It never occurred to Phoebe Spinrad that the poster would cause a problem. True, a colleague in Women's Studies whom she had thought might embrace it in the name of feminist solidarity had been scornful. But honoring women who served in the military during war was an issue close to the heart of Spinrad, a onetime Air Force Captain who now teaches 17th century literature at Ohio State, so she went ahead and tucked up the poster — it showed a picture of military dog tags and the title, "Not all Women Wore Love Beads in the Sixties" — on the door of her office in Denney Hall, and forgot about it until the morning in October, 1991, when she came to work and found that it had been inked over with an angry scrawl: Yeah, some were murderers!

Her first inclination was simply to take the defaced poster down and ignore the incident. A slim, self-critical 50-year-old who looks younger, Spinrad had done a lot of accommodating in her years at Ohio State as she watched trendy nihilisms and chic posturings take over the literature profession in her department. But as she sat down and looked back on it now, it galled her all over again that during Operation Desert Storm, anti-American posters had bloomed like so many flowers of evil on her colleagues' doors, some explicitly pro-Saddam, others more generalized in their anti-Americanism, but none of them ever damaged. (One of her colleagues had gone so far as to mount an American flag, upside-down and smeared with mud, on her door.)

She was also annoyed when she considered once again how Vietnam-era vets at Ohio State had been made to feel that they were present only on the sufferance of a sensibility that would fold at the first step in a process that would draw her into a cultural conflict that was bigger than her own problems on the Columbus campus. It was a prospect that filled her with doubts. But then she reminded herself that she had been at war before and it was fitting that she should re-enlist.

The last time she'd had such a feeling was in 1970. After getting a degree in English from New York University in 1963, she'd spent the rest of that troubled decade working in publishing and watching with dread as the war in Vietnam unfolded. For years she had been a member of a Bronx chapter of the left-leaning Reform Democratic Club, but was perturbed when the rhetoric of the membership began to make a transition from anti-war to anti-American. ("I was brought up with that old Roman attitude toward..."

Hollywood Director John Ford once said, "If there's a conflict between the man and the legend, then print the legend." Change that word to myth and you have what happened when Malcolm X collaborated with Alex Haley on the Autobiography. They created the mythological Malcolm. The myth became unalterable, and any attempt to revise it was considered heretical. I didn't realize how heavy-handed the iconography was until I wrote Malcolm: The Life of a Man Who Changed Black America. Since the book disputes the myth, it took me nearly a decade to get it published. Initially, I did not even intend to write a biography, only an article. I assumed that the brief article I had in mind would take me about a year. But in 1971, with the help of John Fitzpatrick, Massachusetts Commissioner of Corrections, I obtained access to Malcolm's voluminous prison record, which led me to Malcolm Jarvis, whom Alex Haley had transformed into the fictional character "Shirty." Jarvis, in turn, led me to dozens of people who had known Malcolm when he was a teenage hustler. I didn't know it at the time, but I had begun a quest that would end only after I had interviewed nearly 500 people.

After several months in Boston and New York, I flew to Michigan, where Malcolm grew up, expecting to stay for six weeks. But, counting return trips, I spent more than six months there. I interviewed scores of Malcolm's elementary and junior high classmates and teachers. The Malcolm that some of them described was the antithesis of the mythic figure. Which version was real? Eventually, I realized that most of the inconsistencies were attributable to the fact that there were many Malcolms. He behaved one way around some people and quite differently around others.

One relative who had an enormous impact on him was his half-sister Ella. My meeting with her began with her heroic, larger than life description of their father Earl Little. But I couldn't reconcile it with the reports I heard about him from former friends and associates in Lansing. One person I interviewed suggested that I examine the records of the 1929 fire that had destroyed Earl Little's Lansing home after he had been served with an eviction notice. What I found prompted me to check the records of the 1965
DEAR HETERODOXY:

Please remove my name from your mailing list. Your publication is breathtakingly offensive.

James C. Oldham
Professor of Law
Georgetown University

Recently, we received a copy of your publication Heterodoxy. I must say that I was shocked. After attempting to read several of your articles, I realized that this was not anything that I wished to read now, or ever again in the future. I was insulted and felt that your views on certain topics showed a decidedly radical point of view. Take our foundation off your mailing list at once.

Louann F. Ivins
John E. Galvin Charitable Trust

You can keep sending your ridiculous publication to me as long as you like. I'll use it to start fires. But I will never send you a dime. You are unconscionable intellectual muggers and rapists.

Mark S. Chmura

Cheers for your publication. It's about time the liberal left understands that big and I fear it might be damaging for me to prove the dullness of the author's weighty axe, while the exclusion of any hint of white provocation was plainly irresponsible. Let's face it, European colonists of the Americas could have cared less about the indigenous peoples they rolled over and there must have been no shortage of men like Grenier screaming "savages!" when the Indians started to fight back. And as for the denouncement of Indian idealization in recent books and films, what's the big deal? For those who crave the true story of America, the image of great heroes like John Wayne killing Indians by the score in countless "B" westerns will certainly help to set the record straight.

Julian Malone Chicago Heights, Ill.

I am enclosing an article called "Racism 101" from The New Republic about a conference in Atlanta which was devoted to developing strategies to remove all Western influences from our schools and teach everything from an African-centered perspective. The article mentions that CNN and NPR broadcast glowing reports about the conference. The South Africans ask "Can America Avoid Social Catastrophe?" My question is: Does a society which uses its news media which covers up the crime and a government which simply ignores it, even deserve to avoid social catastrophe?

Hugo S. Cunningham Somerville, Massachusetts

I was pleased to be quoted in your November article on family issues, "Ozzie and Harriet in Hell," but my first name is not Randall.

David Blankenhorn Institute for American Values

I and my family and friends were impressed by the September issue. You nailed it to my mother out of the blue. You got a subscriber in me and maybe some of my friends. Mom & Dad got a big kick out of it, but thought it was aimed at a younger crowd. I think the "Hickory, dickory, dock..." bit was their cause for reservation. Political correctness gets worse every day here in and near Ann Arbor. The PC hub of the entire state, of course, is the University of Michigan where stunning things are happening. One freshman woman told me that on the first day in Anthro the very first thing her TA did was to announce to everyone she was a lesbian and that she wanted everyone homosexual and lesbian to feel comfortable in her class. So much for everyone else feeling comfortable.

The PC movement drove me out of U of M. I will never give U of M one cent of support because of the administration's easemacular, Gulliverian pandering to such Lilliputian, self-orbiting groups as the (redundantly named) "United Coalition Against Racism," which would more properly be named "The Coalition of Irate Black Racists." Yes, racism is at least a two way street By the way, I wish this were not the case, but due to my current profession, if you reprint any part of this letter, it must be marked "anonymous, Ann Arbor." This town just isn't that big and I fear it might be damaging for me to stigmatize myself and the firm for which I work. The PC winds whip around Ann Arbor with such alacritous fervor.

Anonymous, Ann Arbor

Richard Grenier's "The Greening of the Merciless Red Man" was both unbearably long on liberal-shadow bash and short on any real attempt at understanding the past or present state of Indian affairs. The excessive accounts of past Indian violence throughout the piece served only to prove the dullness of the author's weighty axe, while the exclusion of any hint of white provocation was plainly irresponsible. Let's face it, European colonists of the Americas could have cared less about the indigenous peoples they rolled over and there must have been no shortage of men like Grenier screaming "savages!" when the Indians started to fight back. And as for the denouncement of Indian idealization in recent books and films, what's the big deal? For those who crave the true story of America, the image of great heroes like John Wayne killing Indians by the score in countless "B" westerns will certainly help to set the record straight.

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Julian Malone Chicago Heights, Ill.

1. Thank you very much for Jay Overacker's article "Ozzie and Harriet in Hell" in the November issue reconstructing the bogus statistic that "only 26% of children are raised by married couples." The mainstream media were asleep at the switch. 2. I enjoyed Judith Weizner's satire of the Americans with Disabilities Act in "Critiques of Modern Science," New Jersey curriculum transformation project (funded by the Ford Foundation—ed).

John Leo
US News & World Report
FLUSHING OUT HOUSTON BAKER:
In our October issue we described how Houston Baker, head of the Center for the Study of Black Literature and Culture at the University of Pennsylvania, refused to let the Psychology Department which shared the Center's building also share the first floor toilet which was on his side of the structure. In the President's Column of the October issue of the Newsletter of the Modern Language Association, the same Houston Baker waxes eloquent about his Center and its brethren: "What is unique about these new.. African American structures of brick and stone, stucco, glass and steel is that they are all representative of the best strains and filaments of the American democratic tradition. They house and embody the finest ideals of free democratic interaction and free intellectual inquiry. None but the hypocritical, the guilty, the racist, the uncivil, or the pathetically envious need fear discourtesy or rejection upon entering these new black public intellectual spaces." And no psychologists with full bladders either.

MRS MANCHUANIAN CANDIDATE:
According to the San Francisco Chronicle, in the summer of 1971, Hillary Clinton, then Hillary Rodham, a young law student, asked her profs at Yale Law School where she could find a "legal law firm" to intern with for the summer. They arranged for her to come to Oakland to work with Robert Treuhaft, pinko husband of pinko writer Jessica Mitford. Just then Treuhaft's office was representing the Black Panther torturers of Alex Rackley. Thus were the future President's future wife's views molded in the crucible of social justice.

