



Voices

+ for media
democracy

*Women's
Institute
for
Freedom of
the Press*

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www.wifp.org

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Summer 2014

Dr. Tobe Levin Presented WIFP's Women and Media

Dr. Tobe Levin was presented WIFP's "Women and Media Award" at an event April 6, 2014 to raise awareness and encourage activism surrounding the issue of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM).

Dr. Tobe Levin is Editor of Waging Empathy, and CEO of UnCUT/VOICES Press, a press devoted to the publication of works on FGM. Levin is also an Associate at the W.E.B. DuBois Institute of the Hutchins Center at Harvard University, as well as a lecturer at the University of Frankfurt. She will soon be a visiting professor at Oxford University.

Dr. Tobe Levin's fascinating presentation covered historical efforts in diverse areas of the world to control women's bodies, putting FGM in a global context. Her forty-minute long lecture, accompanied by her PowerPoint slides, kept her audience engaged. The issue of

FGM is better-known in countries than in the U.S. Awareness has led to increased efforts in eradicating harm inflicted on girls.

Levin discussed forms of FGM, areas of the world where it is practiced and activists who are speaking out for its worldwide abolition. She highlighted the work of Khady, a Senegalese woman who was responsible for the passage of the UN Resolution against FGM. Levin translated Khady's book into English and published her fascinating life story.

Nora Bertognotti, visual artist, journal-



ist and Workshop Art Educator, presented Tobe Levin with one hundred beautifully designed note cards (including matching envelopes). The cards feature a watercolor piece with a slogan on the front that reads, "125 million girls and women mutilated, 125 million spirits annihilated" and a poem on the back~ designed and written specifically for the cause of FGM. We share the poem: "Yet She is Still Wounded."

edia Award



culminated with the presentation of the WIFP “Women and Media Award” in recognition her outstanding work in media. Levin has been working for decades on getting information out about FGM and encouraging activism.

She moves her lips
and only a painful
silence emanates.
Her young girl
eyes weep.

She takes a glance
at her scars...
her heart hurts, her
soul has gone.
Her silence is now
a mournful sound.

She tries to soothe
the wound
She strives to
reclaim herself
She attempts to
hold the *power to
heal.*
*Yet she is still
wounded...*

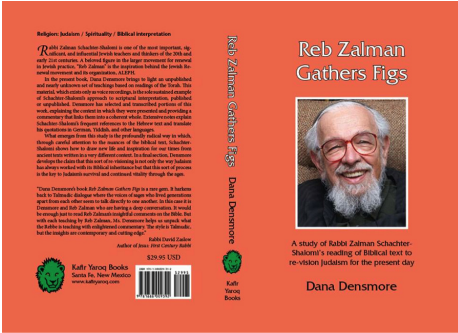
The artist, Bertognotti, who makes generous artistic donations to causes, was honored by CURE Magazine in 2008 as the recipient of the Extraordinary Healer Award. She is the originator of Soul and Heart Cards (soulandheart-cards.com).

Those of us gathered found the talent, generosity, and humility of Nora Bertognotti most inspiring. The cards were donated to raise awareness and generate funding for advocacy. The event



Reb Zalman Gathers Figs: A study of Rabbi Zalman Schachter-Shalomi's Reading of Biblical Text to Re-Vision Judaism for the Present Day

by Dana Densmore



WIFP's Vice President has written another book. Dana Densmore is Co-Director of Green Lion Press in Santa Fe, NM, publishing on the history of science and mathematics. As well as a book publisher, Densmore is a spiritual guide and senior teacher in the Sufi tradition of spiritual practices. She is a feminist theoretician that has been instrumental in articulating, along with WIFP founder Donna Allen, the foundations of WIFP's media philosophy.

"Reb Zalman Schachter-Shalomi is the father of the Jewish Renewal movement of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. Dana Densmore's book, based on unpublished audio tapes, never before transcribed, originates in the seven retreat sessions of the Wisdom School led by Reb Zalman, and his life-partner Eve Ilsen, in 1988-89. Densmore's work makes the breathtaking scope, richness and texture of Reb Zalman's insights available for consideration and reflection by an ever-wider readership. . . ."

-Diane M. Sharon, Ph.D.

"Dana Densmore's book *Reb Zalman Gathers Figs* is a rare gem. It harkens back to Talmudic dialogue where the voices of sages who lived generations apart from each other seem to talk directly to one another. In this case it is Densmore and Reb Zalman who are having a deep conversation. It would be enough to just read Reb Zalman's insightful comments on the Bible. But with each teaching by Reb Zalman, Ms. Densmore helps us unpack what the Rebbe is teaching with enlightened commentary. The style is Tamudic, but the insights are contemporary and cutting edge."

-Rabbi David Zaslow

author of "Jesus: First Century Rabbi"

"*Reb Zalman Gathers Figs* is a treasure trove of chiddushim—new insights—from a master of Jewish thought and practice, a master of renewing the Jewish world, that should grace every lover of Torah's bookshelf. Densmore has given us access to heretofore unreleased material that will inform and illuminate for decades to come. We owe her a significant debt of gratitude for publishing these teachings along with her own remarkable scholarly commentary. . . ."

-Rabbi Debra Kolodny

Rabbi of P'nai Or of Portland, Executive Director of Nehirim
Former Executive Director of AL:EPH: Alliance for Jewish
Revival

Women and Media

reviewed by Michael Honey

professor and author

Danna Walker's *Women and Media* tells the story of Donna Rehkopf Allen, one of the great activists of all time: a well-published labor economist and journalist, a Ph.D. historian with a brilliant mind, she worked non-stop from World War II onward to make the world a more equal, fair, and democratic place. She supported peace and freedom movements and helped to lead resistance against America's cold and hot wars abroad, fought for equal rights for African Americans and all people at home, inspired and guided the New Left generation of activists, and blazed a path toward a sophisticated, learned, but earnest and militant feminism. After fighting all the good fights, in the 1970s she organized the Women's Institute for Freedom of the Press on the principle that democracy requires open access media that allows all points of view to not only be aired but also

to be heard. Her journal, *Media Report to Women*, chronicled the multitude of media women created to share their views and build a democratic community for over twenty years. Her numerous writings also critiqued the concentration of power in the few hands of men in the corporate, mass media, and demanded that mass communications be open to all. She was an early champion of the internet as a leveling influence that would make it possible for a democratic conversation to take place and to create a more just society. Danna Walker's book tells all this and more and is required reading for those trying to build a better world and a more democratic media today. This book tells a story you will want to know; even if you thought you knew the history of women and social movements, you will discover much that is new in this biography and intellectual odyssey of Donna Allen.



About the Author

Danna Walker, Ph.D. is a Washington journalist, editorial manager, content creator and writer with experience in online media and digital tools. She has worked at the Washington Post and CBS News. Walker was Assistant Professor at both American University and the University of Maryland University College.

