



# Voices

for  
MEDIA DEMOCRACY

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*Summer 2011*

## Print Periodical Listing Now Online!

*from the desk of Martha Allen*

A listing of women's print periodicals known to us is now available on our WIFP website (<http://wifp.org/PeriodicalCompilation.html>). There are approximately 2,500 periodicals by & about women that we are aware of and we are continually adding more. This is a work in process so we welcome additions.

This listing differs from our *Directory of Women's Media* that lists only media currently in existence. For this new list, we went through each year of the *Directory* (1975-present) and included the names of periodicals that are no longer publishing. The compilation does not provide all the information about the women's periodicals that the *Directory* does but we have access to some of that information. The compilation uses the periodical title and notes the location. Occasionally dates are included. We also utilized the *History of Women's Media* (<http://wifp.org/>

[tableofcontents.html](#)) as a resource for early women's periodicals.

We began this project last year with the intention of publishing this as a booklet. The information is so extensive that a booklet format is not practical. We expect to publish the list in the form of a book similar to the annual print *Directory of Women's Media*.

We have made the information available on the internet so that people can access it free from anywhere in the world and so that we can encourage others to let us know of women's print periodicals that should be added. While this listing will never be complete, we expect to make a version available in print form for libraries and for the historical record. Like the *Directory of Women's Media*, this print publication can be updated periodically.

We encourage you to take a look at the list and let us know what you think of this current, ongoing project!

## Women's Music Festivals

*By Jane Siegel*

As an avid concert and music festival attendee, one of my first instincts upon the completion of my semester was to check out the summer concert calendar. I was unable to attend the Lilith Fair festival last summer, but as I looked for this summer's line-up I was surprised to see that the festival was not scheduled to continue on. About the disbanding of the Lilith Fair, festival founder Sarah McLachlan said, "In 12 years, women have changed a lot. Their expectations have changed, the way they view the world has changed, and that was not taken into consideration, which I blame myself for." This got me thinking about why, perhaps, a 12-year running female festival would be disbanded? What does this say about the present state of women's music and females in the music industry? Perhaps, the way that consumers of music feel about women's music has changed? And finally, I asked myself what

## *An Environment for Imagining: A Look Into the Culture of Women's Music Festivals*

does this mean for the future of female music?

When looking at women in the music industry and their voices in current times, my findings were much more hopeful than expected. Women's music continues to be diverse in terms of musical styles and disenfranchised communities of women.

This is extremely clear when looking at the Michigan Womyn's Music Festival, established in 1976. In comparison to Lilith Fair, the Michigan Womyn's Festival is quite different. Lilith can be attended by anyone, male or female, but since its inception the Michigan Festival has been an event for exclusively women. This is unique, because only "womyn born womyn" are allowed to attend, and the festival is completely staffed, run, and built by women. Without any corporate sponsorship, each year's sales from the festival funds the next year's festival, and the venue is reconstructed every year over a month-long period by a force of female volunteers. This makes

the entirety of the festival a communal effort with all different races, ages, and types of women working together to create an environment welcoming opinions, music, art, and an openly female community. There is childcare, medical and psychological support, cooking, and

myn born womyn," and even though this alienates trans men and women, this rule creates a space that is wholly a women's sphere with no physical men present, and this is important in helping attendants to feel safe and secure enough to share their thoughts and ideas

with other festies. Margie Adams explains how this festival encourages women

**"In 12 years, women have changed a lot. Their expectations have changed, the way they view the world has changed."**

**Sarah McLachlan, founder of Lilith Fair**

workshops discussing topics of interest to festival-goers, making this much more than just stages and musical performances.

The success and legacy of this Michigan festival gives me reason to believe that Lilith Fair's cancellation does not mean that female music is endangered in modern times. The empowerment that comes from the success of this women-only festival is clear despite the criticisms complaining about exclusion coming from the transgendered. The festival includes only "wo-

to imagine all that they can do. "Women imagined being agents, sound engineers, producers, radio programmers, distributors. Today there are countless women working in all areas of the music business because of this imagining." The Michigan Womyn's Festival shows the strength and success of women working together with a determination to create and how this festival, in addition to other female festivals (such as the National Women's Festival) has established a community that will continue to live on.

# All Labor Has Dignity

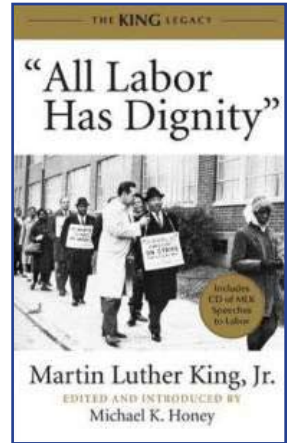
Written by Michael K. Honey Beacon Press/Boston

Reviewed by Jane Seigel

In his newest book, *All Labor Has Dignity*, Michael K. Honey focuses on bringing attention to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s speeches about the struggle for economic equality in the United States. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. is known for his leadership in the American civil rights movement, but less known for his commitment to social justice, labor and human rights. Michael Honey's gathering of King's speeches about labor emphasizes the importance of remembering Dr. King's powerful ideas. In this book, Honey has brought together sixteen of King's archived economic equality speeches and added introductory information to give each speech a greater context. Bringing attention to the forgotten components of Dr. King's dream is crucial in making sure that his words and ideas live on. In the publishing of these speeches, Honey suggests that we must continue to move towards achieving Dr. King's mission to radically restructure American economic

life in order to wage a ferocious war on poverty and economic inequality in this country.

