now.

From a cross-cultural survey done in 1952 we know that in a sample of 110 societies culled from the Human Relations Area Files, rape is considered one of the three most heavily sanctioned crimes (Brown, 1952). The severity of punishment ranges from death to the payment of compensation. We would need the full ethnography to explore the relationship between the type of punishment and the conceptualization of the crime. For example, are punishments for raping married women or non-virgins different than those for raping unmarried women, or virgins? Against whom is rape a crime? Who is the injured party, and what are the criteria used to determine guilt?

Yet rape occurs in many societies where it is not considered a crime; in fact, it is institutionalized and culturally valued. This category of rape may be the more common, though at this time, no categorization can be inclusive or decisive. As rape is rigorously studied, a mature typology will be developed. In this broad division of institutionalized rape I would select two types which contain analytically important elements: (1) symbolic or ritual rape, and (2) punitive rape. Although these elements refer to how and when rape is used, the elements often blend. Thus, when rape is associated with ritual, it may also be sending a punitive message, and when rape is used as punishment there is a ritual-like quality to the event.

Rape in some societies is associated with rituals of male solidarity and initiation into puberty. Kikuyu boys are required to rape a married woman of an enemy group before being eligible for intercourse and marriage with a Kikuyu girl. Eastern Bororo bachelors will gang rape a selected female who will then become a men's house associate, providing sexual services to all the men in turn. Her entrance into the men's house is marked by a ritual which requires her to be "tamed" (Crocker, 1969:245). In Brazil the Akwe-Shavante, when asked what they missed most from the past, named their important ritual *wai'a*, which involved the ceremonial rape of selected women (Maybury-Lewis, 1967:225).

For women, gang rape can be associated with their own puberty rites or marriage rituals. A Canela girl in Brazil is considered sexually available to all men in her community if she has taken or been taken by a lover. If she refuses the attentions of the men for several months, she will be gang raped while alone and away from the village. Her "stinginess" shames her family so that even if she is injured in resisting, compensatory payment will not be sought by her maternal uncles. The ethnographer assures us that "eventually

the woman (Money and Ehrhardt, 1972). Edelman writes of the Chiga, "It is considered merely touching that a child of six wept bitterly when she heard the crying of her father's girl-bride as the latter's marriage was being consummated in the traditional pattern of virtual rape" (Edelman, 1957:63).

Rape, or sequential group sex (as it is euphemistically known), could function as an ideological tool, one among many, which serves to impress upon men and women their sexual rights and prerogatives. Normative sexual aggression for men and passivity for females is symbolically played out in rape. But the fear and pain that are involved in such violation make this act more than symbolic, for it involves physical force and resistance that is real. We might ask if women experience rape in ritual as an act of sexual aggression and violence. Do women share men's reverence for such cultural performances? If they do, might we then ask whether there can be "false consciousness" in primitive society?

When rape does not occur as part of a rite of passage we can more clearly see its function as a control of women's "appropriate sex role behavior." It is therefore possible to see rape as a deterrent to or punishment for female insubordination.



photos by Gail Lineback and Paula Webster

The photos on pp. 17-18 were taken at the Wax Museum, Coney Island

... she learns to like to give herself in these group situations which take place in a spirit of gaiety" (Crocker, 1974:187).

A young bride among the Marind Anim of southern New Guinea must have sexual intercourse with the male members of her husband's clan before he can have intercourse with her. This wedding ritual, extending over several nights, is supposedly not a particularly satisfying experience for

Adultery, disobedience and sexual assertiveness are punished by gang rape in some egalitarian societies. Wagley writes that the Tapirape would gang rape a woman who refused to work or refused to choose a husband after a number of trial marriages (personal communication). Mead writes that the Omaha may gang rape "wanton" women and that "the age

(continued on page 20)

# DIALOGUE WITH A RAPIST

## I.

After I was raped, I remember. Barely remember. Spent a long time going into other people's houses. I went around and told them, all these people that I didn't know, I kept repeating the story of being raped. It was real. The rape had really happened. But I wasn't really sure so I kept telling the story over and over again to make sure it had really happened. And I went and I repeated the story in all different parts of my life, and I went and repeated the story in all the other people's lives, that is to say in their houses, or on the streets. I told a woman I had met only once a year before when I passed her on the streets. I told the people at work. One of the people from work she took me home to her house. And then I moved in, I moved into her house with the other people I didn't know and I told them all about being raped. How did it go, the story? I was hitchhiking back from *Clockwork Orange* with my friend... He is going in to work at the Hungry Charley's Restaurant at Harvard Square. I am standing on the edge of Mass Ave. A car stops. I look in. I don't want to get in because the man is black. But I think to myself, boy, you are really racist, get in you racist slob. So I get in. He asks my name. I say it's Batya.

"What kind of name is that?"

"Jewish name. It means Daughter of God." Maybe he doesn't like Jews. Maybe I shouldn't tell him I'm Jewish. Oh you racist slob just tell the man you're Jewish.

"Want a beer?"

"No."

"What's the matter?"

"Don't drink." Really I am afraid. He is drinking. He offers me drinks. He is asking too many questions.

"What do you do?"

"I'm a photographer." Maybe I

shouldn't tell him that, maybe he'll be jealous. "I work in a camera store." Think of all the things the Jews did to the Negroes.

"Not in school kid?"

He probably never got to go to school. But I did, because I'm Jewish. "No."

"Nice dress, kid, nice boots."

It's my best dress. Long corduroy brown dress. I look so good in it. I got it. One of those nice things you get for yourself when you are trying to feel real. Only nice dress I got. Nice coat. Big nice fur coat. Cheap coat. But nice. Fake fur. And big boots. Big brown lace boots. Big tall brown lace boots they cost me \$35. One of the few nice things I ever bought for myself. On my first paycheck I got myself these boots, and the dress, but someone gave me the coat. I think it was my mother.

"You are pretty kid."

"What?"

"You are real pretty."

"Let me off here."

"No. You are not getting out here."

"What do you mean I'm not getting out here. This is my street."

"This is my knife. You are not getting out here."

## II.

"I know I am going to die. Why should I come. I should come just so I can die?"

"Look this isn't much fun."

"For you it's not much fun. I'm going to die."

"I go to all this trouble—I get you booze, beer, anything."

"I never touched your beer. I don't need to drink beer, if I'm going to die."

"What—whadya mean—"

"Well. I'm going to die. I don't need beer. Everything's clear. I-I."

"Shud up and come."

"Get your god damn mouth off my breast. That's my breast and I don't want your slimy tongue. On it."

"But—uh—"

"Pooh. You said you were going to rape me and kill me. What does that have to do with my breast? Get your lousy lips and your god damn tongue off my breast!!! Look at the rain! Or is it snow? On the windshield. Look at it go, slowly, gently down into the—"

"Will you cut that out, I'm—I'm—"

"Yes the rain passes frozen down the shield of our hearts... Life goes..."

"I'm—trying to come—with you talking it's not much fun!"

"...on and on... drops, rolling off our

(continued on page 21)

# DIALOGUE WITH THE AUTHOR

**Claire Pajackowska:** We've decided to use these last three pages where the dialogue turns into two parallel monologues and the rapist is a middle-class white academic/professional. In the earlier part, the confrontation is with a black working-class rapist. To compare these situations, without an examination of the ways in which rape laws have served as a tool to enforce white supremacy, could be interpreted as racist.

**Batya Weinbaum:** Let's talk about the piece formally first. The power of the complete dissociation in the final "parallel monologues" comes home because the initial piece begins as a real conversation. The rapist and the female character are talking about the same thing to each other—beer, the Israeli name, etc. Then she begins to withhold what she is thinking—saying one thing and feeling/thinking another. By the second section she is saying out loud things which perhaps are inappropriate—she is receding into the internal monologue with herself. Then in the follow-up scene with the "middle-class rapist" she repeats the dissociation pattern. This form of non-discourse was first motivated with the original rapist. The point is how such violent experiences last over into other supposedly remote parts of a woman's life, like years later in bed with someone with whom she has chosen to be a lover.

(continued on page 21)

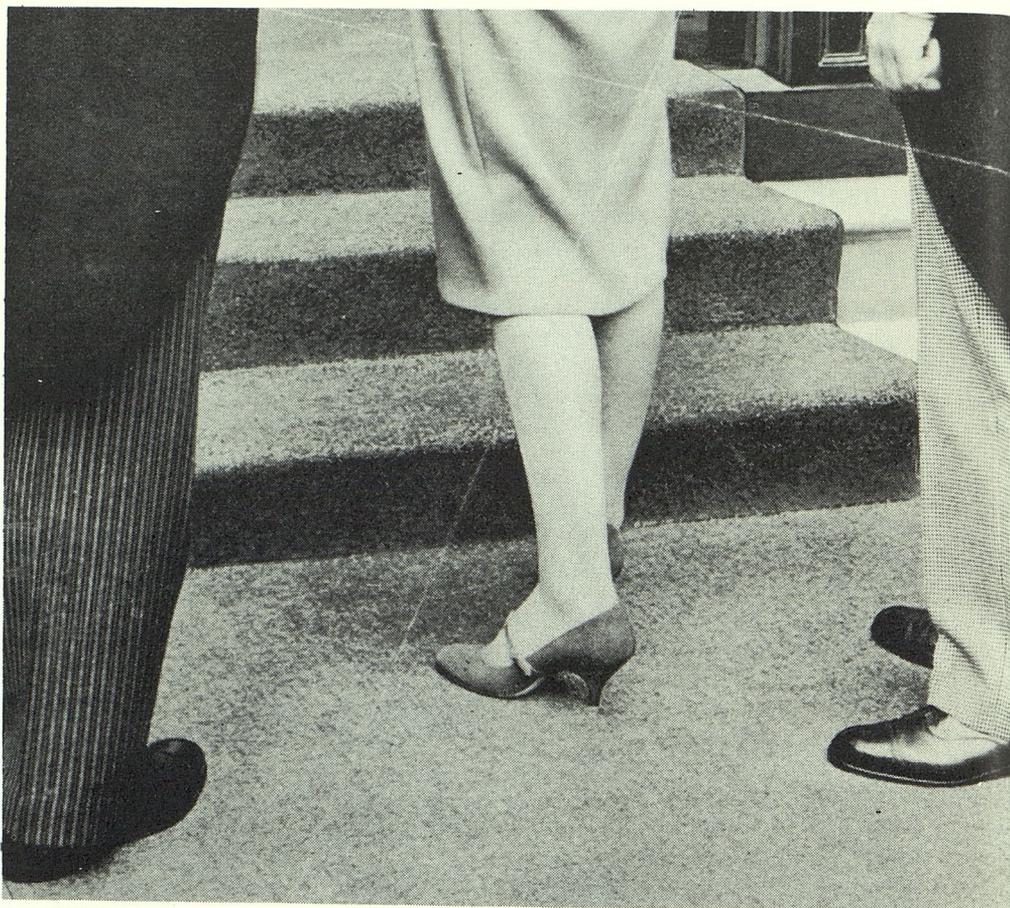
## POLITICS OF RAPE

mates of an Iatmul husband may rape his recalcitrant wife into submission at his request" (quoted in Murphy, 1959:94). Murphy reports that Mundurucu women will be raped if they flout male authority by violating the behavioral norms for their sex. In such rapes, "exogamic restrictions connected with moieties and clans are disregarded" (Murphy, 1959:94). A Cheyenne husband who had been cuckolded *indiscreetly* could invite all members of his military society to gang rape his wife. Although it was only reported four times to Hoebel, in one case a woman had been raped by forty men and left to die. Whether it was used sporadically or not, rape was an available form of punishment of women. Hoebel claims elsewhere in his book, "The Cheyennes cherish the individual personality. . . . Punishment, in their view, need go no further than is necessary to make the individual see the right" (Hoebel, 1960:51). This comment, tragically inadequate, is typical of ethnographers who report violence toward women in egalitarian societies.

It seems that when women act like men, defying rules that restrict their movement and sexual choices, they must be punished, and the punishment must fit the crime. Murphy claims rape is merely a specific cultural expression of the universal ambivalence that men feel toward women. Mightn't this antagonism go both ways? Women, however, have not invented their version of gang rape for dealing with inappropriate male behavior. Shaming, humiliation and beatings of men by groups of women still are not directly analogous to the violation of the body that rape entails. This all seems to imply a universal double standard for sexual conduct that is extraordinarily harsh and vindictive to women. Mead alludes to the possible reasons for this double standard:

If society is to survive the culture must provide for the disciplining of female receptivity, whether by permitting females no opportunity for unconventional responsiveness or by inculcating standards of modesty and sexual ethics which prevent the majority of females from according sexual access to males to such a degree that they jeopardize the marriage arrangements through which males are persuaded to assume responsibilities of parenthood [1961:1457].

Could this mean that rape or its threat is not only an expression of male solidarity, symbolic male dominance or symbolic



fear of female dominance, but a way of controlling women's reproductive potential? By instilling fear in young women there is less possibility that they will violate norms of modesty or sexual propriety, and control over reproduction remains in the domain of men. The obvious problem with such a conjecture is that it assumes that rape has an adaptive significance in terms of community survival. That women are raped and beaten for the good of the community carries the ecological approach too far. If, as I have always believed, culture is created by both sexes, the advantage of rape for women, or their part in perpetuating it, is difficult to conceive. Obviously we need to know much more about the socialization to heterosexuality in all cultures, and the biological, cognitive and ideological aspects of human sexual behavior.

To begin to unravel the threads that interweave gender, power and physical force, a cross-cultural analysis of considerable depth and sensitivity is required. The meaning and function of rape cannot be understood in any society until we collect more reliable data, construct meaningful categories and critique existing theories of political power and interpersonal politics in primitive society. We

need to correlate the incidence of rape with differing modes of production, kinship structure and political organization. We need to understand more about the sources of sexual antagonism and other forms of conflict between men as a class and women as a class. We have to know more about the role of sexuality and its control in human society. We have to send more female ethnographers into the field to pursue studies of all aspects of women's lives, so that our definition of culture is complete.

I am encouraging anthropologists and feminists to reconsider their theoretical and emotional attachment to a model of harmonious sexual equality in egalitarian societies. Such an idealization obscures a fundamental power relationship.

What Rubin (1975) has called the sex/gender system has undoubtedly undergone important historical transformations which we need to study. Only a very static model of sexual politics could explain female/male relations everywhere and at all times. As we begin to construct new paradigms for the political relationship of the sexes, the variable of rape must be included and accounted for.

If, as Susan Brownmiller argues, rape is

(continued on page 22)

## DIALOGUE / RAPIST

backs, hard. Hard as..."

"I can't even keep a hard on—come on—I'm in control—god damn..."

"Melancholy. For some reason I am seized with melancholy. Tell me. Are you seized with melancholy? Golly? Gee? Are you never seized with melancholy? Is that particular to me? Funny. At this time... it seems... universal... to me."

"See that house up there? Come on. We're going in there."

"No. Absolutely not. Why should I get out of this car. Why only a few minutes ago..."

"OUT. I said out! I'm taking you up there!"

"No. You wouldn't let me out. I tried to get out, you pulled a knife. I tried to write you a check, you wouldn't let me out. You said you didn't want my money. Money can't save your life. Isn't that funny. Although I was prepared to give you all the money I had. Although I had been decent and honest enough to tell you—and I told you—\$50 was all I had. No. You could only growl. You would not let me out."

"Out! God damn it!"

"Then, when we stopped at the stop-light, you were so afraid I was going to get out, or wave, at the policeman, you shoved my head down beneath the dashboard, you tried to stuff me, whole, beneath the seat, though all of me wouldn't go..."

"Look, I'm taking you in this house up there."

"No. I told you. Absolutely not. You told me you were going to rape me and kill me. Right here in this car. Tell me, do you often go back on your word? That's absurd! A person's last hour alive and they should be lied to? Not even truth in the last hour they have to live? Tell me, do you think much, about what you are doing? Can't you give someone HONESTY in the last hour they are to live?"

"In that house are waiting lots of guys. You could make lots of money. Come into the house and fuck these guys."

"Are you kidding? You are a pimp? But you said you were an auto mechanic! After I said I worked in the photography store, you said your job was to fix cars?"

"I—I'm not a pimp—I—I'm just a regular guy—"

"Your duty is to go round up pretty women from the streets and bring them back to fuck with a house full of guys? Yes, I think that means you're a pimp."

And you said you were an auto mechanic. Why did you have to lie? Rounding up girls for gang banging. My eye. I'd rather die... Go on... Kill me... Go on, I said. OK. You couldn't fuck me. But you did try."

"You. You are one hell of a—"

"Were. I *were* one hell of a—please address me in the past tense. I'm going to die. Any minute now. Die. D-I-E. I *will be* dead."

### III.

"Ron, I, I can't"

"Oh come on now. Hold your legs up. Open. High."

"I, I can't. I haven't fucked for at least a year."

"Now's a good time to start. Listen here."

"No, it hurts, see, by now it actually gives me physical pain."

"Come on, I'll be gentle, quick. You won't feel anything, I promise."

"God damn it, you don't understand, I, I was raped, and—"

"So what does that have to do with me?"

"And for a year or so I didn't fuck men, then—"

"But you wanna fuck me now, see? I'm special, gentle, kind, quick, fast. You won't feel a thing, I promise. Now open your legs up, fast."

"Then I began to rape men, attack them, pick them up, strangers: take them to bed, from the streets, never see them again, deliberately, even walk out while they were lying still in bed, deliberately hurting them, I thought, and—"

"Well ya ain't a doin' nuthin a the kind to me."

"I began to do this, in Latin America traveling alone, and—"

"What does all this have to do with *me*? Me me me!"

"Then I came back here, gave up men, started with women, gave up women, and now, for over a year..."

"Do you know I did my master's thesis on the philosophy of abstract numbers?"

"ye-bu-R-I—"

"Yes, I'm at least as smart as you, and—"

"The most I could do was get in bed with a man, but not really fuck, I, if they wanted to fuck, I, just lay there, still, while they—"

"Since I have also completed my law degree, I have found—"

"They, forced themselves inside of me—"

(continued on page 22)

## DIALOGUE / AUTHOR

**CP:** Formally I think the last three pages work as a complete unit. The dialogue provides within itself a specific context. But there are problems... I feel if we are going to deal with the situation of white middle-class women being raped by black working-class men it should be done with some perspective on the whole issue, including the long history of white men raping blackwomen and what that has meant/ means in a racist society.

**BW:** OK. Look, let me say that *Heresies* is not the first or only feminist publication to reject these initial pieces on the grounds that the rape of white women by black men is "too controversial" to be treated in this form. However, this form is genuine—it took me five years to even write about the experience. I knew all those statistics about more rapes happen intra-racially before I even got into the car. The consciousness of racism was a factor in my paralysis as a female. The problem of this paralysis in itself is politically significant. Remember that one source of the women's liberation movement was the experience of white women going down to the South to work on civil rights for blacks, whereupon the fact that they were not only white but women put them in a double bind. They were called racist if they wouldn't sleep with black men, and they were called racist if they did. Women continued to participate in their oppression—by placing priority on the rights of others, putting consciousness of their own oppression as women aside. My character—or my former persona—did that as soon as she chastised herself for being racist when she had misgivings about getting into the car. Unfortunately the feminist movement cannot see fit to provide a forum for discussing that paralysis. This I see as doing a disservice to the feminist movement. And about those statistics—those statistics about how my experience was atypical made me bury my feelings for years. Right after I was raped, that very next evening, I went to tell the story to some friends. Immediately I was asked, "Was he black?" and I became completely hysterical, blithering those statistics—don't you understand, I stam-

(continued on page 22)

## POLITICS OF RAPE

an act of intimidation and control, then we must begin our investigations and theorizing by rephrasing Freud's dilemma, asking "What do these men want?"

—Paula Webster

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## DIALOGUE / RAPIST

"That my ability to abstract about the philosophy of numbers—"

"And, but, some of them didn't like to do that, while I just lay back still; and I found that very depressing, because, because, god damn it, it was, the, most I could do, give—the most I could—the most—I—and, it didn't mean anything to them, none of them, they scoffed and they laughed, 'so what's this: like fucking into a hand!' when I had thought the most I could do was jerk them off—but—"

"Has often helped me in winning very important case. I use the singular, 'case,' because actually in my whole life I have only tried one. And do you know how to come, about the negative square root of one? one real law case? in my whole? life? career?"

### IV.

"Ron, I, I don't know what to say, do."

"I told you. Just the way you held your legs... gotta loosen up, raise 'em up over your head, let go."

"I—it's like—I feel—the first time I ever—"

"Yap, you were clenching me, like a crab. Gotta open 'em up, lift 'em high, back over your head, or, at least, try."

"Ron, I—I think I'm in love with you—I—what a wonderful thing for you to do—for—me!"

"Yap. Then, though, you could relax, let go. Don't always have to keep 'em up, perpendicular to the bed, waving 'em over your head; you could've, after I got in, let, go."

"Ron, when you go back to your law practice in the South, can I go, too—"

"Yap, but I realized you were scared to move, after the start, yap I know."

"I mean—it was—so—I didn't feel a thing! Not one twinge, or rip, or sock, smack, nothing! Isn't it wonderful! Oh! Ron! What kind of a house will we live together down south in? Oh! oh oh oh! Think of it! No more pain! I didn't come but oh! Ron! Please kiss me now on the mouth! Please! You're so gentle, kind! I didn't feel ripped apart, cut open, no—pain—"

"Listen, have you read—I was just reading *Lenin on the National Question*. Yes, now Lenin's position on the black belt nation of the South is..."

—Batya Weinbaum

## DIALOGUE / AUTHOR

mered—most rapes happen between white men and white women, between black men and black women—don't blame the blacks—you don't understand—. And do you know what? I was taken out to look at the river by my single black male gay friend—who had been just as brutalized by his own experience of bravado sexuality in his own community. My black friend, not the white men or the political women—who were also prone to calling me racist for quite some time—could give me comfort and understanding.

**CP:** It's not that one should write/publish only material that deals with stereotypical situations: but of all the things that could happen in Cambridge, Mass. [haven of the white middle-class], to write about what was probably the only black guy on Harvard Square is atypical in the extreme—that's why, within the context of Harvard, the dialogue with Ron, the professional lawyer, is really more incisive and ultimately more lucid.

**BW:** Good. Then we agree.

IL ÉTAIT ENTRE ONZE HEURES ET MINUIT. LE RÉSULTAT EN A ÉTÉ  
POUR MOI UNE ANGOISSE DE MORT ET UN RAT QUI S'EST NICHÉ  
DANS UN MORCEAU DE PAIN QUE J'AVAIS À CÔTÉ DE MOI SUR UNE  
TABLE ET L'A DÉVORÉ DE L'INTÉRIEUR, COUVRANT MES LIVRES DE  
CROTTES DE RAT. UNE PARTIE DE CET ENVOUEMENT EST D'AILLEURS  
PARTIE D'UN PETIT GROUPE DE GENS ATABLÉS AU DÔME, QUI CON-  
NAISSENT LA MESURE OCCULTE DE MON ENTRE-CUISSÉS À MON CERVEAU  
ET S'OFFRENT LE LUXE DE ME GÔTER DE LOIN AVEC LEUR LANGUE  
ET TOUTE LA LIPPUE LIBIDO DE LA GOURMANDISE D'ACCAPAREURS  
QU'ILS PEUVENT Y METTRE, DE ME GÔTER EN TASTANT, COMME LE  
FOETUS D'UN NOUVEAU-NÉ, POUR LUTTER CONTRE C'EST SI HIDEUSE

CH IEN, MANGE SA LANGUE, MANGE, ETC.....

T CEST  
JUBLIN  
UES  
DIEU LE  
OBSCÈNE

ARTAUD

L O B S C E N E P E S A N -  
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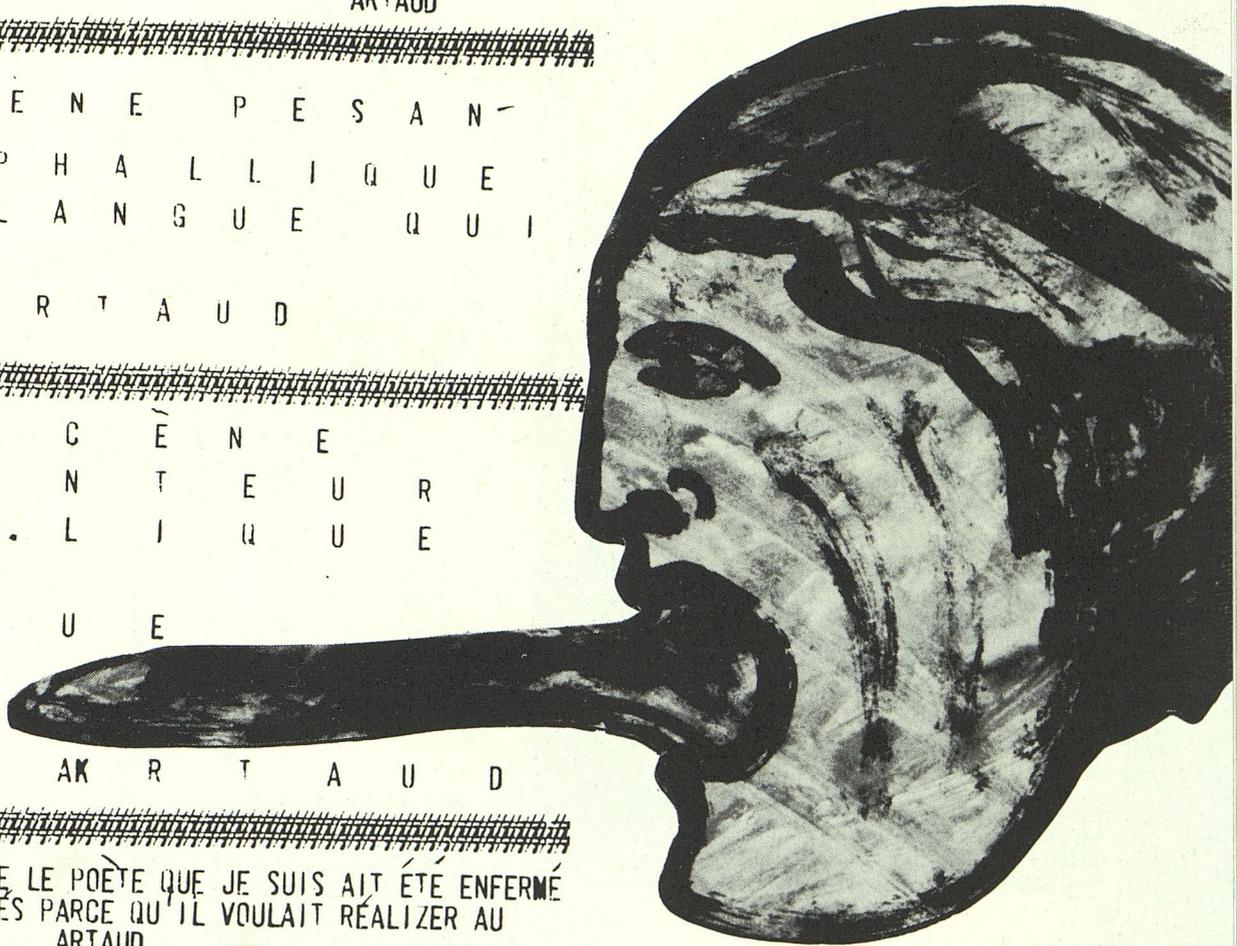
A R T A U D

L O B S C È N E  
P E S A N T E U R  
P H A L L I Q U E  
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P R I E

A R T A U D

ET JE N'ADMETS PAS QUE LE POÈTE QUE JE SUIS AIT ÉTÉ ENFERMÉ  
DANS UN ASILE D'ALIÉNÉS PARCE QU'IL VOULAIT RÉALISER AU  
NATUREL SA POÉSIE.  
ARTAUD

L E P O È T E Q U E J E  
S U I S A I T É T É E N -  
F E R M É D A N S U N  
A S I L E D ' A L I É N É S  
A R T A U D



—Nancy Spero

# Editorial

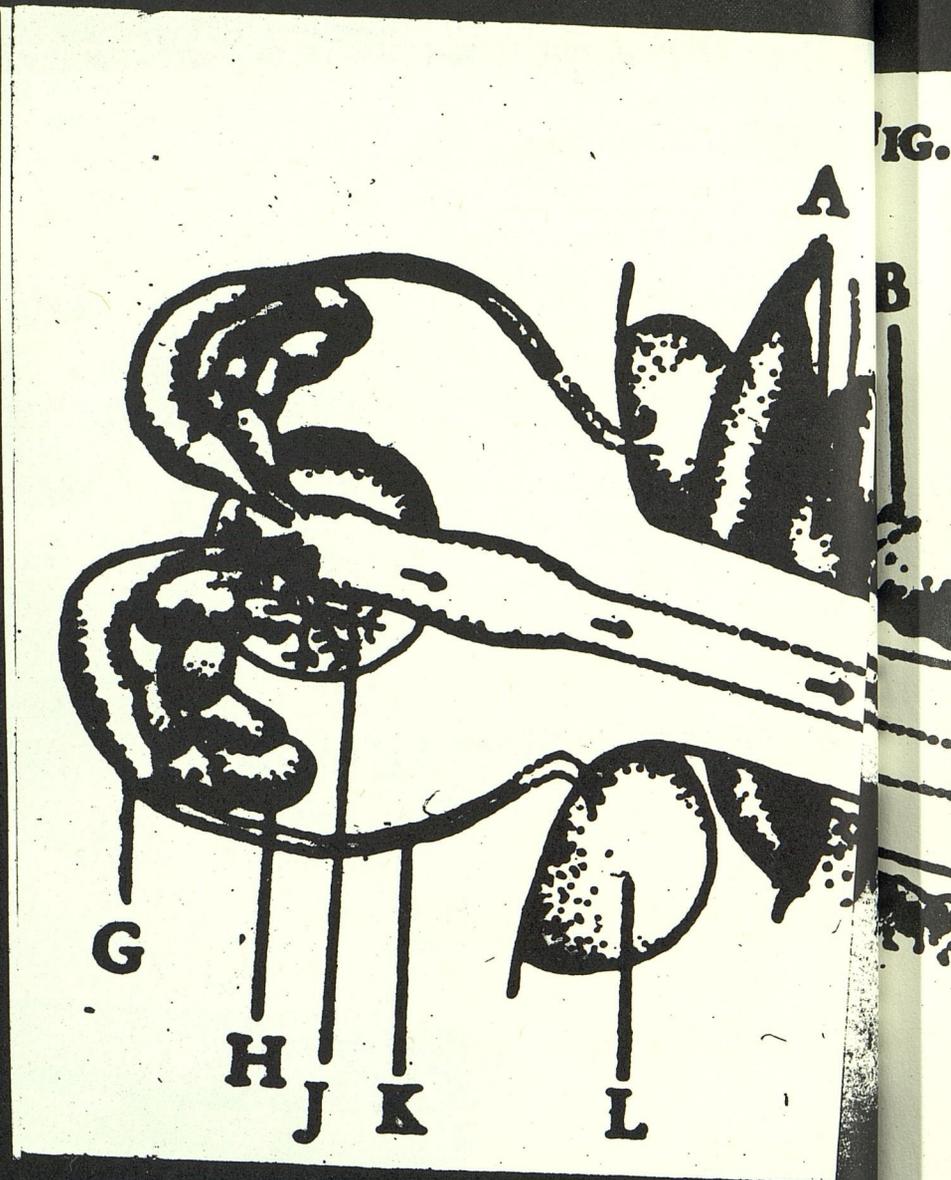
At birth, infants are assigned a gender. This division of all people into mutually exclusive and non-overlapping sex roles is assumed to be natural. Biological males and females become *masculine* and *feminine*. But this development is not the unfolding of some genetic blueprint: it requires learning a complex set of rules and rituals which create rather than reveal what it means to be a man or a woman in a society.

Women can fight fires and men can care for children. Sex-role socialization can be modified by raising consciousness in schools, in the media and in the home. There remains, however, an unspoken and unshaken conviction that some things will never change, that maleness and femaleness are discrete and static and that this difference is linked to the "innate" heterosexual qualities of each group. The fundamental differences are assumed to be sexual: different amounts of libido, different sexual needs, a different nature.

Androgyny is not the answer. Men expressing their "female side" and women expressing their "male side" leaves unchallenged sexist definitions of what is masculine and what is feminine.

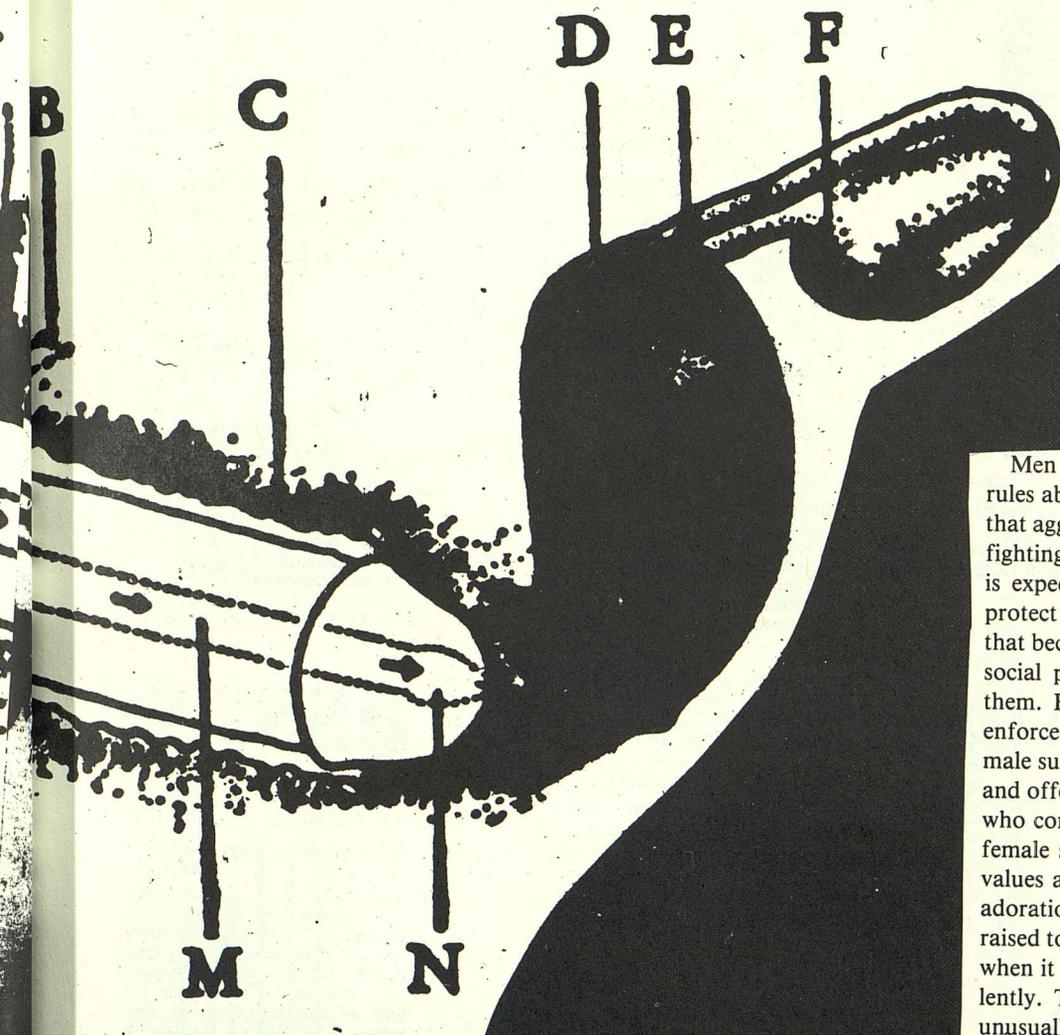
We know next to nothing about unencumbered sexuality. But it would seem sexuality more closely resembles a continuum than a polarity.

We must continue our own explorations into the process by which we become feminine and at the same time we must analyze the ways in which men become masculine and how each becomes heterosexualized. Where gender identity and the institution of heterosexuality coincide, we might begin to look at the role of violence by men against women.



Male dominance and aggression paired with female passivity and submission are the key elements in heterosexual romance. They are also the key elements of heterosexual violence. Getting in and holding off are the strategies of gender politics. The distinction between "normal" sex (which involves a certain amount of force) and rape is a matter of degree and not kind. Culturally, the act of penetration is itself a paradigm for male dominance.

FIG. 52



Men and women learn a complex set of rules about sex and aggression. Men learn that aggressive behavior is valued and that fighting in self defense or to protect others is expected. Women learn that men will protect them, if they are "good," and that because of men's greater strength and social power it is better not to provoke them. Fear of being labeled homosexual enforces compulsive masculinity. The male subculture celebrates sexual victories and offers approval and prestige for those who compete and win. At the same time, female subculture transmits male-defined values and encourages submission to and adoration of "real" men. Deference is raised to almost religious proportions, but when it is withdrawn men often react violently. The protection racket extracts an unusually high price from women.

Cross-culturally there are variations in what it means to be male or female but gender hierarchies appear to be universal. Because heterosexuality/heterosociality is a construction of culture, it may be played out differently in the future. Masculinity and femininity may become less polarized, less a process of psychic and sexual deformation. Unless we work toward the elimination of rigid gender categories, the power that has remained in men's hands for millenia will merely take new forms. In order to end male privilege we must not only continue to challenge the definition of "female," but also we must expose the mystique of masculinity. Both men and women will have to give up the myth of men.

# Dopo

## uccide

**BOLOGNA, 28** — Un pensionato, Rosario Sodaro, di 49 anni, ha ucciso ieri a Bologna la moglie, Rosina Nobbe, di 48, nella loro abitazione di via dall'Ono, nell'estrema periferia est della città. Al momento dell'omicidio si trovavano nell'appartamento — situato al piano rialzato di una palazzina popolare nel quartiere detto « Due madonne » — due dei tre figli della coppia, Maurizio di 17 anni e Paola di 11, oltre alla madre dell'assassino Maria.

Rosario Sodaro è stato arrestato da agenti della squadra mobile mentre tentava di fuggire ed è stato rinchiuso nelle carceri di San Giovanni in Monte.

Secondo le prime indagini, l'omicidio è maturato in un ambiente familiare reso sempre più teso da una serie di dissapori che erano sorti da anni tra i coniugi, entrambi originari di Termini Imerese (Palermo). Alla base di essi vi sarebbe un incidente sul lavoro occorso a Rosario Sodaro circa vent'anni addietro allorché — quando lavorava come muratore — venne colpito al capo da un mattone caduto da un'impalcatura. Di quello incidente non si riebbe mai completamente e venne ricoverato, per un certo periodo, in

HANNO tentato di sequestrare una ragazza, ma sono stati subito presi e chiusi a Rebibbia. E' avvenuto verso le 23,30 di ieri notte in via Emanuele Filiberto, davanti al cinema Royal. Due giovani a bordo di una « 1750 » hanno tentato di far salire a bordo della loro auto, con la forza, una ragazza, Gabriella Ortolani, 20 anni, via Saturnia 26. La ragazza, però, ha opposto una tenace resistenza e s'è messa a gridare, invocando aiuto. Sono intervenuti alcuni passanti che sono riusciti a mettere in fuga i due giovani e a rilevare il numero di targa della macchina che hanno comunicato subito al 113: Roma N 81963. E' scattata, diretta dal dottor Lococo, dirigente del V distretto di polizia, una operazione a vasto raggio e la zona è stata subito chiusa in una morsa.

aspettare tre anni - / di farla finita - Le ho occhi e l'ho uccisa - avuto il coraggio di

**TORINO, 30** — Nostalgia di casa, solo in una città sconosciuta e anche ostile, senza amici: un'unica speranza, sposare la ragazza di cui era innamorato, crearsi una famiglia. Ma a 23 anni, secondo il regolamento, un agente di polizia non può mettere su casa. La scadenza dei 26 anni si avvicina, quasi irrimediabilmente sempre più desiderabile diventava lei, la sua ragazza: era geloso, aveva paura di perderla.



*Mag/ Venti anni prima suo marito / 75 ora stato ferito sul lavoro.*

Il corpo privo di vita della giovane nappista è stato trasportato all'obitorio alle 3, a disposizione dell'autorità

**FIRENZE, 9.** — « Fino alla vittoria sempre »: queste parole pronunciate da Anna Maria Mantini davanti al cadavere del fratello Luca, ucciso in un conflitto a fuoco con i carabinieri il 29 ottobre dell'anno scorso, oggi vengono ricordate come la parola che avrebbe indotto la ragazza a prendere la strada del terrorismo politico, il mondo alla quale ha trovato una fine uguale a quella del fratello. Chi la conosceva però non accetta questo ragionamento, che in effetti appare sin troppo elementare. Quelle frasi, dicono qui i conoscenti di Anna Maria Mantini, sono dovute al grande affetto che la ragazza provava per il fratello ed anche al modo in cui era morto.

la storia crudele di Anna Maria Mantini passa all'archivio come « incidente sul lavoro ». Ad ogni livello è scattata la saracinesca a protezione della meccanica del sanguinoso episodio. Neppure un tentativo di ricostruzione dell'attimo in cui il proiettile calibro 7,62 conficcò nel volto della giovane nappista. La versione del brigadiere Antonio Tizzolillo viene confermata dai superiori e dai magistrati che non erano sul posto e la storia ufficialmente si chiude.

Restano i dubbi. L'improbabile traccio di ferro del sottufficiale e della ragazza, entrambi avvinghiati alle maniglie della porta e la posizione in cui è stato trovato

# assass

La vittima abbandonata amante arrestato

**NAPOLI, 14** — Antonio Festa, l'uomo che ha ucciso la ventenne Tecla Iandolo mentre la ragazza era in macchina insieme al suo amante, continua a dire che lui non voleva uccidere la giovane. E' stato ucciso l'uomo la cui origine sembra doversi ricondurre alla famiglia di un individuo che trovava motivo di eccitazione nel vedere le coppie fare l'amore. Lo ha detto lui stesso. Non sappiamo se Tecla Iandolo, che abitava al rione San Tommaso di Avellino, sapesse che l'uomo con il quale si accompagnava, Saverio Stornaiuolo, era sposato ed aveva due figli.

Quando domenica sera Antonio Festa si è avvicinato alla macchina ferma sul viadotto della variante di Avellino per Agribalda la ragazza era completamente nuda e distesa sul sedile accanto a quello del posto di guida. Erano passate le 22 quando Antonio Festa, trentacinquenne, sposato, padre di cinque figli (sul moglie Rosa Roca è detenuta per appropriazione indebita) sarà liberata tra pochi giorni si è avvicinato alla macchina. Aveva con sé un uccello da caccia. L'uomo infilò la testa nella macchina attraverso il vano aperto dello sportello di guida, osserva, si ritirò e poi

*dei Rausi non*



FIRMA DEL TITOLARE

*Set/ 75 Mise la chiave nella porta.*

## Translated excerpts from Happy New Year, An Album of Violence

May/75 Twenty years ago her husband  
was hurt at work.

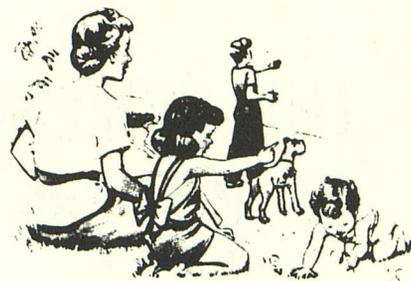
*Bologna 26*—A pensioner, Rosario Sodaro, 49 years old, killed his wife, Rosina Nobile, 48 years old . . . According to the first investigation, the murder grew out of a family situation made increasingly tense by a series of disagreements between the couple who came originally from Termini Imerse, near Palermo. It seems at the bottom was an accident that occurred twenty years ago to Rosario Sodaro, who was a bricklayer, when he was hit on the head by a falling brick. He never fully recovered from that accident and was hospitalized for a certain period for nervous disorder. . . . Left her home to pass the night at her father's home . . . "Papa said to tell mama to come home or he would kill her," the boy said. . . . Knocking down the door with his shoulder, smashing it open with a knife . . . closed inside the bedroom . . . opened a switchblade . . . in the heart, the arm, and the throat.

July/75 She put the key in the door.

*(Anna Maria Mantini was killed by police who were waiting inside an apartment used by the left-terrorist group, NAP, as a hideout.)*

*Florence 9*—"Until victory, always": these words pronounced by Anna Maria Mantini in front of the body of her brother, Luca, killed in a shoot-out with the police on Oct. 29 of last year, become remembered as the trigger that forced the girl to take the road of political terrorism which led to an end equal to her brother's . . . the cruel story of Anna Maria Mantini passes into the archives like an "accident on the job". At every level, a heavy door has slammed shut to protect the mechanism of this bloody episode. . . . Doubts remain. The improbable wrestling between the *brigadiere* and the girl as both clutched the door handle and the position in which the body was found on the landing. . . . The bullet hit the left cheekbone of the girl from a distance of about 50 centimeters. The lesion caused instantaneous death.

—Stephanie Oursler



# The Pleasure Outing

Down near the edge of the lake there was sand, but further back there was grass and trees. Bradley said, "Let's sit by the water, let's sit in the sand," but Katie's father said it wasn't sand it was mud which was okay for pigs like Bradley, but people would rather sit on the grass. Katie said, "I guess I'm a person because I like the grass better too." She was carrying the towels and her mother was carrying the lunch and her father was carrying the blanket. "Who asked you," her father said.

Her mother wanted to put the blanket down under a tree but her father said he hadn't come up to the lake to sit in the shade. He had come up to get a suntan, he said. He set the blanket down in the middle of the grassy slope near where a lady was sitting with her little girl eating hard-boiled eggs and Ritz crackers. The sun was so bright and the lake and the grass and the sky were so bright that Katie had to squint her eyes.

Her mother put down the shopping bag that had the lunch in it and she and Katie's father spread out the blanket. Katie put the towels down next to the shopping bag and took off her shorts and her shirt. They were all wearing their bathing suits under their clothes. Bradley and Tom were wearing cut-off old trousers of Bradley's but Katie had a real bathing suit, a blue one-piece one, and not underwear like last year.

Bradley asked if they could go in the water, but Katie's father said they could wait until he was ready to take them in. Her father lay down on the blanket and put his arms under his head and it looked to Katie as if he was going to lie that way for a long time. Then Bradley said, "Please can't we go in, please can't we go in," and Katie held her breath and wished he wouldn't do that. She wanted to go in too, she was sweaty and the lake was so blue, but she knew that begging would just get her father mad.

But Bradley kept begging. "Why can't we go in alone?" he whined. "We went in

alone last year." That was true, Katie knew. She had gone in alone last year and the boys had gone in alone too, just at the edge. Then her father said he was starting to think that maybe Bradley shouldn't go in the water at all for the whole day. Then finally Bradley knew enough to shut up and he asked if he and Tom could go play in the sand. Her father said that was just the place for two pigs like them.

Then Bradley and Tom went down to where the sand was and Tom's shorts that were really Bradley's old trousers were so big for him that they hung down to his knees and his behind almost showed. Her father was lying on his back and he watched them go, squinting, without picking up his head. He said to Katie's mother, "Will you look at that one?" meaning Tom. Her mother laughed, like she really thought Tom looked cute with his pants hanging down. Then her father said, "Boy you really dressed him up good. He's a real beauty." Then her mother stopped laughing and said that none of Tom's trousers were worn out and she didn't see the point in cutting the legs off a perfectly good pair. Her father said, "He's a real beauty. You dressed him up real good," and shut his eyes.

Then her mother lay down on the blanket too and closed her eyes. Katie sat on the grass and watched them. She hoped they would be able to go in the water soon. She saw the sweat on her father's forehead and she knew that if it hadn't been for Bradley's begging they would have been in the water that minute.

Her mother and father lay there in the sun, their faces turned up to it. Katie thought it was like they were saying, here I am sun, burn me up, burn me up. They were lying with their eyes closed, not talking and she didn't understand how they could do that for so long and not get bored.

There were people running into the water and kids jumping in off the dock, splashing and yelling. She could see Brad-

*(continued on page 29)*

# THE VIOLENCE OF POWER:

# THE GENITAL MUTILATION OF FEMALES

This introduction is a personal one. The topic of violence against women only surfaced quite recently, along with women's growing consciousness of their own status and lives. For centuries this awareness has been buried under a thick crust of socialization which considers violence against women in every form acceptable and natural. In every culture women are considered the "keepers of tradition," upholding (male-defined) social norms and suppressing deviant behavior. At times women become their own wardens in prison, and perpetuate their own oppression.

Perhaps the most devastating form of violence practiced against females is genital mutilation. For the most part it is performed on young girls, the most vulnerable, yet most valuable (as future mothers) population group. The practitioners of this brutal violation are women. In many parts of rural Africa a girl's value is still measured by the bride price paid to her father. Women are thus compelled by fear to perform these operations on their own daughters and granddaughters. Without such an operation a girl's chances to survive as an accepted member of the social group are nil; she becomes an outcast. She cannot get a husband and is therefore "worthless." Furthermore, once married, a good woman is expected to serve her husband (who often has many wives) and to make no demands, sexual or otherwise. Excision is a means to that end.

### Description of the Operation

Genital mutilation, excision (clitoridectomy) and infibulation—have lifelong ef-

## Female Genital Mutilation in Africa: Countries, Regions, Populations

*Arabian Peninsula:* Nagd, Kuwet, Muntafir, Bani, Tamin, Sammar, Mahra, Kara, Sahara, Bautahara, Boni Atije, Agarnem, Adwan

*Benin:* Benin

*Botswana:* Xohsa, Shangana-Thonga

*Chad:* Shuwa

*Central African Empire:* Recently outlawed

*Djibouti:* Afar, Issa (entire population)

*Eastern Africa:* Somali, Meru, Embu, Chuka, Kikuyu, Rangi, Nandi, Masai, Kamasia, Pokot, Elgeyo, Njemps, Dorobo, Sebei, Digo, Taita, Giriama, Kisii, Kamba, Swahili, Chaga, Pare, Gogo, Arusha, Tatoga, Turu, Bena, Hehe, Watusi, Xhosa, Suba, Wasembeti, Nilo-Hamitic population groups

*Ethiopia:* Amhara, Fellasha, Kafitscho, Oromo (Galla), Danakil, Tigre, Ometo, Hamitic Kufa, Babea, Sidamo, Kushite population groups, Somali of the Harrar area

*Egypt:* All population groups (Muslim and Copt) except for educated, urban upper and upper-middle class

*Gambia:* All population groups except Jolloff

*Ghana:* Hausa, Mossi, Yoruba, Kassina, Nankani, North Ghanaian groups

*Guinea:* Twenty-four ethnic groups, including Foulah, Peul, Malinke (Mandingo), Soussou, Bambara, Kasonke, Serer, Wolof, Conakry area

*Kenya:* Masai, Kuria, Kisii, Nandi, Kipsigis, Kamba, Kikuyu, Digo, Taita, Giriama, Dorobo, Samburu, Kamasia, Elgeyo, Pokot (Suk), Embu, Meru, Terik, Marakwet, Chagga, Kavirondo, Watende, Wakamba, Kitosh, Lumbwa, Somali population groups

*Ivory Coast:* Malinke, Dioula, Guere, Guro, Baule, Mwan, area of Odiene

*Mali:* Bambara, Dogon, Mossi, Malinke, Saracole, Songhoi, Peul

*Mauritania:* All population groups

*Morocco:* No confirmed information

*Niger:* Over 80% of population groups

*Nigeria:* Yoruba, Efik, Shuwa, Ibo, Hausa, most population groups except Itsekiri, inhabitants of Cross River State

*Senegal:* Malinke (Mandingo/Wangara), Toucouleur, Peul (Fulani), Soce (Casama)

*Sierra Leone:* All population groups, except Creoles, including Temne, Mende, Loko, Limba, Kono, Kuranko, Susu, Fullah, Mandingo

*Somalia:* All population groups practice infibulation, including Harrar, Afar, Danakil, Galla (Oromo)

*Southern Africa:* Xhosa, Shangana-Thonga, Bechuanaland

*Sudan:* Beja, Handandana, Beni Amir, Kababish, Baggara, Danagla, Shaygia, Gaaliyeen, Rubatab, Amara, Fallata, Bushairiya, Rasyda, Dongola, Hassanie, Bisharin, Ababde, Mensa, Hababa, Bund Burun, Abn Haraz, Musalam Iye, Awlad Kahil Hassanie, Singa, Sinnar, Gezir, Khartoum province, Omdurman area, Nubia, Red Sea Coast ports, Wad Medani, Humor of West Sudan

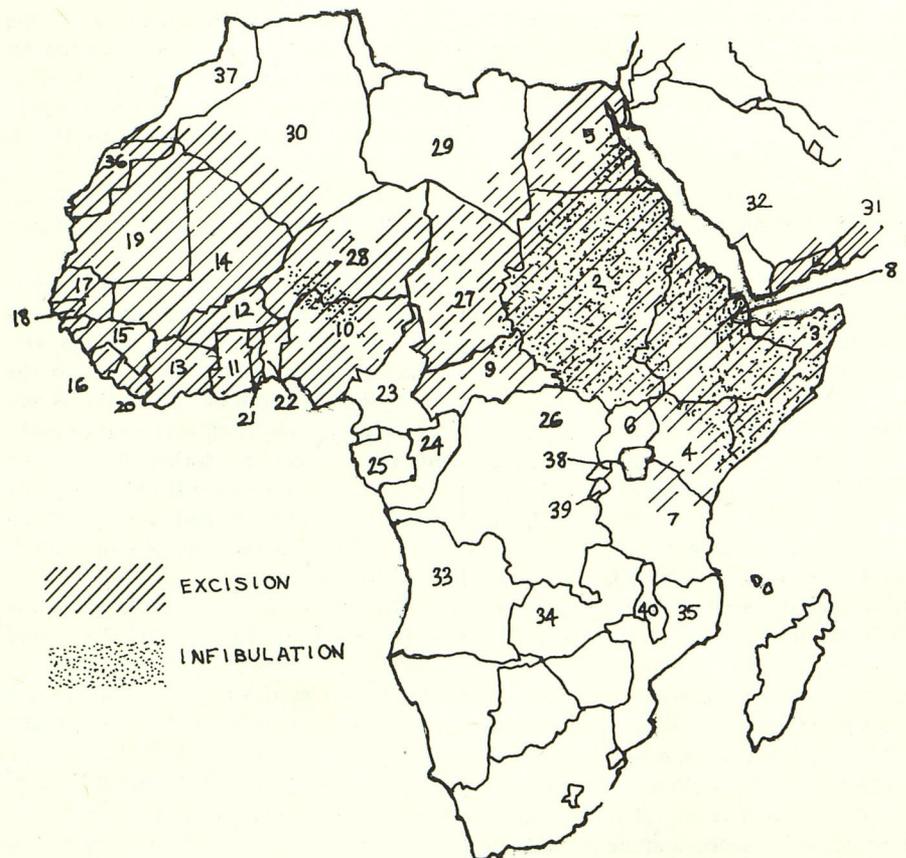
*Tanzania:* Masai, Basembeti-Suba, Bakuria, Komaki, Chaga, Pare, Shambala, Gogo, Rangi, Turu, Bena, Hehe, Nilo-Hamitic population groups

*Togo:* Not specified

*Uganda:* Sebei

*Upper Volta:* Mossi, 60-70% of female population

*Zaire:* M'Bwake, Banda



1. Ethiopia 2. Sudan 3. Somalia 4. Kenya 5. Egypt 6. Uganda 7. Tanzania 8. Djibouti 9. Central African Empire 10. Nigeria 11. Ghana 12. Upper Volta 13. Ivory Coast 14. Mali 15. Guinea 16. Sierra Leone 17. Senegal 18. The Gambia 19. Mauritania 20. Liberia 21. Togo 22. Benin 23. Cameroon 24. Congo 25. Gabon 26. Zaire 27. Chad 28. Niger 29. Libya 30. Algeria 31. South Yemen 32. Saudi Arabia 33. Angola 34. Zambia 35. Mozambique 36. Sahara 37. Morocco 38. Rwanda 39. Burundi 40. Malawi

fects on personality and physical health. Since the practice of excision is carefully concealed from the outside world, a factual explanation is required.

*Female circumcision* is the most popular, although medically incorrect term used for a variety of genital mutilations. These operations differ in purpose and in their effects from male circumcision, although both are frequently performed at puberty. The male operation, according to some traditional medical opinion, promotes cleanliness. In contrast, the female operation has been universally medically condemned.<sup>1</sup>

Three kinds of operations are cited in medical literature:

1. *Sunna Circumcision*: This involves removal of the prepuce and tip of the clitoris; it can only be done by a skilled surgeon.
2. *Excision and Clitoridectomy*: This is the operation most frequently done; it entails cutting away (excision) of the clitoris, labia minora and sometimes all external genitalia. Razor blades, knives or glass splinters are used.
3. *Infibulation or Pharaonic Circumcision*: After the girl is excised her labia are scraped and then fastened together with thorns or catgut. Her legs are then tied up until the wound has healed. This operation is usually performed on girls between four and eight. The purpose is to close the girl's introitus so that she can be guaranteed "intact" when given to a man in marriage. Infibulation is practiced mainly by Moslems, who consider virginity all-important and demand visible proof of a "closed" bride.

For all practical purposes, however, one can speak of only two operations—excision and infibulation. The crude tools used by the operators, mainly old women, preclude the removal of a tiny skinfold (*sunna* circumcision).

Excision/clitoridectomy is practiced in a broad area stretching from Egypt, Ethiopia, the Red Sea Coast, Kenya and Tanzania on the East Coast, to Senegal and Mauritania on the West Coast, and including all the countries in between. Infibulation is practiced in the Moslem areas of Africa. In Somalia all girls without exception are infibulated. In Sudan (except the South), Eritrea (part of Ethiopia), Northern Kenya and Mali, most girls are infibulated. In Upper Volta, infibulation is not practiced; however, the result of excision is often the same—the wound created by excision sometimes adheres and closes the introitus. I saw a woman in labor brought to the maternity hospital in Ouagadougou in Upper Volta unable to give birth.

(continued on page 30)



## Pleasure Outing

ley and Tom sitting in the sand, making mountains and tunnels with their hands. The lady and the little girl over on the other blanket were eating peaches and the little girl had peach juice running down her chin and onto her chest. The lady wiped the little girl's chin and chest with a napkin. The little girl had curly dark hair and she was wearing a two-piece bathing suit with red and yellow and green flowers. The lady was wearing a black bathing suit. The little girl was skinny and the lady was the fattest person Katie ever saw, like a big enormous stuffed pillow. She wondered if the little girl would grow up to be that fat.

Her own mother wasn't fat at all. She looked really pretty, Katie thought, in her two-piece yellow bathing suit. She had the prettiest mother of all her friends. She wasn't fat and her hair was long and reddish brown and her skin was the whitest skin could be, like milk, like snow, like a cloud. Tom had white skin like that but Katie and Bradley were dark like her father. Katie wished her skin was white and that she had a two-piece bathing suit. She could see her mother's stomach all wet with sweat and she knew her mother was waiting for her father to say, Let's go in the water.

Finally he said it. He said, "It's time for a swim." Katie's mother got up and Katie jumped up and they walked across the grass to the sand. Bradley and Tom saw them coming and raced over and said, "We're going in now, Daddy? We're going in now?"

Her father didn't answer them. He just walked straight down to the water and walked in a little way and then dove under. For a minute they couldn't see him. Then they saw him come up way out on the lake near the rope.

Bradley and Tom were flopping on their bellies and splashing and Katie's mother told them not to be wild in the water and not to splash. Katie and her mother were standing in the shallow water. Her mother was in up to her ankles

and Katie was in up to her knees. She couldn't go in any more because the water was so cold. She felt like she was standing in a bucket of ice. Every couple of minutes she walked in a little more and let the icy water creep up her body. Her mother wasn't going in any more. She was standing and hugging herself with her arms, watching the boys to be sure they didn't drown themselves, smiling at the way they were squealing and flopping on their bellies. Then Bradley started kicking up water with his feet and he splashed some on Katie's stomach. She yelled, "Mom, Bradley's splashing me," and her mother told Bradley to stop kicking the water.

Katie saw her father swimming toward them from the rope. When he got to where they were, he pushed back his hair which was all wet and blew his nose into his fingers and said to her mother, "Are you planning to stand there all day?"

Her mother said, "It's so cold, Brad." Her father said, "Sure it's cold if you just stand there. Once you get in you get used to it." Then quick before anyone saw what he was doing, he scooped up some water and splashed it on her mother. Her mother yelled, "Oh no," and sounded so funny that Katie and the boys laughed. Then her father said, "C'mon, you got to get wet" and he splashed her again and she said, "Oh Brad, don't." Then her father said she better come on in or he was going to dunk her good. So she walked deeper into the water, hugging herself and saying "Brrr." When she got in up to her stomach she ducked down fast so that she was wet all over. Then she swam out a little and swam back again. "Oh it's freezing," she said, "but you get used to it." Her father said, "That's what I told you." Then he said to Katie, "C'mon, you too, get yourself wet."

Katie didn't want to be splashed so she made herself duck down fast in the water up to her neck. It was so cold it took her breath away, but it felt good too, she thought, freezing and tingling all over her

(continued on page 31)

# MUTILATION

It is estimated that more than 30 million women are affected in Africa. The map illustrates the areas for which I have definite documentation of genital mutilation from medical literature, hospitals, doctors' personal testimony and ethnographic reports. Edna Adan Ismail, the first registered midwife in charge of midwife training in Somalia, described the terrible ordeal of infibulation at the Fifth Obstetrical and Gynaecological Congress in the Sudan in February 1977. A similar account is given by Jacques Lantier (translated from French):<sup>2</sup>

In Somalia the initiation ritual takes place in the home among the women relatives, neighbors and friends. The father stays outside the door as a symbolic guard. The mother officiates, or her place is taken by an older woman. At each ceremony only one little girl is mutilated, but all girls without exception must undergo this operation before they are married.

The ritual itself is not accompanied by religious ceremony or medicinal preparations—its performance is similar to the castrating of an animal.

The child is made to sit on a stool that is not even wiped and several women hold her down firmly. After separating her outer and inner lips (labia majora and labia minora) with her fingers, the old woman attaches them with large thorns onto the flesh of each thigh. With her kitchen knife the woman then pierces and slices open the hood of the clitoris and begins to cut it out. While another woman wipes off the blood with a rag, the mother (or operator)

digs with her fingernail a hole the length of the clitoris to detach and pull out that organ. The little girl screams in extreme pain, but no one pays the slightest attention.

The woman finishes this job by pulling out the clitoris entirely; she then cuts it to the bone with the kitchen knife. Her helpers again wipe off the spurting blood with a rag. The mother then lifts up the skin that is left with her thumb and index finger to remove the remaining flesh. She then digs a deep hole with her hand amidst the gushing blood. The neighbor women are invited to take part in the operation; they plunge their fingers into the bloody hole to verify that every remnant of the clitoris is removed.

This operation is not always well managed as the little girl struggles. Often, by the clumsy use of the knife or a poorly executed cut, the bladder is pierced or the rectum is cut open. If the little girl faints the woman blows *pili-pili* (spice powder) into her nostrils to reanimate her.

But this is not the end of the torture. The most important phase of the ritual begins only now. After a short moment the woman takes the knife again and cuts off the inner lips (labia minora). The helper again wipes the blood with her rag. Then the woman with a swift motion begins to scrape off the skin from the inside of the large lips.

The operator conscientiously scrapes the flesh of the screaming child without the slightest concern for the extreme pain she inflicts. When the wound is large enough she adds some lengthwise cuts and several more incisions. The neighbor women carefully watch her "work" and when needed encourage her accomplishment.

The girl begins to howl once more. Sometimes in a spasm at this stage, she bites off her tongue. The other women carefully watch the child to prevent such an accident. When her

tongue flops out they throw spice powder on it which provokes an instant pulling back and the little girl opens her mouth wide to scream even harder.

With the abrasion of the skin completed according to the rules the operator closes the bleeding large lips and fixes them one against the other with long acacia thorns.

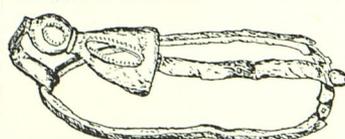
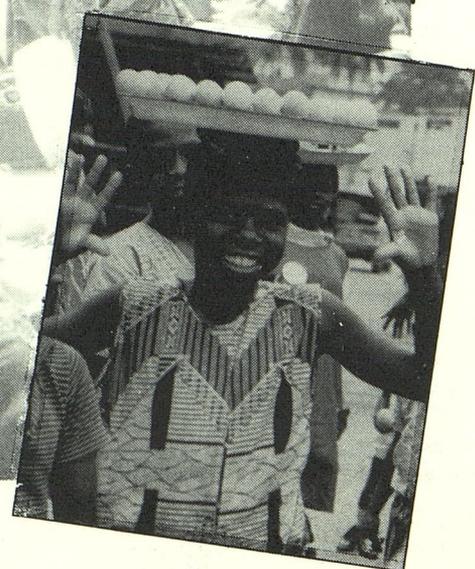
At this stage of the operation the child is spent and exhausted and generally stops crying but usually has convulsions. One then forces down her throat a concoction of plants which has rapid results.

The operator's chief concern is to achieve as narrow an opening as possible, just big enough to allow the urine and menstrual flow to pass. Her honor depends on making it as small as possible because among the Somalis the smaller this artificial passage is, the higher the value of the woman.

Once this operation is finished the woman washes the sex area of the girl and wipes her with a rag. Then the girl is freed (from having been held down) and is ordered to get up. The neighbors then help to immobilize her thighs with ropes of goat skin. A solid bandage is then applied from the knees to the waist of the girl and is left in place for about two weeks. The girl must remain immobile, stretched on a mat, for the entire time while all the excrement evidently remains with her in the bandage.

After that time the girl is released and the bandage is cleaned. Her sex organs assume a monstrous shape which is preserved until her marriage. Contrary to what one would assume death is not a very frequent result of this operation. One does, of course, deplore the various complications which frequently leave the girls crippled and disabled for the rest of their lives.

