

Abstract

The Role of Misogyny in Patterns of Homicide: A Historical Survey Examining the Killing of Women by Men in a Midwestern City (Approximate Population of 200,000), 1975-1979

Analysis of all cases of homicide involving women as victim and/or perpetrator in Dayton, Ohio between 1975 and 1979 showed that 71.9% of the intrasex killings between husbands and wives, boyfriends and girlfriends and estranged same, involved a prior history of wife abuse. Critical analysis of literature on violence from all perspectives, biological, psychological, sociological, anthropological and feminist, revealed the linkages of the concepts of machismo and misogyny to both forms of violence against women, homicide and wife abuse, as well as other gynocidal practices. Women were shown to be generally non-violent both in national and cross cultural epidemiological studies on violence and homicide and in the Dayton homicide cases. When they did kill, a significant proportion (49.1%) of the Dayton female killers were motivated by self-defense, as compared to the 8.2% rate of victim precipitation when men killed women. Newspaper accounts of these cases were also analyzed showing some indication of the perpetuation of myths, subtle blaming of the victim, obsession with purity and sexism which is found in the literature on other gynocidal practices. It is suggested that misogyny and machismo grow out of the patriarchal societal structure and that homicide of women along with wife abuse and other practices of violence toward females maintain the patriarchy by keeping women subservient. Abused women were identified as a population highly at risk to kill or be killed and nursing intervention with these women suggested in terms of prevention.

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Dedicated to:

Lewis, for all his love, support and help and because he is one who cannot be accused of misogyny,

Christy and Brad, who put up with and still love a mainly absent Mommy,

Dorothy and Susan, for their love and support,

Jo Ann and Peggy, for inspiration and pedagogy,

Gert, for providing instigation and the standards to meet,

My parents, for teaching me to love myself,

Connie, for special help in time of great need,

Other family and friends for caring in spite of extreme neglect,
And to:

Jocelyn, who was killed,

Judie, Monica and Julie, who were beaten,

And all other women who are in danger and can learn from this study.

Chapter I

Introduction and Purpose

One of the ten national health priorities identified in the National Health Planning and Development Act of 1974 is: "The promotion of activities for the prevention of disease, including studies of nutritional and environmental factors affecting health and the provision of preventive health care services."¹ Homicide is defined as "the willful (non-negligent) killing of one human being by another."² In 1971, it was the leading cause of death for black women, age 15-34 and the third highest cause of death for white women, age 15-29.³ In 1973, statistics list homicide as the second leading cause of death in women aged 15-24 years.⁴ Homicide must therefore be regarded as a major health problem of women which needs further study. It can be viewed as a disease of society which needs to be analyzed in that

1 Joanne Hall and Barbara Weaver, *A Systems Approach to Community Health* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1977); p. 12.

2 Marijian Herjanic and David Meyer, "Notes on Epidemiology of Homicide in a Urban Area," *Forensic Science* 8 (November-December, 1976): 235-245, p. 237.

3 Leonide Martin, *Health Care of Women* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1978); pp. 8-11.

4 Juanita Kreps, *Social Indicators, 1976* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Commerce, 1977); p. 195.

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context in order to begin to identify the direction that primary prevention should take. Herjanic and Meyer state, "The development of meaningful preventive measures depends on repeated epidemiologic investigations to determine the changes in pattern of crime."¹ Therefore, homicide rates over time and associated demographic characteristics of the victim and perpetrator are appropriate objects of evaluation in order to formulate patterns and trends.

The patterns of homicide must be studied in conjunction with an analysis of its roots in order to provide a comprehensive paradigm on which to base preventive measures. Highriter calls for nursing research studies to combine descriptive analysis of statistics with theory in order to advance community health nursing science.² Pilisak and Ober demonstrate the need to view violence in a public health perspective, to conduct "inquiry into the distribution of the malady within the total population and into the facts about the social system that correlate with this incidence."³ The missing element from most classic theories of violence is a thorough analysis of the role of misogyny (hatred of women). In 1977, of the 2,740 female homicide victims nationally, 2,447 of the perpetrators were men.⁴

During the same year, of 8,565 men murdered, 1,780 of the offenders were women, or in only 21% of the incidents.⁵ According to the City

1 Herjanic and Meyer, p. 196.

2 Marian Highriter, "The Status of Community Health Nursing," *Nursing Research*, 26 (May-June, 1977), p. 190.

3 Marc Pilisak and Lyn Ober, "Torture and Genocide as Public Health Problems," *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 46 (July, 1976): 388-392, p. 389.