WHERE ARE THEY NOW:
Bernadine Dohrn, leader of the Weatherman Underground organization in the 1960s, advocated of terrorist acts ranging from bombings to armored car robberies, fan of Charles Manson, suck to Castro and Daniel Ortega, has found a niche at Northwestern University School of Law. It seems that Dohrn, who, as far as anyone can tell, has shown no remorse for her inane and destructive advocacy of "revolutionary violence," has become a lawyer during her years of internal exile. Not only that, she is now involved in a Children and Family Justice Center located within the Northwestern Law School. This Center has received its backing from the MacArthur Foundation and is now embarking on an ambitious policy of "reform." The beleaguered families and children of Cook County can sleep easier now that the Lady Macbeth of the New Left is on the case.

MORE MINNESOTA MALAISE:
On November 12, the administration of the University of Minnesota summarily ordered all faculty and teaching assistants in Anthropology, Cultural Studies, Comparative Literature, History, etc. to attend "Mandatory Sexual Harassment Training" sessions. The memo from the Office of the Dean of Liberal Arts making this demand also informed faculty that they would be required to sign certificates of attendance. There was murmuring in the department even of the UM faculty who long noted as among the most receptive in the nation to political correctness, about the peremptory nature of the order. Some compared the "required" signatures of attendance with the infamous loyalty oaths of the McCarthy era. Yet the sessions themselves were filled with a bathos that left faculty members amused more by the absurdity of the situation than at its political coarseness. One of the individuals keynoting the sensitivity training, a professor named Gary McLean, gave examples of sexual harassment that included a student complaining her professor had publicly criticized his ex-wives. Other speakers provided by the Dean defended the university's description of sexual harassment as something that can be "as blatant as rape and subtle as a look." Law Professor Mary Fellows, for instance, called the policy "prudent and appropriate." "Who's doing the looking and who has to put up with what look? That's the point, that's the political insensitivity issue... What's behind that look? What is part of the stereotype that's going on with regard to white women, with regard to lesbians, with regard to gay men, with regard to women and men of color?" This left faculty who had been dragged into the meeting shaking their heads. Defending a look as grounds for a harassment proceeding was tantamount to prosecuting for impurity of thought, one observed. Another brought up the notorious case of radical feminists' suit against the UM Scandinavian Department in which one of the charges was the failure of a faculty member to smile at a graduate student. One could be prosecuted for looking; one could also be prosecuted for not looking.

DOING THEIR OWN THING:
The New Press is a feminist newpaper at Georgetown University. This publication has a section called "Dialogues" in which the two editors of the newspaper sit down and talk about a feminist or lesbian issue, record their conversation and then publish it in the paper. The most recent dialogue was entitled "The Political Empowerment of Masturbators" in which the two editors proposed this train of logic. (1) If one masturbates, she becomes more secure with herself. (2) If one is more secure with herself, then she will be able to throw off political oppression. (3) Therefore, masturbate, as it will hold to throw off the political oppression suffered by women.

REAPING THE WHIRLWIND:
In colleges, multiculturalism has been clearly identified as a source of heightened race consciousness and growing racial tension. But now the movement has spread into secondary schools with predictable consequences. In late November, a study appeared in the Los Angeles Times indicating that there were second thoughts. "Educators at the elementary, secondary and university levels are rethinking that idea — and worrying that past efforts to teach multiculturalism may have widen the ethnic divisions they were meant to close." The article quotes Karina Escalante, a senior at Cleveland High School in Reseda, where African-American and Latino students clashed last year. "They teach you that you have to identify with your own group," the Times goes on. "In such a climate, even the celebration of ethnic holidays has caused problems, with one group believing that another got more attention or buyout another group's festivities," said Casey Browne, who heads the peer counseling program at North Hollywood High [when there was a riot with violence erupting between black and Hispanic students this fall].

ANOTHER REASON FOR A RECOUNT:
"I will cut off the head of my baby and swallow it if it would make Bush lose." Iraqi wife of immunity. Election Day in Newweek.

NO QUOTAS HERE:
In order to build up our complement of female faculty, in the spring of 1990 the Department [of Philosophy] adopted a ten-year employment equity hiring plan whose aim is to fill two-thirds of our tenure-stream appointments during the decade with women.

HETERODOXY:
MORE MALCOLMANIA: 200 Black Students at the University of Rhode Island to complain that a Malcolm X quotation engraved on the face of the university library had omitted a reference to "fighting the white man" and spoke only of Malcolm X's love of reading.

FORDIAN SLIP:
"The Ford Foundation hires staff without regard to race, color, religion, national origin, age, gender, sexual orientation, marital status or disability. Minority candidates are encouraged to apply."

MORE MALCOLMANIA:
"The Ford Foundation hires staff without regard to race, color, religion, national origin, age, gender, sexual orientation, marital status or disability. Minority candidates are encouraged to apply."

AFROCENTRISM ALERT:
As we go to press, tens of thousands of young American servicemen and women are embarking on a rescue mission to Somalia. Where are the black demagogues who tick a metronome on the subject of American racism and military intervention? They have not yet uttered a peep about how this country is spending billions and risking lives to save a helpless African country which has been abandoned and ignored by its African neighbors who are too busy in corruption or impotence to offer a helping hand.
by BARBARA RHOADES ELLIS

Their presentations are slick but stale, like a tour guide's spiel but with even less content. Reinhold tries to energize the drowsy gathering with cartoons projected on a screen. One shows several airplane passengers — white men in business suits — agast to learn that the woman on the loudspeaker is the pilot. In another, Delacroix's Liberation of the Sabines (and bare-breasted) symbol of French freedom, is shown leading her band of revolutionaries, but a balloon is added which has her saying, "Now I've got to go home and fix dinner." But Reinhold repeatedly identifies her as Joan of Arc. Schuster looks on without comment So much for cultural literacy.

Getting serious, Reinhold shares with us banal research tidbits about Smith women: whether they follow a career path after college or not, they all find themselves in their early thirties wondering whether they've made the right choice. "Career salient" students (we learn) are more likely to go to faculty to seek concrete advice. There's more about women supporting women and Smith alumnae networking. Nobody seems to notice that the prevailing aggressively egalitarian spirit clashes with this advocacy of the old girl network of the Wellesley Conference.

The group splits in two and we join Van Dyne and Schuster for "hands-on" exercises to achieve "a more equitable pedagogy." We learn that this amounts to professional development. We are told to list what we expect of her is exactly what she expects of herself: a teacher who is knowledgeable, well-prepared, and dynamic. Schuster and Van Dyne eye her warily and change the subject. Luckily for everyone time is nearly up.

Our next workshop features PC Pooh-Bah Peggy McIntosh [see "The Ten Wackiest Feminists on Campus," Our next workshop features PC Pooh-Bah Peggy McIntosh [see "The Ten Wackiest Feminists on Campus," Heterodoxy, May 1992], co-author of the study on bias being touted at the conference, and associate director of the Wellesley Center for Research on Women. McIntosh once again her theory on vertical (male) vs. lateral (female) thinking, she talks about the fraudulent of expertise: to speak on any subject is to claim expertise and to subscribe to hierarchical structures, which is fraudulent. The irony of McIntosh herself speaking to us is lost on her. She admits that certain kinds of experts are necessary — to keep bridges from falling down, to control air traffic, to perform open-heart surgery. But 'other areas of life are different...the world is evolving in complicated ways.'

McIntosh herself is a model of self-esteem: in this brief talk she manages to tell us that her daughter graduated summa cum laude from Harvard, is musically gifted, and is now at Oxford, that the response to McIntosh's paper has been overwhelming from women and men, that she also went to Harvard and is a good cook and a savvy parent, and that she has a large house with a library and conservatory. (Where is Colonel Mustard with a lead pipe when we need him?)

Dinner is served at candle-lit tables alongside the Oakland Hilton's swimming pool. As we eat, we get McIntosh again, this time sharing the podium with Emily Style, a classroom teacher. They are co-directors of the national S.E.E.D. Project (Seek-

A s the conference bus passes through the gates of leafy, clois-
tered Mills College, near Berke-
ley, I am reminded of the riveting news footage of two years ago: Young women sobbing, shrieking, clutching one another. A car accident perhaps? A crazed gunman loose? Had their families been wiped out? Nothing so mundane: these Mills students were reacting to the college's decision to admit men! Fortunately, the decision was Nothing so mundane: these Mills students were reacting to the college's decision to admit men! Fortunately, the decision wasNothing so mundane: these Mills students were reacting to the college's decision to admit men! Fortunately, the decision wasNothing so mundane: these Mills students were reacting to the college's decision to admit men! Fortunately, the decision wasNothing so mundane: these Mills students were reacting to the college's decision to admit men! Fortunately, the decision wasNothing so mundane: these Mills students were reacting to the college's decision to admit men! Fortunately, the decision wasNothing so mundane: these Mills students were reacting to the college's decision to admit men! Fortunately, the decision was...
ing Educational Equity and Diversity). We learn that an essay by Style is "part of the framework being used by the state of Minnesota to promote a more inclusive curriculum."

