

SECTION TWO
EDUCATION, ART AND
CULTURE TODAY

The survey of Section One identified mechanisms of oppression that re-emerge throughout history. In Section Two we examine these mechanisms in their contemporary forms.

CHAPTER 5

SAMBOS, RAMBOS AND BIMBOS

Part I: Racism:Corporate suites and these mean streets.

It was so ironic to see the white students practicing their new Spanish words and phrases while walking down the halls, yet the Mexican American students could expect punishment for doing the same.

—Carmen Lomas Garza, artist

Next to women, the two most-often-mentioned oppressed groups in this book are African Americans and Latinos. There are at least three reasons for that. One is that they are making the most noise. Another is that they are the largest minority groups in our cities, the stages on which our cultural crises are most often played. The third is that there are so many minority groups in this country, as we at last become a melting pot—instead of just saying we are—that it is nearly impossible to list each one. Are these other groups less worthy? No. Democracy is the entitlement of Native Americans, Jews, Arabs, Koreans, Philipinos, Laotians, Cambodians, Whites of every tint, the Inuit, the Chinese, the Japanese, the Vietnamese, the differently abled... No doubt someone was left off the list, or was identified by the wrong label. I apologize. Frankly, it is hard to keep up, which is good. Democracy is realized only when every group finds its voice, participates in self rule, and takes pride in its heritage.

Archeologists' most reliable sources for assembling the human record are the visual images and artifacts that have survived the centuries. In this light, the aphorism that art reflects life, and its corollary, a picture is worth a thousand words, take on profound meaning. One of my bedrock theses

in this book is contained in these two sentences: Art and art education throughout prehistory—that is, throughout most of human existence—were intrinsic parts of life. Three consequences of the modern compartmentalizing of life have been the separation of art from life, the notion that art is the turf of a talented few, and the compartmentalization of art education into a discipline that is taught in classes—in other words, art and art ed as we know them today.

The inseparability of art from life can still be found in tribal cultures, notably those of Africa, Southern Asia, and Australia. Such cultures provide windows through which we can view the role art played in the lives of prehistoric people. These cultures, labeled primitive by Western observers, can teach the West the damage done by fragmenting a culture into segments that do not touch each other. When the industrial revolution taught the West to judge other cultures according to technological capability, the West lost the means to explain such phenomena as the Australian Aborigines' language, which is more complex than English and accommodates levels of thought for which English offers no parallels. Huysen (1990) states:

...the recent self-assertion of minority cultures and their emergence into public consciousness has undermined the modernist belief that high and low culture have to be kept apart. Such segregation does not make sense within a minority culture which has always existed outside in the shadow of the dominant high culture.

How did pre-Columbian culture fall into this shadow? Following Columbus, Europeans victimized by religious persecution fled to the 'New World' but, ironically, a different form of persecution—racism—sailed with them. Ethnocentrism, abundantly represented in Western art and art education programs, ranges from the naive (the belief that one's view is absolutely true, e.g., fundamentalism) to the subtle (the belief that other viewpoints may have merit, but compare poorly to one's own, e.g., the cultural literacy movement, which claims that the 'inferiority' of non-White races can be eliminated by re-educating them to Caucasian standards). The result of both is the attitude that other cultures would benefit from the replacement of their values with one's own. Gould (1981) states that the enlightenment period in Europe and the colonial period in North America were characterized by adherence to racism based on religious arguments and 'scientific' documentation. The need to determine race and sex hierarchically rather than equitably is rooted in economic conventions such as slavery in the South and the capitalist industrial revolution in the North. Racist theoreticians of all races often find that groups with 'inferior' intellects happen to have skin colors, religions, and art different from their own.

Slavery and the oppression that followed the Civil War destroyed African culture in America. European westward expansion across North America under the imperialist sanction of manifest destiny all but destroyed Native American culture. Teaching all races and ethnicities about African and Native American art is part of the remedial process, but art teachers quickly find out that young members of these groups often are not interested. They do not miss what they never had. African and Native Americans, as well as other minority groups, have created new cultures, new art forms, that hybridize components of their heritages with the many heritages of the dominant culture, art forms that reflect their experiences in White America. This is good news; art rises phoenix-like from the ashes of oppression.

The rhetoric of innate inferiority is humanity's oldest tautology (it is true by virtue of how it is defined) yet it thrives today. Giroux (1991b) observes:

The smell of totalitarianism is in the air. Its primary expression is found in the resurgence of racism in this country. Racial slurs are now regularly incorporated into the acts of some rock stars and stand-up comedians; the dominant culture seems indifferent or even hostile to the deepening poverty and despair affecting a growing population of blacks in the underclass in our nation's cities; the growing dropout rate among black students is met with insulting diatribes and the refusal to engage the racism prevalent in our nation's schools; the black family is not high-lighted for its resiliency amidst the most degrading economic and social conditions but is condemned as a cause of its own misery.

Yet, identifying groups that enact oppression is only part of our task. We also must identify cultural attitudes that promote or retard advancement. According to Grondona (in Raspberry, 1992), cultures whose religions emphasize success are advancement-prone, whereas cultures whose religions emphasize the easing of suffering are not. Cultures that view wealth as something to be created promote progress. Note the flood of cash pouring into Native American casinos. Cultures that see wealth as something that simply exists are likely to devote their efforts to redistributing it. Note the failure of welfare programs. Cultures that view labor as a duty and a form of self-expression are progress-prone. Those who see work as a necessary evil, and who feel that pleasure and fulfillment are attainable only outside the workplace, are progress-resistant. Those who define life as 'something I do' are more successful than those who see life as 'something that happens to me'.

At times minorities help racists by generating self-oppression. Perpetrators of racism are hardly likely to remediate oppression; therefore the task falls to the oppressed, fairly or not. Newberry (1992) describes an interview he had in 1988 with Alex Haley, author of *Roots: The Saga of an American*

Family. Newberry (an African American journalist) reports that Haley told him there were certain things he did not tell other Blacks because they would not accept them. Newberry quotes Haley:

We tend to concern ourselves with what we can't do. The people who tend to make it are the people who go out and do it. Blacks who make it are just as black as those who say they can't make it.... People tend to make a living off the crutch [of claiming racism].

Newberry asked Haley how young Black people were to combat the taunts of 'acting White' for trying to achieve:

People are going to knock you because the going thing is to wallow in negative. I can't do that. I go to universities and see black people excelling all the time. All you hear about is the other. I am getting ready to start another book and it's not going to make it because I'm black—it's going to make it because it will compete with everything else out there. But you can't go around talking too much about that. Why? Because you become an 'oreo' (black on the outside, white on the inside). Take you. If you're a good writer, you could write a book. Compete with me and I will try to kick your ass.

It is uniquely painful to watch oppressed groups energetically recycle racist tautologies back onto themselves. A common mistake, made particularly by young minorities, is to identify success-generating behavior as 'White'. The use of standard English, ironically a skill many Whites lack, is an example. These behaviors may involve nothing more than teasing peers for listening to 'White' radio stations or pursuing 'White' pastimes such as skateboarding. Or it may take a more serious turn, such as mocking a peer for getting good grades or attending museums. White children too are subject to teasing for 'nerd' behavior but may be more likely to experience counter-arguments at home, school, and society at large. Some minority youth do not see minority doctors and lawyers as models to emulate. They perceive such potential role models as betraying their people, as deserting the 'hood once they 'make it'. It is rap musicians who are perceived by minority youth to be successful people who do not desert their community.

If white collar and skilled blue collar define the middle class, or if educational achievement is the criterion, the large majority of African Americans are middle class. In 1950 one of six African Americans was in the middle class; today four out of six are. The success of two thirds of African Americans causes one to look to reasons in addition to racism for the third that remain economically ghettoized. Harrison (1992) comments that factors may include "the anti-progress values and attitudes inculcated by slavery and magnified by the toxic pathology of the ghetto, a pathology fed in part by the 'me, now' consumerist values of the broader society." He

quotes De Tocqueville's statement of 1835 that "slavery dishonors labor," and cites a slate of statistics: In 1940, 93 percent of Blacks and 65 percent of Whites were in poverty; in 1990, 31 percent and 10 percent respectively. In 1940, the median number of years of education was seven for Blacks, 10.7 for Whites; in 1990, 12.4 and 12.7 respectively. In 1941, there was one Black in the House of Representatives; today there are 26. In 1960, 22 percent of Black adults and 64 percent of White adults had a high school diploma; in 1988, 67 percent and 87 percent respectively. In 1940, 35 percent of voting-age Blacks registered to vote; in 1988, 65 percent. In 1940, 3.1 percent of Southern Blacks registered; in 1988, 63.7 percent. In 1970, there were 171 Black members of legislatures and city councils in eight Southern states; in 1990, 1876. In 1941 there were 10 Black judges; in 1986, 841. In 1958, 55 percent of White Americans would not move if a Black family moved next door; in 1978, 85 percent. In 1958, 78 percent of Southern parents objected to desegregated schools; in 1980 the percent had dropped to five.

The media's fondness for sensationalizing hate crimes belies the fact that signs of emerging tolerance are beginning to appear. A 1992 survey by T. W. Smith shows that Americans' perceptions of each other are based less on income or educational level than on racial or ethnic group membership or, in at least one case, on geographic location—Southern Whites would object more to having Northern Whites (18.5%) move next door than Jews (14.0%). The survey indicated that, in general, anti-Semitism is at an historic low, although Jews, who were found to possess the highest household income of 33 ethnic groups studied, were socially ranked seventeenth. Similar findings were found for Asian Indians and Chinese. The study also found that the number of respondents willing to vote for a Jewish president totaled 87 percent.

Such findings bolster the view that the United States is realizing its 'melting pot' mission by becoming the first multicultural democracy in history. The message of some liberals to ghetto-dwelling Blacks that they are helpless is false. The argument for separation, whether from Blacks or Whites, is specious. It is contrary to the vision of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. This American version of apartheid propagates a we-vs.-them mindset that resulted, for one instance, in the Los Angeles riots in the spring of 1992. Society in its broad sense, with its host of problems, is more progress-prone than the ghetto, period. Public policy shapes the values of citizens, especially the young. Welfare reform should focus on education that provides marketable skills, followed by job opportunities and living arrangements either located outside the ghetto, or in terms of urban renewal within it. Money spent on Head Start and similar programs for young children, as well as programs for teenagers on effective child-rearing, is more than money well spent; it is money well invested. Racism is a truth of the present, but it cannot be

tolerated as an excuse. Many members of oppressed groups have made the melting pot work for them. Some have 'escaped' the ghetto; others have returned and sought to alleviate its problems. Fifty years ago, Blacks were defined to Whites through such characters as Amos 'n' Andy. Today Whites number among their own role models such individuals as General Colin Powell, Oprah Winfrey, and Dr. William "Bill" Cosby, whose doctoral degree is in education.