*Sharecropper's Troubadour:
The life of singer, union organizer John Handcox*

by Martha
Allen

WIFP Associate Michael Honey has written another fascinating book utilizing oral histories. The life of John Handcox tells a history of people whose stories we rarely hear. It tells of people who were amongst the poorest and most exploited during the decades of the 1920s and 30s and how they survived and organized. This is a story of how Handcox and others, desperately poor black and white sharecrop-

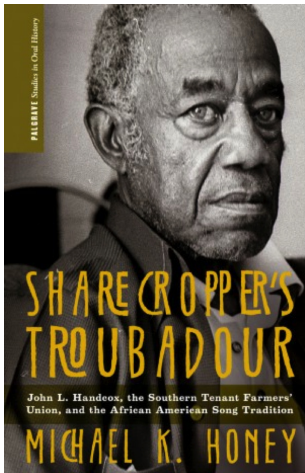
pers, tried to prevent the planters and ruling classes from dividing them in their efforts to get a better life. It is a story that shows once again what one individual can do. Michael Honey sets this story firmly in a historical context.

The life of John Handcox is not just an inspiration because of what Handcox contributed to the world in difficult times but how his life also illuminated that of many others and the

conditions under which they lived. Sharecropper's lives were extremely difficult. Plantation owners kept them locked in an endless cycle of debt. It was from these conditions that Handcox used his gift for song, rhyming and poetry to organize sharecroppers and support union organizing. He

wasn't afraid to write and sing about his experiences, inspiring others to stand up to their bosses. "Roll the Union On" and "There Is Mean Things Happening In This Land" became anthems for sharecroppers, black and white.

John Handcox, born in 1904 in Arkansas, descended from black slaves, Native Americans, and white slave owners. His mother taught him how to read and write before he entered school and his father invested in a book of poetry through which Handcox discovered Paul Laurence Dunbar, one of the most famous poets of his time. "After I got the rhythm of Dunbar, I started writin' my own songs and poems," Handcox recalled. He walked three miles to get to school. When the school superintendent asked students who they would like to emulate, John answered George



Washington.

John recalled, he “thought that I didn’t know what I was saying so he told me that I meant Booker T. Washington not George ‘cause that was the President, and I said that just what I want to be.” Unfortunately, it was necessary for him to drop out of high school when his father died in 1923.

In 1927, Handcox married and his first child arrived in 1929. Other children followed. Times were very difficult. Handcox and other desperately poor people living in the heart of Ku Klux Klan country organized white and black tenants and day laborers into the Southern Tenant Farmers’ Union (STFU). Following a successful cotton pickers’ strike in 1935, some 30,000-40,000 people belonged to the union, more than half of them African American. Handcock became a volunteer union organizer but vigilante threats and a lynch mob forced him to flee Arkansas. In Memphis in 1937 he

began writing songs and became a traveling organizer, poet, singer and songwriter for the STFU.

Most of the STFU locals were either black or white with the remaining organized bi-racially. Segregation laws and segregated community patterns prevailed. Some plantations had white workers

“...he thought I didn’t know what I was saying so he told me that I meant Booker T. Washington not George ‘cause that was the President, and I said that was just what I want to be.”

and others had black workers and many union locals were organized on that basis. The STFU held some interracial meetings and marches. Planters tried to separate people by class and race. STFU members did not call black men “boys” and black elders “uncle” or “auntie.” STFU leaders adamantly used the practice of using the title “Mr.” or “Mrs.” when people referred to each other in meetings. When planters couldn’t divide people in the union by class

or race, they used violence.

Some of the anti-union terror was written up by a white Social Gospel minister named Howard Kester in a report titled “Acts of Tyranny and Terror” and later in a pamphlet titled “Revolt Among the Sharecroppers.” “Planters, the police, and the KKK worked together in the Mississippi River Delta region where the extended Handcox family resided,” Honey wrote. “The white preacher Ward Rogers saw it as a coordinated class war, with all of the military power on one side” (p.61).

Women played important roles in the union. Black women like Henrietta McGee were active and made many decisions. “McGee, a widow and mother of nine children, served as a powerful speaker in the union and at fund-raising events to support the union held in the North. . . Myrtle Lawrence, a desperately poor but tough white woman from the hill country near where John was raised, became a

strong advocate for black civil rights and women's right in the union" (pp.59-60).

In the Foreword, Pete Seeger describes how his father, Charles Seeger, a musicologist, wrote to him in 1937 about John Handcox and the delegation of white and black southern tenant farmers who had come to Washington to petition Congress for help in their struggle for justice. When Charles Seeger heard the lead singer perform, he took Handcox over to the Library of Congress where the Archives of Folk Song had some of the early recording equipment available at that time. Pete Seeger heard those scratchy aluminum disks, turning at 78 RPM, and was so impressed by the songs and poems that he immediately memorized some of them.

Some of John Handcox's music can be heard by going to the author's website and scrolling down to "Music." Other good links can be found on the site: <http://faculty.washington.edu/mhoney/>

[edu/mhoney/](http://faculty.washington.edu/mhoney/)

Once you pick up *Sharecropper's Troubadour*, you won't be able to put it down. It has all the elements I love in a book: history, drama, inspiration, stories about people I care about, photos, all in a well-written historical context.



About the Author

Michael Honey is a professor of interdisciplinary arts and sciences at the University of Washington Tacoma and an affiliate of the UW's Harry Bridges Center for Labor Studies. His previous books include *Going Down Jericho Road: The Memphis Strike, Martin Luther King's Last Campaign* in 2007 and *All Labor Has Dignity* in 2010.



GLOBAL WOMAN
P.E.A.C.E.
FOUNDATION

Walk to end FGM in Washington, DC

Join the Walk to End FGM on November 8, 2014 in Washington, DC.
Sponsored by Global Women P.E.A.C.E. Foundation.

Female Genital Mutliation (FGM) is the intentional removing of the female genatalia for non-medical reasons. 8,000 girls are mutilated daily in the world and 228,000 are at risk in the U.S.

The Walk will assemble on the Washington Monument Grounds on the Mall at 8:30 A.M. Pre-Walk Programs begin at 9 A.M. The 5k Walk begins at 10 A.M.

For more information, visit Global Women P.E.A.C.E. Foundation's website at: www.globalwomenpeacefoundation.org

Global Woman P.E.A.C.E. Foundation is a WIFP partner organization that focuses on eradicating gender violence, particularly FGM. We encourage everyone to join the Walk and efforts to make this a safer world for girls and women.



Road sign near Kapchorwa, Uganda, where FGM is outlawed but still practiced

Speaking out for Net Neutrality

by Martha
Allen



WIFP joined many other organizations and individuals at the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to make it clear that we need real Net Neutrality, not what FCC Chairman Wheeler recently proposed that would allow cable companies and broadband providers to sell faster access to some – an “Internet fast lane” relegating the rest of us to the “slow lane.”

Many have already contacted the FCC, demonstrated and even camped out in

front of the FCC, written in media outlets about Net Neutrality, and supported others who have taken stands in support of an open Internet. We need to continue these efforts: contacting the FCC, calling elected representative to urge them to speak out, and seeking more media coverage. The telecom companies are very powerful and spend more money on lobbyists than almost any other industry. Therefore we must mobilize to make sure our voices are heard.

Net Neutrality is the First Amendment issue of our time. Nearly half of all Americans rely on the web as a source of news and information, with 71% for younger generations. We all need the Internet for conducting many transactions, with fewer off-line options as the years go by. The time to act is now.