Though Style speaks ponderously and at length about "windows and mirrors" and "webs of connection," she does at least find a new victim category for us. She reads off the poem that she used in her classes by Naco American Joy Parjo: "Remember the sky that you were born under/ know each of the stars' story/Remember your birth/ How your mother struggled to give you form and breath/ You are evidence of her life and her mother's and her mother's and so on/ Reform/Reform/Reform/Another one (which she then reads) about children who were adopted/ How could she have been so insensitive, Style wonders?/ She does at least find a new victim category for us. She confesses that she now uses the poem only in conjunction with another one (which she then reads) about children who don't know their biological mothers.

The next morning, all the earnest, upbeat consensus of the previous afternoon begins to crumble during a workshop called "The Perils and Pleasures of Feminist Teaching." Candice Taylor Hogan, assistant professor of History at Wheaton College, announces that she must read her paper rather than deliver it informally because she feels so passionately about her remarks. She tells of the lonely and alienated life of a Wheaton feminist, and of how it felt when the college went co-ed. ("I was agitated, saddened, appalled and angered...The transition was brutal, painful and demoralizing.") She speaks with the bitterness and hurt of a recently-released POW. "I was brutalized, painful and demoralizing.")

Next to speak is Raphael Atlas, associate professor of music at Smith College. His androgynous clothing, mop of dark ringlets, and sensitive demeanor suggest a woman who belongs at Smith. So why am I there?" He seems to be in a dilemma. Little parts of me agree with Rita. Men do not belong at Smith. So why am I there?"

Next comes Faye Crosby, Professor of Psychology at Smith. With the peppiness of a kindergarten teacher, Crosby describes an exercise she gave her students in a recent psychology class. We learn that in "feminist pedagogy" you do more than theorize — you take action, so for homework her students were told to go out and buy three condoms, being sure to make eye-contact with the salesperson. Crosby thought the assignment was going well until some students confronted her with the charge that she had failed miserably in her own ideals of "inclusiveness and inclusion." The condom assignment was "heterosexual," and she was forced to learn about a different kind of safe sex through dental dams. (Don't ask, I don't know either.)

On Parents' Weekend (Crosby continues), when some of the students asked to hear a sample lecture, she chose the one on condoms. Moms, dads, and students played a "condom relay race" to see which teams could put five condoms on a banana without breaking the banana. "They had to own it [the condom] to enjoy it," she says. But the students complained again. Although Crosby had shown the dental dams to the parents, no one wanted to race with them. Groped one student: "It was as if you said, 'Oh well, here are the dental dams — boring, insignificant lesbian sex...now let's get to the really great heterosexual sex.'" Crosby obviously enjoys the self-flagellation as she confesses: "I had been exclusionary again. I felt terrible.

It's time for feedback from the workshop audience. Some are braver than others, well-meaning older women from Sacramento and Long Beach, are AAUW members trying to make sense of what they are hearing. Despite the weird content of the talks the atmosphere until now has been courteous and respectful. But suddenly the workshop explodes into PC. We all played a set with its own set of stock characters that has become standard fare on campuses all across the country.

From the back of the room, Rita, an enraged radical feminist from City College of San Francisco, attacks: "First of all, why did you read your papers? As a poet and someone who cares about language, I found it extremely dull to have to sit through all of that." She is so upset that she has to read her own statement, which she does in an angry, hate-filled tone. "Raphael said he was a male feminist. That is an oxymoron. My deep belief is that men cannot be feminists. They have no place in women-centered spheres. Raphael is a womb-envier and a feminist wannabe — a poseur in our midst. Let him take his voice into an all-male forum."

Another radical feminist, Terry (a day-care provider from Oakland) speaks up: "I agree with Rita. I did not come to a workshop to hear that." Crosby smiles nervously. "Rita," she says, "your attack on Raphael was extremely rude. You are breaking norms by attacking our speaker like that. And that is wrong." Then she catches herself and adds ingratiatingly, "But as a feminist I believe in breaking norms." Crosby is clearly fascinated by the bane of her existence: paradoxes and contradictions of this workshop.

Raphael, looking at the floor, speaks: "It is a dilemma. Little parts of me agree with Rita. Men do not belong at Smith. So why am I there?" He seems to be thinking aloud. "In addition to the nitty gritty issues of job market and my modest research projects I still ask: Do I belong there?" He pauses, sobs, and collects his check, and he's out of there, probably off to another conference. He and his wife have toured the country for years doing this slick and very profitable routine.

The workshoppers now head for home some what poorer (such conferences do not come cheap) although school teachers, simply by attending, can earn "professional growth units" that will help them get raises and promotions. This guarantees a steady demand for educational conferences, no matter how goofy.

With kids all over the country going without textbooks and basic materials, one winces to see time and money spent on these fatuous enterprises. Such meetings are perhaps to be expected of feminist caucuses, but who at the AAUW decided to squander their money on this lavish parade of high-priced PC moguls? What on earth has happened to this respected organization, whose non-partisan history might be compared to that of the League of Women Voters?

Plenty of AAUW members must be leery of radical feminism and of PC in general. Do they quit in disgust — or fight back when they hear that their organization has capitulated to the mindless horrors of the times? Maybe they simply keep renewing their membership, unaware of the invasion of the brain snatchers that is happening in events such as this one. But for those who understand, it must be painful to watch the venerable AAUW devoured from the top down by self-promoters, sensitivity obsessives, victimologists and snake-oil peddlers.
"That you can criticize your mother without kicking her in the teeth."

The ambiguities were paralyzing until 1969, when she experienced an incident comparable to the defiling of the poster. She had begun taking night courses at Hunter College at a time when student anti-war demonstrators were trying to close down the school. One night she saw these protesters assault a man with a brieﬁce who had crossed their picket line. It appeared that they were kicking and punching him with particular energy because he wore a suit and carried a brieﬁce. The incident proposed itself as a metaphor to her because directly above the place where the man was being assaulted hung a banner that read Education is For Everybody.

After this experience, Spinrad quit the Reform Democrats and began thinking seriously about where she ﬁtted into the agony that the country was suffering. "It was at ﬁrst nebulous formulated," she says now. "It was like "something is wrong here and I want to do something right."
Gradually I came to realize that what was bothering me was the fact that so much was being taken away from my country. My conclusion was that I wanted to give something back."

It was the sort of instinctive feeling she acknowledges has led to quixotic acts in her life. (Later on, when it was revealed that New York City was going bankrupt, she sent a contribution and voluntarily paid state taxes, although by this time she had a military exemption.) But in 1970, it led her to decide on a course no other woman in her acquaintance would have considered — entering the military. It was consistent with the values she had learned while growing up in a working class background in the Bronx, but it still required an extraordinary effort. She tried to enlist in the Navy, but their cut-off age was 26 1/2 and she had just turned 29. So she went across the street to the Air Force, which had a 29 1/2 age limit, and signed up there.

After basic training, Spinrad was sent to Officer Training School at Medina Air Force Base in Texas. She soon realized that she had entered the military at a moment of transition for women. Support groups like the WACS, WAVES and WAF (Women in the Air Force) which dated back to World War II, were now being disbanded, and women were being integrated into men's units. Her ﬁrst assignment after graduating from OTS, in fact, was at Warren Air Force Base in Cheyenne, where she took charge of one of the last WAF squadrons and, far in advance of the cosseted femini
tes of the 1970s, she soon realized that she had later tormented her, became an advocate for women. "There was real sexual harassment in the Air Force at this time," Spinrad recalls, "not just "hostile environment" and that sort of thing. Women were being verbally abused because they were being placed in jobs where they were competing with men. They were also being punished because they increasingly refused to regard themselves simply as being in service for the pleasure of men."

Annoyed that evidence of sexual harassment was dealt with so casually, she tried to bring the problem to the attention of the brass and was soundly-thumped. One day she found a young woman with a black eye and lip split after she had rebuffed an enlisted man's advance and marched her into a meeting of male ofﬁcers. "Is this what you think is funny?" she demanded, pointing to the woman's battered face. Thats got their attention.

Because of her concerns, Spinrad was asked to take part in the sensitivity sessions on race relations that were just then sweeping through the armed services. After attending a few meetings, she understood that the position of women in the military was as bad as that of blacks and asked that these sessions include a component on sexism. As a result of her pressure, the seminars at Warren were rewritten to include problems faced by women and eventually became models for a new curriculum that spread ﬁrst to the Strategic Air Command and then to the entire Air Force.

Spinrad was eager for these changes not because she wanted to undermine the authority of the Air Force, but because she felt she had found a home there. She liked the elan, the discipline and determination of the military, the sense of mission which she felt she had survived the cultural onslaught of the anti-war movement. Living in the Rocky Mountain area, that was less tolerant of antagonism to servicemen and women than other parts of the society, she sometimes forgot that she was part of a stigmatized profession. She heard stories from male colleagues about the hostility of the people — the word "pimp" was never used for them — who professed off the "rent a woman" pro
grams. Spinrad was told by her superiors that these men had put out a contract on her. Because of the possibility of assassination, she was not allowed to leave the base and go into town. Today she still remembers the feeling she had sitting in her room night after night, writing doomy poetry and wondering if it was melodramatic to worry about being killed.