Here is more of the statistical story of minority America today:

According to a study by the United Negro College Fund (1992), during the last twenty years, the number of Black college graduates doubled. More Black students are enrolled in college than ever before. Presently 1.2 million Black students, nearly two thirds of them women, are enrolled in college. Between 1988 and 1990 college enrollment of Black students increased 8.2 percent, compared to 5.1 percent for all races. The numbers of Black students who complete high school is also increasing. In 1970, fewer than 60 percent of Black students finished high school compared to 77 percent in 1991. In the 1980s, the number of Black households earning over \$50,000 more than doubled to over one million. Black managers and professionals have tripled, today numbering nearly two million. Blacks control purchasing power of more than \$220 billion, and that is expected to double by the year 2000. If African Americans forged an independent nation, it would be the ninth richest in the world.

Now for a look at the negative side of the numbers:

The United States Centers for Disease Control (1992b) report that life expectancy for Whites increased in the 1980s, while for Blacks it declined. The decline was attributed to four factors: murder, diabetes, cancer, and AIDS. The Black murder rate was 6.6 times the White murder rate. The AIDS death rate was 3.3 times higher for Blacks than Whites.

The percentage of Blacks with high incomes (defined as \$74,304 or more for a family of four) increased from 22.6 percent in 1969 to 28.8 percent in 1989; however, 43.9 percent of Blacks still had low incomes (defined as below \$18,576 for a family of four) compared to 18.8 percent of Whites (United States Census Bureau, 1992b). Nearly half of Black families are headed by single mothers. Nearly two out of three Black children are born to unwed mothers, and in cities that figure is 80 percent. African Americans number 30 million, about 12 percent of the US population, yet account for 40 percent of the nation's death row inmates, and about fifty percent of other prison inmates. Young Black men are ten times more likely to die violently than their White counterparts (Brown, 1992).

According to a US Centers for Disease Control report (1992a), overall infant mortality in the United States dropped to an all-time low of 9.8 per 1000 births in 1989 (the most recent year for which statistics are available); however, Black babies in this country died at more than double the rate (18.6) of Whites (8.1). The leading cause of death for White infants was birth defects; for Black infants, it was pre-maturity or low birth weight. This difference in causes is partly explained by differences in access to prenatal care. Our infant mortality rate leaves us trailing the rest of the industrialized world. Japan has the world's lowest rate, 5.0 for 1987 (the latest year for which complete international statistics have been compiled). The gap between Japan's and the United States' rates costs the US \$7 billion each year in health care and lost productivity. Guaranteed medical care for every pregnant woman in this country could be provided for a fraction of that amount.

Some powerbrokers take the easy way out by blaming the victim. Arthur Jensen (in McLaren, 1990), a Harvard researcher, claims that IQ is genetically linked. He claims that Orientals are the brightest, with Caucasians in the middle, and people of African descent at the bottom. Now Lloyd Nunn makes the same claim, but with Latinos at the bottom. US racism is perpetuated in countless other ways as well. The United States and South Africa remain the only industrialized nations to use capital punishment. In the last ten years, the United States joined only Iraq, Nigeria, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Barbados, and Iran in executing people whose crimes were committed before they were eighteen. This suggests that abolishment of the death penalty is a sign of advancement. Texas—the national leader in state executions—has executed 60 people since 1982. And it is Texas that holds the dubious distinction of being the only state of the fifty in which more residents are victims of murder than automobile accidents (Ivins, 1991). In Louisiana nine juvenile offenders have been executed in the last century. All nine were Black. All nine were convicted by White juries. The characteristic death row inmate comes from an impoverished background, lacks education, and suffered abuse as a child.

Environmental destruction is an ongoing news story, but it is acquiring a new spin. A new phrase—environmental racism—has entered the American lexicon. Flores and Lamont (1992) state, “With the highlighted focus on crime in the streets, there has been a dangerous oversight to the crime in the suites—the corporate suites.” Flores and Lamont cite a study by the Commission for Racial Justice of the United Church of Christ which found that three of every five Black or Latino Americans live in communities that have uncontrolled toxic waste sites.

Why must everything be ‘Black’ this and ‘White’ that? Why can't we just be ‘people?’ is a cry heard often from Whites when confronted with Black assertiveness (and at times from

Blacks when confronted with White assertiveness—note Rodney King's naive query, “Why can't we all just get along?” One thinks of Nancy Reagan's solution to the drug epidemic: “Just say no.”) But we cannot ‘just be people’ or ‘get along’ in a racist society. An example of how ‘big government’ can intervene effectively is found in the US Supreme Court's 1979 decision to eliminate exclusive use of at-large representation in political elections (Klineberg, 1992). The court ruled that the at-large system violated the Voting Rights Act of 1972. Since the majority were Whites in almost every geographic voting area, whether local, state, or national, Whites were almost always elected into office. The creation of voting districts determined by race and ethnicity opened the door to political power for minorities.

In the world of visual art itself, minority groups have made strides, although less so than in the other arts. One of many exemplars is Henry Ossawa Tanner, whose mother escaped from slavery as a child. Tanner grew up in Philadelphia and received a public education. He graduated the valedictorian of his high school class, although his art education occurred largely outside of school. He taught himself to draw by rendering animals at the Philadelphia Zoo. During the late nineteenth century, a time when American women artists were traveling to Europe for greater artistic freedom, Tanner moved to France, where he too found less inequality. Scenes from his American childhood and interpretations of Bible stories earned him respect throughout Europe during his lifetime, but his stature in his home country is being established only now, over half a century after his death.

Following Tanner, African American artists, also denied admission to the art mainstream, developed their own mainstream, called the blackstream. Yet White America read this 1945 review of the exhibition “The Negro Artist Comes of Age,” which included work by Romare Bearden, Elizabeth Catlett, Ernest Crichlow, Jacob Lawrence, Charles White, William Henry Johnson, Hale Woodruff, and Horace Pippin:

...there are certain overtones which suggest common emotional factors of experience. Color is an assertive element—color which is used vigorously. Rhythm is almost always an organic part of the design.

The writer is later partly redeemed:

Few persons know of the early Colonial Negro painting or of the isolated men and women in the 19th century who by their pioneering efforts vindicated the right of the Negro to be an artist. In the next decades, “partly by way of sharing [the] Parisian orientation and partly to avoid the handicaps of race, the next generation of Negro artists was divorced both from its own racial background as well as from the American scene. This went so far with some as an unfortu-

nate but understandable avoidance of racial subject matter for fear of being insidiously labeled" (ARTnews, 1945).

The need for the blackstream is diminishing. A growing number of African Americans, Latinos, artists from various oriental groups, Native Americans, and members of other minorities are achieving international acclaim, not as artists of this or that group, but as artists, period.

In art educational settings, one observes that an American Black youth may take no more pride in the art of Africa than an American White youth may take in a painting by Tintoretto. Both are likely to be more interested in, say, a recent graffiti painting, because they perceive its relevance to their lives. It is important to study the art of one's own culture, and in this country that culture is an artistic patchwork. It is also important for art teachers to expand students' sense of relevance to include the art of their heritage as well as that of others. The art of Africa, for example, is worthy of study by anyone. In the fifth century BCE, Herodotus, the so-called 'father of history', wrote, "There is always something new out of Africa" (Preston, 1991). Given that for every ton of earth excavated from Greece and Rome, perhaps a teaspoonful has been excavated from sub-saharan Africa, it is not surprising that Herodotus' 2500-year-old observation is timely today.

For centuries Western imperialists used the art of Africa to justify slavery and capitalist exploitation with the rationale that it documented the 'backwardness' of tribal culture. They worked in concert with Christian missionaries who labeled it pagan. In this century, Western artists have praised it as powerful and sophisticated. Anthropologists have found that it expresses the social complexity of the cultures that created it.

Meanwhile, the West's primary sources of information about African art are Tarzan movies and airport gift shops. The West's understanding has in some respects become less accurate than that of the naive European explorers who first marveled at African art in its original context. Europeans, of course, did not discover Africa any more than Columbus discovered America. Renaissance Europe was fascinated by artifacts from Africa—Albrecht Durer praised African as well as pre-Columbian art (Preston, 1991)—but by the time of the enlightenment, when beliefs were judged for their 'rationality', African art had lost the fancy of Europeans.

Most African languages do not have a word for art. In the Akan language, art is described as *hand-thought*. Often the concern is the process more than the product. One carves a carving, not a sculpture. The hierarchy of art forms that developed in the renaissance of the West—large, historical oil paintings at the top, dropping step by fastidious step to the textile arts at the bottom—has no parallel for the Afri-

can. It is true that Western categories inadequately explain African art, since Africans often do not acknowledge the standards, functions, or morphologies which the West accepts without question. For example, we may classify all tables as one group and all chairs as another group. An object's function is a common means by which African art is classified, but it may just as easily be classified according to a number of other criteria. On the other hand, there is common ground. Both African and European cultures share the notion that an art object's value lies not in the intrinsic worth of its materials, but in its aesthetic meaning. A gold casting, for example, may be more expensive than a wooden image, but not more important.

Many artifacts of African culture were intended to be seen in motion. Performance art may be the West's closest parallel. Removing a mask from its ceremony, from the costume and drumming that accompanied it, and hanging it in a display case with a spotlight gives viewers only glimpses of its meaning, comparable to viewing an object used in performance art and from that discerning the meaning of the performance.

Carmen Lomas Garza—A woman, a Latino, an artist

Carmen Lomas Garza was born in 1948 in Kingsville, Texas, an isolated town on the US/Mexico border. Garza's interest in art began with her public school art classes. She later acquired a university education in art and received her Texas teaching certificate in 1972. In a folk art style she documents the daily lives of rural Southwestern Latinos. Judged unimportant by White America, this group has gone largely undocumented except for Garza's unsentimentalized visual chronicle of family activities such as picking oranges from the backyard tree, breaking birthday piñatas, enjoying a watermelon on a summer evening, making tamales in the kitchen, and lying on the roof looking at stars. Garza (1991) describes her education in the home of the free:

When I was five years old my brother came home crying from the first grade in public school on the third day of classes because the teacher had punished him for speaking Spanish. She had made him hold out his hands, palms down, and then hit him with a ruler across the top of his hands.