4 William H. Webster, *Uniform Crime Reports*, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice, 1977), p. 9.

5 Ibid.

3

of Dayton police reports, from a total of 70 homicides, 11 of the victims were women during the period of January 1, 1977 through December 31, 1977 in Dayton, Ohio. Of these murders of women, ten of the perpetrators were male, one female. (Determined by physical evidence if not arrest and conviction of the murderer). In contrast, of the 59 men killed during that same period, only 13.6% (8) of the perpetrators were women. The predominance of men killing women over women killing men in both local and national statistics cannot be explained solely by attributing the male predilection for violence to a biological tendency toward aggression, because of the cultures where the incidence of violence and homicide is almost nonexistent.¹ Instead, there must be a thorough analysis of the factors operating in our culture which leads to violence. The possibility that misogyny is operating when men murder women needs to be considered and explored in a scholarly fashion. This kind of study is responsive to Grayce Sills' call for nursing research that examines "the relationships of sexism, racism, poverty and other forms of deprivation to...health care."²

In order to help determine the extent of misogyny in the Dayton area, the journalism regarding homicides as well as their actual patterns needs to be examined. As Suzanne Pingree asserts, "media constantly provide us with symbolic messages about our cultural environment, ... and relative importance of women and men."³

1 Erich Fromm, *The Anatomy of Human Destructiveness* (New York: Fawcett Crest, 1973), pp. 194-196.

2 Grayce Sills, "Research in the Field of Psychiatric Nursing," *Nursing Research*, 26 (May-June, 1977): p. 206.

3 Susan Pingree, "A Scale for Sexism," *Journal of Communications*, 26 (1976): 193-200, p. 198.

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Susan Brownmiller points out that making the victim seem like she "asked for it" helps to lessen the impact of the crime.¹ There is often an obsession with the purity (of its lack) of the victim in newspaper accounts of female homicides.² When the woman is portrayed as less than pure, the crime is lessened, both in the opinion of patriarchal society and in its courts.³ This obsession with purity is found in the scholarly accounts (written mainly by men) of other male perpetrated gynocidal practices such as the Indian rite of suttee, or widow burning, and witch burning, as well as in newspaper accounts of rape.⁴ Subtle blaming and obsession with purity of the victim can be seen as part of an overall pattern of misogyny.

Historical analysis of the patterns of homicide of women in Dayton, Ohio plus comparisons of national and cross cultural statistics can therefore provide an indication of patterns and trends which may support the inclusion of misogyny as one of the roots of violence in our culture. Examination of the various newspaper accounts related to the Dayton homicides for evidence of sexism, obsession with purity and subtle blaming of the victim will also provide data to determine the presence of misogyny. Finally, a critique of selected theories of violence from all disciplines will provide a holistic background for the study. The theories will be analyzed for identification of misogynous components, and the gaps where inclusion of misogyny would have made the theories more comprehensive will be identified.

- 1 Susan Brownmiller, *Against Our Will* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1975), pp. 387-420.
- 2 Betty Farrell, "The Court Said the Victims Invited the Trouble," *New West* (8/29/77): 36-41, p. 38.
- 3 *Ibid.*
- 4 Mary Daly, *Gyn/Ecology* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1978), pp. 132-133.

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Background and Significance

Suzanne Steinmetz and Murray Straus attest that "any social pattern as widespread and enduring as violence must have fundamental and enduring causes."¹ In dealing with the aspect of violence in homicide of women, it is necessary to look at these causes. Biological, psychological and sociological factors need to all be considered as part of the roots of violence. Misogyny is a concept which integrates all of these aspects, and yet has been absent from most theories regarding violence. In relationship to homicide of women, it is a theoretical framework that needs to be taken into account. Misogyny derives from our patriarchal social system which is an integral part of the social forces that Steinmetz and Straus assert need to be understood, "because most aspects of violence, like most aspects of other human behavior, are the product of social forces interacting with basic human potential."²

Patriarchy may be defined as "any kind of group organization in which males hold dominant power and determine what part females shall and shall not play, and in which capabilities assigned to women are delegated generally to the mystical and aesthetic and excluded from the practical and political realms."³ Patriarchy has been the predominant social form for all of recorded history, but there is growing archeolo-

1 Murray Straus, "Violence Research, Violence Control and the Good Society," *Violence in Our Family* ed. Suzanne K. Steinmetz and Murray Straus (New York: Harper and Row, 1974): 321-324, p. 321.

2 Suzanne K. Steinmetz and Murray Straus, "Intra Family Violence," *Violence in the Family* ed. Suzanne K. Steinmetz and Murray Straus (New York: Harper and Row, 1974): 3-32, p. 17.