Resources:

Submit comments to the FCC: <http://www.fcc.gov/comments>

Demonstration July 1 at the FCC:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ll2EgODnHuc&feature=youtu.be>

Comic: Net neutrality: What it is, and why you should care

<http://boingboing.net/2014/07/07/net-neutrality-what-it-is-an.html>

Top Internet providers state-by-state: The United States of Comcast Map

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/03/04/cable-company-map_n_4892435.html

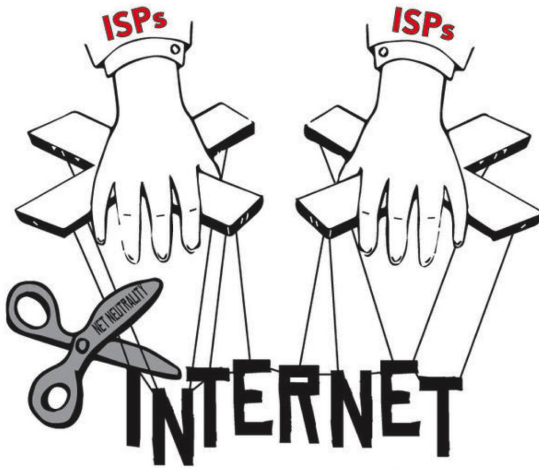
Popular Resistance –leader in the Net Neutrality efforts and on many other issues:

<http://www.popularresistance.org>

Free Press – another leader in the Net Neutrality efforts:

<http://www.freepress.net/?akid=a8157623.9913421.U9E5iV&t=1>





 Public Knowledge

The FCC Must Act Now: Net Neutrality is Vital for a “Free Press”

The Women’s Institute for Freedom of the Press (WIFP) calls on the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to treat Internet Service Providers (ISP) as common carriers by reclassifying broadband as a Title II service. The FCC needs to prohibit discrimination, including paid prioritization that allows those with more money to reach Internet users in a fast lane, leaving the rest of us in a slow lane.

Everyone relies on the Internet for our daily activities and as our means of communication. Without reclassification, the high costs of Internet connectivity will continue to rise. We must not lose the open communication system that the Internet provides. The FCC must act now.

*Erasing Borders, Preserving History:
A Film Review of Annemarie Jacir's Salt of This Sea*

by Alethea
Russell

Regarded as the first feature-length Palestinian film written and directed by a woman, *Salt of This Sea* (*Millh Hadha al-Bahr*) is a zealous love story about ethnic pride and the politics of man-made boundaries—language, religion, airport security, and road checkpoints. Selected for the Cannes International Film Festival in 2008, Annemarie Jacir's self-reflexive tale follows New York native Soraya (played effortlessly by first-time actress and poet Suheir Hammad) as she travels to the West Bank in hopes of claiming an inheritance left by her grandfather currently being held up in a Ramallah bank.

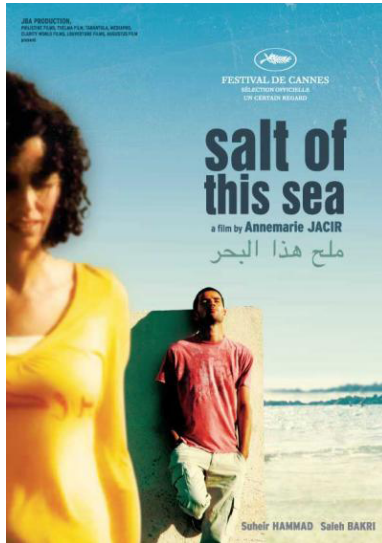
Early on one cannot escape the filmmaker's nostalgic sentiments of a former Palestine. Cur-

rently residing in Amman, Jordan, Jacir was born in Bethlehem, Palestine. In recent years, she was denied access back into her homeland. During production of *Salt* the filmmaker admitted to depression yet she remains hopeful that one day she will return home like the main character.

Black and white images of buildings being demolished and

people crossing the Mediterranean Sea on small watercrafts as the city trails behind them lead to present-day Israel where Soraya is greeted by invasive airport security upon her arrival. These dispiriting images set the tone for post-1948 Israeli and Palestinian relations from the main character's point of view.

It is difficult to keep composure watching the airport officials rummage callously through the young woman's belongings and repetitively inquire of her origin and intentions. She is compliant—proudly stating her Arab orientation and non-traditional religious affiliation—but also possesses a streak of fearlessness which is paramount to subsequent interactions of contempt.



Such images elicit feelings of discontent and grief within me. Although our histories differ I can relate to this character. Firstly, as a woman whose ancestors were uprooted from their native land. Secondly, I know the feeling of being treated as a stranger or threat in a place one now calls home.

At the start of her journey Soraya befriends Emad (Saleh Bakri), a student determined to leave Ramallah for Canada who takes interest in her, along with his friend Marwan (Riyad Ideis), an aspiring filmmaker ready to join Emad in the Western world. The young men's poise and ability to balance Soraya's intractable demeanor. Although they support her efforts and share similar ideals, the men appear only partly concerned with the affects of Israeli Occupation considering they have grown accustomed to the changes; whereas Soraya is experiencing the devastation up-close for the first time

so the wounds are fresh.

Opting to live alone, willing to take up immediate employment as a waitress (a position Emad believes she is too good for), and quick-witted, Soraya is established as serious, self-reliant, and purpose-driven. While these are positive characteristics, at times her rigidity can be confused with arrogance since she is coming from a place of privilege—the United States democratic system where freedom is not as elusive. Her behavior comes across as self-centered and excessive. Then one realizes she's carrying within her 60 years of inherited anger and disgust. Meanwhile local



residents understand that these customs are just the way things are done so they press on. That's not to say the restrictions placed on Soraya or fellow Arabs by Israeli forces are right. It just feels like at times her passion makes her oblivious to the joys, peace, and successes still present among her people despite their oppression.

The dialogue is beautifully written, lacking prattle, complimentary to the film's lack of moribund gestures which

which keeps viewers interested in the narrative. Additionally, there are only one or two instances of violence on display. Even though there is strong propaganda throughout the film, it doesn't incite a militant response. Instead, I think the audience is encouraged to take more practical measures like those displayed by the story's protagonist showing there are peaceful resolutions to conflicts.

This is truly a Arab/Palestinian story with a slow-moving, character-driven plot that's perfect viewing for art house enthusiasts and anyone interested in gaining a better perspective on the Israeli-Palestinian struggle, but as the film's creator has expressed the film is to be viewed

the ambition of Jacir's piece is to encourage empathy. If we can share in Soraya's rage and determination as an Arab woman returning home then we may turn our attention towards Palestine with more knowledge and compassion. Additionally, very seldom do audiences see women of color being their own hero. That's the beauty of *Salt*. Soraya may be unlikeable or hard to understand, but she's a woman on a mission. The principle of the matter is not to retrieve a few hundred Palestinian dollars, but to be in and of Palestine without hindrance.

Salt of This Sea is now streaming on Netflix, Vudu, and YouTube in English and Arabic with English subtitles.

Running time: 1 hour 45 minutes. This film is not rated.