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She had a feeling that she had stepped across another of the lines that have seg
mented her life. She felt the heaviness of the U.S. military defeat in Vietnam. There was a residue of personal defeat as well. Her quartel had been with pimps and rack
teers, and while the Air Force had oﬃ
cially supported her, she knew that no bureaucracy trusts a whistle blower and it was unlikely that she would continue to receive the rapid series of promotions that had so far marked her military career.

Transferred back home to Carlsbad Air Force Base in Ft. Worth, she felt her
self entering a slough of despond. She felt the assumptions that had guided her life for the last few years slipping away. It was not the military that she questioned, but rather the large philosophical issues: good and evil, truth and justice. It was the low point of her life. She asked herself if there could be any ethical underpinnings for any course of behavior. (Years later, when the Vice Chairman of English at Ohio State Univer
sity accused her of too cavalierly rejecting the traditional behaviors just then beginning to revolutionize the study of literature, she told him, "I have already considered these things — when I was in my room in the Philippines waiting to die and afterward. Not called by the name of deconstructionism, perhaps, but the same thing: that there is no objective truth or reality, no right or wrong. I had fully considered these possibilities, and rejected them.")

As she watched other peers go through the trauma and disorientation of coming home, she too struggled to lay a new philosophical foundation under her life. Some of her existen
tial maneuvers didn't work: she made-up impulsively while at Carlsbad and was soon divorced. But she found solace in religion, and although born a Jew and raised an atheist, formally converted to Catholicism. She also re-established a continuity her life by returning to the literary studies she had interrupted fifteen years earlier when she got her degree.

While still in the Air Force, Spinrad began night school at Texas Christian University in the late 70s. She had not only continued to read books all the time she was in the service, but had been a fairly serious amateur scholar, probably one of the few people in the service who subscribed to journals such as Publications of the Modern Language Association. Back in school, she was not just looking for self improvement but for a graduate degree. She became particularly interested in 17th century literature. The empathetic novelists who explored the alienation of individuals and the Jacobean drama — a theatre of faith
less betrayal, sudden violence, and the questioning of authority — resonated subtly with the spiritual crisis she had just passed through.

Although she was still not a beginning graduate student, Spinrad began to publish articles and read papers at conferences. In 1980, after ﬁnally separating from active duty with the Air Force, she took a job as an instructor at Louisiana State University and began work on her dissertation ("The
Teaching Award, getting to the finals of College of Arts and Sciences Outstanding outstanding teachers on the Ohio State Renaissance Conference. Most turned her thesis into a book that was in the fall of 1984. She wouldn’t have said ideas.”

She was 42 years old, but she had good credentials. There were perhaps they shouldn’t be graduate students. The male write at this advanced point in their academic careers thought at the time, commonsensibly) that if they couldn’t try to stay out of controversy, particularly after being burned on one occasion when she did speak up. Her colleagues were considering a remedial writing program for students and she pointed out (as she

Phoebe Spinrad

The Ohio State vets were appointed by the administration as a blue-ribbon task force to see if there was a pattern of discrimination and to make recommendations accordingly. The centerpiece of their discussion was the little-noticed Vietnam Era Veterans Readjustment Assistance Act of 1974, which gives Vietnam-era vets a chance to claim a “protected” status as veterans and women and minorities, including the right to affirmative action at every level of employment, from initial hiring to promotion, like other school districts. OSU had ignored this law with obvious results: while Vietnam era vets were better than 5% of the national labor force, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, in 1990 just one of 899 new hires on the Columbus campus was a vet, that in 1991 the figure was 3 out of 297. The same thing was true of promotion, where veteran status, in contravention of the law, was not only never used in the favor of a candidate but might actually work against him. In one locally famous case, for instance, an OSU teacher up for promotion to full professor had been advised by the chairman of the department not to mention his veteran status at all, lest it hurt his chances.

The vets also saw that it was no mere oversight that had kept the law from being implemented. Affirmative action on campuses like OSU was really about equity, moral reparation, or even diversity. It was not about building cadre for extreme viewpoints, and if its privileges were extended equally to a group like vets this would diminish its value as a tool of political organization. For Spinrad the strands of the political and legal situation were intertwined. “Most of the people on faculties who hate vets are from the Sixties. They began their PC careers as anti-war activists. They were still the situation when they were burned on one occasion when she had repudiated the vets’ task force. They assume, intimating to point out the obvious: he must have a problem in this regard because he had assumed she was talking about black or Hispanic students when she hadn’t mentioned color at all.

Another disturbing moment came in 1988 when a female acquaintance accused Spinrad after she had put out flyers advertis- ing a popular course she sometimes gave on Jacobean drama. "Back by popular demand," the flyer read, "terror and murder! rape and incest! crazed killers, crooked politicians, greedy postmasters and other familiar figures...". The colleague pulled the flyers, charging that such material "encouraged a metaphysical lurch and begin an accommodation to the pressures modern theories and political orthodoxies she abhorred. Spinrad realized that she would have to live with the injustice of colleagues who were half as productive getting twice the recognition that she did because of the intellectual postures they struck. But she tried to stay out of controversy, particularly after being burned on one occasion when she did speak up. Her colleagues were considering a remedial writing program for graduate students and she pointed out (as she thought at the time, commonsensibly) that if they couldn’t write at this advanced point in their academic careers perhaps they shouldn’t be graduate students. The male colleague who had made the proposal responded by immediately accusing her of racism. She still felt that her colleagues who today are the core of our university faculties and service were intertwined. “Most of the people on faculties who hate vets are from the Sixties. They began their PC careers as anti-war activists. They were still the situation when they were burned on one occasion when she had repudiated the vets’ task force. They assume, intimating to point out the obvious: he must have a problem in this regard because he had assumed she was talking about black or Hispanic students when she hadn’t mentioned color at all.

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Longenecker whose scholarly bona fides were questionable. When Longenecker was appointed to follow Libby as graduate chair, an outside reviewer from Harvard evaluating the OSU English Department wrote in his confidential report, "We were baffled that the person now placed in charge of the graduate program may be the least productive member of the department..." But she was primarily disturbed at the notion of "bad paper," the insertion of innuendo and untruth about her teaching into the permanent file she would carry with her for the remainder of her career.

She contacted Morris Beja, Chairman of the English department, informed him of the character assassination and asked him to put a letter in her file countering Libby's by enumerating the teaching awards she had been nominated for and won. The chairman replied that he did not have firsthand knowledge of her abilities as a teacher and could not therefore vouch for her. Then Spinrad arranged for an interview with a Dean named Michael Riley at which she was accompanied by the university ombudsman and a representative from the local Amvets chapter. After an uncomfortable meeting, she received an astonishing letter from Riley stating that people like Libby and Longenecker had a right to their opinions. It was a document which left Spinrad reeling: if "aggressively military type" was appropriate for her, would it also be allowable in the present atmosphere of the university to call a black person a "lazy and ignorant type" or a woman "a dumb blonde bimbo type"? Wasn't that what multicultural sensitivity was all about, doing away with dehumanizing types?

She let the injustice of the university's double standards percolate until midsummer when she filed her own complaint with the Labor Department claiming that she had been discriminated against and harassed because she was a veteran and member of a minority group. That individual complaint is still pending. But on October 5, the Labor Department released the findings of its months-long investigation of Ohio State and found the university guilty of seven serious violations of the 1974 law. Included in its bill of particulars was failure on the part of OSU administrators to prepare and maintain affirmative action programs for Vietnam era veterans and the disabled; failure to maintain a working environment free of harassment, intimidation and coercion for veterans; and failure to list all suitable jobs for veterans with the state Bureau of Employment Services.

It was a victory, but if Spinrad and the other vets on the Columbus campus expected an acknowledgement from the administration, they were to be disappointed. A few days after the Labor Department report on vets had been made public, University President Gee gave a guilty talk about problems of diversity on campus without once mentioning the findings of the Labor Department report. History Professor John Guilmarini was not surprised. "This response shows just how deep the reluctance to give unrepentant vets their due is," he says. "Why are they so determined to hold the line? Because if they acknowledge the justice of the vets' cause, then they have to admit that what they have done and thought is wrong. That's why they will continue to fight against the implementation of this law."

Peter Collier
I had just come back from a month in Ireland and was sitting with my Afro-American friend Akili in a cafe on Telegraph Avenue, the main drag in Berkeley. We were chatting about my adventures in the land of white Catholic Conservative Folks, and I was enjoying the eclectic variety of the crowd strolling by our window: frat boys in UC sweaters and white ducks, activists in Berkeley battle fatigues, nerdy looking rocket scientists and long-haired deadheads, shoppers, businesspeople, panhandlers, men in drag, a naked guy — Hey, wait a minute!

"Akili," I said, "a man just walked by wearing a backpack."

"So? Everyone's wearing a backpack on campus."

"But that's all he's wearing!" I exclaimed. "There he is again!"