This confused us because up to that day my parents had been telling us about how much fun we were going to have in school. So we looked to them for an explanation of this confusing reaction over such a natural act as speaking and why he deserved the unusual punishment. The expression on my parents' faces and their mute silence haunts me to this day. It must have been such a painful moment for them. How could they explain that the punishment was for racial and political reasons and not because he had done something bad....

I did not make nor understand the distinction between the two languages. All I kept thinking was that I was next in line to go to school the following year.

When I finally did get to school, my first grade teacher was a bit more compassionate and actually took the time to explain the fact that the Spanish and the English we spoke were not all one language....

The realization that I knew two languages clicked in my mind just like it had for Helen Keller.... But what had been one world was now two and it seemed that I had to negate one in order to be accepted and exist in the other....

When I was in junior high school I complained to my mother:

"Mami, ya no quiero llevar tacos de tortilla de harina con arroz, frijoles y carne para lonche porque se rien las gringas." ("Mommy, I don't want to take tacos of flour tortillas with rice, beans and meat for lunch because the white girls make fun of me.")

Tacos that were nutritious and made with love, care and hope had to be replaced with sandwiches of baloney and white bread.

In high school we could take Latin, French or Spanish classes but the Mexican American students were still not allowed to speak Spanish in the halls or in other classrooms. It was so ironic to see the white students practicing their new Spanish words and phrases while walking down the halls yet the Mexican American students could expect punishment for doing the same. But the punishment wasn't with a 12-inch ruler across your hands; it was with a 30-inch paddle that had holes drilled into it so that there would be less air resistance as it was slapped across the back of your legs. By the time I graduated from high school I was confused, depressed, introverted and quite angry.

Garza describes her experience as a college art major:

The Chicano Movement for civil rights of the late sixties and early seventies clarified some of that confusion, started the slow process of self-healing and provided a format to vent some of that anger. I had decided at the age of 13 to become an artist so when I was in college the Chicano Movement nourished that goal and gave me back my voice.

But the university art department (which had over 50% Chicano students, the highest compared to all the other departments) did not offer art history classes about my heritage: neither pre-Columbian, colonial or contemporary Mexican; nor native American art, even though we were sitting in the middle of South Texas only 120 miles from the Mexican border. Instead we learned about French Rococo and Henry Moore, the English sculptor. I knew more about the Egyptian pyramids than the pyramids in Teotihuacan. I knew more about Greek mythology than Aztec mythology. The only source for formal training about my heritage was in the anthropology department....

I was looking for information about the Aztecas, Toltecas, Apaches and Hopi; the Nahuatl language and poetry; the

Mayan ceramic sculptures; the gold jewelry and surgical obsidian knives; cultivation of corn, chocolate, cotton, and the vulcanization of rubber. It would have been real cool when I was in high school to have known that way before Columbus invaded this hemisphere the Maya were playing a form of basketball wearing open-toe high top tennis shoes with rubber soles....

The history of generation after generation had been suppressed or ignored by the two institutions of education that I had already experienced.

And so the anger, the pride and self-healing had to come out as Chicano art—an art that was criticized by the faculty and white students as being too political, not universal, not hard-edge, not pop art, not abstract, not avant-garde, too figurative, too colorful, too folksy, too primitive, blab, blab, blab!

What they failed to see was that the art I was creating functioned in the same way as the salvila (aloe vera) plant when its cool liquid is applied to a burn or an abrasion. It helped to heal the wounds inflicted by discrimination and racism.

Chicanismo, a Mexican American political ideology driven by the African American civil rights battles of the 1960s, banded together a people no longer willing to accept Whites' terms. Some of the movement's energy created the Chicano renaissance. Partly educational, partly therapeutic, partly militant, the Chicano renaissance re-examined past events that led to present problems, visually documenting this search through their art. This art is laden with symbols of the bilingual and bicultural Chicano experience.

In 1972 in San Antonio, TX, Chicano artists formed a group called Con Safo, a *barrio* term referring to the removal of social pressure. Lomas Garza, a member of the group, observed its male members depicting their violent, oppressive conditions, and chose instead to portray their culture's positive power. The sexual 'male gaze' common to Western art is replaced in her work with an instructive 'female gaze'. Women are central to her paintings and exert their own locus of control. Paz (1987) describes the Latino view of the mother in terms reminiscent of prehistoric images: "Axis of the world, wheel of time, center of motion, force of reconciliation...fountain of life and the storehouse of religious beliefs and traditional values." Lomas Garza's depictions of the Latino household altar (the origins of which lie in pre-Columbian ceremonies) remind the viewer that it is for women a counterpoint to male-dominated Catholic ritual. Her work is a tribute to the dignity of Latino culture.

Dignity is indigenous to every culture. Since the dignity of a culture is most clearly expressed in its art, arguably the most successful way to teach students to respect other cultures is to teach them of its art. Again we return to the power of art education, and as quickly as we do, we are confronted with

the dormancy to which it has descended. The burden for its awakening lies, rightly or wrongly, on art educators. If we do not accept it, it will not be accepted by anyone. But first we must acknowledge the untapped power of the subject we teach. This calls for a new way of thinking, and it starts within university art education programs. Art education majors and practicing teachers in graduate programs must overcome the tyranny of their fear of grade point averages to demand informative, provocative and usable bodies of knowledge from their professors. From them it will spread to students and then to society. The promise of art education is a cultured society, and a cultured society is a civilized society, which I define as one in which the majority protects the minority.

Part II: Violence

The new American bedtime stories

[Jeffrey Dahmer's] photo on People's cover boosted sales to record heights.

—McCall's magazine

If, as Hughes (1982) suggests, the television screen has become our pool of Narcissus, we have less reason than the Greek youth to be pleased. An American Psychological Association study (1992) found that the average television-viewing child watches 8000 murders and 100,000 other violent acts—our new bedtime stories—before leaving elementary school. The researchers concluded that television devalues social groups, particularly women and minorities, by excluding them or depicting them negatively. Ironically, Saturday morning cartoons contain between four and five times the violence of programs aired after children are in bed.

A colleague of mine once described a trip she took to New Orleans with her husband and teenage son. In the French Quarter they entered a t-shirt shop. Her son picked out a t-shirt and bought it without his mother reading the words on it. When they returned to the hotel to prepare for dinner, her son put on the t-shirt. Included among the several words on it were the words 'sex' and 'violence'. Before he could leave their room, she insisted that a piece of white tape be placed over one of those words. Which one? You guessed it—sex. You knew because her decision mirrors the priorities of our nation. We love violence so much that it is one of our most popular means of entertainment. What is the cost of this cultural priority? I am never one to advocate censorship, but I stop short of claiming that violent media images have no affect on viewers, especially young ones. Can blood splat-

tered across the screen in a Hollywood movie—the essential twentieth-century art form—lead to blood splattered across the floor of your neighborhood school? It probably is one of several factors. Since we are now in the visual realm, this matter becomes our business. Through art we can teach our students peaceful means of resolving conflict and perhaps contribute to diminishing our national blood lust.

Today, breaking the rules in school means something other than sneaking cigarettes in the restroom and kissing in the stairwell. It sometimes means carrying a gun. Vanishing is the clenched fist—*I'm going to hit you*—as a threatening gesture. It is being replaced with the pointed finger—*I'm going to shoot you*. Many adults do not know how to use guns. Do we expect our children to do better? No longer do many inner city children believe they will live forever. A surprising number predict that they will be dead before twenty. The fear of death follows some children through the halls of our urban schools. I can hardly believe I just wrote that sentence.

Although the ultimate answer lies in deep social change, such change takes time. Gun control is an essential short term stopgap—but only a stopgap—that we must implement. The National Rifle Association (NRA) has lobbied efficiently (the day after a gunman slaughtered 23 people in a restaurant in Killeen, TX, the US House of Representatives overwhelmingly rejected a ban on semiautomatic weapons) to continue importing the Uzi submachine gun, the weapon of choice for drive by killings, although this weapon is inappropriate for hunting, sport shooting or self protection. Why then defend its importation? The NRA argument goes that if Americans compromise their right to bear arms one iota, it will open a floodgate of legislation which will lead to the confiscation of all weapons, leaving an unarmed citizenry. But that is not the nature of legislation. A study of the history of legislation reveals that when laws are passed, floodgates do not open. We could banish machine guns and the type of handgun called the Saturday night special and not violate the guarantee of the Second Amendment, which reads:

A well-regulated militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear arms, shall not be infringed.

A well-regulated militia is one thing; an armed citizenry is another. An example of a well-regulated militia is the National Guard. Examples of armed citizenry are plentiful right here in River City: the nervous neighbor who shoots the teenager mistaken for an intruder; the fired employee who returns to work and blasts former co-workers; the wacko who opens fire on the children at the playground; the cult leader who outguns government agents; the child who

finds mom and dad's gun and accidentally blows away a playmate.

As conceived by the founders of this nation, the heart of the Second Amendment is about mistrust of government, not hunting ducks. American colonials founded this nation in a sandwich of violence, both slices of which were initiated by them. The first was the violence perpetrated against this continent's natives, and the second was against England's despotic George III. One notes that Canada, a nation founded by peaceful means, a nation which did not engage in one "Indian war"—in contrast to the US, which engaged in 69 separate such wars—is a less violent nation. In 1991 the nation registered 45 homicides, compared to the 9000 in the US. Adjusting for the fact that Canada's population is a tenth of that of the US, we still end up with 45 compared to 900—five percent. Canada enacted strong gun control legislation in 1977. Some researchers suggest that this legislation has had no appreciable affect on gun violence in Canada. One thinks of physicians who defend the tobacco industry, or male preachers the anti-choice position on abortion.

Even opponents of gun control agree that this right has limits. I should not be allowed to build an MX missile in my backyard, or carry an Uzi into K-Mart. The question is not whether limits should exist, but where the line should be drawn. The NRA, by failing to monitor changing political realities, is losing its support in middle America as gunfire becomes a too-common sound in our homes, schools, streets, and even churches.