The first section of the book, entitled Forging a Civil Rights-Labor Alliance in the Shadow of the Cold War, outlines the events and speeches leading up to the March on Washington in 1963. The highlighted events of the civil rights movement featured in this section include the Montgomery bus boycott, freedom rides, and student sit-ins. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. encourages Americans to be maladjusted to racial and economic inequalities in his speech to the Highlander Folk School on September 2, 1957. In this section, one of the main messages that King is conveying is the importance of organized labor and the civil rights movement working together. King saw organized labor as the Negro's strongest ally in the struggle for freedom due to the purchasing power of the Negro being increased by the rise of industry happening at this time. In



the words of Dr. King from his speech to the United Packinghouse Workers of America in Chicago, 1957:

"The forces that are anti-negro are by and large anti-labor, and with the coming together of the powerful influence of labor and all people of goodwill in the struggle for freedom and human dignity, I can assure you that we have a powerful instrument."

At this time, those working for the civil rights, and labor rights causes were often labeled "communist." King addresses this in stating that it is indeed a tragedy when men cannot work for brotherhood and goodwill without this label. He goes on in his speech at the AFL-CIO 4th Constitutional Convention to elaborate on the parallels between the Negro experience and history of labor in

the United States. Both Negroes and unions, he explains, are working people and have the same needs for decent wages, fair working conditions, livable housing, old-age security, healthcare and welfare, and respect. As our technological creativity becomes more advanced, he challenges American social thinking to match this growth through the merger of the civil rights and labor movements.

The three evils in the world, in Dr. King's speeches, are named as war, economic injustice, and racial injustice. He preached that all Americans work here to defeat these evils now. Leading up to the March on Washington, Dr. King concluded his speeches with words of nonviolence in the face of inequality, and the following insights:

"The arc of the moral universe is long, but always bends towards justice."

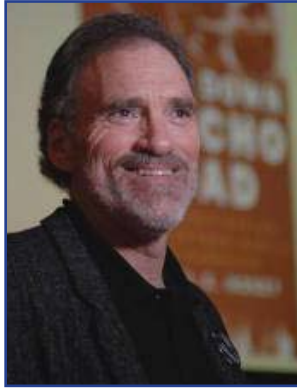
"No lie can live forever," (Carlyle).

"Truth crushed to earth will rise again," (William Cullen Bryant).

These quotes gave his speeches a hopeful and empowering conclusion, because this movement was one that was not cooling off, slowing down,

or standing still in the mind of Dr. King.

Included in the second section of the book, *Race, Labor, War, and Poverty*, the speeches that Dr. King give further connect the Negro and labor movements. They both have the same origins according to Dr. King, because these movements both began with



**Author Michael K. Honey**

the oppressed poor wanting security and equality. These people were denied justice by forces of society and fight using self-sacrifice. Negroes, however, have a more organizationally weak movement, but morally appealing movement and do not have a huge government influence. This is partially stemmed from the lack of credit that Negroes have been given for their contributions to history, for example cotton, constructing

roads and ports, and clearing areas of the wilderness. To address the shared needs of Negroes and Labor workers, Dr. King calls for a total war on poverty because it is not a constitutional right, but a human right for men to have jobs that allow them to live decent lives. This total war on poverty is to fight for a guaranteed annual income that is pegged to the median income and increases as societal income increases. This enables people to consume, and helps the economy by giving more people purchasing power. Further, he goes into discussing the cost of war financially and morally. He describes a "lost generation" that has been forced to live through four wars in the past twenty-five years, and that not helping the poor is like declaring war on these people. The factors that must be addressed in order for our society to stand for equality are war, poverty, labor issues, and race issues, and Dr. King's speeches help to outline his suggestions for addressing these imminent problems.

The final section of Michael Honey's book, titled *Down Jericho Road: Poor People's Campaign and Memphis Strike*,

the chilling AFSCME speech that King gave preceding his death is included. According to King's speech addressing the Poor

working for economic equality. Dr. King repeated the phrase "all labor has dignity" to stress that no matter what job an Ameri-

speech, because it helps bring the point to readers that Dr. King's dream is not yet realized. His dream was not only for civil rights and racial equality, but for economic equality and decent lives for the poor. This is where, in my opinion as a reader, the main take-away

**“Dr. King repeated the phrase ‘all labor has dignity’ to stress that no matter what job an American has, it has worth if it serves humanity.”**

People's Campaign, there are two Americas. These distinctly different segments of the population are separated based not on political freedom, but based on the economy. These two groups are the American poor and Americans living in the land of equality and economic freedom. This population of poor people in this country is not correctly accounted for by the unemployment statistics at the Department of Labor. Poverty cuts across racial lines, and freedom is not equal to financial success in this country because our recently freed Negroes are still poor. In his speech "All Labor Has Dignity" he encourages a general strike to shut down Memphis because the first step of making an impact begins with asserting political freedom to make way for the second step of

can has, it has worth if it serves humanity. These dignified workers are encouraged to harness their power of numbers to demand freedom because it will not be voluntarily handed over without struggle.

In the final speech of his life to the sanitation workers of Memphis, Tennessee, Dr. King's speech is chilling and eerie. Almost as if he knew that he would not live to give another speech, he explains how he may not physically walk forward with this movement, but that he has a dream of a future where all people are free and equal in this country. He also humbly explains the power of Negroes and how they must use a dangerous unselfishness to move forward in working for their goals. It is extremely moving that Honey included this specific

message of the text comes through. This novel, *All Labor Has Dignity*, reminds us that the recession and overwhelming amounts of poverty and unemployment in our country can and should be addressed, and that perhaps Dr. King's thoughts on these issues should be part of the plan of attack.