Alethea Russell is a recent graduate of the University of Rhode Island where she received a degree in Film and Africana Studies. While there, she was awarded the Noreen Coachman award for Outstanding Achievement By An Older Student and briefly studied abroad in Stann Creek District, Belize. Once a WIFP intern, she currently acts as photographer and contributing writer for the organization. She hopes to continue to provide content that magnifies the voices of women of color and other largely overlooked groups of people.

About the Filmmaker

Since her humble beginnings in independent filmmaking 20 years ago, Jacir has released several films, such as *A Post Oslo Story* (1998) and *When I Saw You* (2012), co-developed a production company called Philistine Films which focuses on Arab and Iranian cinema, and acts as chief curator and co-founder of Dreams of a Nation aimed at promoting Palestinian films.

as one of many stories about Palestine. Soraya does not represent nor does she speak for all of Palestine. I believe

Full Figured Fashionistas

by Noa Shusterman

At first glance, Sharon Ben Shabbat's blog looks just like any other regular fashion blog—beautiful clothing, accessories, shoes, soft light and pastoral scenery. The difference between Sharon's blog and other well-known fashion blogs isn't the trends presented or the attire but the model herself. Sharon Ben Shabbat, a young Israeli woman in her twenties, is a professional photographer and personal stylist promoting her skills online while displaying her size 14 body without any shame or hesitation.

Over the past few years plus size fashion blogs have started springing up like mushrooms after the rain, as full bodied women have started taking advantage of the wide outreach finally accessible to them. Major fashion editorials might try to disregard them and

focus on thinner body types, while continuing to promote very problematic beauty and body ideals, but the Internet exposure lets these fashionistas voice themselves in spite of the common perceptions. Using this platform, a new silent resistance has

"...I think all too often our culture tells us that the only people allowed to participate in fashion are thin, which is completely untrue."

emerged, and more and more women feel free to show themselves, curves and all, fighting against the predominant stereotypes and referring to themselves as "real women."

Sharon is only one out of many, accompanied by women like Nadia Aboulhosn, a half-Lebanese American woman who came to prominence after winning the American Apparel's XL model

search in 2011; Gabi Fresh, a 27-year-old from Detroit; and Marie Denee, AKA the "Curvy Fashionista." Although they don't fit the size 0 body ideal, some of them were featured in the most competitive and mainstream magazines, proving that with the right amount of public support, anything can happen.

The growing awareness of plus size fashion is a positive and needed change, but it raises important questions about health issues. Blogging in response to comments that suggest she promotes obesity, GabiFresh says: "No, I promote fashion for all bodies. I think all too often our culture tells us that the only people allowed to participate in fashion are thin, which is completely untrue. Women can look great regardless of their weight, and they deserve to feel great too. I am all for

people striving to be happy, healthy, and comfortable in their skin." Super-skinny models like Twiggy and Kate Moss obviously aren't promoting healthy eating and life style, but the same goes to some of the plus size models. In their blogs, the fashionistas speak freely about the daily difficulties and endeavors

failed, that they deal with as full figured women. Although the full figured fashion bloggers are speaking out for all the women who have been delegitimized in the media and in the advertisement industry, it also seems as if they are playing by the same previous fashion codes - women who

uncover themselves and pose in sexually inviting and tempting postures. In spite of the fact that the blogs were created especially for women, by women, the presence of the male gaze is apparent as the women are still using the same as before tools. It appears that the social shift regarding the way society

perceives women is not only a change that speaks of accepting the woman figure, but also of ceasing to judge and appreciate women by male-made standards. The journey is far from over, but full figured fashion bloggers are definitely a step in the right direction.



Noa Shusterman is a 26 year old living in Jerusalem. She studies political science, Philosophy, and economics at the Hebrew University. She is interested in international relations, diplomacy, and conflict resolution.

The Curvy Fashionista
www.thecurvyfashionista.com

The “Boy’s Club” of the Gaming World

by Nikki Clemons

The world of gaming has often been classified as a “boy’s club,” with girls and women often absent or underrepresented. The popular view is that games are usually made by men, bought by men, played by men and star men. However, the perception that video games are mostly dominated by the male audience is undermined by studies that show that women make up nearly half of the gaming demographic. According to the Entertainment Software Association’s 2013 “Essential Facts About the Computer and Video Game Industry,” nearly 45% of all players are female. So why is it with this high percentage of female gamer that women are so absent or misconstrued in the world of video games?

The most popular role for a female character in the gaming

world is as a sexual object. Whether cast as hookers and strippers in gritty gangster games, pedestrians in open world games like *Grand Theft Auto*, or just skimpily dressed secondary characters, women exist in the virtual world for sex or as embodiments of

“According to the Entertainment Software Association’s 2013 “Essential Facts About the Computer and Video Game Industry,” nearly 45% of all players are female.”

sex. Even traditionally non-sexual characters, like DC’s Harley Quinn, are redesigned in the gaming world to be sexier and skimpier. Harley’s design went from a one-piece jumpsuit in the comics and cartoons to a series of revealing and tight fitting dresses in the Arkham series. Even nameless females suffer the same objectification—the all powerful Great Fairy in the famous *Legend of Zelda* games are

garbed in only thin vines and leaves.

This sexualizing of female characters ties into the lack of diversity and fetishizing of the diversity that is there. In any game with a character creator, the player has the option to design their own character, including hair style, eye color, clothing options, and body type. In the fighting game *Soul Caliber V* the body types for male characters can range from the hilariously muscled to the painfully thin. The body types for females, however, range from thin to average weights. It is very rare to find a game with a character creator that allows for the creation of a “fat” woman, and games with non-revealing outfits can be equally difficult to find.

In the instances of games without character creators, if the player even has the

option to play as a woman, getting the chance to play as a woman of colour is pretty much non-existent. When women of colour are present in games, usually as NPCs (non-playable characters), they are stereotyped or fetishized. They are either stereotypes of “sassy” black women, sexual Asian women, or guiding mammy figures. The Gerudo race in the *Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time*, are racist depictions of Middle Eastern-resembling women in crop tops. Similarly, any presence of gay or bisexual females leads to fetishizing and sexualizing.

In addition to being sexualized, video game women are also subjected to specific and gendered types of violence. In the 2006 open world game *Bully*, the male main character can break into several restricted buildings on his campus, one of which is the girl’s dormitory. He can then hide and spy on the female NPCs, and if caught, he can beat the dorm headmistress with his choice of fists,

bricks, baseball bats, or a variety of other weapons. Similarly, in the very popular open world series, *Grand Theft Auto*, the player can pick up prostitutes, throw money at strippers and run any female down with their car and beat them to death with their fists. This open



The Great Fairy
Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time

promotion of violence against women, sexual harassment and even undertones of rape, are not just degrading, but can drive women away from playing games. Playing any game online as a woman, like *Call of Duty* or *Halo*, can be

uncomfortable since players on the other end of the line tend to threaten rape or sexual degradation, especially upon discovering their opponent player is a woman.