The statement that 'guns don't kill; people do' is a tired one, and when followed to its conclusion, ends up not being an argument. Most people know that murders are likely to be of acquaintances, and that they are committed in moments of rage. The majority of murderers regret their acts, whether they get caught or not. The fatally obvious conclusion is that if guns were less accessible, such moments might pass before violence could occur. Saying 'guns don't kill; people kill' is like saying 'cars don't drive; people drive'. Indeed, most cars can't drive without a driver, but then drivers can't drive without cars. Likewise, eliminating handguns wouldn't eliminate murder, but the 'easy' ones—those committed with recently purchased handguns—would occur less often.

Another anti-control argument is that private handguns are needed to protect oneself and one's family. In fact, many police officers—who not only are more likely than the public to face handgun violence, but who carry handguns themselves—agree that if someone is pointing a gun at your or a loved one, you should not be a hero—you should do what you are told. Your and your loved ones' chances of survival are greater that way. The worst thing you can do, police officers say, is pull a gun on someone who is already holding one on you.

The NRA in its wisdom suggests a tautology—if handguns are outlawed, only outlaws will have handguns. It is equally true that if rape or murder is against the law, then only outlaws will commit rape or murder. This argument implies that gun control would disarm law-abiding citizens while leaving criminals armed. One could respond that legally purchased handguns have done law-abiding citizens more harm than good.

Most postindustrial cultures now restrict handguns to "insure domestic tranquility." (That too comes from the Constitution.) Our reluctance to catch up with peer nations on this issue may stem from the fact that the ancestors of many of us were a feisty, adventurous lot simply to have left their homes to cross the huge ocean in search of fortune in a 'new' world. This gene pool generated a populace willing to fight for its rights, resulting in the American Revolution, and the idea of limited government, which produced the US Constitution. It also produced the arrogance and violence that stole a continent. During our first century, these characteristics enabled European adventurers to conquer the indigenous peoples they encountered. During our second century, as the West was settled and we developed an industrial economy, such characteristics would better have been replaced with more humanitarian, cooperative values. This did not occur. As we enter our third century, a better definition of civilization must be realized.

Following the passage of Washington DC's 1976 gun control law, handgun-related murders decreased by 25 percent and firearms-related suicides by 23 percent. Changes in modern weapons have upped the ante. Until recently, killing dozens of people within minutes with one gun was impossible. Ashby (1991) states, "No reasonable person wants to flat-out disarm Americans. But it is time for some curbs on ownership of the types of guns most often used to kill innocent people."

Gun control, however necessary, is still only one answer, and a surface one at that. It is desirable simply because reducing the murder rate in this country is desirable by any means. Will (1992) writes:

Practical measures against violence are many: conflict-resolution skills, for individuals and...gangs; improved public lighting; bulletproof barriers for cabdrivers; reduced alcohol and drug consumption; gun control; family life education; condemnation of entertainment that fosters cultural acceptance of violence as a response to grievances; metal detectors to deter the one in 20 high school students who today carries a gun, and so on.

But how much better to change the nature of our society so that violence no longer is admired, so that violent people no longer become authors of bestsellers, so that purveyors of violence as entertainment no longer become pop culture

heroes. When violence is confused with justice and packaged as entertainment, such as in the movies of John Wayne, Clint Eastwood, and Arnold Schwarzenegger, we link the cause-and-effect relationship between violent entertainment and violent reality. We define violence as morally appropriate, even admirable. The consensus of crime experts has been disseminated in popular literature over and over—the US' uniquely high crime rate is caused by:

- easy access to weapons
- drugs
- desensitization to death (due in part to the television and movie violence epidemic)
- the breakdown of the family
- punishment of children unaccompanied by remedial counseling.

The death penalty convinces Americans that killing can be just. Weapons such as the Trident II nuclear submarine, which carries up to 408 nuclear warheads, are another mirror of our society. In what moral context can such a weapon be built? The Killeen and Branch Davidian murders emerge from the weave of America's moral fiber. They indict a society that cultivates violence. Media conditioning forms the background. Availability of guns constitutes the foreground. Wandering the middle ground is the person who is mad at the world, the person who completes the deadly circuit. Our country is full of such people. A country rooted in the Judeo-Christian ethic of killing one's enemies—seen, for example, in the state-mandated death penalty—makes these hurting people feel justified in lashing out at those they feel are to blame for their failures. Such people fit a fairly rigid profile. They tend to be White males whose histories of failure go back to their school experiences. Did someone say 'school experiences'? We have yet another opportunity in our art rooms to reach these isolated, unpopular students who do not conform to our notions of attractiveness. We can counteract our twentieth-century lack of attachment to others, a disconnect that frees some people to perform bizarre, pathological behaviors.

The public's fear of serial killers entwines with—and sometimes displaces—titillation, says Davids (1992). *People* magazine listed Jeffrey Dahmer on its list of 1991's 25 most intriguing people. Last year *Vanity Fair* devoted a lengthy piece to an examination of Dahmer's psyche. And television news departments, guided by the policy, "If it bleeds, it leads," boost their ratings with 'gore reports'.

We have confused power with violence. A public fed a steady diet of blood-curdling imagery becomes sated. It demands ever greater shock. But the entertainment industry is hardly the first to be blamed for jumping on the bandwagon of blood. Stories based on evil sell. Media moguls may benefit from the profits such fare generates, but glorification in

books, movies and the news can encourage sociopaths to kill by promising them fame, loyal fans, marriage proposals, and splashy headlines.

The potential of art education to contribute to the remediation of our culture's blood lust is overlooked. Tsugawa (1968) polarizes the "aesthetic" and the "anesthetic," reminding us of the latter's definition in the field of medicine—absence of feeling. Langer (1957) defines art as the "expression of feelings." What does a human being become when divorced from feeling? Flannery (1977) suggests that adolescents extinguish aesthetic behavior, replacing it with 'grown-up' behavior. This numbing of feelings that are innate to a child, entrenched by cultural values that define violence as entertainment, causes the child to finally stop "respond[ing] to the events caused by his actions." She offers this account of a person convicted of six murders:

When I was in the Army in the medical corps, I learned about where all the organs are inside the body. With this one guy, me and my buddy got him down into a ditch and I decided to give my buddy an anatomy lesson. I had a real sharp knife with me and I started down low on this fellow's back and started to split it open along the backbone. I cut up around the kidneys and I showed my buddy where the guy's kidneys were. This guy was squirming and crying but I kicked him and made him sit still and shut up. The I cut up through the guy's heart and lungs—my buddy sure was surprised to find out where a heart is.

Thomas Wolfe's 1937 description of a lynching describes another example:

They go up and down the streets of blistered, sun-wide, clay-dust little towns in their shirt sleeves, and they are full of hearty, red-faced greetings. And after a day before the drug stores or around the empty fountain in the Courthouse square, they go out to lynch a nigger. They kill him, and they kill him hard. They get into cars at night and put the nigger in between them, they go down the dusty roads until they find the place that they are going to, and before they get there, they jab little knives into the nigger, not a long way, not the whole way in, but a little way. And they laugh to see him squirm. When they get out at the place where they are going to, the place where the nigger sat in is a pool of blood. Perhaps it makes the boy who is driving the car sick at his stomach, but the older people laugh.... Then they take the nigger through the rough field stubble of a piece of land and hang him to a tree. But before they hang him they saw off his thick nose and his fat nigger lips with a rusty knife. And they laugh about it. Then they castrate him. And at the end they hang him (in Flannery, 1977).

Art is one of life's most effective means for people—including children—to get back in touch their feelings. The anaes-

thetic numbing of contemporary life is not a given. The aesthetic potential of art is one of our culture's best kept secrets—to humanity's detriment. Receiving feelings—for example, hugging and praise—is necessary, but not sufficient. This fills only half of children's needs. Children—and adults—need to express their feelings as well. We must place the aesthetic in the center of the anaesthetic American classroom.

Part III: Sexism

Goddess Great, Goddess Good, thank you for the sisterhood

For men, prehistory ended in the third millennium BCE; for women, it ended a century or so ago.

—Gilda Lerner

A revolution occurs only after the consciousness of the oppressed is raised, whether that of the peasant toward the feudal lord, the colonist toward the king, the slave toward the master, the worker toward the *bourgeoisie*, the believer toward the deity, or the woman toward the man. The lay male of the renaissance assaulted the church for the right to partake in the explaining and defining of the day. Five hundred years later, feminists, male and female, are laying siege to the patriarchal edifice of knowledge.

Modernism was a Gordian knot from which women did not extricate themselves until the angry sword of feminism cut it asunder. Under modernism, who spoke outweighed what was said.

In 1979, Rorty iterated the argument (elaborated earlier by Marx, Nietzsche, and Dewey, and contemporaneously by Derrida and Foucault) that ideas are socially created, rather than “mirrors” of natural truths. This view was adopted by the liberation movements of the sixties and seventies. It was this populist voice that exposed the Western illusion of ideology-free objectivity. It is now old news that patriarchy became invisible, ironically because it was everywhere. Not until changes in educational opportunities in the last two hundred years gave oppressed groups tools with which to appraise their historical roles could they create a consciousness of emancipation. This consciousness can also liberate White men from the ugly consequences of dominance. Men's homes are often their castles to the degree that they are their wives' prisons.

The liberal, White, middle-class feminists of the early 1970s (the only kind at the time) sought to rewrite art history by turning to the structuralist models that had served art historians since the renaissance. They accepted the view that language reflects realities but does not create them. The post-structuralism of the 1980s challenged these models, claiming that language creates meaning, and that reality is constructed on the shifting sands of sexual, racial, political, religious, and economic vectors.

This did not signify the breakdown of gender. Lather (1991) calls for:

...a less puritanical feminism with room for play, desire, and fantasy [to] displace 'the legion of feminist thought police' (Snitow, 1989) who dominate so much of feminism with the dead hand of ideological soundness and binary notions of 'us' and 'them.' To keep feminism opening out, moving beyond its own boundaries, that is the challenge offered by postmodernism.

Postmodernists are not suggesting that ‘everyone is the same’, as some fret, but rather that all groups should be heard. In fact, postmodernists seek to preserve group idiosyncrasies, without which these groups would have homogenized voices. The renaissance view of the heroic male creating in the image of the divine (summed in Michelangelo's Sistine fresco of God reaching for Adam), and its recycled romanticist version of the artist as divinely mad, were undermined. Pagano (1990) writes, speaking of women:

We now have access to education.... We wear the robes of office. The power to give commands belongs to some of us. Certainly our history has ill-prepared us for this power. "Take off your muddy boots," is scarcely equivalent to, "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife," or "All men are created equal."