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# *Eleanor Roosevelt: Transformative First Lady*

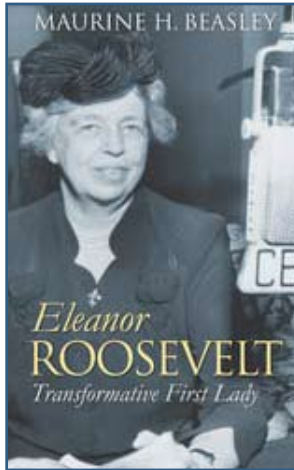
Written by Maurine H. Beasley

University Press of Kansas

Reviewed by Samantha Young and Martha Allen

**E**leanor Roosevelt was born October 11, 1884. On March 17, 1905, she married Franklin D. Roosevelt, the future 32nd President of the United States of America. Maurine H. Beasley's book, *Eleanor Roosevelt Transformative First Lady*, focuses primarily on Eleanor's political accomplishments in the White House and working in media, touching on the times before and after when she was also active. Eleanor Roosevelt was in the White House longer than any other first lady.

Dr. Beasley describes a woman who, though not considered physically attractive, had a strong mind, and was full of energy and compassion. Eleanor was raised to believe she should use her class privilege to help others. Even before marriage, she was committed to improving the lives of others. When her husband was elected President, Eleanor began her own political projects also so that she would not be accused of trying to influence



the President. Eleanor often used work as a way of keeping herself distracted from the problems of her personal life. She had a controlling mother-in-law and an unfaithful husband but learned to stand up for herself and others while also playing the role of wife and First Lady.

One of her early projects was to improve the St. Elizabeth's Hospital that housed many veterans. The institution was poorly funded and had desperately needed attention drawn to the appalling conditions. Eleanor worked diligently on behalf of the poor and working women. In 1919,

Eleanor was then introduced to the Women's Trade Union League, a group she joined three years later. She participated in raising monetary support for the union's aspirations, which included the abolition of child labor, more work hours for women per week, and giving women minimum wages.

Eleanor, during the time of her husband's presidency, launched press conferences for women reporters. This had a dual purpose. It gave work to female reporters who often were excluded from political press conferences, often being relegated to society pages, and it made it clear that she was not trying to compete with the press conferences held by the President. In total, she held 348 press conferences. She was also a media woman herself, writing a daily newspaper column and magazine articles. Her newspaper column ran for 26 years, and her magazine's monthly column was seen in *Woman's Home Companion*. Eleanor used the power of the press and

the media, as well as her prestigious status, to communicate issues that concerned her. She was willing to speak out about racism, poverty, and worker rights as well as the working conditions women faced. At the same time, she also went along with much of the status quo, having been raised to believe women's roles are different than men's and that racism had to be tackled gradually. But she took stands that the President didn't feel he could take or that he chose to take.

Beasley does a great job of showing how Eleanor Roosevelt, while sometimes going along with what was expected of her, also demonstrated courageous acts. She took action, spoke out, and wrote about things she believed in. One such interesting compromise was when she refused to comply with an order to observe segregated seating at the founding convention of the Southern Conference on Human Welfare held in Birmingham in 1938. Beasley wrote: "Choosing a novel way to oppose the separation of the races required by local ordinance, she insisted on placing her chair in the center aisle between



**Author Maurine Beasley**

the two groups."(p121)

Eleanor was full of energy for causes. For instance, she was part of the group who created Freedom House, an international organization that focuses on promoting democracy, political freedom and human rights in general. During the war, she visited injured soldiers in the South Pacific. She enjoyed traveling and being the eyes and ears for the President. She welcomed that role. Also during the war, she further fought against racism by giv-

ing her support to the Tuskegee Airmen. They wanted to become the first black combat pilots as well as gain more military support for their flight school. Eleanor formed a meeting at the White House for the members of the Tuskegee flight school to plead their case.

Her accomplishments and her fight for women and others continued after the death of her husband. She had launched herself into improving the well-being of the nation and Eleanor was not about to retire when she was no longer the First Lady. Eleanor Roosevelt proved to be a woman who was, and still is today, an inspiration for women throughout the world. In this fascinating book, with factual evidence, personal accounts, and a wealth of information, Beasley reveals how Eleanor Roosevelt was indeed a transformative first lady.

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## Wikipedia: Sum of All Knowledge? or Just Some of It? By Colleen Callery



Most people know Wikipedia as the free online encyclopedia, open for anyone to contribute to—notorious for a lack of hierarchical editors, as well as some “editing wars.” But this winter, the *New York Times* reported findings from a Wikimedia Foundation study, confirming that only 13 percent of all contributors to Wikipedia are women. The research has sparked debate, showing eerily similar statistics to other, more established democratic social institutions (according to the Women’s Campaign Forum, only 17 percent of seats in Congress are held by women). And the one question that seems to keep nudging to the forefront is, why, in an environment dedicated to a forum of free participation and a space for consensus knowledge, is there such skewed participation between the genders?

They don’t have time. They don’t need to write, reading is fine for them. But the most troubling answer in the study researching why non-contributing women don’t contribute to Wikipedia is that they

don’t think they have enough information to contribute. These top three answers hint at a larger issue behind the gender imbalance on Wikipedia. According to the *New York Times*, 57% of bachelor’s degrees, 61% of master’s degrees and a majority of doctorates are earned by women in the US, today. With these numbers, it’s hard to believe the reason women aren’t lending their voices to Wikipedia is due to a lack of candidates. So, where are all the women?

Wikipedia is built, among several pillars, on the idea of remaining neutral at all costs. This means that, ideally, every page will have perspectives from each side of a conflicting subject. That way readers visiting a page can understand the debate, the specific arguments and in theory make up their own mind about a subject. This places Wikipedia in a realm of balanced research tools, much like an actual encyclopedia functions. But how in the world can Wikipedia guarantee neutrality from voluntary contributors? The truth is, they can’t.

They can only strongly encourage neutrality by setting up layers and layers of peer editing in order to catch, and remove, any personal bias.

Unfortunately, in the environment that has evolved under such public scrutiny and relentless revisions, fighting for one’s intellectual legitimacy seems easier for some to succeed than others.