"I did not know what was happening," a Somalian named Fatuma, who now lives



Kauschbeitel aus Leder

170. Original im Museum Tausand, London 16. Jahrhundert

in England, told me last year. "I was only six years old, but I remember every detail. I was woken up early one morning, a group of women from the neighborhood had come to wake me up. They pulled my legs apart and held them open. A big old woman sat down facing me. She took out a knife, grabbed hold of my clitoris and started cutting me. I tried to free myself and screamed and screamed. The last thing I remember was blood all over spurting from between my legs. Then I passed out."

Dr. Verzin summarizes the effects on health in his article published in 1975:<sup>3</sup>

Primary fatalities due to hemorrhage (uncontrolled bleeding) and shock, blood poisoning and other infections including tetanus due to dirt; retention of urine and later menstrual blood; trauma (injury) to adjacent tissues, the rectum and bladder. Long range results are: a variety of malformations including cysts, keloid formation (hardening of scars), coital difficulties, lack of orgasm, urinary disturbances, chronic pelvic sepsis (infections) and infertility. Obstetric complications are extreme in case of infibulation as delivery is impossible without episiotomy (cutting open the vulva); frequently two or more cuts are needed. Scar tissue frequently complicates and obstructs first deliveries especially.

It should be remembered that studies by doctors are based on patients who come to hospitals. Only a tiny minority in most African countries are within reach of a hospital. No one knows how many young girls bleed to death as a result of the operations, or die from shock, or perish later from infections.<sup>4</sup>

The psychological effects of the extreme pain of the operations are unreported. The prolonged suffering, both physical and psychological, including pain from subsequent sexual intercourse, has never been investigated. The difficulties in giving birth must be further emphasized. Some women require Caesarian sections. Others are unable to conceive. After birth, where infibulation is practiced, a woman is often sewn up again; wives ask for these "repairs" themselves; however the decision rests with the husband as it makes intercourse more pleasurable for him. When they have another child, the whole process of cutting and sewing starts again.

A midwife from Western Kenya sent me the following letter in the summer of 1975. Female circumcision (in Kenya mostly excision is practiced) is supported by President Kenyatta as an important custom of

*(continued on page 32)*



## Pleasure Outing

body. "It feels real good when you get used to it," she said.

Then her mother said she was going to swim to warm up. She said Katie and the boys were to stay right where they were and Katie was to keep an eye on the boys. She swam out to the rope and Katie's father swam out after her.

When they got back her father said to Katie and the boys, "You better watch out, the killer shark's gonna get you." He went under the water and started swimming toward them. They couldn't see where he was and they screamed and ran. Then he came up for air and stood up and pushed the hair out of his eyes and Katie saw the water sparkling in tiny drops all over his arms and chest. He said, "I'm a hungry shark and I see three little fishes and I'm gonna eat them right up." Then he went under the water again and they couldn't see where he was and they screamed and ran. Katie knew it was her father, it wasn't really a shark under the water, but she felt scared. She felt like laughing too, though. Her mother was watching them and smiling. Then her father caught Tom's legs under the water and Tom screamed and laughed and her father came up with Tom sitting on his shoulders. Then her father carried Tom out to the deep water and went around with him on his shoulders. Katie and Bradley were jumping up and down and laughing, watching Tom get his ride. When her father came back and put Tom down, Bradley said, "Me next, me next." Her father looked at him and said to her mother, "Look at that one. His lips are blue." Katie saw that was true. Bradley's lips were blue and his teeth were chattering. Her teeth were chattering too. Then her mother said, "I think they've had enough" and her father said, "Out of the water now." Bradley whined, "I want a ride too," and her father gave him a shove.

They went out of the water, hugging themselves and shivering. The sand stuck to their feet and made their feet gritty.

When they got to the blanket, Bradley picked up a towel but Katie's father told him to put it down and not waste a towel. The sun would warm them up, he said. Her father and mother lay down on the blanket and Tom and Bradley sat hunched up on the grass. Katie lay down on the grass. She felt her skin crinkle under the hot sun and soon she was warm.

Then Bradley got up and went over to the blanket. He stepped on a corner of the blanket and Katie's father smacked his leg and said to keep his sandy feet off it. Bradley asked when they could go back in the water and her father said they were going to stay out for one half hour until they got warmed up. Then Bradley asked when they were going to eat and her father said it wasn't time to eat yet, it was time to get a suntan.

Then her mother took a bottle of baby oil out of the shopping bag and she spilled a little into her hand and rubbed it on her arm. Then her father said to give the baby oil to him and she did and he told her to just lie down and he would rub it in for her. So she lay down on her back and Katie's father spilled a little baby oil in his hand and he rubbed her mother's other arm with it. Then he spilled a little more oil in his hand and he rubbed it on her mother's stomach. He said something to her, low so Katie couldn't hear, and they both laughed. Katie saw her mother's back bump up and down. Then he rubbed baby oil on her mother's legs, from her toes all the way up.

Katie asked, "Could I have some baby oil?" She loved the sweet smell.

"What do you need baby oil for?" her father asked. He wasn't looking at Katie. He was looking at her mother's legs while he was rubbing them. "You're brown as a nut," he said. "You don't need no baby oil. Your mom needs it so her sensitive white skin won't burn." Then he said something low to Katie's mother again and made her laugh.

When he finished rubbing in the baby

*(continued on page 33)*

## MUTILATION

the Kikuyu—the largest and politically most active group, to which Kenyatta himself belongs. Her name thus cannot be mentioned:

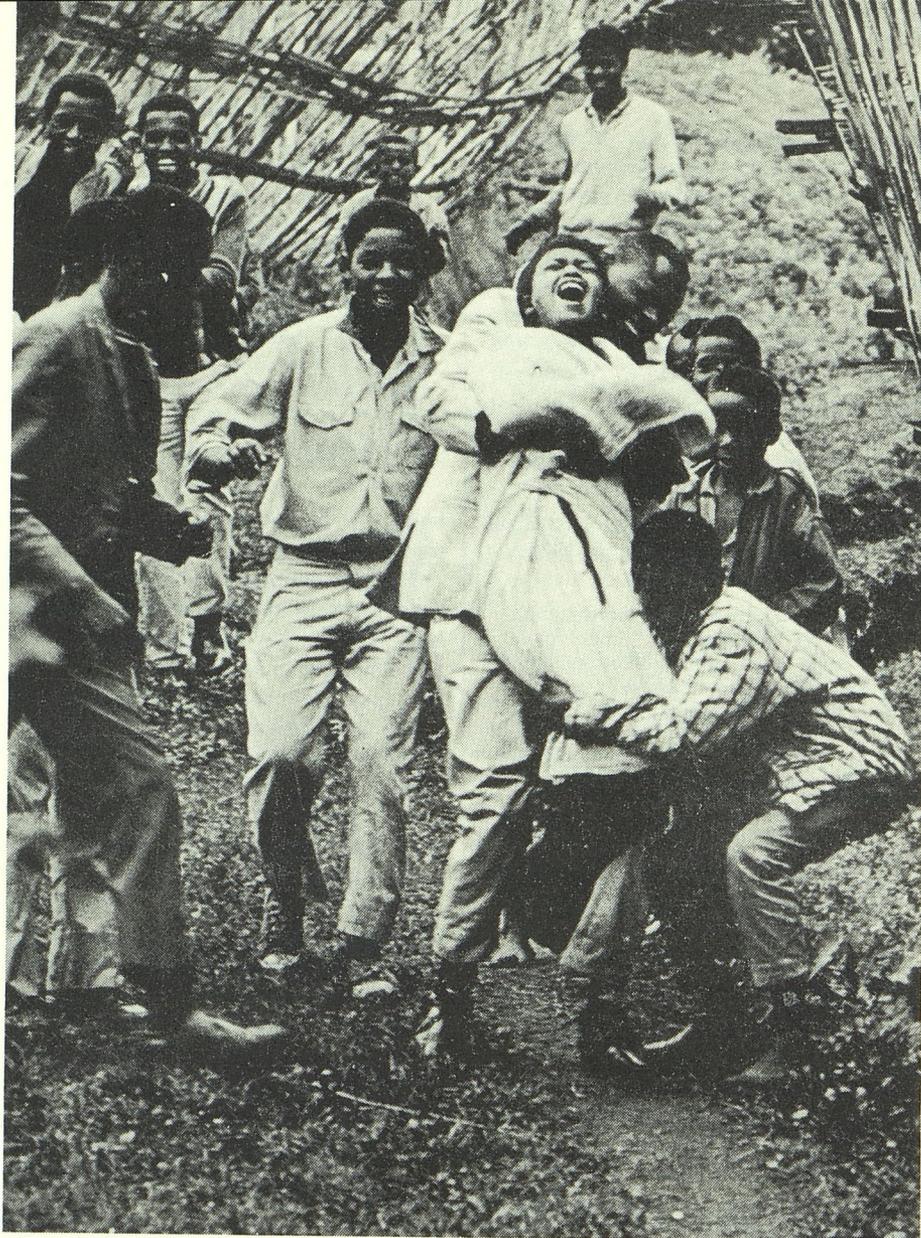
Through my experience as a midwife working under the Ministry of Health I have seen some circumcised mothers recently, especially primagravida [women having children for the first time] having complications, such as a delay in the second stage of labor because of the scar formed; the perineum cannot be stretched to give room for the baby's head to be born. In this case an episiotomy [cutting open the vulva] has to be performed each time the woman gives birth; if not there is a serious tear to both the perineum and the muscles and this involves also the rectum. Sometimes these women end up with V.V.F. (Vaginal Vesicle Fistula) which is very hard to repair if there is no experienced doctor. Also babies born of these women, if premature, normally die or have brain damage. Some babies are born dead because of delay in second stage, if born at home without supervision of a qualified midwife. Hemorrhage is profuse in case of a tear on the scar, and the scar always forms haemotoma when bruised and it is very painful.

Yet women themselves most vehemently oppose change. Why should this be so?

### Reasons for the Operation

Traditions of violence against women have hardly changed for centuries. Last year I spent six weeks in seven African countries,<sup>4</sup> investigating the present situation of genital mutilation. My findings, backed by four years of research, are related here.

Most people are convinced of the necessity of the operation because it is a custom decreed by the ancestors. Terrible harm befalls those who defy tradition. Men refuse to marry girls who have not been operated on and in most African cultures marriage is still the only purpose in life for a female. In Black Africa it is widely believed that excision is necessary to "preserve the family," to prevent women from becoming "wild," with no control over their sexuality. A direct correlation has been made between genital mutilation and polygamy, which is still practiced in much of Africa. (Only in the Ivory Coast is polygamy outlawed.) An African schoolteacher wrote that excision was necessary on account of polygamy: "How can a man satisfy all his wives? He would ruin his health." "Polygamy," the teacher stated, "is one of our important



African traditions that we must preserve."<sup>5</sup>

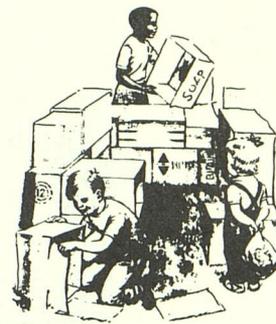
Genital mutilation is practiced by members of all religions in Africa, including Christians (both Catholic and Protestant), Moslems, Animists, Copts, Ethiopian Christians and even the Fellasha, an ancient Jewish sect living in the highlands of Ethiopia. Female circumcision was known in ancient Egypt, was reported by the Romans, and has existed in different parts of Africa and Arabia for thousands of years. In the sixteenth century Jesuits who came to convert the Abyssinians (Ethiopians) discovered and forbade the practice. But since no man would marry a girl who was not excised, conversions stopped. The Pope then sent a medical mission which promptly found that the operation was "necessary for medical reasons." Since then all Catholic missions permit the operations on the daughters of their converts.

Infibulation is mostly practiced by Mos-

lems. Although Dr. A. Abu el Futuh Shandall and others—based on Moslem religious texts—state that circumcision of females is not a command but an "embellishment" and that infibulation is against the Moslem admonishment not to inflict pain, in West Africa the Marabouts (Moslem holy men) frequently claim that female circumcision is a religious command.<sup>6</sup> In Egypt and the Sudan, it is claimed that the operation contributes to the beauty of the woman—that the exterior genitalia are ugly and must be removed.

It must be remembered that these customs are kept secret everywhere. I have found that African women in the modern sector, concerned about the health damage done by circumcision, do not know how widespread these practices are. Frequently they are unaware that these practices continue in other parts of Africa or believe that circumcision is a universal practice and that nothing can be done.

*(continued on page 34)*



## Pleasure Outing

oil, he lay down on the blanket. He put his hand so it was lying flat on her mother's stomach. "Sun sure feels good," he said. Her mother said, "Mmm."

Katie had nothing to do.

The lady and the little girl on the next blanket came back up from the water. The lady was dripping wet and her hair was black and wet and flat against her head. The little girl was wet and shivering and the lady wrapped her up in a big blue towel and rubbed her all over. Then the lady took another towel and rubbed her own arms and chest. Her chest was enormous and all pink with sunburn. Katie could not stop staring at it. Then the lady looked up at Katie and Katie looked away.

Bradley and Tom came up from the sand. Their chests and arms and legs were covered with sand. It made Katie itch to look at them.

Bradley stood by her mother and asked if it was a half hour yet. Her mother opened her eyes and sat up and said, "My god, look at you two. What were you doing?"

"We were getting buried in the sand," Bradley said. Katie could see there was sand in his ears and in his hair. Then he said, "Is it a half hour yet, Mom? Can we go in the water?"

Her mother looked at her father who was still lying down. "What are you looking at me for?" he asked. "They didn't ask me, they asked you."

Her mother said, "Well you were the one . . . Well, I'm asking you."

Then without looking at Bradley or Tom, just looking at the sky, her father said, "Yeah, go in." Bradley and Tom tore off in a second and her father said to their backs, "Yeah, go ahead in. Go in where it's good and deep, why don't you. Go out and play in the middle of the lake and drown." Bradley and Tom didn't hear him say that because they were already down at the water.

Her mother was sitting up on the blanket, squinting down at the water, watching Bradley and Tom. Her father turned over on his stomach and put his head on his arms.

"I don't want to go back in that freezing water," Katie said. "I like it right here in the sun." Her father didn't say anything. She lay down on her stomach too. The sun was hot on her back and the grass tickled her stomach and her nose. Soon the sounds of the people's voices, the grownups talking and the children yelling down at the lake, seemed to come from far away. It was as if she were dead on the grass and could still hear all around her the voices of the people who were alive. Then she found she was telling herself the story of the princess—it was her only with long golden hair and a white dress down to the ground—and the stern, cruel king. She did not remember when she first started thinking the story. She had an idea that it first came to her in a dream. She told it to herself every night in her bed, the darkness all around her. She did not understand why it made her so ashamed. The greatest mystery was the feeling it gave her—like she had to pee so badly that she had to clutch herself between the legs—when she got to the part about the beatings. She did not understand it because the feeling was not at all the feeling she had when her father came towering at her, his hand coming down so fast and so hard that she could not look; did not know where or how many times she would be hit; crumpled, so sick with fear that she wanted to die. That feeling between her legs did not come then, so why did it come in the story? She didn't know, but she couldn't resist telling herself the beating part over and over, making the beatings harder each time. She was panting softly into the grass when her mother said, "Let's go for a swim now, Katie, then we'll have lunch."

Her mother's voice came as a surprise to her. She'd forgotten where she was. She stumbled to her feet and followed her mother down the grassy slope. She could see her father, ahead of them, wading out into the freezing water.

—Anita Page



Ougadougou, Upper Volta, 1976 photo by Su Friedrich



## MUTILATION

### The Effects of Modernization

Modernization—the introduction of new tools, the monetary economy and “development”—has not improved women’s lives. Development projects have ignored the personal and health needs of women, while increasing the economic gap between men and women. Thus women have become ever more dependent on men. In Moslem Africa, outside the family, without the “protection” of the male, a woman is literally lost. She owns nothing, she is prey to assault by any man, she has no home if she is rejected by her family. Divorce represents loss of children and economic ruin.

At the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements in Vancouver, Canada, in 1976, A.J. Abdille, the leader of the Somali delegation, gave a rousing speech about the accomplishments of the Somali revolutionary government. He described the actions undertaken to modernize the country and society through general education and modern technology. Abdille also related how the government had successfully moved to abolish many

damaging traditional customs, such as tribal feuds and blood revenge. “We have started literacy training of all women,” he told me, “My wife also has learned to read,” he said. When I asked about infibulation, he said: “But everybody does that—it is an old custom, it has always been done.” Abdille related that he had his own daughters infibulated in new hospitals: “Of course, everyone else in the government does it too.”

When Ambassador Abdirazak Haji Hussein of Somalia appeared on the *McNeill-Lehrer Report* in February, he stressed Somalia’s need for assistance from the United States, for arms, as well as aid for his people, who had recently suffered a devastating drought. “Women have equal rights in Somalia,” he assured me, but confirmed that infibulation operations are still performed in government hospitals.<sup>7</sup>

The hospitals are built with European aid (Italy gave \$64 million in development funds between 1969 and 1976, Germany \$33 million, and Sweden \$8 million) and the health services are organized with technical assistance from abroad. Dr. Kevin M. Cahill, a New York specialist in tropical medicine, was one of the Western health advisors to the Somali Government; he worked with A.J. Abdille. When asked what he knew about infibulation and the use of hospitals to perform the operation, he told me, “This is of no interest to me—my own research deals

with the major illnesses of the land. Infibulation is not one of them.”

### Some Signs of Change

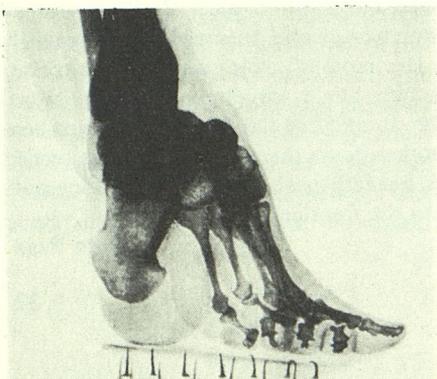
Contrary to what is claimed by international agencies, including church groups active in Africa as well as the World Health Organization, UNICEF (the Year of the Child is 1979) and U.S. Agency for International Development, women in Africa are beginning to demand change.

In Nigeria an article condemning circumcision was recently published in a widely circulated magazine by Esther Ogunmodede,<sup>8</sup> who is active in a large, influential women’s organization. “How much longer will we allow our girls to be brutalized in this barbaric way?” she asks in the headline of the article. The *Nation*, the leading paper of Kenya, ran an article giving ten health facts of circumcision and referring to my work and research published in *WIN News*.<sup>9</sup>

The Sudan is the only country in Africa today where genital mutilation is acknowledged and openly discussed as a serious health hazard. At the Fifth Congress of Obstetrical and Gynaecological Society, the Minister of Social Affairs, Dr. Fatima Abdul Mahmoud, who is herself a gynecologist and a member of the Ob-Gyn Society, stressed the importance of the discussion of female circumcision and emphasized that the Sudanese government is looking for guidance in its commitment to permanently doing away with these debilitating customs. Kateera Yassin, the Secretary of the Sudanese Women’s Union, a powerful political women’s organization, stated that doctors have discussed this situation for more than 30 years. She accused them of doing nothing and added that some of them profit from doing these operations: “Fortunes are being made by M.D.s and also by midwives.”

Throughout the world, female sexual assault and torture, both sanctioned and unsanctioned, continues. Our oppression takes many forms. The time has come for action. African women, appealing for a major WHO study that has never been conducted, said: “While it [is] the duty of African women to further . . . African culture by supporting those rich and varied qualities which were of value to Africa and the world, they should join in condemning these customs which [are] deleterious to health and indeed dangerous . . .”<sup>10</sup>

—Fran P. Hosken  
©1978 Fran P. Hosken



## Notes

1. This point is made especially by Dr. J.A. Verzin in "Sequelae of Female Circumcision," *Tropical Doctor* (Oct. 1975). See also Dr. A. Abu el Futuh Shandall, "Circumcision and Infibulation of Females," *Sudan Medical Journal*, Vol. 5, No. 4 (1967).
2. Jacques Lantier, *La Cité magique et magie en Afrique Noire* (Paris: Librairie A. Fayard, 1972) pp. 277-279. Similar descriptions are also given by: Annie de Villeneuve, "Étude sur une coutume somalie: les femmes cousues," *Journal de la Société des Africanistes*, Vol. VI pp. 15-32, (1973), and Guy Pieters, "Gynaecology in the Country of the Sewn Women," *Acta Chirurgica Belgica*, No. 3 (May 1972) pp. 173-193 and *WIN News*, Vol. 2, No. 3, p. 19, Summer 1976.
3. Dr. J.A. Verzin, op. cit.  
See also Dr. R. Cook, "Damage to Physical Health from Pharonic Circumcision (Infibulation) of Females: A Review of Medical Literature" (World Health Organization).
4. Sudan, Egypt, Ethiopia, Kenya, Ivory Coast, Upper Volta and Senegal. In 1973 I visited 15 countries (sub-Saharan) and 25 cities to research modernization and urbanization. Prior to that I visited all of Northern Africa.
5. *Famille et Développement*. B.P. 11.007, C.D. Annexe, Dakar, Senegal, 2nd issue (Spring 1975) article on excision (in French).
6. Shandall, pp. 183-184.
7. Letters demanding that aid to Somalia be withheld and human rights hearings (of Women's rights) be held should be sent to Patricia Derian, Co-ordinator of President Carter's Human Rights Committee and Secretary of State Cyrus Vance, Dept. of State, Washington, D.C. 20520. Letters

to Congresspersons should request that the message be forwarded to the pertinent committee chairpersons (especially to Congressman Donald Fraser, re Human Rights Hearings).

8. Esther Ogunmodede, "Circumcision: How Much Longer Will We Allow Our Girls to Be Brutalized in This Barbaric Way?," *The Drum* (Nov. 1977). See also *WIN News* No. 3-4 (Fall 1977), pp. 45-46.
9. Fran P. Hosken, *WIN News*. (For additional information on my research write *WIN News*, 187 Grand St., Lexington, MA. 02173 USA. Tel. 617-862-9431.)
10. United Nations Document ST/TAO/HR/9, paragraphs 60, 61 and 62; published in *WIN News* 1-4 (Summer 1975), pp. 41-42.

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- "Genital Mutilation of Women in Africa" by Fran P. Hosken, *Munger Africana Library Notes*, Issue 36, Oct. 1976. Order from Munger Africana Library, California Institute of Technology, Pasadena, Cal., 91125.

## Medical Literature

- "Sequelae of Female Circumcision" by J.A. Verzin, *Tropical Doctor*, Oct. 1975. Reprint available from the Royal Society of Medicine, Chandos House, 2

DEAR [REDACTED] I know exactly what SYLVIA is going through. She's the wife who's trying to find a chastity belt so she can put her husband's suspicions to rest.

I've been married for 14 years to a wonderful man whose only fault was his unreasonable jealousy. He loved me dearly, and although I've always been a true and faithful wife, he never trusted me out of his sight.

The daily accusations, denials and fighting were destroying our marriage, so together we designed something on the order of a chastity belt.

It's a tight-fitting rubber panty girdle over which I wear an old-fashioned type corset which laces up the back. My husband ties me into it every morning, tying the lace in a hard knot at the top where I can't reach it, let it alone undo it. Over that I wear a snug-fitting leather belt which also fastens in the back with a small padlock like those used on suitcases. My husband carries the only key.

Every day he comes home at noon to help me in the bathroom.

This may sound like a humiliating solution, and I'm certainly not advocating it for all wives, but it saved our marriage. —HAPPY

DEAR HAPPY: If you're happy in this kind of wedlock, more power to you.

DEAR [REDACTED] We at the Anvil Arms do custom work in metal. We make swords and military items for museums and personal collections. Having made,

armor for the National Park Service for living history programs, the chastity belt should be no problem at all.

Of course, it would require some redesigning, since the chastity belt was notoriously uncomfortable for the wearer. We would also need the exact measurements to provide a proper fit.

May I add, Abby, after a hard day in the shop, I look forward to your column, as it adds a little fun and a great deal of insight into human problems.

—J. LUTHER SOWERS

DEAR [REDACTED] A friend of mine who makes gold jewelry told me he recently made a 14-Karat gold chastity belt for the wife of a rich Arab in Beverly Hills. A month later this same Arab phoned and ordered NINE more.

DEAR [REDACTED] I own a specialty sheet metal fabrication shop and can make a fine chastity belt with stainless steel that will not rust, tarnish or chip.

Three styles are available: snuggy, regular and bikini. Locking devices can be lock, padlock or combination. Item can be monogrammed at no additional cost.

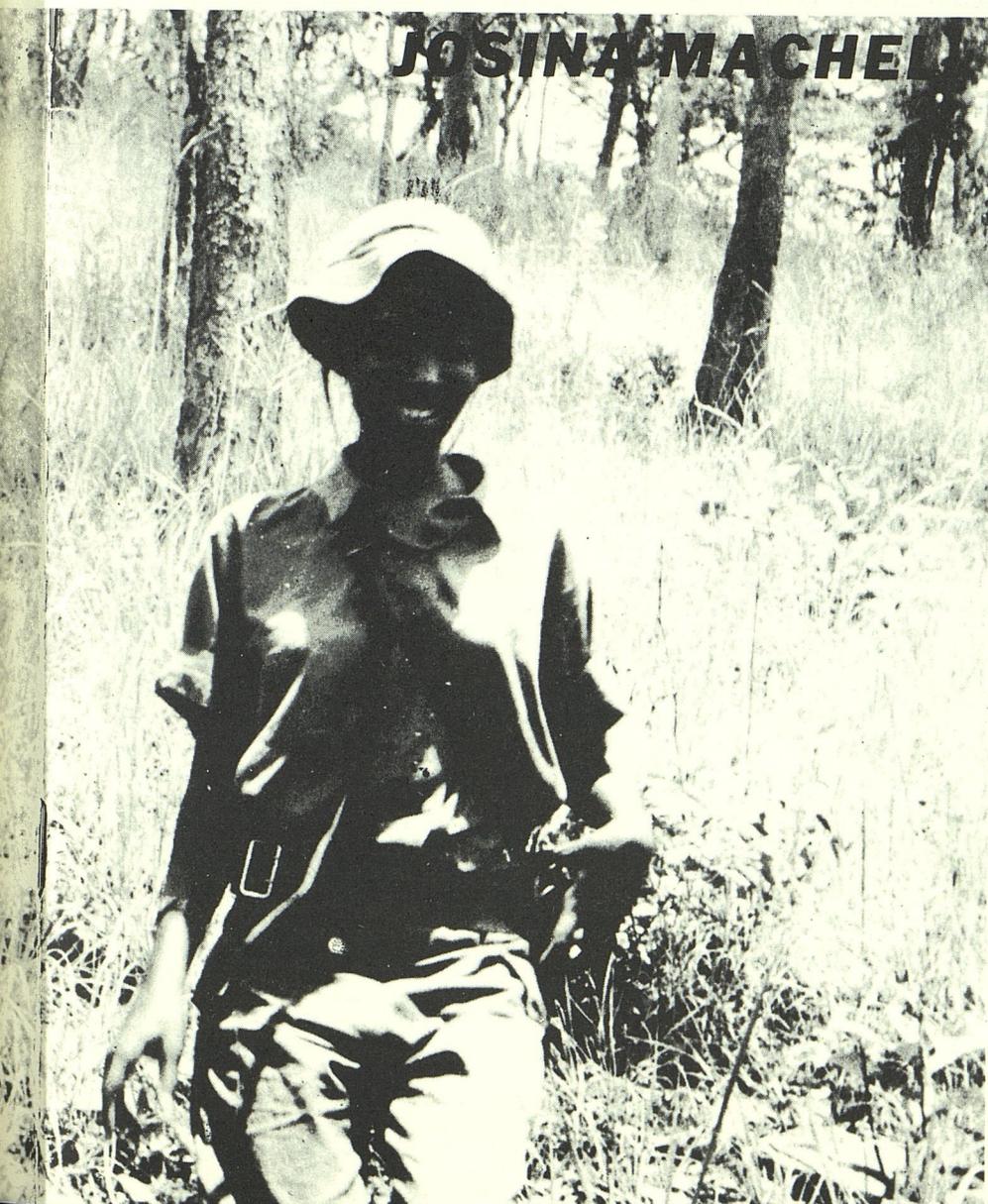
It can be made on a time and material basis, and the only requirement is that the lady come for fittings.

—DONALD KEMPH

DEAR [REDACTED] Tell the woman who wants a chastity belt that she can buy one in New York at a place called "The Pleasure Chest."

—MURPH

## JOSINA MACHEL



## Breasts

A laughing man's voice  
coils  
around and ropes me.

Walking down the street,  
netted by calls,  
walking thru the words  
thrown on my path,  
I stumble. I walk  
among the knife-sharp voices  
cutting their mark.

In one man's eye a hand  
severed at the wrist.  
His other eye winks shut.  
One man's head incises  
vulva  
like the hieroglyphic slits  
of urinal drawings.  
Another swings a briefcase  
stuffed with women's legs  
cut off.

And a man  
lifts up  
a woman's tongue  
between his thumb and finger.  
From hand to hand  
they pass a woman's breast,  
finish,  
and toss it down into the gutter.

—Rachel Blau DuPlessis

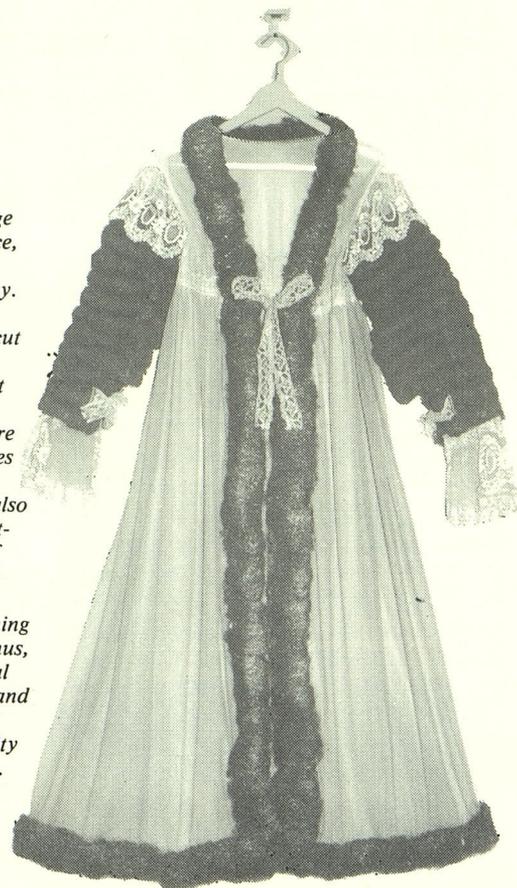
# MUTILATION

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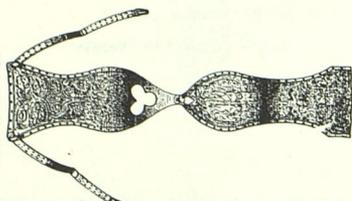
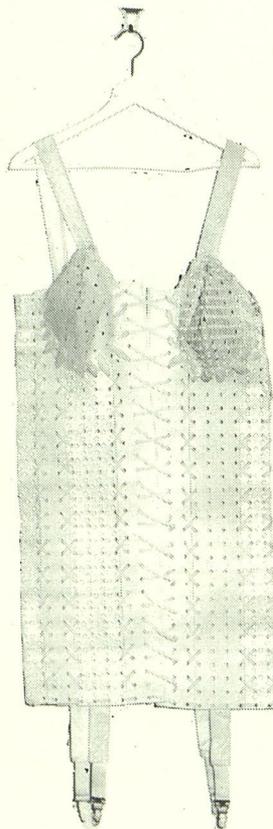
## Peignoir

*Related to the idea of illusion in marriage is the peignoir. The peignoir is made of lace, steel wool, and pink nylon. The choice of materials illustrates a cruel-gentle ambiguity. Pink nylon is a very soft, pretty material. Steel wool is not. It scratches you. It can cut you. There is cruelty in the peignoir in the fact that the steel wool is very deceptive. It was sewed to look like fur. One doesn't notice the danger until one gets close. There is a fantasy aspect in the fur-looking sleeves and collar that is counter-balanced by the reality of the pink nylon. The peignoir is also humorous. It resembles some sort of robot-like monster. There is a whole mystique of illusion and pretense built up around peignoirs. Women in the movies are always changing into them. They are the "something more comfortable" used for seduction. Thus, all women have come to associate beautiful lacy underwear with Hollywood romance and vicarious story-book sex. I felt that a steel wool and nylon peignoir combine the reality of marriage with the romance of marriage.*



## Girdle

*One of the most frightening articles of clothing that I can imagine is the girdle. The whole concept of pretense is embodied in the idea of a girdle. Its function is to mold one into society's ideal. It is completely dishonest. It merely creates a facade. It is an uncomfortable torture. It doesn't let a woman breathe. It sticks to her like an octopus. It doesn't let air in or out. This is why I used rubber bath mats with suction cups all over them to make my girdle. The deceptive and humorous aspect of a girdle is further heightened by little bits of lace and ribbon which are always attached to them. I used velvet and nylon ribbon with the rubber to intensify the ambiguity. Being young and thin is considered the ideal. A girl is told that she will no longer be thin when she reaches middle-age. She will be unattractive by society's standards. As a punishment for getting old, she will have to wear a girdle. She will end her life being surrounded on all sides by rubber and elastic.*



—Mimi Smith, 1966

# WOLF WHISTLES and WARNINGS

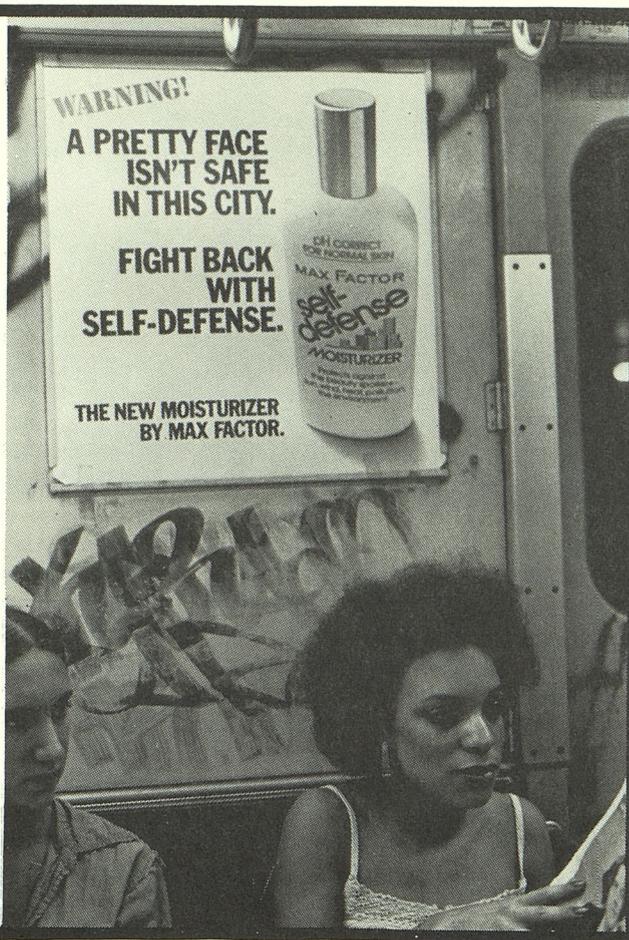


photo by Cathy Cockrell

I turn the corner and see them waiting. I brace myself, put on the outer shield, hurry past while they comment . . . on me. And it will happen again. And again and again.

Running a gauntlet? Walking a mine field? No. This describes a woman's typical afternoon walk through any neighborhood. There is nothing that so graphically differentiates the public experience of men and women.

Wolf whistles and intimate comments are said to be merely a friendly institution of male/female contact. The men intend to compliment, I'm told. So I feel confused when I don't like the attention I'm getting, and embarrassed at the mere thought of confronting this experience with a label as drastic as "public harassment."

The privilege of publicly scrutinizing the female figure is indulgently viewed as a grown-up "boys will be boys" tradition, a trivial pastime unrelated to the female/male struggle for power and dignity. It has been institutionalized in songs ("Standing on the corner watching all the girls go by"), in movies, in advertisements, in jokes and in proverbs ("Man is the head but woman turns it"). It is institutionalized further by teenage etiquette books written for girls which offer advice on the proper response to a wolf whistle.

However, public harassment in the guise of simple friendliness—for all its superficial harmlessness—needs to be exposed as the manipulative expression of power that it ultimately is.

A brief description of public harassment is enough to reveal the surprisingly transparent camouflage of its intent to flatter. The key here is that the speaker making the public comment (about the physical characteristics of a person he doesn't know) assumes total control in a situation he has unilaterally created by his statement. The content of this random statement can be "flattering" or crudely insulting at the initiator's sole discretion. The person toward whom the comment is directed has the option of responding after the fact, but is initially subject to the commenter's whim. This freedom to comment randomly on another person's appearance in public clearly affords a power position.

The peculiarity of public harassment is that it is a one-way assumed privilege which is culturally sanctioned for men only. Women may comment and publicly tease their male friends and acquaintances, but it is not common or acceptable behavior for women to make public comments on the physical appearance of men they don't know.

The notion that this is trivial behavior is

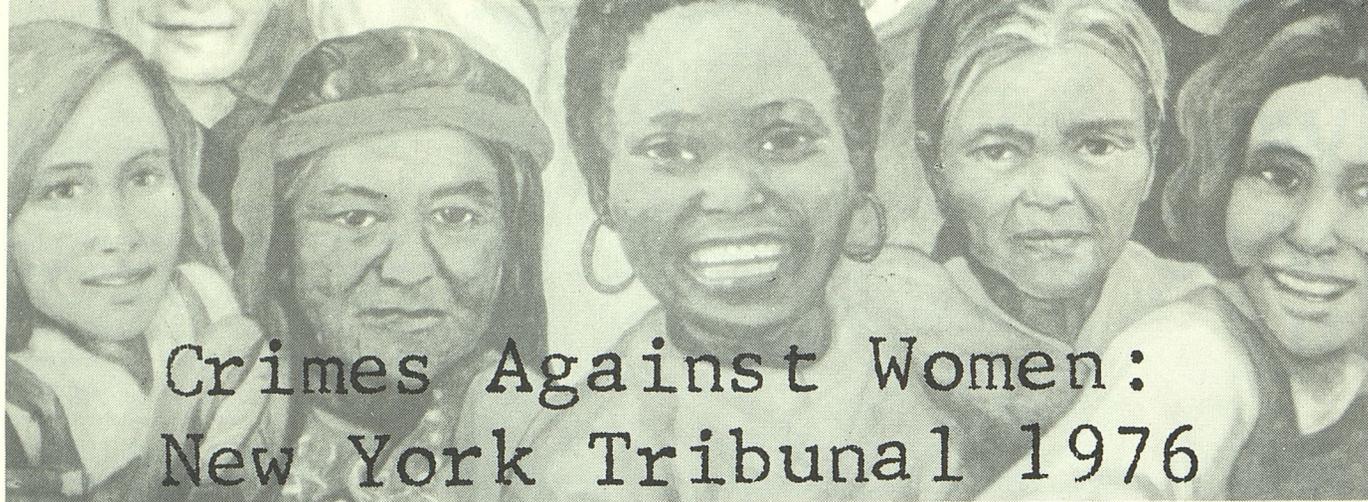
not borne out by the experiences of women who have confronted their harassers with expressions of disapproval. They have been met with sudden outrage because women who don't appreciate this involuntary subjection to male appraisal (i.e., do not fulfill the expected function as receiver/reflector of male virility and aggression) become insults to the American male's image of himself. "Beautiful" turns instantly to "Cunt." There are few inbetweens. Misogyny is thinly veiled.

The first function of public harassment is to reinforce spatial boundaries that drastically limit women's "sphere." It clearly stakes out public space as male space. Women who want to be outside their homes must do so at their own risk and with the full knowledge that at any time they can be publicly humiliated or "complimented." Women are at all times subject to public scrutiny. Men in offices, on the street, from their trucks, in elevators and in stores all assume the right to comment. They can comment on various parts of women's anatomy, clothes, weight, hair color, emotional state, race and age. Nothing is beyond comment. On some level this always requires that women respond emotionally. Even when the whistle feels complimentary, one is inevitably self-conscious when one knows one is being watched and evaluated. Often the whistle or comment generates feelings of embarrassment, anger or fear and is an intrusion on one's time and privacy. Constant badgering or teasing also saps our energy. From the boys on the playground to the men on the street—it is endless confrontation. Being the object of such unrelieved evaluation is like being on stage every minute out of the house.

Constant subjection to male scrutiny is a reminder that this is not woman's domain, that women must not relax or be off guard in public. It reinforces the notion that men are the lookers, the evaluators, the judges, the people who set the standards of acceptance and recognition. The street becomes the school where women learn to compete for the only attention that really matters, to conform to the established norms set by men in order to obtain the approval of men, i.e., public approval.

The second function of public harassment is the meshing of one half of the world into a single category. The underlying message is that women are interchangeable. Comments, whether they are overtly flattering or degrading, are arbitrary; they are meant for women in

*(continued on page 39)*



## Crimes Against Women: New York Tribunal 1976

In August 1974, at an international feminist camp in Denmark, a group of women decided that feminists had to protest the token gesture the United Nations had made in designating 1975 International Women's Year. Although the extent of the indifference was still unknown, it was already clear that the U.N. had made a very limited commitment to deal with the severe social, economic, political and medical needs of women throughout the world. Only later did we all learn how this male-dominated organization cavalierly allocated for 1975 the smallest budget ever proposed for one of its special annual projects. As a way of taking a public stand against this travesty, the women gathered in Denmark decided to stage a tribunal, one in which unknown women, from the capitalist, socialist and Third Worlds, would come together to testify about the crimes committed against them. After a series of organizational and promotional meetings, in Frankfurt, Paris, Mexico City, London and East Berlin, 2000 women, representing at least 40 countries, assembled in Brussels in March 1976 and held a five-day International Tribunal on Crimes Against Women.

The Tribunal was one of the largest international feminist events to occur in recent years. Comparing it to the U.N. meeting in Mexico City, Simone de Beauvoir said in her opening remarks to the Tribunal: "In contrast to Mexico where women, directed by their political parties, by their nations, were only seeking to integrate Woman into a male society, you are gathered here to denounce the oppression to which women are subjected in this society."<sup>1</sup> What is more, the Tribunal directly challenged ideologues on the right and on the left, those who glorified traditional cultures and those who heralded the freedoms brought about by advanced technology. In Brussels, women who represented different social classes and cultures, who proclaimed different political tendencies

and sexual orientations, all joined to denounce a world where virtually every state, no matter what its relationship to capital is, supports a social system that discriminates against women.

The Tribunal provided a forum for women to plead their cases as well as a place for feminists to draw up resolutions and political strategies. It was not, however, a platform for presenting elaborate new theories on the oppression of women. Still, for those willing to listen and reflect, the horrific stories shared by the victims reminded us that we cannot ignore, but have to find explanations for, the widespread—if not universal—brutal oppression of women. As Gayle Rubin so poignantly put it, "No analysis of the reproduction of labor power under capitalism can explain foot-binding, chastity belts, or any of the incredible array of Byzantine, fetishized indignities, let alone the more ordinary ones, which have been inflicted upon women in various times and places."<sup>2</sup>

The Tribunal identified five categories of crimes, many of which are not even recognized as such by international or national codes of law:

—*Sexual crimes*: rape, sexual molestation of children, persecution of lesbians, abuse of women and girls in pornography, clitorotomy and infibulation.

—*Women political prisoners*: torture and rape.

—*Family and the law*: forced motherhood due to outlawing abortion, economic dependency necessitated by the structure of the nuclear family, welfare system, persecution of lesbian mothers, wife-battering.

—*Medical and reproductive crimes*: forced sterilization, brutalization of the childbirth process, psychiatric role reinforcement in the name of ensuring mental health.

—*Economic crimes*: unpaid housework, women as a surplus labor force, sex discrimination in employment, sexual harassment at the place of work, layoffs.

In every category, many of the crimes

specifically involved sexual assaults, or at the very least the abuse of women's bodies. In every category, many of the crimes specifically served to enjoin women that they are inferior to men, both in terms of physical strength and social status. In every category, many of the crimes were sanctioned and executed by representatives of male-dominated states, male-dominated local institutions and/or male-dominated family structures. The Tribunal, in other words, dramatically suggested that despite the social and economic variations from one culture to another, women experience male violence as the ultimate means of social control in almost every society around the world.

The possibility that things are significantly different in "classless societies, where women, like men, participate actively in the means of production, is an issue still hotly debated among feminist anthropologists today.<sup>3</sup> When all the rhetoric is eliminated, however, many of us feel that there is enough doubt in the literature to urge us on to seek explanations which transcend a purely materialist analysis. While agreeing that the role women play in the economic sphere is an important component, and while being uncomfortable with ahistorical, universalistic interpretations which veer dangerously toward sociobiology, many of us insist that serious attention be given to the superstructure as well, i.e., the ideology of the particular society under consideration. The women among the African Bushmen (hunters and gatherers) provide, for example, 80% of the band's diet, while men contribute only 20%. But what is the significance of their 80% when the men's 20% is more culturally valued?<sup>4</sup> Then there are the horticulturalist Mundurucu of Brazil, where the men control their women by threats of gang rape, despite the productive hours women spend in Mundurucu gardens.<sup>5</sup>

(continued on page 40)

# WOLF WHISTLES

general. In a single afternoon walk one woman may be the recipient of both whistles and insults. Women, being interchangeable, can fit any male fantasy.

There is a widespread cultural endorsement for the myth that a whistle aimed in a woman's direction is a compliment on her own appearance and that it is an expression of genuine appreciation. We are encouraged, in the Hanes stocking ads, for example, to be the "other woman" who can turn the head of a male even when he is already accompanied by a beautiful woman. To be able to generate this sort of male recognition is the sign of a successfully "feminine" female. Or so the myth goes.

In *The Dialectic of Sex: The Case for Feminist Revolution*, Shulamith Firestone argues that such a process of differentiating women only by physical attributes deliberately blinds women to our condition of invisibility. She gives the example of seeing each secretary in an office perk up when a man exclaims, "I love blondes!" Each wants to be "the" blonde, though she would accomplish recognition merely by being one of a rather large group. In addition, Firestone points out that, when women are recognized only on the basis of their external qualities, male individuality (accomplishments, ideas, interests) becomes conveniently exaggerated.

Some women enjoy public comments and whistles and may actively encourage them; however, women are never individually asked if this public judgment from a stranger is desired or would be appreciated. It is the male harasser's assumption that all women deserve comment and want it. This blanket assumption transcends any allegation of the harasser's good will by its blind disregard for individual preferences and temperament.

A third function of the public harassment of women by men is the reinforcement of one-way familiarity. The assumption is that all women can be spoken to intimately and informally even though they are strangers. This presumptuous intimacy stems from and reinforces an internalized hierarchy which implies a lesser regard and lower status of women in general as it ultimately reduces every woman to the common denominator. There is judgment in a tradition that sanctions a nonreversible male-to-female familiarity.

In a seemingly parallel insight regarding another aspect of the politics of public familiarity, Nancy Henley, the author of *Body Politics*, has investigated the significance of sex, power, and non-verbal communication in our hierarchy-ridden society. She points to "the network of touch privileges," "micropolitical gestures" and "tactical assertion of authority" and generally establishes that people are more likely to touch their subordinates and co-workers than their bosses. Similarly, in other interactions between pairs of persons of different social status (teacher/student, minister/parishioner, foreman/worker), the typical pattern that emerges is of the superior-status person touching the inferior-status one; the pattern of touch thus reflects its hierarchical significance. Henley further establishes a convincing argument relating touch to power and gender. She carefully demonstrates how touch is used as a tool to perpetuate the social order in this male-dominated culture.

Henley's research into the social significance of physical familiarity would appear to support my argument that the one-way familiarity of street harassment is a form of social control, subtler than rape (and in no way comparable in consequence) but certainly as effective because women have been socialized to think that this familiarity is elevating rather than degrading.



photo by Gail Lineback

Such presumptuous familiarity does not exist in isolation but fits into an unpleasant package for women. American proverbs sustain a direct connection between desirability and vulnerability, and indicate by their presence in the "familiar quotations" books in the library that this thinking has had a long history. "Ugliness is the guardian of women." "Plain women are as safe as churches."

In the wake of the Son of Sam's terrorizing, Madison Avenue saw fit to make a profit on the linking of desirability and vulnerability. "Warning! . . . A Pretty Face Isn't Safe In This City!" was the

slogan for Max Factor's face moisturizer "Self-Defense." In the smaller print it was explained that this was self-defense against the city's dirt and pollution which could ruin a face with skin problems, but the terminology was blatantly based on the fact of crimes against women. The warning was true and Max Factor played on every woman's victim role to sell that moisturizer. It used male predators as the status quo and built a clever ad campaign on the reality of crimes against women. And it was able to do this because this reality is taken for granted. No one had to ask what the ad was referring to. It was also assumed that most women would not be offended by this ad. In fact the advertising mentality assumed that the reverse was true: women, being concerned with self-defense, would respond positively to this advertisement by buying the product. Overt sexism sells. The male-as-predator role, trivialized by the Max Factor promotion team, is fed by the everyday treatment of women as public property.

Public familiarity is the bottom line of the spectrum reinforcing the larger crimes against women. Like alcoholism that starts with "just a social drink," public harassment is "just a harmless passing comment" which grows hideous. Each level of harassment provides the excuse for the next, and the process gathers momentum as it rolls across our cultural stage.

The privilege of commenting publicly on a woman's body is legitimized by the big money-makers in that self-righteous second cousin, the Beauty Contest. From public evaluation of female bodies in the flesh, it is just one step to spreading the naked female form across the centerfolds of magazines and from there to showing women, bruised or in chains, on record covers. X-rated movies are big business, and prime-time television dramas are often made of the crimes against women, with rapists apprehended and found guilty only after some juicy, fantasy-inspiring footage of female terror. Given such a firm foundation, is it any wonder that we are daily bombarded with the news reports of rapes, attacks, murders to an extent that women are on one level always aware of the risk of walking the streets?

The theme of impending victimization is reinforced by the continual annoyance of simple public confrontation until finally the entire hierarchy of harassment creates and sustains a long-term terrorizing effect on women.

—Pam McAllister  
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# Tribuna l

True, certain groups of men, particularly in a class society, are also controlled by violence (almost always male violence) and often by the very same institutions that dominate women. Still, as Marx himself recognized, borrowing—but not acknowledging—the idea from Flora Tristan, women are the proletariat's proletariat.<sup>6</sup>

To return to the issue at hand, what is important in theoretical terms, and what is confirmed by the cases presented at the Tribunal, is that women are very often punished—some may say socialized—with sexual violence. When necessary, women are kept in line by men who sexually humiliate them, who forcefully determine their productive and reproductive roles in society, and, by extension, control female sexuality. As Margaret Mead said in commenting on forms of social control, men are killed and women raped.<sup>7</sup>

How is it that women can be controlled by male sexual aggression? What is there in the nature of male/female relations that so defiantly challenges even the best sociological explanations? Obviously we need to know more about cultural attitudes toward violence against women.

The story of the International Tribunal has been told in detail in *The Proceedings of the International Tribunal on Crimes Against Women*.

## The New York Tribunal

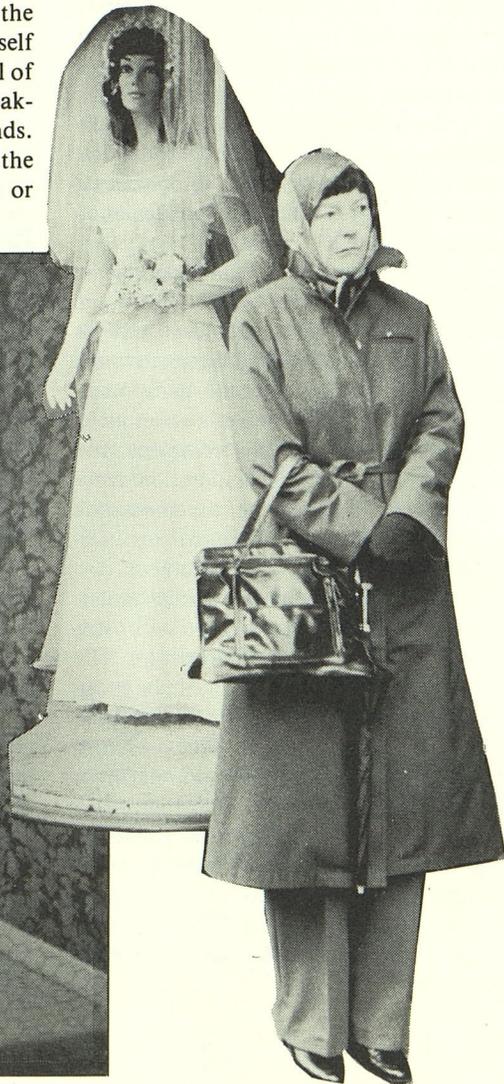
In March 1975, when the International Tribunal was in the beginning organizational stages, a number of us felt that such an important feminist speak-out should

not take place in a centralized location. Instead, parallel tribunals should be mounted in as many parts of the world as possible. If we were serious about wanting to involve working-class and peasant women in significant numbers, instead of merely organizing the usual, sectarian, middle-class feminist event, then speak-outs, all timed to take place simultaneously, had to be situated where the "people" lived. We could not expect poor women to travel long distances to one centralized Tribunal.

With the idea of trying to interest women from different parts of the world, Diana Russell, Lydia Horton (an American living in Brussels) and I went to the U.N. meeting in Mexico City the following June. At the Tribune (not to be confused with the Tribunal), where nongovernmental organizations met, we got permission to hold what turned out to be a dress rehearsal for the Brussels Tribunal. As we anticipated, with the exception of Domitila Barrios de Chungara, the wife of a Bolivian miner who had herself become a union organizer,<sup>8</sup> virtually all of the women who participated in our speak-out came from middle-class backgrounds. Clearly the women invited to attend the U.N. meetings, either as government or

nongovernment representatives, were by and large professional women.<sup>9</sup> What is more, most of these women did not see themselves as feminists. If they came from socialist or Third World countries, they predictably considered feminism a capitalist imperialist plot. If they were from the capitalist world, all too often they dismissed the Movement as well, with the usual clichés about "those man-hating women."<sup>10</sup>

Given the difficulties we had in Mexico City, it was amazing that we met as many interested women as we did. Unfortunately, the dream of organizing coordinated tribunals around the world was not realized, but the New York Tribunal was conceived in Mexico as well as the subsequently organized support rallies which took place in Tokyo, San Francisco and Philadelphia. Furthermore, women who participated in Mexico City kept in touch both with the Brussels and New York Tribunals. In particular we received



letters from Latin America asking us to raise money to help the ever-growing number of political prisoners.

Back in New York, we began to meet regularly in mid-September and continued to do so until the actual Tribunal took place at the end of February.<sup>11</sup> From the beginning we believed it was essential that our Tribunal combine personal testimony with analysis. We were also committed to the principle of involving individuals who represented a wide range of political and religious organizations as well as different racial and ethnic groups. Many, but by no means all of us, felt that the feminist movement had reached a point where it had to make alliances with other political groups if it was to continue to grow in terms of both achieving specific material objectives and broadening its ideological understanding of the causes and conditions for the oppression of women. We knew we were taking a risk, almost ensuring that there would be conflict, but the risk was essential and ultimately productive.<sup>12</sup>

The edited testimonies presented here demonstrate how politically important and truly collective in spirit and organization the Tribunal was. Although we have no figures to indicate how many of the women who attended were inspired to join groups or create new organizations, we do know that there was a significant exchange of information and perspectives.

One final remark. Although I have written about the Tribunal in the collective "we," I want to make entirely clear that the interpretations here of the events and of their significance for feminist

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"My husband held a gun to my head all morning and dared me to breathe. When I finally went to the probation officer, she didn't believe me. It took me three weeks to see the judge and when I finally did he told me to go home and try to work it out.

Now my husband has left and Welfare has told me that I have to find him so that they can make him pay child support. My children scream because he shouts at me and hits me in front of them. He has thrown me out at night and told me to go but I can't leave the children and it's hard to get a room with children. My husband has assaulted me and threatened to kill me. I had him arrested and he got a two-month suspended sentence. Finally I had to move out of my apartment and he is in possession of all my worldly goods. I can't afford a lawyer and legal aid can't help me. Where do I go from here? Does anybody have the answers?

When the police answer a call, you feel that they're smirking. You feel put down. After a few calls they stop responding. Once when I called them to make an arrest, they refused.

Women's cries for help may fall upon deaf ears. Many are refused protection by the police and family courts and are neglected by social service agencies. Few shelters exist and the usual experience of these women is that nobody cares and nobody wants to get involved. How many of us have heard arguments from our neighbors—screams, cries, broken dishes, what have you? How many of us have called the police or chosen to get involved? Do you remember the case of Kitty Genovese? The neighbors actually heard the poor woman being killed and slaughtered, but they didn't want to get involved because they thought it was a family dispute.

There are intangible pressures that can render a woman immobile and prevent her from taking any further action. Her shame and guilt at having "failed" at a successful marriage or relationship make it difficult for her to admit to others that she is being beaten. She therefore covers up: "I walked into a door," "I had an automobile accident," never "My husband did it." Tell your doctor. Have him write it up. Because if you cover it up you may be covered by the ground.

Very often an abused woman is confused and doesn't know her rights, doesn't know what to do, especially if there are children involved. She may hope that the situation will improve. Years of battering have lowered her self-esteem. She is too shaken, despairing and afraid to do anything.

In a culture that instinctively relies upon military solutions to problems, how can brute force and use of lethal weapons in the home be considered anything but the norm? Violence is tolerated in the home. It wasn't until about ten years ago that society recognized that children have rights and that parents are responsible for maiming and brutalizing their own children. It is high time that society condemned the violence suffered by women in married and companion relationships. Children who witness or are themselves victims of actual acts of violence are likely to perpetuate violent households as adults. The time has come to recognize that patterns of violence are transferred from one generation to another.

This cycle must be broken by creative and flexible legal and psychological progress. What is needed first and foremost are emergency aide shelters to provide comprehensive services to abused women and children—advice and refuge as well as the means for immediate extrication from the violent and potentially life-threatening home situation."

—Edited from testimony by Abused Women's Aid in Crisis



“Iran is a huge dungeon where women are being imprisoned and tortured daily. Most people know about the CIA coup in Chile, but very few know that the CIA organized a coup in Iran in 1953. Ever since, the repression has increased.

Amnesty International has stated that Iran has the worst record of human rights in the world.

What kind of crimes have Iranian women political prisoners committed? One was arrested because she, as a sociologist, had been investigating the living conditions of Iran's peasant population. As a result of harsh torture and imprisonment, Vidi Tabrizi has lost any sense of feeling in her hands and feet. She has developed a bad heart, poor blood circulation, meningitis, and no longer menstruates at all.

This repression does not just apply to adults, but also to young girls. Amnesty International reported the case of a four-year-old who was whipped and cut in the neck with scissors before the eyes of her mother.

The Shah's wife and sister come to the United States and are called “feminists.” But I am here to tell you that these people are not representatives of women in Iran, and they are not “feminists.”

It was American tax dollars that financed the 1953 CIA coup in Iran, and led to the repression and torture that is still occurring today.”

853 Broadway, 4th Floor  
NYC 10003



“I think it helps to realize that the people we are talking about are not only victims of oppression, they are also fighters.

It's hard to talk about South Africa without thinking constantly of the tremendous role that the U.S. plays in the repression and exploitation in South Africa. So we have two jobs in the U.S.—there is the very direct one of focusing attention on the political prisoners, to see that they are not forgotten, but the other, even greater responsibility is to challenge the policies of the American government.

According to the South African government, there are no political prisoners. South Africa has a population of 25 million; 5 million whites and 20 million Blacks. The 5 million whites have all the power and all the wealth, while the 20 million Blacks produce all the good things in life, the necessary things, and yet have nothing. I think it is true to say that all Black people in South Africa are political prisoners.

Black women are oppressed as workers, as Blacks and as women. They are always at the very bottom of the pyramid.

But Black women have been strong participants in every aspect of the political struggle in South Africa. They have fought to establish trade unions although unions are illegal for Black workers. They have gone on strike although when you strike in South Africa you face the boss *and* the police. They have fought against the pass system. They have fought as teachers against the imposition of slave education. They have fought in the countryside, where the government has stripped them of their land.

Women have been banned, subjected to house arrest, and have also been held incommunicado under the Terrorism Act. It is even illegal to try and

(continued on page 43)

## Tribuna 1

theory are personal evaluations. As I have said already, our group represented a wide range of political and personal orientations and I do not therefore presume to speak for everybody. I have simply shared my own opinions of what was objectively a collective effort. Nothing more, nothing less. The choice of testimonies represents the editing of Dianne Feeley and Lisa Garrison. It is unfortunate that even more of us who participated in the Tribunal did not contribute at the “writing-up” stage. Our experiences and views varied in rich and significant ways.<sup>13</sup>

—Judith Friedlander

### Notes

1. Quoted in Diana E. H. Russell and Nicole Van de Ven (eds.), *The Proceedings of the International Tribunal on Crimes Against Women* (Millbrae, Cal.: Les Femmes Press, 1976), p. xii.
2. Gayle Rubin, “The Traffic in Women,” in Rayna R. Reiter (ed.), *Toward an Anthropology of Women* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1975), p. 163.
3. See Kathleen Gough, “The Origin of the Family,” Karen Sacks, “Engels Revisited: Women, the Organization of Production, and Private Property,” Ruby Rohrlich-Leavitt, Barbara Sykes, and Elizabeth Weatherford, “Aboriginal Woman: Male and Female Anthropological Perspectives,” Gayle Rubin, “The Traffic in Women,” all in Rayna R. Reiter (ed.), *Toward an Anthropology of Women*. See also Eleanor Leacock, “Introduction to Fredrick Engels,” *The Origins of the Family, Private Property and the State* (New York: International Publishers, 1972).
4. Patricia Draper, “Kung Women: Foraging and Sedentary Contexts,” in Rayna Reiter (ed.), *Toward an Anthropology of Women*, p. 82.
5. Yolanda Murphy and Robert Murphy, *Women of the Forest* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1974).
6. Dominique Desanti, *Flora Tristan* (Paris: Hachette Press, 1972).
7. Taped interview, Dec. 1976.
8. Moema Viezzer (ed.), ‘Si me permiten hablar . . .’ *Testimonio de Domitila una mujer de las minas de Bolivia* (Mexico City: Siglo XXI, 1977). Domitila appears in the film *The Double Day*, directed by Helena Solberg - La dd.
9. The only sizable group of nonprofessional women present at the congress were the Indians, perhaps 100 of them, who had been bused into Mexico City from the countryside, to provide a little folklore for the large group of foreigners. These women did not participate in the *ad hoc* workshops that, in spite of everything, some feminists like ourselves did manage to organize. Instead, they sat—as instructed—for endless hours in the regular sessions, listening to specialists tell them and others about the problems rural women have around the world.
10. The Mexico City Women Liberation group did not receive permission even to enter the convention center and N.O.W. only obtained the right to participate as a nongovernmental organization at the last minute. Originally it was considered too radical for the meetings.
11. Approximately 1000 women participated in the New York Tribunal, which took place at Columbia University one week before the Brussels Tribunal. Since then, Lisa Garrison has put together a slide show based on the Tribunal, entitled “Crimes Against Women in the Family and the Law.”

12. The New York Tribunal was divided into committees, each one responsible for organizing one of the five categories of crimes:

*Crimes Against Women in the Family and the Law*

NY Radical Feminists  
Lesbian Feminist Liberation  
Wages for Housework  
Sisterhood of Black Single Mothers  
American Civil Liberties Union  
AWAIC  
International Indian Treaty Council

*Women Political Prisoners*

Women for Action in Chile  
US Committee for Justice to Latin American Political Prisoners  
TAPOL  
Committee for Artistic and Intellectual Freedom in Iran  
American Committee on Africa  
National Student Coalition Against Racism  
Amnesty International  
Committee for the Defense of Soviet Political Prisoners

*Sexual Crimes Against Women*

Mayor's Task Force on Rape  
NOW Rape Prevention Committee  
Women Against Rape  
Women's Martial Arts Center

*Medical Crimes*

Committee to End Sterilization Abuse  
NOW Medical Committee  
Puerto Rican Socialist Party

*Economic Crimes Against Women*

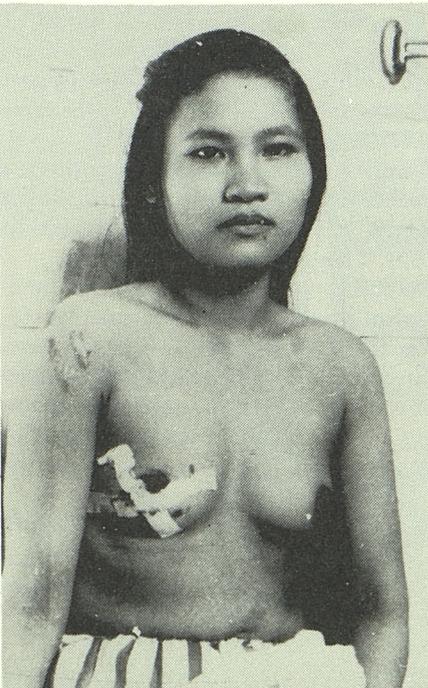
Women Office Workers  
Women in Local 32J of the International Union of Building Service Employees  
Shop Steward of Local 241 of the Transport Workers Union  
Columbia University maids' struggle  
Women professors in university sex discrimination suits

13. The Tribunal was transcribed from tapes by

SUNY Purchase students:

Rhonda Arbeit  
Jan Calabro  
Denise Delisser  
Fran Eichelz  
Leslie Elges  
Susan Goodstein  
Reena Manusco  
Pam Murtha  
Robin Newmark  
Lili Reisner  
Carrie Schaffer

photo courtesy of IWS (Liberation News Service)



find out what has happened to the detained person. The detained prisoner has no right to see her family, or even her lawyer.