The designation ‘year of the woman’ as applied to 1992 will be laughable on that day when half of the members of the US Congress are women.

According to Christian teleology, pre-Christian history (i.e., Before Christ, or BC) is only a preparatory stage for history, which begins with the birth of Jesus (i.e., *Anno Domini*, or AD) and ends with his second coming. According to Darwinian theory, prehistory is a primitive state in human evolution—it suggests that that which follows is superior to that which goes before, simply because it survived. Freudian psychology—aspects of which have aided in constructing feminist theories—was used to reinforce traditional views. For the lack of a penis, the female was deviant. Her psychology was constructed on her need to compensate for this shortcoming. Freud's dictum that anatomy is destiny rejuvenated male supremacist arguments. One might respond that anat-

omy once was destiny, but is not anymore. ‘Penis envy’, a social construct moored in the currents of psychoanalytic discourse, makes no more sense today than does ‘penis pity.’ “He’s got something she ain’t got” easily translates into “She doesn’t have to shift herself every time she sits down.” Women no longer seem so willing to recline into society’s missionary position.

The teeth of sexual prejudice, however, are deeply embedded in the cultural flesh. Pulling them is no light task when members of the oppressed group strive with feral zeal to maintain their own oppression. Phyllis Schlafly (1991)—a woman tolerated by the most conservative males of the Right because she is an articulate misogynistic woman—writes:

The polls are now all reporting that “feminism” is a negative word. [Schlafly cites no polls.] Women absolutely do not want to be called feminists. The American people, including (and especially) women, instinctively recognize that “feminism” means radical feminism....

The feminists themselves are now crying all over the television screens and the pages of metropolitan newspapers that they are the victims of a “backlash.” But they brought it on themselves. The American people saw their hatred, contempt, and envy of men by the way they carried on the eleventh-hour smear campaign to try to stop the confirmation of Clarence Thomas for US Supreme Court Justice.

The last time the feminists so openly showed their true face to the public was at the taxpayer-funded event in Houston in November 1977 called “International Women’s Year.” That conference was the occasion when the gender-neutral feminists [Schlafly offers no definition of the phrase “gender-neutral feminists,” leaving readers to grapple with this physio-ideological enigma] coalesced with the abortionists and the lesbians to try to force the Equal Rights Amendment down our throats....

When you see feminists on television, they usually wear dresses, clean up their language, and sanctimoniously advocate “women’s rights.” It is important to realize that, when the feminists talk about “womens rights,” they don’t mean fair treatment for women in jobs, school, or home.

Oh dear. In fact, when we feminists talk of women’s rights, we indeed mean fair treatment. One of the 1991 Resolutions passed by the National Organization for Women, labeled by Schlafly “the principal feminist organization,” includes the following:

...whereas, “quota” has become the catchword for opponents of civil rights, women’s rights and economic justice, and has been used to attack affirmative action, when in fact, quotas are used to exclude women and minorities from institutions and positions of power and to guarantee that the

overwhelming under representation of women in decision-making positions is maintained;

Therefore, be it resolved that the National Organization for Women (NOW) intensify its commitment to the passage this year of a strong and uncompromised civil rights law to restore the rights of women and people of color so decimated by the Reagan/Bush Supreme Court, and that NOW will hold every member of Congress and the President accountable for the watering down or defeat of the Civil Rights Act; and

Be it further resolved that NOW will not endorse any political candidate who backs away from full and unqualified support for affirmative action and the Civil Rights Act and will work to defeat any candidate who uses the phony issue of quotas to deny women and people of color economic justice.

I recall being taught in Sunday school that we children were to be seen and not heard. As I grew into my adult voice, loud and proud, I observed the comparative quiet of many of my female and minority friends. I realized that we all had been taught not only that children, but certain kinds of adults, were to be seen but not heard. Belenky et al. (1986) defined five world views held by women: *silence*—a voiceless state in which the woman, believing she is incapable of possessing knowledge, accepts the ‘truths’ of external authorities; *received knowledge*—a state in which a woman believes that she can own knowledge given by external authorities, and even reproduce it to others, but that she is incapable of generating it from within herself; *subjective knowledge*—a state in which a woman perceives herself as able to intuit knowledge from within (listening to her “infallible gut,” as one of Belenky’s subjects put it); *procedural knowledge*—a state common (but not restricted) to the college-educated woman in which she employs both intuitive and objective means for acquiring portions of a body of knowledge that she perceives as given and inflexible; and *constructed knowledge*—a state in which a woman realizes that knowledge is context-bound and can be self-created.

In at least one sense, Rousseau, Marx, Chodorow, and de Bouvier are quintessential modernists in that they embrace Santayana’s dictum that humanly authored history holds the key to understanding the present—“Those who do not study history are condemned to relive it.” Chodorow (1985) contends that cultures develop in response to whatever social conditions prevail. An example is monogamy. Engels (1972) describes it:

It was not in any way the fruit of individual sex love, with which it had nothing whatever to do; marriages remained as before—marriages of convenience. It was the first form of the family to be based not on natural but on economic conditions, on the victory of private property over natural communal property. The Greeks themselves put the

matter quite frankly: the sole exclusive aims of monogamous marriage were to make the man supreme in the family and to propagate, as the future heirs to his wealth, children indisputably his own....

Thus when monogamous marriage first makes its appearance in history, it is not as the [happy joining] of man and woman.... Quite the contrary, monogamous marriage comes on the scene as the subjugation of the one sex by the other; it announces a struggle between the sexes unknown throughout the whole previous period.... The first class antagonism that appears in history coincides with the development of the antagonism between men and women in monogamous marriage, the first class oppression coincides with that of the female sex by the male.

Engels adds that, in contemporary culture, the *bourgeois* woman experiences more material comfort, but in some ways is less empowered than her proletarian counterpart:

...now that large scale industry has taken the wife out of the home onto the labor market and into the factory, and made her often the breadwinner of the family, no basis for any kind of male supremacy is left in the proletarian household, except, perhaps, for something of the brutality toward women that has spread since the introduction of monogamy. The proletarian family is therefore no longer monogamous in the strict sense, even where there is passionate love and firmest loyalty on both sides and maybe all the blessings of religious and civil authority.... The wife has in fact regained the right to dissolve the marriage, and if two people cannot get on with one another, they prefer to separate. In short, proletarian marriage is monogamous in the etymological sense of the word, but not at all in its historical sense.

Betty Friedan (1963) describes one consequence of monogamy under patriarchy—the “problem that has no name”:

Each suburban wife struggled with it alone. As she made the beds, shopped for groceries, matched slip cover material, ate peanut butter sandwiches with her children...lay beside her husband at night—she was afraid to ask even of herself the silent question—“Is this all?”

Jaggar (1983) contends that some interpret ‘work’ to mean the production and exchange of goods—the kind of work men do. They classify women’s work—and particularly procreative work—not as ‘work’, but as biological processes. Women are thus excluded not only from history, but from full humanness.

Mulvey (in Wallis, 1991) interprets Hollywood cinema by giving examples of man as “maker of meaning” and woman as “bearer of meaning.” She quotes Boetticher (1970), ‘What counts is what the heroine provokes or what she represents. She is the one [or rather the love or fear she inspires in the

hero] who makes him act the way he does. In herself the woman has not the slightest importance.’ Mulvey suggests that Hollywood cinema caters to men’s scopophilia—the pleasure of looking (here meaning the male erotic gaze).

Capitalism, the Great Quantifier, emphasizes external appearance. If women peruse their reflections in store windows more than men do, it is a measure of the fact that they are valued for how they look rather than for what they think. The medical field has further objectified the female body in at least four ways: by filling the field with male practitioners, by defining the physiology of womanhood as a series of diseases, by treating patients—both male and female—with a ‘scientific’ detachment that ignores their emotional needs, and by implementing a costly and complex technology that is omnipresent throughout every step of treatment. When medicine became a ‘profession’ in the eighteenth century, the birthing act was transformed into an illness by male physicians who replaced midwives and moved the site of birth from home to hospital. The twentieth century has made surrogate mothering possible, giving a troubling new spin to the ideas of women selling her bodies and their children.

Tavris (1992) notes that much medical and psychological research is predicated on the unquestioned assumption that male behavior is the norm. When research on women reveals different results, these results indicate deviance. The pathologizing of menstruation and menopause are two examples. Women are treated for ‘premenstrual syndrome’ and the ‘symptoms’ of menopause. Women learn from their doctor’s cues that their bodies are ‘problems’. Assigning the rhetoric of disease to healthy, normal conditions is a form of control. Tavris cites a study in which men were given a checklist of mood fluctuations customarily given to women to identify premenstrual syndrome (PMS). In the study, the male subjects were divided into two groups. For one group, the questionnaire was untitled. For the other, the questionnaire included its title as a checklist of symptoms of PMS. The first group checked as many mood fluctuations as women did. The second group checked significantly fewer. Tavris observes that upper-middle-class males are overrepresented in the scientific community, but that this explains only part of the bias. Some women, she says, want it this way. Women tend to be poorer and less educated than men. They are more tied down by children. By accepting such labels as PMS or Self-defeating Personality Disorder, they can rationalize their behavior without threatening a social system that tolerates a submissive woman but punishes an angry one.

A revealing observation on the status of women concerns the lack of research on the safety of breast implants. This sword is two-edged. A common reason women get breast implants in the first place is to conform to a standard the male-dominated media has created that defines the ‘ideal woman’. She is skeletal but for breasts reminiscent of the bumpers on a

Cadillac. If American males indeed froth at the mouth over elephantine mammaries (in fact many do not), this fascination does not seem to reach beyond pornography houses and bedrooms. It does not extend into the medical research laboratory. Inequities in women's health research in the National Institute of Health are so lopsided that safety conclusions about implants based on hard data emerged only recently.

Most leaders of movements to deny women choice in abortion are men. Most leaders of movements to give women choice are women. Why? Denial of the option of legalized abortion is a powerful weapon of sexual oppression. If powerbrokers can force women to bear unwanted children, they often have to do little more to insure their dominant position, because after the unwanted child is born, other societal mechanisms kick in. The woman who brings such a child into her life is more likely to be poor than one who does not. She is more likely to remain uneducated. She is more likely to be added to welfare rolls. She is more likely not to be married. And so on. Technology has made abortion a relatively safe procedure just as contemporary social dynamics have made the option to choose it a necessity. None of the questions raised by these issues can be answered by a remote deity, an established religion, or a revealed doctrine. A woman's body is sacred to none of these. It is sacred only to her, and only when she gains control of it will she recover her stature as an equal member of the human race.