As part of the debate hosted by the *New York Times*, Susan C. Herring says that the atmosphere on Wikipedia is more conducive to communication behavior more typically found in men than in women. While women tend to phrase their messages as suggestions, men tend to assert their messages as facts, a style that is rewarded on sites like Wikipedia that value fact over opinion.

Many argue the competitive atmosphere is also unwelcoming and can leave women uninterested in contributing their equally-needed knowledge. There are also women who feel Wikipedia’s environ-

ment may even be unfriendly to women. There are instances when a page for a film is said to include a sex scene, when in fact the scene is actually a rape scene. These small but powerful differences

women aren't involved. President of the National Council for Research on Women, Linda Basch, wrote into the *New York Times* with this opinion: "The inclusion of women's expertise

and has talked about outreach programs to attract more women to become contributors. Her goal is to raise women's participation to 25 percent. Some are concerned with focusing time and money on "diversity for diversity's sake." But looking at the situation in full context, the Internet as a tool for research is growing enormously in popularity around the world.

According to *Businessweek*, Wikipedia also has an incredibly tight-knit bond with Google. In nearly any Google search, you can bet that if a Wikipedia page exists, it will rank in the first several links. In fact, Wikipedia says that it gets 60 to 70 percent of its traffic from Google searches. So, with Wikipedia being more visible than ever, being on Wikipedia tends to have greater impact. The more people see (and read) information posted on Wikipedia, the more influential its articles become. Wikipedia's Jimmy Wales (10), way back in 2004, put their goals in these terms: "Imagine a world in which every single person on the planet is given free access to the sum of all human knowledge. That's what we're doing."

In fact, Wikipedia is

Reasons for not contributing	%
I don't know how	23.77
I am not sufficiently comfortable with the technology	16.22
I would never interact on the internet	4.99
Others are already doing it, there is no need for me	19.08
I don't have time	31.31
I don't feel comfortable editing other peoples' work	23.48
I don't think I have enough information to contribute	53.06
I am afraid of making a mistake and getting "in trouble" for it	23.15
It's a waste of time; my edits would be reverted or overwritten	6.15
I am happy just to read it; I don't need to write it	45.49
Other	3.58
Don't know	3.82
Respondents who checked none of the options	1.23
N=28,897 (readers, who had never considered contributing)	

Table 8: Reasons of non-contributors for not contributing to Wikipedia

Results from the 2009 study by the Wikimedia Foundation.

may all be contributing to an unwelcoming atmosphere for women to participate in.

Because Wikipedia grounds its project in a steadfast belief in neutrality, in facts, and objectivity, it hinges on an idea similar to the "marketplace of ideas" theory—that if all opinions and voices are heard, the truth will rise to the top of the clatter. But what happens when only a fraction of those voices are actually heard?

Many point to disparities between male-oriented subjects and female-oriented subjects to prove, rather superficially, the kinds of information that gets left out when

on Wikipedia is vital not just for the sake of fairness, but because without such representation, the whole of society loses the experience, knowledge and perspective of over half the population." One can't be neutral with opinions from only one side, no matter how unbiased they try to be. According to Jane Margolis, projects like Wikipedia need women to actually be neutral.

Sue Gardener, head of the Wikimedia Foundation that runs Wikipedia, responded to all the press in a blog post called "Nine Reasons Women Don't Edit Wikipedia (In Their Own Words),"

## WIKI KNOW HOW

also applying to be included as a cultural icon on UNESCO's World Heritage List. While the petition may be a long shot, it suggests that Wikipedia represents more than just a collaborative online project, but a cultural repertoire. Therefore, if Wikipedia is to represent "the sum of all human knowledge," it is more important than ever for Wikipedia to make efforts to include more women, and just as important for women to heed these efforts, in order to avoid representing just "some" of all human knowledge.

With a collaborative platform like a wiki, there is nothing compulsory required; it is only as strong as the knowledge people voluntarily contribute. Content, therefore, tends to reflect and emphasize the expertise, knowledge, and interests of those that use Wikipedia more than those that do not. The Internet and digital collaboration tools like the wiki have afforded our society with an incredible opportunity to redefine the flow and access to information around the world.

Never before has such comprehensive knowledge been so accessible to so many people. It only makes sense to use these technologies to their greatest extent and to our advantage by including voices in a worldwide discussion to create an accurate and more complete representation of the collaborative knowledge we all share.

As part of my internship at WIFP, I decided I would learn what it takes to be a contributor on Wikipedia, and create a page for the Women's Institute for Freedom of the Press. It sounded much less daunting when I first said it. After reading through pages and pages on what it means to contribute to Wikipedia, going through the "Dos" and "Don'ts," learning what makes a good article, and what Wikipedia "is not," I felt fairly confident I knew what I was in for. There was just one tiny glitch in my confidence: What exactly defines a conflict of interest?

Cue the debate over objectivism, neutrality, third-party sources that has been plaguing Wikipedia since its inception. And what about "worthiness"? Wikipedia also warns against adding yourself, your company, your band, your teacher, etc. claiming that "Wikipedia is not a directory of everything in existence," and "if you are worthy of inclusion in the encyclopedia, let someone else add an article for you." This raises questions about what deserves to be included. In traditional encyclopedias there is a final editor who ultimately gets to decide what gets included, what is written about them, and what gets printed. But in an online, open source encyclopedia like Wikipedia, designed to bypass traditional hierarchy and editors in favor of consensus, who gets the final say?

### TIPS FOR CREATING YOUR PAGE:

1. Start a page in a temporary location. Wikipedia provides several places to start creating your article without actually publishing it first. I chose to start mine as a subpage of my Userpage using what they call the Article Wizard.
2. When you are satisfied with your page, publish it!
3. Add your new page to your Watchlist. This updates you every time something is edited, added, or deleted from your page.