In the few instances where female characters don’t fit any of the above roles, they are often in the role of a dependent. Elizabeth from *BioShock Infinite* is constantly in modest clothing and is independent and powerful in her own right. However, the player has no chance to actually play as her. Instead they play as Booker DeWitt and spend the game toting Elizabeth from place to place and protecting her from attackers. Similarly, Ellie from the apocalyptic *The Last of Us* requires

protection and exists mainly as a secondary character. And

of course, there are the typical depictions of women as damsels in distress, often princesses captured by horrible beasts and waiting for rescue from the main male protagonist (see the *Super Mario Bros* and *Legend of Zelda* series)

In these instances, women are given personalities, powers and are more independent and less mindless than women in other games. However, they are still submissive and powerless within the confines of the plot and dependent on the male lead and the presumably male player.

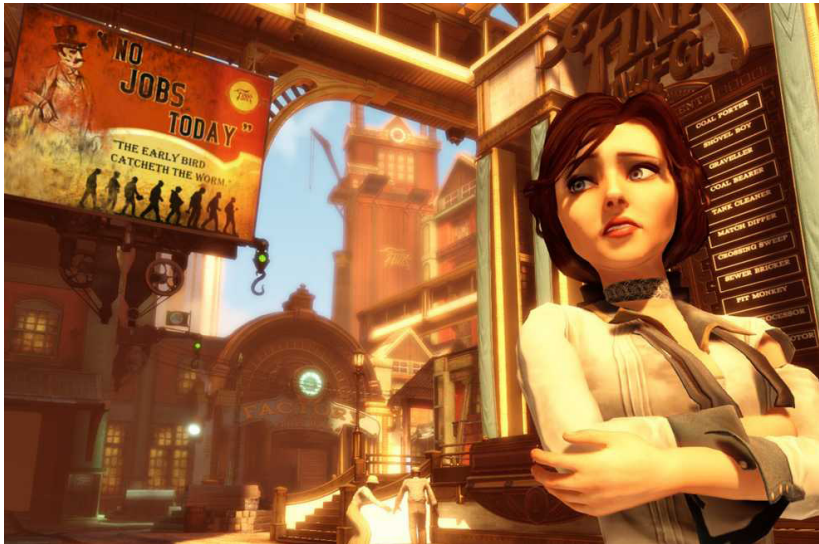
And all of this is assuming that women are present in the game at all. During 2014's E3 conference, an annual conference for the presentation and discussion of video games, James

Therein of Ubisoft confirmed there would be no playable female characters in the new *Assassin's Creed* game. He explained this absence saying that putting the women in as playable characters would have "doubled the work" to produce the game. This created an outrage and general confusion amongst the fans, as there were previous games where the player could be female assassins.

Women are so often denied roles even in industries where they nearly dominate sales and play time.

The few times they are granted roles, they're empty background characters in skimpy clothing, there for the male player to protect, objectify or destroy. Women have no agency in the very open world games that are supposed to give them just that. Video games are still a "boy's club," ultimately, even though half of those boys are girls. ♀

Nikki Clemons is an English major, and Sociology and WGS minor at Virginia Tech. She hopes to go into editing and/or design.



Elizabeth from *Bioshock Infinite*

Opening the Conversation
Surrounding Rape Culture

by Cheyane
Reisner

In the world of patriarchy, misogyny and hyper masculinity, how do we, as a society, tackle our overt rape culture? As women's organizations begin to address this multi-faceted issue, society continues to reinforce the idea that violence against women, sexual objectification and unattainable ideals of beauty sell. It appears that women's issues are devalued and, in fact, ignored by the few men in power who control the media. However, there is a grassroots movement towards expanding the conversation to include men when discussing rape culture, slut shaming and victim blaming.

Men Can Stop Rape (MCSR) is an organization rooted in the notion that including men in feminist dialogue is essential to breaking down patriarchal societal influence. This group holds programs in local middle schools

and high schools where young men generate discourse about rape culture and socially constructed ideals of masculinity in a

"MenEngage commits to empowering education equality for women and girls, promoting reproductive and sexual rights and blurring harmful gender binaries."

safe space. MCSR has found that many young men are exposed to an unhealthy view of masculinity that centers on violence, money and sex. Instead of shaming these men for their tainted views, MCSR creates a non-judgmental safe space for expanding the notion of masculinity to include compassion, empathy and respect. MCSR is unique in that it aids men's ability



to act as allies to any woman affected by patriarchy, while additionally deconstructing hegemonic masculinity and expanding how these young men define "manhood."

On an international scale, MenEngage Alliance, a global coalition that works with several countries in varied regions, strives to engage all cis males in promoting gender equality. From Mozambique to Honduras, MenEngage works internationally, with representation in dozens of countries, to reshape manhood away from one's number of sexual partners,

violence and power against women or sexual orientation. MenEngage collaborates with the UN to employ men in roles as caregivers, allies, activists and feminists. More specifically, MenEngage commits to empowering education equality for women and girls, promoting reproductive and sexual rights and blurring harmful gender binaries. MenEngage members advocate for key gender issues that affect people of all genders and the MenEngage website provides online petitions regarding women's rights, gender equality and reproductive rights.

While these problems are far from resolved, organizations such as MCSR and MenEngage facilitate men's participation in the fight against patriarchy, misogyny, violence against women, rape culture, gender discrimination, sexism, slut shaming and victim blaming. For generations, women's rights organizations have been discussing, combating and actively fighting for these very

issues, however, it is apparent that without the aid of men, these issues will prosper and the gender divide will increase. MCSR and MenEngage successfully educate young men about the issues women face in patriarchal society and how alliance with women is an essential prerequisite to peace. Thus, the feminist fight would benefit from organizations that tackle the roots of socially constructed hyper masculinity. ♀

Cheyane Reisner is a gender studies and government double major at Skidmore College with an English Literature minor. After graduation, she hopes to travel to developing countries and publish articles based on the untold female experience.



Trigger Warnings and Their Place
in an Academic Setting

by Danielle
Maldonado

Trigger warnings are content notices usually seen before blog posts and online articles, e.g. "TW: Sexual Violence, Rape." They have their roots in feminist blogging and are intended to protect the mental and physical health of people dealing with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Those with PTSD are prone to being "triggered," which is when a person relives their trauma after being exposed to stimuli that remind them of their experience. Being triggered has a strong emotional and physical component ranging from panic attacks to blackouts. Forewarning a reader of an article's content allows them to mentally prepare, as well as choose whether or not to continue reading. While originally intended for survivors of sexual assault dealing with PTSD, trigger warnings have expanded to include an array of readers with

lists of triggers ranging from suicide and violence, to racism and sexism, to snakes and other phobias. Although they are generally accepted on the Internet, trigger warnings are making their way on to college campuses and have been met with backlash.