Akili whipped her head around and stared. There he was, striding up Telegraph, naked as the day he was born (except for the backpack). Akili commented on his physique (which, I must admit, I would be proud of if it were mine) as I pondered what sort of protest this could be. It isn't uncommon of course to see naked people around Berkeley, but they are usually handcuffed to a building they want donated to the homeless or a park the don't want razed. But here was this guy — young, clean cut, well built, smile on his face, with his Willy Johnson hanging out for the world to see. He bore no signs of purposes, like a UC student on his way to class. But Willow didn't know why either. The only thing my sleuthing had turned up was a bunch of rebels without a cause (or a coat) and some mildly uneasy residents. I was starting to give up when the answer seemed to appear on a Channel 7 afternoon program.

Dr. Dean Edell, ABC's advice M.D. had a special panel on his talk show: four naked people. I wondered if they were my naked people. Dr. Dean announced the topic of the show and invited any squeamish people to leave the audience. Two people left. Then, with no further ado, the camera panned to the stage and there they were: the Berkeley naked people. The fuzzy guy dot that bounces around the countenances of those who wish to remain anonymous bounced around the parts of the body not suitable for daytime viewers.

Here it is, I thought, the end of my quest. Now I will find out why they are naked. Not when the show was over, I felt confused and a bit let down. These people are not a group of people being naked for a cause. They are not even a group of people. They are individuals who go around naked because they like to. That's it. The young man that I first saw on Telegraph is risking expulsion from UC Berkeley because of the large number of complaints about his nakedness. He was arrested,154 jogging near the dormitories because the police mistook him for a raider (a man running naked through campus — can you blame them?). All this trouble — which could be ended if he just put on a pair of shorts — and he has no cause. No statement. Just liked to feel the wind in his hair, so to speak.

The older people — two women and a man in their late thirties, early forties — just like to be naked as well. They occasionally cover their bottom halves and trek around topless — not because they are uncomfortable, but because others seem to be. But they are naked just for fun
SEXUAL HARASSMENT AND COMMON SENSE

(The following memorandum was sent to us anonymously.)

To: English Department colleagues and graduate students
From: Jonathan Penner
Creative Writing Department
University of Arizona

Sexual Harassment and Common Sense

For the length of this, and its claims on your patience, I apologize. I apologize too to those who may feel offended by my views. After thinking about these matters a long time and attending many meetings, I thought I had to try to make some sort of coherent statement about where I think we’re heading. I hope others will reply, either in agreement or disagreement, and will express their views on high as well. For too long, it seems to me, the discussion has been one-sided. Real discussion, real debate, will save us if anything can.

I’m writing out of concern that our shared commitment to solving one important problem—that of sexual harassment—has led to attitudes, policies, and acts that are already doing us all more harm than good, and that threaten worse in the future. My concern is for that future, and for our students. I don’t want to exaggerate the importance of local and parochial events. Old battles, or even to right wrongs. Nor do I want to think we’re heading. I hope others will reply, some sort of coherent statement about where I may feel offended by my views. After thinking about this in order to justify (as I hope) to larger conclusions.

During the spring semester of 1992, rumors spread that one or more members of the Creative Writing faculty had been accused of sexual harassment. Simultaneously we heard that the Affirmative Action Office had summoned every (or nearly every) female graduate student in Creative Writing (messages were left on answering machines—‘The Graduate College needs to speak with you immediately’)—one student feared that somebody at home had died for an interview concerning her experiences, if any, as a target of sexual harassment. These interviews also collected information in other areas, recording a variety of unfavorable opinions, but apparently no favorable ones, about the Creative Writing program generally. Several students commented afterward that their questioners didn’t seem interested in favorable views.

What led to this very assertive step (whose consequences I shall come to) by the Affirmative Action Office? We’ll never know. If any report exists, it has not been made public. What is known, however, is that no written complaint was ever filed. That a hypersensitive person, especially one so predisposed to finding themselves in one another’s path. It is not implausible that someone was deliberately placing herself in her path. I knew that I didn’t harass my students. This statistic is looked at more seriously than men. But Provost Cusanovich would not presume, many, I had not understood who was doing the harassing and who was being harassed. On one hand, my assumption about the scale of harassment included the following:

- Others have heard of this happening. (Affairs with students, yes. Marriages, yes. Harassment, no.) Students do speak to me freely about matters both professional and personal. I’ve heard all kinds of other things, unfavorable and even outrageous, about colleagues in my own department and other departments. But how could I be missing something so important? After all, I work in a program (Creative Writing) that we are now asked to believe is a veritable hotbed of sexual harassment. How could I reconcile the claimed prevalence of sexual harassment with the fact that I had never become aware of it in my fourteen years on this campus?
- Provost Michael Cusanovich, the Creative Writing faculty argued that it should choose its own colleague just as any other academic unit normally does. (The Dean, as always, would return a veto.) Should anyone imagine that the faculty was biased against women, lists were presented that showed the contrary: that in recent years the faculty has recruited nine women and only two male colleagues to teach Creative Writing. Other data showed that women graduate students received teaching appointments and were awarded prizes more often than men. But Provost Cusanovich would not overturn the recommendation of the Affirmative Action Office—which, in the current political climate, is easy to understand.

In addition to decreeing this hiring procedure, the Affirmative Action Office ordered sensitivity sessions for the Creative Writing faculty, to be conducted by an outside expert. Dean Kolodny directed members of the search committee to attend as well. Students were also invited and encouraged to attend, but only five came to one meeting, and only two to another. The outside expert, Dr. Bernice Sandier, a national authority in the field of sexual harassment, presented several extremely informative sessions for the campus community in general and the Creative Writing faculty in particular.

For me, the education was a startling one. Like, I presume, many, I had not understood who was doing the harassing and who was being harassed. On one hand, I’d assumed that the problem must be substantial, because an extremely powerful office had been created on campus. In the current political climate, it is easy to understand.

So what is known, however, is that no written complaint was ever filed. That a hypersensitive person, especially one so predisposed to finding themselves in one another’s path. It is not implausible that someone was deliberately placing herself in her path. I knew that I didn’t harass my students. This statistic is looked at more seriously than men. But Provost Cusanovich would not presume, many, I had not understood who was doing the harassing and who was being harassed. On one hand, my assumption about the scale of harassment included the following:

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HETERODOXY

"Sexual harassment is in the eye of the ambiguous. Dr. Sandier expressed a keen awareness of the ambiguity. What about a stronger comment, such as innocent, even conceivably welcome, like congratulating for a sexual joke seem to me to constitute an act of sexual harassment. Dr. Sandier mentioned the endless range of nuances conferred by their delivery, make it obvious that some "sexual jokes" will not. Only in the rarest circumstances would even an offensive joke seem to me to constitute an act of sexual harassment.

Dr. Sandier expressed a keen awareness of the ambiguity of such situations. Unfortunately, she resolved that ambiguity quite simply by asserting, and repeating at every delivery, make it obvious that some "sexual jokes" will sometimes be offensive, and that others at other times will not. It will be thought that the common sense and good will of students can be relied upon — even though that of faculty apparently cannot — to distinguish sexual harassment from everything else. In this regard, Dr. Sandier was again most unsettling. The criterion that she suggested to students was "discomfort" — if it makes you uncomfortable, it's wrong. This amounts to investing subjectivity with the mantle of justice. That we should so honor and promote our feelings (which all of us have) of pain and outrage — and then act upon them — is appealing advice. But when we have all finished doing so, not much will be left.

Still, what's important here is not the list itself. It's what is done with the list. When students are interviewed that are not asked, "Have you ever been sexually harassed?" Rather, they are asked, "Have you ever experienced any of the following?" — and then the entire list is read.

Thus, even if the student herself considers the behavior innocuous, the person compiling the list will count as "sexual harassment" the telling of an off-color joke — exactly as though the student had reported being fondled in the elevator. The Affirmative Action Office, and professionals in the field generally, make no distinctions between these forms of behavior when it comes to generating statistics — statistics that are then used to demonstrate the existence of a truly vast problem, one requiring drastic action, and justifying whatever consequences may befall.

The second misleading thing about that shocking statistic — that 40 per cent of female graduate students report "having been sexually harassed" — is that it conceals how many (or few) such events are being reported. If a student has heard a teacher tell an off-color joke even once during her long educational career, she would be included as someone who has been sexually harassed. In light of this, it is perhaps astonishing that students reporting "sexual harassment" do not approach 100 per cent — of both sexes. Of what use are such statistics, given the shakiness — I would even say the speciousness — of their methodological underpinning? They are of enormous use to Affirmative Action officials. They appear to describe a plague, an emergency. They make a strong claim for institutional support of the office concerned with dealing with this problem. And they may be used to justify whatever actions that office should take, no matter how rough-shod or over whom it may ride.

(I asked Dr. Sandier if it ever happened, when he was counseling students who reported sexual harassment, that it appeared to her that sexual harassment had not in fact occurred, and whether she counseled the student accordingly. Her response was that such counseling would be improper because then the student might later raise the charge that a counselor had discouraged her from filing a complaint. In other words, Dr. Sandier believes that an Affirmative Action officer may counsel students to pursue complaints but may not counsel them not to, regardless of the facts of the matter. This would tend to distort statistics — and perceptions — further.)