-Colleen Callery

## Our Colorful World:

### Opening Dialogue About Domestic Abuse on a Global Scale

By Samantha Young

The world is not black or white. Unthinkable things occur in various parts of the world that tends to leave a lifelong image in the heads of those who have witnessed these things. These things can be summed up in five words: “women and children being abused.” The word “abused” in this context is not to be taken lightly. It does not just mean getting yelled at, or a random slap every now and then. No, these women and children experience daily domestic violence, rape, human trafficking, and

destructive wars in history. Women and children were abused to the point of death during these wars, and even now, after the war is over, the abuse has not stopped. It has become part of everyday life for these women and children. Most of these women and children are unaware of their rights and that further complicates this injustice.

Ann Jones, author, photographer, and a gender adviser for the United Nations, wrote a book on her journey through these countries, *War Is Not Over When It's Over*. Her mission was to help

with a list of issues they wished to be addressed or changed. In her book, while visiting Cote d'Ivoire, she wrote the following: Wives were told everyday to do things they didn't have the time or strength to do, let alone the inclination. Failure brought punishment. When the women began to bring in their photos, I learned that men routinely beat their wives for their failures to produce dinner on time, wash the clothes, sell tomatoes, stay at home, go to the field to work. The list was endless. Men also beat their wives for small acts of assertion: going to visit a neighbor, answering back, being tired or “lazy.” Men referred to wife beating as “education,” (27-28).

This is not only the case in Cote d'Ivoire, but it's the case in most war-driven places. According to the UN Commission on the Status of Women, at least 1 out of 3 women and girls are beaten and/or sexually abused in their lifetime. This statistic is on a global scale. The main areas of the world that this statistic occurs are

**“Unlike other countries, where the abuse is from peers or gangs, the islands’ abuse is mostly from the parents and family members...”**

sometimes it may lead to their death. These horrific events do not just occur in places of war, but also in places that one would never expect.

Places such as Cote d'Ivoire, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Congo, Thailand, Jordan, Syria, and Lebanon have been known to host some of the most

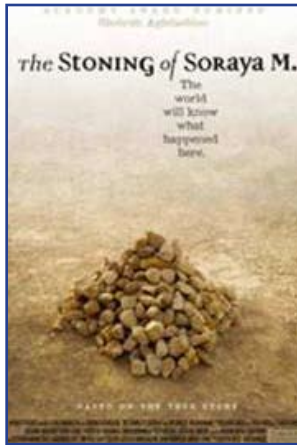
women become aware of their rights, and empower them to stand up for themselves. Her method was a photography project. She gave cameras to some of these women and asked them to photograph things that were good and bad in their village or area. By doing so, the women were able to come up

Africa, the Middle East, and most of Asia. What makes it even worse for some of these women is the fact that they are uneducated and do not know what their rights are. As Ann Jones quotes in her book while watching the uneducated women in Africa, “[She] thought of all the women [she’d] met in Afghanistan who told [her] they wanted to learn to read so they could see if the Quran really said what mullahs and husbands told them it did,” (25).

Recently, a lot has been revealed about what women in the Middle East experience. Many of the women who escaped from their homes in the Middle East have written memoirs and autobiographies detailing what they went through and what women who have not escaped are still going through. Such women are Zana Muhsen (*Sold: One Woman’s True Account of Modern Slavery*), Nujood Ali (*I Am Nujood, Age 10 and Divorced*), and Taslima Nasrin (*My Girlhood, Gusty Wind, Split Into Two, Those Dark Days*).

One particular story of women in the Middle East that has opened people’s eyes of the inhumane events that women

still endure in this part of the world is the story of Soraya M. The biographical novel has been recently adapted into a movie. It was the movie that brought to light the issue of stoning women as punishment. The book and movie revealed that this primitive punishment is still in



existence.

What makes all this abuse towards women even more horrific is the fact that most of it is domestic. Women and girls suffer from beatings, domestic rape, and molestation from their fathers, husbands and in some cases, brothers. This sort of abuse can be found in even the most unexpected places of the world, such as the Caribbean islands.

The Caribbean Islands sounds like the perfect vacation spot, doesn’t it? White

sandy beaches, clear blue water, authentic Caribbean spicy food, cultural music, and warm, cheerful natives. The Caribbean is like a paradise, a way to escape the harsh times of everyday life and have some real fun. However, ask yourself, are these cheerful natives really as happy as they seem, or is there more than what meets the eye?

The answer is, yes. There is a lot more to these Caribbean citizens than what is seen by tourists. One has to remember, although the Caribbean is a paradise, every island in the Caribbean is under the Third World Country category. There are things that occur in these islands that would shock even the most unstirred person.

The islands are known for their beautiful beaches, waterfalls, carnival festivals, and abuse. Young children, teenagers and women on the island have been physically, mentally, and verbally abused. Unlike other countries, where the abuse is from peers or gangs, the islands’ abuse is mostly from the parents and family members of the child, and on most occasions, it’s the male members. The abuse can go from a simple



slap on the head to a full on rape.

One particular island where this abuse is prominent is Trinidad and Tobago. According to the Minister of the People and Social Development of Trinidad and Tobago, Dr. Glenn Ramadharsingh, "there were a total of 13,684 calls for help to Child Line, for the period of January to September [in 2009]." The Child Line is the child abuse services that the island offers for children and teenagers to call when they are being abused. According to UNICEF, 77% of children on this island are subjected to what their parents call "child discipline." This discipline comes in the form of brutal beatings that leave the children scarred for life. As these children become adolescents, 10% of



them adopt the mentality of acceptance to their abusive family members (unicef.org).

In an interview with a young woman, Jynona Moore, from Trinidad and Tobago, she revealed some of what she had to endure from her father growing up.