Bias in research is not restricted to science. Jaggar (1983) points out some of the flaws that have characterized traditional cultural research. First, it has been conducted by men. It has focused on the activity of men. Since male members of colonized cultures have been more likely to learn European languages, the information from observed groups has been from men. Leacock's 1981 treatise, *Myths of Male Dominance*, undermines the presumed universality of male dominance. According to Jaggar:

Anthropologists who have entered a society with male supremacist assumptions have ordinarily found what they expected to find. For instance, they have interpreted the isolation of women's menstrual huts to mean that women were unclean, whereas the isolation of men's huts has been taken to mean that men's activities were sacred. They have failed to note that the male authority they observed was likely to have been enhanced by the impact of colonialism....

Lorde (1984) defines a disjuncture within feminism that falls along classist and racist lines that makes the matter more complex than 'male' vs. 'female':

Poor women and women of Color know there is a difference between the daily manifestations of marital slavery and prostitution because it is our daughters who line 42nd street. If white American feminist theory need not deal with the

differences in our oppressions, then how do you deal with the fact that the women who clean your houses and tend your children while you attend conferences on feminist theory, are for the most part, poor women and women of Color? The failure of academic feminists to recognize difference...is a failure to reach beyond the first patriarchal lesson.

Pagano (1990) defines feminist equality:

To be equal in the patriarchal scheme is to be as good as, the same as, the dominant male. We women do not want equality if equality means equal access to the superior position in a structure of domination and submission.... We do not want the power to oppress, to maim, and to silence.

Lorde reminds us that people seek easy targets for their anger. In 1930s Germany Hitler pointed toward Jews and six million of them died for it. Adorno, Frenkel-Brunswik, Levinson, and Sanford (1969), members of the Frankfurt school, explored how the sexually repressed German model of the male-led family unit created the structure of dominance which led to the easy acceptance of Naziism.

Today's easiest target is the woman on welfare. Welfare recipients combine the most complete set of vulnerabilities of any group: a disproportionate share are minorities, uneducated, single, and poor. Surely out there somewhere is a recipient who is also a wheelchair-bound lesbian—the perfect American target. She is safely hated. If we honor strength and courage, if we applaud long-suffering and perseverance, then she, if anyone, should have her own monument on the Mall in Washington DC.

Whatley (1991) observes that 'sex education' in the public schools often hides behind the safety of biological determinism in terms of 'male' androgen and 'female' estrogen to suggest that sexual differences inhere in hormonal differences. This is to 'explain' matters such as sexual preference, gender identity, cognitive difference, and level of sex drive (That of males, it is suggested, is 'stronger.' This could explain why society gives women responsibility for birth control. We poor men, at the mercy of our raging libidos, simply can't control ourselves).

The names for human sex organs are considered dirty words. Nudity, once considered sacred, is now pornographic. This linkage of sex with evil results from Western religion's fragmentation of mind from body. The body (the earthly, emotional domain) is defined as the woman's province, and the mind (the elevated, rational domain) as the man's. The power of eroticism, which lies in its potential to establish the deepest kind of bond between people, is thus undermined. The debasing of such power, as done by Christianity, for example, replaces this potential with fear. We end up hailing power, reason, and self control without balancing them with

instinct, emotion, and sensuality. True eroticism blends sexuality and spirituality in equal measure. Pornography—defined here as sexually explicit imagery, verbal or visual, that portrays dominance and submission as a desirable model for intimate relationships—is the antonym of eroticism. It is akin to rape in that neither is about sex. Both are about power. Both generate sensations as they deny feelings. They share these characteristics with the practice of casual sex wrought on us by the so-called sexual revolution of the 1960s. The sexual revolution followed patterns of earlier sexual revolutions under patriarchy—it increased the number of unwanted pregnancies, the emotional distance between men and women, and the spread of unspeakable diseases. It gave men easier access to women's bodies without increasing women's political or economic power.

Sexual control of one person by another is one step away from violent control. Violence against women and minorities is rooted in Judeo-Christian-Islamic histories. The ages-old perception is that women are temptresses and that minorities are pagan. But revealingly, when women engage in violent dominant behavior, they demonstrate that the problem lies not in the sexuality of the male but in the construct of dominance itself:

KEYS

1

It started just how they said on Oprah. You were always sorry after. And I always came back.

2

You called me a bum fuck because we weren't conceiving. You told Denise and Lisa it was my fault, so I got checked. The doctor said everything was working fine. I knew you would be afraid that this made it your fault, so I quickly said it was nobody's 'fault'. You cracked your boom box against my forehead anyway. Just in case.

Twenty years of training about 'proper' behavior kept me from striking back. I ran from the house, drove across the lawn and away from you, keeping the blood from my eyes by pressing my sleeve against my head.

3

That taught you to take away my keys. I would rather you hit me with your boom box. We lived thirty miles from town, thirty-four miles from my job. No car key, no house key, no work key, not even the key to my bicycle lock. If I left on foot, you locked me out. I was to stay put until I learned my lesson.

Sometimes I still left. The first time, you forgot to lock the garage, so I slept in the car. After that I slept on the ground behind the hedge so the neighbors wouldn't see. I slept near the front door in case you changed your mind. Fat chance.

I had my keys the time in the front hall when you broke the saucer on my head, so I slept in my office. Security woke me at around three. I told them I was working late, taking a catnap. Okay, they said, we just don't want anyone thinking they can live here. We chuckled together. That morning I washed my hair with soap from a chrome dispenser in a restroom at Burger King.

4

Do you remember the moment our marriage ended? The moment when you said you wished my children from my first marriage were dead and buried in our backyard? We were in the kitchen when you said that. I sat at the kitchen table. You leaned on me and put your face an inch from mine. I saw inside your mouth—

*saw pieces of food in your teeth
smelled tuna fish
felt your hot breath.*

Your pupils were pinpoints. You grabbed the gallon of blue dye you used for your fiber art from the counter and dumped it on my head, into my face, my eyes, my hair, my clothes.

I ran into the shower with my clothes on and scrubbed. The bathroom door opened and closed. I swung the curtain back. You had taken the towels. You were always good with details.

5

I knelt in the tub with the shower running, with my blue hair, my blue face, my blue shoes. I wrapped my arms around myself, placed my chin on my knees and sat still as I conquered that twenty years of training.

When I came out, you were gone. I cleaned up the kitchen except for the blue stains in the table top. They never came out.

6

In our early months together, when the attacks started, I would stand there and take it, my arms limp at my side, shocked that this was happening, that it was an option. I watched you get worse, realized that you would never stop. I began to defend myself, but it didn't help. So I came up with another plan, didn't I? When you took my keys that last time, I told you I would smash the TV if you didn't give them back.

You didn't. I went into the garage, got the axe, walked to the TV and buried the head and half the handle in the middle of the pic-

ture tube. You gave me my keys when I headed for the beveled mirror above the lowboy.

Then I broke a glass over your head. You may have outweighed me, but you didn't swing. It was your turn to be shocked. You called the police and told them I tried to kill you. I went out into the driveway, I don't know why. When they got out of the car, their guns were out, pointed at me.

Another big night for us, hey? You moved into a shelter, telling anyone who would listen what an abused spouse you were.

7

When I went to the psychologist and told her I was a battered spouse, she said my case was unusual. More often, she said, the husband was the doer, not the receiver. She giggled, then stopped herself. After that I sat still for the rest of the hour, quietly answering her questions, giving all the correct answers. She charged me a hundred dollars.

8

In ended just how they said on Oprah. You were sorry after but I didn't come back.

The behavior of the psychologist in this poem epitomizes the dilemma of the battered husband in male-dominated culture. He loses when he is believed (he is a wimp) and when he is not believed (he is both violent and a liar). However, the overwhelming majority of battered spouses are women. Men can learn from women how to touch their feelings. This can eliminate the fear of women that drives men to dominate them. Davids (1992) discusses another phenomenon that reflects the desperation within some women:

One of the oddest sideshows of this media circus [of violence] is the women swooning over serial killers. Richard Ramirez, the "Night Stalker" who brutally killed 13 people in California, had so many female visitors that prison authorities had to call an end to the parade of lovestruck women.

John Wayne Gacy, the "Killer Clown" who tortured and killed 33 boys and young men, had a relationship with a woman with young sons while in prison. Kenneth Bianchi, known with his cousin Angelo Buono as the "Hillside Stranglers" after terrorizing Los Angeles in the late 70s, married in 1989 a woman with whom he had corresponded from prison. And Ted Bundy, perhaps the most infamous of all serial killers, had such a strong following that he was knee-deep in love letters in his cell on death row.

Are women who adopt murderers as heroes mere social anomalies? Perhaps not when compared to the rest of society. The tremendous press coverage garnered by murderers like Ted Bundy and Jeffrey Dahmer has resulted in the public's

shifting from viewing these killers as twisted sociopaths to intriguing public figures, a perception helped along by the fact that many are charming, handsome and intelligent.

Why do these women fall head over heels for murderers? They are often drawn to the fact that convicted killers locked behind bars are unattainable. These women generally come from abusive backgrounds—incest, beatings, abandonment. Their role models for love relationships are soap operas and romance novels, which are often predicated on dissatisfaction—the woman wants the man but can't have him. A relationship with a convicted killer who will probably never get out of prison becomes sweeter, more intense. For these women romance is suffering. Such women tend to feel low self-esteem because of their troubled pasts, and may gain a morsel of self-worth through the killer's notoriety. The serial killer's celebrity sometimes rubs off on them by association. At times they are pursued by reporters and interviewed on television. They get their 15 minutes of fame and a boost to their self-esteem. Some also bolster their egos by thinking of themselves as 'saviors' for these men ("He'll be all right now that he has me"), while others find fulfillment in empathizing with the equally abuse-riddled backgrounds of these men.

Are not these women afraid of the evil streak that runs through such men? After all, many could easily have been the killer's next victim. Often they are not. Such women may not believe that the man they love committed the crimes. Instead, they rationalize his imprisonment, saying the man was framed, or was on drugs or alcohol and therefore was not responsible for his actions. This defense mechanism is employed to avoid dealing with the truth. It removes the cognitive dissonance that results from loving a man who tortured 15 people (Davids, 1992).