In the month of February 2014, three Universities introduced trigger warnings to mainstream college culture. Oberlin College's Office of Equity Concerns released a Sexual Offense Resource Guide to its faculty calling for them to educate themselves on triggers, implement trigger warnings and refrain from teaching explicitly triggering material when possible. Faculty criticized the impracticality of knowing what information would be triggering to students and the guide was amended. On February 15th, 2014 a Rutgers University student released an

article calling for the implementation of trigger warnings on syllabi, books and other material in the college classroom. The student clearly stated that they were not in favor of censorship and that the triggers would simply be a way for students suffering from traumatic memories to interact with the material in a safe and prepared way. Ten days later, the Student Government at the University of California, Santa Barbara (UCSB) passed a resolution that would urge professors to include trigger warnings on their syllabi and during class. The proposed list of trigger warnings currently includes rape, sexual assault and abuse, self-injurious behavior, suicide, graphic violence, pornography, kidnapping and graphic depictions of gore. In addition to the warning, professors would be unable to

penalize students who did not attend class on those days if it was to avoid being triggered. The movement is spreading to other campuses across the nation such as George Washington University, Michigan University and others.

Opponents of the resolution have expressed concerns that trigger warnings in classrooms are a form of censorship and coddling of an oversensitive generation. Realizations of some of these fears can be seen in Oberlin's mandate in which faculty were advised to avoid teaching triggering material whenever possible. However, trigger warnings themselves are not inherently censoring. The material being taught, like the blogs and online articles being written, already exists and is not given parameters by the warnings. Similar to movie ratings and parental advisory notices on CDs and TV shows, trigger warnings advise an audience of the content but neither determine the material nor the decision for it

to be viewed.

Trigger warnings provide readers, viewers and students with the choice to engage with specific material after taking into account their mental health and safety. In exposure therapy, a treatment for PTSD, survivors work through their responses to triggering material in a controlled environment at an individual

“Trigger warnings are not designed to allow people to avoid uncomfortable material, but to engage with it at their own pace.”

pace. Trigger warnings are not designed to allow people to avoid uncomfortable material but to engage with it at their own pace. Many of the arguments against trigger warnings on college campuses center on how the warnings allow students to hide from material they disagree with and that this is unrealistic of the outside world. However, the young independent adults attending college should be able to find a safe space in which

to learn and challenge themselves without risk to their mental health and given the credit to understand when it is necessary to engage with or abstain from specific material. Trigger warnings are not an exact practice and where to draw the line is an important issue. Their implementation into an academic setting has many barriers to overcome and many ways for the process to be improved. Changes can already be seen from Oberlin to UCSB in terms of the expectations of professors. The more this discussion enters colleges the more it will be improved upon until there is a system that is not censoring, can be implemented with relative ease, and is beneficial to the students. Questioning the validity of trigger warnings, on the other hand, invalidates the safety of survivors of traumatic events on campus. While not all people who suffer from PTSD require trigger warnings, some do. Trigger warnings will not harm or hinder the learning of

3.5% of the adult population has PTSD
1 in 4 college women have been sexually assaulted or raped
31% of these women will experience PTSD

students who do not need them, but they can create a safer environment for students who do. According to the National Institute of Mental Health, 3.5% of the adult population has PTSD and as stated in *Completing The Mission: A Pilot Study of Veteran Student Progress Toward Degree Attainment in the Post 9/11 Era*, veterans are

attending colleges in record numbers. In addition, 1 in 4 college women have been sexually assaulted or raped, 31% of whom who will experience rape-related PTSD according to the National Violence Against Women Prevention Research Center. Facing these facts, it is necessary for the university to take the needs of its entire

student body into account. ♀

Danielle Maldonado studies Comparative Literature and Global Studies at the University of California, Santa Barbara. She is co-chair of UCSB's Womyn's Commission and has plans to go into editing and publishing after graduation.

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*The Masked
Military Mess*

by Cheyane
Reisner

The problem of military response to rape has been an epidemic for decades. While this is not a new issue, the progress the military has made in these past years is miniscule at best. Dozens of women interviewed about their experience with rape in the military depicted a culture where male military members feel entitled to sex with any female troop member. According to Pentagon research, over one in four women who join the military will be sexually assaulted during their career. Indeed, the U.S. military has created a culture of countless rape survivors repeatedly being told that their experience comes with the job and will not be taken seriously. "It is a complex problem because it involves a culture change," says Major General Gary

Patton, head of the Pentagon's Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office. "We have to see a culture change where those victims of this crime are taken seriously at their unit level by every member of their unit, so you don't see the divisiveness and

"...ninety percent of military survivors of sexual assault are involuntarily discharged, while eighty percent of perpetrators or accused perpetrators are discharged with honor."

the lack of support and the feeling of isolation that these victims feel." Because less than 2.5 percent of total suspected service members experience punishment or dismissal, these perpetrators have no deterrent against sexually assaulting anyone in the military.

The Oscar-nominated 2012 documentary, *Invisible War*, exposes the numerous sexual assault cases within the military.

This film highlights the survivor's experiences as they attempt to seek justice for their trauma. Each woman in the documentary faces much backlash, resistance and bribery as they try to get their perpetrators convicted. The system the military has established surrounding the appalling rape culture provides little deterrent to stop perpetrators. In fact, the survivors in the film depict how their rapists still serve in the military with honor, while these survivors were dismissed from their position and provided little, if any benefits. Indeed, ninety percent of military survivors of sexual assault are involuntarily discharged, while eighty percent of perpetrators or accused perpetrators are discharged with honor. The film, *Invisible War*, progressively reveals the elusive and highly problematic lack of military

response to rape by portraying the way most generals and counselors advise survivors not to report their experience or define it as assault.

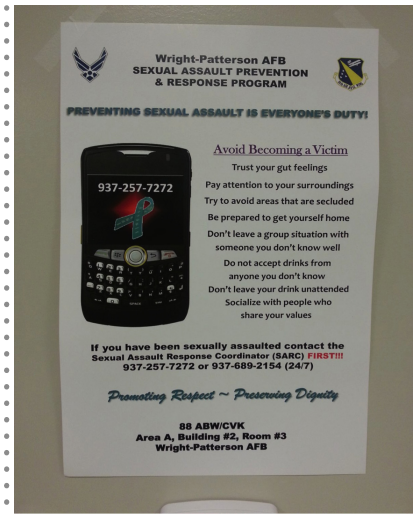
Additionally, *My Duty to Speak* is an Internet blog created by military sexual assault survivors. The website holds dozens of individual stories and is a place where these survivors are able to discuss and exchange support and comfort with one another. These triggering depictions vary from case to case but each holds a common thread: the survivors are all left feeling as though they are not entitled to their experience because their traumas were minimized, mocked, shamed and ignored. The blog has very few stories of people who do come forward and report, all of which regret their decision and the ramifications that follow. Many survivors that report their assault face

jokes made about their sexual openness, verbal abuse regarding their consent as ineffective, and are repeatedly forced to prove that their experience was, in fact, real and valid

Of course, this information leaves most citizens wondering if there is any hope for the military. However, on March 6th, 2014, a minority of Senators voted on Senator Kirsten Gillibrand's Military Justice Improvement Act (MJIA), which would give power to independent, trained, professional military prosecutors to indict any military crime punishable by

one year or more. Currently, the decision is in the hands of the chain of command, which means these prosecutions are political, biased and often not taken seriously. Additionally, as Trina McDonald, eighteen year old military sexual assault survivor articulates on her rape: "There was no one I could turn to because, like so many victims of sexual assault in the military, my attackers were in my chain of command. So I kept my mouth shut." Thus, prosecution outside of the chain of command would decrease the strong

forces of intimidation, isolation and retaliation used to silence survivors. The MJIA faced a filibuster and is still being deliberated in Congress. Any individual passionate about enabling a fair and equal trail for military cases of sexual assault can sign online petitions, email MJIA support groups or write to Congress in favor of this essential bill!