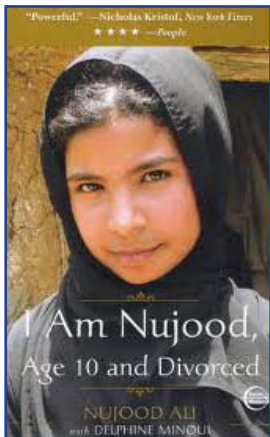
"And then he slapped me across my face. I didn't know what to do... so I ran into my room. It was quiet for a while. I thought he was doing something else. But then... he opened the door to my room... he had the bamboo stripped broom... you know, the thin pieces of bamboo tied together... the one that stings a lot? He swung it towards my arm... it stung at first... but he wouldn't stop. He pushed me onto my stomach, and then... began to swing at my

back. I passed out after the... sixth whiplash... I think it was the sixth. But yea... that's how it started. It continued every day after that... just worse... and worse with each day."

Some of the islands in the Caribbean have laws that try to prevent this abuse from happening in the future. However, the mentalities of the past have rolled over so much that no one pays attention to these laws. The Child Abuse Hotlines seem to be the only source of help for these children and teenagers. But even that is not enough.

One would assume that as we move further into the 21st century, these issues would not be so prevalent. Yet, the issues simply change slightly due to various conditions. The encouraging aspect is that this information is getting out and, particularly because of the internet, we can share ideas on what needs to be done, what has been successful, and where we should go from here.

About the author: Samantha Gina Young, WIFP staff in the summer of 2011, is from Trinidad and Tobago.





# Mixed Messages: What Not to Wear

By Laura Caldas de Mesquita



**Pictured above is a photo of an art project by two anonymous Parisian students in 2010 as a protest to criticize France's niqab ban.**

When generations to come look at big-picture Western culture as we live it today, they will inevitably pick up on the fact that women's attire carried with it a political message. We know how men used to dress in colonial times in the US, with their wigs and tight trousers; and most of us will have seen illustrations of industrial revolution days in England, where men wore Oliver-Twist-style hats and suspenders. Even further back in history we can find accounts of what men used to wear. Yet in most of these occasions, women wore dresses. Some more uncomfortable than others, layers of underskirts, corsets that left little room for breath-

ing, puffy sleeves, but, if anything, women's attire could to a certain extent be described as slightly predictable through the ages. Somehow, dress codes for women seem to have developed from "wear a dress and grow your hair long" to an infinite amount of mixed messages.

Women should be sexy, elegant, wear make-up, cover up flaws, flaunt attributes, wear "power suits" to make it in the business world and be –or look like– one of the guys, dress slutty but act nice to avoid slut-shaming, leave the burqa, the hijab and the short skirts at home to avoid being harassed. It is an exhaust-

ing set of prescriptions which all seem to lead to but one thing: where before women were able to distinguish the status quo from liberation, nowadays this task is awfully tiresome. Women are bombarded with these different messages. And taking note of the rather unexpected exceptional success of the global Slut Walk movement, a significant amount of women are angry about it too.

French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu, in his book *Masculine Domination*, uses a term I would like to adopt with some caution to describe what is occurring today. Bourdieu says that the power mechanisms that

*Mixed Messages:**Addressing Gender Bias Toward Personal Style and Aesthetics*

coerce women into the position of “object” rather than that of “subject” work best because they go by unnoticed, in a process he calls “symbolic violence.” Symbolic violence is violent in that it is a set of coercions and norms that work their way top-down—from the hegemony to the masses—and serve to legitimate the most taken-for-granted oppressions, making these pass as fair and normal. It entails the sum of all of those hidden, subliminal messages which only surface as explicit every now and again, but which are always there, in the background, telling women they wear short skirts and heels because they want to, no matter how restricting both of these are to their mobility, telling women that a taller and older man is the appropriate choice of mate because this represents the correct symbolic order of things between male subjects and dominated female objects. At the risk of over-simplifying Bourdieu’s theory, I feel it serves to help us see why these impositions are only questioned a portion of the time;

namely because most of us have fully internalized these boundaries between ourselves, our limited power, and that of the white, middle-class, heterosexual male hegemony.

Recently, in the United Kingdom, a young woman aged 24 was sent home from her job at a department store for refusing to wear make-up. Although her outrage made the national news, what about all of the other women employees at the same store who simply comply and see no harm in being told that their faces need a touch-up to look presentable—and all of this without a single mention of make-up to men? They are under the spell of symbolic violence.

Not so hidden yet equally symbolic is the recent wave of right-wing, anti-immigration politicians in Western Europe telling Muslim women they are not to wear their religious attire in public spaces. While the discussion of whether or not these women are choosing to dress as they please is not always being addressed—mostly, it is assumed that they are being liberated by the white, enlightened

European males who are forbidding them from wearing their veil—something else is at play: their symbol of “otherness” is being eliminated as to assimilate these women into whatever women are supposed to look like.

Lila Abu-Lughod, in her piece about Afghan women and the place of the burqa in that context, explains rather how these forms of covering up in fact serve to allow Muslim women to take part in public life instead of sitting at home. So could this not be the case for European Muslim women? Is forbidding them from wearing a headscarf at work or university not a way of exclusion, in that supposing that the veil is imposed upon them, one could also suppose that not wearing one commits them to permanent house-arrest? And are they not then forced to be under two kinds of oppression: one by the family and one by the state?