Such behavior represents the extreme edge of a broad social undercurrent against women. This undercurrent has a history of legitimacy within the halls of the judiciary. White (1991) describes the case of Myra Bradwell, who in 1872 was denied an Illinois license to practice law because she was a woman. She sued, and the case reached the U. S. Supreme Court, which upheld the state's denial. The opinion, written by Justice Joseph Bradley, includes the following observations:

[L]aw, as well as nature herself, has always recognized a wide difference in the respective...destinies of man and woman. Man is, or should be, woman's protector and defender. The natural and proper timidity and delicacy which belongs to the female sex...unfits it for many occupations...

The...family organization, which is founded in the divine ordinance, as well as the nature of things, indicates the

domestic sphere as that which properly belongs to...womanhood.

The family institution is repugnant to the idea of a woman adopting a distinct and independent career from that of her husband. This very incapacity was one circumstance which the Supreme Court of Illinois deemed important in rendering a married woman incompetent fully to perform the duties of an attorney....

A Supreme Court decision of a different sort offers a counterpoint (Pitts, 1989).

The year is 2010. The President of the United States is a woman. The Supreme Court has eight women and one man. Ninety percent of the House and Senate are women. Men make 59 cents for every dollar a woman earns. Men are getting angry. They want to be equal. We feel they are getting a bit out of hand. Looking back through history, we see that the laws that control the human body are an effective means of oppression. We act. The Supreme Court rules 8-1; ejaculation without the express intent to create life is unconstitutional. The sperm contain half of the genetic material to create life. To ejaculate without intending to create life will be a felony and will carry harsh sentences. The men in our country are in an uproar. Their cry is heard throughout the nation... "Our bodies, our lives, our right to decide!"

Was the following paragraph written by a man or a woman?

Men have a capacity for understanding and compassion which women structurally do not have—do not because women cannot have it. Women are incapable of it. This caring, this compassion is endemic to men. It is not that women don't care. It is that women have more difficulty getting the hang of it. Men think with a broader scope. Men look out and see more than women do. Men have a wide-lens camera because men are not narrowly focused on what is best and most powerful a man.

How does that statement make you feel? Just more sexist garbage from another male chauvinist pig? If we reverse that statement's gender terms, we have a quotation made in the 1990s by Barbara Jordan, a former member of the U. S. Congress from Texas. This is what she said:

Women have a capacity for understanding and compassion which a man structurally does not have—does not because he cannot have it. They're just incapable of that. This caring, this compassion is endemic to us. It is not that men don't care. It is that they have more difficulty getting the hang of it. We think with a broader scope. We look out and see more than a man does. We have a wide-lens camera because we are not narrowly focused on what is best and most powerful for me.

Barbara Jordan and Justice Joseph Bradley seem to agree. Jordan's and Bradley's rationales of biological superiority are fundamentally the same; they are simply adapted to serve their respective sexes. (Jordan, a heroic civil rights pioneer, is quoted by Rugeley (1992) as admitting that her students and friends "criticized me for painting with too broad a brush. I plead guilty. I should have spoken with greater specificity. That is, not all men. Some men.")

Women who hold traditional views are still easy to find. Kent (1991) identifies the male as superior in her advice to women on how to get the men of their choice:

Never deny sex, because that dooms any ideas of his marrying you. Don't expect him to sleep on crumpled or wet sheets. If necessary, you should sleep on the wet spot. If you are overweight, it may be best if you avoid pressing down on him when you are on top. Be a bitch, not a nag. Bitchy females get the men. If you need to pass gas, excuse yourself from his presence. Try not to destroy illusions by unpleasant odors.

After sex, the male is exhausted and has no immediate need of you as a female... After intercourse, the man will have little energy left. Be prepared to revive him with coffee, sweets and appetizing snacks. Always play it safe sexually by consenting only to acts that are generally acceptable. Place the burden of deviation upon him.

The burden of deviation??

Richardson (1981) contrasts the rhetoric of human conception from patriarchal and matriarchal cultural views:

| | |
|-------------|-------------|
| Patriarchal | Matriarchal |
|-------------|-------------|

| | |
|---|---|
| <p>The sperm has a long way to travel through the vas deferens, through the penis, through the vagina and uterus, finally into the tiny tube where the female egg is waiting.</p> | <p>The sperm is provided with a continuous enclosed passageway—thus making its conveyance as simple as possible. In the female, there is a remarkable gap—which the egg must traverse alone.</p> |
| <p>Nature has provided an aggressive and active male cell. Each sperm is composed of rich and highly specialized material and is equipped with a fine wriggling tail which gives it the power of self-locomotion.</p> | <p>Because of its central importance in reproduction, the female egg is much larger than the male sperm. The egg is actually visible to the naked eye and is the largest cell in the body. The male ‘germ’ cells are unbelievably small and must be magnified one hundred times to be visible at all.</p> |
| <p>No less than 225,000,000 cells are emitted from the man’s body with each ejaculation.</p> | <p>The male sperm is produced in superfluous great numbers since the survival of any one sperm is improbable. The egg, being more resilient and endowed with solidity, toughness, and endurance, can be produced singly and yet achieve reproduction.</p> |
| <p>[In terms of function] it may be said that orgasm for women is a luxury, whereas the male function of orgasm is indispensable for conception.</p> | <p>If a woman obtains orgasm before the man obtains his, it is essential that she sees that he has one if fertilization is desired, but also for the humanitarian reason of reducing penis congestion.</p> |

Penis congestion?? We do not need to make ourselves look silly by gauging differences between men and women to measure which is superior. All people are different. Each of us is more similar

to some members of the opposite sex, if all aspects of humanness are considered, than to some members of our own. Separate never is equal. Which way shall we have it—equality for all, or separation and its conjoined twin, inequality? Census bureau research makes clear that a woman with a bachelor's degree makes the same amount of money as a man with a high school diploma. Does this gap narrow with age? No, it widens. Part of the reason for this is that many women who obtain bachelor's degrees enter low-paying professions such as teaching. Society will benefit when more women enter male-dominated fields such as business administration, science, and law. Society will benefit still more when teachers choose to initiate political action rather than take whatever they get dished.

Toys, TV, textbooks, teachers, peers, and parents send out the message that girls, and the women they will grow up to be, are considered less competent, powerful, or important than boys (Cadoff 1992). Ironically, girls start off with an edge—they tend to speak before boys and learn fine motor coordination more quickly—but early on society starts sending girls the message that some areas are off limits because they are girls. Girls do not see themselves on television. This is taken to mean they do not count. Broadcasters can trot out Nielson statistics showing that girls will watch programs starring boys, but boys will not watch programs starring girls (Cadoff, 1992).

How do America's schools stress the message that women are inferior? As girls reach school age, the obstacles to a strong sense of self-worth increase. Many textbooks are colored by sexism. Further, a disparity can develop between how boys and girls are treated in the classroom. Teachers may give boys more attention than girls. Boys may get more constructive help and be asked more probing questions. Girls, on the other hand, may receive more praise for appearance. Boys may also receive more criticism which, when handled well, can be helpful to children. If girls get fewer opportunities to cope with criticism, problems can develop which can be carried into adulthood.

Some of the disparity, ironically, comes from the children themselves. Girls come to school better behaved and more ready to learn. Instead of having an edge, however, girls suffer from the squeaky-wheel dynamic of the classroom: boisterous, assertive boys demand attention, and they get it. They are eight times more likely to call out an answer than girls (Cadoff, 1992). When girls call out the answer, they are more likely to be reminded to raise their hands. This reluctance to speak up in class hurts girls. Although elementary school girls consistently score equal to boys in math and higher than boys in verbal skills on standardized testing, they miss out on the valuable lessons that come from classroom participation. Studies show that children who talk in class

about academic issues are more likely to also have high self-esteem and be high achievers (Cadoff, 1992).

By the middle-school years, boys have forged ahead in academic achievement as well as self-esteem, according to a 1992 study by the American Association of University Women (AAUW). From that time on, girls find it difficult to recover lost ground. Anne Bryant, executive director of the AAUW, comments, "[Nineteen ninety-one's] SAT scores came out a few months ago, and there's still about a 50-point differential between males and females in math and science."¹

A study presented to the American Psychological Association in 1992 claims that differences in self-esteem between boys and girls do not occur until the age of twelve. Why this crisis of confidence at age twelve? The major change is adolescence. By the time girls reach puberty, girls have seen how power is distributed. Beginning with junior high, men teach the 'important subjects', the principal is probably male, the President is certainly male and nearly everyone in Congress is male.

Girls who turn to their mothers are often disappointed. They often find only that their mothers have learned to accommodate. This is different from, for example, the way Black women deal with a parallel issue, racism. Studies of Black children indicate that mothers often say, 'This is not about you. You're great.' Such straightforwardness may be at least part of the reason that the American Association of University Women (AAUW) (1992) has found that Black adolescent girls experience higher self-esteem. They seem able to distance themselves somewhat from sexism and racism.

The AAUW study shows that a bias against girls exists in public elementary and high schools. This is revealing in light of the fact that seventy-two percent of their teachers are women. The study also found that girls receive fewer scholarships than boys with equal or slightly lower grades. However, whereas in 1970 five million college students were male and 3.5 million were female, in 1989, 7.3 million were female and 6.5 million were male. In 1972, five percent of law degrees were awarded to women, but today—despite the additional obstacles created during the Reagan/Bush era—41 percent go to women.

In the art world, it took the kakistocracy of Ronald Reagan and his *Doppelgangers* the Bushes to drive the Third World and feminist art communities to close ranks. Organizations formed with the specific purpose of exhibiting the work of marginalized groups. But when art prices went through the roof in the 1980s, they left the work of women artists on the floor, says Mary Ross Taylor (1992), Director of the Lawndale Art Center in Houston. She speaks of a new voice

emerging from this din of inequity, the Houston Gorilla Girls, a group of anonymous women artists (formed in conjunction with a New York group that uses the spelling “Guerrilla Girls” and immodestly labels itself the “conscience of the art world”) who regularly disrupt art events wearing gorilla masks to pass out bananas on which are written statistics about the status of women in the visual art world. Examples include, “90% of art models are women. 65% of art students are women. 20% of art faculty are women,” “93% of the paintings of women in the Metropolitan Museum are nudes. Does a woman have to be nude to get into the Met?” and “NYC museums—how many one-person woman artist shows in 1991? Guggenheim-0; Met-0; Modern-1; Whitney-0.”