Is it possible to gather firmer statistics as to how many women are sexually harassed? Apparently it is not. I asked Dr. Sandier how many complaints were actually filed, and she said that it is impossible to gather this information because universities will not release it. Thus we are left with scattered personal accounts — some vivid and even horrible, but representing a rare class of events — and the wildly misleading statistics gathered in surveys, as discussed above.

If we can't know much about the victims of sexual harassment, what about the perpetrators? Here again, the lack of data is startling. According to Dr. Sandier, "Most men do not harass women. Rather, a few men harass women repeatedly." I asked her what was meant by a few men — 25 per cent? Two per cent? One-tenth of one per cent? She said it was impossible even to guess. "We simply do not know."

I s sexual harassment a serious problem? It is, because even one case would be serious. Is it also a widespread problem? Even granting that some instances of harassment never become known, we cannot make the leap from an extremely small number of known cases (for me the number is zero, but I know that number is wrong) to a plausible hypothesis of many, many unknown cases. The "transcendental temptation" — urge to believe in the unknown, indeed the unknowable — is not harmless in this matter. Actions, which have consequences, need to be based on facts.

Recent trends on campus (though not in themselves The Big One) warn us of greater destruction to come. I greatly fear the consequences of hysterical overreaction to a threat that is real only in small, albeit hideous, part, and in larger part imagined. Most men and most women get along pretty well — and want to continue to do so. There sure are a very few men who paw or pressure women for sex, taking reprehensible advantage of positions of authority. Such men ought to be dealt with, I think severely, one by one. Far better than that is to start casting dragnets through the ranks of faculty and students, subjecting broad populations to interrogations, and in the process creating a climate of hostility and fear.

Dr. Sandier, who is at the cutting edge of her discipline, showed what lies down that road. "Men," she emphasized, repeatedly, "need to be extremely careful." For instance, she warned that a man may have his intentions misunderstood — and may therefore be charged with sexual harassment — if the lunch hour arrives and he suggests continuing the discussion over a sandwich. In that case, she advised, proper procedure would be to take two women to lunch, to avert any possible misunderstanding as to one's intentions toward either of them. Thus are we being coached in paranoia. Women are invited to treat every slight as sexual harassment, while men are warned that women stand ready to accuse and denounce them.

The problem of sexual harassment is a real one, but must not be dealt with in the unscientific and even hysterical manner that we see today. The hallmark of science — including social science — is its reliance on data. What is most striking about the anti-sexual harassment campaign is that it is proceeding in a virtual vacuum of data. Though it needs to deal with a real problem, it operates like a pseudoscience, proceeding on unverifiable assumptions, and day by day injuring us all.

I hope it is not too late for us, as an institution and as a culture, to take a careful look at what is happening, and to begin to save ourselves.
fire that raged Malcolm's New York City home after an eviction notice was served on him. The remarkable similarities underscored the fact that one could not adequately understand, let alone politically understand, the traumas suffered by the youthful Malcolm.

I was totally unprepared for the police and court records indicating that Earl Little's family was riddled with criminality. His brother Oscar was killed by a policeman for wounding an officer who had attempted to arrest him for threatening some people with a pistol. Earl's oldest son Earl Jr. was a burglar. His first conviction occurred when he was twelve. By the time he was 14, he was in reform school and spent the next decade in and out of prison.

One courthouse contained records describing the mental breakdown of Malcolm's mother and her commitment to a state hospital. When I tried obtaining access to the records herself, I ran into a brick wall. My frustration was somewhat allayed when I located Mrs. Little in a nursing home and interviewed her there. She seemed happy to have a visitor. She said she had always felt alone and that when Malcolm was a boy, he too had kept himself to himself. I had difficulty locating Malcolm's brother Reginald, who spent most of his time on the streets. Finally, someone told me he was temporarily staying with his sister Yvonne. I wrote and convinced him to let me interview him. In 1975, I located and interviewed Malcolm's eldest brother Wilfred, whose responses to most of my questions were extremely guarded. But Philbert, Malcolm's next oldest brother, told me so much about his growing up that I had to scrap my manuscript and begin anew.

Though my list of interviewees grew, I had trouble locating James 67X, who had been one of Malcolm's chief aides. James, now Abdullah Abudr-Razzaq, he had dropped out of sight. Eventually I discovered that he had moved to South America, where he had carved a farm out of the rain forest. I wrote him and finally he agreed to meet me on the island of Grenada, where Malcolm's mother Louisa had been raised.

After this meeting, I stayed on in Grenada and interviewed Louisa's Grenadian relatives, who described how her surrogate parents had flogged her. Eventually she ran away to Montreal, where she met Earl Little. (His real name was "Early.")

A jackleg (self ordained) preacher, Little did not tell Louisa that he had walked out on his wife and three children. They married shortly after they met. At times, he beat her. He was also brutal to their children. Frequently he administered his beatings with a sapling or belt. "You'll kill that child, Early," Louisa (whose Michigam friends called her "Louise") occasionally protested. But she never intervened. She was too afraid of her husband.

Most of Malcolm's beatings were administered by his light-skinned mother, who ruled her children without visible evidence of affection. According to Malcolm's brother Ralph, she would hit a boy so hard with the back of her hand that it made him feel as if his head had been severed from his neck.

Malcolm protested her beatings loudly enough for the neighbors to hear. He also resisted his mother's attempts to send him outdoors so that the sun would darken his light skin. Yet when he was indoors, he avoided getting too close to her. Frequently, he refused to speak to her. On one occasion, he reproached her for being "all witchy." Clenching his little fists, he screamed,

**SETTING UP MALCOLM FOR THE KILL**

In the final months of Malcolm X's life, he was pursued by the furies of the Nation of Islam, the organization he had left and whose leader Elijah Muhammad he had denounced, and whose guns soon would hunt him down. As the noose tightened around Malcolm, spokesman for the Nation publicly called on the renegade leader to cease his apostasy, warning him of the vengeance that awaited him if he did not. One of the most ominous statements amounting to a sentence of death came from the powerful head of the Boston Mosque, a protege of Malcolm's named Louis X.

"The die is set, and Malcolm shall not escape, especially after such evil, foolish talk about his benefactor [Elijah Muhammad]." Louis X proclaimed in the Nation's newspaper, Muhammad Speaks. "Such a man as Malcolm is worthy of death, and would have met with death if it had not been for Muhammad's confidence in Allah for victory over the enemies."

Louis X, now known as Louis Farrakhan, does not appear in Spike Lee's film about Malcolm X, although Minister Farrakhan was on the list of those whom Spike consulted in preparation for the filming of "X." And Minister Farrakhan's Fruit of Islam goons provided the security for Spike's previous films.

Does this therefore qualify as an irony: Spike Lee is close to the man whofingered his "black prince" for death?}

"I could kill you." Years later, Malcolm lauded his father, who sub- sisted partly on the contributions he received for his visiting preaching in black churches. He obeyed few of the rules he preached to his children. In addition to stealing from his relatives, he was a "natural-born whoremonger," according to his friend Chester Jones. From childhood onward, Malcolm would have great difficulty trying to decide whether to follow the path of virtue his father preached or the path of vice he often practiced.

When he wasn't preaching or propagating the teachings of Marcus Garvey, Earl Little dug ditches at construction sites. But what money he earned did not support his family. Often, he rose late and spent the day pontificating in the homes of avid listeners, who fed him while his wife and children went hungry.

Repelled by his parents' brutality and lack of affection, Malcolm went to Boston to live with his older half-sister Ella after his mother was committed to a mental institution. Ella was not only a tyrant, but also a thief. She sent him to the grocery store without money but with instructions to bring home whatever he could. She stole so much food herself that her third husband was afraid to accompany her to the market. Eventually, she accumulated a lengthy criminal record that included more than 18 arrests and 10 convictions for offenses ranging from petty larceny to assault and battery.

Malcolm, who occasionally stole from some of his own relatives, just as his father had done, doesn't tell us any of this family background in his splendidly written autobiography, which accuses his youthful criminality entirely to the way his aspirations were thwarted by "white society."

T here are many things his autobiogra phy omits. Malcolm is si lent about the fact, that, because of his fair skin color, he was rejected as much by his youthful black peers as he was by his white ones. Moreover, the youthful criminal Malcolm, who wielded power over his victims in the same way his parents and Ella had wielded it over him, wasn't nearly as villainous as his book makes him out to be. By exaggerating how bad he had been, he had an easier time portraying himself as an inspiring example of how other wrongdoers could reform themselves.

According to Malcolm, Betty Sanders (now Betty Shabazz) was the only woman he had ever thought of marrying. But there were others, most of whom he spurned, consciously or otherwise. He yearned for love, but deprived himself of it. He craved success but coveted failure. He hungered for approval from the authority figures he defied. He longed for freedom, but shunned it until it was too late.