Interesting as these questions may be, laying down a link between these different kinds of oppressions of women being told what to wear and what



**This photo was taken at the SlutWalk London in March 2011, a protest against blaming women's dress for the cause of rape.**

not to wear (read: fashionable clothing versus Muslim veil) is a common area of debate in Western Europe and is not always as easy to argue. In Amsterdam, I was present at a lecture where one young (white, Dutch) woman felt under severe attack when a Muslim scholar tried to lay down a link between raunchy behaviour and sexually-laden attire of young secular women and the veils of their Mus-

lim compatriots. "My father never forced me to wear short skirts and so I think it's time you realise these are very different issues," she cried. But are they? Anyone who has ever caught a glance of male-run women's magazines or had the chance to see TLC's "What Not To Wear" has been confronted with how much a woman's image is supposed to be important to her achievements

in life.

A recent episode of the latter show was one where a fashion editor at a magazine received an "intervention" to stop wearing over-sized clothing and start dressing smarter –which not surprisingly involved a hair cut, a dye job, tight-fitting clothing, open backs and a significant amount of make-up. Rather cringe-worthy was a statement by her boss claiming that while she was perfectly capable of filling the position, promoting her was not an option until she started to look the part. The show is loaded with gender bias and ideal-type feminization of already professional women. "Be the best looking you you can possibly be" seems to be the general idea.

While it cannot be denied that men too are being targeted and flooded with images of what to wear and how to be as to comply with the hegemony, women suffer this kind of pressure to a level no one would ever dare impose on men. This double standard of imposing uncomfortable and non-functional requirements on women's appearance that are not in any sort of comparable way imposed upon men seems to be an omni-

present and widely accepted phenomenon. Try to picture a white European politician shouting out that Jewish and Muslim men cannot grow their beards long or wear their Kippah or Taqiyah in public. Can't do it? If it helps, France, which is known for initiating the prohibition of headscarves in Europe, does follow this model. Through their principle of *laïcité* (secularism), they ensure that no religious symbols appear in French public life and this applies to women and men alike. Far from liberal—unless liberal means something other than freedom, including freedom of religious expression—but certainly more fair.

Symbolic violence, domination and oppression occur everywhere. The “slut” or the woman whose religious expression is considered backwards suffer this constant pressure to look different than they do in a way that goes beyond, and yet cleverly hides behind, a sense of aesthetics. When rules are imposed exclusively upon women, these pressures should be addressed as a serious malfunction of the way our sense of ethics has developed in the West.

## Modern Slavery By Samantha Young

Wasn't slavery abolished decades ago? One would believe that it was, but the reality is that slavery is still occurring, only recent slavery situations have been carried out more cleverly than ones before. It has been so secretly accomplished that no one in our modern world would suspect the tragic truth. Slavery has not been completely abolished. Now, it's inflicted on the weakest of those among us: those who come from extreme poverty and war-driven countries.

Two young women spent the majority of their young lives subjected to the rigorous torture of slavery, but escaped. They have written, with the help of translators, their entire experience. They wanted to show the world that this sort of grave injustice is still occurring, and not many people are aware of the situations, or the permanent impact it has on the victims. These two young women come from very different backgrounds, from very different countries, but the situation they experienced couldn't be more similar.

Mende Nazer was born in a small village in the Nuba Mountains of northern Sudan. She is a member of a large family consisting of her mother, father, brothers, sisters, and her cat, Uran. Her story, *Slave: My True Story*, does not begin with her days as a modern slave. She starts her heart stopping novel by describing her childhood. She discusses how hard but happy her life was as a young Nuba girl. Her family's sole means of survival was cattle herding and farming. Although she was

given her own bed, Mende's closeness to her father caused her to sleep in the same bed with him most nights while she was a child. She was extremely close to her father in other aspects as well, such as helping him with herding of the cattle across rivers, harvesting the crops, and going on trips with him. She was able to go to school where she was in the top two of her class. She experienced the culture of the Nuba people with her family and friends, and lived an extremely happy youth with her humorous and protec-

tive father.

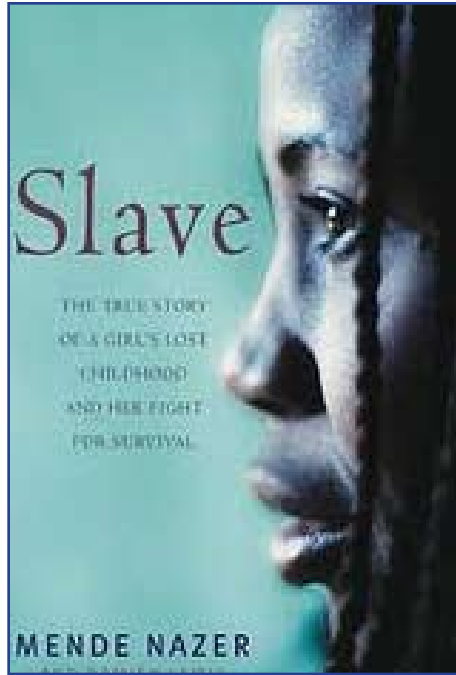
Everything for Mende changed at the age of 12. Her village was attacked one night, and although her father fought to keep her safe, Mende was caught and abducted by the Arab raiders. On the ride with her abductor to the Arab campsite, Mende was sexually assaulted by her kidnapper. She was placed with the other young children and then slowly, they were each picked by another Arab man to go to Khartoum. During her time in Khartoum, she met an older Nuba lady who worked for her newest abductor. Mende was forced to bathe, eat and put on proper clothing. She was then shown, along with her fellow abductees, to various wealthy Arab families, as if she was a special prize to be won.

Mende was bought by one of the new Arab families and taken to their home. She was instructed to do the everyday chores, and whatever else her mistress commanded her to do, with severe beatings for not abiding to her mistress' wishes. One particular beating was so severe that Mende needed serious medical attention. For years she was subjected to this type

of treatment and her only sense of genuine kindness was from the gentleness of her mistress' children. As the years progressed for Mende, her hopes were ignited again upon meeting one of her friends from the Nuba tribes who had also been abducted. After the friend explained that her family was still alive and looking for her, Mende gained a newfound courage. A few months later, Mende was sent to England to work for her mistress's sister as a slave. While in England, the sister sent Mende to stay with a few family friends while they went on

vacation. Her new home allowed her the freedom of having personal time-- something that Mende was never accustomed to. During her free time, she met a man from Sudan who helped her get into contact with someone in England from Nuba. The Nuba savior helped her escape from her mistress's sister in a unique and nerve wracking way.