Women have also been subject to South Africa's system of interrogation, which includes the standard electric shock treatment as well as sleep deprivation. Sleep deprivation does not leave any scars. But it destroys one's orientation, one's capacity to function as a human being. Winny Mandella, who was tried in 1969-70 under the Terrorism Act, was held in solitary confinement for six months and then subjected to five days and nights of constant interrogation.

What I'd like to really leave you with is a sense of responsibility as Americans for understanding what the American government is doing and for doing something to turn that policy around."

—Jennifer Davis

American Committee on Africa  
305 E. 46th St. NYC 10017



"This first indictment I make in the name of all of our foremothers who were also healers.

Some we know because they were also political leaders: Anne Hutchinson, the dissident legislator who was a midwife and feminist; Harriet Tubman, the Black leader who led so many slaves to freedom, who was a feminist and a midwife; Emma Goldman, anarchist, feminist and midwife. And in the name of the millions of unknown witches who died because of their skills, the Black slave women whose healing was part of an underground culture of resistance, the European immigrant midwives who served the working women in this and many other cities in this country.

In the name of these women I indict the medical profession for the usurpation and theft of those healing skills which belonged to the community of women, for turning human care into a commodity to be sold and for turning skills and knowledge which were ours into private property hoarded by an elite. All the other crimes I want to mention are consequent on that one. And all the other indictments follow that indictment.

First, when even the most basic health care was turned into a capitalist commodity, it ceased to be available to the poor. In the name of the at least 15 million women in this country who live in extreme poverty and millions more around the world, I indict the entire medical system for the denial of basic human care and services—prenatal, infant and preventative. I lay before you in particular the deaths of 40,000 babies a year in this country alone for lack of maternal nutrition and health services. I think the charge should be murder.

The second particular indictment I want to bring forth is that health care has less and less to do with the needs of women and more and more to do with the priorities of the men who control it. I indict the medical profession in collusion with the owners and administrators of medical institutions for a relentless campaign of surgical aggression against women. In the nineteenth century it was the removal of the clitoris and the ovaries, performed to tame women and enrich doctors. Today the uterus and the ovaries are the principal targets. Hysterectomies are a 400 million dollar a year business in this country. At least half are performed for no good medical reason, and those unnecessary hysterectomies result in the deaths of approximately 6,000 women per year. The charge should be murder.

Third, I indict the medical profession for conspiring with third parties—gov-

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# Why the Women's Movement Cannot be Non-violent

In our city, the protest against the film *Snuff* involved the arrest of four women charged with breaking a window and doing some spray painting in the course of removing the poster for the film which depicted a naked woman's body being cut to pieces with a gigantic pair of scissors. Since the arrests, some discussion has gone on among feminists in the community regarding the question of non-violence. Many people have challenged the "violent" nature of the acts with which the four women have been charged. It has become a question of ideology: "Is the women's movement non-violent, or not?" The implication is that if we are not non-violent, we are no good, because, as products of the sixties, we consider non-violence a positive quality for a movement to have and violence a negative one.

Shortly after the arrests, I was in a room with a group of women discussing this topic. One said she approved of violence as a means to an end. One was into passive resistance. One preferred direct action. One thought that violence against property was okay, but not against people. One maintained we should actively practice self-defense. It began sounding vaguely like a Jules Feiffer cartoon. But an important issue was being raised. Are we, indeed, violent or not?

For non-violence to have any meaning, an oppressed people must be able to choose between it and violence. If there is no choice, non-violence loses its meaning, its potential effect. One pictures great masses of Indians, or Blacks perhaps, who *could* stage a bloody uprising, but who do not—who march peacefully by the thousands in the streets in order to make a point—who allow themselves to be beaten and dragged off to jail without struggle so that the oppressors are seen in their true colors. This is political non-violence as we

know it in contemporary society. Non-violence capitalizes on the fear that a ruling class has of its teeming masses. Non-violence creates martyrs when the masses withdraw their immediate threat to *prove* their own victimization.

But women are not a direct physical threat to the male ruling class. It is also questionable whether or not women *could* be violent, *could* stage a bloody uprising, even if we wanted to. Our conditioning has made us utterly passive, and we have lacked the communication among ourselves necessary to wage any real battles. Imagine the burning of nine million witches without protest—systematic infanticide directed toward female children for centuries without protest—the exchange of all women as property among men without protest—the rape of the women of all conquered nations without protest. Imagine any other oppressed group suffering injustices of a similar scale without protest, without bloody uprising just once in those centuries. At its most activist stage, the women's movement in England during the first decades of this century *did* manage to break some windows and set fire to some mailboxes, but real violence was never unleashed on men. Never. Contrast this to the brutal force feeding of women in English prisons during the same period, often resulting in severe injury and sometimes even death.

The very idea of an organized violent uprising of women against men is never taken seriously, not by us, not by anybody. The names of recent radical feminist organizations such as S.C.U.M. (The Society for Cutting Up Men) and W.I.T.C.H. (The Women's International Terrorist Conspiracy from Hell) make us somehow revel in the very power of these words, but we all know they are nothing but words, and fear is not struck in the hearts of men.

It's like the teeshirt which reads, "The Ladies' Sewing Circle and Terrorist Society." Just words—amusing, delicious words to a class of inherently passive victims.

The kind of protest we have been able to wage has been, at most, on the level of what males consider to be typical Halloween pranks. But when women commit these acts, they are labeled violent. The same acts were committed by the anti-war movement in the sixties in the name of non-violence because they involved only the destruction of property. But minor vandalism, when done by women, is violent to be sure. In the case of our *Snuff* protest, the women arrested were charged with a felony and could get up to five years in jail.

All of this may explain why the violence/non-violence question has been such a thorny one for feminists. We are called violent (indeed, we actually consider ourselves violent) whenever we assert ourselves in the smallest ways. One woman recently described the verbal challenging of men on the streets as an act of violence. The truth is that there is no space left for us in which to be non-violent by society's definitions and, at the same time, express ourselves.

I am not advocating bloody uprising. I believe that physical violence is a male model which we would do well not to copy. I *am* talking about semantics.

Let us not *call* our movement non-violent when we have no potential for violence. Let us not shrink from assertive, direct action because this action is defined as violence by others, or even by our own gut feelings conditioned by centuries of oppression. Let us rise up and express ourselves in all necessary ways.

—Karen Hagberg

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Birth control as an individual right must not be confused with population control as social manipulation / El control de la natalidad como un derecho individual no debe ser confundido con el control manipulado de la población

WOMEN'S GRAPHICS COLLECTIVE 3100 N SOUTHPORT CHICAGO IL 60657  
For sterilization info contact  
COMMITTEE TO END STERILIZATION ABUSE 3411 W DIVERSEY CHICAGO IL 60647

# STOP STERILIZATION ABUSE / ALTO AL ABUSO DE ESTERILIZACIÓN

ernmental, religious or private—to control the fertility of individual women throughout the world, for perpetuating forced or unexplained sterilizations on untold numbers of Native American and Third World women in the United States, Puerto Rico, India, Tunisia, Colombia for reasons of population reduction and sheer racism. I indict them for conspiring to withhold information and techniques of contraception and abortion from millions of women in industrialized countries—West Germany, Italy, Spain, Latin American countries. The charge should be conspiracy to defraud women of their basic right to biological self-determination.

Fourth, I indict the medical profession, in conspiracy with the drug companies, for countless assaults on women's bodies. Women have died from strokes, heart disease and cancer and suffered serious disablements as a result of drug companies' uncontrolled attempts to profit from every aspect of the female life cycle. With DES, for example, birth control pills, estrogen as therapy for menopause and so on. The extent of the damage is only beginning to be known, calculated and acknowledged. And I would single out here, with special outrage, the use of Third World women—Mexican, Puerto Rican and Chicano—by the drug companies as guinea pigs in the development of new hormonal products.

Fifth, I would like to indict the medical profession for acting on its own and in collusion with drug companies in actively promoting and advancing sexist ideology, for taking the ancient male prejudice that women are passive, masochistic, hysterical, etc., and attempting to pass this kind of prejudice off as medical science, as biological truth. I must indict the medical system for using all its technological and institutional weapons to enforce this ideology on non-conforming women. First, by imprisoning half a million women in this country alone in mental hospitals for failing to be feminine. And finally, by subjecting literally millions of women to chemical incarceration with mood-altering drugs, not only in mental hospitals, but in prisons, in every neighborhood and every place where women work.

Finally, I'd like to indict the medical profession for its systematic exploitation of the 80% of health care workers in this country who are women. Most occupy powerless positions and are subject to harrassments, office speedups, and live on miserably low wages. I charge the owners and administrators of medical institutions with dictatorial oppression of these women, including conspiracies against their attempts to organize as women and as workers.

The medical system as we know it now, a system so perverted by sexism, racism and profiteering that it actually generates disease, arose with the male takeover of medicine. Yet that does not mean that those crimes would be redressed simply by a female takeover of medicine. More women doctors would be helpful—more hospital administrators, druggists and so on. But these things cannot change the problem as it exists today. At this point we're not only up against male medicine, we're up against capitalist medicine.

I could say that sentence in two different ways—rape and exploitation may be analogous on many different levels. Class rule and male domination may be analogous and they may make for interesting metaphors, but they are not the same thing. We need an analysis that makes this clear to us if we're going to make these changes. Things have gone so far that there's no way to confront the medical system in this country or throughout Western capitalist countries without confronting the entire medical industrial complex with its ties to banking, its ties to agribusiness, its ties to the arms industry. There is no way to work for health, for food, shelter, security, those kinds of things, for all women, without confronting imperialism, and I don't mean by that rape (I mean political and economic imperialism), and without confronting capitalism as an international system."

—Edited from testimony by **Barbara Ehrenreich**

# BIOLOGICAL SUPERIORITY

## THE WORLD'S MOST DANGEROUS AND DEADLY IDEA

All who are not of good race in this world are chaff.

Hitler, *Mein Kampf*<sup>1</sup>

It would be lunacy to try to estimate the value of man according to his race, thus declaring war on the Marxist idea that men are equal, unless we are determined to draw the ultimate consequences. And the ultimate consequence of recognizing the importance of blood—that is, of the racial foundation in general—is the transference of this estimation to the individual person.

Hitler, *Mein Kampf*<sup>2</sup>

Hisses. Women shouting at me: slut, bisexual, she fucks men. And before I had spoken, I had been trembling, more afraid to speak than I had ever been. And, in a room of 200 sister lesbians, as angry as I have ever been. "Are you a bisexual?" some woman screamed over the pandemonium, the hisses and shouts merging into a raging noise. "I'm a Jew," I answered; then, a pause, "and a lesbian, and a woman." And a coward. Jew was enough. In that room, Jew was what mattered. In that room, to answer the question "Do you still fuck men?" with a No, as I did,

was to betray my deepest convictions. All of my life, I have hated the proscribers, those who enforce sexual conformity. In answering, I had given in to the inquisitors, and I felt ashamed. It humiliated me to see myself then: one who resists the enforcers out there with militancy, but gives in without resistance to the enforcers among us.

The event was a panel on "Lesbianism as a Personal Politic" that took place in New York City, Lesbian Pride Week 1977. A self-proclaimed lesbian separatist had spoken. Amidst the generally accurate description of male crimes against women came this ideological rot, articulated of late with increasing frequency in feminist circles: women and men are distinct species or races (the words are used interchangeably); men are biologically inferior to women; male violence is a biological inevitability; to eliminate it, one must eliminate the species/race itself (means stated on this particular evening: developing parthenogenesis as a viable reproductive reality); in eliminating the biologically inferior species/race Man, the new *Über-*

*Womom* (prophetically foreshadowed by the lesbian separatist\* herself) will have the earthly dominion that is her true biological destiny. We are left to infer that the society of her creation will be good because she is good, biologically good. In the interim, incipient Super-Womom will not do anything to "encourage" women to "collaborate" with men—no abortion clinics or battered woman sanctuaries will come from her. After all, she has to conserve her "energy" which must not be dissipated keeping "weaker" women alive through reform measures.

The audience applauded the passages on female superiority/male inferiority enthusiastically. This doctrine seemed to be music to their ears. Was their dissent silent, buried in the applause? Was some of the response the spontaneous pleasure

\*SuperWomom's ideology is distinguished from lesbian separatism in general (that is, lesbians organizing politically and/or culturally in exclusively female groups) by two articles of dogma: (1) a refusal to have anything to do with women who have anything to do with males, often including women with male children and (2) the absolute belief in the biological superiority of women.



IN  
DEFENSE  
OF  
FALLEN  
COMRADES:  
LA  
MUTUALITE

It is a large, public meeting hall. La Mutualité. We are in Paris. Two Days of Denunciation of Crimes Against Women. Any woman could have the right to speak, it has been declared. There is a floor mike. But the days have been divided for discussion of specific subjects. First day: unwed mothers, married women, single women, homosexuality. Second day: sexual and ideological rape, salaried work, abortion-contraception, domestic work. Different groups take turns on the stage. Two days of personal testimony of crimes against women. Two days of testimony in solidarity in a public meeting hall rented for the occasion, by which the personal becomes the public; hence, the political.

But no—there are deviations from the program. The homosexual group does not give testimony; at least, it is not a testimony of outrage. They choose to make their testimony different from that of the others. They do not sit in a circle. They do not offer case histories, explanations, apologies. They stand. They dance. They sing. They touch. Arcadian echoes. Joy. Testament rather than testimony. A *politique* of the joy of being. Each of us a

Muse. Captained by a writer in a battered hat, singing and dancing together in Parnassian re-enactment. It is infectious; women in the audience clap hands in rhythm and join in song. A moment of liberation.

So ends the first day.

It is the second day. Arcadia has been relegated to the outer lobby. Within the smoke-filled meeting hall, it is back to serious business. Any woman could have the right to speak, it has been declared. Each group, according to the program, takes the stage to give a round of testimony.

The Abortion-Contraception group is on the stage. They sit in a neat circle. The audience pays close attention. This is the group that was the prime mover of these days of denunciation of crimes against women. The meeting hall was rented in the name of a very important person who has associated herself with this group. She is modestly sitting midway in the far rim of this circle. In spite of her age, in spite of her being a very important personage, she too is sitting on the floor of the circle. She is dressed primly, like a dutiful daughter, in a black jumper and white

# BIOLOGICAL SUPERIORITY

that we all know when, at last, the tables are turned, even for a minute, even in imagination? Or has powerlessness driven us mad, so that we dream secret dreams of a final solution perfect in its simplicity, absolute in its efficacy? And will a leader someday strike that secret chord, harness those dreams, our own nightmare turned upside down? Is there no haunting, restraining memory of the blood spilled, the bodies burned, the ovens filled, the peoples enslaved, by those who have assented throughout history to the very same demagogic logic?

In the audience, I saw women I like or love, women not strangers to me, women who are good not because of biology but because they care about being good, swept along in a sea of affirmation. I spoke out because those women had applauded. I spoke out too because I am a Jew who has studied Nazi Germany, and I know that many Germans who followed Hitler also cared about being good, but found it easier to be good by biological definition than by act. Those people, wretched in what

*(continued on page 48)*



“Which is prettier”? (Stanford-Binet, 1960)

blouse. Her hair is braided in a neat crown over her head. She does not speak while the testimonies are being given—well-conceptualized, well-assimilated, well-prepared, well-articulated.

A middle-aged woman is speaking now in the name of a sixteen-year-old in need of an abortion. Suddenly, a scream cuts through the measured phrases and reverberates throughout the hall. “I was raped by my uncle when I was six,” the words tumble out, “and then by my father and my brother.” Shock. The voice is still screaming; it is coming from the balcony. The circle turns outward toward the audience. Come forward. Come on stage. Any woman has the right to speak, it has been declared.

She is black. From the French Caribbean colonies. She is wearing white trousers. A red blouse. A multi-toned rose and green patchwork jacket like a jester’s. Sunglasses. She walks stiffly as if treading over splinters of broken mirror. She does not bend her joints. Her arms are extended in front of her, crooked at the elbows, palms out. She walks as if blinded by some terrible light.

She is onstage. They give her the microphone. She does not sit in the circle. She stands, she crouches, she keens. Her account tears itself out of her. Uncontrolled, barely coherent. This is not a testimonial. This is no rehearsed case history of a past-assimilated emotional event. This is vivid. This is raw. The outrage takes place before us.

Her account is finished; she is somewhat more calm. Everyone is stunned. “Someone should embrace her,” I murmur. She is beside herself. Beside herself. No one does. The sisters of Arcadia are absent. The Abortion-Contraception group is more pragmatic. They are gentle, they are respectful, they are compassionate. They are benevolent. Distant solicitude. Someone guides her from the center of the stage. She lets herself be led, as if blind. She starts to descend the steps, but someone else indicates that she sit in a chair at the side of the stage, near the stairs crowded with people. She does. A blond, long-haired woman in the adjoining chair chats with her, delicately and casually, with no trace of self-consciousness.

The circle turns inward again. The testimonials continue. No one has panicked. She has finished chatting. She is sitting there. She gets up and joins the circle, midway in the outer rim, with her back to the audience. She is facing the very important person on the other side of the circle. She lies down on the stage, legs pointing to the center of the circle, diagonally opposite the very important person, who remains still, except for discreetly brushing perspiration from her upper lip. After a while, she sits up again. There is tension. What will she do next? No one panics. No one breaks. The circle remains unbroken.

Someone, the bespectacled leader of a psychoanalytic-political group standing at the foot of the stairs has come to get her, quietly mounting the stage and talking to her compassionately. She talks, subdued, with the group ranged along the stairs, then leaves the auditorium by the side door. The program continues.

Still later, she returns and mounts the stage again. She re-joins the circle, but it does not assimilate her. She is part of the geometric pattern of the circle, but she has

*(continued on page 48)*

# BIOLOGICAL SUPERIORITY

they experienced as their own unbearable powerlessness, became convinced that they were so good biologically that nothing they did could be bad. As Himmler said in 1943:

We have exterminated a bacterium [Jews] because we do not want in the end to be infected by the bacterium and die of it. I will not see so much as a small area of sepsis appear here or gain a hold. Wherever it may form, we will cauterize it. All in all, we can say that we have fulfilled this most difficult duty for the love of our people. And our spirit, our soul, our character has not suffered injury from it.<sup>3</sup>

So I spoke, afraid. I said that I would not be associated with a movement that advocated the most pernicious ideology on the face of the earth. It was this very ideology of biological determinism that had licensed the slaughter and/or enslavement of virtually any group one could name, including women by men. ("Use their own poison against them," one woman screamed.) Anywhere one looked, it was this philosophy that justified atrocity. This was one faith that destroyed life with a momentum of its own.

Insults continued with unabated intensity as I spoke, but gradually those women I liked or loved, and others I did not know, began to question openly the philosophy they had been applauding and also their own acquiescence. Embraced by many women on my way out, I left still sickened, humiliated by the insults, emotionally devastated by the abuse. Time passes, but the violence done is not undone. It never is.

I am told that I am a sexist. I do believe that the differences between the sexes are our most precious heritage, even though they make women superior in the ways that matter most.

George Gilder, *Sexual Suicide*<sup>4</sup>

Perhaps this female wisdom comes from resignation to the reality of male aggression; more likely it is a harmonic of the woman's knowledge that ultimately she is the one who matters. As a result, while there are more brilliant men than brilliant women, there are more good women than good men.

Steven Goldberg, *The Inevitability of Patriarchy*<sup>5</sup>

As a class (not necessarily as individuals), we can bear children. From this, according to male-supremacist ideology, all our

other attributes and potentialities are derived. On the pedestal, immobile like waxen statues, or in the gutter, failed icons mired in shit, we are exalted or degraded because our biological traits are what they are. Citing genes, genitals, DNA, pattern-releasing smells, biograms, hormones, or whatever is in vogue, male supremacists make their case which is, in essence, that we are biologically too good, too bad, or too different to do anything other than reproduce and serve men sexually and domestically.

The newest variations on this distressingly ancient theme center on hormones and DNA: men are biologically aggressive; their fetal brains were awash in androgen; their DNA, in order to perpetuate itself, hurls them into murder and rape; in women, pacifism is hormonal and addiction to birth is molecular. Since in Darwinian terms (interpreted to conform to the narrow social self-interest of men), survival of the fittest means the triumph of the most aggressive human beings, men are and always will be superior to women in terms of their ability to protect and extend their own authority. Therefore women, being "weaker" (less aggressive), will always be at the mercy of men. That this

## LA MUTUALITE

not been assimilated. She has not been embraced. This group does not touch. They sit in a perfect circle, spaced off neatly from one another. Everyone is controlled. The very important person remains motionless.

She gets up once again and faces the audience. She makes fluttering motions with the palm of one hand over her abdomen. She moves her legs stiffly like a marionette. Someone onstage speaks to her. She leaves the stage. She exits.

Tension is relieved. The program of Two Days of Denunciation of Crimes Against Women continues. The scheduled round of testimonials is completed. The very important person is no longer immobile. It is her turn at the microphone. She speaks stirringly, militantly, politically. She is making a political speech about solidarity.

The Two Days of Denunciation of Crimes Against Women are over. The weekend of solidarity in sisterhood has been completed. Every woman has had the right to speak. The convocation has been a success.

Many days later, we ask:

"What became of . . . that sister in jester's coat, the mirror-image of our colonized selves, the embodiment of insult and injury, so possessed by the passion of outrage, so beside herself as to have been incapable of intellectualizing such passion into the rhetoric of the Mutualité meeting hall?"

We are answered dispassionately, offhandedly, matter-of-factly:

"She had escaped from a psychiatric hospital; she had been taken back."

"Had she heard about the convocation of Two Days of Denunciation of Crime Against Women?"

"Apparently."

"Then, she escaped precisely to attend the meeting, to seek out . . . ?"

A non-committal shrug of the shoulders. She had been committed. She had not been embraced.

We have lost another one of our comrades. None of us came to her defense. Our sister. Our scapegoat.

The desolate outcry has been blunted in its trajectory. The primal impulse reduced once again to the marginal, to the pathetic, to the normatively measurable. Regen-

eration will not be forthcoming.

And so, the carefully phrased enumerations of crimes against women accumulate; the articulations of a culture of women proceed. But only the first circle of mutuality has been described. The center has yet to be joined while we continue to forfeit our sisters to the hands of the professionals lest we be seared by too intimate an embrace.

—Eleanor Hakim

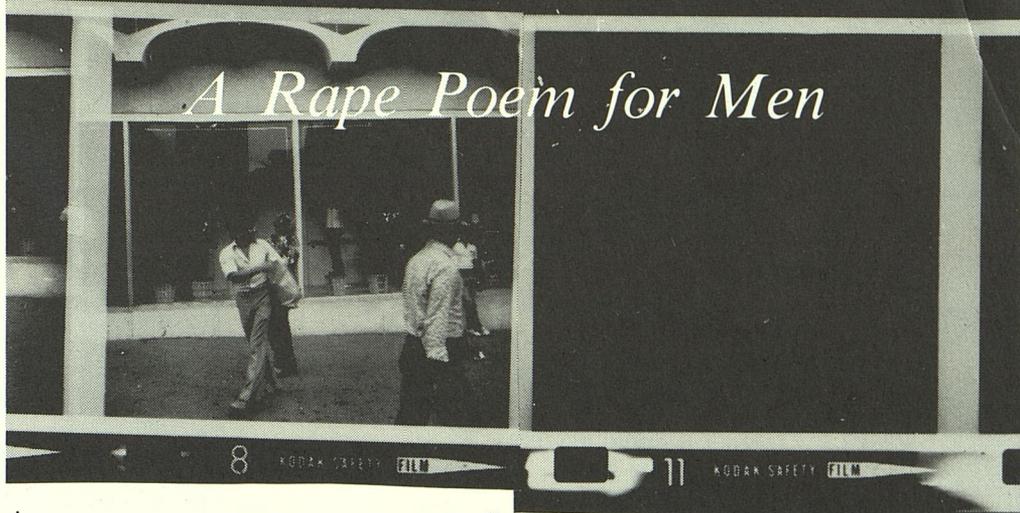
# BIOLOGICAL SUPERIORITY

theory of the social ascendancy of the fittest consigns us to eternal indignity and, applied to race, conjures up Hitler's identical view of evolutionary struggle must not unduly trouble us. "By current theory," writes Edward O. Wilson reassuringly in *Sociobiology: The New Synthesis*, a bible of genetic justification for slaughter, "genocide or genosorption strongly favoring the aggressor need take place only once every few generations to direct evolution."<sup>6</sup>

I have told you the very low opinion in which you [women] were held by Mr. Oscar Browning. I have indicated what Napoleon once thought of you and what Mussolini thinks now. Then, in case any of you aspire to fiction, I have copied out for your benefit the advice of the critic about courageously acknowledging the limitations of your sex. I have referred to Professor X and given prominence to his statement that women are intellectually, morally and physically inferior to men . . . and here is a final warning . . . Mr. John Langdon Davies warns women "that when children cease to be altogether desirable, women cease to be altogether necessary." I hope you will make note of it.

Virginia Woolf, *A Room of One's Own*<sup>7</sup>

(continued on page 50)



i.

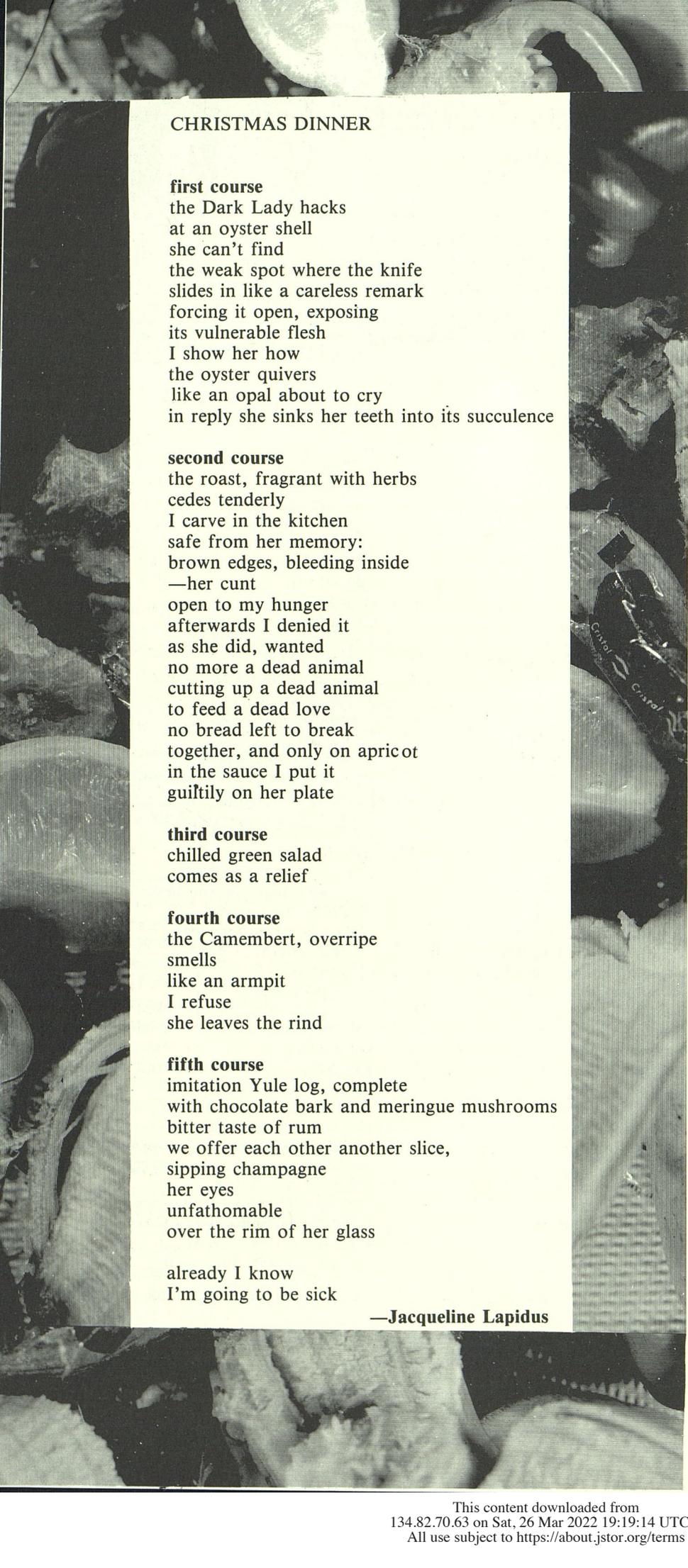
Hey there brother man,  
 Black prince come to save me  
 from the white night  
 this poem is for you,  
 just as much as it is  
 for the each and every one  
 sister in the room  
 who has been through  
 the common woman's  
 experience of rape.  
 Yes my dark protector,  
 king, nation builder  
 I know you know about it  
 I can tell by your outrage about  
 white men  
 forcing Black women  
 white men  
 violating your sisters and queens  
 You know the hatred and ugliness  
 white men  
 can reap and sow on a field of women  
 how white men  
 can take their ugliness  
 and dump their garbage  
 and wipe themselves  
 on a woman  
 and then go to the boys  
 around the corner  
 with a good joke about this woman  
 who told no lies to him in particular  
 who was maybe just day dreaming  
 or smiled,  
 because it's no big deal  
 or because we weren't  
 brought up to be rude  
 and it's a nice day—  
 why frown on it?  
 he smiled too  
 a nice-looking young man  
 features lovely  
 like those sculptures  
 those african masks  
 a nice-looking bro  
 a face testifying  
 to our people's beauty  
 our family's moral fiber  
 hell: not every dude out there  
 is asking for a nickel  
 or some attention,  
 some way not to look at himself,  
 some hole to hide in.

ii.

Being full grown means  
 letting go of small comforts  
 means turning loose  
 the short-term reliefs  
 that used to tide you over  
 until the next wad is shot  
 and your personal load of sticky stuff  
 dropped into someone else's lap,  
 is made part of someone else's  
 trial by fire  
 in order for you  
 not to have to face yourself.  
 You can be lost on high  
 with the vision  
 of some woman under a gun  
 on her knees to you,  
 but understand this:  
 in time temporary reliefs  
 reach the point of diminishing returns  
 and the bitch will turn around  
 for a big pay back.  
 On this Saturday night double bill  
 will be your self-respect,  
 your two feet,  
 your chance to stand tall,  
 all those things you can never own.  
 You'll be the one  
 fucked between your legs  
 in your mouth,  
 up your ass  
 all in your head  
 every place you can be fucked  
 and then you can find yourself  
 left alone  
 and bleeding and violated and outraged  
 for something you lost,  
 because you were playing  
 and abusing yourself,  
 spilling rotten wine and sowing shit  
 you will be seeing very clearly  
 two balls and a dick  
 that you will now handle with care  
 because some once polite lady  
 will turn her head away  
 and you pulling the trigger  
 will shoot yourself off,  
 wham bam, like a man.

—Donna Allegra Simms





## CHRISTMAS DINNER

### first course

the Dark Lady hacks  
at an oyster shell  
she can't find  
the weak spot where the knife  
slides in like a careless remark  
forcing it open, exposing  
its vulnerable flesh  
I show her how  
the oyster quivers  
like an opal about to cry  
in reply she sinks her teeth into its succulence

### second course

the roast, fragrant with herbs  
cedes tenderly  
I carve in the kitchen  
safe from her memory:  
brown edges, bleeding inside  
—her cunt  
open to my hunger  
afterwards I denied it  
as she did, wanted  
no more a dead animal  
cutting up a dead animal  
to feed a dead love  
no bread left to break  
together, and only on apricot  
in the sauce I put it  
guiltily on her plate

### third course

chilled green salad  
comes as a relief

### fourth course

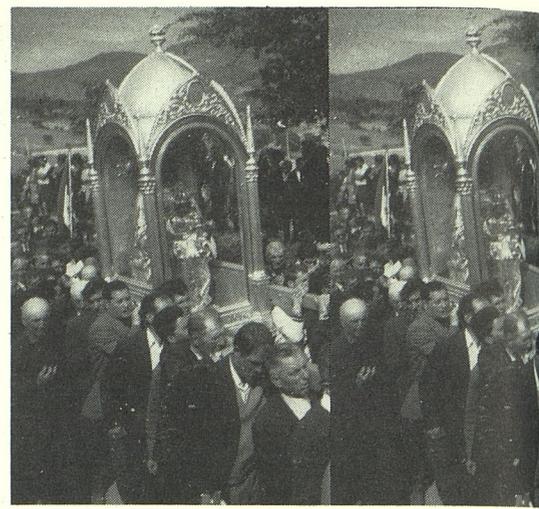
the Camembert, overripe  
smells  
like an armpit  
I refuse  
she leaves the rind

### fifth course

imitation Yule log, complete  
with chocolate bark and meringue mushrooms  
bitter taste of rum  
we offer each other another slice,  
sipping champagne  
her eyes  
unfathomable  
over the rim of her glass

already I know  
I'm going to be sick

—Jacqueline Lapidus



## BIOLOGICAL SUPERIORITY

In considering male intellectual and scientific argumentation in conjunction with male history, one is forced to conclude that men as a class are moral cretins. The vital question is: are we to accept *their* world view of a moral polarity that is biologically fixed, genetically or hormonally or genitally (or whatever organ or secretion or molecular particle they scapegoat next) absolute; or does our own historical experience of social deprivation and injustice teach us that to be free in a just world we will have to destroy the power, the dignity, the efficacy of this one idea above all others?

Recently, more and more feminists have been advocating social, spiritual, and mythological models that are female supremacist and/or matriarchal. To me, this advocacy signifies a basic conformity to the tenets of biological determinism that underpin the male social system. Pulled toward an ideology based on the moral and social significance of a distinct female biology because of its emotional and philosophical familiarity, drawn to the spiritual dignity inherent in a "female principle" (essentially as defined by men), of course unable to abandon by will or impulse a lifelong and centuries-old commitment to childbearing as *the* female creative act, women have increasingly tried to transform the very ideology that has enslaved us into a dynamic, religious, psychologically compelling celebration of female biological potential. This attempted transformation may have survival value—that is, the worship of our procreative capacity as *power* may temporarily stay the male-supremacist hand that cradles the test tube. But the price we pay is that



we become carriers of the disease we must cure. It is no accident that in the ancient matriarchies men were castrated, sacrificially slaughtered, and excluded from public forms of power; nor is it an accident that some female supremacists now believe men to be a distinct and inferior species or race. Wherever power is accessible or bodily integrity honored on the basis of biological attribute, systematized cruelty permeates the society and murder and mutilation contaminate it. We will not be different.

It is shamefully easy for us to enjoy our own fantasies of biological omnipotence while despising men for enjoying the reality of theirs. And it is dangerous—because genocide begins, however improbably, in the conviction that classes of biological distinction indisputably sanction social and political discrimination. We, who have been devastated by the concrete consequences of this idea, still want to put our faith in it. Nothing offers more proof—sad, irrefutable proof—that we are more like men than either they or we care to believe.

—Andrea Dworkin

#### Notes

1. Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, trans. Ralph Manheim (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, Sentry Edition, 1962), p. 296.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 442.
3. Jeremy Noakes and Geoffrey Pridham (eds.), *Documents on Nazism 1919–1945* (New York: The Viking Press, 1975), p. 493.
4. George Gilder, *Sexual Suicide* (New York: Quadrangle, 1973), p. v.
5. Steven Goldberg, *The Inevitability of Patriarchy* (New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1973), p. 228.
6. Edward O. Wilson, *Sociobiology: The New Synthesis* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1975), p. 573.
7. Virginia Woolf, *A Room of One's Own* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc., 1957), pp. 115–116.

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# Men on Women's Day

(MARCH 8, 1972—ROME, ITALY)



I arrived at the piazza in time to catch the tail end of the march. Thousands of women filled the main street leading from the square. The bulk of the demonstrators moved together in uneven rows flanked by a human cordon of girls, arms straining and pulling. Sprigs of mimosa were everywhere, jammed into buttonholes, tucked in amongst curls or waving in hands. The younger women were having a wonderful time: their bodies swayed in unison to a chant and they ended each slogan with a laugh; arms linked or hand in hand, their heads bobbed together, touched gently, then separated only to come together again. To the right of me, a girl forming part of the security line drew my attention. She stood perpendicular to the marching women, her arms pulled out to each side of her, legs apart, feet planted firmly, head thrown back in throaty laughter. Although she couldn't have been more than 16 or 17, her bosom was full under a white ruffled blouse. Her blue denim skirt was stretched to a tight "A" and below it striped stockings alternated bright bands of color down her legs to where a pair of thick socks were turned down above heavy brown suede hiking shoes. She was ludicrous, unspeakably lovely and absolutely invincible because she didn't know defeat. A confusion of ringlets covered her head and she answered my stare with a spontaneous flash of teeth.

I was beginning to feel better. I started to move with the other women, staying for a few minutes with each different group, then quickening my pace to catch up with the next one and falling into step again. I had felt tired, dragged down, but now my body began to respond to the energy. I joined in the shouting, this time to the men looking on from the sidelines, the men watching us, hardly speaking to each other. Their faces were tight, controlled—some serious, others slightly mocking, still others confused, displeased, angry? What was there that connected them and made them seem all of a piece? A rigidity perhaps, nothing spontaneous or natural. I sensed their fear and turned away.

Coming into Piazza del Gesù we all yelled out, "*Si, si, si, abortiamo la D.C.!*" and emotion grew in us at the image of the little grey men in their colorless offices, playing their humorless games, controlling, deciding behind the long windows of the old palazzo. Suddenly ranks closed against an elderly man who was trying to cut through the march: in the face of such unanimity he gave up and stepped back with a good-natured sigh. Further along there were cries of "no smoking—no smoking" and another man, protesting loudly that he only wanted to get to the tobacco shop on the other side of the street, was pushed back by a sea of female bodies. This was that rare moment when being a woman was all that was required for immediate acceptance and complete freedom of movement. Yet to my amazement I saw a young couple hurrying through, the woman's head down as though she wanted to pass unnoticed and the man's arm protective around her, shielding her, his other hand raised to ward off attack. How blatantly inappropriate and yet how automatic their age-old reactions. Ahead of me a short-haired woman walking with a child paused to speak to a youngish man who had approached within a foot of the demonstrators, girlfriend in tow. In a pleasant voice she instructed him to either go around the back end of the march or wait until everyone had passed. He stood stiff and unblinking. She repeated what she'd said in the same tone. After a moment's silence, the response came out low and dry, "Did I ask you anything?"

(continued on page 53)

...avoid including both your first name and number here strangers might see on notices, etc.

Do not give out your number indiscriminately. When in doubt, get the number of the person and call him.

When you get an obscene phone call, hang up immediately.

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**On The Street**  
Do not daydream; you can be caught unaware. If you are, regain your composure at once. It is not too late to present a strong front.

Do not overload yourself with packages, purses, books. Pockets leave your arms free. If you are carrying packages and are attacked, drop them or throw them at your attacker. Do not value them more than yourself. Suddenly emptying the contents of a purse can distract an attacker and give you time to run.

Get acquainted with items you carry that could be used as weapons—e.g., lighted cigarette, hair brush, keys, edges of books.

If you carry a purse, keep it tucked under your arm. Never count money out in the street.

Always carry change for a phone call. Don't forget where phone booths are located along often-traveled routes.

Wear clothes that permit you to run or fight easily.

Take a route home from bus stop, subway, parking lot, etc. Know places where stores open late, neighbors like to party. Avoid parking lots, empty spots always in mind—don't loiter in them when you are in trouble.

Be aware of possible weapons on the street: car antennas, garbage cans, and buildings as you move.

Guilt is used to gain access to a person's home, especially after a disaster has occurred.

If you think you are being followed, try to change your route. Change your place in the street and see what happens. Do not walk around looking obnoxious; people looking for victims do not care for vibrations.

Be followed by a car, turn in the opposite direction. It will take the car a while to turn around.

Carry a police whistle. Have it accessible. If screaming is difficult, you can usually get enough breath to blow. If you are being followed, make sure you have the whistle or available weapons ready.

Don't walk alone at night.

Don't go to the parks at night.

Don't walk alone at night.

Don't go to the parks at night.

**Other people think they know why I do the things I do. One psychiatrist I talked with told me that I rape women because I fear them and cannot adequately cope with the games they play. Another said that I am incapable of having normal sexual relationships because I view sex as nothing more than an energy release and not as a means of expressing/sharing my love for a particular woman. Another put forth the theory that I used rape to strike back at my mother.**

**"There's truth in what they say. I often quote them when the need arises to justify/rationalize my behavior. But there's a thing which most people, including the psychiatrists, overlook. The main reason why I do the things I do is that I find rape enormously stimulating and very exciting.**

**"It's fun."**

Never fall asleep in the park unless a friend is with you who is awake.

If you are for any reason leaving the park when it is deserted, be careful around exits. That's where people lie in wait.

Know where exits, call boxes, and populated areas are.

**Transportation**  
Look alert while on bus or subway. Do not fall asleep.

If you are being hassled and others are around, speak up. People may look at you like you're crazy, but that's O.K. Often men try to find out where you're at, how meek you are, etc. Respond quickly. They are looking for the victim mentality. Most of us are terrified of making scenes. Get used to it. Drawing attention to yourself could prevent trouble.

React quickly to men on the subway who paw you. There is rarely real danger in such situations but it is important we let men know that we won't take such treatment. Every time we submit to such abuse by denying it's happening or fearing a scene, we are letting men know that we will respond passively to their aggression.

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**"The message to women and girls in this era of violence must be to live, so as not to expose themselves to the dangers of rape. If we obey the precautionary suggestions appearing with great regularity in magazines and specially-designed "safety" movies, we would soon find ourselves doing all that we can to avoid rape. We would be effectively paralyzed, and rape would have served its purpose."**

**Sternhell.**

Do not put your full name on mailbox or bell—use only first initial or a man's name.

Never leave clues in the form of notes as to whether you'll be home alone, when you'll be coming, etc. If you must leave a note, write in code and don't indicate the apartment.

Do not give out your address to strangers or put your full name with your address in ads, notices, etc.

Get to know some neighbors and which ones you can trust in an emergency (any type of emergency). If possible, arrange a signal to indicate trouble.

If you are coming home alone late at night, call ahead to tell people in your building.

Windows should have locks. The most vulnerable windows are those on the first two floors and those near and in front of fire escapes. Windows of basement and

at night and not expecting someone knocks or rings anyone, and someone knocks or rings...  
 Quotes collected by the Kitty Genovese Project.

man during a rape to give her a good screw giving a girl a screw 'll have less fear of against Inez Garcia

the elevator mirror before...  
 Do not get on an elevator with a stranger and do not rely on stereo-

buttons (to stay in control) with your to a wall. If there is trouble or the possibility of trouble, and the elevator has an alarm button, press it. Do not, however, press the type of emergency button which stops the elevator. Also press floor buttons and get off on the nearest floor. If followed off, yell FIRE! It is difficult to refuse to get on an elevator if someone is around—do it anyway: "forget" something and hesitate until they are gone. Be subtle if you can. In some situations it may be better to walk up the stairs.

It is also difficult to refuse to allow a stranger behind you as you enter a building. It is difficult, but important. Many women have been mugged because they let the person in. You may be accused of being uptight or racist (depending upon who you are whom you refuse). If they turn out to be intimate you can always explain later. Do not take it as your policy to refuse to go to a stranger. Make the fact take the most precaution. Although most of the time the attacker will assume the attacker to guard down immediately, clothing, class, style,

with an interest. If you do not know the person, do not go down. Other people are going down. If you are walking, look your neighbors. A tenants' committee can be very helpful. The very best defense is avoidance. Below are suggestions on how to avoid attacks. They are drawn from women's experiences in New York City and not all of them may apply at the present moment to other locales. They are not intended to be a substitute for police training.

Do not value the purse can distract you time to run. Suddenly emptying the purse, keep it tucked under your arm. Do not count money out in the street. Change for a phone booth as you walk. Do not permit you to be home from bus stop, parking lot, etc. Know the neighborhood. Avoid parking lots and similar deserted areas. Always in mind when you are in public places.

possible weapons are the can tops, car antennas, etc. Examples. If you are above, duck behind bars, and buildings as you move.

are being followed by to mirror. Change your face, get and see what happens. Do not walk around looking like a person looking for a victim. Once you are reasonably sure you are being followed there are several things you can do. Walk near the curb away from buildings and alleys. If there is traffic about, walk in the middle of the street to attract attention. If the street is one-way, go against the traffic. At night, stay under lights. Do not go home; the attacker can follow you.

Excerpted from *Self-Defense for Women* —Nadia Telsey and Linda Maslanko with the help of The Womens Martial Arts Union

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# Men on Women's Day

Suddenly, off to one side, just outside the march in the narrow open strip in front of the stationary onlookers, a commotion of some sort caught my eye. I saw a group of girls several deep, leaning toward someone at the edge of the crowd. The pushing came from the ones in the back and those caught in the crunch in the middle lifted up their faces as though to breathe better and they were laughing and shouting complaints. Another "maschio" (male?) who had tried unsuccessfully to invade the women's act, I thought with a chuckle. Then my eyes found the man. He was standing up straight just past the leaning girls and had somehow managed to put about a foot of space between him and them. He was dressed in a dark suit and had turned to face the women. Bordered by close-cropped hair, his face was a mask of rage. His shoulders were rigid and jerked with each lunge of his fists. They leapt out one after the other, again and again. I heard the dull thud of contact as his punches connected with the young faces pressed so close together in front of him. He was consciously in control, drawing in his fists, taking aim in a split second, striking again, his shoulders absorbing the shock as he followed through, a perfect machine of aggression.

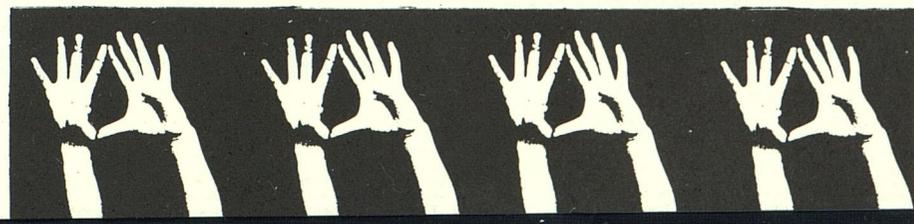
I stopped, rooted to the spot. Staring in horror at the scene, I felt my legs get weak, felt the uselessness of my two limp arms. My face seemed to ache with every punch and the nausea starting in my stomach moved in ever-widening circles over my body. The bodies of the girls in front fell back with the blows only to be carried forward again from behind. Immobilized, frozen, only my brain pleaded for someone to take action. By this time, other women were joining in at the back and I heard a mature female voice shout out instructions to those in front to kick. A flurry of feet went out, flailing the air. When I looked past them the man was gone. There was confusion among the women and someone cried out in disappointment, "You mean no one was able to get him?" Then someone moaned and I saw a young girl, her face pale against her long brown hair, swoon as several pairs of arms went out to buoy her up. There was pain on her upturned face and blood trickled down from each side of her nose. It was then that I noticed the ominous silence around me. There was no sound, no movement in the crowd. But these were men too, men who knew how to punch, men who could have stopped the machine of aggression by force. A bearded young man looked over at the group of girls, now subdued, and nodding grimly toward the bar behind him, said in a quiet voice, "The bar . . . take her to the bar." Inside the march, the last group of women was striding by and their words resounded in my empty head like a bad joke:

"Come mai, come mai,  
 Nei non decidiamo mai,  
 D'ora in poi, d'ora in poi  
 Decidiamo solo noi!"<sup>2</sup>

—Linda Lombardo

## Notes

1. "Yes! Yes! Yes! Let's abort the Christian Democrats!" A reference to the ruling government party. With headquarters in that square, responsible for blocking passage of a law to legalize abortion last June, 1977.
2. "How is it, how is it, We never get to decide, From now on, from now on, We'll be the only ones to decide!"





We hope that by describing our process, we may contribute to, as we have drawn from, the experience of others in working together collectively. The issue has taken one year to construct. The group has changed several times over this year. Several women participated for a time and then left for various reasons from personal to political. The seven of us who have been working on this issue for the last six months came together as near strangers (all but two) to work together intimately. The magazine would not have been produced by this particular group of women had not the working method been collective. Each of us believes that working collectively is not only a personal need but also a conscious decision to participate in the building of a new social order.

We are, as all issues have been, autonomous from the Heresies Collective. The theme of our issue, *Women and Violence*, was originally proposed by AFWIC (Action for Women in Chile).

After meeting weekly for several months, we sent out over 1,000 flyers with a long list of possibilities to suggest the breadth of the issue. In an effort to reach many different women, we collected names and addresses from all possible sources, including publications, individuals and community groups. In response to eight months of solicitation, we received well over 500 submissions. All material went through the same process. Each piece was read by everyone, commented on, then discussed and voted on as many as three times. Voting was usually by majority decision, but we made room for strong pro or con opinions on any piece. As a collective we wanted to stimulate controversy and avoid "the lowest common denominator" method of agreement. With few exceptions, we read and decided upon the material sent to us "blind" (having taped over the names of the authors). For the most part, somewhat detailed rejection letters accompanied returned manuscripts in an effort to share both our biases and our thoughts.

## The Log

We made use of several ideas that we had brought from other collective experiences. One of these was the strike log, so named after its use by workers during a strike. In this big hardcover book we kept all the minutes of the meetings, making possible easy consultation by absent members as well as information recall. We also included (through drawings, notes, poems, exclamations, dialogues) our own individual and/or group thoughts, feelings and arguments about what was going on. The first page of the strike log reads: "the log, recording our process, then making it available . . . sharing, the process: a marking we/our herstory, we are history, an effort to minimize endlessly reinventing the wheel." Much of what follows is taken from the log.

## The Seven of Us

**"Understanding an individual's possible function in a collective: We are trying to unify, but we all seem to be operating under different ideologies; in order to have no delusions of unification, no false solidarity, our differences should be made clear."**

We are all under 35 years old, one of us is married, we are all white; all of us describe ourselves as feminists; our class backgrounds range from working class to upper middle class; two women are lesbians (and lovers); one is English; we have among us a carpenter, a vegetarian, a rape counselor/advocate, a book designer, an ex-whore, a union organizer, an anthropologist, an artist, a photographer, a performer, rape victims, a dialectician, a women's shelter worker, a former abused child.

One of us is writing a book, one of us wears only black and white clothes; none of us believe in a god or goddess; most of us have t.v.'s; none of us carry a weapon all of the time.



*I know that working on this issue has made me violent. much more violent. that in public and in private now, my urge to strike out and my striking out has increased. my response to feeling trapped by angry words, to an insult on the street, to rudeness or hostility, is to strike out. now more than ever. as all women, I have experienced violence since childhood: physical, psychological, spiritual. now my own violence is literally almost always just a hair's breath from actualization.*

*if our group had not been as strong as it was, I am not sure that this issue would have come out. or I'm not sure I would have been working on it when it was finished. we expressed a lot of our anger. at each other and at things outside. at times a confusion of the two.*

**"The pitch of our interaction is heightened by the timebomb we are working with—the material."**

**"There is this odd situation where the homophobia in the group is hidden, passive, almost invisible (though certainly not absent) and the lesbian assumption (though we've always been a minority) is open, blatant, right out there."**

**"As a group and as individuals, we need to work on finding ways to acknowledge and assimilate the individual anger/s that surface as a necessary by-product of our group work, as part of the process . . . to encompass individual differences."**

## Crit/Self-Crit

We used the process of criticism/self-criticism. At times it was more an empty ritual but at times it gave us the room to express and confront our anger, fear and affection. Important to our productive use of C/SC was (1). to not interrupt, (2). to focus our responses to the process of the meeting and not the decisions. The guidelines we agreed to were the following:

1. to listen to negative and positive criticism as one person's perspective and not the whole truth.
2. to say and not hold negative criticism.
3. to accept positive criticism and appreciations.
4. to give and ask for support when we want it.
5. to check out assumptions or hunches with the people we have them about.
6. to take responsibility for active participation as well as unconscious participation.
7. that to apologize continually for one's own ideas and actions makes it very difficult for others to extend any criticism of those ideas or actions.
8. not to consider ourselves outside of group decisions or above a particular task.

"The authority of the group equals the authority of another boss."

"I feel isolated and manipulated. Our dynamics lack respect for each other."

"We haven't made enough room for each other's particular experiences. A mistake? Are we missing potential contributions from each other's experiences?"

"I dislike the group capacity for endless self-questioning."

"I'm terrified by all this."

"After a discussion I don't know if my views have been compromised or expanded."

"We are not living in a utopia; our collective has not been idyllic. To say it was like a family is to consider all the ups and downs that 'family' means in this society: the battles for recognition, respect/self-respect; the power struggles; the typecasting of individuals; the manipulation through affection extended and withdrawn; the support and nonsupport; the struggle to have our own individual perceptions and sometimes crazinesses confirmed by the group; the struggle against alienation, loneliness."

"A collective does not consist of certain members who tell others the criteria for valuing members. That's why I'm furious!"

"Well, what is the 'comradely' way to be angry?"

### Our Goal

"That the focus of the issue should not be simply a documentation of violence done to and endured by women; nor an exhibition space for individuals to publish their artwork; nor simply a collection of individual solutions to violence; but should contribute to the momentum of women actively considering their power to affect radical change."

### Our Criteria for Material Selection

1 Where does this piece lead? Towards despair? action? analysis? isolation?

2 Is this piece feminist? Does it perpetuate concepts embodied in sexism: hierarchies, traditional gender definitions, etc?

3 Does this piece contain potential or actual racism in its assumption or scope?

4 Does the work contain class biases that go unchallenged?

5 Does this piece strengthen women? through info., confrontation or reconciliation.

6 Is the context of the work radical or reformist in terms of the issue as a whole? Do the assumptions and/or premises challenge or support the prevalent class./prem. of the society?

7 The material should represent the wide spectrum of women's experiences... class, race, sexual preference, culture and circumstance.

8 The material should be widely accessible.

9 IS THIS MORE POETRY???

10- How will it look in 18 pt. w/a little floral border?!

11. How famous is she?

FUNNY HOW THE FAMILY IS . . . . I hated Marty because she demanded so much attention and because she acted so hostile towards the guys I brought home. Katy pissed me off because she took days and sometimes weeks and months to decide to throw out an article all the rest of us discarded immediately. Janet was stubborn stubborn stubborn. Claire was a very complicated relationship. AMR I tended to dismiss because she fidgeted and got bored very quickly. The only one I haven't gotten mad at yet, and she's gone off to Italy, is Paula, who I can't afford anyway.

Yet I'd climb the highest mountain and swim the deepest ocean and, as a benign vegetable of long standing, even eat a man-burger if they asked me to, that's how strong my love is and how intense all this has been.

Funny what a year with women can do to you . . .

Funny how the family follows you everywhere . . .

\*\*Gail

"The weakest part of the issue so far is too little a sense of strength coming from women to resist."

"I think that a weakness of the analysis is that it indicts individual men. Patriarchy is the enemy. Not men."

"There should be pieces that are antimale because that reflects the reality of women's outrage. I don't care if there is gore and blood in the pieces. What's wrong with that? It is taboo."

"Manhating doesn't lead anywhere. If we see violence as perpetuated by the working class, this is exactly how the ruling class wants it to be seen. Men are not the natural enemy of women . . . I am interested in the way that the group gives a dialectical pull on my ideas."

"Gender categories appear universal and define masculinity and femininity. How do we understand the ways in which this serves capitalism? or any economic system?"

"The problem of voicing resistance without supporting social systems, without offering individual solutions to complex social problems. Kill criminals rather than abolish the causes of crime, kill rapists rather than rearrange the sexual power structure."

"If we cannot offer serious solutions to these social problems I feel it would be better to be descriptive rather than prescriptive."

### Budget

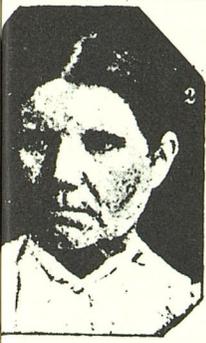
Our budget was established and provided by the Heresies Collective. 6,000 issues were printed. From the beginning we limited our expenses so we could make free issues available to women in prisons and mental institutions.

Postage, telephone, copying materials, misc.	\$300
Paper	\$2200
Printing	\$3000
Typesetting	\$2500
Contributor's payment	\$600
Reproductions	\$150
Cover paper & printing	\$350
	<hr/>
	\$9100

At least 6,000 labor hours (approx. 125/wk.) have been donated by (combined) members of the editorial collective over the last year. Untold hours have been donated by contributors and friends.

*A very flexible hand*





No. 15, aged 41. A peasant. Set fire to nine houses out of revenge; pretended to have done it while drunk. Very ferocious countenance, asymmetrical, with enormous ears and jaws. Sullen, very black eyes, fair hair, diasthema of the incisors, narrow arch of palate. Type.

No. 6, aged 36. Of a rich family, with an epileptic mother, and a father addicted to alcohol. She poisoned her husband with arsenic after sixteen years of married life. Nose hollowed out and club-shaped, large jaws and ears, squint eyes, weak reflex action of left patella. She confessed nothing. Character resolute and devout. Type.

Nos. 12 and 13 are German women, whose vertical wrinkles and thin lips seem to me to mark them out as thieves.

No. 4, aged 44. Strangled her husband by agreement with her lover, and threw him into a ditch. She denied her crime. Hollowed-out nose, black hair, deep-set eyes, big jaw. Demi-type.

The French women, however, are infinitely more typical and uglier, and here I would remark that the more refined a nation is, the further do its criminals differ from the average. It is, for instance, very

No. 3, aged 21. Was married against her will, ill-treated by her husband, whom she killed, after night altercation, with a hatchet while he slept.

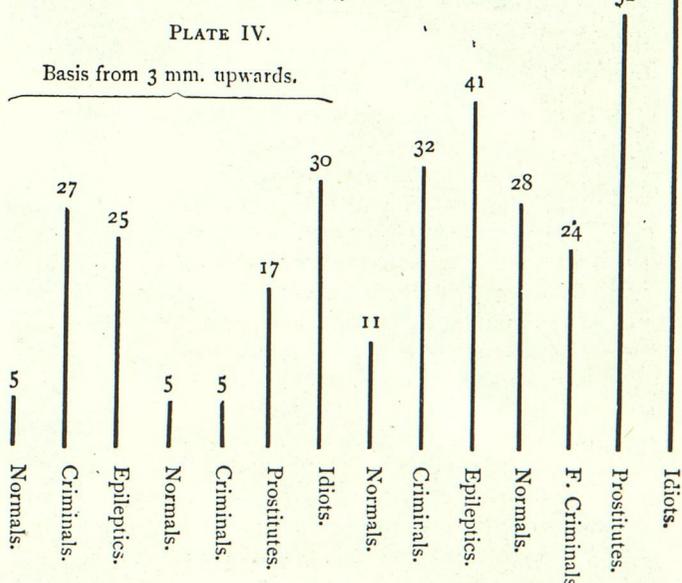
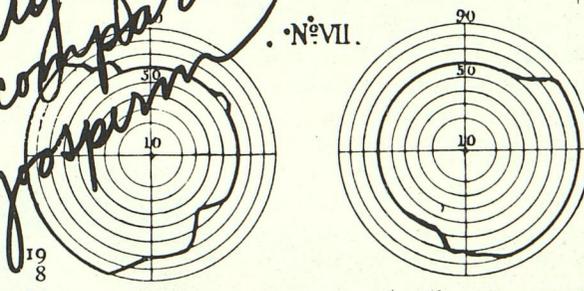
In her we find only a demi-type. Her ears stand out, she has big jaws and cheek-bones, and very black hair, besides other anomalies which do not show in the photograph, such as gigantic canine teeth and dwarf incisors.

No. 2, aged 60. Was constantly ill-treated by her husband, whom she finally joined with her son in strangling, hanging him afterwards so as to favour the idea of suicide.

Here again we have asymmetry of the face, breadth of jaw, enormous frontal sinuses, numerous wrinkles,

*the conservatism of women in all questions of social order is to be sought in the tendency of women to a conservatism of social order, a conservatism of which the primary cause is the immobility of the ovule compared to the yosperm.*

Female Thieves	Women of immoral life	Various women criminals	Normal
19	8	14	25



which we possess of this criminal, so full of virile angularities, and above all so deeply wrinkled, with its Satanic leer, suffices of itself to prove that the woman in question was born to do evil, and that, if on one occasion to commit it had failed, she would have found others.

This characteristic is wanting among prostitutes.

15. *Hair.*—The hair of criminals and prostitutes is darker than among normals.

The following comparative table is by Madame Tarnowsky:—

	Russians.		
	100 Moral Women.	100 Thieves.	100 Prostitutes.
Dark hair	42	62	52
Fair hair	58	35	47
Red hair	2.6	3	0.5

Prostitutes appear to have a smaller proportion of dark hair than thieves, because the fair-haired specimens of their class are the most sought after.

In one out of 60 prostitutes Gurrieri found that the second and third toe coalesced as far as the small phalange.

*Female Offenders*

# A SOCIAL HISTORY OF BATTERED WOMEN

Nearly a decade after the birth of the contemporary feminist movement—a decade marked by affirmative action legislation, the legalization of abortion, the mass availability of birth control, and the unprecedented entrance of women into the heretofore exclusively male domains of sports, medicine, law, the military and politics—a decade in which the possibilities for women and their liberation appeared nearly limitless—the battered woman stepped out of the family closet, a grim reminder that the oppression of women in its most brutal and direct form remained firmly intact. Beginning in 1975 with the opening of the first shelters for battered women in America<sup>1</sup> and continuing to the present, the issue of wife beating has received extensive press and media coverage: books, plays, papers and articles have been written on the subject; additional shelters have been opened; hot-lines, outreach and counseling programs have been implemented; and research has been initiated into the causes and effects of what has come to be known as the battered wife syndrome. It seems to me, however, that much of the work being done on the issue, specifically in the area of research, suffers from serious methodological misconceptions.

Because the plight of the battered woman has only recently emerged in the public eye, there is a tendency to view the abuse of women as uniquely the problem of contemporary society. Much of the research being conducted in the area tends to perpetuate this view. For example, studies have been published that attempt to relate wife abuse to social phenomena such as drug addiction, alcoholism and unemployment. I understand there is a study now being conducted that draws a relationship between the rise of the women's liberation movement and wife abuse. In addition, there has been a tendency for researchers to "psychologize" the problem, to seek an explanation for the battering of women in the psychological makeup of the individuals involved. Explanations are put forth that men beat their wives because they feel insecure, intimidated or inadequate; or, on the other hand, because the women beaten are in reality masochistic provocateurs.

Both these approaches, it seems to me, serve to obscure rather than illuminate the problem. By seeking the causes of wife abuse solely in the context of contemporary capitalist society, we lose sight of the fact that women have been physically abused in virtually every culture since the dawn of civilization. The abuse of women is, ultimately, a problem that emerges from the history of *Man*. Thus research on (and service for) wife abuse functions as ideology, that is to say it obscures and perpetuates wife abuse, first, by dealing with battering as an issue separate and apart from rather than internally related and integral to the totality of woman's oppression and, second, by failing to perceive this oppression in its historical context. The history of women has been a history of oppression, and this oppression has been both sustained and punctuated by force and violence.

Ruby Rohrlich-Leavitt, speaking at the Tribunal on Crimes Against Women held at Columbia University in April 1976, pointed out that the first known written laws, dating approximately to 2500 B.C., decreed that a woman who was verbally abusive to her husband was to have her

name engraved on a brick which would then be used to bash out her teeth.<sup>2</sup>

While the status of women in early history remains all but hidden to us and, as a result, the subject of much conjecture and debate, by the time of the Greeks we are able to get a much more accurate view of what women's lives were like. Among the early Greeks, Aristotle and others argued on the natural inferiority of women and, therefore, the natural right of the male to rule the female. As Bullough states, "Greek literature from the poets to the playwrights was essentially misogynistic."<sup>3</sup> Archilochus called women the "greatest Evil God has ever created,"<sup>4</sup> and Euripides argued that women "ought to be silent, ought not to argue with men, ought not to speak first, and ought not to speak with strangers."<sup>5</sup> Women in the Greek world-view were to be neither seen nor heard. They were regarded as gossipy, immoral and, of course, vastly inferior to the male. The Greek husband had the right of life and death over his children—it was his prerogative to have his child killed or exposed if the child was weak, deformed or female. Under certain cir-

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# FACE-TO-FACE WITH THE FAR RIGHT

## Tradition, Family, Property

Sat., May 13, 1978—Seventh Avenue & 52nd Street, New York. Some 250–300 people are gathered in front of the New York headquarters of Planned Parenthood to protest a “blasphemy against the Blessed Virgin.”<sup>1</sup> The full-page *Daily News* ad announcing the event calls it a “public rosary”—sponsored by the American Society for the Defense of Tradition, Family and Property (TFP)—to defend the Virgin Mary, the Family and the holy crusade against abortion.

In fact, this is one of the first publicized demonstrations against abortion and against the women’s movement staged by the religious far right in New York—a signal of a heightened campaign to come. On the surface, it has a surreal quality: here in mid-town Manhattan is a bizarre spectacle of medieval pageantry, grim lifeless faces, and neo-fascist politics. (The Nazis, too, couched their public spectacles in medieval symbolism.)

In front of the Brew ’n Burger restaurant, a wooden speakers’ platform has been set up; in the center is an altar bearing a statue of the virgin and decked with flowers. Surrounding the altar, and wearing red drapes over their ordinary dark suits and ties, are some two dozen white men, many of whom hold red banners that display a heraldic lion and the words “Tradition—Family—Property.” Others carry colored images of the virgin or printed placards with slogans such as:

“THE ABORTION MOVEMENT  
HAS CAUSED  
THE GREATEST SLAUGHTER  
OF INNOCENTS IN HISTORY.”