Orange Might Not Be The New Black Afterall

by Cheyane
Reisner

Orange Is the New Black, the hit Netflix sensation has become an Internet sensation and controversial topic ever since it first aired July 11, 2013. This show tackles race, class, gender, sexual orientation and privilege as it exposes the multifaceted issues within women's prisons. Piper Chapman, the white, upper-middle class main character, is in prison for transporting a suitcase of drug money to her ex-girlfriend, Alex Vause. As the Feminist Griote explicates, "Piper gets involved in criminal activity because she was a privileged white

woman who got bored with life. Meanwhile the point of entry for many women of color into the criminal justice system stems from being severely abused by a boyfriend or another trusted figure, being forced into the sex trade, coerced into becoming drug mules, or these women are forced to commit crimes out of necessity to feed their Black and Brown babies." Indeed, Piper's story remains in the foreground and is used as an introduction to the experience of the women of color who are in the prison system for reasons often outside their control.

This Netflix sensation progressively tackles LGBTQ issues and is the first show with a transgender woman of color, Laverne Cox, playing a lead role. Laverne's character reveals how the prison system denies essential hormone medication to transgender people and her backstory illustrates the struggles transgender people face. However, the show feeds into racist and classist stereotypes regarding the women who wind up in prison by separating the characters based on race and depicting the Latina community as hypersexual

and the black community as aggressive and loud. These detrimental labels instill and reify racism and classism, while ignoring the problematic fact that our prison system targets people of color in lower class areas. For example, statistically, people of color are four times more likely to be arrested for possession of marijuana. This is known as the Prison Industrial Complex. Thus, while Piper repeatedly states that she is in prison because she “made bad choices,” this oversimplification undermines and ignores the problematic aspects of the American incarceration system.

Piper Kerman, author and inspiration for the fictional Piper Chapman, wrote a novel, *Orange Is the New Black: My Year in a Women’s Prison*, which depicted her experience after she was indicted for money laundering and drug trafficking. The fact that a white woman of privilege had to write a novel about her prison experience in order for it to

be seen as valid presents the greater issue that women of color’s stories are ignored and invalidated. Assata Shakur, a woman of color who spent time in an all-men’s prison wrote a captivating novel entitled, *Assata: An Autobiography*; however, this story will never hit the big

“Indeed, Piper’s story remains in the foreground and is used as an introduction to the experience of the women of color who are in the prison system for reasons often outside of their control.”

screen. As Aura Borge points out, the narratives of the women of color “remain deeply powerful, yet each one is framed by a white introduction.” This highlights the greater issue that, in our society, the white voice must speak for the women of color and, often times, is incapable of understanding the complexities and intricacies of the issues.

Orange Is the New Black addresses transgender issues in a realistic and progressive way. Indeed, the show is revolutionary in that it is the first to have a real transgender wom-

an play a transgender character. This should be applauded and recognized as a giant step forward in the transgender equality movement. However, one must watch any television show with a critical eye, recognizing that the overt racism and classism is unavoidably present and complexly problematic. While there are many women of color in the show, their characters feed into harmful stereotypes and their stories are under-emphasized.

Thus, *Orange Is the New Black* should not be enjoyed without one’s awareness of the regressive racism and classism that the show perpetuates.



Invest in Graduation Not Incarceration for Young Women of Color

by Danielle Maldonado

Since 1970, the U.S. prison population has increased 700%, with 1 in 99 adults serving time behind bars according to the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU). This rise in incarceration has been felt most by communities of color who make up 60% of the inmates. Separating the statics by gender, the Sentencing Project's research found that the presence of women in prison has increased by 646% between 1980 and 2010, and as of 2001, the likelihood of imprisonment for Black women is 1 in 19, for Latina women 1 in 45, and for White women only 1 in 118. As this racialized epidemic sweeps the nation, there has been a growth in the imprisonment of juveniles. Black girls are the fast-

est growing juvenile justice population and each day more and more brown and black bodies are being funneled out of schools into prisons in what has become known as the school-to-prison pipeline. Youth of color, and in particular girls, are facing harsh disciplinary action and heavy police presence in schools, as well as jail time for minor offenses and lack of resources to help them move on to higher education. The U.S. government needs to invest in education and graduation for these communities to ensure that they can become contributing members of society and achieve the quality of life they deserve.

Since the

adoption of "zero tolerance" policies in schools after the Columbine Shootings in 1999, Black and Latino students, especially girls, have been suspended and expelled at alarming rates. Zero tolerance policies were enacted with the intention of cracking down on the presence of weapons, drugs and violent behavior in schools to ensure a safer environment. However, they are inconsistently applied and require that minor and major disciplinary situations receive the same treatment and allow for broad terms such as "willful defiance" to warrant suspensions. It is important to note that a study done by the African American

Policy in 2007 concluded that many teachers find black girls "loud, defiant, and

.....

1 in 99 adults serve time behind bars

60% of this is made up of communities of color

1 in 19 Black women are likely to be incarcerated

1 in 45 Latina women are likely to be incarcerated

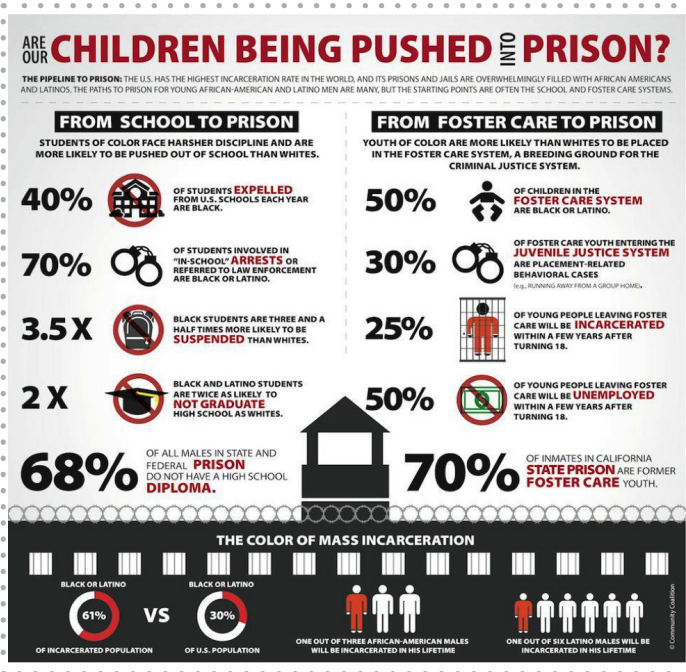
1 in 118 White women are likely to be incarcerated

.....