Mende's struggles did not end there though. She needed to seek asylum from the British government. However, the UK officials believed that they could send her back to Sudan and all would be well. What they did





not take into account was that the family who had kept her as a slave had connections to the Sudan army. They would easily find Mende and take her again.

After many protests in the UK and Continental Europe, the British government gave in and offered her asylum. Unfortunately, at the present time, it is still extremely dangerous for Mende to return to her home and see her family. But, she is able to converse with them over the phone. Hearing their voices gives Mende hope that one day she will be with them again. One day she will hear her father's jokes again. One day she will see her brother's strong fighting body. One day she will see her home.

**Z**ana Muhsen was born and raised in Birmingham, England. In her personal biography, *Sold: One woman's heartbreaking, true account of modern slavery*, she describes the events that occurred at age 15 which changed her life as well as her sister Nadia's life, forever.

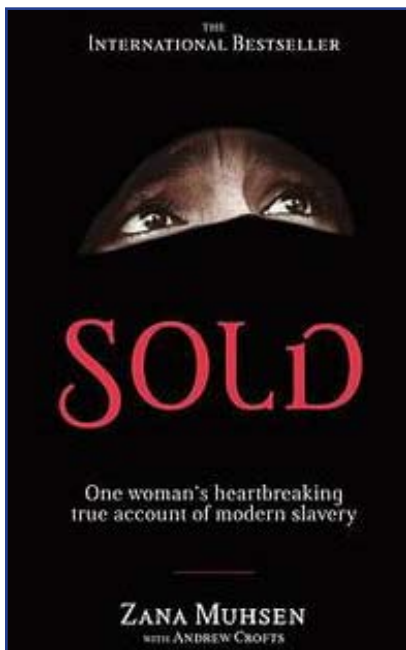
In Birmingham she lived a life of freedom and independence. She attended school,

and had many friends. She did what regular teenagers love to do. Her life began to turn strict when her father realized that she was growing into a young woman. He tried to keep her away from boys and certain friends whom he deemed unfit for her to have friendships with.

At the age of 15, Zana's father offered to send her on a vacation trip to Yemen with some of his friends. Her father described Yemen as a place with "beautiful beaches fringed with palm trees, sunshine all the time and camel rides across the desert" (pg. 16). He convinced

both Zana and Nadia that Yemen was a paradise. Additionally, if Zana and Nadia went to Yemen, they would finally be able to meet their older brother Ahmed. Their mother, although skeptical about the whole idea, still allowed their departure to occur.

Zana was to leave first with her father's friend, Abdul Khada, and Nadia was going to follow her with another friend of their father's, Goward. Upon her arrival at Yemen, Zana knew that her father had tricked her. Yemen was hot, deserted, and houses were so far apart from each other that it took





at least 20 minutes to walk from one house to another. Zana was taken to Abdul Khada's house and introduced to his wife and children.

Soon, Zana was told that she was not here on vacation. In fact, her father had sold her for 1,300 Euros to Abdul Khada, with the intention of becoming

but eventually had to give in to his requests.

Zana's nightmare continued when she realized that her warning letters had not reached her mother, and Nadia was still on her way to Yemen. Their only hope was for one of their letters to reach their mother.

After some time, Abdul Khada forced Zana

to their mother who instantly knew the truth. Their mother went to the authorities in England, but was told that nothing could be done because her daughters had married Yemeni men.

Hope came slowly in the form of journalist Eileen McDonald, who wrote numerous articles about the girls' treatment as slaves.

The media coverage from the articles caused an outbreak in the UK. This outcry forced the Yemeni government to allow the two girls to go home on the condition that they must leave their children in Yemen. Nadia volunteered to remain in Yemen and take care of Zana's son.

The book ends with Zana's heartbreaking choice of whether to leave her sister and her son for freedom, or staying in Yemen as a slave.

**“It’s almost unheard of that a girl born and bred in England could be forced into the life Zana had.”**

the wife to his son, Abdullah.

Zana was forced to have sexual intercourse with Abdullah, her husband, who hated her as much as she hated him. She was thrown into doing chores such as fetching water 12 times a day from wells that were far away from her new home. When she needed to walk to the wells, she had to endure risking her life from the various poisonous snakes, scorpions, and other reptiles that seemed to lurk everywhere in Yemen.

Zana was strong, however. She refused to give in easily to Abdul Khada's demands. She fought and argued with him at all times,

to do a voice recording for her mother, telling her mother how wonderful her new life was in Yemen. Zana's father hid the tape from his wife out of fear that she would hear her voice and would know that what they were saying was not true.

However, years later, Zana's brother, Mo, showed the tape



There are hundreds of young girls who are subjected to what both Mende and Zana endured. The popular media is more concerned about the wars in such poverty-driven countries than the outcomes of the wars and the effects these wars have on young girls. Zana's story is overwhelmingly powerful because of the unique background she had. It's almost unheard of that a girl born and bred in England could be forced into the life Zana had. Both stories reveal secrets and truths in the world we live in which we often look past or do not notice. Slavery is still in existence.

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The following individuals are some of the hundreds of associates of WIFP. Many have been with us since the early days of the 1970s. Not all of those we work with are Associates, but the network of Associates helps us experience continuity in our endeavors over the years. We've shared projects and ideas. We've lent each other support. We continue to look forward to the energies of the newer Associates joining with us to bring about a radical restructuring of communication that will bring about true democracy in our countries.

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