Policemen, some standing and some on horseback, form a cordon around the demonstrators and the speakers’ platform. They stand or sit almost reverentially, with folded hands and solemn attentiveness to the speakers. They seem to be there to protect the demonstrators rather than to contain them . . . even to be participants. Those crowded behind the barricades are entirely white, middle- or lower-middle-class, very mixed in age, at least half male but with a large contingent of older women. The men and boys are all short-haired and clean-shaven; many of the women wear prim hats and carry rosaries—they are dressed for church. Children of all ages are scattered through the crowd, fidgeting or staring distractedly; one little girl has been brought out for the event in her white communion dress. A smiling lady in a fur-trimmed coat holds up her homemade sign: “A ROSARY A DAY KEEPS THE DEVIL AWAY.”

What is especially striking about these people is not their predictable class origins and white skin, nor their conservative style, but the general air of blankness and passivity in their faces. Often they appear hardly to be listening to the speakers—or to have heard all this before. Many, perhaps most, are not from New York but have been bused in, dispatched by their parish priests, from the Connecticut, Queens, New Jersey and Long Island suburbs—even from as far as Washington, D.C. (This is important for us to note. While the religious right wing is dangerous in terms of its aims and its organizational and financial backing, it hasn’t yet suc-

ceeded in mobilizing a real mass base. People on the street don’t stop to join the rally, and the *Daily News* ad clearly failed to generate any support among city residents.)

On a barrel next to the altar a series of TFP dignitaries (again, all white male) addresses the crowd, denouncing abortion, women’s liberation, sexual promiscuity, the Anti-Christ and the decline of Western civilization. They read prepared speeches, in tones of ranting militarism and venom that jar against the benign smile of the virgin and the lethargy of the audience. The only remark I hear that seems to arouse a real response is a blatant appeal to racism by Fordham University Professor William Harris (resentfully): “If we had any ethnic or racial identity they wouldn’t have dared touch us; but because we’re Christians [read: white, middle class] they would.” And (shouting loudly): “We are the sleeping giant!” (In a recent article in *Radical America*, Linda Gordon and Allen Hunter<sup>2</sup> suggest that the New Right follows the classic pattern of fascist movements in its combined appeal to religious fervor and racism as means to generate support across class lines—and, one should add, across sex lines.)

The featured speaker is a youngish, blond man who claims to be from the Quebec TFP. Citing an English magazine’s account of the alleged “atrocities” of abortionists and abortion-seekers, he warns that “burned fetuses” are being sold to soap and cosmetic factories for their high

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cumstances, he had the right to kill his wife as well. His right to personally chastise her was assumed.

The position of the Roman woman before the Punic Wars was no better than that of her Greek sister. The Roman term *patria potestas*, meaning "father's authority" reflected the male's position of absolute ruler over the household. The Roman marriage ceremony passed ownership of the woman formally from father to husband, and it directed wives to live so as "to please their husbands only."<sup>6</sup> While divorce, at least in early Rome, was illegal, the Romans did justify the husband's right to kill his wife for any of the following reasons: committing adultery, drinking wine, making poisons (this has been interpreted by some scholars to mean the concocting of potions to induce abortion), counterfeiting the husband's keys or any other "disgusting" behavior.<sup>7</sup> His right to beat her was a given in Roman society. Valerius Maximus relates the case of a husband who beat his wife to death because she had drunk some wine. Maximus states ". . . his murder, far from being denounced, was not even blamed. People considered that her exemplary punishment had properly expiated her offense against the laws of sobriety."<sup>8</sup> Indeed, at least one Roman male lamented the fact that the beating of a wife did not achieve the desired obedience on her part. In a poem entitled "On Women" Semonides of Amorgos complained:

And she wants to be in on everything  
that's said or done  
Scampering about and nosing into  
everything  
She yaps it out even if there's no one  
to listen  
Her husband can't stop her with threats  
Not if he speaks to her sweetly when they  
happen to be sitting among friends  
No, she stubbornly maintains her  
unmanageable ways.<sup>9</sup>

The status of women underwent drastic changes after the Punic Wars. While the men were fighting, the management of their affairs was left to the women. Upon the return of the men, the women did not readily give up their new activities. This phenomenon, and the new wealth which began to flow into Rome as a result of conquest, were catalysts in the alteration of Roman society. Fathers became unwilling to give their daughters a generous dowry at marriage that would pass into



the hands of the husband. The custom of contracting marriage without passing ownership of the wife to the husband ensued. Upon her marriage, the wife was placed under the control of an appointed guardian, whom she could replace without great difficulty. No longer under the authority of their husbands and now in possession of large dowries, women began to demand from their husbands and from the community at large, a greater amount of freedom in controlling their own persons and property. Divorce became more common and was more often initiated by women.

As women, or at least women of the upper classes, began to free themselves from the restrictions of the old patriarchal family, they allied with one another to further their common interests. About the time of Tiberius, we hear of a previously existing *ordo matronaru*, a "society" of married women. In Seneca we find mention of a women's meeting, and Suetonius also speaks of the women's meeting as an institution representing women's interests.<sup>10</sup> The efforts of these women represent perhaps the first attempt by women to join together in collective action against their oppression.

From the closing years of the fourth century until well into the sixth, the barbarian hordes of the North overran the empire of the Caesars, settling in the territories won by conquest. Tacitus relates that among the early Germans an adulterous woman was beaten through the village until she died because she was proven unfaithful to her husband. An idle "gossip" woman was the particular aversion of the Anglo-Saxons and she could expect swift punishment from her husband. In the Gnostic verses found in the Exeter book we read: "A rambling woman scatters words, a man thinks of her with contempt and oft smites her cheek."<sup>11</sup> Among the Germanic peoples, as among the Greeks and Romans, the husband had the assumed right to beat his wife.

While Jesus himself never preached the degradation of women, the task was undertaken by St. Paul. In I Corinthians he urges that a woman should cover her head or have it shaved: "For a man indeed ought not to cover his head, for as much as he is the image and Glory of God, but the woman is the glory of man. For the man is not for the woman, but the woman for the man. Neither was the man created of woman; but the woman of



man." The apostle firmly asserted the principles of the patriarchal family once again.

At the time Paul wrote these oft-quoted sayings, women in the imperial city of Rome, as we have noted, had achieved a relative degree of social and economic independence. Under the influence of the early church fathers, particularly Paul and Tertullian, women were to be quickly and brutally put back "in their places." Under the guidance of the Catholic Church a program of terrorization, brutalization and murder of women was initiated which has few parallels in the history of human atrocities.

The age of witch-hunting spanned more than four centuries in its sweep from Germany to England. It has been estimated that 85 percent of those burned were women. Men were burned as heretics as well, but after mercifully being strangled to death first. Women were burned alive for numerous pretexts: for threatening their husbands, for talking back to or refusing a priest, for bearing an illegitimate child, for adultery, for masturbating, for engaging in sodomy, even though the husband who committed sodomy was "forgiven," for lesbianism, for scolding and nagging and for miscarrying, even if the miscarriage was the result of a beating

from the husband. Women in the final stages of pregnancy were burned alive, the heat often bursting their bellies and propelling the fetus outward beyond the neck. "The infant was then picked up and flung back into the fire at its mother's feet."<sup>12</sup> Young daughters were often forced to dance with bare feet 100 times around the stake and through their mother's ashes in order to impress upon them forever the "memory of their mother's sins."<sup>13</sup>

Every husband in medieval Europe was the wife's lord. If she killed him English law considered this treason and she was often burned as a traitor. Throughout Europe if a husband caught his wife in an act of adultery he could kill her without fear of punishment. Society encouraged and condoned his wrath. Under ordinary circumstances, he had the legal and moral right to chastise her physically; all legal systems of the time agreed on this. Throughout the Middle Ages, priests from the pulpit urged men "to beat their wives and their wives to kiss the rod that beat them."<sup>14</sup>

In France the law clearly stated that: "Provided he neither kills nor maims her, it is legal for a man to beat his wife when she wrongs him. For instance, when she is about to surrender her body to another

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fat content, to be used in making commercial products ("selling human flesh"). Hence the gory conclusion: Women who get an abortion may be unknowingly rubbing the fat of their own dead baby on their face! (Could the bland acceptance of this "information" by the crowd, in contrast to my own muffled gasp, be a sign that this is "old news" to them?)

*What is TFP?*—While appearing fantastic and even ludicrous on some level, the rally just described represents a deadly serious resurgence of the extreme right that originates in the right wing of the Church and tries to mobilize churchgoers as a mass base. Although the form and rhetoric of TFP are militantly religious, it is important to see that their exploitation of religious feeling masks *very political purposes*, especially with regard to reproductive issues. As of now, TFP's organizational connection either to the Catholic Church hierarchy, the broader Right-to-Life movement or other right-wing (secular and religious) groups are unclear. But

its own politics are out front—and they are unquestionably *anti-left, anti-feminist, anti-abortion* and *neo-fascist*. In their own description:

[TFP] is a civic organization based on the principles of Natural Law as they are interpreted by Catholic social doctrine. It actively and vigorously opposes socialism and communism. The TFP defends our Christian traditions, the sacred institutions of the family, and private enterprise based on the right of property, the three fundamental values being undermined by Communism.

Several crucial facts about TFP's structure and political program emerge from studying its literature:

1. The organization's membership is

apparently *all male*, with an emphasis on organizing "young men."

2. It combines a rigorously anti-communist line with active opposition to feminism and the goals of the women's movement, including abortion, publicly aided child care, etc. As with other right-wing organizations, however, TFP's activities in the area of reproductive and sexual politics have recently overshadowed even its anti-communism.

3. It co-opts the language and tactics of the left in the service of avowedly counter-revolutionary goals. For example, its organ, *Crusade for a Christian Civilization*, goes "directly to the people

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# SOCIAL HISTORY

man, when she contradicts or abuses him, or when she refuses, like a decent woman, to obey his reasonable commands."<sup>15</sup> English laws also gave the husband the right to beat his wife: "If a man beat or outlaw a traitor, a pagan, his villain or his wife it is punishable."<sup>16</sup>

The Russian domestic code of the sixteenth century, the *Domostroi*, demanded absolute obedience from women and advised them that their main reason for being on earth was to fear God and please their husbands. Disobedient wives were to be beaten, "but not straight on the face or on the ear since the husband would be sorely disadvantaged should his spouse become blind or deaf." "Keep to the whip," enjoined the code, and "choose carefully where to strike."<sup>17</sup> Among the Slavic people the bridegroom beat the bride as part of the marriage ceremony.<sup>18</sup>

Not only medieval Christians, but medieval Jews beat their wives. The Rabbi R. Perez proposed a reform to a council of rabbis which would have given to the battered wife the right of legal separation and awarded her support payments. It was of course rejected. In it he states: "The cry of the daughters of our people has been heard concerning the sons of Israel who raise their hands to strike their wives . . . we have heard the cases where Jewish women complained regarding their treatment before the communities and no action was taken on their behalf."<sup>19</sup> The lack of interest and concern on the part of the state today and the feelings of futility it induces in women who look to it for help were experienced much earlier by the Jewish battered wife.

Muslims, too, beat their wives and justified this abuse by noting women's inferiority. The Koran states: "Virtuous women are obedient and careful . . . but scold those who you fear may be rebellious, leave them alone in their beds and beat them."<sup>20</sup> The story is told that the Prophet once declared that a man should not beat his wife. He met with such opposition on the part of the men who claimed that women, as a result, had become rebellious and unruly that he had to modify his statement to say that indeed a man could beat his wife but he could not "hit her in the face."<sup>21</sup>

The Renaissance was marked by vast upheavals in the economic and class structures of European societies. While it is true that during this time women had greater opportunities for exposure to edu-

cation and greater participation in social life, it must be understood that the changes relating to the status of women were changes in the appearance rather than the essence of their oppression. We can never really regard women's status at any time in past history as progressing or regressing, but simply as assuming new forms and performing new functions. As indicated in a French work of the era, attitudes toward women were to remain essentially the same as they had been throughout history. A woman was still expected to "pay honor, reverence and respect to her husband . . . obedience in all things just and lawful, adapting herself and bending to the habits and disposition of her husband, having no private purpose, love or thought, she must be in all and through all with her husband . . . wash his feet, keep his house . . ."<sup>22</sup> As usual, the power of the husband to enforce obedience to his will by beatings and imprisonment in the house was unquestioned. "Woman good or bad needs the stick"<sup>23</sup> is an old Tuscan saying which was nonetheless observed throughout Europe during the Renaissance.

Among the earliest laws prohibiting wife abuse were those of the New England colonies. While the southern colonies not only legalized but encouraged through statute the physical chastisement of wives, the majority of northern colonies prohibited a man from beating his wife. This is not to say, of course, that wife beating did not occur—it did. Goodsell notes the case of a man summoned before the New England town council of elders for beating his wife. Like so many husbands of today in similar circumstances, he claimed his right to do so on the basis of the fact that "she was his servant and slave."<sup>24</sup> Throughout the New England colonies cruelty consti-

tuted sufficient grounds for divorce. It must be made clear, however, that these laws did not aim to put an end to the punishment of "disobedient" wives, but simply transferred the right of chastisement from the husband to the state. In the colonies a woman who was disobedient to her husband, or who nagged or verbally abused him, was punished by being put in stocks or submerged in water in a ducking stool.<sup>25</sup>

The continued prevalence of wife abuse in the face of its legal prohibition points out one of the glaring flaws of liberal democratic thought: the belief that laws rather than social relations govern people's behavior. When these social relations themselves are examined in their material and historical framework they emerge as relations between dominator and dominated, oppressor and oppressed, powerful and powerless. More concretely they may be seen to be relations of exploitation and class struggle founded along economic and sexual lines. When wife abuse is perceived in this context it becomes clear that the conclusions drawn by scholars and researchers working on the issue of the "battered wife syndrome" are erroneous. Men do not beat their wives because they drink, take drugs, feel insecure, or because their wives provoke them. Men today batter their wives for the same reasons that men have battered women throughout history: because they have believed it their right, their privilege and their duty to do so. Why do men batter? They do so as a function of the domination they exercise over women as a sex-class, a domination that is inherent in the very structures of societies that men have created in their own image.

—Mary Metzger



photo by Gail Lineback



## Notes

1. The first two shelters in America were in St. Paul, Minn. and Boston, Mass. These shelters were begun by battered women such as Betsy Warrior who founded Boston's Transition House. These pioneer shelters were run cooperatively and in the case of Transition House, nonhierarchically. While shelters continue to open they are increasingly under the auspices of city, state and/or federal agencies or are funded or operated by church and civic organizations. They are, consequently, less "feminist" in their approach, being more concerned with the preservation of the family than in the amelioration of the status of women.
2. This was taken from my notes. I do not have a copy of the original paper, but *Majority Report* did print excerpts from Rohrllich-Leavitt's paper about a month after the conference. I don't have that copy either.
3. Vern L. Bullough, *The Subordinate Sex: A History of Attitudes Towards Women* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1974), p. 69.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 69.
5. R.E.L. Masters, and Eduard Lea, *The Anti Sex: The Belief in the Natural Inferiority of Women: Studies in Male Frustration and Sexual Conflict* (New York: Julian Press, 1964), p. 3.
6. Otto Kiefer, *Sexual Life in Ancient Rome* (London: Abbey Library, 1971), p. 15.
7. *Ibid.*, pp. 7-55.
8. Julia O'Faolain and Lauro Martines, eds., *Not in God's Image: Women in History from the Greeks to the Victorians* (New York: Harper and Row, 1973), p. 37.
9. Sarah B. Pomeroy, *Goddesses, Whores, Wives and Slaves: Women in Classical Antiquity* (New York: Schocken Books, 1975), p. 49.
10. Kiefer, p. 51.
11. Willystine Goodsell, *A History of the Family as a Social and Educational Institution* (New York: Macmillan, 1930), p. 196.
12. Elizabeth Gould-Davis, *The First Sex* (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1973), p. 257.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 257.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 259.
15. Cited in O'Faolain and Martines, p. 17.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 17.
17. Masters and Lea, p. 19.
18. See Edward Westermarck, *A Short History of Marriage* (New York: Macmillan, 1926), p. 197, for other instances in which the wife is struck as part of the actual marriage ceremony.
19. O'Faolain and Martines, p. 176.
20. *Koran*, IV, p. 8.
21. O'Faolain and Martines, p. 112.
22. Goodsell, p. 263.
23. *Ibid.*, p. 264.
24. *Ibid.*, p. 348.
25. *Ibid.*, p. 349.

## FACE-TO-FACE

on the streets." It hails young "Americans" who have "joined the movement," through its study groups, called SEFAC (Specialized Education and Formation in Anti-Communism). In 1975, it organized in support of the American puppet regime in South Vietnam, using such familiar peace movement methods as the candlelight vigil; and it has organized campus rallies against the Panama Canal treaty.

4. There is ample evidence that TFP is linked to, or perhaps grew out of, extreme right-wing Catholic organizations in Latin America. In a summary of its program since its founding in the U.S. in the early 1970's, TFP indicates its affiliation with groups in Brazil, Argentina and Chile, its frequent "cultural exchanges" with such groups, and its support of the junta in Chile. These connections are ominous to say the least, since it is well known that organizations such as *Patria y Libertad* in Chile—which maintains nearly identical "principles" to those of TFP—have been engaged in violent counterinsurgency activity, were instrumental in overthrowing the Allende government, and have been heavily funded by the CIA.

That the abortion issue has become a principal target of the far right is not surprising. In recent months, the escalation of local and national attacks on gay rights, ERA, abortion rights and sex education have made it amply clear that the real stakes of "New Right" politics are the traditional family, "the system of male-dominated heterosexuality" and a general fear of women's independence. As Gordon and Hunter point out, it is the latter more than "concern for the unborn" that underlies the viciousness of the current attacks.<sup>3</sup> What feminists did not anticipate until recently, however, was the degree of physical violence that the right-wing anti-abortion campaign would unleash. Abortion clinics throughout the country have been subjected to increasing harassment in the form of picketing, verbal abuse of patients and staff, vandalism, interruption of medical procedures and a series of fire-bombings in Omaha, Burlington, Cincinnati, Columbus, Cleveland and St. Paul (where an anti-gay ordinance has also been passed recently). In Cleveland a receptionist at the Concerned Women's Clinic was temporarily blinded when a bag of gasoline was thrown into her face.

Not only is the Catholic Church hierarchy in the U.S. not taking a stand against

these acts of violence, but there is evidence that many archdiocese are condoning and even encouraging such tactics as part of their own quest for political power. In any case, the connection of extreme right religious groups such as TFP to anti-abortion violence seems more than plausible. Consider this: in 1976, TFP held "a four-month special course for young men" in Cleveland, and in 1977 it organized a "special summer course for boys" in that city. Thus, there is a very direct and strategic urgency for feminists concerned with abortion rights to study carefully the politics and tactics of TFP and similar groups and to mobilize others against them. We have to begin to piece together, in a very precise way, *who* and *where* the enemy is; what exactly the ties are within the anti-abortion movement between the Church hierarchy which *encourages* and the tactical organizations which *mobilize* crusades, pickets and fire-bombings of clinics. This is a matter of survival—to be able to defend ourselves against potential violence as well as to develop a winning strategy in the movement to gain reproductive freedom for women.

But it is also important that feminist groups join with like-minded organizations on the left and in the gay community in the effort to analyze, expose and defeat the extreme right. We should push to form coalitions with such organizations to mobilize large counterdemonstrations whenever and wherever TFP appears on the streets, to let them know that neofascism won't be tolerated in our communities. And we should make the basis of such coalitions our understanding, not only that we share a common enemy, but that violence against women and against women's reproductive freedom *is* the major form that political reaction is taking in this period. In the politics of an organization like TFP, the link between anti-abortion/anti-feminist/"pro-family" politics and anti-communist/counterinsurgency politics becomes very clear; they connect these two struggles, and so must we.

—Roz Petchesky

## Notes

1. The occasion for this "solemn service" was the publication of a booklet called "Abortion Eve" by a Planned Parenthood local which depicted a grinning Virgin Mary surrounded by cherubs and captioned, "What, Me Worry?" Planned Parenthood for America disclaims this publication and has publicly apologized for its "malicious and profoundly offensive cover."
2. Linda Gordon and Allen Hunter, "Sex, Family, and the New Right: Anti-Feminism as a Political Force," *Radical America* (Nov. 1977-Feb. 1978).
3. Gordon and Hunter, pp. 10-11.

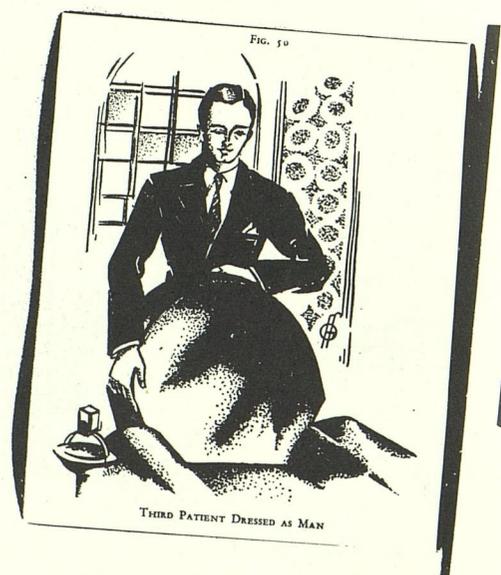
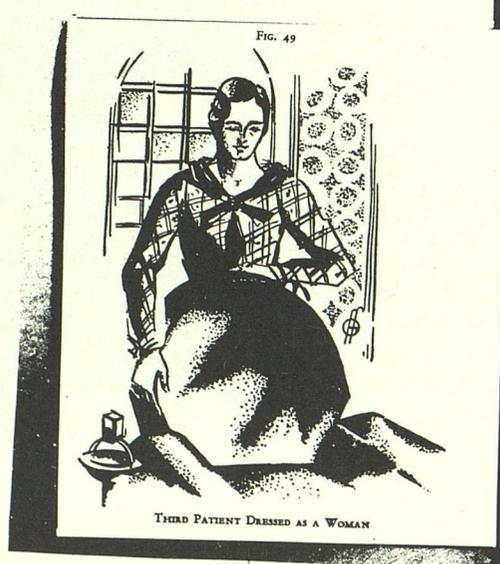
CHAPTER VII  
UNUSUAL PRISONERS  
SECTION 3 SEX DEVIATES

Some male homosexuals play the female role in sexual activity and therefore act in a feminine way, using make-up, swinging their hips, wearing women's clothes (transvestism), generally acting in a way to attract attention. Some male homosexuals are manly in their outward appearance, act rough and talk tough, but can be picked out by the company they keep. In prison these men are often "wolves" who have to be watched carefully because of the trouble they can stir up over their "love affairs". Jealousy, rivalries, and resulting bitter enmities can result from homosexual relationships that are allowed to develop or continue. For this reason, they represent not only a threat to the victim of the "wolf", but also to the discipline of the institution.

Even though they are caricatures of normal sex life and romance, homosexual affairs in prisons or jails are no joke, and should not be treated as such. They should be promptly broken up. This is particularly important because even fairly normal individuals may learn homosexual practices in prison if they are not properly supervised and protected from "wolves". When they are released, they may be unable to take up a normal sex life. It is the duty of the correction officer not only to protect society from the inmate during the process of rehabilitation but also to protect an inmate from other inmates who may damage, weaken, coarsen, or otherwise destroy what is left of his moral fibre. Just because homosexual tendencies are almost inevitable in prison life because of the absence of normal sexual opportunities, the custodial officer must not relax a stern suppression of sexual deviation.

This doesn't mean that all individuals who try homosexual experiences will end up being confirmed homosexuals. Kinsey reports that 37% of the male subjects he and others interviewed reported one or more homosexual experiences since adolescence but only 4% of the group interviewed were exclusively homosexual. However, there are always dangers in this type of experience, subject to the essential makeup of the person or the intensity of the experience he undergoes.

Although the approach varies in different facilities, most prisons and jails require that known homosexuals be kept under strict surveillance, if not segregation. Despite the revolting nature of their acts, homosexuals should not be ridiculed or otherwise brought to the attention of other prisoners as homosexuals. Whatever we may think of them, they are still entitled to the same fair treatment that any other prisoner would get. In addition, not all people with characteristics of their opposite sex such as male sissies or mannish women are necessarily homosexual.



# Women & Children First Or How Pop Planning Fucked Over Mom

War is waged on women in many different ways. One especially violent battle is currently being fought by the health care establishment through that particular field that caters to women's "special" function—human reproduction. While there has recently been renewed interest in how to make childbearing less painful for women and children, less attention has been paid to how to make the *control* of childbearing through contraception painless and safe. Indeed, both aspects of reproduction—*having* and *not having* children—must come under the control of women if we are to eliminate the type of violence currently being waged on women and their bodies.

In this paper we will explain why we think population planning and birth control demand the attention of the feminist and radical community today, describe some of the ways the population establishment has abused women, and then examine the theoretical underpinnings of that abuse from a feminist, a marxist and a marxist-feminist point of view.

## I. Why should women be concerned about population control?

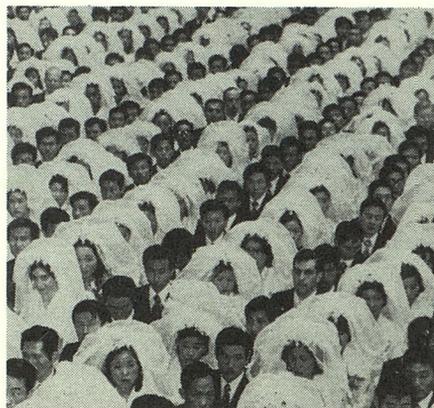
### A. The mentality of crisis

The population problem is part of the "mentality of crisis" that threatens the goals of oppressed groups today, including working people in general, and women, blacks and nationalists in particular. Over the last decade we have seen the emergence of a widespread feeling of alarm on the part of government leaders and the media about such issues as the dwindling supply of natural resources and food, decreased quantities of fuel and increased contamination of the environment. Population growth is often viewed as the culprit.

The attention given to the "population problem" feeds a growing sense of doom which makes rational planning difficult and allows government to enact harsh and stringent measures as an expedient against

"disaster." Although indeed some fear is justified about these problems and certainly many Americans do suffer from low wages or lack of jobs, high prices on food, poor housing and health care, as well as a deteriorating environment, to blame the problem of the *quality* of life on the *quantity* of people is to obscure rather than clarify the issue.

The crisis mentality diverts the focus of social and political attention from needy constituencies. Money is spent on reform measures that offer little of substance to any one group. Arguments that compare the world to a lifeboat and suggest using the technique of triage (selecting whom to feed according to their prospects of survival) tend to divide rather than unite us. Thus, we hear such statements as: "You can't give more jobs to women when there aren't enough jobs for men!" and people like Bakke go to court to assert the right of the majority to fight minority groups for places in the educational system. As the problems of food, health, employment and housing become defined as global issues, there is a danger that the



problems of women, who have historically been poorly fed, housed, cared for and, by and large, under- and unemployed, will be ignored.

### B. The importance of reproduction to women

The second reason that the population

problem is of concern to women is that it focuses on a (and some might say *the*) central aspect of female existence—reproduction. Although women vary in their attitudes toward their biological capacity to bear children, few women can go through life without being affected in some way by it. Thus, through population control programs, a major aspect of female gender identity is taken from women and placed in the hands of male policymakers, practitioners and researchers who enact legislation, design programs and develop technologies that are primarily used on or against women and their bodies. Although women are the objects (otherwise known as "targets") of population planning programs and are often the victims of these programs, they are rarely included in the decision-making process.<sup>1</sup> In fact, it is indicative of the field's male hegemony that until very recently the "population problem" was defined in terms that excluded either women or sexuality—two ingredients essential to the creation of any population.

### C. The repressive and sexist morality of population planning

Population control theories objectify women through an analysis derived from Malthusian economics which had its origins in a repressive and sexist philosophy. The thesis of Malthus (a minister) was that the social ills of the nineteenth century, such as poverty and disease, resulted from the tendency of humans to reproduce more rapidly than agricultural resources could expand. The unrestrained sexuality of humans (read: females) was thus viewed as the cause of social crises; self-control was offered as the necessary solution to these problems.

Today, using the label "neo-Malthusian," population experts explain the large-scale misery, the economic and social impoverishment of the poorer classes and of the "developing countries" by reference to "ignorance," "poor plan-

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# PSYCHOSURGERY FOR SOCIAL CONTROL

*Lobotomy is Back and Most of Its Victims are Women*

It reads like science fiction: telemetry (long-distance remote control messages to determine behavior); Electrical Stimulation of the Brain (ESB); disorientation drugs; psychosurgery. But it is not science fiction. It is the technology used by medical men to control human behavior.

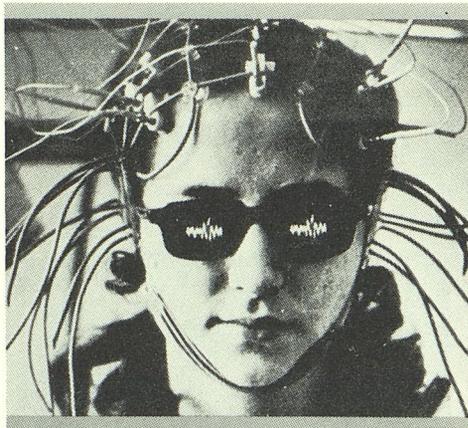
In the 1950s, there was a lobotomy craze in the United States. Over 50,000 victims, mostly women, were lobotomized. It horrified people—especially the relatives and friends of the victims. Many in the medical profession were not persuaded that the “cure” served any medical purpose. Then for almost 10 years very little was heard about lobotomy. During the dissatisfied and rebellious years of the 1960s lobotomy resurfaced. Once again psychosurgeons had a cure for the nation’s discontent—not only a cure, but an analysis. People were not acting out of anger. They were not demonstrating, marching and rioting because of social realities: poverty no longer bearable, a vicious war no longer acceptable, racism. The cause was damaged brains. “Shrewish” women, upset children, angry unemployed workers, urban rioters, anti-war demonstrators, all these people revealed by their behavior that their brains were “sick.” Millions of tax dollars went toward a variety of programs to control behavior. Lobotomy was back with a new name.

Psychosurgery lobotomizes more specific areas of the brain; it is a less generalized operation. The intentions and results are the same—to control behavior by altering those areas of the brain that govern intellectual capacity and emotional response. If we cannot think or feel, we cannot react too vigorously to our environment.

Psychosurgeons have been very specific about the nature of their work. Dr. O. J. Andy, head of the department of neurosurgery at the University of Mississippi Medical Center operates on children as young as five. In the 1973 Senate Hearings on Psychosurgery, Dr. Andy spoke bluntly: “For the treatment of abnormal be-

havior it thus is rational to utilize either surgical or psychological techniques to alter the brain function. The surgical technique is a direct approach to the structural and functional organization of the brain, whereas the psychological technique is indirect.”<sup>1</sup> Psychotherapy takes longer, is not cost-efficient and involves environmental, societal and familial changes. Sedative neurosurgery produces immediate results.

Neither Dr. O. J. Andy, nor his colleagues Dr. Marion Jurko, advocate fundamental social change. They believe that anybody “involved in any uprising such as Watts and Detroit could have abnormal brains.” Drs. Frank Ervin, Vernon Mark and William Sweet wrote a letter to the *AMA Journal* in March 1967 contending that since the vast majority of “slum



dwellers” did not riot, there must be “something peculiar about the violent slum dweller that differentiates him from his peaceful neighbor.”<sup>2</sup> In 1970 Dr. Ervin explained their position further:

We’re not talking about being nice to people . . . I found out 30 years ago that didn’t sell anybody. We’re really talking about being socially cost-effective. If you can work out a way to define, diagnose, treat, and even prevent a problem, you’re going to save a lot of money.<sup>3</sup>

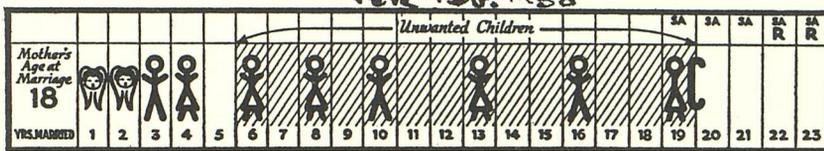
Drs. Ervin, Sweet and Mark have been well rewarded for their interests in cost-

efficiency. Their projects have been funded by the Boston Mayor’s Office from a state grant under the “Safe Streets Act” (\$50,000), the Law Enforcement Assistance Agency (\$100,000), the National Institute for Mental Health (\$500,000), the National Institute for Neurological Diseases and Stroke (\$1 million) and, in order to expand the Boston Program and establish new ones in Houston and Los Angeles, the National Institute of Health (\$1 million).

In Santa Monica, California, neurosurgeon M. Hunter Brown is also concerned about cost-accounting. He reports performing 20 operations on people who walked into his office from the street after they had read an article in *The National Enquirer*, explaining how, with “thermal probes,” “vicious killers” could be transformed into “happy, peaceful citizens.” Now Dr. Brown sees a “bright future for operation on criminals, especially those who are young and intelligent.” Such operations will free the state of the economic burden of “rehabilitating” its youthful offenders. “Each violent young criminal incarcerated for 20 years to life costs taxpayers perhaps \$100,000.” For only \$6,000, Brown observes, one can simply operate. Even more economical, Brown contends, would be a program that would enable doctors to identify and operate on potentially violent women and men before they commit a crime.<sup>4</sup>

Disregard for human rights is not limited to criminals, rioters or “slum dwellers.” Women have been the group most victimized by medical practice in general, and by psychosurgery in particular. Dr. Peter Lindstrom of San Francisco performs psychosurgery for everything from depression, pain, “obsessive, compulsive and phobic reactions” to “hypochondriasis.” He has operated on almost 500 patients. Eighty percent of his neurotic patients are women.<sup>5</sup> There is nothing *physically* wrong with these women. There is nothing *untreatable* by the traditional psychotherapy and/or drug therapy

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## Pop Planning

ning motivation" (i.e., lack of impulse control) and "lack of education." Such a moral philosophy allows population planners to overlook social, historical and cultural origins of fertility rates, and justifies those who would blame the individual rather than the social system that fails to distribute according to human needs. Since the individual most obviously involved in reproduction is the woman, blame often falls on her.

### D. Economic and cultural differences in the meaning of reproduction that challenge feminist theory

The final and perhaps most theoretically compelling reason for women to be concerned about the population problem is that as an issue population, birth control and reproduction pose a challenge to much current theory and analysis in the women's movement. Many middle- and upper-middle-class women believe that birth control and population planning are synonymous and that both serve the needs of women of all classes. In fact, however, although many birth controllers and even some population planners have been feminists, the interests of women of all classes have not always been served by these movements.<sup>2</sup> For example, contraceptive devices often differ by class: middle-class women have been encouraged to use methods that allow more individual control such as the diaphragm and the pill,

and poorer women have been encouraged to use methods controlled by the physician, such as the IUD and sterilization. Abortion, which has always been available in this country to women who could afford to pay for it, was briefly legalized for women of poorer classes, but with the withholding of Medicaid payments for abortion, it is now again accessible only to those who can pay. Thus, population programs and birth control technologies have been used to further the separation of the classes and to maintain fertility rates that benefit the privileged.

Just as birth control and population planning have been experienced differently by women in different classes, and in different cultural settings, so too has the meaning of reproduction and the value of having children varied. Whereas middle-class families in industrialized areas such as the U.S. and Western Europe do not usually benefit economically from having many children, since the preparation of children for skilled jobs is costly, families in agricultural settings and in economies (such as urban ghettos) that require less skilled labor and income from many individuals do benefit from having many children. Thus, birth control aimed at decreasing family size is highly valued in the former settings and is either irrelevant or threatening to the economic well-being of families in the latter.

An understanding of the meaning of reproduction to women in various parts of the U.S. as well as in such varied settings

as agricultural communities in Asia or squatter settlements in Latin America, can help us expand our understanding of the female condition and develop a feminist analysis that is meaningful to a larger number of women.

As we have seen, the population problem is important to women because it is part of the growing crisis mentality, it encompasses one of the most central aspects of female identity, it represents a moral position that threatens women's freedom, and it challenges our feminist analysis. For these reasons it is essential that we discuss the problem of population *as women*, not just so that we can have a piece of the pie, but so that our understanding of the root reasons and solution of the problem can be heard.

## II. How are women abused in population planning programs?

The abuse of women in the field of population planning is of such proportion as to warrant a separate article. Suffice it to say here that as yet there is no completely safe and effective birth control method available to women, so that all birth control programs that encourage the use of *any method* are *de facto* harming women. Furthermore, leaders in the field of population planning have only recently begun to acknowledge that women can be viewed as more than "targets" in their programs—in fact their critical role as child-bearers and contraceptors makes them a logical choice as researchers, practitioners and policymakers. Despite this recent enlightenment the sexist, elitist and imperialistic tendencies of the fields of birth control and population planning are pervasive and can be easily examined through the "family planning" literature.<sup>3</sup>

## III. Critique of population planning theory

### A. The traditional population control theory

The theoretical thinking behind much population planning is based on the idea that economic, social and political conditions are the result of population growth. Population planners have borrowed several notions from Malthus and updated them to apply to the contemporary situation. To Malthus the critical factor in understanding political and social problems was the ratio between the growth of the population (which he described as "geometric") and the growth of agricultural resources (which he

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## PSYCHOSURGERY

alternatives. Yet hundreds of women have undergone his "Prefrontal Sonic Treatments," which are nothing more than technologically advanced prefrontal lobotomies.

In Kingston, Ontario, Dr. Robert Hetherington was refused permission to lobotomize male patients because of "adverse publicity" but "was allowed to operate on seventeen women."<sup>6</sup> Another Canadian has operated on women for personality disorders and marital problems. One patient, unhappy in her marriage, ran away from her husband and felt suicidal. "After her lobotomy," the good doctor reported, "she was no longer promiscuous and became a faithful partner in her marriage."<sup>7</sup>

Dr. Walter Freeman, now retired, who holds the world's psychosurgery record, is very precise about why the overwhelming number of psychosurgery patients have been women. According to Dr. Freeman, women "make better victims" because "they have less power in general." He describes the first patient ever lobotomized in the United States, a woman never before hospitalized. Freeman writes that she needed the operation because she "was a past master at bitching and really led her husband a dog's life." Psychosurgery cuts away all the highest capacities of the brain including, in Freeman's words, "the ability to introspect, to speculate, to philosophize, especially in regard to the self." Creativeness involves "imagination, concentration, visualization, self-criticism and persistence"—all of which are diminished. These are qualities that men with power have traditionally considered irrelevant in women and minority groups. Freeman's bigotry is unmistakable. He writes that in his 15 years of "success," women, older, largely Jewish patients and Negroes have been some of his best clients.<sup>8</sup>

An encompassing example of psychosurgeons' attitudes toward women may be seen today at the UCLA Center for the Study of Violence. Run by Ervin, Vernon, Mark and company, the Center's program includes a mass screening facility for psychosurgery candidates, with the stated aim being to study violence in the individual. It emphasizes "the rioter," "the murderer" and "violence—possibilities during the menstruation cycle of a woman."

Electrical Stimulation of the Brain (ESB) represents a sophisticated advance in psychosurgical technology. This new

## The Mind-Fuckers Statement

I'd say it's time to give the mind-fuckers a taste of their own medicine, since it could be decades too late before our oppressors could be tried under an updated version of the Nuremberg codes. Those who prescribe Thorazine, Prolixin, Anectine, etc., should be injected with those drugs. Those who prescribe shock treatments should get the circuits turned around on them. Those who prescribe lobotomies should be lobotomised. Doctors & attendants who rape, molest, use & abuse female clients & inmates should be subjected to similar treatments. Likewise for the latter-day Pavlovians who prescribe aversion 'therapy' or remote control of human beings via the implantation of electrodes in their brains. And surgeons, nurses & attendants should not be let off easily because they were 'only following orders.' All those who have conspired to administer psychiatric assaults, including manufacturers of drugs & of electro-shock machines, should be forced to bear responsibility for their crimes against the people. It is the responsibility of all human beings to be informed about & to prevent the psychological, physical social & economic assaults which are being performed in the name of 'therapy'. We have tried to take back our mental wealth from the professionals & paraprofessionals who have stolen it from us. It's time for the mind-fuckers to get a taste of their own medicine.

--Shebar Windstone.

method, according to *Medical World News*, has enabled Dr. Robert G. Heath (Chairman of the Department of Psychiatry and Neurology at Tulane University in New Orleans) to implant more electrodes into the human brain than anyone in the world. With as many as 125 implantations, the brain is turned "into a human pin-cushion," and his patients into his puppets who carry with them "electrical self-stimulators," traveling-companion transistorized packets generally connected to the brain's "pleasure centers." Heath believes that anguish and upset behavior can be replaced by "positive pleasure feelings." Generously, he has wired his patients for sensations that he describes as "better than sex." He notes that his patients are not troublesome since they can "indulge themselves at the rate of more than 1,000 stimulations an hour."

Many clients are "frigid" women and homosexuals. Heath was pleased to announce that after weeks of self-stimulation made possible by ESB, a male homosexual encountered "his first successful heterosexual experience."

Dr. José Delgado, the most prominent ESB researcher, seems to be more interested in social control: he calls for a "cerebral victory" for humanity. Until he returned to his native Spain, where he continues his research, Delgado worked at Yale University with research support from the Office of Naval Research and the Air Force. A survey of his work indicates why the military was interested in funding his studies. Delgado has been able to stop a charging bull in his tracks through remote-control radio stimulation of an electrode implanted in its brain.

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# Pop Planning

described as “arithmetic”). Because these two growth rates are unequal, poverty and attendant social ills develop when fertility rates are too high. Malthus believed that fertility rates are likely to be high, especially among the lower classes, because their undisciplined nature is self-serving and pleasure-seeking. He felt this tendency to proliferate would result in political and social turmoil unless people were forced (by the more enlightened citizenry) to curb their appetites.

Today, neo-Malthusians follow a similar line of thought in attempting to explain the social and political problems of the developing world and of the lower classes in the developed world. Experts in the fields of demography and population planning speak of the “tragedy of the commons”<sup>4</sup> in describing the tendency of individuals to ignore the good of the group and seek to maximize their “piece of the pie” which they believe is limited by finite agricultural resources. In addition to the alleged tendency of people to outstrip natural resources by their high rate of increase, modern societies in the developing world are also burdened with the effects of the decreased mortality that has resulted from Western medical technological advance. Thus, while birth rates have continued to increase, death rates have diminished, producing an abundance of people. Because Western medicine is blamed for this interference with nature, many population planners consider it the obligation of Western countries to remedy this imbalance by promoting birth control (a twentieth-century white man’s burden?).

To the modern population expert numbers are only part of the problem. Which groups and classes increase is also considered to be an issue. Much of the concern about high fertility rates is a response to high fertility among groups of people who are seen as not being effective producers or consumers in terms of the economy. For example, welfare clients and unemployed citizens who have many children are viewed as adding to the class of “dependents.” “Third World” countries are also said to suffer from a growing “dependency ratio” (the ratio of those who are supported by the economy, e.g., children and the elderly, to those who contribute to the economy. This is particularly troubling to American capitalists who invest in these countries. By comparing the rest of the world to the United

States, many population planners have concluded that the best way to develop a stable (capitalist) economy is to have smaller families that can afford to educate their children for highly skilled jobs so they can earn enough money to be active consumers and thus feed the financial growth of the society. Thus, families are encouraged to limit their size to two children and are promised the bliss of a middle-class existence.

More recently, some population experts have acknowledged that the promise of a happy life through the use of family planning has not been sufficient to either reduce population growth in some areas or to improve the standard of living. Another school of thought has therefore developed, borrowing some from the socialist viewpoint. This “developmentalist” school of thought suggests a two-way relationship between population control and social and economic development. In order for people to benefit from family planning, or even to utilize it, they must be offered some of the advantages of development first, such as schooling and housing, or even jobs. From this point of view, family planning programs must be introduced simultaneously with development programs to ensure the stabilized population growth which is the goal.<sup>5</sup> As a result of this viewpoint, money previously devoted solely to population programs is now being channeled into “development” programs.

## B. A marxist critique

To the marxist, traditional population planning theory suffers from several fundamental flaws which have so far impeded its ability either to explain current growth (and recent declines) or to alter successfully fertility rates. From a dialectical point of view, population experts have the relationship backwards. Economic and material conditions determine population growth rates, rather than vice versa and scarcity of resources is due not to numbers of people but to how production is organized and wealth is distributed. Thus, if one wishes to alter population growth, one must first examine the social and economic situation of the people in a society at a given historical period. Such an examination inevitably shows that fertility rates are strongly determined by the structure of the economy and the condition of the labor market. For example, American birth rates decreased during the Depression when children were costly and later during World War II when women were needed in the labor market. When veterans returned from World War II, the labor market was flooded with males needing work, so women were encouraged to return to the home and to have more children, thus producing a consumer class to help recoup the economy.

Similarly, the economic structure of agricultural society determines fertility  
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# PSYCHOSURGERY

With a "ten second radio stimulation" he was able to inhibit "maternal behavior . . . most widely shared by mammals." He was able to turn a nursing mother monkey away from the "tender calls" of her infant and make her assume an aggressive attitude marked by "self-biting." "Peace and war" are now within the control of the scientist," Delgado concluded. Delgado's vision of the future extends even to cosmetics:

Leaving wires inside of a thinking brain may appear unpleasant or dangerous, but actually the many patients who have undergone this experience have not been concerned about the fact of being wired, nor have they felt any discomfort due to the presence of conductors in their heads. Some women have shown their feminine adaptability to circumstances by wearing attractive hats or wigs to conceal their electrical headgear.<sup>10</sup>

We read a lot these days about human rights. We read about how human rights are denied to the people of the Soviet Union in particular. But lobotomy was declared an illegal operation in the Soviet Union in 1951. In September 1976, on the other hand, the U.S. removed psychosurgery from the "experimental" category and elevated it to the realm of "therapy." Despite months of hearings, long deliberations and vigorous public protest against psychosurgery, spearheaded by Dr. Peter Breggin, the National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research advised

HEW that the merits of psychosurgery are significant and "the risks are not excessive." To date only vague guidelines exist to protect people from the mind-controllers. The dictum of "informed consent" or "parental consent" offers little protection.

Mind-controllers plan a very specific future for the citizens of this planet. James V. McConnell of the University of Michigan's Department of Mental Health Research is enthusiastic about the possibilities: The "day has come when we can combine sensory deprivation with drugs, hypnosis and astute manipulation of reward and punishment to gain almost absolute control over an individual's behavior. . . . We should reshape our society, so that we all would be trained from birth to want to do what society wants us to do. We have the techniques now to do it. . . . The techniques of behavioral control make even the hydrogen bomb look like a child's toy."<sup>11</sup>

In a society where the wants and needs of children, of women, of poor people, of lesbians and homosexual men are repudiated, in a society violent in its structure and by its economic nature, psychosurgeons are nothing more than instruments of torture. But it is now in this moment of renewed feminism, which recognizes so clearly the need to reclaim our own bodies and the full integrity of our spirit and our lives, that they can be stopped. Women acting together vigilantly and vigorously can end the power of all mind-controllers, including psychosurgeons.

—Blanche Wiesen Cook

## Notes

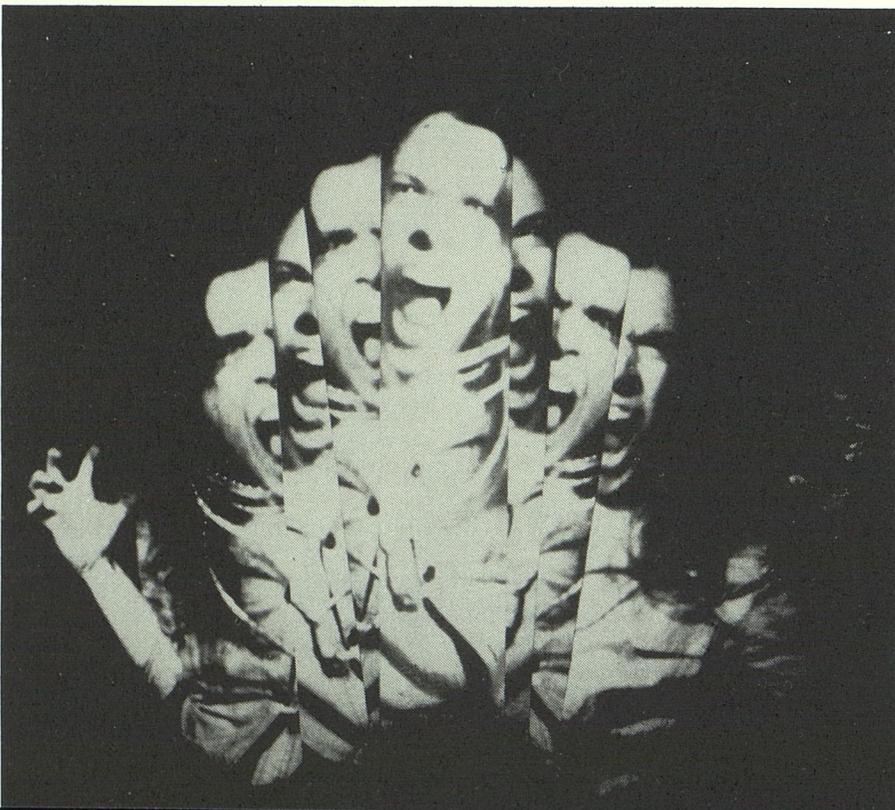
1. O.J. Andy's 23 February 1973 statement appears on page 348 of the Hearings before the Subcommittee of the Committee of Labor and Public Welfare, US Senate, 93d Congress, 1st Session, *Quality of Health Care: Human Experimentation* (23 February, 6 March 1973), Part 2; see also O.J. Andy, "Thalamoty in Hyperactive and Aggressive Behavior," *Confin. Neurol.*, 32 (1970), reprinted in *Ibid.*, pp. 398-429—with related Andy articles.
2. Mark Vernon, W. H. Sweet, and Frank Ervin, "Letter to the Editor: Role of Brain Disease in Riots and Urban Violence," *American Medical Association Journal* (March 1967) p.895.
3. See Mark Vernon and Frank Ervin, *Violence and the Brain* (Harper and Row, 1970).
4. M.H. Brown quoted by Peter Breggin, "The Return of Lobotomy and Psychosurgery," entered into the *Congressional Record* by Rep. Cornelius Gallagher (24 February 1972), E1602-E1612.
5. Lindstrom quoted in Breggin, "Lobotomies Are Still Bad Medicine," *Medical Opinion* (March 1972), reprinted in "Hearings. . .," *Quality of Health Care*, p. 387.
6. *Ibid.*
7. *Ibid.*, *Congressional Record* (24 February 1972), E1604.
8. Walter Freeman, *Psychosurgery* (1950). See Freeman quoted by Breggin "Psychosurgery for the Control of Violence," (1972) reprinted in *Hearings*, pp. 440-441.
9. Robert G. Heath, "Electrical Self-Stimulation of the Brain in Man," in *Control of Human Behavior*, Eds., R. Ulrich, T. Stachnick, and J. Mabry (Scott, Foresman, 1966).
10. Jose Delgado, *Physical Control of the Mind: Toward a Psychocivilized Society* (Harper & Row, 1970). See also, Karen Waggoner, "Psychocivilization or Electroligarchy: Dr. Delgado's Amazing World of ESB," *Yale University Alumni Magazine* (Jan. 1970).
11. James V. McConnell, "Criminals Can Be Brainwashed Now," *Psychology Today* (April 1970), p. 74.

## Sourcenote

See also Blanche Wiesen Cook's "Surveillance and Mind Control," in *Unclouing the CIA*, Ed. Howard Frazier (Macmillan Free Press, 1978).

For materials relating to mind control generally, and official government involvement in mind-control, crowd-control and drug-control experiments, see Joint Hearings before the Subcommittee on Health of the Committee of Labor and Public Welfare, U.S. Senate, 94th Congress, 1st Session, *Biomedical and Behavioral Research* (Sept. 10, 12; Nov. 7, 1975).

For additional information on this subject, see: Stephen Chorover, "The Pacification of the Barin," *Psychology Today* (May 1974); Constance Holder, "Psychosurgery or Laundered Lobotomies," *Science* (Mar. 16, 1973); Joe Hunt, "The Politics of Psychosurgery," *Rough Times* (Nov.-Dec. 1973); George P. Anna, "Mark Denies Racism Charge, Believes Violence Ubiquitous," *Medical Tribune and Medical News* (Jan. 2, 1974); Ruth Tebbets, "The Next Step in Law Enforcement: Electronic Brain Control," *Pacifica News Service* (mimeo, n.d.); and Marge Piercy's novel, *Woman on the Edge of Time*.



# Pop Planning

patterns in a way that differs from industrial economies. When an economy depends on intensive labor rather than capital, the economic and social value of children will be high. Women and families are encouraged to have many children because they are economic assets. Birth control is useful then for spacing births, rather than for limiting them. The marxist thus points out that no one population policy is applicable to all societies at all times, and indeed no population policy that overlooks the economic and social origins of demographic trends will be useful.

According to the marxist, several other aspects of modern population planning thinking are problematic. Malthusian economics has been shown to be faulty. Currently, for example, agricultural growth rates are higher than population growth rates, even in a highly fertile world. Thus, the premise that people will necessarily outstrip the food supply is incorrect. In addition, Malthus ignored the fact that in capitalist society people do not just eat their "piece of the pie," or occupy their part of the commons, but hoard wealth and accumulate goods or capital that can then be used to increase profits through investment.

The concept of a "population crisis" has also been questioned by marxist and other thinkers who suggest that it serves as a cover for imperialist goals of Western countries such as the United States. The assumption that absolute numbers is the problem is contrasted with the thesis that the density of population accounts for impoverished conditions or social tension. In fact, an examination of population densities indicates that, aside from Bangladesh, density ratios are higher in Western European countries, such as the Netherlands and England, than in countries that are the current targets of population programs. These same critics suggest that if world resources were more fairly distributed the so-called population problem would disappear. Finally, there is no reason to assume that in a situation of scarcity people will seek resources only for themselves; in planned and cooperative societies sharing allows for a more equitable distribution of goods.

## C. A feminist critique

Feminist critiques of population theory focus on the right of women to control their reproductive potential and tend to view population control programs merely

as a means to that end. If concerned with the "population problem" at all, many feminists suggest that the best way to control population is to give women alternate forms of status and satisfaction in life so that they do not have to have (many) children in order to feel important or legitimate in society. Emphasis is placed on improving a woman's status and increasing her social and political power through such institutional changes as improved employment and educational opportunities, improved health care and pregnancy benefits, the establishment of daycare centers and restructuring of the work world so that child care can be shared equally between men and women. In contrast, many women state strongly that although these changes may indeed decrease fertility rates, that is not a feminist concern: these social changes need to be effected to improve women's lot, regardless of population rates.

That women's needs have been subordinated to other goals such as the population crisis is clearly evidenced by the abuses referred to above. Feminists are right to insist that not only should women be in control of population programs, since they are so often its targets, but they should also be involved in the development of birth control technologies, programs and services, either directly or as consumers whose input is solicited. To allow women to have real choices in this and all other societies, they must have *optional* birth control that is safe and effective, as well as social legitimation of both childbearing and childlessness.

In sum, a feminist critique returns women to center stage in the population field and criticizes population programs for either overlooking women and women's rights or for paying lip service to or co-opting women's demands without seriously including them in their programs.

## D. A marxist-feminist critique

A marxist-feminist critique of population planning combines aspects of the marxist and feminist analyses above and proposes a new synthesis of these approaches in an attempt to understand fully the obstacles to reproductive freedom for women today. A marxist-feminist is interested in examining the relationship between economic changes throughout history and the development of sex roles, particularly as they relate to reproductive behavior. Women are here viewed as crucial elements in a complex historical process which aims at regulating fertility rates by

defining sex roles in such a way as to increase or decrease the value of reproduction in a given society at a given time. The marxist thesis that societies of different economic structures require different quantities and patternings of population growth is taken as valid by a marxist-feminist, but more emphasis is placed on the role of women in this process. Although much of the research is yet to be done, we can state that our reading of history so far indicates that as the economy requires varying numbers of people, either to supply laborers or to increase consumption, constraints are placed on sex roles and particularly on the role of women to ensure that they will reproduce the required amount.

An example of the application of a marxist-feminist analysis to a current social problem is the work of our Ad Hoc Women's Studies Committee Against Sterilization Abuse. We joined together when we discerned the rapidly growing threat to the reproductive rights of poor and minority women in the form of sterilization abuse. Few middle or upper-middle-class women were aware that, while they had recently won the right to abortion, their sisters in the working and welfare classes were denied payments for abortions with the passage of the Hyde amendment and were increasingly subjected to sterilization without adequate knowledge of the alternatives or consequences of the procedure, i.e., without *informed consent*. Injustice in the area of reproductive rights demanded the attention of our study group and compelled us to investigate and attempt to rectify it. Our study revealed that indeed population policy has been used to sustain and exacerbate class and racial differences in our society. Middle- and upper-middle-class women are taught to have the right number of children so they can afford to educate them to become skilled workers and consumers. They are given temporary forms of contraceptives to help them to space their births. Working-class and welfare mothers, who often need more children to ensure an adequate household income, are, on the other hand, forced to cut down their family size permanently through surgical sterilization (or with the use of birth control devices such as the IUD which can only be removed by a physician). While women of privilege can afford to have multiple abortions, the government refuses to pay for more than one sterilization operation for women on

(continued on page 73)

# Editorial

...it is automatic to read the representation of the housewife as her function within the world

(delimited by the husband's shirts, the home interior, the standards of cleanliness). The image of

the housewife becomes the commodity on sale. All products are interchangeable as what is being sold

is an attitude---a pattern of consumption. She is being offered an unambiguous function in a social

order where democracy is the choice between brand names and even that choice is informed by

men (the gray-haired paternalist in his dark business suit, signifying his standing outside of

the domestic sphere within which he still maintains his authoritative position as Expert)...

How does the victimization of women serve capitalism?  
Under what circumstances is violent action by women culturally sanctioned?

Which forms of violence does the crime rate leave unexamined?  
In whose interests is it to depict violence as the culture of poverty?

In whose interests is it to depict women as "naturally" nonviolent?  
How come most prisoners are men; most mental patients, women?

Is the process of armed struggle a part of the women's movement?  
Is the use of firearms a reinforcement of patriarchal control?  
What would female weapons be?

What is the status of terrorist groups like S.C.U.M. and W.I.T.C.H. within the movement?  
Why would Valerie Solanas want to kill Andy Warhol?

Did your father, grasping both your wrists in one of his hands, ever keep you trapped until you pleaded that the game end?  
Was it your mother who told you not to take it too far or it would end in tears?

In what ways are women often the transmitters of patriarchy among themselves?  
What kind of investigation could lead us to an understanding of the way ideologies are internalized by women and then reproduced in artworks?

# Pop Planning

public assistance. Discovering the contradictions in birth control policy in the U.S. led our study group to compose a *Workbook on Sterilization and Sterilization Abuse*<sup>6</sup> and to participate in public hearings on the issue on a local and national level.

Redressing the problem of women in socialist and capitalist societies requires that economic revolutions be accompanied by a dynamic understanding of the relationship between structural change and social relations, as evidenced in the family, in socialization and in sex roles. Marxist-feminists have just begun what is sure to be a long and difficult analysis of these relationships and it is hoped that the problem of reproduction and the issue of "population" will not be slighted in this process.

## IV. What can women do about population?

We must begin by defining the problem as *our* problem since so much of "population" concerns us, our roles, our bodies, our reproductive capacities. This in turn requires viewing "population" as a political issue that affects women of all classes. Defining the problem can be effected through analysis or through community organization, through research or through political action. We need to start this process by talking more to each other about the meaning of reproduction, the meaning of children, the meaning of being or not being a parent, since every woman is an expert in her own right on these issues.

Although the possible scope of approaches to take is indeed unlimited, ranging from local to national to international, it seems many feminists are today choosing to work first on a regional level. Many women have begun to form local task forces addressing specific issues and to build solidarity with other women through affiliation with a larger network of task forces. In the New York area, for example, several small groups have chosen to focus on various aspects of the abortion struggle, and meet on a regular basis with a coalition organization called CARASA. Our collective, which started as an independent study group on sterilization abuse, is currently a member of CARASA. Other groups have formed around such issues as childbirth, child abuse, and self-help health care.

While study groups and task forces create alternate institutions which offer a challenge and ongoing criticism to the establishment, there is still much to be done within the private and government agencies that fund or carry out the research and programs in the population field. Women interested in studying, teaching or researching particular aspects of the population question from a feminist perspective may wish to do what some of us have done in the past—attempt to work from within the population establishment to improve women's condition. Although funding has decreased since the mid-1970's and has been channeled into other related areas, such as "development," there is still ample opportunity to gain financial support for fashionable topics (this year the fundable topics are "adolescent pregnancy" and "sterilization"). Other women may wish to expand their own understanding of some of the topics discussed here and spread their knowledge to others in neighborhoods, workplaces, schools or universities.

It is our belief that a comprehensive understanding of the meaning of reproduction and the politics of population leads to an analysis that crosses class and cultural boundaries in a way that few women or feminists have so far achieved. It can thus forge an international awareness and strengthen ties among women around the world who are struggling to take back their bodies.

—Susan Bram

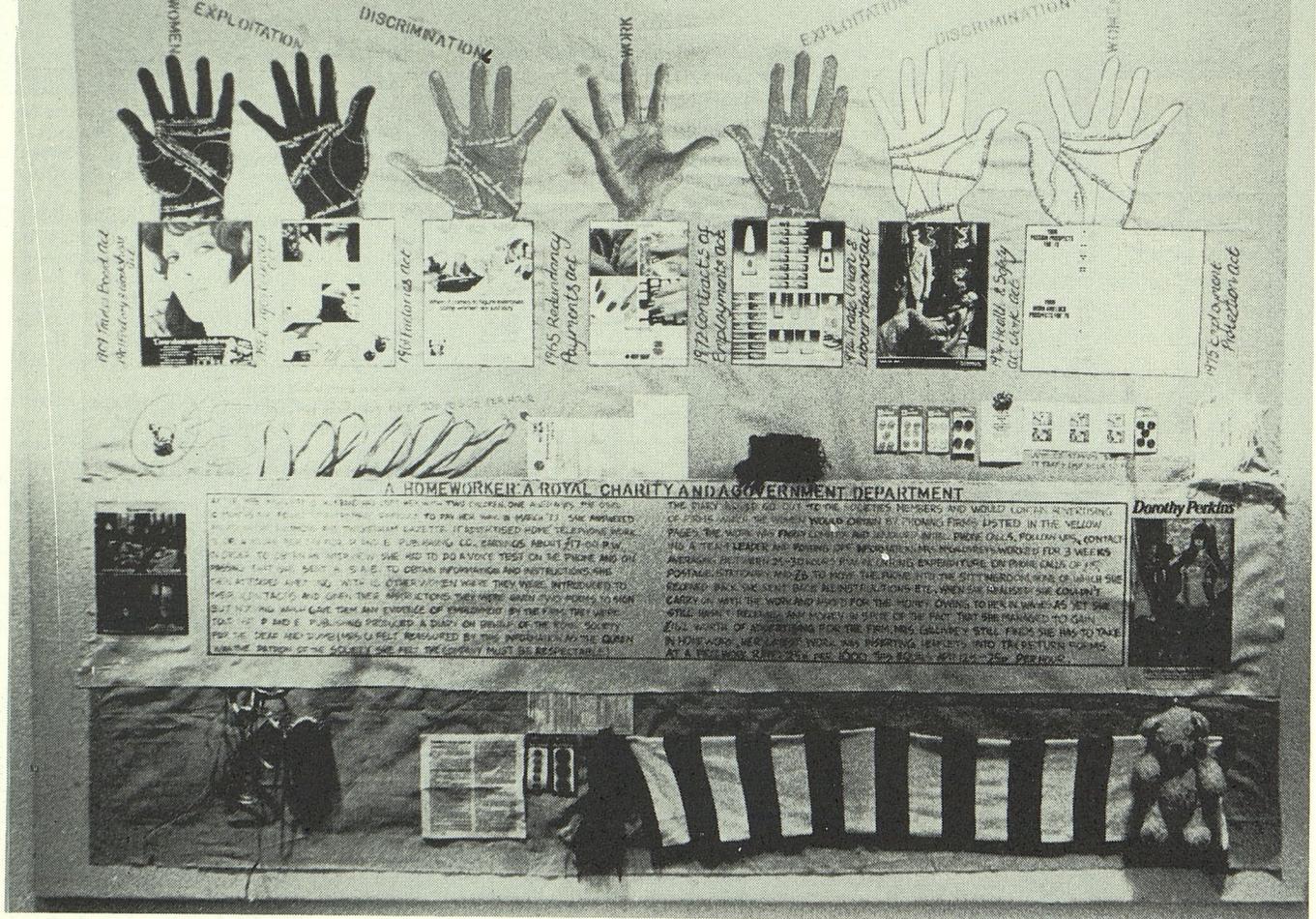


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# HOMEWORKERS

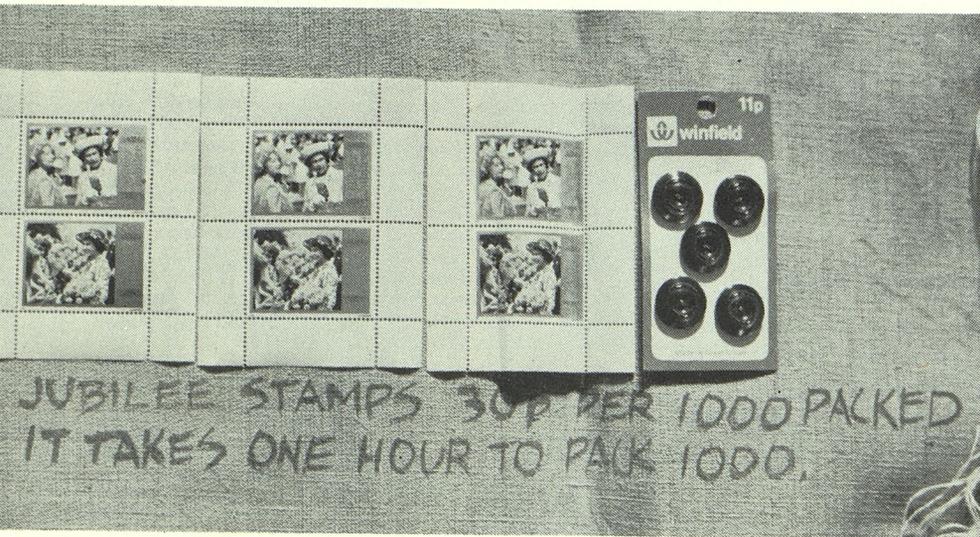
There are, by conservative estimates, 250,000 homeworkers in Great Britain. These workers are mainly women with young children who do piece work at home. They may paint toy animals, sew tassels on football scarves, card buttons, assemble fire extinguishers, carry out pregnancy tests. They usually work longer hours than a full-time office or factory

worker and still earn less than a quarter of an average weekly salary. Because of their isolation from one another and from their employers, homeworkers have not been able to organize (save in a few cases) for higher pay rates, job security, benefits. Labor laws ignore them, but the capitalists do not. They are a source of cheap labor.