precocious" [Emphasis mine]. The result of this policy has been an increased rate of suspensions and expulsions throughout the nation despite the stable and, in some areas, declining school violence. According to the Department of Defense's Civil Rights Data Collection (CRDC), Black students are 3 and 1/2 times more likely to be suspended than their white peers and the disparity remains even after controlling for socio-economic status. Black girls are

suspended at higher rates than all girls and most boys, with 1 in 10 receiving an out of school suspension between 2009 and 2010. Furthermore, 1 in 5 girls of color with disabilities receive an out of school suspension. However, the National Association of School Psychologists found that the suspension and expulsion of individuals who already display antisocial behavior may set them on an accelerated course to delinquency, and there is no evidence

that removing students from school makes a positive contribution to school safety. In addition, a high rate of repeat suspension may indicate that suspension is ineffective in changing behavior, and the most likely result of suspension is an additional suspension, which leads to elevated dropout rates. Correspondingly, there has been an increase in the use of police force on school grounds turning hyper-disciplining into hyper-criminalization. 70% of students



involved in in-school arrest are Black or Latino as reported in the CRDC. In the last decade, there has been an increase in the criminalization of black girls in the classroom. In Texas in 2005, 14-year-old Shaquanda Cotton was arrested and sentenced up to 7 years in prison for shoving a hall monitor despite not having been in trouble for violent behavior before. 13-year-old Olivia Raymond, an honor student, was arrested for felony theft and suspended for finding her teacher's sunglasses and attempting to return them to her in 2010 in Illinois. Within the last two years, 8-year-old Jmyha Rickman and 6-year-old Salecia Johnson were handcuffed and arrested for throwing temper tantrums in their classrooms in Illinois and Georgia respectively. Rather than turning to counselors, parents or school disciplinary actions, these kids became acquainted with the criminal justice system. Zero toler-

ance policies coupled with police presence are driving kids from schools and leaving them with records that limit their options for their futures.

With repeat suspensions, expulsions lasting up to 3 years or becoming permanent, the likelihood of these children dropping out and being arrested skyrockets. The Bureau

“...the U.S. spends almost \$70 billion annually on incarceration, probation and parole, which represents a 127% increase in prison funding between 1987 and 2007 alone.”

of Justice Statistics reported that 68% of inmates do not have a high school diploma. It would appear that one of the solutions to this problem would be to invest in the high school education of our society, even encouraging them to go on to colleges and universities. However, according to ACLU, the U.S. spends almost \$70 billion annually on incarceration, probation and parole, which represents a 127% increase in prison funding between 1987 and 2007

alone. In contrast, there has only been a 21% funding increase for higher education within the same time span. With such a large disparity in government spending, it begs the question: what does the government expect from the younger generations—for them to enter prison or pursue higher education? Facing this mentality, what should a young girl of color from a low-income neighborhood expect for herself? Institutional obstacles bar her way to success

in and outside of the classroom. A high number of arrests for women of color are due to “quality of life” policing practices. This is the heavy policing of non-criminal activities such as congregating in public places, as well as minor offenses like graffiti and littering. In addition, the categorization of the possession of marijuana as a felony in many states leads to prison time for more people of color than it does for white people. As these problems are intertwined with many

different aspects of society, how can the flow from the school-to-prison pipeline be stemmed?

Programs such as Invest in Graduation Not Incarceration, Transform Education (IGNITE) have devoted their time to lobbying for bills that would improve the current system in California. Bill SB 649 would give more discretion to local judges to classify the possession of substances as punishable as either a felony or a misdemeanor—in turn, reducing the prison population and stopping the imprisonment of nonviolent drug offenders. In a similar move, other states and districts such as Washington D.C. are pushing for the decriminalization of marijuana as a felony, instead, making the punishment a \$25 fine. Other bills by IGNITE include AB 420, which would limit suspensions and expulsions for willful defiance, and AB 218, which would prohibit state or local agencies from asking an applicant to disclose information

regarding a criminal conviction until the applicant's qualifications are determined. Bills such as these can be replicated across the nation. Aside from policy, Recruitment and Retention Centers on college campuses are invaluable for their work in visiting traditionally underserved high schools and providing them with resources necessary to pursue higher education. Funding of these programs benefits the future of today's youth. As of now, young girls of color have been invested in and believed in the least. Our society needs to create a new narrative that acknowledges the importance of its females, especially its underrepresented future generation. By investing in their education both in rhetoric and action, these girls will have the opportunity to accomplish more than was previously afforded to them and will be able to educate their peers as well as their children in the future. By ensuring that these brown and black girls graduate and go on

to higher education rather than prison, a cycle of growth is created that will affect and benefit our society as a whole. ♀

I am a Power Hungry Woman

by Karma
AbuAyyash

All across the world, women have long fought for equality, recognition and a presence in the political arena. In times of war and conflict these struggles became even more prominent, a situation very recognizable to the Palestinian women. Both the patriarchal nature of Arab society and the restrictions enforced by the Israeli occupation shackle Palestinian women in their fight for societal and political freedom. However, since the beginning of the twenty-first century, Palestinian women have been working to make their collective voice heard and reduce the gender gap within their society. Looking back at the first Civil Uprising in 1987, the seed of a feminist movement had begun to develop, which enforced social change. As women became more active and politicized, the feminist movement

gained momentum; the fight was not only against the occupation, but also against the restrictive norms of society. Women undertook prominent roles in the first civil uprising, standing shoulder to shoulder with their male counterparts, which thrust the subjects of gender

“Both the patriarchal nature of Arab society and the restrictions enforced by the Israeli occupation shackle Palestinian women in their fight for societal and political freedom.”

equality and women’s rights into the spotlight.

Nowadays, the percentage of women participants in the political arena is diminishing. Although this might appear to be a negative phenomenon, as Palestinian women are currently less active in the actual fight against the occupation— in comparison to the first civil uprising— they have been taking more significant roles in

other mediums such as journalism and media. During the last couple of years, the number of women majoring in journalism and media in the Palestinian universities has been increasing. For example, in Birzeit University— one of the leading universities in Palestine— the ratio of female students to male students is 4:1. One of the main reasons might be the low wage a media graduate gets when hired.

However, due to the patriarchal nature of Palestinian and wider Arab culture, which views women as less capable of both journalism and politics, women tend to wait in line for years to get a job as a journalist. Although there have been many leaps forward, the disparity between the sexes is still clear. While tradition may be good for social cohesion, it can have a limiting effect on progress and prosperity in Palestinian

society. One example of such gender discrimination by the Palestinian media channels is their tendency to discriminate between the two sexes. When vacancies open, the majority of the media channels and outlets in Palestine hire male applicants instead of female applicants regardless of the females' superior skill sets, knowledge or experience.

In conclusion, Palestinian women have to break free from their internalized misogyny established by patriarchal social constructs and realize their inner power. These women are just as equal and qualified as any successful male activist or journalist. Madhulika Sikka - the Executive Editor for NPR News- emphasized the actions Arab women should take in their own societies when she was asked to voice her opinions on this matter on the panel of "Closing Journalism's Gender Gap: A Forum on Women and Leadership" that was hosted by Poynter and the

National Press Club Journalism Institute. The idea that women are inferior to men in patriarchal societies has to change, and this change will only come from within. ♀

Karma AbuAyyash is a 22 year-old Palestinian with a BA in Marketing. She hopes to advocate for gender equality to help empower women develop business ideas.

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