Though Malcolm never resolved all these conflicts, he did succeed in surmounting most of his youthful handicaps. The youngster who feared he was a bore became a great orator. The pseudo-masculine criminal became the manly rebel. As he conquered his fears, he inspired his followers to conquer theirs Together, he and his followers drove the frightened white establishment of the 60s into the waiting arms of Martin Luther King, Jr. who seemed the lesser of two evils.

He was a man of enormous strength—the strength to educate himself, the strength to free himself from his financial and emotional dependence on Elijah Muhammad; the strength to confront certain death head-on.

Black nationalists hailed him as their champion White Leftists were convinced he was becoming, or already was, a bore because a great orator. A disciple of Karl Marx. But in fact Malcolm was a political chameleon.

The *Autobiography* contends that it wasn't un he left the Nation of Islam and went to Mecca that I discovered that not all whites were "devils." But Malcolm had been in Saudi Arabia in 1959. For years, he cultivated numerous white-skinned Arab diplomats. Because of his friendship with them, he was one of 1/3 few Americans who could walk into the United Nations: compound in New York without being challenged by the guards. His trip to Mecca was a political ploy to enable him to renounce the "white devil" theory with having for years been a brilliant political strategist. He was one of the most brilliant political figures of his time. (Some of the Messenger's secretaries slept in his
luxurious mansion and by 1959 or 1960 some half
dozeen had given birth to his children out of wedlock.)
Although Malcolm said he never bit his tongue when
the truth was stake, the evidence shows that he had
held his tongue about Elijah Muhammad's immorality
for years, just as he had kept mum about the
improprieties of his philandering father and the
criminality of his half-sister Ella.
If Malcolm hadn't kept silent about Elijah, it
would have meant the end of his participation in
the Nation of Islam, which was his sole source of
financial and organizational support. According to
one well-informed informant, he was marking time in the
hope that he could take over Muhammad's
movement and then "purify" it.
But then it became evident that neither Elijah
Muhammad nor any of the officials at the Nation
of Islam's Chicago headquarters would allow him to
succeed the Messenger. Malcolm, who had portrayed
himself as Elijah's "slave," was put in a bind. He
did not appear to be able to leave the Nation, most
of whose leaders were enriching themselves at their
followers' expense. Yet in the long run, he had no
future there. He couldn't overtly rebel without losing
his political base, but how could he submit?
So he compromised by a series of provocations
that included attention-getting, impolitic utterances
that apparently intensified Elijah Muhammad's fear
of government retribution. Late in 1963, for instance,
Malcolm defied the Messenger's instructions and
publicly ridiculed President Kennedy, whose
recent assassination had transformed him into a
martyr. The incident prompted Elijah to forbid
Malcolm from making public statements.
After he had left the Nation of Islam, Malcolm
made a determined effort to unmask his former
mentor, whose constantly tithing but destitute
followers had made him a multimillionaire. His
friends warned him that his attacks on Elijah
Muhammad would get him killed, but he paid no
heed. Week after week, month after month, he kept
telling radio and TV audiences that Muhammad
was a fraud. The pages of the Nation's news-
making newspaper, Muhammad Speaks, were led
with thinly veiled threats against
Malcolm's life. Louis
Farrakhan, One of Malcolm's former protégés wrote,"Malcolm shall not escape...the
die is set." And a cartoon in the
day showed Malcolm's severed
head bouncing along the
sidewalk. Then, a week before the
assassination, a spokesman for the
Nation of Islam declared that it was
too late for Malcolm to retract the
bitter seeds he had sown.
But Malcolm kept provoking
Elijah Muhammad. On February 15,
1965, he described the Nation
of Islam as a "criminal organization"
and the Messenger as a senile old
man who was interested in nothing
but money and sex. Six days later,
he was dead.
This was the tragic culmination
of a lifetime of self-
destructiveness that had included
his unwillingness to complete
college, his是一个manic drug habit, the compulsive
bargaining habits that had consumed the
income from his youthful hustles, and
his prison-provoking behavior. He
got himself arrested twice for
stealing from people who
knew him. (One of them
was his aunt.) Later on, after he had moved from Harlem
back to Roxbury, he reportedly left fingerprints on
the screens and some of the homes he burglarized.
And despite that he knew the importance of taking identifica-
tion marks off stolen merchandise, he pawned a stolen
wedding band stamped with its owner's initials. He also
left a stolen, diamond-studded watch for repair. He gave
his real name and Ella's address and promised to return
for the items. Policemen were waiting for him when he
did.
Malcolm wrote from prison, "Man is actually the
tool of his own destruction...laboring towards the
completion of his own end." Years later, after he began
trying to destroy Elijah Muhammad's reputation by
telling reporters about his mistresses, he refused to let his
aides search the people who came to hear him speak.
"Rather than have you brothers harm any of Elijah
Muhammad's followers, I'd rather die," he told them.
Yet according to Malcolm, white people were the
ones who were self destructive. He projected
onto whites his own imperfections, real and
imagined. He didn't conceal his anger; the ones
who masked hatred with a friendly smile. He didn't
need to apologize for his past; whites were the criminals,
he didn't feel inadequate because of his lack of formal
education; whites were "ignorant." He told one Harlem
crowd, "The white man makes you a drug addict." He
even suggested that his teenage gambling habit had
been the fault of the white people who had
manufactured the dice.
Occasionally, Malcolm admitted that he had been
being hated. But few African Americans acknowl-
edge that fact today. Blacks never teach hatred. Only
whites are racist. People who substitute these "politically
correct" assumptions are beyond the pale. Their views
should not be aired and their research should not be
published. People who do air or publish them do so at
their peril, as Philadelphia talk show host Deborah
Anderson discovered when she interviewed me on her
radio show. After I left the studio, a man telephoned and
threatened to harm her physically.
This incident helped me understand why it had
taken more than fifteen years for me to find a publisher
for Malcolm: The Life of a Man Who Changed Black
America. My agent had explained that the book was
creating problems for prospective publishers.
At first I didn't believe him. But then my dealings with
Houghton Mifflin and Random House proved instruc-
tive.
Gerard Van der Leen, Houghton Mifflin's senior
trade editor, persuaded his colleagues to take a chance on
the book, but after he was shunted aside the editor to
whom I was assigned told me that before I received any
part of the projected advance, I had to perform "an
exercise."
This turned out to be the revision of several chap-
ters. Some of the stylistic suggestions were good ones,
but the editor also wanted certain material deleted,
including the fact that Malcolm, who claimed that will-
ingness to commit violence is the true test of manhood,
had repeatedly been accused of avoiding conflict when
he was young. He exorted his followers to do in the
political arena what he had been unable to do to his
opponents in the streets.
I refused to delete the material which, among other
things explained why Malcolm frequently accused Mar-
tin Luther King Jr. of cowardice. But I paid the price.
Houghton Mifflin, which slightly anticipated the reac-
tion to the disclosure that Malcolm had doubts about his
virility, withdrew its offer to publish the book.
The same thing happened over and over again.
Another publisher wanted me to delete the numerous
parallels between the 1965 fire that destroyed Malcolm's
Little's house and the 1965 fire that destroyed Malcolm's. Still
anther publisher wrote me, "We assume that you are
black. We would not consider publishing the book if you
are white."
What happened at Random House was also highly
instructive. Jonathan Galassi wanted to publish the
manuscript. But then he called and said that he couldn't.
I asked why. "Random House is a funny place," he
sighed over the phone. An editor who was present at the
time later told my agent that the decision not to publish
the book had been a political one.
Two years later, Joni Evans assumed command of
Random House. So I called and told her
what had happened. "Things have
changed here," she assured me
and asked her to send her the
manuscript. Twelve days later she
called and declared, "I'd like to
publish your book." She said she
would soon telephone me back.
The call never came. A letter arrived
instead. Evans claimed she couldn't tell me to delete the
right editor, but I had long
since learned that the reasons given
in rejection letters are often not the
real ones.
Four years later, after the book
was finally published, some of the
publishers that had asked me
to help them prepare
publications were far more
forthright about the reasons they
had later changed their mind. CBS
told me that it had to forgo my
services because Malcolm's widow
Betty Shabazz (who collects
royalties from a book of
Malcolm's speeches that I
edited) wouldn't participate if I
did. An NBC producer told me that executive of the
television company that wanted NBC News to
make a documentary partly
based on my book had vetoed the
project because they considered it "too
controversial." They were diverted sadly to the
success some of the oppressed
have had in intimidating those they
have decided to define as their oppressors.
SPIKE X: THE MOVIE

Because of his denunciation of my biography of Malcolm X, I was prepared to dislike Spike Lee’s movie. But I was moved by it. During parts of Malcolm X—even the many parts that contravene the historical record—I realized that I was seeing on the screen the life Malcolm may have wished he had lived. The wishful Hollywood fantasy overwhelmed the part of me that had spent two decades separating the myths about Malcolm from the verifiable facts.