"This work was in many ways a collective effort. I worked with others in the field, notably with a woman trade unionist and with the London Homeworking Campaign. But I was the only one who had a specific interest in bringing it into an art gallery—a gallery in Battersea which is situated in the London heartland of homeworking. In June of this year, the work went to the National Conference of the G & MWU (General and Municipal Workers Union) and so to a different audience. (At Battersea, it was visited mainly by artists, women, and homeworkers.) Its use was different in that it served to reinforce the campaign for more union action for homeworker legislation. The exhibition is now available to other groups: feminists, artists, galleries, homework campaign groups, labour history groups.

"In working on this project, I discovered I related to the situation very personally: not only do I have children and find it a constant battle to organize nurseries, etc. in order to work, but as an artist, the situation was very familiar. The work is done in between other responsibilities, from the home, with no protection, and, as far as Social Security is concerned, no profession."

—Margaret Harrison

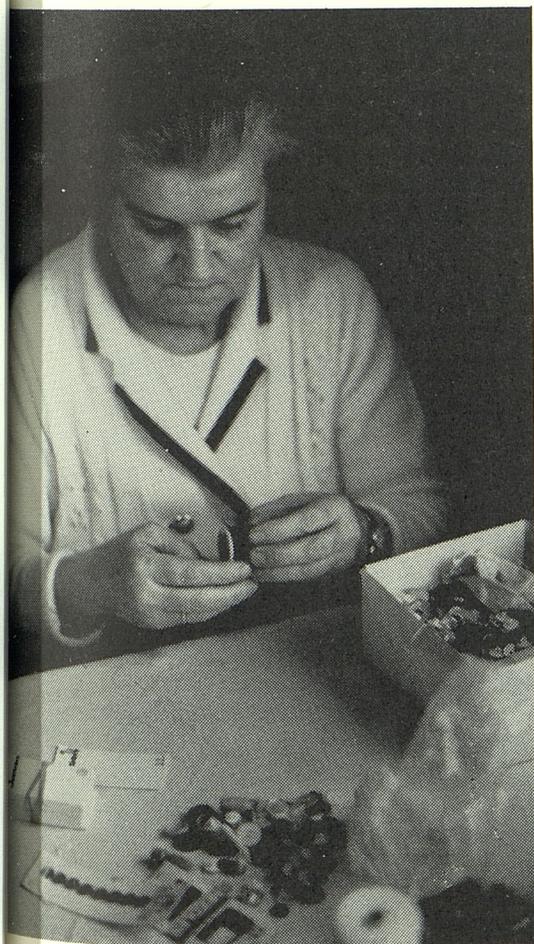
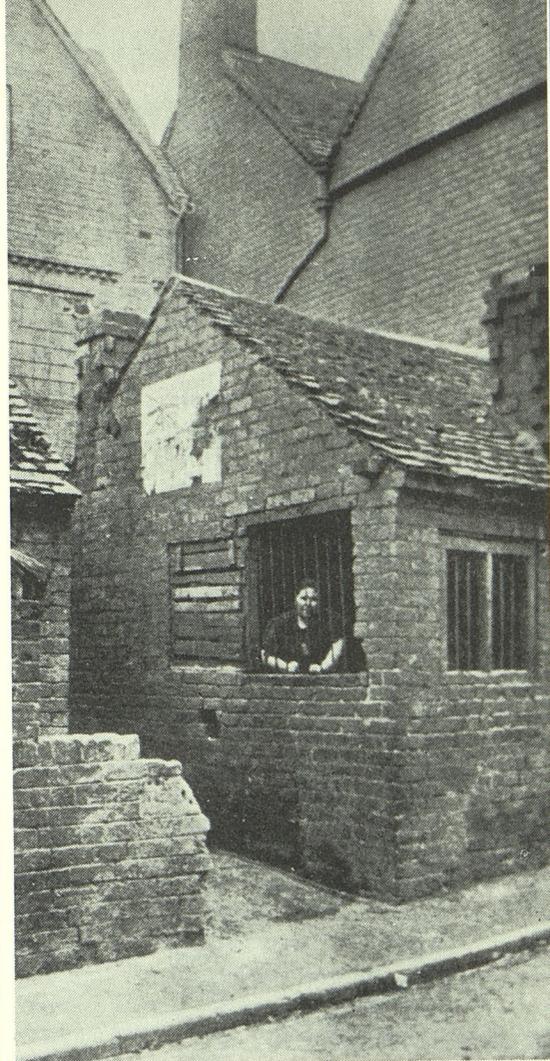


## RATES OF PAY 1975-1978

1975—HOMEWORKERS:  
National Average Weekly Wage £5.61  
Homeworkers National Average  
Hourly Rate 12P

Type of Work	Payment per Hour
Knitting Gloves	1.3P
Assembling Fire-Extinguishers	50P
Typing Labels	45P
Sewing Plastic Pants	16.6P
Tying Wire to Fishing Hooks	30.7P
Jewellery Repair	60P
Assembling Watch Straps	12.5P
Making Toy Bricks	40.8P
Assembling Lipstick Cases	50P
Crocheting Palms and Backs of Mittens	4.6P
Finishing Socks	31.2P
Making Sea Fern into Decorative Bunches	19.59P
Making Washers for Use in Sewers	17.5P
Xmas Cake Frills and Wedding Cake Bags	21P
Packing Jewellery	£1.80
Crocheting Baby Bonnets	2.5P
Cardboard Box Assembly	50P
Knitting or Crochet Work	UNKNOWN

Hand Crocheting Baby Jackets	5P
Repairing Books of Stamps	35P
Envelope Addressing	28.7P
Knitting Icelandic Sweaters	9.1P
Inserting Leaflets into Income Tax Forms	24P
Making Gloves	10P
Tasseling Football Scarves	40P
Making Leather Notecases	6P
Filling Fireworks	3P per 100
Packing Gas Mantles	5P
Painting Toy Animals	15P
Painting Toy Footballers	8P
Making Gloves (Highest Rate)	40P
Packing Vacuum Cleaning Filters	35P
Pregnancy Testing	18P
Making Cardboard Boxes	20P
Making Soft Toys	4P
Sewing on Motifs	40P
Carding Buttons	11-14P
Jewellery: Putting in Jewels &	15P, 30P, 40P
K TEL Hair Magicians— Packing	25P
K TEL Assembly Stunt Kites	35P
Packing Save Children Stamps & Jubilee Stamps	30P



“One week you would get thousands to do, the next nothing, you just had to take it when it was available. If you complained they just said, ‘If you can’t do it we can get someone else.’”

“I know I am a fool to do this, but I have to work at home and I have no choice but to agree to the bosses’ terms.”

“I usually earned about £7 per week. If I worked very hard I got £12. I asked him so many times for more money but he said ‘take it or leave it—there are lots of other ladies who want to do the work.’”

“I find the job of painting these tiny little figures in the manner required a severe strain on my eyesight and sanity. But I have three children and I need the money and I can only work at home.”

“You do what you are given—I’d chuck it over the canal bridge if I could but I could never get another job.”

Many processes employing outworkers, including those with significant risks, are not included in the health and safety provisions. For example, it has been found recently that work involving handling of radioactive thorium has been given to outworkers without any obligation by the employers to warn of the dangers.

### Mrs. Brewster carding buttons for Samuel Johnson & Sons Ltd. of Brixton

Mrs. Brewster used to have between 4,000 to 6,000 buttons per week to sew on to cards. The rates vary from 73 pence to £1.30 pence per 1,000. Mrs. Brewster’s highest rate was £1.09 per 1,000. She usually worked over 36 hours a week and her earnings were between £4.00 & £6.00. She often had to sit up sewing until midnight in order to finish in time. The company supplied cotton and rubber bands but not needles. The job involved sorting buttons, getting cards into sets of 10, and carding. Mrs. Brewster took on the work after she gave up a full-time job to look after her son and his little boy. The buttons go to a variety of outlets including Woolworth’s chain store and to Holland and Germany.

# Evolution of a Feminist Art Public Forms and Social Issues

The truth is that no place is safe. It seems clear to say that women should not hitchhike: seventeen of the eighty-six [raped during *Three Weeks in May*] were raped while accepting or offering a ride to a stranger or acquaintance. *But twenty-one were raped at night in their own homes.* Should we not stay home either? We all know not to walk late at night: thirteen of the eighty-six were raped while doing so—and *twenty-three were raped on the streets in broad daylight!* One woman was raped by her bus driver when she fell asleep before the end of the route, another at five o'clock in the afternoon as she sat in her office. Women are offered help when their cars break down and are raped instead. Women are offered medicine when they are sick and are raped instead. Women go to parties with men they think are friends and end up gang-raped instead. It's clear from the facts of the map, it's clear from the reality of women who speak out, that there is no privileged or protected group of women . . .

—Statement to the press during *Three Weeks in May*

We are here because we want you to know that we know that these ten women are not isolated cases of random unexplainable violence. That this violence wreaked upon them is not different, except perhaps in degree and detail, from all of the daily real-life reports which reach the news media, from those fictionalized mutilations shown by our entertainment industries, and from the countless unreported cases of brutalization of our relatives, friends and loved ones who are women . . .

—Statement to the press during *In Mourning and In Rage* . . .

It is predictable in this time of acknowledged backlash against feminism that violence toward women is increasing. As feminists realize the importance of this issue, we find ourselves knocking at the very threshold of an authoritarian patriarchy. Violence is the critical point around which the position of women revolves: it is the final expression of a system that feels its power threatened. We have seen into the institutionalized violence of gynecology, forced marriage and motherhood, psychiatry and incarceration. Now we are becoming aware of the role of so-called random and individual acts of violence in the systematic terrorization of women. We are more than the scapegoats for frustration within the social system. Our bodies are manipulated by the patriarchy as a battlefield for the diversion of attention away from economic systems which are themselves predicated on and preserved by violence.

Through the sobering confrontation with the politics of violence, women are educating themselves to the strategies necessary for revolutionary change. Collective action and pooling resources are important prestrategic acts for those of us whose first concern is saving the physical bodies of women. As artists we work with the issue of violence as source material, using feminist ideology to shape forms necessary for changing culture. These forms involve the collective action of many women artists and non-artists, working to "break the silence" and create solutions to violence.

Last year we introduced a course in feminist social art to a group of women at the Feminist Studio Workshop and discovered that before the formal concerns and political ideology that structured our work could be comprehended, these women had to go through a developmental process that would link them personally with a broad public art form. The "expanding self" became a metaphor for the process of moving the boundaries of one's identity outward to encompass other women, groups of women and eventually all people. Powerful feminist political art comes from such personal and spiritual connection to the world. Our approach in this article, as well as in our educational activities, is to make manifest the process by which we personally arrived at a public statement of our feminism through art.<sup>1</sup> First we will describe how our different individual developments brought us to similar aesthetic and political conclusions. These ideas were shared and refined during our work of the past year: *Three Weeks in May*, *Record Companies Drag Their Feet*, and *In Mourning and In Rage* . . .

(continued on page 78, 79)

# THE VIOLENCE OF IDEOLOGICAL DISTORTION

## *The Imagery of Laundresses in 19th Century French Culture*

Physical violence is the easiest kind to identify. It is blatant, direct and can be responded to. But what of invisible violence, rendered over time, subtly, insidiously? What of the forms of psychological and social violence that descend upon us so silently, stealthily? In psychological language, violence is so disguised that it often goes by the name of "love."

Love and violence [says R.D. Laing] are polar opposites. Love lets the other be, but with affection and concern. Violence attempts to constrain the other's freedom, to force him [sic] to act in the way we desire, but with ultimate lack of concern, with indifference to the other's own existence or destiny.

We are effectively destroying ourselves by violence masquerading as love.<sup>1</sup>

In the social arena, violence is institutionalized as "culture," "our heritage." The implication is that that heritage is universal—for all of us, by all of us. But that's a lie and one which permeates and violates every aspect of our existence. That heritage, for example, tells us that capitalism is good, socialism bad and unnatural; that men are not maternal; that women can't think abstractly; that coal miners are dumb. It is a society's ideologies that disguise and codify social violence. "Ideology is an outlook," says Alan Wallach, "that somehow corresponds to or serves to advance the interests of a ruling class, that is, an outlook that is class-determined . . . ideology is class domination in the realm of ideas."<sup>2</sup> Cornelius Castoriadis elucidates ideology as: "an invocation of fictive entities, pseudo-rational constructions and abstract principles which, concretely, justify and hide a social-historical practice whose true signification lies elsewhere."<sup>3</sup>

It is crucial to note here that there is a kernel of truth in ruling-class ideologies, and it is that bit of truth that guarantees the tyranny. For example, if we look at the

ideology of capitalism we find that it persuades us that competition is natural, and that everyone can compete equally. Each statement seems to be at least a little true. And both the truth and the lie can be located in the material realities of capitalism. Women, for example, can compete for most jobs, but they certainly will not get them, and for the work they do find they will be underpaid.

Since it is in the interest of capitalism to parade its ostensible belief in freedom, the competitive element is stressed, the strictures on freedom ignored or denied. And what we are left with is a bewildering set of experiences in which our primary sense of constricted freedom is belied by the culture's myths. We are led to distrust our instincts which tell us that we are unfree because, after all, there does seem to be some freedom. Because of that bit of freedom, that kernel of truth, we become unsure of our ability to comprehend, and faith in our own perceptual apparatus is violated.

Long before I understood the meaning of "ideology," I had unwittingly begun to observe and remark its machinations in my research as an art historian. I was working on Degas and his social milieu and was particularly interested in how his upper-class status affected the transformation of social realities in his art. That is, I wondered how his wealth and customs, for example, affected his view of laundresses, milliners, dancers, prostitutes and so forth. In order to assess his transformation, I began to do extensive research on contemporary labor realities. The first profession I investigated was laundering. I found that the realities of the trade were far indeed from any visual depictions that I found either by Degas or the myriad other artists who depicted the subject.

By the end of the 19th century there were a few factory-size laundries in France, but the majority of shops were still

small, with one to four workers. Women were employed almost exclusively. Although a law of 1900 fixed a 10-hour day for all women and children under 18, family establishments could not be monitored, and so in the small shops the women continued to work up to 15 and even 18 hours a day, rising at 5 A.M. and working till 11 P.M.<sup>4</sup>

Unemployment was chronic. And when laundresses worked it was backbreaking and paid little. Ironers maneuvered 5-pound irons in devastating heat; washerwomen trudged through the city balancing 20 pounds of linen on their hips. The ironers were the better paid and more regularly employed of the two; they were the artisans or skilled laborers of the trade.

In 1881 a laundress earned an average of 3.25 francs a day. Milliners and women's tailors earned between 5 and 10 francs; embroiderers, 4.25; lacemakers, 3; seamstresses, 2; unskilled chemical matchmakers and candlemakers, 1.25 to 1.50 francs; a doctor with a modest income, 20 francs; and an owner of a cotton-spinning factory, five thousand francs.<sup>5</sup> How specifically did laundresses live on their income? Here is an estimate for a woman working 260 days at 3.75 francs a day (975 francs a year):

Food	670.00 francs
Rent	150.00
Clothing	110.00
Linen	93.60
Shoes	23.00
Heating and Lighting	12.65
Laundry	66.00
Misc.	50.00
	<hr/>
	1175.25 <sup>6</sup>

(The average worker's daily diet consisted of two eggs, boiled beef, bread and wine.<sup>7</sup>) She needs 200.25 more francs to meet her expenses. How was she to make it up? With savings? Hardly. She went into debt.<sup>8</sup>

Her pay was not mitigated by her work  
(continued on page 79)



Edouard Zier, *La Petite repasseuse repassait* (The Little Ironer Ironing), 1887



Edouard Menta, *Blanchisseuse (Laundress)*, 1892



Edouard Menta, *Blanchisseuse (Laundress)*, 1892

# Evolution of a Feminist Art

Leslie Labowitz:

It was through *Menstruation-Wait*, my first performance coming out of a female consciousness, that I became a feminist. Prior to this performance my work had been consistent with the concerns of the sixties, an involvement with formal art problems rather than content. Early in my career I began to see that to evolve fully as an artist I had to free myself from the effects societal taboos and conditioning had on my life. This process of self-realization began with *Menstruation-Wait*. The first Wait took place in Los Angeles in 1971, the second in the entrance hall of the art academy in Dusseldorf, West Germany in 1972. The audience in Germany was anyone who walked by me, mostly art students, teachers and artists. I confronted the audience directly through my physical presence. In so doing I attempted to break down myths about menstruation as well as myths about women artists. Primarily, I wanted to reach women art students with the intention of creating a dialogue about their situation in the academy. The audience reaction during both the L.A. and Germany performances taught me that the expression of women's experience was not acceptable even in art. The L.A. audience was shocked. The German audience was rude at times (hanging painted red rags on my backdrop), but stimulating to the further evolution of my emerging politics. All the women consciously ignored me, except for two, who were later to organize one of the first women's art groups in Germany. The men were openly responsive. Though they avoided the direct feminist content, they questioned me as to how menstruation fit into a political class analysis.

These questions were important as they began my personal exploration of feminism and the role of economics and art in a capitalist society. The five years I spent in Germany from 1972-77 provided exceptional opportunities for an introduction to Marxism and "political thinking" unlike anything comparable in the U.S.

Living in the intense political climate of Europe, particularly in the educational institutions (including art institutions) resulted in a radical change in my life as well as my work.

I discovered political art and found it to be an integral part of European art history and tradition. Kollwitz, Heartfield, Brecht, Grosz, Beckmann, Beuys and Staeck were just a few of the artists available for the study of important and effec-

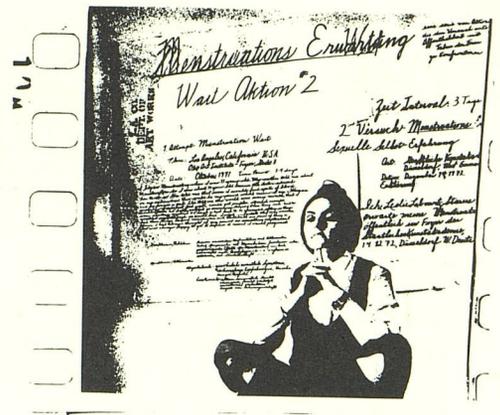
tive political art activity. Their imprint on me was especially great because I saw that this kind of work could only be fully comprehended by living in the political and social environment out of which these artists came. Because of my own personal interest in performance art as an expression of women's experience it was the Russian Constructivists<sup>6</sup> who most influenced my vision of how performance could be a political art form. Their concern with the social role of art and the artist's connection to a political struggle seemed appropriately close to feminist ideology and the art coming out of the movement. The large-scale monumental street works, often collaborative, and the innovative direction of performance in the public sphere (streets, factories, schools) symbolized the kind of synthesis between art and politics I wanted to move toward.

There was no visible feminist art in Germany in 1972, but the seeds were being planted within a well-organized network of radical feminist groups throughout the country. Like myself, these women were influenced by the artists I have mentioned. Within the already politically conscious feminist groups the ties to working-class women and housewives were deep-rooted. The art that was beginning to come out reflected those ties. The direction of the development of women's culture was very different from that in the U.S. although these women were certainly influenced by the "personal" approach that began the movement here.

After *Menstruation-Wait* I consciously moved out of the art world and began teaching art at a German Gymnasium. My first actual connection with a women's community began there with a class of young women. While I initially saw teaching as an alternative activity to art, it was here that I found the basis for the art form characteristic of the direction my work would take in the future. I guided the class through collaborative performances based on a critical analysis of fashion and makeup. We made costumes, masks, collages, as performance props. These pieces were private but were filmed and shown publicly.

Recognizing the potential for performance to politicize its participants as well as its audience, I started thinking about a model for its use as a public political art form. This model was based on the premise that the interaction of art and politics

(continued on page 80)



Leslie Labowitz. *Menstruation/Wait*. Oct. 4-9, 1971. Otis Art Institute, Los Angeles, Cal. Dec. 9-12, 1971. Entrance hall, Art Akademie, Dusseldorf, West Germany.

I sat cross-legged on the floor of the public space dressed in black and white. The audience walked by me entering the intimate sphere of "the female" I had established. I expressed my physical and emotional experiences as they occurred. If I felt like crying I did so; if hungry, I ate. This information was recorded by hand on a backdrop along with audience reaction, the memory of my mother telling me about menstruation and information on the physiological and psychological effects of the birth control pill. The Wait continued until I started my period.



*Paragraph 218* by Leslie Labowitz was performed at the City Hall in Boln the evening before the supreme court judges voted on reinstating the law making abortion illegal in West Germany. The performance was part of an entire program put on by a women's organization, which included songs, speakers and leafletting. Some 500 men and women participated by holding up torches to light the performance area. Three women, dressed in black pointed hoods and capes and holding signs with the number 218 handprinted on them, stood elevated on a portable stage; they represented the brotherhood of a male society, the German supreme court judges. Two women in red hoods stood lower, to the side of judges. A woman in street clothes entered the performance area and approached the judges. "Why can't anybody hear me?" she screamed. The two figures in red began wrapping her from feet to head with white gauze. A bucket of red paint was thrown on her as she knelt. A woman in a short skirt and heels carried a six-foot-long gold penis on stage, handed it to the judges, who elevated it erect and then threw it to the audience. It broke apart.

Suzanne Lacy:

*Ablutions* provided one of the first art vehicles for the portrayal of women's experiences of violence. During the previous year Judy Chicago and I had gathered the shocking and painful testimonials of women who had experienced rape. With Sandra Orgel and Aviva Rahmani we worked to create a performance on rape. In that time of the emerging feminist movement, we felt our most politically powerful art act would be to reveal this hidden experience, a substratum of horror obscured by the prevailing myth that no woman could be raped "against her will." The strategy behind this first piece was to convince the audience of the reality of the problem, and to initiate a cultural context that would allow women to speak out about sexual assaults.

*Ablutions* began as a collection of oral histories. For me the translation of this sociological information into art marked a synthesis of my past education in psychology, my experiences in feminist organizing and my artmaking. I was not personally satisfied with feminist organizing at the grass roots level or within the professional community, as both seemed to take energy without nourishing me. At Fresno I met Judy Chicago and entered the Feminist Art Program. In this openly expressive and highly demanding space I learned that the creation of art, no matter how painful the subject matter, replenished me as no direct political activity had done. The act of making art somehow mitigated the pain of much of the experience with which we dealt.

Our first performance work, almost always collaborative, presented our newly emerged world-view to audiences whose ideas about women's lives were often diametrically opposed to ours. Our audiences consisted largely of college students and faculty, and at first it was a struggle to make our ideas comprehensible to even these small groups. Clarity of communication was desperately important, and this need structured the development of our form language, one which included the audience as an instrumental and powerful part of the artist's creation. We more than wanted to be understood, we needed it: we were, after all, describing our own lives. *Ablutions* was a large step for us, one in which for the first time we addressed the professional art community in Los Angeles with what had become a strong political statement in art.

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## Laundresses

conditions; they were ghastly! Although one art critic described laundry shops as "clean-smelling shops gaily decorated with hanging gown, shirts, sheets and towels,"<sup>9</sup> that was a fiction. The shops were stiflingly hot, and were incubators of disease. Ninety out of every 100 laundresses lived in two rooms; one where they ironed, the other where they slept. Quarters were cramped, living conditions unhealthy. In the majority of cases there was no kitchen; food was prepared and eaten in the rooms where dirty laundry was counted, marked, sorted and later ironed. The stench was awful. Dust and other particles released during sorting contaminated the air, which was constantly heated by the furnace which kept the irons hot.<sup>10</sup> Emile Zola in *L'Assommoir* evokes the slow heat of the work day:

By now the really hot weather had begun. One June afternoon, a Saturday when there was a lot of urgent work, Gervaise herself stoked the stove up with coke, and there were ten irons heating round the roaring flue-pipe . . . The heat was enough to kill you. The street door had been left open, but not a breath of air came in . . . all sounds had stopped and in the oppressive silence the only thing to be heard was the dull thud of irons.

The incidence of disease was staggering. Laundresses were chronically ill with TB, bronchitis and inflammation of the abdomen and throat.<sup>12</sup> Because the law was powerless to affect small family-run businesses, it was healthier, paradoxically, to work in a factory than in a small shop.

Laundresses also suffered from alcoholism, as did workers in general. The women felt they needed strong drink to fortify them while they worked, and employers, in order, they believed, to increase the ironer's output, provided stimulants like wine and brandy.<sup>13</sup> Laundresses began drinking at 11 A.M. and continued all day. Wine merchants encouraged the washerwomen by setting up canteens at the door of public wash-houses and some-

times within the wash-houses themselves.<sup>14</sup> It is said that these women "died at about fifty or sixty, worn out by chronic drinking, general paralysis, or acute rheumatism."<sup>15</sup>

Lacking memoirs or any other writing by the laundresses themselves, the most reliable sources of information are the labor reports.<sup>16</sup> One would be tempted, however, to consider also as data the many paintings, prints, photos and stories about laundresses. That would be a mistake. For these artifacts of middle-class culture depict a laundress we would hardly recognize.

Art salons in Paris from 1865 to the end of the century regularly exhibited paintings with such titles as *The Little Laundresses*, *The Queen of the Laundresses*, *Wash-house in the Park of Grandbourg*. The laundresses depicted are dexterous but more emphatically they are sexually alluring. (See Edouard Menta's *Blanchisseuse (Laundress)*, 1892, and Edouard Zier's *La Petite Repasseuse Repassait (The Little Ironer Ironing)*, 1887.) The emphasis is continually on the intimate nature of the work they do—undergarments and bedclothes abound. Also, ostensibly because of the work conditions, the women are in a state of semi-undress. The details of the painting are more or less suggestive, and one begins to sense that the apparent hard work is only a foil for disclosing intimate details of the women's anatomy. The implicit sexual content of these works is made explicit by more popular prints such as *La Repasseuse (The Ironer)* of 1837 in which an old woman enters, surprising a younger woman ironer who has just (none too successfully) hidden a suitor under the bed.

Contemporary literature found the laundress equally beguiling. In 1877 Zola published *L'Assommoir*. The popularity of the book was due not merely to the attention paid to working-class life and the ravages of alcoholism, but also to the titillating nature of the material in general. The novel told the story of Gervaise, a laundress, whose taste for good food and

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Stereoscopic photograph, 1850's

## Leslie Labowitz:

could facilitate the collective expression of large groups of people, activating them toward social change. The performance would work on the level of public ritual, uniting participants and a mass audience in a spiritual bond that creates community by politicizing its members.

I saw the model as having five components: collaboration with a political organization; use of the skilled artist as director/organizer; a focus on issues of current concern; use of the language of the audience addressed and economic accessibility of materials.

*Paragraph 218* became the actualization of this model. I had joined a feminist organization in Bonn working on the legalization of abortion in Germany. I was asked to participate with an art action at a rally. I seemed appropriate to focus on a public performance about abortion because that topic was heavily covered by German media; we would have an opportunity to present a feminist perspective on the issue. Seven women participated with me in the actualization of the piece. I directed and performed.

*218* was my first attempt in an art framework to use a language that could be understood by a general audience. The use of clear, direct images was to avoid misinterpretation. The use of work images as backdrops and signs woven throughout aided the making of direct political statements because of their informational quality. Their contrast with strong visual images compressed information and heightened the activity, shortening the length of the piece, which was about 10 minutes long.

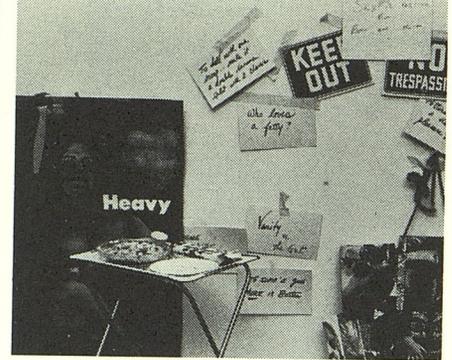
This is much the same technique used in current mass media, particularly in advertising, but the content of *218* was not slick, simplistic or manipulative. Advertising tries to sell on highly sophisticated subliminal levels while as an artist, conscious of the power of images, I wanted to communicate a totally different kind of information on a much deeper level. The performance was therefore to be experienced differently than the way the usual bombardment of visual information in daily media is experienced.

The audience was mostly women. It was very emotional, many women crying silently. After it was over, there was a period of silence where our spiritual connection could be felt throughout the group.

The use of materials that were acces-

sible economically, easy to locate and recyclable made it possible to produce the piece for about \$25.00. The materials for the props were black and red paper, red, white and gold paint, white gauze and plaster. They gave it a raw quality that I hoped would reflect events that grow out of a community's immediate need to express itself.

Coming to L.A. in 1977, I was intent on continuing the public work on women's issues. In Europe I had let my defenses down and felt almost no fear about walking through the streets at night. I knew that coming back meant I would have to begin building those defenses back up—rape being the highest rising crime in the U.S. I am angry and resentful of this situation, particularly in L.A. where it is said one out of three women will be raped in their lifetime. My meeting with Suzanne, the strong feminist community and the Woman's Building have given me the support needed to expand into the scale of the current work presented.



*One Woman Shows* was a performance structure in which women could perform acts of self-naming for each other. A temporary community was formed by word of mouth, chain-letter fashion: I chose three women for whom I wanted to perform; they chose three, who each chose three, etc. We met to perform together on an opening night at the Woman's Building. The audience viewed the performance from a roped-off space to the rear of the gallery. The performers sat together and faced me as I began the first piece, naming myself as the woman who is raped, the woman who is a whore and the woman who loves women. Then the three women I had invited moved to different parts of the space with their invited participants and began performing simultaneously. From one dramatic event the activity mushroomed into several simultaneous rituals. As the loss of boundaries between individual pieces increased, the audience was left with the experience of the warmth, hilarity and intensity of women relating to each other. The performance continued throughout the month, with each performer leaving her "traces" on the wall.

Collaboration by Suzanne Lacy, Judy Chicago, Aviva Rahmani and Sandra Orgel. *Ablutions*. 1972. Venice, Cal.

The performance space was strewn with egg shells, piles of rope and fresh meat. In the center three galvanized tubs were filled with eggs, blood and clay. The audience entered to hear a tape-recording of women telling the stories of their rapes. The tape continued as one woman was methodically bound from head to foot with white gauze. Another slowly nailed beef kidneys into the wall, thus describing the perimeter of the space. Two nude women bathed first in the eggs, then in the blood, finally in the clay. Two clothed women bound the performance set and other performers into immobility with string and rope—leaving the space as the tape repeated, "and I felt so helpless all I could do was just lie there . . ."



(photo: Lloyd Hamrol)

Suzanne Lacy:

This audience, composed mostly of contemporary men artists and women artists newly exposed to the ideas of feminist art, received the piece in shocked silence. From later reports we found that many viewers were unable to process what they had seen and heard for several months, so disparate was the information about rape in the piece from that available in the general culture. For several years after *Ablutions* feminist performance art received little attention from the broad art community.

In the Woman's Building,<sup>2</sup> performance was nurtured in the educational programs at the Feminist Studio Workshop, where it was used as a consciousness-raising and educative tool as well as becoming a personal art form for several young artists.<sup>3</sup> Audiences were once again small, but being left out of critical observation by the art community had its benefits: we were able to develop our ideas in a supportive environment, and we began the development of a feminist audience for our work. Given the feminist political concern for changing culture, however, it was natural that women's performance art would soon evolve in the direction of expanding the breadth of its audience.

Three years after *Ablutions* I created *One Woman Shows* in which I made the performance art process directly available to women outside of the art community.<sup>4</sup> My personal concern for violence was still intact, but the feminist educational experience had shifted my thinking toward structures allowing for the participation of artists and non-artists together in performance. In our analyses of forms of oppression we had begun to realize that the separation of artist from society resulted in a neutralizing of the social power of art.

*One Woman Shows* was created as a framework for the expression of multiple voices.<sup>5</sup> Like a patchwork quilt in which many women's labor and images are sewn into the fabric of one cover, the piece was designed so that each woman's unique image, seen in a single space, created a collaborative expression of the burgeoning women's community. In this piece (as well as in quilt making) the form of creation is as important to our women's culture as the content of the work itself. Like consciousness-raising in which each woman has her space, professional artists performed simultaneously with women who had never made art. Personal ritual, per-

formed in concert in a public space, its privacy intact, gave voice to the form of feminist interaction. The very strength of our movement lay in the quality of our interaction, and performance provided an affirmation of the collective whole.

I was not directly aware that including equal participation of women who were not artists was a move in the direction of broadening audience. In fact, for two years I ignored the piece because I thought it too didactic and political to be "good art." Looking back, however, I can trace many of the formal elements of *Three Weeks in May* to this piece.



Rape Speak-out at Woman's Building sponsored by Rape Hotline Alliance in *Three Weeks in May*, by Suzanne Lacy, 1977.

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## Laundresses

drink led her to moral degradation, sexual promiscuity and financial ruin. Gervaise so lost her moral compass that she slept in turns under the same roof and before her daughter's eyes, with both her former lover and her husband. In addition, Zola's readers were treated to such workshop episodes as robust ironers undressing in hot weather, stunning male passersby with a "vision of bare-breasted women in a reddish mist."<sup>17</sup> Significantly, *L'Assommoir* was Zola's first popular success—a success which also firmly established the publishing house of Charpentier.

Even popular histories like Octave Uzanne's *La Femme à Paris* (1894) dwelt in a titillating manner on laundresses who are described as

clean, coquettish, and often really pretty . . . It cannot be said that their souls are as immaculate as the linen they iron. These girls have a shocking reputation for folly and grossness . . . They haunt the outskirts of the city, are inveterate dancers, descend sometimes to the lowest forms of prostitution, and are also given to drink. They do not hesitate sometimes to pawn their clients' linen to pay for some piece of dissipation.<sup>18</sup>

George Montorgeuil, a contemporary writer of manners, concurs on their easy virtue and wonders in *Le Café-concert* (1893) whether they aren't deserting their own profession to join the even looser one of cafe-concert dancers.<sup>19</sup> So pervasively was a laundress thought of as a sexual object that even the fledgling photography business capitalized on it. (See the stereoscopic photograph.)

Those who examine the vision communicated by the paintings, prints, novels, etc., naturally tend to believe it. However, after one becomes familiar with the labor data, the cultural images look at best one-sided, and at worst completely distorting. Left-wing contemporary critics of *L'Assommoir* were quick to realize this. Some criticized Zola "for slandering the people, for representing the working classes as a gang of drunks and laggards."<sup>20</sup> Arthur Ranc in 1877 called Zola "a bourgeois in the worst sense of the word. He has for the people a bourgeois contempt, doubled by an artist's contempt . . . Never has he presented manual work as other than repugnant."<sup>21</sup>

Clearly, a discrepancy existed between the labor data and the cultural phenomenon. Why did the essential facts of

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'Three Weeks in May' was a process image documenting the repeated sexual assaults against women in Los Angeles from reports gathered daily from the Los Angeles Police Department. The decision to place the maps in a public site was critical to the subsequent structure of the piece, as it brought the question of responsibility to the audience into the aesthetic design. The rape map itself was an effective consciousness-raiser for those who watched its ominous progress, but to allow it to stand as the sole image of the piece would be to portray only the continuing victimization of women. A second map focused on what was being done by listing phone numbers of rape prevention and intervention agencies. These maps were the central image around which the performance structure of three weeks of activities was created.

Going into the public sphere added to the piece the awareness of multiple communities and their possible roles in social art. Members of the "community" of government employees and officials were instrumental in installing the maps as well as publicizing the piece.

#### Governmental Support

The maps were placed in downtown Los Angeles, as it is the center of activity for the city, housing government organizations, large businesses, and shopping complexes. I approached two large shopping complexes, hoping that placement there would ensure large audiences and the use of organizational facilities. One refused ostensibly due to prior scheduling and the other more forthrightly objected to the "controversial subject matter." It was clear they did not want women shoppers to be troubled by thoughts of rape.

By chance I found a supportive City Commissioner, father of an artist friend. He offered the City Mall Shopping Center adjacent to the City Hall. The decision to use this complex proved later to be a most fortuitous one, as the city government became supportive in publicity-seeking, installation of the maps, and production of events in ways which greatly expanded the scope and effectiveness of the piece. The City Attorney set up a press conference with himself, me, a representative of the hotline alliance, and the deputy mayor to announce the opening of the piece. Although this would not ordinarily have been a newsworthy event, his particular political situation at the time generated a good deal of coverage, something both of us used to our own advantage.

The maps were installed in the Mall on Mother's Day, May 8. During the installation ceremonies only one city official, Councilwoman Pat Russell, was present to address a sparse and transitory audience. As the three weeks progressed, however, several officials began to offer their support, and public awareness grew up until the closing rally, which was well attended by both press and a general audience.

#### Community Based Organizations and the Media

In Los Angeles many organizations have been dealing with issues of violence against women for several years. We discovered, in addition to the rape hotlines (several of which have formed a coalition, The Hotline Alliance), there are rape treatment centers in several hospitals, private counseling centers which deal with victim recovery, special committees within organizations such as N.O.W., Los Angeles City County Commission on the Status of Women, and A.C.L.U., and programs sponsored by the police and sheriff's departments. There are grassroots feminist organizations struggling to develop battered women's shelters, create "neighborhood watch" programs, and educate the public on violence in the media:

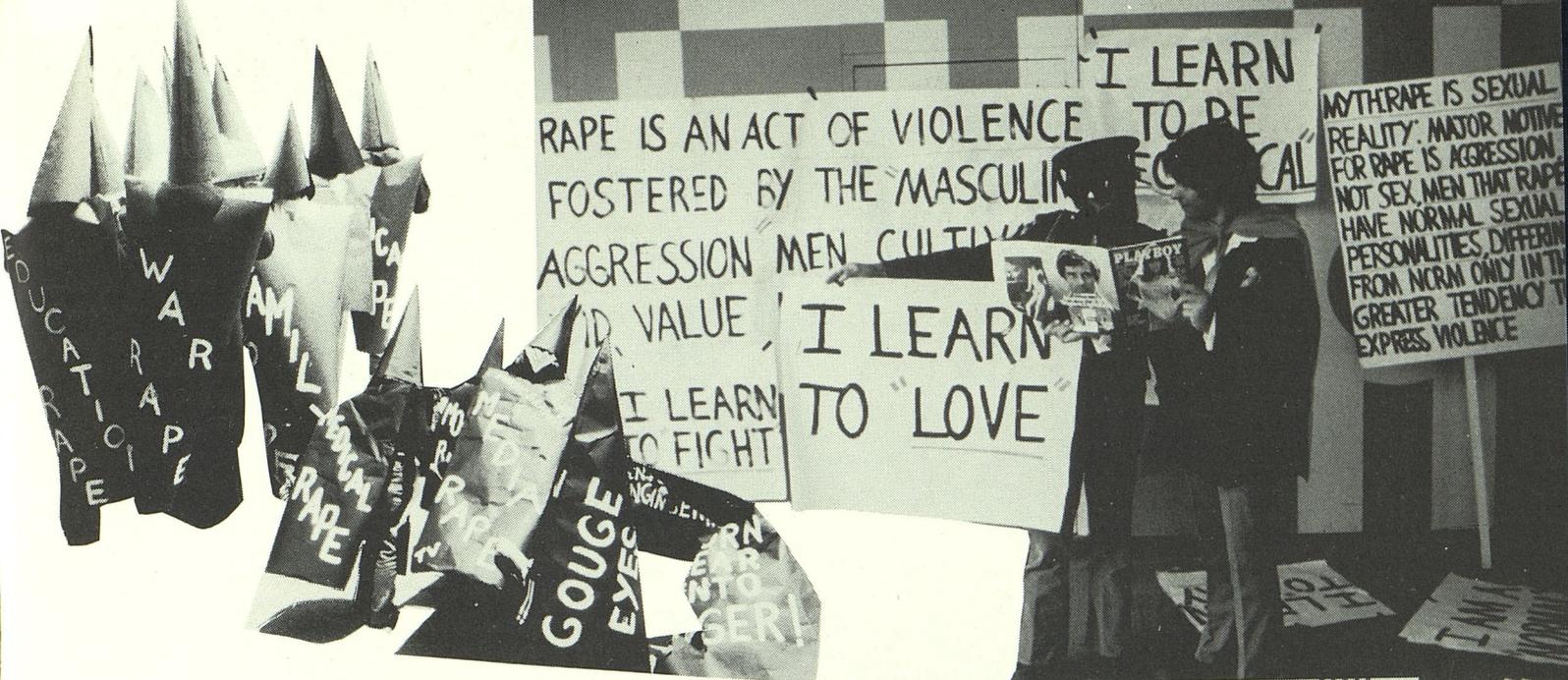
Although many of these groups are somewhat aware of each other's activities, political differences and the strenuous demands of their own activities prevent collaboration. As I collected information about these organizations, I began to see Three Weeks providing a framework to publicize already existing activities and introducing the organizations to the notion of more extensive interaction. The overall media strategy took the form of a campaign to bring

public attention to the maps, the piece as a whole, and the various activities of the involved groups.

Thus, the piece became an open structure for the dissemination of information beyond that possible for any one agency, individual, or artist.

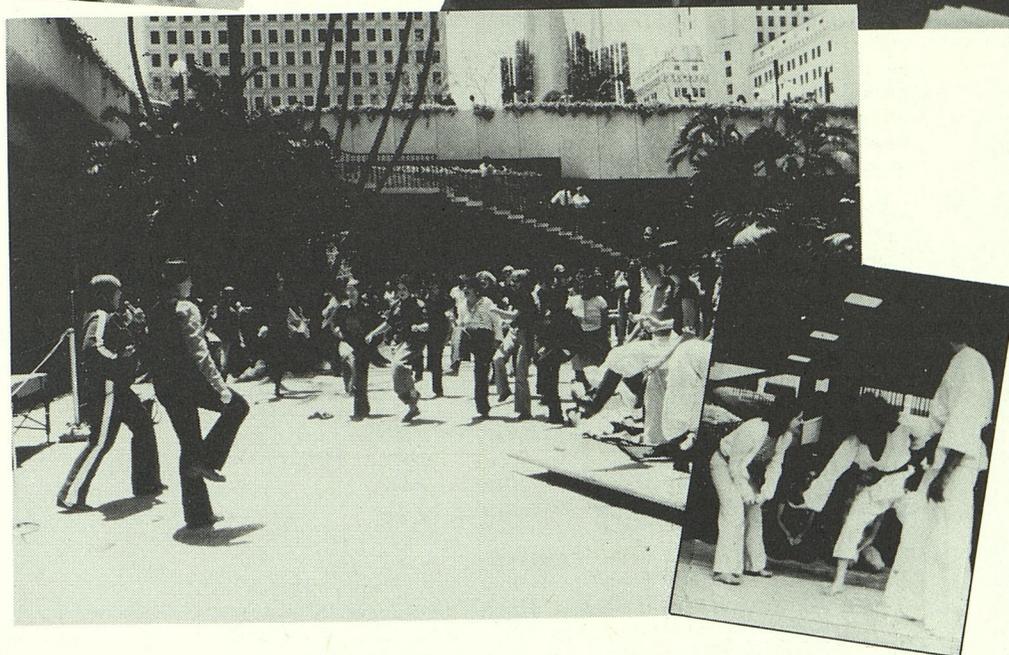
I was conscious that the piece functioned as a model, constructed to show the kinds of communities that could potentially be addressed. Effectiveness in terms of numbers of people reached is an important consideration, although my primary concern was to create a form that could be used in other situations with other information. Audiences for the presentations by anti-rape organizations were selected in terms of their representative value to the model rather than their size, and I worked equally hard making connections with a group publishing a women's religious newsletter as with the reporter writing a feature article for the Los Angeles Times. A large employee organization from ARCO Plaza, a city utilities company, a small parent-teacher organization, and a business women's association were some of the organizations addressed by participating speakers.





### Art Community

An artist's imagery does not always adapt itself to mass communication; many artists share the need to make an intensely personal statement, one which might not be understandable even to the artist herself. Public art, on the other hand, must use forms and information accessible to its audience to fulfill its intent of communicating with a broad range of people. Three Weeks was designed to allow for the contributions of both equally valuable forms. Pieces ranged from public street presentations to private performances to personal ritual. Barbara Smith and Cheri Gaulke created "Liebestod" a banquet event for women from organizations with differing political views. This performance evening was designed to strengthen their community, and included a sharing exchange along with food and performance art. Melissa Hoffman and Anne Gauldrin performed a healing ritual sharing their own rape experiences for an intimate audience. Laurel Klick did a private ritual documented with photos, an exorcism of a recent assault. My piece, *She Who Would Fly*, was performed especially for an art and feminist art audience. A brochure detailing the list of events was designed by Meridee Mandio. Leslie addressed the largest public audience in her four part street performance in the City Mall.



A final piece was a guerilla action performed by myself, Phranc, Melissa Hoffman, and Judith Loischild. Early one morning we went to several street corners which had been specified by the rape reports. We outlined a woman's body on the sidewalk with red chalk and left a flower within it. Next to the outline we wrote, "A woman was raped near here," and the date of that crime.

The closing rally was held in the City Mall. By this time media had been alerted to the maps, and several television camera crews and newspaper reporters were on hand for an address by Councilwoman Russell. Leslie's fourth performance, *Women Fight Back* offered exciting visuals for the reporters, and coverage that evening included not only the rally but information from the entire project and the maps themselves, which by this time had recorded over ninety rapes.

Knowing this was an opportunity to use the media to put forth a feminist perspective on rape, I delivered a speech about the maps that strongly represented that viewpoint. The maps were then "given" to the City Commission on the Status of Women, who later had a City Council resolution passed to install them

temporarily inside the City Hall. The final event was a self defense demonstration by Betty Brooks and Cathy Barber. (We were pleased the next day when we saw a photo in one of the papers, showing women actively kicking beneath the shadows of City Hall, with a caption reading "members of the Studio Watts Workshop and the Woman's Building demonstrate against rape at the Los Angeles Mall by performing exercises designed to disarm assailants.")

This particular photo was meaningful to us because it was a successful "media image." It showed a group of women in an active and united stance along with information on rape. Actual results of Three Weeks in May are difficult to measure, and like this picture they largely consisted of setting the context for the discussion of rape to be carried on in the city in an open and aggressive way. We established some contacts in the media and several in city government, giving us the credibility to perform our subsequent works with much more support. The publicity of the piece contributed to an awakening of the art community to the possibility of political art and an increased respect for feminist art.



Gaulke and Smith. *Liebestod*.

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### Record Companies Drag Their Feet

On Tuesday morning August 30, 1977, at 8301 Sunset Blvd., site of a billboard of the rock group KISS in L.A., a media event was presented in the form of a performance and press conference. The event was a collaborative effort between myself and WOMEN AGAINST VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN, an activist organization working to stop the use of exploitative images of physical and sexual violence against women in mass media. Exploitative record album covers and the social responsibility of the recording industry provided the theme for the connection between media images of woman and the rising condition of violence against women.

Graphic images were set up for a particular number of shots and staged in such a way as to make it easy for the camera crews to shoot. Shot sheets and explanatory information about the performance were given out to the media to avoid misinterpretation. The huge billboard of KISS's Love Gun album became part of the set. The set was further composed of a counter billboard—statistics on rape from the Federal Crime Index with a simulated record executive's office in front.

The "Big Button," WEA's (Warner, Electra and Atlantic) symbol of power, was sitting proudly on the desk. The record executives were portrayed by women dressed as roosters, who began the event by driving up and down Sunset Blvd. in a gold convertible. Entering the "office," they simultaneously performed clichés of roosters—proud, strutting and arrogant—and executives.

Women made attempts to communicate with the roosters. After being ignored, the women held up signs: I WISH THE MEDIA WOULDN'T INSULT, Demean, DEHUMANIZE ME BY THEIR IMAGES; I DON'T WANT TO BE TREATED LIKE A PIECE OF MEAT; I WISH I COULD WALK HOME ALONE AT NIGHT; LOVE IS NOT VIOLENCE.

The roosters accidentally spilt one of ten buckets of red paint over the money and desk—the "blood money" made by the commercialization of sex and violent images of women.

During the fall of 1977 in Los Angeles a particularly horrible series of rape killings had been grouped together as "The Hillside Strangler Case." The media was reporting in detail each of the ten victims' personal histories, photographic accounts of each death, and speculations about the identity and personality of the murderers. Quotations from frightened neighbors and stories on the ineffectual means women were using to protect themselves served only to further terrorize women. Far from providing useful incentive toward self-protective measures, the media's dissection of the cases served as a focus for the unspoken fears of constant potential assault. Women were living in more fear, feeling isolated and helpless. It is characteristic of such highly sensationalized reporting to avoid a political or comprehensive statement, to focus instead on individual motivation for random acts of violence.

We formulated the strategy for a memorial event which would introduce a feminist perspective into media's handling of the case. We created a public ritual for women to share their rage and grief, to transform the individual struggle to comprehend these assaults into a collective statement.

We were aware of the multiple distortions possible in the interpretation of the event as it was distilled by media communications. In particular they would want to make the event an individual reaction of grief against the ten specific victims of the strangler. We knew the media would focus on this particular statement in the hopes of finding an explanation for the entire performance. A concise and dramatically delivered statement was planned to capture media attention and present a radical feminist perspective on violence.

The ten women on the steps, the chorus and their banner served as a visual backdrop



against which the remainder of the piece unfolded. We provided a framework for the participation of women's organizations and governmental representatives to share in the collective statement of the event. By incorporating elected representatives we would increase our power base and allow them to participate in radical feminist thinking and politics. During the construction of the event we had contacted the Rape Hotline Alliance, and with them formulated demands for mandatory self-defense in grade schools, telephone emergency listing of rape hotline numbers, and increased funding for neighborhood protection programs. The second part of the piece was designed to manifest these demands and to build a collaborative relationship between participating groups.

### Notes

1. Feminist art is art created out of the unique consciousness of being female, a consciousness which implies an awareness not only of the singular treatment afforded to one because of gender, but also an awareness of one's relatedness to all other members of that group. Implicit in the work is the artist's knowledge of the history of women as a class and their struggles to emerge from oppression. Feminist art links itself to this ongoing struggle and is invested with the belief in women's ability to create cultural equality. Strong feminist art might or might not appear to be political according to conventional definitions. By virtue of its expression of an oppressed and hidden cultural experience, it will always *in fact* be political. In the most directed of such art its purpose (and contrary to the myth of functionless art as high art, it does have a purpose), as stated by art historian Arlene Raven, is "to provide information about women's experience, invite an exchange with its audience on the issues raised, and to ultimately transform culture." As information expressed in feminist art is not common to the culture, forms evolved by women artists that are particular to their perceptions will look foreign to the art community. This art cannot rest on prior assumptions or conventions about the nature of art; it must create its own basis for audience understanding.
2. The Woman's Building has served as an important focal point for the education of women in performance and for the display of work by most of the prominent women performance artists in California. Visiting artists such as Eleanor Antin have used this supportive audience to initiate new work with feminist implications, contributing through participation in conferences and exhibitions to the exchange of information and friendships which have forged a recognizable West Coast women's performance aesthetic.
3. The Feminist Art Workers (Cheri Gaulke, Laurel Klick, Nancy Angelo and Candace Compton) and The Waitresses (Jerri Allyn, Leslie Belt, Anne Gauden, Patti Nicklaus, Jamie Wildness and Denise Yarfitz) are two of many groups of women artists doing outstanding feminist political per-

The event received local and national television coverage and some international press. The Los Angeles media itself was very affected by the event. Part of our strategy was to motivate the reporters to participate in the concern about violence and to question their manner of reporting crimes. One news reporter took her cameras to the phone company the day of the performance, and under this pressure the representative stated that the emergency listing of the rape hotline numbers was assured of receiving company approval. The event also instigated a series of television appearances dealing with a critique of the media handling in this case.

The success of the piece in generating such response had to do not only with the power of the issue and our organizational activities, but with the impact of the images themselves which were chosen to show powerful women. Women began to move to make that power a reality.

Councilwoman Joy Picus pledged that morning to initiate free self-defense clinics for city employees. Between January 17 and 19 1200 employees attended four one-hour sessions. The Rape Hotline Alliance sponsored a very well attended free self-defense workshop the Saturday after the performance. Finally, at the instigation of the County Commission on the Status of Women, \$100,000 held by the county as ransom for the capture of the strangler was used to sponsor free self-defense workshops throughout the city and county. This piece alone did not accomplish all of the activity which poured out as a result of the Hillside Strangler incident, but contributed to the context of strengthened women's response to their victimization.

performances. Contributing to the educational process have been women like Martha Rosler, Paulene Oliveros, Linda Montano, Lynn Hershman and Bonnie Sherk.

4. My thinking about the "democratization of art" was most directly influenced by Allan Kaprow, whose ideas about the role of artists and the art inherent in "non-art" activities moved me in the direction of thinking in terms of "performance structures." Many other feminist artists, e.g., Mary Beth Edelson, did early work involving the audience as artist-participants.
5. I am indebted to Sheila de Bretteville and her exploration of the translation of feminist participatory democracy into visual form for many of the structural ideas underlying this piece. Her work expressed, among other things, the creation of grid structures for the simultaneous and equal expression of many voices and she spoke eloquently over the years of our association to the necessity for creating communication forms that expressed the grass roots level of our feminist ideology.
6. "In Russia they felt a great experiment was being made in which, for the first time since the Middle Ages, the artist and his art were embodied in the make-up of the common life, art was given a working job, and the artist considered a responsible member of society"—Camilla Gray, *The Russian Experiment in Art* (London: Thames and Hudson, London, 1962), p. 276.
7. Descriptions of *Three Weeks in May* and *In Mourning and in Rage* . . . were first printed in *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies*, Boulder, Colorado, as well as the information from footnote 1. During the description of *Three Weeks* I move back and forth from the use of the personal "I" to the collective "we" to describe the process of putting the piece together. This reflects the very real and supportive participation in planning from several people, most significantly Barabara Cohen, Melissa Hoffman, Jill Soderholm and Leslie Labowitz. A work of this scale could never be done by a single person, and the feminist art community in Los Angeles has a well-established pattern of collaboration. This piece was sponsored by Studio Watts Workshop and the Woman's Building.

## Laundresses

working-class reality nearly vanish from middle-class cultural imagery? I maintain that the discrepancy was a symptom of contemporary bourgeois ideology concerning working-class women. That is, it was an attempt to "justify and hide a social-historical practice whose true significance lies elsewhere."<sup>22</sup> The women's reality was effectively erased in the service of creating a myth, a myth, however, which had its kernel of truth, that bit of truth which is so crucial a dynamic in maintaining the prevailing ideologies. We know, for example, that laundresses picked up and delivered laundry in what could be viewed as the provocative intimacy of people's homes. In addition they worked in devastating heat which forced them to violate Victorian standards of dress and "lady-like" conduct. Compared to French bourgeois women the laundresses' sexual habits may well have been free. We know that the French bourgeois woman was very repressed sexually.<sup>23</sup> One purpose that repression served was to maintain the institution of marriage; middle-class men went to prostitutes, and middle-class women embroidered and read novels. Working-class women on the other hand were not dependent on men for marriage and financial support; they earned their own money after all. Their sexual habits were not limited by the social demands of marriage. Zola therefore was not mistaken when he said in *L'Assommoir* that laundresses are not a prudish lot.<sup>24</sup>

How can we explain, however, the exaggerated and nearly exclusive emphasis middle-class culture placed on the laundresses' sexuality. Why, for example, does one so rarely find images like Daumier's *Washerwoman*? Why is there not more of an emphasis on the sheer drudgery of the laundresses' work? My real question is what purpose does this distortion serve ideologically? It does two things. It neutralizes middle-class fear and guilt toward workers, and it rationalizes middle-class exploitation of workers.

In fact middle-class fear of the masses had greatly increased in 19th-century France. By the end of the century, working-class people were no longer merely victims; the mass uprisings in Paris during the Revolution of 1848 and the Commune of 1871 made that clear.

The Paris Commune [writes E. J. Hobsbawm] was . . . important not so much for what it achieved as for what it forecast . . . If it did not threaten the bourgeois order seriously, it frightened the wits out of it by its mere existence.<sup>25</sup>

One shape bourgeois defensiveness took was disdain. Mentally, the bourgeoisie trivialized the poor; one way to do that was to sexualize them. In the case of the laundress in 19th-century middle-class culture, the illusion that she was sensual, coquettish and without morals meant she did not have to be taken seriously; guilt about the quality of her work-life or fear of her potential anger was side-stepped. She posed no dangers. She could not possibly be a Eugénie Suétens, the accused laundress-incendiary of the Commune.<sup>26</sup> She was merely a brute, if sometimes coquettish, sexual animal.

As long as laundresses were seen as immoral they clearly deserved to earn less and live in squalor; they weren't worth more. This distortion of their reality legitimized their exploitation. It was therefore crucial to perpetuate this lie. There was nothing casual, then, about the middle-class cultural image of laundresses in 19th-century France. It served very specific ideological ends.

—Eunice Lipton

### Notes

1. R. D. Laing, *The Politics of Experience* (New York: 1967), p. 58.
2. Alan Wallach, verbal presentation to Artists Meeting for Cultural Change, Oct., 1977.
3. Cornelius Castoriadis, cited in *New York Review of Books* (June 29, 1978), p. 36.
4. Marcel Frois, *Les Blanchisseries—hygiène et pratique du blanchissage*, (Paris, 1910), pp. 113, 116.
5. This information was found respectively in René Gonnard, *La Femme dans l'industrie* (Paris, 1906), p. 102; Paul Leroy-Beaulieu, *Le Travail des femmes au XIXe siècle* (Paris, 1888), pp. 11, 118; Theodore Zeldin, *France 1848-1945*, Vol. 1: *Ambition, Love, Politics* (Oxford, 1973), pp. 33, 69.
6. Gonnard, p. 126.
7. *Ibid.*
8. *Ibid.*
9. Pierre Cabanne, *Edgar Degas* (New York/Paris, 1958), p. 51.
10. Frois, pp. 97, 98.
11. Emile Zola, *L'Assommoir* (London, 1970), p. 146; originally (Paris, 1876).
12. Frois, p. 49.
13. Leroy-Beaulieu, p. 114.
14. Frois, p. 100. In general see Chapter 6, "alcoolisme et tuberculose," pp. 100-104.
15. Octave Uzanne, *La Femme à Paris* (New York/London, 1912), p. 71; originally (Paris, 1894).
16. We must appreciate, however, how biased even these must be, written as they are by middle-class men scrutinizing the problems of an industry which in every way but practically, was alien and perhaps even repulsive to them.
17. Zola, p. 159.
18. Uzanne, pp. 71-72.
19. Georges Montorgueil, *Le Café-concert* (Paris, 1893), p. 6.
20. Alexandre Zévaès, *Zola* (Paris, 1945), p. 63.
21. *Ibid.*, pp. 63-64.
22. Castoriadis, p. 36. The Church told bourgeois women that "the purpose of marriage was definitely not pleasure, but the constitution of families and the procreation of children . . . after procreation, continence by mutual consent in marriage was recommended as desirable."
23. Zeldin, p. 297.
24. Zola, p. 245.
25. E. J. Hobsbawm, *The Age of Capital, 1848-1875*, (New York, 1975), p. 167.
26. Edith Thomas, *The Women Incendiaries* (New York, 1966), pp. 176-177; originally (Paris, 1963).

# Evolution of a Feminist Art Working with WAVAW

Women Against Violence Against Women grew out of our realization that the way to eliminate the promotion of violence against women via the media was not through censorship, but through public education and consciousness-raising. Our work with Leslie has been part of an overall strategy to change social attitudes, to mobilize people and to pressure companies to adopt policies reflecting corporate responsibility. In August 1977, we needed powerful press-coverage-type exposure of the record industry's position regarding advertising exploiting violence against women and we needed generally to increase public awareness and understanding of the issue.

Leslie and I evolved a similar understanding of the political implications of images in mass media and the need to create a media strategy that incorporates the strengths and tools of the political and the artistic. Imagery is political because it contains and creates our society's assumptions about the world, e.g., sex-role stereotypes, who rules the world. Mass media (TV, radio, magazines, billboards) disseminate these images to masses of people, providing most of the information they get today, beginning at a very young age.

Recognizing the power of mass media to affect public opinion and cultural stereotypes that in turn affect public policy and our everyday lives, Leslie and WAVAW tapped this power. Leslie is more adept and experienced than us at manipulating forms and physical components to convey messages. WAVAW has an organization, an established action program, and has developed a public awareness and concern, that is, a constituency. WAVAW's campaign provided the news. The artists contributed skills to develop a powerful image and an event that would move people both emotionally and politically.

Together, in *Record Companies Drag Their Feet*, we created images of strong, dignified women of various ages fighting back. In the face of overwhelming rape statistics, they, as a group, confronted the record industry's exploitation of violence against women. They talked to the leaders, protested and rallied support for a boycott. The performance and the press conference which followed each enhanced the effect of the other. This was a logical and potent counterforce to the images, definitions and political analyses of women's concerns usually provided for the

consumer and audience by advertising, news, entertainment and other popular information sources.

Leslie, the artists and WAVAW tried to set up a collective working relationship based on mutual problem-solving. We integrated the CR (consciousness-raising) process and feminist consciousness into both the piece itself and the process for developing and producing the event. WAVAW's close participation was required in production so that the piece accurately portrayed our positions and image, information about the industry (executives' image, symbols of power and prestige, albums, etc.), and the images of women that we wanted. The artists learned about the structure and goals of the industry, strategies for change and how all this affects them as artists and as women. In other words, they were politicized.

The piece was effective. It provided a form that made our position accessible to a news program format. The format itself reinforced the feeling (and reality) of immediacy and authenticity that we need to bolster. Our preparations for the press plus the tone of the event increased our credibility with reporters and their respect for us. A videotape documentation (suitable for broadcast) will further the outreach of the initial performance. It was a highly successful synthesis of P.R., organizing and art, a new form for politicizing people and gaining popular support.

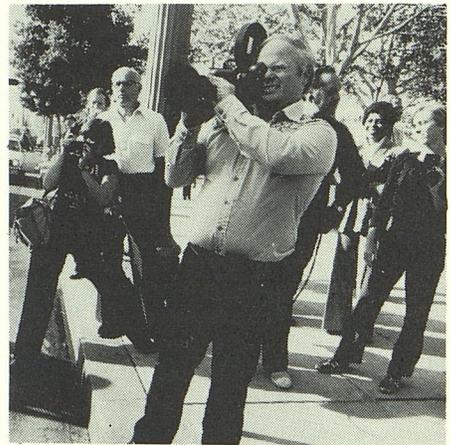
However, while industry publications carried good coverage of the event, none of the companies we were boycotting responded. Without a more sophisticated, long-term strategy around the event its effect was limited.

The potential for building a community around the project was great. A shortage of time for preparing the event (one and a half months), however, resulted in WAVAW people doing basic overall strategy, site selection and concept with Leslie, press conference, fund-raising, and some production work. Leslie did production work and other political, community outreach. Most of the participants were artists from the L.A. women's community. Only one person from WAVAW had ongoing contact with the artists. Nonetheless, the "political" people exposed to the event now have a high appreciation for what can be done.

Access to and control of mass media is generally limited to those with the economic resources to support its technology.

Therefore, a relatively tiny group of interests has extraordinary political power. Now, more than ever before, feminist organizing means organizing the power of the media to convey feminist images. The collaboration developed a model for feminists to control and obtain cheap access to the media.

—Julia London  
—Joan Howarth



## Development of a feminist media strategy

A media strategy to gain control of and accessibility to mass media is particularly vital to women. The feminist perspective is unrepresented in the media of popular culture. At this time, when violence against women is used by the media in exploitative and sensationalized ways that degrade and dehumanize women, it is essential that we find a way to present alternative images by ourselves in the media. This can be done in various ways: by creating alternative media outside the system or by demanding that existing media present different perspectives. Another approach is to make the public aware of the power of images, media manipulation through images and the attitudes perpetuated about women. This necessitates the development of a concrete media politics with a full understanding of the role of economics in the structure of media. As women we cannot develop a feminist political perspective in this contemporary society without including a media analysis. I see WAVAW functioning with this perspective. In a certain sense WAVAW operates on the level of "art critic" in popular culture. Its slide show is composed of offensive record covers and advertising that exploit violent images of women. The covers are analyzed during slide presentations in terms of content based on design, composition, color

and form. Techniques of manipulation in advertising are taught to a general public. WAVAW's audience extends over all class, race and age barriers. WAVAW educates the viewers to develop critical skills toward media and images. After taking them through the slide show WAVAW allows the audience a collective expression of anger or disgust or pain. The issue of "corporate responsibility" and economic pressure of a boycott are discussed as action, as is letter writing. The group is offered ways they can collectively or individually affect change.

I found the collaboration with WAVAW a natural and important one for myself as both artist and activist. It seems to me that the area of media is where artists can best work politically as their skills in image-making can work to criticize the media criticism as well as to create new images. Since L.A. is the media capital of the world and ideas, images and current events pass through this center to reach out internationally, it seemed logical to expand my own definition of art in that direction.