A flyer generated by the New York Guerrilla Girls lists “The Advantages of Being a Woman Artist”:

- Working without the pressure of success.
- Not having to be in shows with men.
- Having an escape from the art world in your four freelance jobs.
- Knowing your career might pick up after you’re eighty.
- Being reassured that whatever kind of art you make, it will be labeled feminine.
- Not being stuck in a tenured teaching position.
- Seeing your ideas live on in the work of others.
- Having the opportunity to choose between career and motherhood.
- Not having to choke on those big cigars or paint in Italian suits.
- Having more time to work after your mate dumps you for someone younger.
- Being included in revised versions of art history.
- Not having to undergo the embarrassment of being called a genius.
- Getting your picture in the art magazines wearing a gorilla suit.

(in Carr, 1992)

Carr describes how the efforts of the Guerrilla Girls first became visible in 1985, when posters suddenly appeared throughout Soho listing galleries beneath the statement, “THESE GALLERIES SHOW NO MORE THAN 10% WOMEN ARTISTS OR NONE AT ALL.” More posters named “collaborators”—male artists who did show in those galleries. Carr (1992) writes that “both pieces were cheerfully tagged ‘A Public Service Message from Guerrilla Girls—Conscience of the Art World.’” Thus began a barrage of such ‘public service announcements’ as “DO WOMEN HAVE TO BE NAKED TO GET INTO THE MET MUSEUM?” which featured a naked woman wearing a gorilla mask, and “THESE CRITICS DON’T WRITE

ENOUGH ABOUT WOMEN ARTISTS,” under which appeared a list of twenty-two names. These posters were familiar enough by 1986 to release one declaring “IT’S EVEN WORSE IN EUROPE” without defining “IT’S.” With membership estimates of up to 100 (although no one is saying), their anonymity after two decades in the gossipy New York art community testifies to the seriousness underlying their sardonic humor.

Recently they have addressed feminist issues beyond the art world. A 1991 poster featuring the image of a female soldier in Operation Desert Storm bears the question, “DID SHE RISK HER LIFE FOR GOVERNMENTS THAT ENSLAVE WOMEN?” Another reads:

GUERRILLA GIRLS EXPLAIN THE CONCEPT OF NATURAL LAW.

1. *Protecting the rights of the unborn means precisely that. Once you’re born, you’re on your own.*
 2. *Sexual harassment is man’s natural response to women on the job. Women who report it are uptight prudes. Women who don’t are ambitious whores.*
 3. *Women are paid less in the workplace because they have no business being there.*
 4. *Anyone who is unemployed or homeless deserves it.*
 5. *The people who have the most money are entitled to the best health care.*
 6. *AIDS is a punishment for homosexuality and drug abuse. Only heterosexuals, celebrities, and children deserve a cure.*
 7. *Life is beautiful. Artists, writers, or performers who want to inflict disgusting, homosexual, erotic, satirical or political images upon the public should have their [redacted] cut off.*
- grants*

As early as 1971, Linda Nochlin (1992) wrote:

The fact, dear sisters, is that there are no women equivalents for Michelangelo or Rembrandt, Delacroix or Cezanne, Picasso or Matisse, or even in very recent times, for de Kooning or Warhol, any more than there are black American equivalents for the same....

But in actuality, as we all know, things as they are and as they have been, in the arts as in a hundred other areas, are stultifying, oppressive, and discouraging to all those, women among them, who did have the good fortune to be born white, preferably middle class and, above all, male. The fault, dear brothers, lies not in our stars, our hormones, our menstrual cycles, or our empty internal spaces, but in our institutions and our education—education understood to include everything that happens to us from the moment we enter this world of meaningful symbols, signs, and signals. The miracle is, in fact, that given the overwhelming odds against women, or blacks, that so many of both have

achieved so much sheer excellence, in those bailiwicks of white masculine prerogative like science, politics, or the arts....

The angry activism of feminist artists peaked in the early seventies. Women achieved record-breaking (though still unequal) gallery and museum showings in the late seventies. At this time—perhaps seduced into complacency by the success it was experiencing—the movement lost grassroots momentum, and showings of art by women declined in the eighties. It is time for a resurgence of feminist anger. It is time for the phrase ‘woman artist’—along with ‘woman senator’, ‘woman mayor’, ‘woman police chief’, and ‘woman governor’—to follow ‘school marm’, ‘midwife’, and ‘lady in waiting’ into oblivion.

Over the centuries, the hiddenstream has contributed to civilization in ways that are becoming appreciated as feminist historians explore its traditions (Collins and Sandell, 1984). Its ideas inform postmodern thought. The products of hiddenstream artists have simultaneously filled aesthetic and practical needs. Hiddenstream artists have evolved techniques which integrate art production with family and community life. They have preserved their techniques through art educational means at the grassroots level. Their means of production develop cooperation and social bonding. Their processes often recycle discarded products and tend not to involve ecologically unsound materials. These artists have generated motifs and processes that have often inspired mainstream artists. Perhaps above all, hiddenstream artists have resisted the separation of art and life, of production and consumption, of work and home, with greater success than have artists of the mainstream. Some mainstream artists, such as Judy Chicago (1986), incorporate the hiddenstream into their work. Chicago designs fabric images which are then produced by skilled artisans and exhibited as conjunctive efforts. Chicago is quick to acknowledge the roles played in the productive process by her collaborators. Perhaps the most revolutionary aspect of art by women and minorities is not the imagery itself, but the fact that it was made by women and minorities. Chicago (1977) describes the sacrifice the woman artist must make to be successful:

Either be oneself as a woman in one's work and live outside the art community or be recognized as an artist at the price of hiding your womanliness.... The women who had opted for their personal subject matter had suffered the price of never seeing their work enter the world. The women like me whose work had become visible had sacrificed a part of their personalities to do so.

Despite the obstacles, half of the interesting artwork done today is by women. This statement was equally true twenty years ago; the difference is that today artists who are women are angry enough to blast inroads into the art press, obtain gallery showings, and achieve positions on university art fac-

ulty—in short, in all corners of the art community. The highest price paid for a work of art in the 1990s was for a painting by Frida Kahlo. Heartney (1993) writes that, of the 87 artists included in the 1993 Whitney Biennial, “...the vast majority...are members of ‘marginalized’ populations: women, African Americans, Asian Americans, Latinos, and gays.”

Despite such progress, however, the status of women in visual art remains uniquely oppressed among the arts. Women as major forces in music, dance, literature, and theater are common. Lorraine O’Grady, an African American conceptual artist, depicts the female body as subject rather than object. O’Grady (1992) states:

There's no question that visual art is the last holdout of white elitist culture. The ability of the dominant white culture to keep the work of despised minorities from being seen seems to know no bottom. The nineteen seventies version of feminism died a natural death—and should have—because it was the bastion of white middle class women. It failed to reach minorities, working class white women, and fundamentalist women. A black female intellectual writing in the late nineteenth century said, ‘The most interesting person in our culture is the colored girl.’ That is true in the late twentieth century as well. She has been washing everyone else's laundry—white males', white females', black males', and her own.

In the late 1980s, the voices of feminists of Color began to be heard in the art world. In 1987 the National Museum of Women in the Arts was inaugurated in Washington, D. C., and the same year Faith Ringgold launched Coast to Coast, a group that promotes projects by women of Color. The late 1980s also witnessed the founding of Vistas Latinas, a coalition of Latina artists, and Godzilla, an Asian-American artists association with a vocal feminist contingent. In New York in 1991, a week after the Clarence Thomas hearings, artist Deborah Kass arranged a panel discussion of feminism’s role in art in the 1990s. She hit a nerve. Nearly a thousand attended the event, and the Women’s Action Coalition (WAC) was born. Originally consisting of artists, the organization mushroomed to 1900 members in New York, 20 chapters nationally, and chapters in London, Paris, and Toronto. The organization has widened its umbrella to support a variety of women’s issues, as well as ACT-UP, NOW, the Guerilla Girls, WHAM (Women’s Health Action Mobilization), and the Women’s Caucus for Art.

WAC spokesperson Ellen Salpeter refers to the “bubble of energy” that was pierced not only by the under-representation of women in the art world, but also by the Anita Hill spectacle, the Mike Tyson and William Kennedy Smith trials, and the erosion of *Roe v. Wade* (Mifflin, 1992). The creation of these organizations reflects the discrimination some

minority women have found within the broader feminist ranks. Some White feminists are accused of seeking to appear liberal as they colonize the issues of women of Color. Some feel that issues of racism will soften feminism's focus.

In museums, feminists such as Robert Storr, a curator of painting and sculpture at New York's Museum of Modern Art, and Kathy Halbreich, who directs the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis, are shifting the balance of art world power. In 1990, Storr began to exhibit shows of which 70 percent was work by women. When Halbreich was hired in 1990, the board consisted of one person of Color. Through her efforts, in the fall of 1992, there were four.

Women artists of Color fight two wars. According to a Guerrilla Girls study (Mifflin, 1992), the work of men of Color in Whitney Biennials held from 1973 to 1987 amounted to 4.1 percent, and for women of Color, 0.3 percent. Interestingly, in the celebrated exhibition "Making Their Mark: Women Artists Move into the Mainstream 1970-1985," eight of 87 artists were minorities. Providing context to these statistics is the fact that 28 percent of the present US population is non-White.

The National Museum of Women in the Arts in Washington D. C. has been criticized for ghettoizing women artists by separating them from men artists. Director Susan Fisher Sterling states that the museum's intent is to give women the visibility that the mainstream has denied them. "I try to give people their first museum exhibition and send them out in the world. That's the main function the museum serves. We do a lot of the same things for women that other museums tend to do for men" (in Mifflin, 1992). Judy Chicago describes the precariousness of the issue. "Would I rather have existing museums show an appropriate number of women artists? Yes. Is that the reality? No. In the absence of that reality, it's absolutely imperative for women to take responsibility for institutionalizing our own culture" (in Mifflin, 1992).

ENDNOTES

1. Willingham (1985), however, documents the unreliability of the Scholastic Aptitude Test as a predictor of college success. It is roughly half as accurate as "high school rank," for example, yielding a regression weight of .58 compared to 1.02 for "high school rank" ($p = .01$). In fact, Willingham found it useful only when grouped with a number of other predictive variables such as "high school honors," student's personal statement," and "school reference."