One of the myths that Lee’s film propagates is that of the strong but loving, protective mother who single-handedly confronted several hooded, gun-toting Klansmen outside the family’s Omaha home. Malcolm’s mother and his aunt, Rose, who also lived in Omaha, told me that the incident never happened. Malcolm’s father, whom Spike Lee portrays as a hero, was actually a con-man and philanderer and brutal to most of his children. Following the autobiography, the film claims that Earl Little was burned out of his Lansing home by one group of whites and assassinated by another. The latter allegedly bashed in his skull, laid him across a trolley track, and watched as a streetcar ran him over. The records of the Michigan State Police contradict these assertions. Earl Little was arrested on suspicion of burning down the house himself, perhaps to prevent its repossession by the whites who had wrongfully but successfully asked a court to restore the property to them because the deed restricted ownership to white people. Two years later, when Earl Little was run over by the trolley car, he was still conscious when state trooper Laurence Baril arrived at the scene. According to the police report Baril filed at the time, Earl told Baril that he had arrived at the streetcar stop just as the trolley was passing by and had tried to board the moving vehicle but had missed the step and fallen under the rear wheels, which nearly severed his leg. I interviewed Baril forty years later and he confirmed his original report.

Malcolm’s mother (who was unable to stand up to her dictatorial husband, let alone a group of armed nightriders) struggled to feed her seven children during the Depression. Seven years after her husband died, she became pregnant and gave birth to an unwanted son. Despite Malcolm’s autobiographical assertion (which Spike repeats in the film) that white social workers destroyed his mother, his family, and his home, records show that Malcolm himself asked the attending social worker to remove him from it. He said that nobody in his home cared about him.

Malcolm’s marriage to Betty Shabazz was not the idyllic one depicted in Lee’s film. He married her on the rebound from a partly-consummated courtship with another woman named Bettye. Partly because of the way his mother had beaten and neglected him, he did not trust women and did not confide in his wife who recently acknowledged, after decades of denial, that her marriage was a troubled one.

Lee’s film is entertaining and well made, but historically false. The true story of the transformation of the youthful criminal Malcolm into the fiery political Malcolm is far more remarkable than Spike Lee’s politically motivated myth.

Bruce Perry
GRAFF AND CORRUPTION

by JOHN ELLIS

Beyond the Culture Wars:

How Teaching
the Conflicts Can Revitalize
American Education

by GERALD GRAFF

Norton: New York, 1992

Gerald Graff used to be a conservative critic but instead of elan we get anxious bobbing to the newly converted generally have some extra fire.

So what sort of literature does the campus left want to teach? Right now the hard fact which Graff avoids is that such topics as a 19th-century romance can be reconsidered as "bogus," and "baseless or grossly exaggerated" But this is what his new friends are doing, should consider doing something other than teaching literature. On the basis of this chapter we have to think about relationship between the two courses, I did not make the stubborn fact go away: what Graff would dominate, as the fringe is actually the heart and soul of his movement.

The silliest example is when he grotesquely misreads Frederic Jameson in order to find him "not as far as he may seem from Orwell." The author of 1984 far from the unreconstructed apologist for the horrible crimes of Communism. Graff instead of arguing (111), are frustrated at no longer getting their own way as they are used to having it (8), dislike theory don't even bother to read it (31), make excuses for social inequality and injustice (46), are angry at the challenge to their rule by gentle
tman's agreement (56), and of course they are all conservative.

Graff seems often ill-at ease with the ideas he now espouses. Much backing and filling, entering of caveats and general nervousness is visible, but also plain lack of conviction. Take this example: "A neo-Marxist analysis of Vanna White's autobiography, Vanna Speaks, one that emphasized, say, the commodification of the self under postmodern capitalism, might be more challeng-
ing than any number of analyses of weightier tonal than Vanna's." Here Graff can't bring himself to say straight out (as his new allies do) that this kind of study is just splendid, period, but only that relating to the boring old run-of-the-mill stuff might not come out too badly. It is as if he steels himself up pick something a bit smelly, sets his face in a rigid smile as he prunes it through gritted teeth, then drops it with relief.

Graff's complaints about the other side are in fact his own vices. His tedious repetition that they have not done their homework is especially unfortunate because this is obviously a hastily produced and poorly researched book which deals with very little of the case made in print against Graff. It is largely content to jibe away predictably at the usual suspects (Blooom, Bennett, Cheney, D'Souza) but even in these cases, contemptuous asides are all we get; there is no serious and systematic argumentation. Though many of the points he asserts—without mentioning any examples—that critics of deconstruction have not read its proponents—he himself cites none of the relevant critical scholarship. He gripes at the books that support the anti-PC case (under postmodern capitalism, might be more challenging than any number of analyses of weightier tonal than Vanna's) here Graff can't bring himself to say straight out (as his new allies do) that this kind of study is just splendid, period, but only that relating to the boring old run-of-the-mill stuff might not come out too badly. It is as if he steels himself up pick something a bit smelly, sets his face in a rigid smile as he prunes it through gritted teeth, then drops it with relief.

Beyond the Culture Wars seems to me less a contribution to the debate than an exercise in self-positioning. Graff is evidently ambivalent both to cement his leadership position with his new friends and to retain as much as he can of the respect of the old ones. As to the second intention, he only makes things worse, and I think he sees the book as a way of not only things don't work, and thus that stands in the way of teaching both sides of the conflicts, and he evidently has no real confidence in the substance of its position. This admission casts a long shadow of doubt over the integrity of Graff's book.

The fault-lines in Graff's position really open up, however, when he blunts out, "If the left hopes to advance it must risk entering a debate that it would otherwise be necessarily guaranteed to win." Here we have it plainly at last: Graff does know perfectly well that it is the campus left that doesn't want a debate, and thus that stands in the way of teaching both sides of the conflicts, and he evidently has no real confidence in the substance of its position. This admission casts a long shadow of doubt over the integrity of Graff's book.

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HIGH COURT UPHOLDS JUSTICE CONCEPT

by JUDITH SCHUMANN WEIZNER

In a major decision one year after the sweeping reform of the legal system mandated by the Clinton administration’s Judicial Reform Act of 1994, the Supreme Court today upheld the manslaughter conviction of a middle-aged piano teacher who killed a homeless woman in a street fight in New York City.

The case received much publicity when the jury in the original trial rendered an acquittal that was overturned on appeal due to an incorrect calculation of Justice Points.

The facts in the case were never in dispute. Stephanie West had been on her way home from giving a piano lesson on the evening of December 15 when she was accosted on the street by Laticia Riggs who demanded a dollar. Ms. West ignored Ms. Riggs, and continued to walk along West End Avenue, where both women reside. When Ms. Riggs grabbed Ms. West by the arm, spun her around and punched her in the face, Ms. West reacted. Falling to the ground, Ms. West saw a beer bottle lying by the curb. She picked it up by the neck, smashed it on the sidewalk and held it in front of herself as she got to her feet. When Ms. Riggs charged her again, Ms. West swiped at her with the broken bottle, severing Ms. Riggs’ jugular.

Ms. West was charged with manslaughter and subsequently acquitted by the jury. The Appeals Court pointed out, however, that a serious error had been made in calculating the Justice Points that led to its verdict.

The Essential Points were correctly assessed. Ms. Riggs had precipitated the attack, making Ms. West a victim and thus eligible for one hundred points. Both principals were women, meriting fifty points each. But since Ms. West is white and Ms. Riggs was black, Ms. West was penalized twenty points.

The error in the decision was in the calculation of the Circumstantial Points. Since both women reside on lower middle class West End Avenue, each received ten points. But because Ms. West lived indoors at an address in the low four hundreds, she forfeited her ten points and Ms. Riggs received a grant of ten percent of Ms. West’s street address. Additionally, Ms. West had armed herself against someone poorer than she, costing her five percent of her total adjusted points. It was further pointed out that the reason Ms. West had chosen that particular weapon was that she had seen it on television. Since Ms. Riggs had no television, she was awarded an additional ten points.

When the Circumstantials were computed, Ms. West earned four more Justice Points than Ms. Riggs, and so the decision went to Ms. West. However, the Appeals Court pointed out that Ms. West had been on the way home after giving a classical piano lesson and so Ms. Riggs had been entitled to an additional Circumstantial Award of ten percent of her total.

The case went to the Supreme Court because Ms. West’s lawyers argued that the piano is also used to play blues, jazz and rock, and that although Ms. West had indeed just given a lesson in classical music she is also able to play music of the underclass. One of the telling arguments was that one week prior to the incident Ms. West’s classical student had asked to learn “The Entertainer” by black composer Scott Joplin and had been given this music immediately. It was a surprise, therefore, when the High Court upheld Ms. West’s conviction. Justice Lamont Tripe spoke for the minority of Justices when he wrote, “The killing of a homeless woman cannot be excused on the grounds that the killer could also play jazz. That excuse is akin to the disclaimer “Some of my best friends are Jews” that is often used by anti-Semites to explain away their behavior. But more important than this in arriving at the decision was the fact that the proportion of white females in the penal system is not yet commensurate with the proportion of white females in the population. The conviction must stand.”

With this decision the Judicial Reform Act of 1994 has demonstrated its validity. Enacted to eliminate both the subjectivity and bias that had become evident in verdicts and the legal congestion resulting from an overwhelming number of hung juries, it provides a means of assuring impartiality in the justice system. The proviso that in odd-numbered years the minority opinion on the Supreme Court shall prevail has been hailed by legal scholars as the final embodiment of judicial equity.