After the media exposure brought about in *Three Weeks in May* it was evident that TV was a most effective stage for my performances. To be able to use mass media for putting out images and information from a feminist perspective I saw that they would have to become "media events." A media event from my analysis is an activity that enables itself to be taken in by media-makers and their technology and then be filtered through them. Media events are created by the media itself. There is usually no control of what, how or when the media will use information. As feminists, to learn to control the material that is given out about women would put us in a very powerful position.

WAVAW and I decided on a media event that would be specifically designed for TV newscasts. WAVAW needed public attention to be restimulated on their issues (boycott of Warner, Elektra, Atlantic Record Company). This entailed a thorough media analysis as to what kinds of events might attract reporters, when the best time would be, what image we were trying to project, who would participate. Determining the look of the event was a long and intensive process involving WAVAW and myself. It took researching the way actual executive offices looked, how executives themselves dressed, and

(continued on page 88)



In this issue, there are few visuals made by artists: art that sets out to explore and demonstrate violence often presents an ambiguous message. Much of the art sent to us would have remained ambiguous even within the context of this issue.

In America today, artworld art has a greater economic than social function. The question of a work's monetary possibilities supersedes any political, emotional, spiritual, or intellectual intentionality. Where a work appears, how much it costs, who made it, who wrote/said what about it are all part of that work's context. The meaning of a work, depending on its context, can be the opposite of the artist's intention.

Any strictly formalist analysis places a work in a tradition of modernism where art refers only to itself, progressing within an autonomous history by virtue of the risk-taking breakthroughs of the avant-garde. Art that is not grounded in principled social theory can as easily lend itself to a metaphysical, religious, purist interpretation as to a materialist one. Artists' statements on their work, and much art criticism, looking only at the relation between artists and their materials, do not provide us with an avenue of inquiry into the complex relations between culture and ideology.

All forms of representation—artworld art, advertising art, TV, movies—provide a standard by which to evaluate experience. At the same time they either confirm or negate our daily experiences. The assumed neutrality of representational forms allows the ideological function of all art to pass unnoticed and unquestioned.

The social position of women in any given culture and the depiction of women within that culture are dialectically related

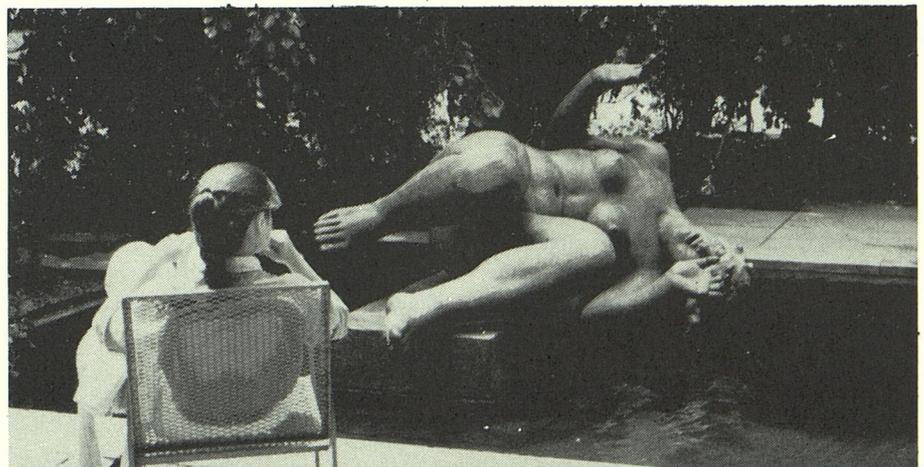
—that is to say, that the representation of women is influenced by their social position but also that the effect of these representations is to maintain women's status.

Media and commercial art (because of the magnitude and ubiquity of their images) have today largely supplanted traditional art's role of transmitting ideology. It is Vogue/Hustler's images more than, say, Picasso's images that tell us who we are or should be. Advertising art sells a way of life in which commodities are increasingly humanized while people are increasingly commodified.

Advertising presents women as commodities. This both reflects the real condition of women's subordination to men and also serves to strengthen it by making women's submission appear glamorous. We see images of elegantly dressed high fashion models, happy, middle-class families contrasting with *our* daily lives. These images are meant to inspire envy. Advertising art capitalizes on the misogyny which it helps to reinforce. The most recent example is the vogue for S/M ads in which violence against women is marketed as "upfront" and "liberating." Commercial art functions to adjust us to our own repression by making repression seem natural, even pleasurable.

The visuals in this issue incorporate images from daily life: snapshots, newspapers, posters, graffiti, ads, packaging, TV. Their ordinariness, their seeming naturalness is one key to any understanding of ideology and social control. Images, decisions about typeface, paper, layout, design, the dialectic set up between images and written text are all integral to the argument we are presenting.

Rather than challenge the concept of fine art by attempting to "democratize" it through the inclusion of craftspeople, Third World, working class, women artists, we have tried to make evident the fundamental connections of all visual representations with ideology and social control.



# Evolution

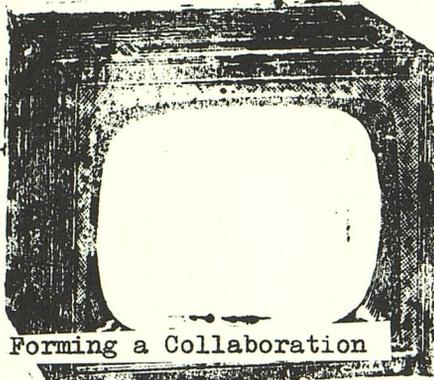
how we could portray women in images that were strong and active without being unrealistic. After working on this with WAVAW for about two weeks, I then took the information and designed a piece around it. The event took six weeks to produce. The final aesthetic decisions in an event such as this are of utmost importance and demand a sophisticated knowledge of images in popular culture as well as art images to be successful. Every part of this event was controlled, even the press conference. Because the audience was so broad we wanted as many women from diversified groups as possible to take part in the collective statement at the end. After about a month of contacting different communities I found that most ethnic groups did not want to connect politically or publicly with the concerns of white middle-class women. What I recognized was the aversion and fear being shown in the media and the real need for the organizing of women from different racial or ethnic backgrounds to come out of the community itself. The community I wanted to represent was the Mexican-American one because of the high rate of wife battering. Once Chicana woman did participate and carried a sign written in Spanish but the piece did not focus on that issue.

The event turned out to be both a performance and press conference. It was estimated the media would stay about 15 minutes, they stayed a half-hour. Eight different images were set up to correspond to eight shot possibilities for the camera crews. Most images were repeated at least four times so that the media could come and go and still not miss an image. We had our own media representative at the site to hand out a press kit and shot sheet to cameramen.

*Record Companies Drag Their Feet* was covered by all local stations, pretty much in the format I designed. The media reporters responded extremely positively to the visualizations and made an effort to understand the meaning of the images so that they could present it accurately. One newscaster, Felicia Jeter of CBS, became a kind of participant in the event. She narrated it as it took place, using the images to make her points during the newscast.

The effects of this kind of political activity are often long-term or hard to measure. The concrete effects were ones that helped set the supportive and positive relationship we now have to L.A. media, the women's community and the art com-

munity. A long-term effect was to place different images of women in the public consciousness. On a personal level, for me as an artist, I feel an important gap is beginning to be bridged between women artists and their political community. I know WAVAW has opened itself up to the possibility and recognized the importance of future collaborations with artists.



After the strangler piece we retreated, nursing the personal effect that working with such devastatingly violent material had on us. As we supported each other through this period, we began to think of continuing our collaborative relationship. We felt that the expanded arena into which our political and aesthetic perspective was taking us necessitated a strong support system, psychologically and physically. The work alone was more than any one individual could handle.

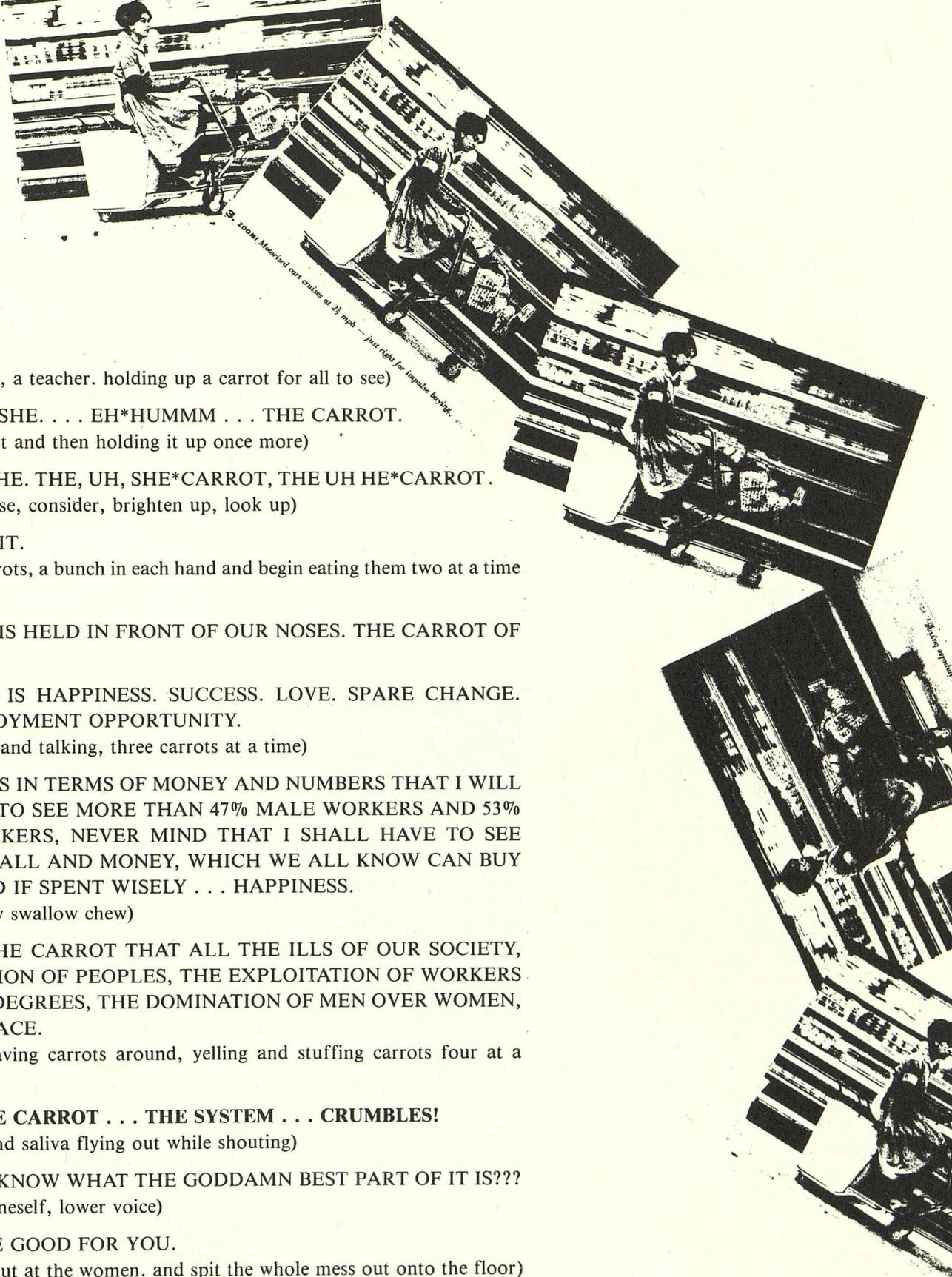
While we did expand our energy, concepts and image resources we certainly were not without painful conflict. Many times one of us has felt herself losing power to the other, feeling overwhelmed, projecting authority resentments. We have been troubled by the difficulty of receiving equal recognition in a system that prefers to see single authorship. These are the same problems that come up when working with larger groups and communities. We are working out our personal and aesthetic conflicts through dialogue, as preparation for expanded work in which artists, feminists, people in political office and journalists collaborate on works to end violence against women.

This year we are initiating *Ariadne: A Social Art Network*, a three-year project created out of the models of our past work. Our goals are to sponsor the creation of art work directed toward ending all violence against women and to provide the context in the art community for a viable and effective political art. To achieve these goals a communication/information exchange and an action/production network

with artists, politicians, feminists and journalists are being formed which can function as a pressure group for the representation of a feminist perspective in the media. In this embryonic stage of our planning, we have isolated three components to address various needs of such a project.

The Education component is housed in the Feminist Studio Workshop at the Woman's Building in Los Angeles. *Ariadne* will offer classes, lectures and training programs for women to learn the skills of production and the historical and political analyses underlying the development of feminist political performance art. The Vision and Theory component will be an open forum for women to discuss issues of violence in a setting disconnected from immediate action. It will serve as the first connection for women from various communities who would like to begin the discussion of violence and its relationship to personal lives, social groups and the entire class of women. We will be seeking out a variety of participants from women of all classes and races in an effort to forge a coherent political perspective which will inform our art. Vision and Theory will encourage critical writing on the subjects of violence toward women and the art forms being evolved out of our socio-political consciousness. The Project component will serve as a consultant to community groups wishing to plan their own art actions, will support those women already working on violence through art and will carry out projects designed specifically to fulfill *Ariadne's* goals. One of the first projects will be a handbook on how to produce multilevel informational art events at a grass roots level. A documentary on our latest performance event in Las Vegas, *From Reverence to Rape to Respect*, is now being prepared by a PBS station there. As well, *Ariadne* has three documentary videotapes in production which will be completed this year.

As we have begun the process of organizing *Ariadne*, we have found a tremendous and eager response, one which reveals the need women have to act on the issue of violence. We know there will be times when direct political intervention, be it lobbying or marching in the streets, will be more effective than even political art events. We recognize and support the existence of political action on every level; the action we have personally chosen is through art—performance, graphics, video and mass media—as we work toward the creation of effective models for the radical intervention of artists in society.



*THE CARROT*

(Like a magician, a teacher. holding up a carrot for all to see)

THE CARROT SHE. . . . EH\*HUMMM . . . THE CARROT.

(looking at carrot and then holding it up once more)

THE CARROT HE. THE, UH, SHE\*CARROT, THE UH HE\*CARROT.

(look down, pause, consider, brighten up, look up)

THE CARROT IT.

(grab several carrots, a bunch in each hand and begin eating them two at a time while talking)

THE CARROT IS HELD IN FRONT OF OUR NOSES. THE CARROT OF HAPPINESS.

THE CARROT IS HAPPINESS. SUCCESS. LOVE. SPARE CHANGE. EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY.

(continue eating and talking, three carrots at a time)

WHICH MEANS IN TERMS OF MONEY AND NUMBERS THAT I WILL NEVER HAVE TO SEE MORE THAN 47% MALE WORKERS AND 53% FEMALE WORKERS, NEVER MIND THAT I SHALL HAVE TO SEE WORKERS AT ALL AND MONEY, WHICH WE ALL KNOW CAN BUY CARROTS AND IF SPENT WISELY . . . HAPPINESS.

(chew chew chew swallow chew)

IT IS UPON THE CARROT THAT ALL THE ILLS OF OUR SOCIETY, THE OPPRESSION OF PEOPLES, THE EXPLOITATION OF WORKERS TO VARYING DEGREES, THE DOMINATION OF MEN OVER WOMEN, CAN TAKE PLACE.

(expounding, waving carrots around, yelling and stuffing carrots four at a time)

**WITHOUT THE CARROT . . . THE SYSTEM . . . CRUMBLES!**

(bits of carrot and saliva flying out while shouting)

AND DO YOU KNOW WHAT THE GODDAMN BEST PART OF IT IS???

(pause, collect oneself, lower voice)

CARROTS ARE GOOD FOR YOU.

(look solemnly out at the women. and spit the whole mess out onto the floor)

—Marty Pottenger

# The Social Meaning of Violence

Why is violence prevalent in our society and why is so much violence aimed at women, especially at poor, third world women? In attempting to answer this question, we need first to look at the relation between violence and society.

Violence is a word of "longstanding complexity."<sup>1</sup> But within all the forms of violence (physical, emotional) there are essentially two broad categories: sanctioned violence and unsanctioned violence. We tend to notice only the latter. Sanctioned violence is supposedly used to restore social order and peace—or the absence of violence (e.g. war "to make the world safe for democracy"). I will define violence here as the forcible interference of personal freedom whether sanctioned or unsanctioned, which ultimately rests on the threat or use of physical force.

As accounts of violence are presented to us in the daily media, violence would seem to be the result of uncontrolled natural aggression. It is chiefly produced by those "less civilized" peoples and parts of the world. Some eminent male anthropologists have written that the human species is instinctively aggressive and that man is by nature a killer, a hunter; while woman is by nature unaggressive (and if not a hunter then a victim?). History textbooks tell us that *man* transforms the natural state of barbarism into civilization by establishing customs, codes, laws. Civilization, we learn, takes violence out of the realm of interpersonal relations (where it is supposedly rampant) and attaches it to the state in the form of an apparatus of repression to be used against the enemies of civilization. Institutionalized or legitimized violence exists for the maintenance of social order. The higher or more advanced the civilization the greater the machinery of violence at the state's disposal.

Today, the degree of development of a particular nation is judged by the sophistication of its armaments.

A real examination of history shows just the opposite. Civilization itself creates the conditions for violence. Indeed, the artifacts representing the highest attainments of past civilizations are also records of the violence and repression required to create them.

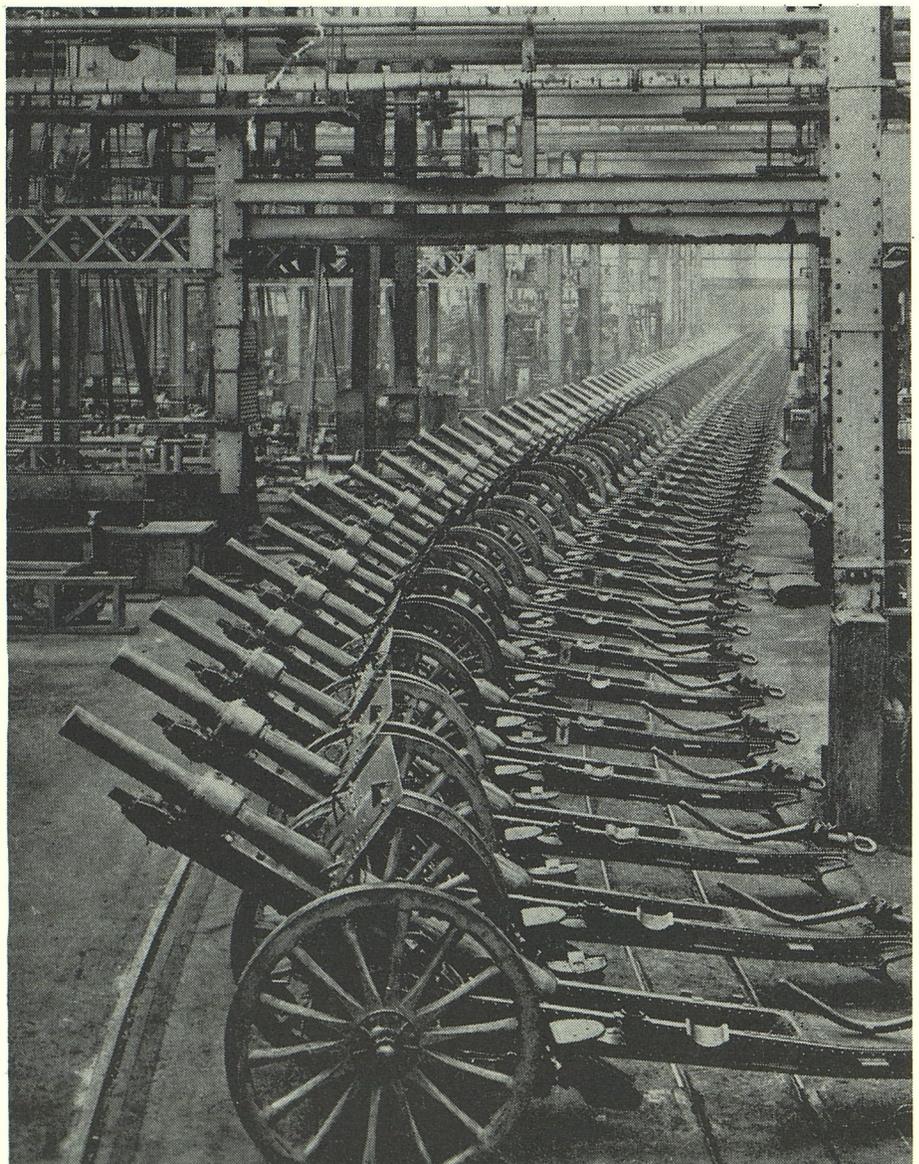
Whoever has emerged victorious participates to this day in the triumphal procession in which the present rulers step over those who are lying prostrate. According to traditional practice, the spoils are carried along in the procession. They are called cultural treasures, and a historical materialist views them with cautious detachment. For without exception the cultural treasures he [she] surveys have an origin which he [she] cannot contemplate without horror. They owe their existence not only to the efforts of the great minds and talents who have created them, but also to the anonymous toil of their contemporaries. There is no document of civilization which is not at the same time a document of barbarism.<sup>2</sup>

In the age of Pericles, Athens' golden age of democracy, slaves built the glorious temples and imperialism financed the construction. It was the Greeks who coined the phrase, "might makes right" to justify imperialism. Settlers of the United States practiced slavery as well as genocide; the Civil War ended slavery, in order to extend wage slavery.

The development of every civilization up to our times has given rise to the development of oppressed classes.

The process of creating an oppressed group as well as maintaining its subjugation requires constant violence. Old traditions, customs, social relations must be shattered for new laws and enforcers to hold sway. Nowhere is this more transparent than in the process of colonization, which is really the enslavement of one people by another.

Violence in the colonies does not only have for its aim the keeping of these enslaved men [and women] at arm's length; it seeks to dehumanize them. Everything will be done to wipe out their traditions,



to substitute our language for theirs and to destroy their culture without giving them ours. Sheer physical fatigue will stupefy them. Starved and ill, if they have any spirit left, fear will finish the job.<sup>3</sup>

The oppressed class is disciplined to accept its poverty, its forced labor for the enrichment of others, its social inferiority.

At first the level of violence used to suppress a group, as in the beginning of colonization, is striking. It is recognized as warfare, conquest. But gradually, the violence used to keep the disadvantaged in line becomes routinized and ritualized. It becomes so part of the environment, of the school, factory, prison, and family that it is barely perceived consciously. Ideology distorts the perception of violence. The source of violence now appears to be not the system but those who rebel against it; the sanctioned violence used to repress rebellion though generally of far greater magnitude is overlooked. Finally even the expression of needs by the oppressed is viewed as proof of their violent nature and a constant source of danger to society. Consider the advice given in a manual for training automotive managers:

Each worker has certain basic needs which can be likened in some respects to the basic instincts of wild animals, in that they require no teaching or learning and lie dormant in the subconscious until outside events bring them suddenly into the conscious mind, when they may cause the person to act in a certain way.<sup>4</sup>

woman is absolutely helpless in her misery. But as a monster, her rage makes her capable of unknown feats of destruction. Such is the fear accorded woman; either she must be rendered helpless or she may destroy society.

The process of creating an oppressed class is completed and secured when the violence of the social system is internalized by its victims. The violent social relations get played out in every relationship. The family becomes the daily arena of violence and it socializes the next generation into re-enacting the violent modes of behavior. Accepting finally a social hierarchy of superiors and inferiors, society's victims turn their rage against themselves. Sexist, racist, and ethnic battles multiply new victims while those who benefit from the system go untouched. On another level, physical and psychological illnesses increase. The majority of patients in mental institutions are women.

At the extreme, a criminal class develops among the oppressed—criminal because it cannot possibly acquire the material rewards of society by acceptable means and criminal because it has been dehumanized. Such a class has had its human rights and sense of self worth systematically stripped away, and it has come to believe that there are no human rights. Its also perceives, correctly, that its rulers are no less corrupt.

Interpersonal violence within the oppressed class works to the advantage of the social system in two ways. It can justify the use of repression by pointing to the inhumanity of the oppressed. More important, the oppressed become divided among themselves and therefore incapable of fighting against the real source of oppression, the system itself.

The struggle for freedom means working out a totally new way of being in the world. This involves recreating human and communal values (values which may never have existed except temporarily in revolutionary situations). This does not mean reconstructing an ideal past since the past was never ideal. Today's oppression was built upon past oppression. Upon the initial foundation of patriarchy was laid racism and class prejudice. Like the rings of an ancient tree, our civilization is made up of layers and layers of oppression. Women are the targets of so much violence because they have been historically, within every oppressed group, the most oppressed.

The struggle also means recognizing that all forms of oppression are intercon-



nected. The goal then is not solely to win particular demands but to change the entire social system. Feminism must lead to socialism or it leads to the dead end of reformism. As long as workers, third world and minority people are oppressed, women will be oppressed. Conversely, if these groups fight for narrowly conceived interests and not for the liberation of women as well, their struggle is in vain.

—Janet Koenig

## Notes

1. Raymond Williams, *Keywords*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1976, p. 278-9.
2. Walter Benjamin, "Theses on the Philosophy of History," *Illuminations*, Fontana, London, 1973, p. 258.
3. Jean-Paul Sartre, Preface to Franz Fanon's *Wretched of the Earth*, Grove Press, Inc., New York, 1968, p.15.
4. Alan Shier, *Motor Trade Management*, Oxford University Press, London, 1977, p.78.
5. See Bruce Franklin, *Victim as Criminal and Artist*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1978.

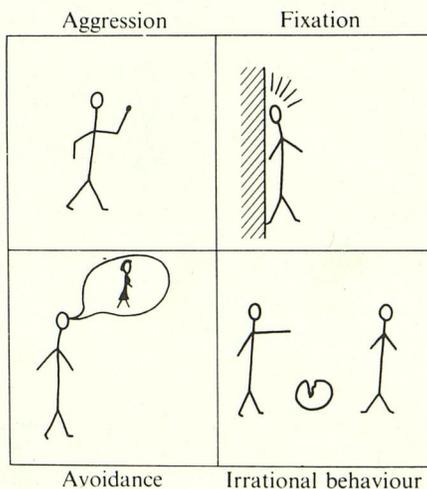


Fig. 6.2 Symptoms of frustration

It has been commonplace in literature and art to portray the lower classes as animals.<sup>5</sup> Women who fall from their pedestals become either the most degraded of animals or monsters. These depictions are two sides of the same coin. As an animal,

## Let's Settle Scores, Compadre

photo courtesy of LNS



### CHRONICLES FROM THE LAND OF THE BAD

#### Part One: "The Women of Star Metal Corporation"

##### In the morning

Midnight yesterday ended 160 consecutive days of saturation bombing (done) by the North American air force over the whole country. The airplanes have bombarded Cambodia during the last 4½ years . . . first in secret and then during the last years letting fall more than 240,000 tons of bombs. That is 50% more explosives than were dropped on Japan during World War II. (Amuse oneself/extend oneself guiltily in the new literature . . . for this reason these poems are so sad.) Phnom Penh was shattered by the fierce and unexpected bombardment in the last hour while those in control were ordering attack upon attack against a rebel force of 10,000 men who surrounded the city. The (long or great) death running about the countryside. The big B-52, F-11, and tactic equipment took part in the attack.

Men like Rusk are not new. They are bombs waiting to be loaded in a darkened hangar. While the sun did not rise, Bengal lights illuminated the sky looking for rebel concentrations. As the day arrives, the air activity intensifies in the outskirts of the capital.

You must know that there will be a day when all of us will be free. The people went to their jobs as they were accustomed, oblivious of the fact that the American bombings would cease at midnight.

"Dejame ayudarte, Mama! ¡Qui'ube chica! How are my babies this morning?" (Let me help you Mama. How are things Chica?)

The multicolored dresses, the laughter that I can hear still, the swollen feet, the gossip, the curses. The bell is going to ring now, and a single hoarse breathing will vibrate in the basement for 4 hours. On the right-hand corner now the machine begins to sound. The supervisors light their cigarettes. The one from Guayaquil comes in running with her little green plastic purse, right at the turn of the hour as always. Teresa finishes singing a sweet Puerto Rican song with her eyes half-closed. Anitha, who at times like these would always smile, seated on the boxes, arching a little her beautiful African head. Anitha looks at me no more . . . doesn't wink an eye as if to say to me, "'til the break at 12 sister" . . . because yesterday they threw her out of the factory and once again she is out of work. Only after 2 months can you belong to the Worker's Union, in the meantime you can be fired at any moment for whatever reason or without one. Dinola passes through the hallway speaking to herself in her heavy Louisiana accent; she looks at me and gives me an orange shining like the sun. We are beautiful. 200 strong women making the day to earn the day. Puerto Rican women, Black women, Illegal Latin American women: ripe fruit, flesh of the Third World (those that are being eaten by Amerika). And now we begin. And the light is always dark here inside. And in 5 minutes the legs begin to kick alone, the arms in the air, the splinters get under the fingernails, one must go faster and faster to reach the necessary level of production they tell you from the first day and sometimes one loses consciousness, as if one becomes one with the machine and forms without a new body, a mind paralyzed. Today we weld the same golden hook 4,550 times from its metal bar. Today we cover 5,000 clothes racks exactly alike. Today we made 8,000 times the same hole in the same piece with which some one will assemble 8,000 heaters exactly alike. Today we hooked 7,000 rubber rings with hands submerged in kerosene for 8 hours. Today I spent another day in the Star Metal Corporation. And we run, as if affected by some sudden drunkenness, pushing each other, giving each other slaps in the rumps, in the shoulders, all about the clock that is eloquently ticking, to punch out the tickets, to the little door for employees only, to the street, to the deafening subway tracks, to the day that is gone for us, to the sun

setting far away behind the buildings, to the sad August breeze stirring the curtains in the windows of the dingy apartments, sweeping crushed papers and remains of food into the street, stripping off the leaves of the saddest tree that I've ever seen in my life on the corner of Boston Ave. and 174 St.

"There they take my whole week," Rita said to me, pointing to the loaders who took out the boxes with the finished material. "All my creative woman energy made a cipher—and I don't know which was the piece I was assembling—generally we don't know, all are loose fragments, steel jigsaw puzzles of which none of us women have the final model." And for an instant a sparkle of hate flashed in her eyes. And that made me happy. There comes a time in which only anger is love.\*

"I am short about \$50 for the rent and I'm behind 10 days . . . but today I'm sure that I won't fail," whispers Rose, cherishing the grimy piece of paper on which is noted the number that she played in the clandestine lottery, and 'til 3 the time advances faster, thinking of her possible good fortune, and when Leroy, who drives the trucks comes in from the street and spreads in the hallways the news of which number appeared today, Rose will



photo by Corky Lee

\*from a poem by Denise Levertov

say "Shit" as always "I played this 2 days, or 2 weeks" or "I lost only by a number, and I'm not going to play any more," as always Rose, but tomorrow she will again believe in her good fortune, and in the new furniture that she will buy and in the dress that she saw in Alexander's and in the \$50 that she is short for the rent, dear Rose . . . . ?????????

It has been four years since my sister and I came from Puerto Rico, but wherever we are we are still poor. When my daughter finishes high school, I will find some easier little job. My husband lost his job and is collecting Welfare, but he goes about so nervous that half of it is spent Saturdays on beer. My youngest is sick and I don't have anyone to help me take care of him. Men do the same work but they're always making more than us women. A riddle. A puzzle. But the key is in each one of us and everytime someone uses it, and out of the lips of Aida, out of Margie, of Ofelia, out of Josephine, of many of us, of all of us, I heard said in some moment I have heard said: Some day they will have to work if they want to eat if they want to live well, they'll have to toil, not always at the expense of the poor. Them, those who never show their faces here, those sons of bitches, the owners of the factories.

In 1971 there had been more than 4 million Black and Latin American women employed in physical labor. The majority of these Third World women work in service industries as domestics, hospital workers, etc.; in textiles, metalurgy and to a lesser extent in offices. The minimum obligatory salary that an employer must pay is \$1.85/hour. This makes \$14.80 in a day of 8 hours of work and a total of \$74/week. This basic pay is subject to deductions for taxes. The monthly rent of a small apartment in the poorest areas, in buildings that often do not posses the minimum conditions that allow a more or less healthy life, is \$130, the price of a pound of meat—\$1.80, a pound of rice—30¢, a pound of beans—50¢, a pound of frozen vegetables (the cheapest)—50¢, a quart of milk—35¢, round trip cost on the subway or bus —¢70. Let us round out an imaginary sum of the expenses that include clothes, footwear, house utilities, in addition to electricity and telephone. In the month of August, to begin in the fourth phase of the Nixon administration program of economic development, ironically the newspapers announced at the same time the meeting of economists and the increase of 4.69% in the cost of basic

(continued on page 94)



photo by Tom Angotti & Belinda Sifford/LNS

## RAIN

She hated the rain. Never could figure out what people be talkin' bout when they be talkin' bout gentle, refreshing, spring rains bathing the earth's surface! This nasty ass, cold, greyness pouring down combining with shit in the street sho wadn't sweet. Her wig was wet. Hairspray and rainwater mingled with perspiration and ran down her neck. Her feet were like blocks of ice. "Muthafuck this shit," she mumbled, "I'm turnin' in for the nite."

As she strolled past the likker store she looked down the street at the elementary school she usta go to wondering what her mother would say. "Well, she thot, 'least I ain' on welfare.'" The street was deserted. At three o'clock in the mornin' Webster and Grove looked like something out of a movie. She shivered and quickened her pace. Some putty faced pig in a blue chevy slowed down and while cruising along side he leered, "Pssst wanna date? Huh honey? How bout it?" She almost ran; she couldn't have taken another feebly dick, pink, hairy son of a bitch if he'd been shittin' fifty dollar bills. She walked over to Hayes St. lo and behold—a bus—a rare occurrence at three o'clock in the morning. She hopped on the bus, sauntered to the back hopin' Willie wouldn't be upset bout her not gettin' no whole lot of money. Shit! Wet as it was the mutherfucker oughtta be glad she got what she got. She jumped off the bus and motored down the street hopin' there was some brownies left cause all night she'd been wantin' somethin' sweet. She started up the stairs, slid up to the doe and laid on the bell. No one answered. She wondered

what was takin' so long. Shit! Even if no one else was in Jackie be in. She was always the first one in! Sometimes she thot that bitch had a stash cause can't nobodi come up wid that much cash every nite! "Hell," she muttered, "What's wrong wid these fools?" She laid on the bell again. Willy usually be home about this time too. Finally she heard footsteps approaching the doe. They musta been fuckin'. Still that son of a bitch didn't have to take till Christmas to answer the door. She heard him on the other side of the door . . . his footsteps . . . his breathing.

Willie opened the peephole and said, "What cha want?"

"Nigger r u crazy!" she said, "what u think I want! Lemme in!"

"How much cash u got?"

"Bout seventyfive."

"U triflin' bitch u mean u been out all nite and ain't got but seventyfive dollars? You musta been jivin' round smokin' weed wid the other bitches!"

"Willie u know better than that. I ain' lazy. It's jus been slow. Come on daddy." she wheedled, "Open the doe."

He opened the door, grabbing her left arm with his right hand, yanked her around and placed a well aimed patent leathered foot in her ass and said, "Bitch u get in when u got my money."

Enraged and scared she sobbed, "Bu . . . , But Willie its rainin'!"

Willie slammed the door, opened the peephole and tole her,

"Walk between the raindrops baby walk between the raindrops."

—Sapphire



photo courtesy of IMS

## HELLO NEW YORK

nutritious products. The majority of the women workers have small children, because of the lack of nurseries and daycare centers they have to pay other women to take them during the working hours. In the poor areas for taking care of a child you get about \$20 a week. Let us imagine once more the level of life of a woman worker in the U.S. of A., the richest country in the world, the gigantic octopus that sucks the veins of the people of Latin America, of Asia, of Africa.

I have been working 3 months in a small metals factory in the South Bronx. (One of the 6 great urban areas that form the structure of the city of New York.) I work 8 hours each day. I start at 8 a.m.. There's no break neither in the morning nor in the afternoon to rest or drink coffee, we have an hour from 12 to 1 to lunch. There's no cafeteria in the factory nor is there one close, so we bring our food, cold in summer and in winter, and seated on the floor or on the boxes of material or on some

work benches, we eat, with still half-automatic gestures, in the same landscape of counters dirtied with grease and dust forming on one side, the pieces of metal, turning off the electric machines, washing ourselves as best we can in the small bathroom with 3 toilets, a single little basin with 2 water faucets and the clothes closets without doors with which to hang outdoor clothes. Sometimes the weariness is so great that no one speaks in the first few minutes. Afterwards the conversation spreads, in one and a thousand fragments, in little groups, with muffled voices, as if one wouldn't want to break all at once the great lapse of silence, where the bodies reacquire their natural rhythm, soft, beautifully human; where the faces relax, and someone whistles slowly, and someone shows me photographs of her children, of her friend on some Sunday afternoon at the beach. And also a type of clandestine market begins that happens in *factorias* (carbon copy of the word factories, like

many others that constitute the living language of the hispanic in New York, and which takes one over, fixed in the fine fabric of thought and finally one uses them spontaneously and for this reason they appear as such in this chronicle) where our co-workers sell clothing material, or toiletries, or kitchenware, merchandise coming from other women workers — friends or relatives who "expropriated" them from their jobs. These little expropriations happen under a kind of tacit agreement between the woman workers and the bosses who generally are more or less aware of them, and allow for them provided that they happen within minimal margins and under the ritual of clandestinity and discretion. These exchanges, generate in their turn a chain of small debts that cut down even more the skinny check every week. The clandestine lottery, the fruit or caramel sweets that we give ourselves as a gift. The naively gross joke told by one male friend that works in the

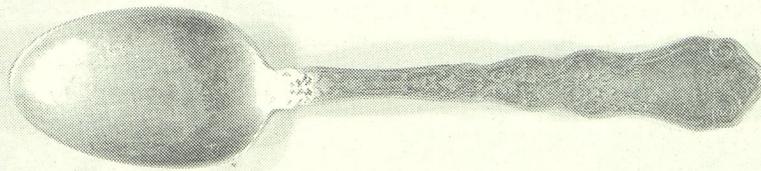
neighboring plant of the same factory and comes around at this time; the last cigarette, the yawn, the laughter, some of the many daily curses meant for the supervisors, the patched blue jeans, the old pumps, the stained and sweaty blouses, the bodies accommodating themselves once more in front of the machines, the life, so much life—like swelling, thawing rivers in spring, so much life devoured by grey smoke, for the strong boxes with millions and millions, with martinis, with glorious estates of the American Dream, with bombs in Cambodia, with classism and sexism, and racism and genocide. Such tender, loving life faster faster faster the bell has rung again.

— Diane Bellessi

—Translated from the Spanish

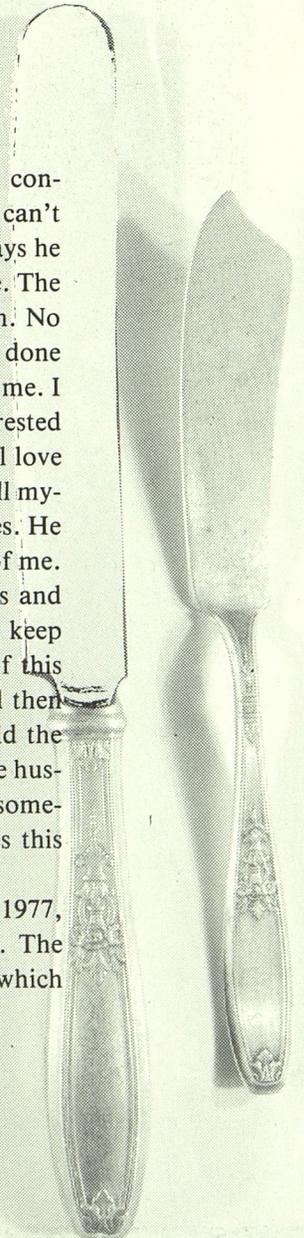
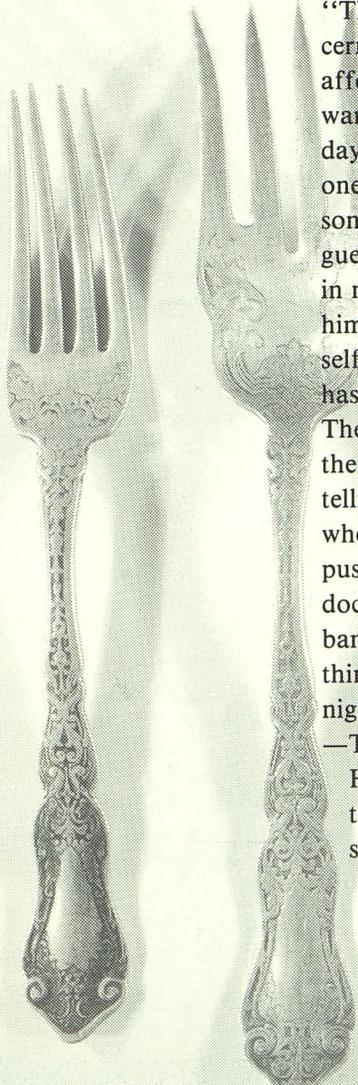


photo by Cidre Hart/LNS Women's Graphics



“This creeping disease called upward mobility, it’s killing us. He’s so concerned about his image, his status; we’ve just bought this house we can’t afford. We are horribly in debt. I know he’s worried about money. He says he wants nice things for me and the children. I don’t know anything anymore. The day we moved into this house he beat me up in front of the moving men. No one tried to stop him I remember thinking to myself that I must have done something to deserve this, otherwise one of the movers would have helped me. I guess they didn’t want to get involved. Sometimes I think he’s more interested in making an impression on his boss and his cocktail party friends. I still love him; when he’s not drinking he’s so decent. Each time he beats me up I tell myself it will be the last time, that it just could never happen again. But it does. He has alienated our son. I’m afraid the boy will strike his father in defense of me. The boy is confused. He hit me twice recently. His father witnessed this and then beat the boy for having hit me. We have everything in the world. I keep telling myself to count my blessings. Things could be worse. I think of this when I remember the time my husband broke a chair over my head and then pushed me down the cellar stairs. I had to have medical attention. I told the doctors that I fell down the stairs. My husband said I was lucky; that some husbands knock their wives teeth out and break their jaws. I must be doing something wrong. Then sometimes I say to myself, My God, no one deserves this nightmare.”

—Testimony submitted to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, Sept. 1977, Hartford, Connecticut, during Public Hearings on Battered Women. The testimony was given by a member of the Danbury Women’s Center which serves women from the surrounding affluent suburbs.



# New York City Tonight

Malcom! And I'm a thousand years  
behind the times  
Nothin' has changed  
ten years ago today I was  
trickin' in L.A. now  
I'm in New York and  
I repeat nothin'  
has changed!  
I can't find my dreams  
I don't know what  
nothin' means.  
I am alone. So ashamed  
I keep going but  
want to come  
home.

1) I'm talkin' about  
a sickness  
inside  
A feelin' I can  
no longer  
hide  
I've gone the  
way of  
serpents  
an' can no  
longer find  
my way home

2) I need the  
wisdom of the  
ancients  
The sight of  
the soothsayers  
The salve of  
the blues  
A spiritual cathartic  
or  
I will strangle  
in my own  
filth  
I will be but  
a parody  
of a woman  
livin' a death  
and life  
that ends  
with me,  
with an aversion  
to pain  
that only allows for  
a shallow  
mediocrity; not  
havin' the courage

to move past  
old hurts I  
remain bound in a  
Peter Pan pubescence  
And I am at once lost  
and found unsure  
of what is mine,  
what is creation or  
imitation, forward or  
backward.  
I have lost sight  
of the Blk. Will  
the seventies be  
the times of the  
the Blind  
Gropin' lost where is the vision?  
All I see is the  
crackers' wasteland  
A toilet left  
unflushed

3) Across the aisle from  
me on the subway  
a nigger in pink  
jeans reads Ebony  
magazine his  
hair pressed and  
curled  
Elijah why did u leave us!  
All I think of is gigs  
costumes, gettin' slim, tryin' to MAKE  
IT actin', dancin', maybe a play  
on Broadway like Zaki  
All the while the race  
among the races is  
at a crucial point  
the survival of my peole  
is at stake  
and I have elected  
to spend my days  
in petty pursuit  
of pieces of the  
pie. The shit  
pie. I  
am sick. I don't know  
what it will take  
to get me

well. Malcom is not goin' to rise  
again. Panthers played out. Elijah is dead.  
Processes is back. I can't talk about nobodi cause  
I wear wigs. I can't write warrior poems talkin'  
clean up the community cause I would  
have to wash myself  
away. I am a  
part of the  
perversion that  
permeates our  
existence  
Blk children can  
pass by taverns  
and see me  
on a platform  
g-stringed and gyratin', hear me  
cursin' on subways  
and street corners  
see me wid wite boys  
and women. I

and do not know  
what to do about  
it. I have  
come from the sixties to the  
seventies. From being  
the solution to  
being the  
problem.

They should stone me/US  
I did not get this way ALONE.

I am a product of  
humiliations, drowned dreams  
and betrayals. It is  
not all the time what  
it seems. I tried/  
tryin' and am still  
gettin' up

I know in the end  
it will be better  
than it was an'  
cannot berate myself  
cause of limited  
survival mechanisms

I am gettin' up  
and gettin' on  
Comin' home!  
and don't  
want no static  
bout where  
I been. I'm  
comin' HOME an'  
like the bible say  
"let he who is  
without sin  
cast the first  
stone"

I got to move past old ways  
sometimes I jus' don't know how-----

-----I could be doin' better  
but I could be doin'  
worse

I have heard of those  
who walk the way  
of the new world. I don't  
know how I came to always  
be on the outside  
lookin' in. Enlightened  
ones do not leaves us. Oh robe  
wearin'/Blk talkin'/knowledgable  
ones love us be

like my grandmother  
whose prayers has  
endured past all things  
when the dancers stopped dancin'  
poets stopped poetin'  
men stopped lovin', her  
prayers endured I  
remember her  
when ideologies

Kings and other things had  
let me down and if  
you can be like she  
and never turn  
your back on  
your children

She said "go grow but don't  
forget you can/must always  
come home"

4) I have much  
good to give  
But don't feel  
I have long  
to live

5) changes pain

6) On the subway  
home  
people look at u  
like u crazy  
Blackmutherfuckers!

I was with a trick  
last nite  
Oh god! ain't no use  
me talkin' about

it cause u can't know less  
u been there. This nauseating  
monkey/his hands with the nubs  
factories had left him for fingers/cadillac/whiskey  
drinkin' talkin' bout is it good?/u got  
good pussy girl/tight stuff/lemme rub it/lemme suck it good for u/  
lemme rub some of dat tittie/  
lemme rub—I'm not gonna put it back in—come on no  
I'm gonna give u two twenty dollar bills/Do u suck?/  
Aw honey u sumptin' else/I sho likes u/yo skin smooth as butter/  
come to daddy lemme suck dat tittie

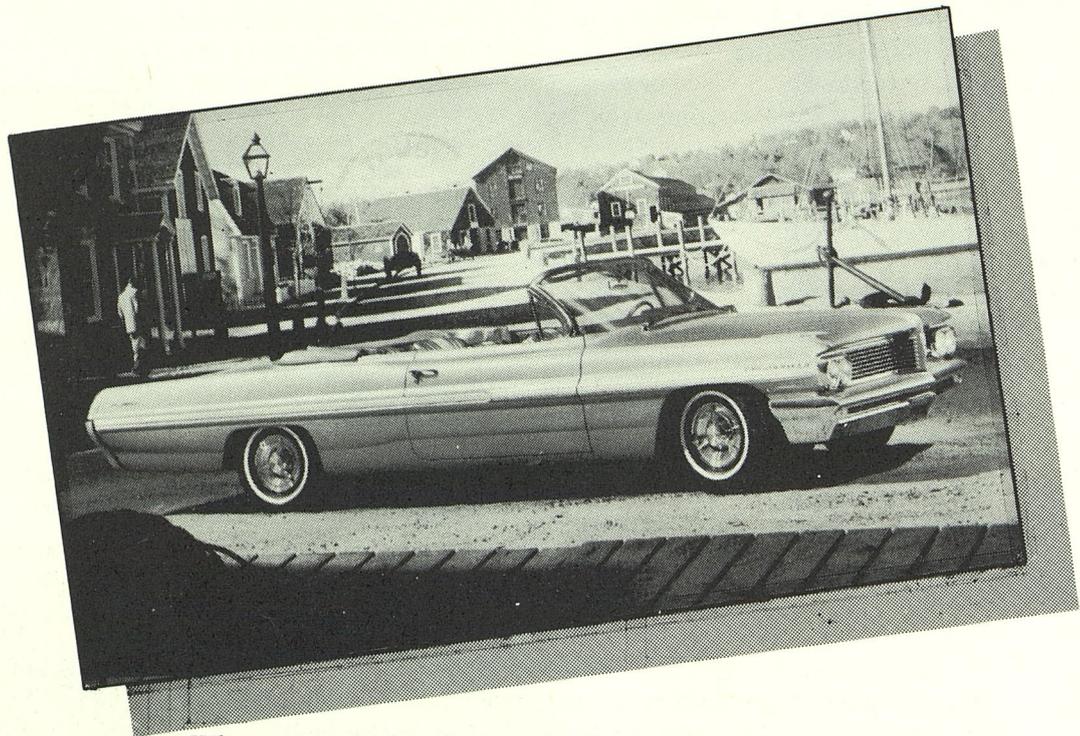
It was makin' me wanna die vomit  
but the rent/tokens/dance classes/food/taxis/clothes  
telephone/gas/lites/books/food/rent/entertainment  
made me bite my lip an' say

Oh baby/it feels so good/Ahhh/Oh yeah honey  
do it daddy

7) I feel empty  
unfinished like  
this poem  
which has  
no appropriate  
end.

—Sapphire

# AFTERNOON STROLL



When my rapist knocked on the door a few weeks later, I laughed to myself. Not only did he have to answer my "Who's there?" but also my "Whaddaya want?" Rural neighborliness long lost, replaced at first by the fear any country girl learns in her first moment in the Greyhound terminal and over time by the acquired deference to cities that true hicks are known for, my joviality and wit took over. The fake brass deadbolt between him and me, less cumbersome than a chastity belt, made me grin. The best defense is a good offense, my friend Katy had said by way of advice on my first night tricking. With equally off-handed practicality I got rid of him.

When I had both stopped shaking and started eating pea soup with a friend who could not lend me his silver Cordoba with maroon leather interior, I finally sighed. I didn't want pea soup and I did want to roll my terror around town in a tinted glass cocoon. Self-indulgence didn't seem like such an unmeritorious hedge against the female condition. Nobody has to know *why* you order extra croissants or weekly daffodils or something from the Tupperware woman at work. You don't have to tell some Dagwood that you're Blondie today. After all, I even worked rapists now.

When several months had passed, I cried. Admittedly I pitied myself at the lack of my own Cordoba but since deep inside I really wanted a navy Mercedes top-of-the-line sporty job, I knew the tears were real. Tricking having given way long ago to the notion that if I was my own pimp, why trick, I had kept myself busy nosing around used car lots after five. Less in control of my income, I had more time to rant to myself about injustice.

I had started crying when I saw a dented rich-blue Riviera but stopped temporarily as I passed the slick operator's lot full of shiny red muscle cars with jacked-up rear ends. Their implicitly bankrupt, young, previous owners, country fellows living in town now, had annoyed me once with cheap-skate attitudes and downright ignorance. Apparently they also didn't know how to buy cars. But when I looked a second time at the row of raised behinds, all stickered at a good grand above their next owners' ignorant ability to pay, I knew I had been crying for a reason.

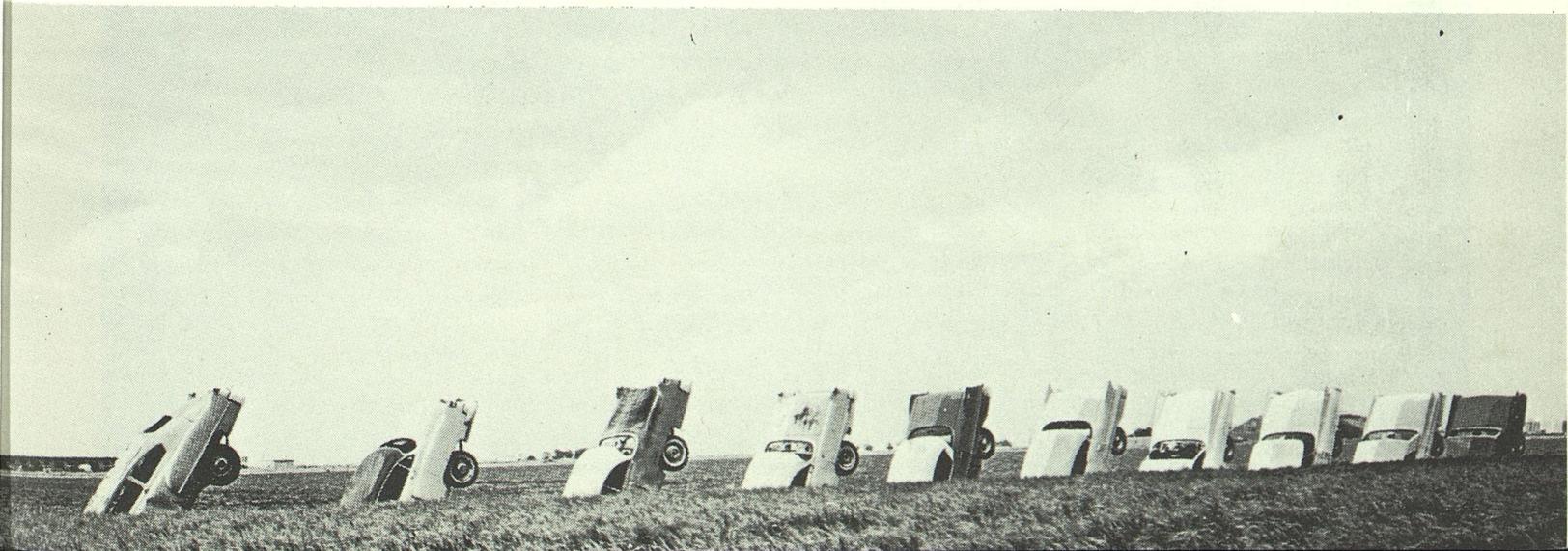
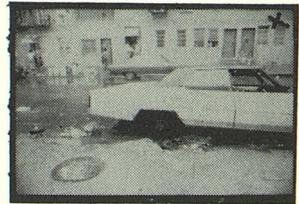
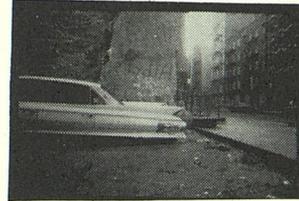
When I thought about the navy Mercedes—from time to time—I was gratified by its unattainability. Why whore when you can dream with no effort, I must have said one offensive day, tearlessly. So years after tricking, when I was raped in my living room by a welcomed acquaintance who asked for a ride home after, I rocked with some comfort while he caught a cab in the street below. In the country there are lots of rocking chairs but no cabs. No escapes that aren't of your own making. No easy ways to send tedious callers away without inhospitably admitting that you were dubious about answering the bell. No social conventions that allow selectivity among passers-by. No deadbolts to guard your dreams.

I started to cry again by the Lincoln-Mercury showroom as rusty Impalas and a lot of foreign makes whizzed by. I don't like Cougars—they get tawdry with age—and Continentals remind me of Dagwood's cartoon dreams. This is serious, Katy might have said. So much ugly metal perpetrated on all *kinds* of people, I reflected, adding to myself, What has Ralph Nader done about rape, anyway? But keeping my injustices in perspective, I shifted to acknowledge a right-on-red turn by some hurried 'Vette and noted that if I was crying, it was raining.

In the city it's easy enough to come in out of the rain. Nobody yells, Shut the damn door—were you brought up in a barn? Nobody sighs, It's busier in here'n Grand Central Station. Nobody gives a hoot if you're crying as long as you don't talk to the other customers or drool. Nobody cares how you make a buck as long as you pay for coffee with something smaller than a five and don't park in their loading zone. So you can sit where it's warm and think about a Mercedes and weep with indulgence. The waitress might glower to let you know that after work *she* returns to some block where people don't cry—or drool—but if you put the tip by the saucer early on, you're permitted sadness. As long as you're not a regular and know she's a lying creampuff who cried over Lynda Bird's *and* Tricia's weddings.

He came in with a woman who had worked the three best hotels for years now —with impunity because her takers, hardly gentlemen but quiet anyway, were as lackluster about it all as she. Maybe she didn't like clothes *or* cars, or in choosing not to have a habit had chosen not to get desperate. She exchanged rain talk with the waitress. Now he was doing the glowering, but he also, I noted, paid for the coffee. As city folks do, we exchanged glances without recognition, my tears having stopped lest I look vulnerable to Rag Lady drooling nearby, or suspicious to the female undercover cop checking her crowsfeet in the mirror behind the pie cabinet. For a moment I laughed to myself again and then, sick all over, lost myself in the swarm of cars outside.

—Diane Solomon



# REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN WHO DEFEND THEMSELVES

## In Response to Physical or Sexual Assault

### I. INTRODUCTION

Women have always had to defend themselves against physical and sexual assaults by their husbands, lovers, friends or strangers. Recently, however, women are consciously refusing to accept this abuse, and the public is increasingly aware of the failure of courts and police to protect women who face these assaults. Women charged with homicide in response to abuse formerly pled guilty or pled insanity and were routinely convicted. They are now speaking out about their circumstances, describing the reasons for their actions, and asserting an equal right with men to defend themselves.

National attention on women "fighting back" first focused on Inez Garcia and Joan Little, who killed assailants following sexual assaults.<sup>1</sup> Women who defend themselves against wife assault<sup>2</sup> or who, like Yvonne Wanrow, defend their children against sexual or physical abuse, have also attracted national attention.<sup>3</sup> These women have become the subjects of considerable controversy, largely because they challenge historically accepted notions of women's roles.<sup>4</sup>

For lawyers representing the women charged with these homicides, the legal and political problems posed by the outspoken statement of women's self-defense are complex. The task for the lawyer is one of evaluating the facts of the case free from bias and sex-stereotyping, and then constructing and presenting a defense in the courtroom that is likewise free from bias and sex-stereotyping. Unfortunately, even lawyers sensitive to the problems of sex discrimination in other areas share these biases.

This article is intended to aid attorneys representing women who commit homicides after they have been physically or sexually assaulted or after their children have been molested or abused. As criminal defense lawyers who have been involved in the representation of women who assert their right to defend themselves against such abuse, the authors have explored the particular problems which arise in these cases. As women

involved in the women's movement, our thinking and approach reflect an analysis of women's experience as understood and developed by feminist theory. Our interest is in developing a legal analysis which incorporates women's experiences and perspectives into existing concepts of criminal law.

Our analysis assumes that an act of homicide by a woman is reasonable to the same extent that it is reasonable when committed by a man. We do not argue for a separate legal standard for women. However, sex-based stereotypical views of women, especially women who act violently, and a male orientation built into the law prevent an equal application of the law.

The approach we present identifies the myths and misconceptions held about women and seeks to remove them from the trial and defense process. The goal of this analysis is the presentation to the jury of the defendant's conduct as reasonable. The crucial point to be conveyed to judge and jury is that, due to a variety of socially based factors, a woman may reasonably perceive imminent and lethal danger in a situation in which a man might not. This perception will justify for her, as it would for a man who perceives such danger, recourse to deadly force. Not only has this approach been successful, but failure to apply it has resulted in unnecessary convictions.<sup>5</sup>

In representing women who commit what they believe to be an act of justifiable homicide, choice of defense and implementation of that defense in the courtroom are the two fundamental problems. First, the facts must be thoroughly explored and evaluated, and the defendant's perception of her actions understood. Choice of defense must be based on the defendant's and lawyer's perceptions of these actions together with an analysis of available legal defenses. Analysis of the woman's case must take into account her circumstances and her reasons for committing a homicide. This will give the lawyer insight into her state of mind, as well as how to translate it to

the jury. It will affect every aspect of the courtroom presentation including voir dire, jury selection, education of the judge, use of expert witnesses and jury instructions.

We believe that a self-defense approach should be thoroughly explored as a first step. The traditional view of women who commit violent crimes is that their action was irrational or insane. Consequently, an impaired mental state defense<sup>6</sup> has often been relied on automatically. We start from the premise that a woman who kills is no more "out of her mind" than a man who kills. Our work has shown that the circumstances which require a woman to commit homicide in these cases can demonstrate that her act was reasonable and necessary. Accordingly, the homicide should be defended as self-defense where possible, although an impaired mental state defense may be appropriate in a given case.

This article will discuss the historical, social and legal context of the problem, and the issues and implications involved in choosing a defense. We will also explore the strategic problems of implementing the defense in the courtroom. An understanding of each of these areas is necessary in order to incorporate the woman defendant's perspective into the trial process.

### II. HISTORICAL, SOCIAL AND LEGAL BACKGROUND

Women who commit violent crimes have been almost completely ignored by criminologists, lawyers, penologists and social scientists.<sup>7</sup> While these women may figure mythically in American culture,<sup>8</sup> only recently have they commanded any serious attention.<sup>9</sup> Historically, criminological literature portrayed women who committed violent crimes as "more terrible than the male," with propensities for evil "more intense and more perverse" than their male counterparts.<sup>10</sup> The criminologists' view that these women "somehow betray their womanhood by venturing out into a reserve of men,"<sup>11</sup> has continued in current literature.<sup>12</sup>

One result of this view is the notion that increasing numbers of women are committing violent crimes because of the improved status of women. Information available on women criminal offenders, however, bears out neither the historical portrait nor the assertion that killing by women is on the rise. Of all homicide arrests, the number of women arrested has remained at a stable 15%.<sup>13</sup> It appears, however, that convictions of women are increasing.<sup>14</sup> Women who are convicted are thought to be more dangerous than men, and are often sentenced to longer prison terms.<sup>15</sup> Women usually kill men, not women,<sup>16</sup> and women charged with homicide have the least extensive prior criminal records of any female offenders.<sup>17</sup> In fact, the homicides women commit frequently arise out of "domestic disturbances" in which they are forced to defend themselves.<sup>18</sup> Indeed, a recent study found that 40% of the women incarcerated in Chicago's Cook County jail for homicide had killed their husbands or lovers as a result of physical abuse.<sup>19</sup> In spouse killings, wives are motivated by self-defense almost seven times as often as are husbands.<sup>20</sup> In this context, a woman who kills a man is not insane; she may be saving her own life.

Women are forced to defend themselves against abuse because they do not receive adequate protection from the courts or from the police.<sup>21</sup> The legal system provides almost no protection for a woman abused by her husband. Similarly, the chance of securing a conviction for a rape is small. Women's need to protect themselves must be understood in the context of the failure of judicial and law enforcement authorities to protect abused women.

Inadequate treatment of rape victims by the judicial system and law enforcement agencies has been well documented.<sup>22</sup> Although rape is inherently a violent crime,<sup>23</sup> it is not treated with the same seriousness as other violent crimes.<sup>24</sup> While rape has increased by 226.3%, the highest percentage increase of any crime against the person since 1960,<sup>25</sup> it also has the highest rate of acquittal or dismissal,<sup>26</sup> with only one out of seven reported rapes resulting in conviction.<sup>27</sup>

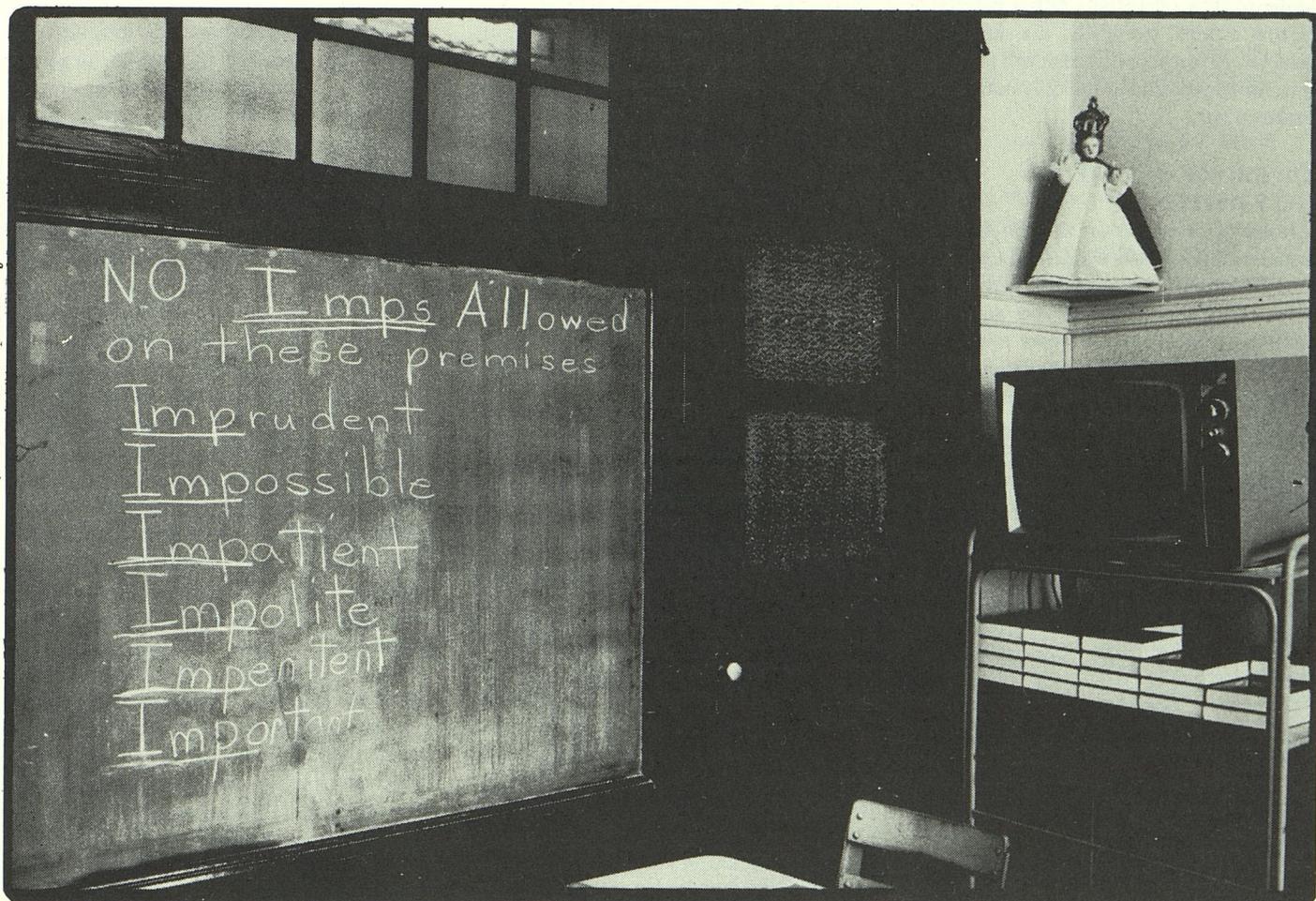
The rape victim is often treated callously by law enforcement authorities. She is seen not as a legitimate victim of crime, but as a temptress precipitating rape.<sup>28</sup> Beginning with the decision to prosecute,<sup>29</sup> this view infects every stage of the process. Evidentiary require-

ments,<sup>30</sup> jury instructions,<sup>31</sup> and jurors'<sup>32</sup> and judges'<sup>33</sup> attitudes reflect the biased treatment of the rape victim. Women filing rape charges know that they will have to subject themselves to the "initial emotional trauma of submitting to official investigatory processes . . . subsequent humiliation through attendant publicity and embarrassment at trial through defense tactics which are often demeaning."<sup>34</sup>

Women who are the victims of wife assault are also without remedy from the police or courts.<sup>35</sup> Neither the police nor the family courts will interfere with domestic violence. A marriage license is viewed as giving a husband permission to do what he wants with and to his wife. Police enforcement of those court orders which do issue against husbands is nonexistent or meaningless.<sup>36</sup> This inadequate protection has serious consequences for women, since it is estimated that one-third to one-half of all married women experience brutality at the hands of their husbands.<sup>37</sup> These incidents of domestic violence commonly result in serious physical injury or death for the woman.<sup>38</sup> In many of these cases, police had been summoned at least once before the killing occurred.<sup>39</sup> This high and deadly inci-

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Our Lady of Perpetual Help School, N.Y. 1978 photo by Su Friedrich



## REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN

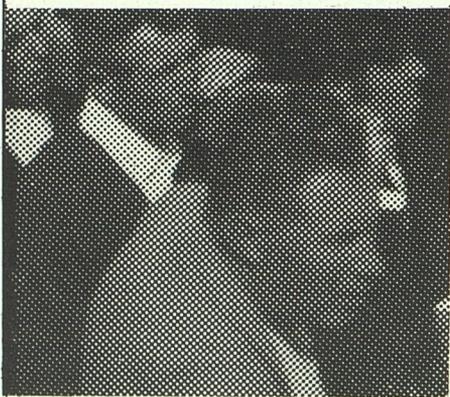
dence of wife assault must be viewed with an understanding that many women are forced to remain with their husbands out of economic necessity or fear of retaliation. These problems are compounded by the shamefully few resources available to shelter battered women.

The problem of lack of police protection is greatly exacerbated for poor and minority women. While sexual and physical assaults plague women from all economic and racial backgrounds, the judicial and law enforcement systems are even less responsive to women from minority and poor communities. These communities suffer from severely reduced services.<sup>40</sup> As a result, women from these communities have greater difficulty in getting a police officer to respond to a "domestic disturbance" call. If the woman does succeed in processing a complaint, she is likely to be treated even less responsively than other abused women. The class and racial biases of the judicial and law enforcement systems will compound their already hostile attitude toward abused women.

Thus, lack of adequate police protection creates a situation in which a woman may feel it necessary to respond in self-defense to a potentially lethal battery or sexual assault. Ironically, the same court and law enforcement system will prosecute her for responding in the only manner left open to her.

### III. CHOICE OF DEFENSE— SELF-DEFENSE

Choice of defense is the threshold issue in representing abused women charged with homicides. This process can only begin, however, when the stereotypes and implications of available defenses are understood. Stereotypes of these defenses may even subconsciously control fundamental information elicited from the defendant



which forms the basis of choice of defense.

Although in any given case there may be many legal and factual defenses available, we have limited the focus of this article to two major categories of legal defenses: self-defense and impaired mental state. Our work and experience is in the area of self-defense, but we believe that an exploration of the general law and social implications involved in both defenses will provide a useful framework for analysis of proper choice of defense.

#### A. The theory of justifiable homicide and its intrinsic sex bias

Not all homicides are punished. The law has always excused certain killings, calling them justifiable homicides. Persons who kill in defense of their own lives, the lives of others, or in defense of their property are entitled to a determination that the killing was justifiable.

Homicide itself is not a crime, but a class of offenses, graded according to the mental state and turpitude of the defendant.<sup>41</sup> Generally, the class is divided into first- and second-degree murder, voluntary and involuntary manslaughter.<sup>42</sup> Proof of a killing in the sudden heat of passion upon sufficient provocation generally reduces a killing to manslaughter.<sup>43</sup> A successful plea of self-defense is a complete defense and results in an acquittal.<sup>44</sup>

Standards of justifiable homicide have been based on male models and expectations. Familiar images of self-defense are a soldier, a man protecting his home, family, or the chastity of his wife or a man fighting off an assailant. Society, through its prosecutors, juries and judges, has more readily excused a man for killing his wife's lover than a woman for killing a rapist. The acts of men and women are subject to a different set of legal expectations and standards. The man's act, while not always legally condoned, is viewed sympathetically. He is not forgiven, but his motivation is understood by those sitting in judgment upon his act since this conduct conforms to the expectation that a real man would fight to the death to protect his pride and property. The paramour laws, which permitted a husband to kill another man he caught *in flagrante delicto* with his wife, are an explicit expression of societal sympathy for such an act.<sup>45</sup> The law, however, has never protected a wife who killed her husband after finding him with another woman. A woman's husband simply does not belong to her in the same way that she belongs to him.<sup>46</sup>

The law clearly does not permit a woman to protect herself to the same extent that a man may protect himself. Case law, for example, allows the use of deadly force to prevent forcible sodomy between males,<sup>47</sup> but has not yet sanctioned a woman's right to use deadly force to repel a rape. Underlying this distinction is the belief that the invasion of a man's body is a more egregious offense than the invasion of a woman's body. Conceptions of why a woman kills a rapist are also laden with sex-based stereotypes. The juror's statement in Inez Garcia's first trial that "you can't kill someone for trying to give you a good time"<sup>48</sup> demonstrates the separate standard of justifiable homicide for men and women.

As presently applied, the law of self-defense does not take into account women's perspectives and circumstances. The law reflects and embodies society's biases and its expectations of women. Thus, while the courts have begun to acknowledge the subtlety of sex discrimination in other areas,<sup>49</sup> the law of self-defense has barely begun to reflect this change.<sup>50</sup>

#### B. Sex bias in the perception of imminent danger and the use of deadly force

Homicide is justifiable in self-defense if the act can be shown to be reasonable. There must be "a reasonable ground to apprehend a design on the part of the person slain to commit a felony or to do some great personal injury to the slayer or to any such person, and there is imminent danger of such design being accomplished."<sup>51</sup> The act must be reasonable on two counts. The person claiming self-defense must have a reasonable *apprehension* of danger and a reasonable perception of the *imminence* of that danger. While divisible into two aspects, the standard is often expressed as reasonable grounds to apprehend imminent death or grievous bodily harm.<sup>52</sup> Although the standard to be applied in evaluating reasonableness differs from state to state, it is generally defined as the perception of both apprehension and imminent danger from the individual's own perspective.<sup>53</sup>

In several respects the law of self-defense allows the defendant to have been reasonable but wrong. Thus, in determining reasonableness, the law takes into account the effect of danger and fear on a person's perception of the situation. As Justice Holmes said, "The law does require detached reflection in the presence of an upraised knife."<sup>54</sup> The law of self-defense also applies when the danger, although

# R A P E C A S E D E P O S I T I O N

reasonably perceived, is not borne out by events. For example, when confronted by an attacker who is known to carry a weapon and appears to be reaching for it, a person may reasonably believe herself to be in imminent danger, even if the attacker turns out to be unarmed.<sup>55</sup>

Legally, for self-defense purposes, there are two kinds of force.<sup>56</sup> Force that could produce death or serious injury (deadly force), and force that could not. Generally, like force can only be used against like force.<sup>57</sup> Deadly force cannot be used against nondeadly force. A person may respond to an attack with equal and opposite force and nothing greater. Traditionally, this is true even if a person is jumped on the street by an unknown assailant or if the person is weaker than her attacker. However, if the attacker uses a weapon or his greater physical strength to render his victim helpless, and the victim has reason to believe that death or serious injury is imminent, the victim may respond with deadly force.

The law of self-defense does not take into account women's perspectives and the circumstances under which women are forced to respond. The attorney considering a defense of self-defense must therefore explore and understand these problems. This will affect both the advisability of such a defense and the jury's ability to understand and perceive the woman's actions as reasonable. This presentation is the crux of a self-defense justification. Views of self-defense that prevent the woman's actions from appearing as reasonable as a man's must be eliminated from the trial process.

Sex bias permeates the legal doctrine regarding the perception of imminent and lethal danger. The law assumes that both the attacker and the victim have approximately equal capacities. While a man is assumed to have the ability to perceive danger accurately and respond appropriately, a woman is viewed as responding hysterically and inappropriately to physical threat. However, certain factors relevant to women's experiences are not taken into account. For example, women are less likely to have had training or experience in hand-to-hand fighting. Socially imposed proscriptions inhibit their ability to fend off an attacker. The fact that women generally are of slighter build also gives a male assailant an advantage. All of these conditions will have an impact on the reasonableness of a woman's perception of an imminent and lethal threat to her life such as would justify the use of deadly force.

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DID HE COME?  
the doctor wants to know.

DID HE COME?  
the doctor with no face grunts  
shoving a gloved hand up my cunt.

I say he came in  
through the door  
he came up behind me  
came in like he lived there  
or like it's just another hallway  
to piss in  
like he owned it,  
like you.

DID HE USE FORCE?  
the cops want to know  
guns and nightsticks swinging  
from their hips

DID HE USE FORCE?  
I say he had the force of a sudden  
storm  
the strength of a desperate child  
the power of knowing what he wanted.

BUT DID HE HAVE A WEAPON?  
they ask staring.

I say he had himself; the advantage of  
surprise.

He seemed to think that was enough,  
that  
and.....

I am forgetting his hands  
I want to forget his hands  
(the horror of those hands... long,  
slender...  
like other hands I love caressing...  
but those hands...)

like hammers like clamps  
like claws

I say yes he had weapons I believe  
he had a whole arsenal of weapons  
it is likely he is supplied by a  
conspiracy furnishing arms.

AND YOU WERE ALONE?  
they ask leaning in.

yes I say meekly and old porn films  
flicker across their lips and  
I scream I didn't know it was against  
the law  
I didn't see the sign "Go home alone at  
your own risk!"

WHAT WERE YOU WEARING?  
asks the official form  
AND WHAT WAS THE  
PERPETRATOR WEARING?

I write: dressed then as I am now I was  
as nude  
as exposed as this;  
he was naked as a knife.

WOULD YOU RECOGNIZE HIM?  
the detective wants to know.  
CAN YOU IDENTIFY HIM?  
he asks from the back  
of a fat scrapbook.

I say I see him  
everywhere.

IF YOU SEE HIM CALL US,  
the blue boys soothe.

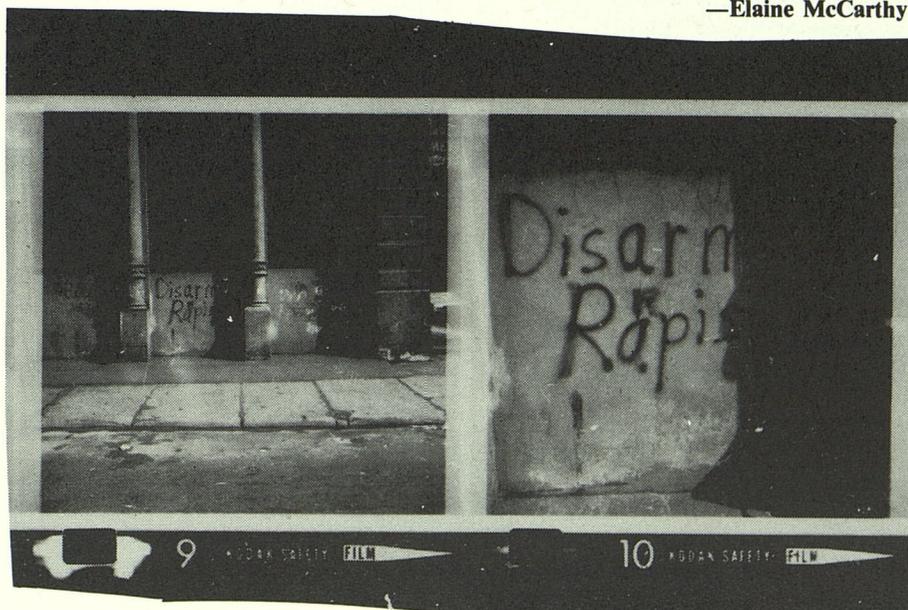
I say if I see him I will call  
on all the will power I have  
to forget he's human.  
I will kill him.

Now now little lady they murmur  
you just let us handle this after all  
you have to understand he's young  
crazy poor...

I understand I say that he & I don't  
make  
anything but your dinner or  
put another way  
two victims only make a right  
to change the whole  
fucking  
system.

Sign here.

—Elaine McCarthy



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These factors, however, have not usually been considered during the trial.

## C. Presenting the woman's perspective

Even where the standard of self-defense is that of the person's own perception of the circumstances, it is difficult to apply this standard to the woman defendant.<sup>58</sup> Not only are the circumstances under which women are forced to defend themselves entirely different from those which cause men to commit homicides, but the woman's state of mind is different as well. Presenting the individual woman's perspective in the trial means educating the judge and jury about the incidence and severity of the problems of rape, wife assault, and child abuse and molestation to the extent that they explain the defendant's conduct. It also means educating them about the lack of judicial and social alternatives available to women in these situations and combatting specific myths: for example, that a woman who kills a man is insane or that women enjoy rape.

*State v. Wanrow*<sup>59</sup> is an example of the successful implementation of this strategy. In appealing Yvonne Wanrow's conviction for felony-murder and first-degree assault, counsel challenged the lower court's self-defense jury instruction on the ground that it did not fully include the woman's perspective.<sup>60</sup> This was argued on two separate grounds.<sup>61</sup> First, counsel argued that the instruction failed to direct the jury to apply correctly the Washington standard of self-defense. This standard would require the jury to consider the defendant's action "seeing what [s]he sees and knowing what [s]he knows," taking into account all the circumstances as she knew them at the time.<sup>62</sup> Second, counsel argued that the failure to apply this standard was particularly prejudicial to a female defendant. The tone of the instruction and the persistent use of the masculine gender left the jury with the impression that the standard to be applied was that applicable to a fight between two men rather than a small woman facing a large man.

In a landmark decision, the Supreme Court of Washington in *Wanrow* reversed the conviction on both grounds.<sup>63</sup> Acknowledging the threat to equal protection inherent in the failure to include a woman's perspective in the law of self-defense, the Court noted:

[This instruction] leaves the jury with the impression the objective standard to be applied is that applicable to an altercation be-

tween two men. The impression created—that a 5'4" woman with a cast on her leg and using a crutch must, under the law, somehow repel an assault by a 6'2" intoxicated man without employing weapons in her defense, unless the jury finds her determination of the degree of danger to be objectively reasonable—constitutes a separate and distinct misstatement of the law and, in the context of this case, violates the respondent's right to equal protection of the law. The respondent was entitled to have the jury consider her actions in the light of her own perceptions of the situation, including those perceptions which were the product of our nation's "long and unfortunate history of sex discrimination." Until such time as the effects of that history are eradicated, care must be taken to assure that our self-defense instructions afford women the right to have their conduct judged in the light of the individual handicaps which are the product of sex discrimination. To fail to do so is to deny the right of the individual woman involved to trial by the same rules which are applicable to male defendants.<sup>64</sup>

This application of a woman's perspective to the law of self-defense is a watershed in judicial recognition of women's right to self-defense. The court in *Wanrow* clearly validated the argument that equal protection of the law requires that the jury consider a defendant's actions "in the light of her own perceptions of the situation."<sup>65</sup> The specific aspects of the woman's perception mentioned by the court in *Wanrow* need to be particularly addressed by defense counsel in future cases. These issues are discussed in the following section.

## D. Defense issues

1. *Women's perceptions of danger*—The "role-typing which society has long imposed"<sup>66</sup> has relegated women to a position of second-class status with respect to their abilities to defend themselves. Women have been denied equal opportunity and access to physical training and athletics.<sup>67</sup> They have been discouraged from learning how to defend themselves physically because such behavior would be "unfeminine." Women are socialized to be less active physically, not to display physical aggression and to be more afraid of physical pain than men.<sup>68</sup> These problems are exacerbated by the fact that most women are physically smaller than men.

Women who have learned to associate femininity with being weak and helpless experience great anxiety when confronted with a situation where they must display aggression.<sup>69</sup> Relative size, socialized self-perceptions about helplessness and generally poor physical training influence women's perceptions of danger. These circum-

stances must be included, as noted by the *Wanrow* court, within the standard of self-defense.<sup>70</sup>

2. *Women's need to use weapons*—Traditional legal theory virtually ignores the problem of how a small unarmed woman, or anyone without self-defense skills, can cope with an attack by a large unarmed man whom she perceives as threatening her life. The legal responses have been couched within a male standard of physical equals: deadly force can only be used to meet deadly force.<sup>71</sup> When perceived by a woman, however, the fist or the body of the large male may itself be the deadly weapon. The woman who feels ill-equipped to defend herself with her fists may feel that her only resort is use of a weapon. The Washington Supreme Court implicitly recognized this fact. Its ruling against the challenged instruction was based, in part, on the fact that the instructions in *Wanrow* left the jury with the impression that a small encumbered woman could legally defend against a large intoxicated man only if she did so without employing weapons.<sup>72</sup>

The special circumstances that may require a woman to use a weapon must be fully explained in the trial. The jury must be allowed to consider the relative size of the woman, her lack of access to self-defense training and her possible need to resort to a weapon when faced with an unarmed assailant. This approach equalize the application of the law to women by incorporating the woman's perspective into the deadly force standard and other standards of self-defense.

3. *Provocation and time restrictions*—The court in *Wanrow* recognized that a narrow time restriction wrongfully limits the jury's consideration to the event immediately preceding the homicide.<sup>73</sup> Restriction of this kind violates the rule that all the circumstances should be taken into account, even those that precede the incident by a long period of time. A victim's conduct preceding a homicide is generally viewed as relevant to explain the reasonableness of the defendant's actions. In a woman defendant's self-defense case the events of recent moments, days, weeks and months may be admissible to show that the defendant was provoked into the homicidal act.

The relevance and admissibility of the decedent's acts preceding the homicide are not limited to showing provocation. Their effect on the defendant's own perception of the situation may also be demonstrated.

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# ON BEING INSIDE: VIOLENCE IN WOMEN'S PRISONS

*Dedicated to our friends of Bedford Hills, without whose constant strength and guidance we couldn't go on*

If you want to understand what Hell is all about, take a short trip into the barred realm of a women's prison. This is a journey in time and space, a reality appearing so Kafkaesque that it resembles science fiction, a different dimension. Here a whole colony of women live in oblivion; sleepwalk, more dead than alive. In the total absence of attention from the outside world, they become easy targets for a system which feels free to treat them like animals, to harass them while they are too powerless to fight back. Those who do decide to fight take the brunt and serve as disciplinary examples to the rest, the faster for everyone to learn how to survive without making trouble, without dignity, without the memory of what it is to be yourself, a human being, a woman.

Prison is a cage. Yet so is a tenement in the ghetto. So is the typing pool of a corporation. So is a factory. So is even the isolation of a suburban dollhouse. There are cages and cages. Prison is the cage

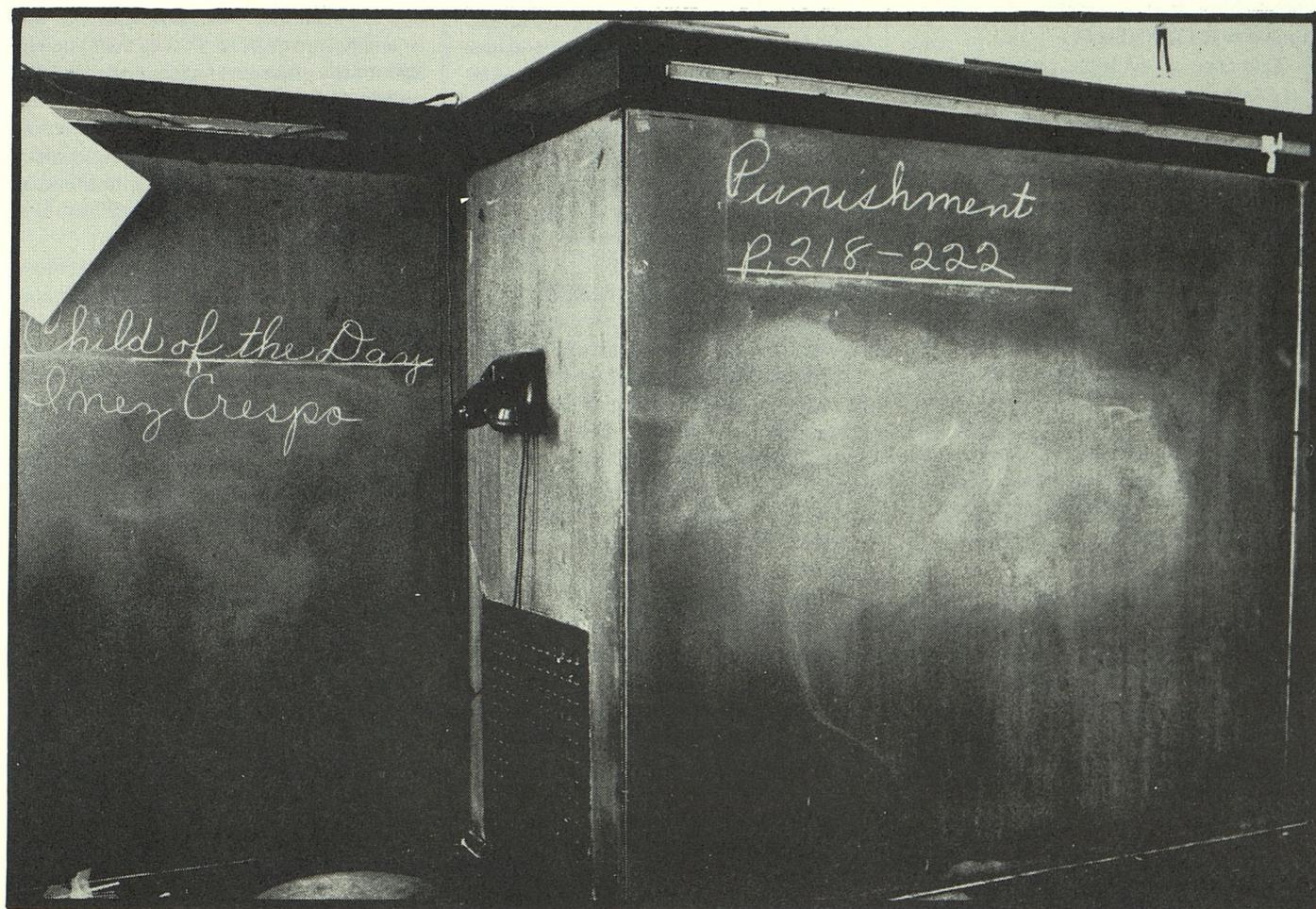
where even the illusion of freedom is removed from your dreams.

Women are targets of violence on the streets, in the family, at work, on welfare. Their assailants are men they don't know and men they love, the state, the system, society at large. This violence grows like cancer and becomes itself a powerful prison from which there is no escape. It is perhaps easier to jump the fence at Bedford Hills than to overcome the societal dictatorship which deprives women of their self-respect, their integrity, their safety, their means for survival. These invisible bars to self-fulfillment and survival are unbending and hard; they are the reasons why women ultimately end up in prison. One prison simply leads to another.

Prisons in general are concentration camps. They are the places where the poor, those with the wrong color of skin, the wrong kind of language, the wrong background, the wrong political ideas can

be contained, isolated and held responsible for the failures and crises of society at large.

The ultimate hypocrisy of our system is that it creates a class of oppressed and desperate people and then turns around and blames these very people for the tragedy of their situation. Blaming the victim is a ploy the system—any system—uses in order to round up and put away the unwanted elements of the population and make it look like justice. Meanwhile, the rich and powerful, who commit big-time murder through war, big-time robbery by living off the oppression of the poor—they go free and prosper. All poor and Third World people are subject to this ploy. But those who have it worst are Third World, lower-class women. To them, even the restricted prospects available to women of higher classes, especially white women, such as education, better jobs, some leisure, some freedom from constant responsibility and worry—all are denied. What they get instead is the threat of forced sterilization aiming at the ultimate genocide of their race or class, children they can't feed, menial jobs, slave wages, the superpatriarchal oppression of the welfare system. (continued on page 107)



Our Lady of Perpetual Help School, N.Y. 1978 photo by Su Friedrich

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The reasonableness of her response does not depend on one overt act, but on "all the circumstances as they appeared to her at that time."<sup>75</sup> Thus, any previous experience the woman has had with her assailant or any frightening information she may know or believe to be true about him may be crucial to establishing her state of mind. Similarly, the entire course of the decedent's conduct must be taken into account in determining whether the defendant acted reasonably.<sup>76</sup>

#### 4. Decedent's reputation for violence—

The decedent's general reputation for violence or his prior commission of specific acts or threats of violence is clearly relevant and crucial to the reasonableness of a woman's conduct in apprehending danger of imminent bodily harm. Generally, proof of the decedent's reputation for violence, if known to the defendant, is admissible to show who was the aggressor in the attack. It can also be used to support the reasonableness of the defendant's conduct. It is almost universally held that once the defendant has produced evidence that the deceased attacked her, she may introduce testimony of the reputation of the deceased for violence.<sup>77</sup> If the deceased had earlier threatened or violently assaulted the defendant, there is support for the proposition that a quicker, harsher response was justifiable.<sup>78</sup>

This type of evidence puts before the jury a clearer picture of the person against whom the woman was defending. An individual may not be justified in using a weapon against a man about whom she knows nothing. However, she may be perfectly and reasonably justified in reaching for a weapon against a man whom she knows to be violent. While it is critical to develop this area in any self-defense case, it is particularly important in cases involving women. In such cases, the assailant's reputation for violence may have had a more severe impact on the state of mind of a woman who feels unable to defend herself. This may be especially true for the woman who has been denied judicial or law enforcement protection.

5. *Rage*—Many people, including many lawyers, think that if a woman's response is even partially motivated by anger at the victim, the defense of self-defense is precluded.<sup>79</sup> However, in cases involving rape, sexual assault or wife assault, rage is a perfectly legitimate response, and a self-

defense defense should not automatically be ruled out.

As women become increasingly educated and self-conscious about the problems of rape, child molestation and wife assault, rage may well be one of the several components of a woman's mental state at the time she responds. Viewed from the woman's perspective, it is apparent that the absence of anger would be abnormal and unreasonable. A reasonable and self-protective response to the situation may well be rage rather than acceptance. To some extent, this may include the urge to retaliate.<sup>80</sup>

Traditionally, retaliation and anger have no place in the self-defense exception to homicide culpability.<sup>81</sup> In responding to an attack, however, rage is rarely the sole motivating force.<sup>82</sup> A woman's state of mind at the time of the homicide is complex. It probably includes some feeling of fear (immediate or otherwise), rage, panic, humiliation, shame, abject terror and an excited state of mind in which judgment is impaired. The degree and importance of each of these factors vary from case to case. If rage is put before the jury within the context of the other emotions that naturally and reasonably accompany it, the rage will be perceived as reasonable. This approach no longer conflicts with the assertion of self-defense.

Even though rage can be an acknowledged component of a woman's mental state, it must be handled with extreme delicacy. Defense counsel must be sensitive to the fact that rage is an issue that most strongly sparks the myths of women and violence. Additionally, prosecutors uniformly seek retaliation instructions<sup>83</sup> in an attempt to defeat self-defense justifications where rage has been an issue in the case.

#### IV. DEFENSES OF IMPAIRED MENTAL STATE

Our focus on self-defense reflects a dissatisfaction with the use of traditional impaired mental state defenses for women charged with homicides. These defenses tended to imply that such women were insane. We believe that analysis of the circumstances which force women to respond to life-threatening situations usually leads to a self-defense perspective. We recognize, however, that not all cases involving women responding to sexual or physical assault can or should be defended from the standpoint of self-defense. Accordingly, we have set forth the preliminary outlines of an impaired mental state defense.

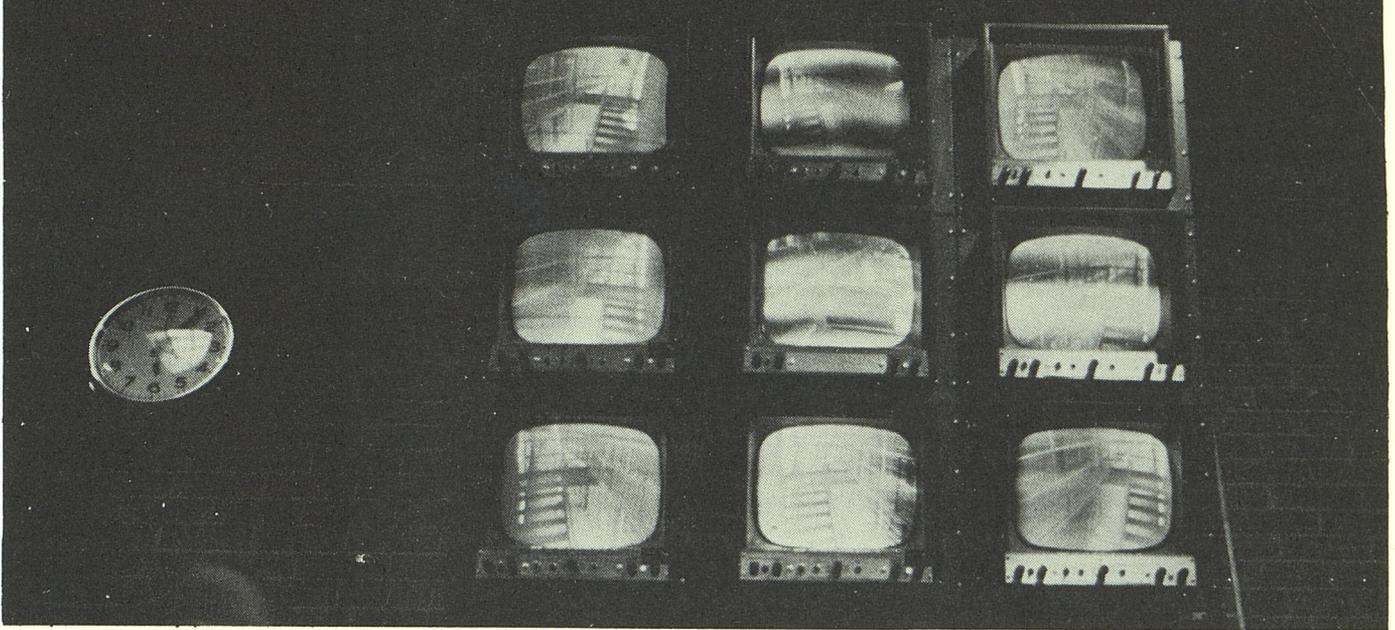
The law has always recognized that responsibility for criminal conduct cannot be fixed on persons whose mental capacities were in some way impaired at the time of the incident. The range of defenses available for impaired mental capacity varies from state to state. They generally include insanity, which is a total defense to criminal conduct, and some form of partial responsibility defense such as heat of passion<sup>84</sup> or diminished capacity.<sup>85</sup> The automatism, or unconscious defense, also limits criminal responsibility. This defense rests either on the ground that the defendant did not have the requisite mental state to commit a crime or that she did not commit a voluntary act.<sup>86</sup> There may also be other variations on the impaired mental state defense.<sup>87</sup>

Women generally have been viewed as more prone to hysteria and panic than men. Women who violated that stereotype by being strong and independent or violent were treated as hysterics.<sup>88</sup> It is our belief that many women who committed homicides and were considered disturbed by society, their lawyers, and even themselves, might now be viewed as having acted in self-defense.

In the past, defense attorneys relied almost automatically on an impaired mental state defense for a woman who committed homicide.<sup>89</sup> Today, an impaired mental state defense should be considered only as a last resort, with full awareness of its social implications.<sup>90</sup> In particular, the use of an insanity defense must be evaluated in light of the procedures which follow an acquittal by reason of insanity. In some jurisdictions, commitment to a mental hospital for treatment is mandatory after such an acquittal.<sup>91</sup> In all other nonfederal jurisdictions, commitment is possible but not mandatory.<sup>92</sup>

If it is necessary to use an impaired mental state defense, counsel can still accurately and fully inform the jury of the conditions and circumstances which affected the woman's state of mind. For example, when a woman has suffered years of physical or sexual abuse by her husband, has experienced a prior rape or incident of child molestation, or has a particularly severe cultural or social reaction to sexual assault, it is important for her defense to explain these background factors. This can be done through sociological, psychological or psychiatric testimony,<sup>93</sup> the defendant's own testimony, and voir dire. The defense would suggest that the woman was driven to the breaking point by the circumstances of her situation.<sup>94</sup>

In choosing an impaired mental state



defense, it is important to consider that juries not only generally mistrust psychiatric defenses, but may, as with self-defense, apply a different standard to women. The jury may require a woman who asserts an impaired mental state defense to sound truly insane. A woman who sounds too angry or too calm may not fulfill the jurors' role expectations. The jury may then feel punitive toward her for not conforming to the stereotype. Prosecutors have played on this bias by using tape recordings of a defendant's voice to the police or other persons after the incident. These recordings are used to suggest that the woman sounded too calm to have been acting under an impaired mental state. The prosecution may also seek jury instructions stating that anger and frustration are not insanity. This problem is particularly severe where other myths are operating as well. Prosecutors may, for example, imply that women are masochists and are themselves responsible for the precedent assaults.<sup>95</sup>

We believe that as more legal people begin to work in this area, they will develop a more thorough analysis of impaired mental defenses which includes the woman's perspective. This work is needed to represent women in these circumstances more effectively through a wider range of defenses.

#### V. TRIAL TACTICS AND STRATEGIES

After the defense strategy is chosen, myths and misconceptions which would prevent the jury from seeing the defendant's acts as reasonable must be identified.<sup>96</sup> If the myths surrounding physical or sexual assault are openly discussed and disputed in an evidentiary setting, homicide can be

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## ON BEING INSIDE:

It is no wonder that, at least in New York State, 90 percent of the women in prison are poor, Black, Spanish-speaking.

#### What did these women do?

They had something to do with drugs, either as users or as small dealers; they were prostitutes; they shoplifted or were involved in some sort of robbery; they forged checks or perjured themselves; some killed a man in self-defense; in some sad cases, they killed their children.

What mother would kill her children were she not maddened by the effort to keep going, keep providing, keep the children alive, keep them from trouble, keep herself from sinking under the weight of too much effort? What does it mean to kill in self-defense except to kill in order to avoid or avenge rape, to save oneself and one's children from being beaten to death, to call a halt to the violence done to us by taking matters into our hands and actively fighting back? Why would someone poor steal, forge, shoplift, but for the fact that she is in need of essentials she can't otherwise get? Why do women become prostitutes? It's another job, dictated by the ease with which men give money to women for the use of their bodies as opposed to the reluctance with which they give them money to be creative and productive as human beings. Why does anyone turn to drugs, except to shut reality out, the dread and horror of having to live powerless and victimized? How dare we put a moral clamp on the highs, the obliviousness which can be purchased for a short while from dope?

"Crimes" such as these arise out of the despair of poverty and female oppression, and were nailed on the offenders by society. These "criminals" are not criminals at all—they are the victims. The ultimate stage of being a victim is to end up in prison.

Bedford Hills Correctional Facility for Women may not look quite like a concentration camp, nor do the women look emaciated and starving. The institution takes good care to fatten them with poor-quality, carbohydrate-saturated food, which, it has been proved, keeps one lethargic and passive. But look again, talk with the women, and the grim reality will start unveiling itself.

From the time women enter the gates to the moment they leave, no one will let them forget who they are, where they are, what they are there for. They are "problems," constantly to be watched out for, contained and tamed.

#### The key words in prison are Security, Revenge and Brainwashing.

The women are treated with contempt, harassed and humiliated daily. Their privacy becomes secondary to security, their labor belongs to the prison, their ties with their families are inhumanly disregarded, their need to relate to other human beings, to each other, is impeded at every moment by the authorities who dread that communication among the women will lead to resistance and revolt. Lesbians who keep to themselves, out of trouble, i.e., those not openly "out" and not involved in any political activity, are usually, though not always, left to themselves—just as on the outside. Conversely, strong relationships among the women are often labeled "les-

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# REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN

understood as a response to a vicious physical assault. The jury will not consider that the assault was an "enjoyable experience." Defense strategy can then proceed as in any other criminal case. The strategy devised will determine the evidence presented, tenor of the defense and the defendant's testimony,<sup>97</sup> and the jury instructions.

Analysis of the trial and retrial of Inez Garcia presents a valuable case study in the development of defense theory and its application to specific trial considerations. In the first trial, her defense was largely based on the theory of diminished capacity; that is, as a result of the rape she was acting in an abnormal state of mind when she shot Miguel Jimenez, the man who earlier had been an accomplice in raping her. Inez Garcia's act was presented as that of an unreasonable woman. But Garcia herself perceived her act as reasonable. At retrial, her attorneys presented evidence to show this to be so.

In preparation for retrial, Garcia's trial team analyzed which factors had led to her conviction. At the outset it appeared that she had an excellent self-defense case since the victim died with his own knife only inches away from his body. This indicated that he had intended to use it, or at least had it drawn. It was also apparent from juror interviews after the first trial that at least some of them perceived the rape as an act which Inez Garcia should have enjoyed. These factors, among others, led the trial team to conclude that the failure to present Garcia's act as reasonable was an error in strategy at her first trial.

Throughout the retrial, the strategy employed was to identify and expose myths and misconceptions which would prevent the jury from viewing the evidence with an open mind. The defense presented one consistent message to the jury: Garcia's act of shooting her assailant was reasonable. Every problem was faced and resolved consistently with that strategy. The jury acquitted Garcia because they felt that anyone in her situation would have done the same.<sup>98</sup>

## A. Voir dire

Voir dire<sup>99</sup> examination of the jury should include the theory of the case, as well as some preliminary consideration of the makeup of the ideal jury.<sup>100</sup> An extensive voir dire examination is useful in laying out to the jury the defendant's theory of

the case. It also begins to remove certain biases and prejudices from the jury. In the Garcia trial, voir dire examination helped to expose and eliminate the myths of rape which had been seen as detrimental to her defense.<sup>101</sup>

Voir dire may be used to identify and rebut other myths about women. For example, the myth that men use weapons as a matter of right whereas women should not use them at all is critical in a homicide case involving a woman. Women may be seen as hysterical in their decision to use a weapon. In voir dire examinations, these different attitudes should be explored. If properly done, the bias reflected in these attitudes will be exposed to the jurors. When the evidence of the weapon is presented in the trial, the previously examined juror will at least have been urged to take an unbiased view of the evidence presented.

In selecting jurors for a woman's self-defense case, consideration must be given to the issues the defense will raise, how the defense and counsel will be perceived, and the issues raised by trial strategy. We do not posit one type of juror, male or female, who can best accomplish the job of being fair-minded.<sup>102</sup> The desired composition of the jury for each particular case depends upon the defendant, the witnesses and counsel's theories of jury selection. The Garcia jury consisted of ten men and two women,<sup>103</sup> not because this sex composition was considered ideal, but because those particular jurors appeared to be the most fair and open-minded. Experience in the Garcia trial indicates that men as well as women can be sensitive to women's issues in a criminal trial if the issues are presented correctly.

## B. Education of the judge

Defense counsel in cases concerning homicide by an abused woman have found it useful to provide the court, either before or during trial, with memoranda, literature and media presentations on the issues upon which the defense is based.<sup>104</sup> For example, the Garcia attorneys, prior to trial, provided the judge with a feminist study on rape.<sup>105</sup> Counsel felt that the judge, if educated, would understand the defense perspective and permit introduction of evidence surrounding it. At the very least, counsel hoped that, if the judge himself believed any of the myths, he would be fairer if aware of his own prejudice. Recent research provides a firm foundation for the defense approaches described in this article. This research should be used at every opportunity to educate the court.

## C. Presentation of expert testimony

Expert testimony can be used effectively to neutralize stereotypical prejudices and ideas which interfere with a proper consideration of a woman's defense. In determining whether or not to present such testimony, however, counsel should consider what myths or misconceptions surround the area. The effect an expert witness will have on the jury<sup>106</sup> and the jury's ability to understand defendant's actions, given the circumstances, must also be weighed.

If the subject is sufficiently beyond common experience so that expert opinion will assist the trier of fact, it is admissible at trial.<sup>107</sup> The judge, however, may need to be convinced that the subject is beyond common experience. In the Garcia trial rape was a subject which, in its scientific entirety, was beyond the common knowledge of both the jury and the judge. The brief demonstrated that scientific literature contradicted commonly held views of rape and that the proposed expert testimony would be crucial to an understanding of Garcia's state of mind at the time she committed the homicide.<sup>108</sup> Similar motions for expert testimony should be made in cases where child molestation or wife assault is involved.

In the Garcia trial, two experts testified for the defense about the effect of rape on a rape victim. The testimony of one included statistics on the reactions of rape victims and whether rape victims called the police following a sexual assault.<sup>109</sup> The second expert testified to defendant Garcia's racial and cultural background as a Latina. The specific effect of a rape on the emotional makeup of a woman of her background was stressed.<sup>110</sup> This testimony proved to be very helpful in explaining Garcia's act as that of a reasonable woman in her circumstances.

## D. Jury instructions

Jury instructions must reflect and be consistent with the theory of the case. They must affirmatively try to solve any special problems. In a case involving a woman on trial for murder, jury instructions are particularly crucial. Many of the concepts developed in this article arose out of jury instruction challenges. The attorney must be extremely sensitive to the subtleties and nuances of the tone of the instruction, the use of masculine gender and the incorporation of male-defined standards. Jury instructions embody, direct and reflect to the jury the male-defined standard of self-

defense in its purest form. Such instructions divert the jury from the woman's perspective, even when this perspective has been incorporated into the trial.

#### E. Resources

The theoretical basis of the approach set forth in this article has its foundation in women's movement resources. The original work in the area of rape was done within the women's movement.<sup>111</sup> It included attempts by women to make legislative changes in the law,<sup>112</sup> to set up rape crisis and intervention centers,<sup>113</sup> to focus media exposure on the problem of rape and to distribute substantial literature on the subject. Similar work is now being done in the areas of wife assault and child molestation.<sup>114</sup>

Many communities now have rape crisis centers, shelters for battered women, women's centers, women's switchboards and women's bookstores. In addition, women's projects frequently can be found within sociology, psychology, history, women's studies and criminology departments of major universities. Together these provide fruitful resources and should be sought out by the lawyer representing a woman in these circumstances. Studies and expert witnesses to testify about them are also available from these sources.<sup>115</sup>

#### VI. CONCLUSION

The legal analysis set forth in this article has proved successful because of the social, political and scientific foundation upon which it is based. The courts have begun to accept this analysis, and it provides a framework in which lawyers faced with similar cases may counsel a woman defendant.

The subtleties of sex discrimination in criminal law, however, are only beginning to be explored. Increasing numbers of women find themselves facing criminal charges without lawyers who understand their circumstances, their states of mind, or who can translate their perspective into the courtroom setting. Much creative work remains to be done in this area. Courts can and will accept the woman's point of view, if adequately and sensitively presented. The contours of criminal law must be expanded to include the woman's perspective.

—Elizabeth M. Schneider  
—Susan B. Jordan  
with the assistance of  
Christina C. Arguedas

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## ON BEING INSIDE:

bian" and destroyed, because any strong relationship is to be feared and avoided. To be in prison is to be considered not human, to have none of the usual physical and emotional needs people have on the outside.

Without family, with friendships requiring a hassle to make them last, all that's left is eating the horrible food provided, sleeping under constant disorienting surveillance, doing the daily chores for as low as 30¢ to \$1.50 a day and attending the poor-quality, limited programs the institution may offer. Most important of all, the women must keep up with the rules.

From what we know at Bedford and from accounts around the country, women, as soon as they arrive at the prison, are confronted with a long list of rules and regulations that make no sense and reduce life inside to a series of monotonous exercises in boredom and drudgery. A woman once said to us:

In here you have to forget how to function on a normal day-to-day basis; you are expected to get up, regardless of whether you have anything to do or not, to get counted, to eat, to do your prescribed chores, and then go back to bed. All sense of responsibility is removed from you, all is done for you, even the things you don't want done. You are regressing back to infancy.

Indeed, the guards, the warden, everyone considers the women as children who don't know anything, to be rewarded or punished according to whether they follow the rules. And since the rules are so arbi-



Here's where the sun don't shine  
Living on Bedford grounds,  
Where women faces are not  
Stamped with happy smiles,  
But rather with bitter frowns.

Here's where the sun don't shine  
In a two by four with a  
Steel door.  
Cold dreary walls mounted with  
Toothpaste where pictures hung  
Representing Freedom, Love  
And Happier Times.

Here's where the sun don't shine  
Sitting in the board room  
Facing more time . . . Just . . .  
Because society says  
"CONFINE"!

Here's where the sun don't shine  
Laying in segregation  
Without any recrimination . . .  
. . . or . . .

Standing on a line,  
Whether it be chow, or  
Just medication time, having  
The "sadistic pigs" try and  
Mess with your mind.

And years passing by . . . . .  
. . . . . and each day seeming the  
Same; wondering really  
Who's to BLAME!!

—Malikah—B.H.C.F.

trary and change from day to day, a woman is at a loss to know what is expected from her; she can break the rules, and not even be aware that she's doing so. In fact, it is strongly suspected that this is exactly the *raison d'être* of these rules: to confuse, harass and drive crazy, to *disorient*. Disorientation is the first stage of brainwashing, as it leaves you shaky and unsure of what you want and who you are. You become malleable material for the authorities to shape as they please.

Disorientation is also achieved and promoted by artificially inducing boredom. In the absence of anything worthwhile to fill in one's day with, each and every moment seems an eternity, and the prospect of ever reaching the time to get out becomes blurred in the anonymity of time. One's will to resist, the desire to live, goes out little by little, like the sand in a huge hour

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1. Inez Garcia was acquitted in 1977, after being convicted at a first trial and winning a retrial on appeal, *People v. Garcia*, Cr. No. 4259 (Superior Court, Monterey County, Cal., 1977); Joan Little was acquitted in 1975, *State v. Little*, 74 Cr. No. 4176 (Superior Court, Beaufort County, N.C., 1975).
2. Although the term "wife assault" is used throughout this article, the problem is equally applicable to unmarried women living with violent men.
3. The Washington Supreme Court reversed Yvonne Wanrow's felony-murder conviction from her first trial, *State v. Wanrow*, 88 Wash. 2d 221, 559 P. 2d 548 (1977) and she is awaiting retrial, *State v. Wanrow*, No. 20876 (Superior Court, Spokane County). Other cases of which the authors are aware include the following: Marlene Roan Eagle (South Dakota, battered wife, acquitted of murder on grounds of self-defense); Miriam Grieg (Montana, battered wife, acquitted of murder on grounds of self-defense); Evelyn Ware (California, battered wife, acquitted of murder on grounds of self-defense); Janice Hornbuckle (Washington, battered wife, acquitted of murder on grounds of self-defense); Janet Hartwell (Michigan, battered and sexually abused wife, acquitted of murder on grounds of self-defense); Eva Mae Heygood (Wisconsin, battered wife, acquitted of murder on grounds of self-defense); Sharon McNearney (Michigan, battered wife, acquitted of murder on grounds of self-defense); Gloria Maldonado (Illinois, abuse of child by husband, state's attorney ruled insufficient evidence to warrant prosecution); Francine Hughes (Michigan, battered wife, acquitted of murder by reason of insanity); Betty Jean Carter (Wisconsin, battered wife, murder charge reduced to self-defense manslaughter, granted probation with no incarceration); Lea Murphy (Washington, abuse of child by husband, convicted but given five-year deferred sentence); Shirley Martin (Minnesota, battered wife, convicted of manslaughter); Christina Pratt (New York, convicted of manslaughter for killing rapist, served several years, was granted executive clemency); Gloria Timmons (Washington, battered and sexually abused wife, convicted of manslaughter, served several years, recently paroled on 20-year sentence); Jennifer Patri (Wisconsin, battered and sexually abused wife, convicted); Hazel Kontos (Alabama, battered wife, convicted and sentenced to life imprisonment); Carolyn McKendrick (Pennsylvania, battered woman, convicted of murder for shooting her boyfriend, a professional boxer); Mary McQuire (Oregon, battered wife, convicted of soliciting someone to kill her husband, sentenced to five years); Dessie X. Woods (Georgia, convicted of shooting attempted rapist); Beverly Ibn-Thomas (Washington, D.C., battered wife, convicted of murder); Mary Melerine (Louisiana, battered wife, awaiting trial); Evelyn Graham (Florida, battered wife, awaiting trial); Maxine Waltman (Oklahoma, battered wife, awaiting trial). More information on these cases may be found by contacting the National Communication Network, 584 Grand Avenue, St. Paul, Minnesota 55102. See also "Wives Accused in Slayings Turning to Self-Defense Pleas," *Washington Post*, Dec. 4, 1977, p. A1.
4. Indeed it has been suggested that acquittals in these cases would result in an "open season on men." Greenberg, "Thirteen Ways to Leave Your Lover," *New Times*, Feb. 6, 1978, p. 6. See also "A Killing Excuse," *Time*, Nov. 28, 1977, p. 108; "The Right to Kill," *Newsweek*, Sept. 1, 1975, p. 69; "Wives Accused of Slayings Turning to Self-Defense Pleas," *Washington Post*, Dec. 4, 1977, p. A1; "Wives Who Batter Back," *Newsweek*, Jan. 30, 1978, p. 54.
5. Both Inez Garcia and Yvonne Wanrow were convicted at their first trials, when the jury apparently rejected pleas of impaired mental state. Upon retrial, Inez Garcia asserted a self-defense explanation of her actions and she was acquitted. See note 1 *supra*. Yvonne Wanrow won a reversal of her conviction on two grounds. See *State v. Wanrow*, 88 Wash. 2d 221, 559 P. 2d 548 (1977). See Subsection IIIC *infra*.
6. Impaired mental state defenses include insanity, temporary insanity, diminished capacity and other defenses asserting a less than normal emotional and mental makeup. See text accompanying notes 84-94.
7. The dearth of material in the area of women and crime has been noted by many current commentators. See, e.g., R. Simon, *Women and Crime* (1975) p. 1 [hereinafter cited as Simon].
8. For a study of women who committed homicides in another country, see M. Hartman, *Victorian Murderesses* (1977).
9. See, e.g., Simon, *supra* note 7; C. McCormick, "Battered Women" (Cook County Department of Corrections, Chicago, Illinois, 1977) [hereinafter cited as McCormick].
10. Rasche, "The Female Offender as an Object of Criminological Research," in *The Female Offender* (1974) p. 17 (citing C. Lombroso & W. Ferrero, *The Female Offender* [1958 ed.]).
11. *Id.* p. 24 (citing O. Pollak, *The Criminality of Women* [1950]). See also Klein, "The Etiology of Female Crime: A Review of the Literature," *Issues in Criminology*, vol. 8, No. 2, 1973, p. 10.
12. F. Adler, *Sisters in Crime* (1975) p. 30. See "Critics Assail Linking Feminism with Women in Crime," *New York Times*, Mar. 14, 1976, p. 48.
13. Simon, *supra* note 7, p. 40. Accord Price, "The Forgotten Female Offender," *Crime and Delinquency*, Apr. 1977, p. 103. But see also "Critics Assail Linking Feminism with Women in Crime," *New York Times*, Mar. 14, 1976, p. 48 (female homicide rate has been stable at 10% for years).
14. Simon, *supra* note 7, p. 57. Accord Rottman & Simon, "Women in the Courts: Present Trends and Future Prospects," 23 *Chitty's L.J.* 24, 25 (1975).
15. F. Adler, *Sisters in Crime* (1975) p. 179 (citing Temin, "Discriminatory Sentencing of Women Offenders: The Argument for ERA in a Nutshell," 11 *Am. Crim. L. Rev.* 355 [1973]). See also L. Kanowitz, *Women and the Law* (1969). Accord Price, "The Forgotten Female Offender," *Crime and Delinquency*, Apr. 1977, p. 110.
16. 11 *Crimes of Violence, Staff Report to the National Commission on the Causes & Prevention of Violence* 209-10 (1969) [hereinafter cited as *Crimes of Violence*].
17. 13 *Crimes of Violence, supra* note 16, p. 903.
18. See 11 *Crimes of Violence, supra* note 16, pp. 223-24.
19. McCormick, *supra* note 9. For a period of 18 months the author interviewed every woman arrested in Cook County for murder, involuntary manslaughter or manslaughter, eliciting information regarding the person killed, the weapon used, the length of marriage or relationship, reasons for beatings, preventative measures utilized prior to the murder and the reasons for remaining in the home.
20. 11 *Crimes of Violence, supra* note 16, p. 360.
21. This problem of lack of police protection also extends to child molestation. See De Francis, "Protecting the Child Victim of Sex Crimes Committed by Adults," 35 *Fed. Probation* 15, 16 (1971); Rush, "The Sexual Abuse of Children," in *Rape: The First Sourcebook for Women* (N. Connell & C. Wilson, eds., 1974). See, e.g., S. Brownmiller, *Against Our Will* (1975); Queens Bench Foundation, *Rape: Prevention and Resistance* (1976); *Rape: The First Sourcebook for Women*, (N. Connell & C. Wilson, eds., 1974); St. Louis Feminist Research project, *The Rape Bibliography: A Collection of Abstracts* (1976); Berger, "Man's Trial, Women's Tribulations: Rape Cases in the Courtroom," 77 *Col. L. Rev.* 1 (1977); Bohmer & Blumberg, "Twice Traumatized: The Rape Victim and the Court," 58 *Jud.* 390 (1975) [hereinafter cited as Bohmer & Blumberg]; Bohmer, "Judicial Attitudes Toward Rape Victims," 57 *Jud.* 303 (1974) [hereinafter cited as Bohmer]; Eisenberg, "Abolishing Cautionary Instructions in Sex Offense Cases: *People v. Rincon-Pineda*," 12 *Crim. L. Bull.* 58 (1976) [hereinafter cited as Eisenberg]; Hibe, "The Trial of a Rape Case: An Advocate's Analysis of Corroboration, Consent and Character," 11 *Am. Crim. L. Rev.* 309 (1973) [hereinafter cited as Hibe]; Le Grand, "Rape and Rape Laws: Sexism in Society and the Law," 61 *Cal. L. Rev.* 919 (1973) [hereinafter cited as Le Grand]; Mathiasen, "The Rape Victim: A Victim of Society and the Law," 11 *Will. L. J.* 36 (1974); Note, "If She Consented Once, She Consented Again—A Legal Fallacy in Forcible Rape Cases," 10 *Val. U.L. Rev.* 127 (1975).
23. "Rape is widely recognized as among the most serious of violent crimes . . . [in which] often the victim suffers serious physical injury." *Furman v. Georgia*, 408 U.S. 238, 458-59 (1976) (Powell, J., dissenting). See also *People v. Ceballos*, 12 Cal. 3d 479, 526 P. 2d 241, 116 Cal. Rptr. 233 (1974).
24. See generally note 22 *supra*.
25. See, e.g., U.S. Dept. of Justice Federal Bureau of Investigation, *Crime in the United States*, 1976, pp. 15-17.
26. See *id.*, Table 54 p. 217.
27. In 1976, police charged 2,418 persons with forcible rape; 33 were found guilty, *id.* In addition, these figures do not reflect the fact that rape has been grossly underreported, making the disparity between occurrence of the crime and conviction rate even larger. See *id.* p. 16.
28. See generally S. Brownmiller, *Against Our Will* (1975); Bohmer & Blumberg, *supra* note 22; LeGrand, *supra* note 22.
29. Frequently the police will more readily disbelieve a rape victim's report of a crime than a report from a victim of some other kind of assault. See, e.g., "Police Discretion and the Judgment That a Crime has Been Committed—Rape in Philadelphia," 117 *U. Pa. L. Rev.* 277 (1968).
30. In some jurisdictions, the rules of evidence permit the victim to be questioned regarding her prior sexual conduct and the crime itself requires corroborative evidence. See, e.g., Bohmer & Blumberg, *supra* note 22; Eisenberg, *supra* note 22; "The Trial of a Rape Case: An Advocate's Analysis of Corroboration on Consent and Character," 11 *Am. Crim. L. Rev.* 309 (1973); Hibe, *supra* note 22; LeGrand, *supra* note 22; Note, "If She Consented Once, She Consented Again—A Legal Fallacy in Forcible Rape Cases," 10 *Val. U. L. Rev.* 127 (1975).
31. It has been customary to give juries "cautionary" instructions in rape cases warning them to be skeptical of the victim's testimony since the crime of rape is "easily alleged and difficult to prove." See, e.g., Eisenberg, *supra* note 22.
32. See H. Kalven & H. Zeisel, *The American Jury* (1966); J. MacDonald, *Psychiatry and the Criminal* (1969) p. 235.
33. See Bohmer, *supra* note 22, p. 398; Bohmer & Blumberg, *supra* note 22, p. 304.
34. *People v. Rincon-Pineda*, 14 Cal. 3d 864, 880, 538 P. 2d 247, 258, 123 Cal. Rptr. 119, 130 (1975).
35. See generally D. Martin, *Battered Wives* (1976) [hereinafter cited as Martin]; Eisenberg & Micklow, "The Assaulted Wife: 'Catch-22' Revisited," 3 *Women's Rts. L. Rep.* 138 (1977); R. Langley & R. Levy *Wife Beating: The Silent*

*Crisis* (1977) [hereinafter cited as Langley & Levy].

36. Martin, *supra* note 35. See also Bruno v. Codd, 90 Misc. 2d 1047, 396 N.Y.S. 2d 974 (Sup. Ct. 1977) and Scott v. Hart, 76 Civ. 2395 (N.D. Cal. 1976). Plaintiffs in Bruno are 12 married women beaten by their husbands and refused assistance by the Family Court or by the police or by both. The women are suing the New York City Police Department and the clerks and Probation Department employees of Family Court to enforce the defendants' legal obligations to protect battered wives; trial is pending following the court's denial of class action certification. Scott presents a similar situation. Pleadings and briefs for both lawsuits are available from the National Clearinghouse for Legal Services, 500 North Michigan Avenue, Suite 2220, Chicago, Illinois 60611.
37. Langley & Levy, *supra* note 35. For statistics on the severity and prevalence of wife battery, see Martin, *Supra* note 35, pp. 11-14.
38. Records from Boston City Hospital show that 70% of the assault victims it receives are women who have been attacked by their husbands. Martin, *supra* note 35, p. 12. Moreover, in California, in 1971, one-third of all female homicide victims were murdered by their husbands. *Id.* at 14.
39. In one city it has been shown that in 85% of the cases, when a homicide occurred in the course of domestic violence, the police had been summoned at least once before the killing occurred, and in 50% of the cases the police were called five or more times before the actual murder. *Domestic Violence and the Police: Studies in Detroit and Kansas City* (1977).
40. See generally G. Lerner, *Black Women in White America* (1972); U.S. Comm'n. on Civil Rights, *Hearings Held in Chicago, Illinois* (1974); Wright, "Poverty, Minorities, and Respect for Law," 1970 *Duke L.J.* 425 (1970).
41. W. LaFave & A. Scott, *Handbook on Criminal Law* (1972), p. 528 [hereinafter cited as LaFave & Scott].
42. See, e.g., *Conn. Sen. Stat. Ann.* <sup>88</sup> 53a-54 to 56 (West 1958); *Ga. Code* <sup>88</sup> 26-1101 to 1103 (1972); *Idaho Code* <sup>88</sup> 18-4003, -4006 (1947); *Ill. Ann. Stat. ch. 38* <sup>88</sup> 9-1 to 3 (*Smith-Hurd* 1972); *Ind. Code Ann.* <sup>88</sup> 35-13-4-1 to 2 (Burns 1975); *Iowa Code Ann.* <sup>88</sup> 690.1 to .3, 110 (West 1950); *N.M. Stat. Ann.* <sup>88</sup> 40A-2-1 to 2-3 (1953); *N.C. Gen. Sta.* <sup>88</sup> 14-17 to 18 (1969); *Ohio Rev. Code Ann.* <sup>88</sup> 2903.02 to .04 (Page 1975); *Or. Rev. Stat.* <sup>88</sup> 163.005 to .125 (1977); *Wash. Rev. Code* <sup>88</sup> 9A.32.010 to .070 (1977).
43. LaFave & Scott, *supra* note 41, p. 572.
44. Although the defendant bears the burden of producing evidence as to defenses of self-defense and insanity, courts have been divided as to which side bears the burden of persuasion once these defenses are put in evidence. LaFave & Scott, *supra* note 41, pp. 47-48. *Mullaney v. Wilbur*, 421 U.S. 684 (1975), however, arguably requires the prosecution to bear the persuasion burden in both situations, and has generally thrown the issue of burden of proof into confusion. See, e.g., *Frazier v. Weatherholtz*, 411 F. Supp. 349 (W.D. Va. 1976); *Wright v. State* 29 Md. App. 57, 349 A. 2d 391 (1975).
45. See The "Unwritten Law" as a Defense, ch. 303, § 2-4, 1963 N.M. Laws (repealed 1973); Adultery as Justification, arts. 1102, 1103, Tex. Pen. 1916 (Vernon) (repealed 1973).
46. The concept that a wife "belongs to" her husband is illustrated by the fact that a man cannot commit rape by having sexual intercourse with his wife even if he does so by force and against her will. R. Perkins, *Criminal Law* (2d ed. 1969) p. 156 [hereinafter cited as Perkins].
47. See *Commonwealth v. Lawrence*, 428 Pa. 188, 236 A.2d 768, (1968); *People v. Collin*, 189 C. App. 2d 575, 11 Cal. Rptr. 504 (1961); *State v. Robinson*, 328 S.W. 2d 667 (Mo. 1959).
48. Juror's statement following the Garcia trial. The

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## ON BEING INSIDE:

glass. This truly is Dante's Hell, a bleakness more frightening than many more overt forms of violence. Disorientation is complete when one completely loses one's sense of time as well as one's sense of oneself.

What the authorities desire is to mold women into weak, obedient, "feminine" slaves who will be content to serve forever, to be ill-treated and victimized, without complaints. To that end, they offer the women little more than high school courses and typically "female" vocational training, i.e., secretarial, beautician courses, etc. Often they have the audacity to call the chores the women must daily perform (in order to maintain the prison budget at a minimum) vocational training—as if the women didn't already know only too well how to scrub floors, wash dishes, do the laundry, sew clothes. Meanwhile, men in prison can at least do electrical wiring, plumbing, carpentry—higher-paying, skilled jobs not available as a rule to women in prison.

If you refuse to do your chores, you are labeled a troublemaker and punished. Then a more overt cycle of violence begins to operate against you. First comes "counseling" or "group therapy"—how to lead you back to the path of virtuous hard labor. Then come the drugs. Drugging is such a prevalent feature on prison campuses that one wonders why the prison establishment isn't given the honorary title of "Big-Time Pusher." A lot of the women seek the drugs themselves, as a relief from the frustration of prison life. But there are also those who are forcibly drugged because they are disciplinary problems. The drug industry often experiments with their newest, most harmful drugs on women in prison. We have known women who were forcibly injected with Prolixin, a mind-altering drug with long-lasting effects, because they were termed "dangerous."

Then there is sterilization. The prison, hand in hand with the medical profession, has found the ultimate means of rendering women, especially poor Third World women, harmless in the long term: they stop them from being able to reproduce themselves. This is racism in the raw, compounded on sexism, and one of the types of physical violence specific to women in prison. It is tied in closely with the emotional violence done to a woman when her children have been snatched



N.Y. State prison guard Charles Holland addressing a KKK rally held on his land.

away from her. There is nothing like the despair of a mother separated from her offspring. And only a woman can experience the *full* savagery of such a torture. Often, in the visiting room, seeing her weep with joy when she re-finds her child, and seeing her weep with anguish when it's time to separate again, I grow violently angry inside and demand what right these men in the Corrections Department have to do this to a woman. Of course, this type of cruelty is also part and parcel of the same racist mentality that sterilizes Third World women: breaking up the family has always been a white supremacist policy against people of color, a way of furthering genocidal policies, the destruction of one of the few sources of strength and solace Third World people may have in this racist society.

The other major type of physical violence done to women behind bars is the presence of male guards, and the threat of brute male physical power always looming over their heads. Both men and women prisoners experience the racism of the Correction Department in the form of guards who belong to the Ku Klux Klan—a horrifying and very little known fact of prison oppression. Women have to put up with KKK guards, but, actually, *any* male guard is oppressive in a woman's prison. Male guards, often of all colors, "goon squads," the "superior male muscle," are called in to quell riots and fights, and under that excuse, they beat the women up and sexually abuse them, though this is

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# REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN

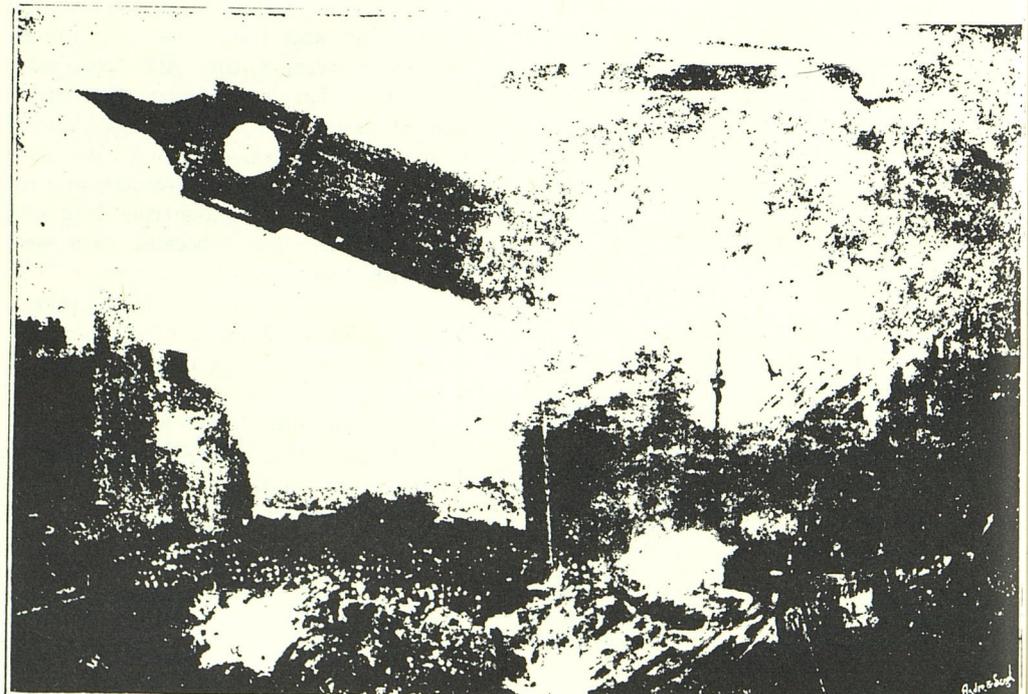
Garcia defense team informally gathered information from the jurors following the trial. All subsequent citations to jurors' statements are from these interviews.

49. See, e.g., *Stanton v. Stanton*, 421 U.S. 7 (1975) (different age of majority for males and females under Utah child support statute violates equal protection); *Taylor v. Louisiana*, 419 U.S. 522 (systematic exclusion of women from jury panels violates defendant's right to representative jury); *Frontiero v. Richardson*, 411 U.S. 677 (1973) (different dependency requirements for male and female spouses of members of the armed services violate equal protection).
50. For example, the trial judge in Inez Garcia's first trial repeatedly stated in front of the jury that "rape has nothing to do with this homicide prosecution."
51. See, e.g., *Wash. Rev. Code Ann.* § 9A.48.170 (1977). This is a fairly typical articulation of the standard.
52. See, e.g., *State v. Lewis*, 6 Wash. App. 38, 491 P. 2d 1062 (1971).
53. For states that adopt this standard, See, e.g., *Conn. Gen. Stat. Ann.* § 53a-19(a) (West 1958); *Ga. Code Ann.* § 26-902(a) (Supp. 1976); *Ind. Code Ann.* § 35-41-3-2(a) (Burns Supp. 1977); *La. Rev. Stat. Ann.* § 14.20(1) (West 1974) *Wash. Rev. Code Ann.* § 9A.16.050(1) (1977). The traditional legal characterization of this standard as either subjective or objective is confusing. In fact, the standard generally applied is an amalgam of subjective and objective tests. It includes the individual's perception of both apprehension and imminent danger from the individual's own perspective, but involves an objective view by the jury of these circumstances. Thus the law will consider how the individual perceived her male assailant as he came at her, but will apply an objective judgment to the circumstances. Although including the woman's perspective is obviously easier where the more subjective standard is applied, the woman's perspective should be incorporated even where the standard is the "reasonable person," since that too must include women. See text accompanying notes 52-57 *infra*.
54. *Brown v. United States*, 256 U.S. 335, 343 (1921).
55. For an excellent analysis of the law of self defense, see J. Curtin & D. Kates, "Rape: Legal and Practical Aspects of Armed Self Defense" (1977) (unpublished paper, St. Louis University Law School).
56. There are a number of other aspects of self-defense law pertinent to a defense of self-defense, such as inapplicability of self-defense to an aggressor, defense of others and defense of a dwelling, which are not discussed in this article.
57. The crimes viewed by the law as involving deadly force may reflect its underlying biases. Thus, it is not established whether a rape, classified as a violent crime, but not accompanied by deadly force, could be defended against with deadly force. Similarly, although it has been legally established that deadly force may be used to repel a dangerous felony, at least one court has failed to place the felony of wife assault in that category. See *People v. Jones*, 191 Cal. App. 2d 478, 482, 12 Cal. Rptr. 777 (1961).
58. Although this section focuses on the "person's own perspective" standard of self-defense, the "reasonable person" standard can be made to include the woman's own perspective in the same manner as described herein.
59. 88 Wash. 2d 221, 559 P. 2d 548 (1977).
60. The instruction read as follows: "To justify killing in self-defense, there need be no actual or real danger to the life or person of the party killing, but there must be, or reasonably appear to be at or immediately before the killing, some overt act, or some circumstances which would reasonably indicate to the party killing that the person slain

is, at the time, endeavoring to kill him or inflict upon him great bodily harm. However, when there is no reasonable ground for the person attacked to believe that his person is in imminent danger of death or great bodily harm, and it appears to him that only an ordinary battery is all that is intended, and all that he has reasonable grounds to fear from his assailant, he has a right to stand his ground and repel such threatened assault, yet he has no right to repel a threatened assault with naked hands, by the use of a deadly weapon in a deadly manner, unless he believes, and has reasonable grounds to believe, that he is in imminent danger of death or great bodily harm."

61. See Supplemental Brief for Respondent; Reply to Petition for Rehearing for Respondent, *State v. Wanrow*, 88 Wash. 2d 221, 559 P. 2d 548 (1977). These briefs are available from the Center for Constitutional Rights, 853 Broadway, New York, New York 10003.
62. *State v. Dunning*, 8 Wash. App. 340, 342, 506 P. 2d 321, 322-23 (1973).
63. *State v. Wanrow*, *supra* note 59, 559 P. 2d at 559. The decision on the self-defense instruction in *Wanrow* was reached by a divided court. Four of the eight justices ruling on the case voted to reverse the conviction on this ground. The conviction was reversed by a vote of five to three on the ground of improper admission of a tape recording of *Wanrow's* telephone conversation with the Spokane police. Self-defense instructions based on this opinion were also used in the successful trials of Inez Garcia, see note 1 *supra*, and Janice Hornbuckle, see note 3 *supra*.
64. *Id.* at 59, 559 P. 2d at 559 (citations omitted).
65. *Id.*
66. *Stanton v. Stanton*, 421 U.S. 7, 15 (1977).
67. See generally, B. Babcock, A. Freedman, E. Norton & S. Ross, *Sex Discrimination and the Law: Causes and Remedies* (1975) at 990-1036.
68. Bardwick, "Ambivalence: The Socialization of Women," in *Readings on the Psychology of Women* (J. Bardwick, ed., 1972) at 52-58.
69. Consentino & Heilbrun, "Anxiety Correlates of Sex-Role Identity in College Students," in *id.*, 126-134.
70. The Washington Supreme Court stated in *State v. Wanrow*: "[C]are must be taken to assure that our self-defense instructions afford women the right to have their conduct judged in the light of the individual physical handicaps which are the product of sex discrimination." 88 Wash. 2d 221, 559 P. 2d 548, 559 (1977).

71. Perkins, *supra* note 46, at 997.
72. See text surrounding note 65 *supra*.
73. 88 Wash. 2d 221, 559 P. 2d 548, 555 (1977).
74. *Id.* at 559 P. 2d at 557.
75. See, e.g., *State v. Dunning*, 8 Wash. App. 340, 342, 506 P. 2d 321, 322-23 (1973).
76. This view has already been recognized by some courts. The New Jersey Supreme Court has held that provocation can include a "course of ill treatment" not limited to events immediately preceding the homicidal act. *State v. Guido*, 40 N.J. 191, 211, 191 A. 2d 45, 56 (1963). The court stated that "prolonged oppression" and an accumulation of events can become a "detonating force, no different from that of a single blow of injury." See also *English v. People*, 178 Colo. 325, 497 P. 2d 691 (1972), *Ferrin v. People*, 164 Colo. 130, 433 P. 2d 108 (1967).
77. C. McCormick, *Handbook on Law of Evidence* § 160 (1954). *Accord Fed. R. Evid.* 404 (a) (2). The decedent's reputation for violence, however, need not have been personally known to the defendant.
78. *People v. Torres*, 94 Cal. App. 2d 146, 210 P. 2d 324 (1949).
79. Indeed, it is interesting to note that women who commit violent acts are either seen as insane or acting out of anger, although the prevailing image of a man protecting himself is that he is cool-headed.
80. For example, who can imagine not saying, "I'd like to kill the guy who raped me." In fact, when asked in voir dire in both Garcia trials, "What would you do to the man who you learned raped your wife/daughter?" male jurors uniformly responded, "I would like to kill the guy."
81. There are two situations in which an aggressor may justifiably defend herself. (1) An aggressor who begins an encounter using no weapon or a nondeadly weapon and who is met with deadly force, may then justifiably defend herself against the then deadly attack. This is so because the aggressor's victim, by using deadly force against nondeadly aggression, uses unlawful force. (2) Also, an aggressor who in good faith effectively withdraws from any further encounter with her victim (and to make effective withdrawal she must notify the victim, or at least take reasonable steps to notify him/her) is restored to her right of self-defense. *LaFave & Scott*, *supra* note 41, at 394-95. See also Perkins, *supra* note 46, at 1015.  
In some states, courts have held that where possible a person must retreat rather than use deadly force if attacked outside her home or busi-



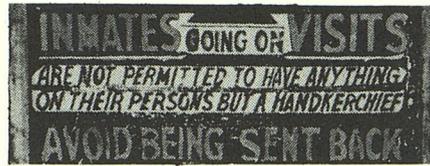
Ph'nglui mglw'nafh Cthulhu R'lyeh wgah'nagl fhtagn

ness. However, in most states, a person has no duty to retreat in the face of a deadly attack. Even in those jurisdictions which require retreat, the defender need not retreat unless she knows she can do so in complete safety; and she need not retreat from her home or place of business, or place where she is rightfully. See, e.g., *King v. State*, 233 A. 198, 171 So. 254 (1936); *State v. Abbott*, 36 N.J. 63, 174 A. 2d 881 (1961). Moreover, the doctrine of deadly force does not encompass any right to use deadly force for the purpose of revenge. After an attacker has been disarmed or if he has retreated, there is no present and immediate danger which further justifies killing him.

82. If it were, of course, and the woman was not afraid, then a defense of self-defense might be difficult and strong consideration of an impaired mental state defense should be given.
83. A typical retaliation instruction for a jury appeared in *People v. Triolo*, 332 Ill. 410, 163 N.E. 784 (1928): "If you believe from the evidence, beyond a reasonable doubt, that he had no reasonable cause to apprehend the approach of immediate injuries to himself, and did so . . . from a motive of revenge or retaliation, then the defendant can not avail himself of the law of self-defense and you can not acquit on that ground." *Id.* at 414, 163 N.E. at 785.
84. Although heat of passion is also discussed in the section on self-defense, it is conceptually akin to an impaired mental state defense in that it suggests that the mental state of the defendant was less than normal. Perkins, *supra* note 46, at 66, 869.
85. This can reduce first- or second-degree murder to manslaughter if the provocation was "reasonable." LaFave & Scott, *supra* note 41, at 573. Diminished capacity is a potential complete defense in some states, in other states it is entirely precluded as a defense. See "Recent Developments: Diminished Capacity—Recent Decisions and an Analytical Approach," 30 *Vand. L. Rev.* 213, 215, 222 (1977).
86. LaFave & Scott, *supra* note 41, at 337.
87. For example, there is also the xxy chromosome defense for men which bases lack of criminal responsibility on genetic factors; or voluntary intoxication which is usually a partial defense to specific intent crimes. *Id.* at 332-37, 341-51.
88. Indeed, the literature suggests that women who are violent and display criminal tendencies are more likely to end up in mental hospitals than in jails. See, e.g., P. Chesler, *Women and Madness* (1972) at 78-82, 107; H. Derosier & V. Pellegrino, *The Book of Hope: How Women Can Overcome Depression* (1976) at 3.
89. See, e.g., Blitman & Green, "Inez Garcia on Trial," *Ms. Magazine*, May 1975.
90. This reinforces the general defense view that psychiatric defenses are usually resorted to only after everything else has failed.
91. See, e.g., *Mass. Ann. Laws* ch. 123 § 48 (Michie/Law Co-op 1972 & Supp. 1977); *Neb. Rev. Stat.* § 29.2203 (1975); *Wis. Stat. Ann.* § 957.11 (West 1958).
92. LaFave & Scott, *supra* note 41, at 317. In these jurisdictions commitment may be ordered upon a judicial finding that the defendant's insanity continues or that she or he is dangerous. In most jurisdictions, the power to release the defendant from commitment is vested in the trial court. The defendant bears the burden of seeking release and establishing grounds for release beyond a reasonable doubt. It should be noted that these release provisions are often more severe than the release provisions for patients civilly committed.
93. It may be difficult, however, to find a psychologist or psychiatrist who can testify about the background circumstances and the woman's state of mind in a non-sexist, clear and comprehensive manner. See § IV, *infra*.
94. This kind of defense was apparently successful in the case of Francine Hughes, a battered woman who set fire to the bedroom in which her sleeping

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## ON BEING INSIDE:



not always as publicized as in Joan Little's case. But male guards serve another function, not as overt as all that. In a recent suit brought by the Bedford Hills women against the institution, which sought the removal of the male guards, it came out in the state's testimony that male guards were "desirable" because they were a "stabilizing, humanizing factor"! In their presence, women acted more "ladylike," dressed better, used less "vulgar" language, got into fewer fights. In short, we surmise, they acted more "feminine," passive and submissive.

Conditioned as all women are by the patriarchy to compete with each other for men's favors and attention, because we are taught that all the improvements we'll ever get in life come through the protection and grace of a man, it is small wonder that such a subtle technique of brainwashing is used in women's prisons. So, it's not only a threat to have male guards around, it's a promise that, while inside, you'll fare better if you play up to them, if you behave in the manner prescribed to you by the patriarchy. This, along with the demeaning chores, the drugs, the "counseling," the sterilization, the possible rape, serves to implant deep in a woman's consciousness the lesson she mustn't forget in and out of prison, that we are the chattel of men, we have to serve them and to entertain them, according to their needs.

The patriarchy, however, forgets that women have a tremendous capacity for psychic survival and a great will to resist. While a lot of the women in prison learn their lessons well, a lot more remain fully conscious of what's being done to them, and put up a constant struggle to remain women, strong and unbroken.

Prisons have always been fermentation grounds which gave birth to a lot of revolutionaries.

Women, already toughened by a history of aggressive survival in the streets, more often than not turn into the strongest, most courageous revolutionaries of us all. Their high consciousness is an example for all of us who are fighting not only to survive but also to bring down the forces that

keep us oppressed.

It is not surprising that a lot of these women are lesbians, because lesbians already made their first revolutionary step when they broke the rules of patriarchy: that woman will sleep with man and will depend on him for her survival. Lesbians in prison form structures of support, entire families, in order to fight alienation and to give each other the solace and the strength to survive in prison. Lesbians do not fall for the games the administration plays by using male guards, they have no interest in playing up to men. Thus, while lesbians are by no means the only ones to rebel, they are usually at the core of the rebellion.

(continued on page 115)

## Chains Release Me

Time passes by me  
While lying within this cell.  
They shackled my mind in bondage  
Changes we go through in jail  
I think about the future  
My debates of the past  
Tears filled with joy and laughter  
My soul filled with  
Unhappiness.

I meditate upon  
My two daughters whom I left at home  
The smiles that they carried  
Tears that they shed  
For they knew mommy was near to love  
And understand  
The way that they cuddled next to my side  
Hanging tight to me like we can  
Survive  
They threw time before me  
On that auction block  
Took me from my babies  
Without a second thought.

While locked within these bars  
Of confusion and shame  
Chains release me, or  
I'll never be the same  
While walking here in darkness  
With my emotions in the air  
My soul is searching  
My mind is in despair.  
I'm pacing slow at the song of a lullaby  
And my babies are riding gently on my  
mind.  
Chains release me

—Carolyn Smithers

## REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN

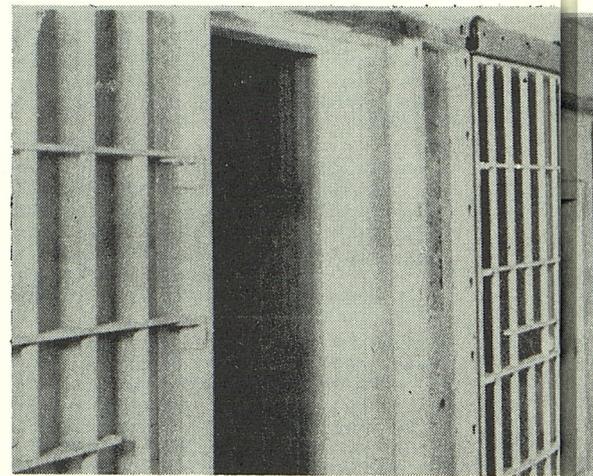
husband lay. See "Self-Defense Standard At Stake in Michigan Trial," *In These Times*, Aug. 10-16, 1977, at 6; "Wife Cleared in Mate's Death," *The Record*, Nov. 4, 1977, at A-4. For an analogous application of this defense for poor and minority people, see Harris, "Black Rage: Political Psychiatric Defenses," *Frontier Issues in Criminal Litigation* (Aug. 1977), available from People's College of Law, Los Angeles, California.

95. Walker, "The Battered Woman Syndrome Revisited: Psycho-Social Theories" (1977) (paper presented at the American Psychological Association Annual Convention, San Francisco).
96. The National Jury Project, P.O. Box 675, Brookline Village, Massachusetts 02147, is an excellent resource for jury selection. The Project consists of 30 people, located around the country, who apply social science techniques to jury composition, venue, voir dire and selection problems. Assistance of the National Jury Project was used in the cases of Joan Little and Inez Garcia. A priority of the Project's work is cases involving women's self-defense.
97. A self-defense defense necessarily involves having the defendant testify. The considerations in preparing her testimony are suggested by the ideas explored herein, but are outside the scope of this article.
98. The circumstances that were brought to the attention of the jury to demonstrate the reasonableness of Inez Garcia's conduct included the following: that she had seen the man she shot, Miguel Jimenez, beat up her housemate earlier in the evening; that later that night Jimenez had acted as an accomplice to her rape; that shortly after the rape he threatened her over the telephone; that when she left the house carrying a loaded rifle she was terrified, angry and humiliated by having been raped; that when she came upon Jimenez and the rapist, Jimenez was holding a knife. All of this convinced her that he was capable of killing her. This factual evidence was supplemented by testimony from experts on the issue of rape.
99. Voir dire (French for "speak the truth") usually refers to the examination by the court or by the attorneys of prospective jurors to determine their qualifications for jury service.
100. The scope of voir dire examination of the jury varies from state to state. Some states will allow an extensive voir dire by counsel and a minimal voir dire by the judge. See, e.g., *Cal. Penal Code* § 1078 (1972); *N.C. Gen. Stat.* ch. 9 §9-15 (1967). In other states, as well as in federal court, voir dire is largely conducted by the judge. See, e.g., *Mass. Ann. Laws* ch. 234 § 28 (1957); *N.J. Stat. Ann.* § 2A: 78-4 (1957). In many cases it may be appropriate to move for an expanded voir dire. This motion can also serve to educate the judge about the issues underlying the homicide, since their complexity is a reason why voir dire must be expanded. An excellent work in the area of voir dire and jury selection is Ginger, *Jury Selection in Criminal Trials* (1975). See also Van Dyke, "Voir Dire: How Should It Be Conducted to Ensure That Our Juries are Representative and Impartial," *Hastings Const. L.J.* 65 (1976).
101. The jurors were extensively interviewed on the subject of rape with the following series of questions: (1) Do you believe that women invite rape? (2) Do you believe that rape is a violent act, and (3) If so, do you believe that women enjoy it? (4) Have you or anyone close to you ever been raped? (5) Do you permit your daughter to go out alone late at night? If not, why not? (6) What would you do if your wife or daughter were raped? This series of questions produced valuable interchanges between defense counsel and the jurors, and was significant in pointing out to the jury the myths surrounding rape.

102. In post-verdict interviews, it was apparent that the male jurors had been receptive to the expert testimony about rape. They had learned from it, and as planned, had ultimately seen the act of rape and the resulting homicide from the defendant's perspective.
103. This composition was the result of several factors. Primary among them was the fact that the prosecution used peremptory challenges on all prospective women jurors who appeared sympathetic to Inez Garcia and/or to the women's movement. In addition, the defendant found some women jurors hostile to the women's movement and to Inez Garcia due in large measure to the publicity and turmoil surrounding her first trial. The main objective was to find jurors, male or female, who were open-minded about the case, and who could make a fair determination of the defense position that Inez Garcia, fearing for her life, shot her victim in self-defense. The jurors who were ultimately selected demonstrated those qualities.
104. In many cases, it may be possible to file a motion to dismiss the indictment in the interest of justice which will provide an opportunity to educate the judge by appending useful literature to the motion and supporting briefs.
105. In the Garcia trial, when the defense presented a brief in support of expert testimony on the issue of rape, supplemental scientific literature was provided in support of that motion.
106. If the defense is one of impaired mental state, the testimony of an expert on that mental state may be required.
107. See, e.g., *Fed. R. Evid.* 702.
108. See "Points and Authorities in Support of Defendant's Use of Expert Testimony on the Subject of Reaction of Rape Victims to the Act of Rape, *People v. Garcia*," *Frontier Issues in Criminal Litigation*, *supra* note 94 (Aug. 1977).
109. Studies indicate that there is no correlation between the incidence of rapes reported to the police and the actual number of rapes, for only a small minority of rape victims contact the police. See Queens Bench Foundation, *Rape: Prevention and Resistance* (1976). This testimony was particularly useful to the defense since the prosecution's theory was that Garcia's failure to report the rape to the police meant she had not been raped.
110. One of the jurors interviewed after Garcia's acquittal remarked that he reacted negatively to expert testimony that Latina women reacted more adversely to being raped than other women because of their cultural background. He felt that his wife would be just as upset. Despite his stated negative reaction to this testimony, his remark indicated that it had substantial impact on his perceptions that women do not like being raped.
111. See material cited in note 22 *supra*.
112. See generally, *Rape: The First Sourcebook for Women* (N. Connell & C. Wilson, eds., 1974).
113. *Id.*
114. See notes 21 & 35 *supra*.
115. In our experience, an expert from a university, for example, who has never testified before, may well make a valuable expert witness. The requirements for good expert testimony are less in testifying experience and more in the ability to present information clearly and sympathetically to a jury. Juries act adversely to jargon, but react positively to information being shared with them in a noncondescending way. Often the inexperienced but well-prepared witness will be able to appear to the jury fresh and capable and will be very effective in conveying the information. However, the practitioner should be careful to prepare the expert witness both for direct and cross-examination so that difficulty is not met in either area.

## ON BEING INSIDE:

Lesbians and straight women, who refuse to submit and who resist the authorities, the brainwashing, even the male guards, are all labeled "dangerous," "ring leaders," "troublemakers." Not only are they themselves an example of strong independent womanhood—the enemy of the system—but they stick their necks way out to help the other women, they inspire others to resist. This can and often does lead to a full-fledged riot, as at Bedford Hills in 1974, and in Frontera, California, last spring. Such behavior is of course severely punished, and most of the revolutionary women end up doing an extraordinary amount of time in segregation—the prison within prison where, for



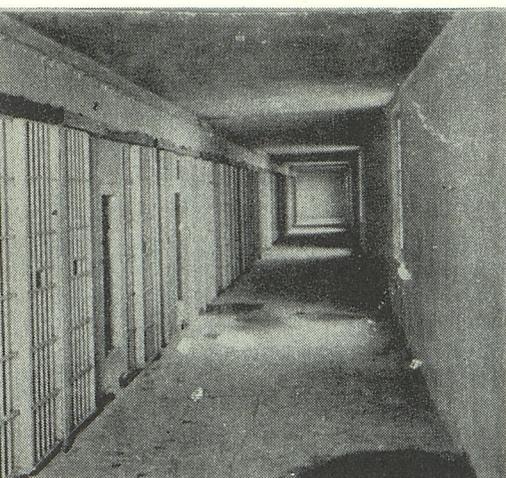
all intents and purposes, you are lost to the world. Also, another result of prison resistance is the lengthening of your prison sentence, often indeterminately, until it becomes vague when you will ever get out. These women who defy all odds against their bodies and minds in order to fight for their freedom as well as that of their sisters should be our heroines and guiding lights.

Instead, the system tries to present them to us as bad. They want us to believe these women, and indeed all women in prison, are evil, dangerous and violent. These are the myths the system weaves for our benefit, so that their experience, the experience of all incarcerated women, will seem completely alien to ours, a different reality.

There is a purpose to this. Just as the prison authorities don't want the women to talk to each other, to inspire each other, to help each other build a resistance movement, so also the system in general fears our getting together with women in

prison. Because, as we begin to understand the threads that connect our existence with that of incarcerated women, as the outlines of their experience begin to look more and more familiar, the Kafkaesque reality ceases to be so science-fictional! Prisons appear increasingly as microcosms of our society which represent in a highly intensified form the sexist, racist, classist structures which keep women everywhere oppressed. The more conscious we become of the similarity between our fate and the fate of our sisters in prison, the more we break down the division between "us" and "them," the "good little girls" and the "bad women," the more we have the potential to unite and to combat efficiently our common enemy.

Here lies the importance of our under-



standing the commonality of our experience with that of our sisters in prison. At the same time, it is imperative that we make a huge leap in consciousness in order to understand the extremity of their situation, and also the extremity of the situation that brought them to prison in the first place. We need to unite our struggles with those of incarcerated women. We need their strength, and they need ours. Together, we will form a power that the patriarchy will find hard to crush.

—Charoula

The Rockefeller Drug Law is the harshest drug law in the US. It affects primarily small users rather than big time dealers (who are tried in the federal courts and receive remarkably milder sentences). The people convicted under this state law recieve harsher sentences mandatory *life* sentences with a minimum of 7-25 years—than those convicted under all other felony classifications except first-degree murder. "Mandatory" means that the judge cannot exercise any personal discretion based on the person's relationship to the crime, his or her past criminal history, or other mitigating circumstances. It also means that no parole is available before the minimum is served in full. Under this law for example, a first offender and mother of 3 can get 15 years to life for passing a package of drugs at her man's request, in complete innocence of the contents of the package. Compare this to a first offender who can murder his girlfriend and get 0 to 7 years with parole at 18 months.

## Pooah Pooah Woman

You Woman—yes you—how can it be—the enemy captured you two years ago, held you in jail, forced you to take a plea, two (2) to four (4) they could no longer hold you in Rikers, so you were shipped to Bedford, Bedford the *Carnage Island*—you are mistreated by the female guards—stripped of all your principles, forced into submission—You Woman, yes you, no longer a woman—the female guards have crushed you to your lowest ebb, you submit and become the shell that housed the real YOU; you are now assigned to a slave job, the cafe, the roaches have taken over, the female guard tower over your every move, you scream out for

—DEATH;

Now Pooah Woman, the male guards are here—a new assertion of authority—you continue to work, slaving and no pay—no money from the free world—commissary too high, more than the outside—so Pooah Woman, what'cha gonna do, ya gotta steal, you take lettuce, tomatoes, onions, butter and whatever you can take to—SMOKE;

Cigarettes all gone, no roll your own, you once again creep into the cooler, the coast is clear—so you think—SNATCHING—SNATCHING—filling your bag with things to sell, so you can smoke—SMOKE;

Suddenly it happened, the male guard walked in, you begin to shake, he tells you that you will go to segregation for a long time, you begin to cry and plead with him not to write you—he smile as he begin to unzip his pants, he instruct you to kiss it for awhile, you don't want to, but you don't want segregation either—you nervously take his organ with shaking hands as he attempts to lunge his organ into your mouth—you gag, but segregation is dangling in front of you—much too soon his organ has swollen twice the size and he insist you lift your dress quickly while he forces his penis into your vagina—you want to fight, but you are frozen with fear, you want to resist but his grip is one of DEATH—soon the brutal force breaks through and the hot-sperm from him floods your inside like a hot shower—it is all over for him, he left and returned, telling me to come out, you sneakily walk out unnoticed by the female guard;

The male guard in running into you later tells you to keep your mouth shut, stating that no one would believe you anyway—because—the administration is adamant in telling you-people that your word has no validity—

You continue to work on your slave job, stealing whenever you can—a week or so later you see the guard and he DEMANDS that you meet him at a certain time—you out of fear, COMPLY;

You beg him not to do that again as you are afraid—he threatens you and you adhere to his demand—the procedure is basically the same, a repeat—the weeks fly, you are working, stealing to smoke when suddenly the stomach pains are constant—you see the nurse, you ask for the prison QUACK—after extensive complaining you are put down to see the prison QUACK; your urine is taken, much later you are called to the clinic, there is a female who identifies herself as a doctor, she tells the nurse to undress you and put you on the table—you question this, you are told that your urine came back SUSPICIOUS; you are internally examined, nothing is said to you—after all, you are no-body so why should they tell you anything about your self;

Some time later you are called to go out to a special doctor—you are taken out, examined and are told that you are PREGNANT;

Now Pooah Woman—whatcha gonna do—the female guards have taken your identity, made you a human robot—the male guard done-done-it-to ya—tell me Pooah Woman, whatsit gonna be—when can we be free from this PIG-ABUSE?

—Dollree Mapp

## IMOGENE KNODE

*In March 1977 Imogene Knode was shot in the neck by her husband, in the living room of her mother's home where she had been living since her separation. He was free on \$500 bail for having slit her throat. They had been married 7 years and had a daughter. Two weeks prior to her death, Imogene Knode wrote a letter to the editor, pleading for protection. "He has beat me, cut me, broke in my mother's house . . . among other things I cannot mention. The police say they can't do anything to him. Someone, please, tell me what to do." She was 25 years old.*

I want this poem to run like drano down his throat.  
I want this poem to be salt on a snail.  
I want it to be like an acid bath, lukewarm  
and ready in a shallow tub.

I want this and not only in his dreams, though there  
first, there too.

I was a woman and I was unsafe in my mother's,  
unsafe from my husband, unsafe  
in my mother's house.

I am a woman choking on the stitches of a sewn-up scar.  
Ear to ear.

I want this poem to be a lethal curse.  
A flower blooming its thirsty petals inside the enemy's  
breathing, protected throat.

I had not heard of Inez Garcia.  
I had not heard of Yvonne Wanrow.  
I had not heard of Joan Little. I was a woman,  
gentle, and I did not live  
to hear my own name.

I want this poem to be a basket of razorblades.  
A permanent trap in each woman's cunt. A trap  
that only desire or trust, desire  
and trust, would remove.

I wish every woman a venomous bite.  
A boa-constrictor's reflex.  
A mother-bear's murderous will. I was a woman,  
gentle, and I did not live  
to hear of my sisters.

I want this poem to be a scorpion  
poised in my husband's throat, thriving  
on fear like a mean god.

The scorpion won't let him swallow.  
He has to hold back his cough.  
He has to spit his saliva.  
He feels the desert breeding in his lungs  
its rising sand-drifts of fear.

Because my daughter is still young, young  
I want this poem to be a weapon.  
Because my sisters are many and still young  
I want this poem to be a weapon.

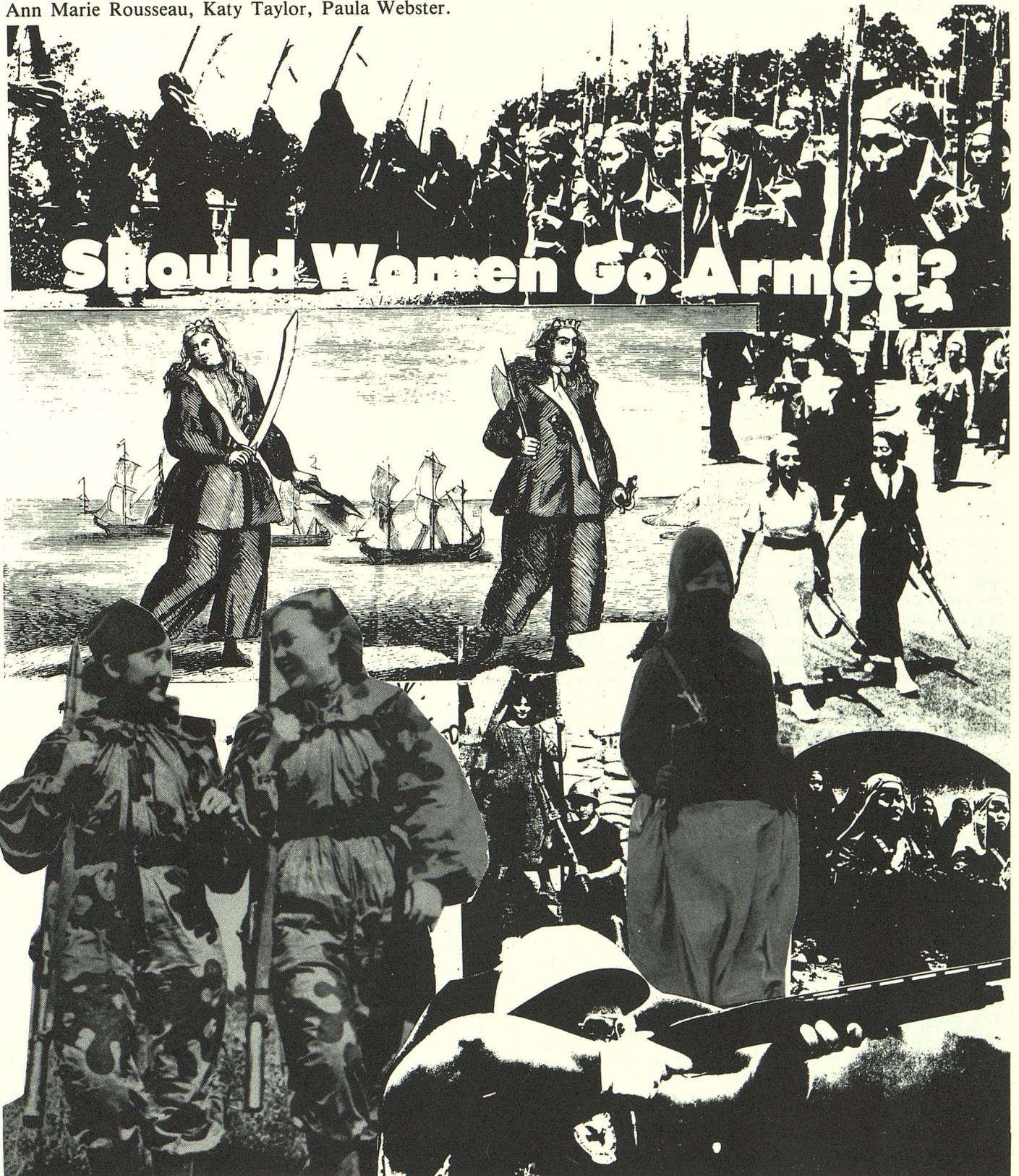
Because none of them, none are safe  
from the enemy in each other's house, I want  
this poem to be a weapon.

I was a woman, gentle, and I did not live.

I call this poem to be a weapon.  
I give this poem authority to kill.

—Olga Broumas

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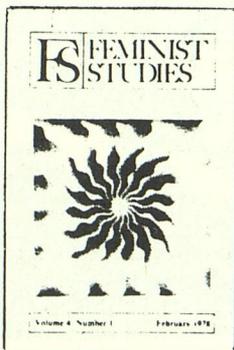
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 Safe House, Northwest Matrix, 1628 E. 19th St., Eugene, Ore. 97403.  
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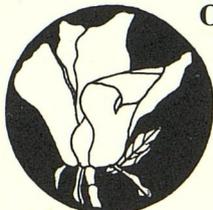
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## Contributors

**Donna Allegra** is "a freelance writer and athlete who inhabits the lower eastside. Brooklyn born and bred, I do radio in mid-Manhattan at WBAI. I believe that women are the world."

**Christina C. Arguedas** is a second-year student at Rutgers Law School who has worked with the Yvonne Wanrow defense team.

**Martine Barrat** has worked with La Mama and with Charles Bobo Shaw and The Human Arts Ensemble—involving dance, acrobatics, video and music. She has been working since 1971 with members of street gangs on the Lower East Side, Harlem and the South Bronx. "They were my teachers. Violence is a condition, it's not them."

**Diana Bellessi**, a 32 year old visionary poet of Argentina, studied philosophy at Universidad Nacional de Rosario. She has travelled the road of the working classes through South America, Central and North America, primarily on foot. In recent years she has been working with the Indian people of her country, recreating their myths and writing *Fundaciones*.

**Susan Bram**. "The Ad Hoc Women's Studies Committee Against Sterilization Abuse is a group of women engaged in study and action aimed towards reproductive freedom for women regardless of class, race or culture. Since 1977 we have been involved in writing, speaking, lobbying and protesting on the issue of sterilization abuse and relating it to the broader issues of economic and social oppression of women."

**Olga Broumas**. "I am currently unpacking my papers and duds at the U of Idaho in Moscow for a teaching stint, having just taught feminist aesthetics at the U of Oregon in Eugene. Before that, Greece, after this, Vermont. Hard at work on a third book and hoping for a publisher for my second: SOIE SAUVAGE."

**Cynthia Carr** is a writer who lives in New York.

**Charoula** works with Women Free Women in Prison, a group of women committed to breaking down the isolation of women in prison and bringing to outside groups and individuals the needs and demands of the sisters behind bars. "We are constantly learning from our interaction with these women that the racism, sexism and classism of the Corrections Department is part and parcel of the oppressive forces operating in society, and within

ourselves as well. We visit the women regularly and try to keep them informed about what's going on outside by sending them books, magazines, etc. We welcome any woman who would like to work with us."

**Cathy Cockrell**, after trying her hand at boat and newspaper businesses in the Northwest where she grew up, has been working for three years as a writer and photographer with Liberation News Service in N.Y.C. She hopes to write fiction and continue contributing to women's and left media.

**Blanche Wiesen Cook** is a professor of History at John Jay College. She is also a writer and journalist whose most recent book is *Chrystal Eastmen on Women and Revolution* (Oxford University Press). She is now working on a book about Eisenhower and Nixon contracted by Doubleday. Of interest to *Heresies* readers is her article "Female Support Networks" which appears in the third issue of *Chrysalis*.

**Rachel Blau DuPlessis** teaches at Temple University, is an editor of *Feminist Studies*, and has appeared in such journals as *Chrysalis*, *Montemora*, *Boundary 2* and (forthcoming) *The Massachusetts Review*. "Breasts" originally appeared in *Connections 5*, (Spring '77).

**Andrea Dworkin** is the author of *Women Hating* (Dutton, 1974) and *Our Blood: Prophecies and Discourses on Sexual Politics* (Harper and Row, 1976). She is currently working on a feminist analysis of



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pornography, to be published by Anchor/Doubleday in 1981.

**Dianne Feeley** is presently running for governor of NY State on the S.W.P. ticket.

**Judith Friedlander** teaches anthropology at SUNY, Purchase, NY. She is presently doing field work in the Jewish community of Paris. Her book, *Being Indian in Hueyapan*, (St. Martin's, 1975), focuses on questions of class and ethnicity in Mexico.

**Su Friedrich** lives in N.Y.C., is a photographer and does past-up for a living.

**Lisa Garrison** is an occasionally violent individual who has been undergoing traumatic experiences since age three and enjoys going down to the docks to weep.

**Paula Gray.** "I am a painter and cartoonist living and working in Venice, Ca. I'm presently making my living by doing comic books and film strips for a non-profit organization, The Constitutional Rights Foundation."

**Karen A. Hagberg** lives in Rochester, NY, the hometown of Susan B. Anthony, where she is co-publisher of the *New Women's Times*.

**Eleanor Hakim** is a New York-based college teacher and writer who has published essays on literature, drama, culture and politics. Her produced plays include *Ele-*

*phant & Flamingo Vaudeville* and *A Lesbian Play for Lucy*. "La Mutualité" is one of a series of essays and evocations written under the title *In Defense of Fal-len Comrades*.

**Margaret F. Harrison** is one of the founder's of the women's art movement in England. She lives in London, but has also been active in Northern England and Ireland. She is a co-founder of the Women's Work Exhibition and consistently works with trade unions.

**Fran P. Hosken**, editor of Women's International Network News, is a journalist and author. For more information on female mutilation, send \$1 plus a SASE to WIN News, 187 Grant St., Lexington, Mass. 02173.

**Joan Howarth** works with WAVAW and the National Committee Against Repressive Legislation. She is also attending University of California Law School.

**Susan B. Jordan** is a 1970 graduate of Northwestern University School of Law, a member of the San Francisco firm of Cumings, Jordan and Morgan, Professor at New College School of Law, and a Co-operating Attorney with the Center for Constitutional Rights. Ms. Jordan represented Inez Garcia in her appeal and retrial, and she and Ms. Schneider are co-counsel for Yvonne Wanrow in her retrial, together with Mary Alice Theiler of Seattle

**The Kitty Genovese Women's Project** published a 20 page tabloid, March 8, 1977, listing the names and cases of thousands of Dallas, Texas men indicted for sex offenses against women from 1960 to 1976. They can be reached at K.G.W.P., 316 5th Ave., Suite 301, NYC NY 10001.

**Janet Koenig** is a conceptual artist and book designer.

**Leslie Labowitz** is an artist who has recently returned from a 6 year stay in Europe primarily in W.Germany and Spain. She spent one year on a DAAD-Fulbright at the art academy in Dusseldorf, W. Germany to work with Joseph Beuys. She taught at a German gymnasium, the University of Bonn and the U of Maryland/European Division and collaborated with women's political organizations in Germany to create a framework for political art.

**Suzanne Lacy** is a feminist artist who has been active in California since 1970. She is integrally involved in the Woman's Bldg. in L.A. and teaches at the Feminist Studio Workshop, as well as various colleges and universities in California. Her work includes performance, video, photography, books, graphic forms and expresses feminist political concepts.

**Jacqueline Lapidus** is a radical lesbian feminist who lives in Paris.

**Gail Lineback** is a movie (star).

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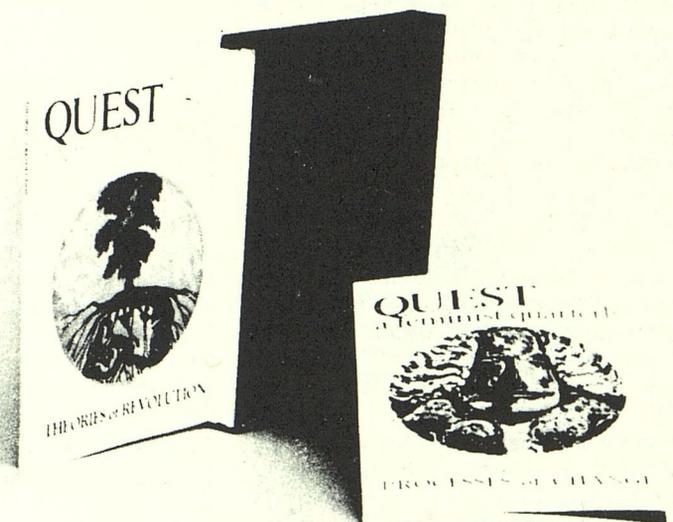
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**Eunice Lipton** is an art historian who lives and works in N.Y.C. She is a teacher and writer who is committed to understanding the social and political meanings and uses of art.

**Linda Lombardo.** "Formerly a social worker in Cleveland, Ohio, I have been living in Rome for the past 4 years where I have been active in Self-Help and Consciousness-Raising groups."

**Julie London** was in a feminist studio workshop in the Woman's Building in Los Angeles. She is one of the founders of WAVAW and has completed her B.A. in the Program of Comparative Cultures at the University of California (Irvine). She has completed three years of graduate work in Anthropology and has worked as a boycott organizer with UFW.

**Malikah** (slave name Delores Smith) is currently at Fulton (Bronx) after having served two years of her sentence at Bedford Hills. She was one of the many women who brought a suit against the institution protesting the presence of male guards in their private quarters. For this action, she has since been harassed and her removal to Fulton is no doubt an attempt to separate her from her friends in struggle at Bedford.

**Dollree Mapp** is the Civil Rights heroine of the celebrated US Supreme Court decision, *Mapp vs. Ohio*, which held that evidence obtained without a search warrant was inadmissible in court, and thus reinforced our right to privacy. For this interference with "justice" she was sought for years by police who finally caught up with her in New York City and framed her for a crime she did not commit—possession of drugs. She is currently serving a 20-to-life sentence at BHCf. Her friends and supporters have formed the Dollree Mapp Defense Committee (c/o Women Free Women in Prison, Box 283, W. Nyack, NY) which is committed to fight for her freedom.

**Pam McAllister** is a freelance writer living in N.Y.C. She has been published in feminist newspapers and has written an article about DES-daughters for *The Ladies' Home Journal*. Her play about women and patriarchal religion, "Approaching the Apple," recently won the Unitarian-Universalist Religious Arts Guild Playwriting Contest. She is currently working on a major project concerning nonviolence, feminism and self defense.

**Elaine Butler McCarthy** was active in feminist and anti-war groups before moving to Paris three years ago. She is Arts Editor of the English-language magazine *The*

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**Lou McDonald** is a 13 year old feminist who is presently working on her writing and thinking about photography.

**Mary Metzger.** "For the past two years I have worked as a researcher and consultant for various organizations in NYC working with battered women. I am married and have three daughters."

**Stephanie Oursler.** An American artist who lived in Rome 1971-78 is known for her mixed media installations, performances and narrative art.

Happy New Year, An Album of Violence, published by the Italian Feminist Collective, Edizioni Delle Donne in 1976, resulted from an installation done in December 1975 in the Gallery of Romana Loda, Multi-Media, Erbusco Brecia, Italy. The book is based on a pin-up calendar format: A tearout 12 part album with a large photo of one woman for each month and a three inch clip of news for each dated calendar day taken from *Paese Sera*, a popular leftist Roman daily. "At night his-story is not progressive. Men are momentarily, accidental, noisy squatters in the universe. Women are, at least, quietly invisible . . . in clean mornings of habitual sanity, one reads the newspaper and reason eclipses the moon. There are women worthy of attention, eloquent in their man-given power to die."

**Anita Leibowitz Page.** "I'm a writer and freelance editor living in Liberty, N.Y. I've been writing fiction since I was five. Most of my short stories are about the politics of childhood."

**Claire Pajaczkowska** works with films.

**Roz Petchesky** teaches political science and Women's Studies at Ramapo College in New Jersey and is also a member of the Committee for Abortion Rights and Against Sterilization Abuse (C.A.R.-A.S.A.). During the current year she is doing a study of reproductive freedom as a "fellow" of the Hastings Center (the Institute of Society, Ethics and the Life Sciences).



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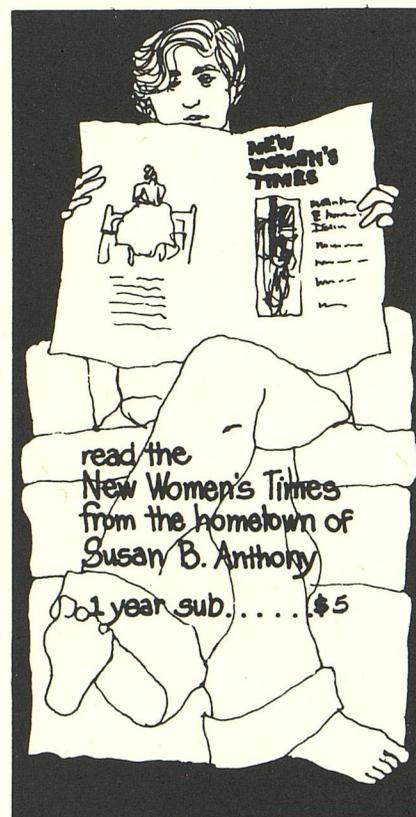
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**Toni Robertson** lives in Sydney, Australia. She teaches screen-printing in workshops at Sydney University and works with the Earthworks Poster group.

**Ann Marie Rousseau**, a photographer and an artist, is a member of the Anti-Catalog, M-F IV, and has written for *Heresies* and the *Feminist Art Journal*. She has worked with homeless women at a N.Y.C. shelter and recently visited the People's Republic of China.

**Sapphire**, Blk. female spirit from the West moving east.

**Elizabeth M. Schneider** is a 1973 graduate of New York University School of Law, a staff attorney with the Center for Constitutional Rights in New York, and Adjunct Professor of Law at Brooklyn Law School. Ms. Schneider represented Yvonne Wanrow in her appeal in the Washington



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Supreme Court and is co-counsel along with Ms. Jordan and Mary Alice Theiler of Seattle for Yvonne Wanrow in her retrial.

**Ntozake Shange** is a writer and poet and author of "For Colored girls who have considered suicide/When the rainbow is enuf."

**Mimi Smith** is an artist who lives and works in New York. In the 60's she made sculpture in the form of clothing. Her current work is drawings combined with audio tape readings.

**Carolyn Smithers** is a 20 year old woman, who recently served time at Bedford Hills. She is the mother of two daughters placed in foster homes. The horrible medical conditions at Bedford aggravated her condition of epilepsy and her resistance to the authorities made her the target of several physical attacks by the guards. The combination of these two factors caused the prison to transfer her to Marcy State, an institution for the criminally insane in upstate New York.

**Diane Solomon** works on cars, clothes, cookery and an M.B.A. and works as a government training and personnel administrator. She writes daily—personal letters to friends across town, reports and position papers, fiction and poetry.

**Nancy Spero.** "Since 1965 I have worked in NY. From 1966 to 1970, I made over 100 paintings on paper dealing with war and violence, particularly emphasizing the atom bomb and Vietnam. From 1972 to today I have continued extended linear formats (both vertical and horizontal). In 1976, I exhibited "(The torture of women)," a painting 20 inches by 125 feet. I am a member of A.I.R. the first NY women's gallery."

**Katy Taylor** is an anartist.

**Nadia Telsey.** "In 1972 I helped found the Women's Martial Arts Union, a martial arts outreach group. I am currently centering my energies at Brooklyn Women's Martial Arts where I teach karate with others and work with a C.E.T.A. funded project which offers free self defense classes to community women."

**Sharon Thompson** is a writer who lives in New York. She is currently writing a book for kids about puberty.

**Paula Webster** works in acrylics and dables in chance/choice.

**Batya Weinbaum** lives in N.Y.C. she worked as a photographer and journalist until her experience in Allende's Chile sparked her interest in radical economics, politics and feminist theories, which culminated in her first book, *The Curious*

*Courtship of Women's Liberation and Socialism* (South End, Boston 1978).

**Shebar Windstone.** "From 1965 to 1968 I was locked up in Kalamazoo (Michigan) State Hospital where, as a minor, I had no legal rights and not much of anything else except pain, fear and anger. This piece and some of my other writings and drawings dealing with mental prisons have been published by the Network Against Psychiatric Assault (558 Capp St, San Francisco, Ca. 94110) in their newspaper *Madness Network News* ("All the Fits That's News to Print")."



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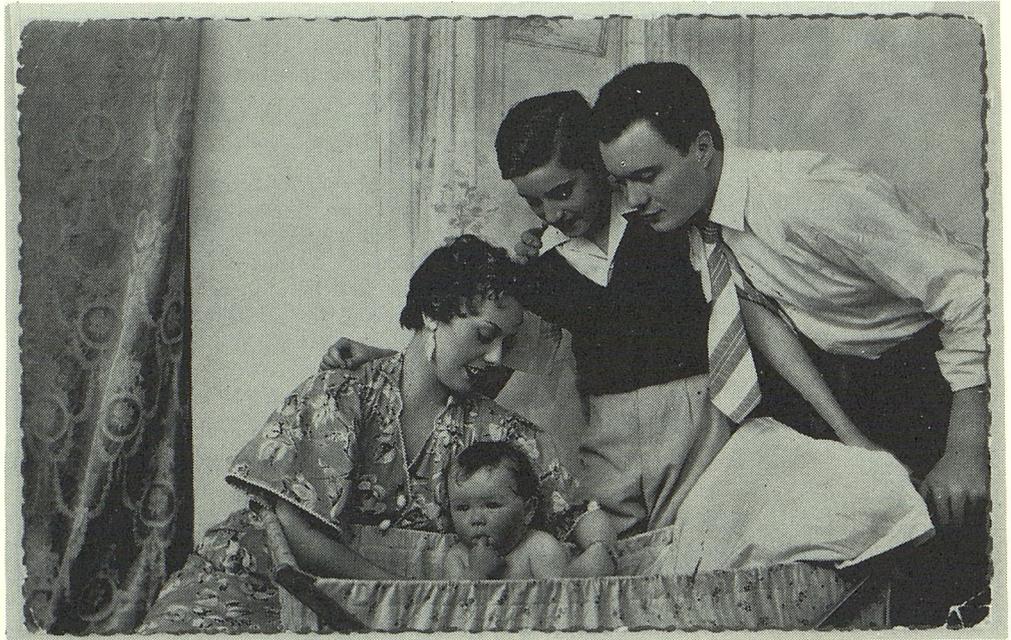
HERESIES is an idea-oriented journal devoted to the examination of art and politics from a feminist perspective. We believe that what is commonly called art can have a political impact, and that in the making of art and of all cultural artifacts our identities as women play a distinct role. We hope that HERESIES will stimulate dialogue around radical political and aesthetic theory, encourage the writing of the history of *femina sapiens*, and generate new creative energies among women. It will be a place where diversity can be articulated. We are committed to the broadening of the definition and function of art.

HERESIES is structured as a collective of feminists, some of whom are also socialists, marxists, lesbian feminists, or anarchists; our fields include painting, sculpture, writing, anthropology, literature, performance, art history, architecture and film-making. While the themes of the individual issues will be determined by the collective, each issue will have a different editorial staff made up of women who want to work on that issue as well as members of the collective. Proposals for issues may be conceived and presented to the HERESIES collective by groups of women not associated with the collective. Each issue will take a different visual form, chosen by the group responsible. HERESIES will try to be accountable to and in touch with the international feminist community. An open evaluation meeting will be held after the appearance of each issue. Topics for issues will be announced well in advance in order to collect material from many sources. Possibly satellite pamphlets and broadsides will be produced continuing the discussion of each central theme. As part of its commitment to the women's community, HERESIES provides workshops in all phases of magazine production and maintains the Women Artists Slide Registry.

As women, we are aware that historically the connections between our lives, our arts and our ideas have been suppressed. Once these connections are clarified they can function as a means to dissolve the alienation between artist and audience, and to understand the relationship between art and politics, work and workers. As a step toward the demystification of art, we reject the standard relationship of criticism to art within the present system, which has often become the relationship of advertiser to product. We will not advertise a new set of genius-products just because they are made by women. We are not

committed to any particular style or aesthetic, nor to the competitive mentality that pervades the art world. Our view of feminism is one of process and change, and we feel that in the process of this dialogue we can foster a change in the meaning of art.

**THE COLLECTIVE:** Ida Applebroog, Patsy Beckert, Joan Braderman, Mary Beth Edelson, Su Friedrich, Janet Froelich, Harmony Hammond, Sue Heinemann, Elizabeth Hess, Joyce Kozloff, Arlene Ladden, Gail Lineback, Lucy Lippard, Melissa Meyer, Marty Pottenger, Carrie Rickey, Elizabeth Sacre, Miriam Schapiro, Amy Sillman, Joan Snyder, Elke Solomon, Pat Steir, May Stevens, Elizabeth Weatherford, Salley Webster.



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## ERRATA

### 4th Issue

"Feminism—Has It Changed Art History?" by Mary D. Garrard was reprinted with the permission of Women's Caucus for Art. It first appeared in the Women's Caucus for Art publication, *Women's Studies and the Arts*, edited by Elsa H. Fine, Lola B. Gellman and Judy Loeb, Winter, 1978, pp 3-7.

### 5th Issue

The photograph on p.104 of a woodcarving by Mei-Mei Sanford, "She was Carved on the Night of a Hurricane and a Full Moon," should have been credited to Jean West. The carving is one foot high.

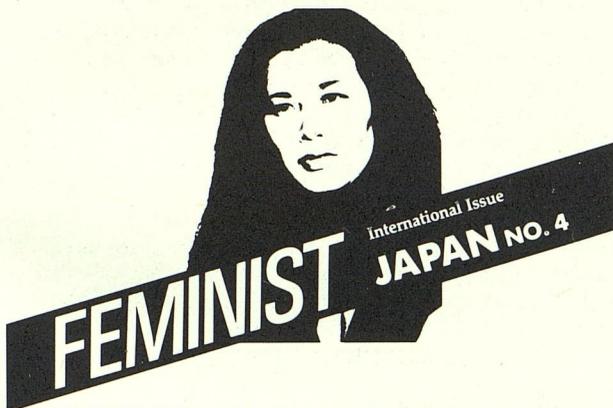
The footnote to Lucy Lippard's "Stone-springs" was inadvertently omitted. It should have read: "The myths italicized above are incorporated from Mircea Eliade's *Gods, Goddesses and Myths of Creation*; occasionally fragments and phrases have also been absorbed from R. Hansford Worth's *Dartmoor*, Vincent Scully's *The Earth, the Temple and the Gods*, and Guy Underwood's *The Patterns of the Past*."

Cover printed by Phillips Offset, Mamaroneck, N.Y.

So Joannie stabbed him once  
and again  
and again  
and again

The following people have made contributions to HERESIES ranging from \$1 to \$200. We thank them very much.

Zeldy Appel  
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### **Guidelines for Contributors:**

Each Issue of HERESIES has a specific theme and all material submitted should relate to that theme. We welcome outlines and proposals for articles and visual work. Manuscripts (one to five thousand words) should be typewritten, double-spaced and submitted in duplicate. Visual material should be submitted in the form of a slide, xerox or photograph. **WE WILL NOT BE RESPONSIBLE FOR ORIGINAL ART WORK.** All manuscripts and visual material must be accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope. We do not publish reviews or monographs on contemporary women. We do not commission articles and cannot guarantee acceptance of submitted material. HERESIES pays a small fee for material that is published in each issue.

### The Next Issues

7

**Working Together:** An exploration of the way women function in work situations—alone, in groups, in collectives. The problems and rewards of going public with our work. HERESIES' work process in the first year and critical response to the first four issues. The impact of work on our lives. How and why women set up support structures. Work and education, work within family and living groups. Women in unions and as organizers. Looking at past and present collectives: feminist, Third World, lesbian. Work that is product-oriented. Women in the professions and in positions of privilege. What have we got? Where are we going? Available: Early 1979

8

**Third World Women in the United States:** Explorations through researched documentation, literary and visual works: a redefining of "Third World women"; celebration of creativity and self image; isolation of Third World women from each other; forced invisibility within the larger society; Third World women effecting social change; ageism; growing up Third World; validation of our art/who legitimizes our art? a philosophy for criticism; critiques, Third World women as consumers of art; creative modes of expression: fashion, life style, environment and work. The 8th issue collective is accepting manuscripts from women of all ages. Available: April 1979

9

**Women Organized/Women Divided: Power, propaganda and backlash—**How culture organizes women and how women can use culture to organize themselves; media and fine arts as propaganda; use of media by right-to-lifers, anti-abortion and anti-E.R.A. forces. Is *any* art apolitical? Power and money in the Women's Movement; backlash, wiretapping, investigation and intimidation of political women. Nihilism in pop music and other art forms. Working-class women and their relation to feminism. Eurocommunism and feminism? Lesbian socialism—what is it? The politics of therapy—psychoanalysis: What can women salvage? Deadline: early February 1979

10

**Women in Classical, Folk, Popular, Rock and Jazz Music:** What is Women's History in Music? What is the Politics of Aesthetics when it comes to Music by Women? Is there a Female Aesthetic? Is the feminist music business succeeding in developing an alternative for composers, songwriters and performers? Sexism and musical instruments. Women in music management and boards: Perpetuating the prejudices or giving our sisters a chance? Women, ritual, religion and song: ancient times to the present. The issue will include a resource guide, bibliography, discography and grant proposal guidelines. Interested in including excerpts from scores by composers, text-sound pieces, and descriptions of multimedia presentations. Deadline April 1, 1979

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OPEN MEETING

WOMEN & VIOLENCE

Wed., Feb. 28, 1978  
8 p.m.

Barnard College  
Barnard Hall-James Room  
4th floor  
New York, New York  
(Broadway & 117th St.)

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The Women's Slide Registry, located in the HERESIES office, includes women artists from all over the U.S. Send 3 slides, name, address and other information plus \$5 to Women's Slide Registry, P.O. Box 539, Canal Street Station, NY, NY 10013.

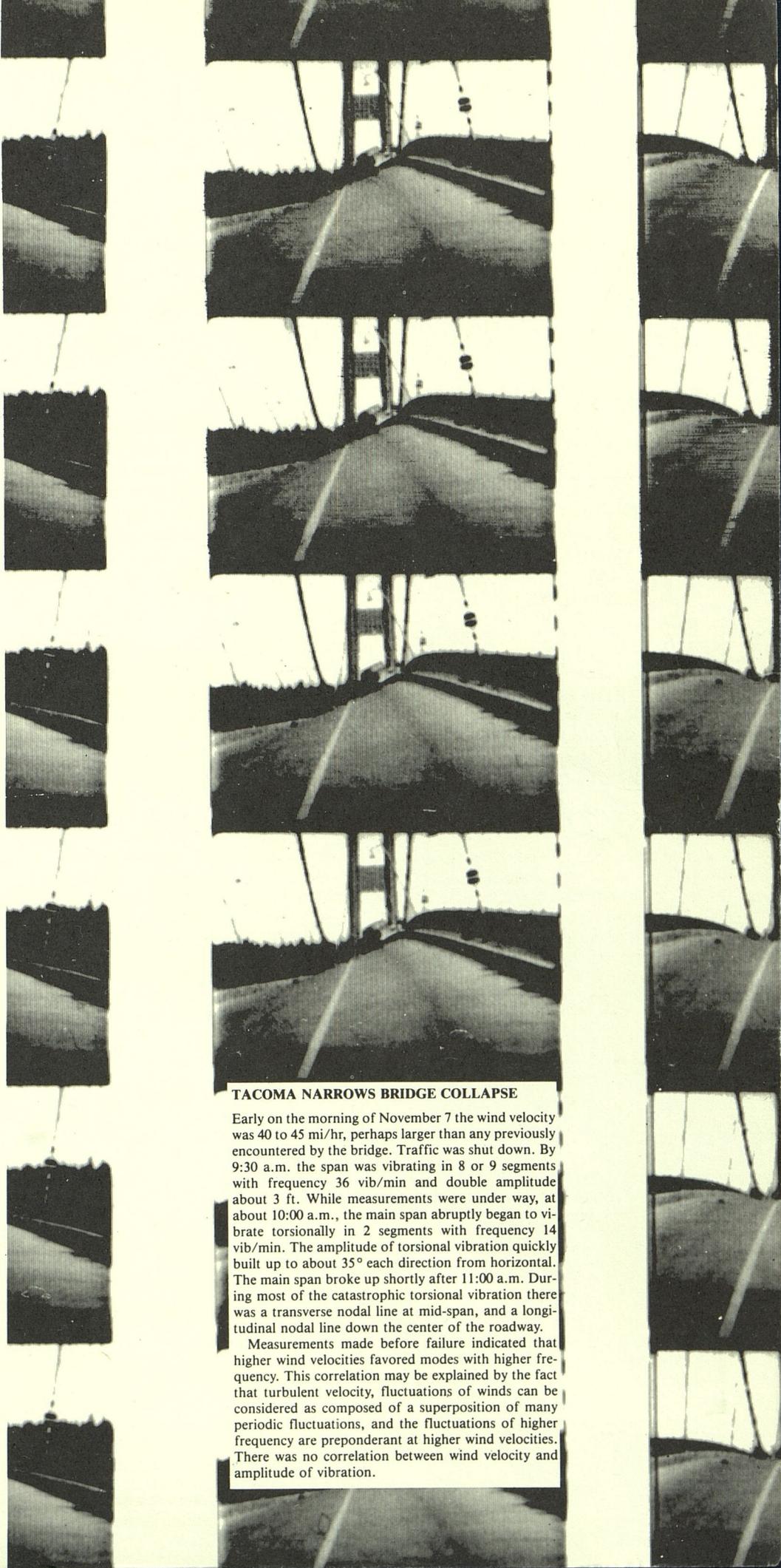
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**TACOMA NARROWS BRIDGE COLLAPSE**

Early on the morning of November 7 the wind velocity was 40 to 45 mi/hr, perhaps larger than any previously encountered by the bridge. Traffic was shut down. By 9:30 a.m. the span was vibrating in 8 or 9 segments with frequency 36 vib/min and double amplitude about 3 ft. While measurements were under way, at about 10:00 a.m., the main span abruptly began to vibrate torsionally in 2 segments with frequency 14 vib/min. The amplitude of torsional vibration quickly built up to about 35° each direction from horizontal. The main span broke up shortly after 11:00 a.m. During most of the catastrophic torsional vibration there was a transverse nodal line at mid-span, and a longitudinal nodal line down the center of the roadway.

Measurements made before failure indicated that higher wind velocities favored modes with higher frequency. This correlation may be explained by the fact that turbulent velocity, fluctuations of winds can be considered as composed of a superposition of many periodic fluctuations, and the fluctuations of higher frequency are preponderant at higher wind velocities. There was no correlation between wind velocity and amplitude of vibration.

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