3 Adrienne Rich, *On Lies, Secrets, and Silence* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1979), p. 79.

6

logical and anthropological evidence that recorded history was preceded by more equitable or matriarchal forms in which violence, in terms of human beings killing each other, was virtually unknown.¹ These early cultural remnants show female deities, sharing in power and policy making and natural divisions of labor based partially (although not entirely) on sex which were complementary and equally important.²

The roots of the patriarchal societal organization can probably be most logically traced to male fear of women because of the unexplained mystery of reproduction in primitive times.³ There are thousands of legends from all parts of the world that indicate some crisis occurring when leadership was "wrested from the woman, either by force or seduction or both" between 7500 B.C. and 1250 B.C.⁴ Early recorded history shows the efforts of men to overcome their fear by establishing a religious basis for the subjugation of women and depreciation of the woman's role.⁵ Early Greek and Judaic patriarchal formations are based on the concepts of subjugation of nature and the

1 Ruby Leavett, *Peaceable Primates and Gentle People* (New York: Harper and Row, 1975).

2 *Ibid.* Toni Cade, "On the Issue of Roles," *The Black Woman*, ed. Toni Cade (New York: New American Library Inc., 1970) pp. 101-112.

3 Robin Morgan, *Going Too Far* (New York: Vintage Books, 1977) p. 309. Adrienne Rich, "Disloyal to Civilization: Feminism, Racism and Gynophobia," *Chrysalis* 7 (1979) :9-28, p. 16.

4 Pat Robinson, et. al. "A Historical and Critical Essay for Black Woman in the Cities, June, 1969," *The Black Woman*, ed. Toni Cade (New York: New American Library, Inc., 1970), 198-210, p. 203.

5 Mary Daly, *Beyond God the Father* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1973), pp. 73-100. Rosemary Radford Ruether, *New Woman, New Earth* (New York: The Seabury Press, 1975).

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linking of male "essential selves with a transcendent principle beyond nature which is pictured as intellectual and male."1 Men eagerly accepted this paradigm and the "first oppressor-oppressed relation, the foundation of all other class and property relations" became entrenched.2

The patriarchal formulation was spread through religion, war, written history and economics. Each subsequent sociological and economic development further divided the sexes and subjugated the female. Development of the patriarchal nuclear family structure and the control of technology by men have been the most lethal accomplishments of patriarchy for women.3 In the present world every avenue of power, military, industry, technology, government, science, finance, police, the courts and religion are almost entirely in male hands.4 However, the male image of aggression that stems from the patriarchal role assignments is beginning to be seen as dangerous to all human beings and is reflected in patriarchal class systems, attempts at controlling nature, and wars resulting in revolution, ecological pollution and widespread violence. Misogyny is embedded in patriarchy and is a basic part of the violence against women in our society.

The patriarchal social and economic system has resulted in rigid childbearing patterns where the mother has primary responsibility especially during the years before the child is capable of rational thought. Since she is the person who can gratify all of the infant's

1 Ruether, p. 13.

2 Ibid, p. 3.

3 Shulamith Firestone. *The Dialectic of Sex* (New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1970).

4 Kate Millet, *Sexual Politics* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Co., 1970): p. 25.

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needs but sometimes does not, all human beings have a basic ambivalence toward female figures.1 The father represents the real and exciting world, and all boys are taught very early to reject their mothers and "join ranks with her oppressor."2 Boys feel guilty about this desertion plus they fear the seeming omnipotence of the early mother.3

The fear and guilt are translated unconsciously to hostility toward females generally.

The unconscious hatred of women is nurtured and legitimized by religion. From Eve to witches the Judao-Christian tradition depicts women as sinful.4 Mary is the only "holy" figure who is female in Christianity, but she is "good" only in relation to Jesus.5 Since she is conceived without sin and had a virgin birth, she becomes an impossible model for women to achieve.6 Salvation is possible only through male figures.7 The church has set the example for misogyny through early theological doctrine and witch burnings and the more recent stance against reproductive control by women.8

1 Dorothy Dinnerstein, *The Mermaid and the Minotaur* (New York: Harper and Row, 1977), p. 60.

2 Firestone, p. 58.

3 Ibid. Dinnerstein, pp. 48-49.

4 Daly, Beyond God the Father, p. 77.

5 Ibid., p. 82

6 Ibid.

7 Ibid.

8 Ibid., p. 63. Ruether, pp. 99 - 105.

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Male self-esteem is based on the impossible model of invulnerability, perfect competence, fearlessness, virility, power and always winning.¹ In order to bolster what must always be a shaky self-esteem when based on that image, religion and patriarchal parenting patterns have presented the ideal scapegoat onto women, and they are consequently hated.² Oppression of women and other classes and/or races enhances the power of men and reinforces their tenuous self-esteem.

When males feel that they are becoming powerless, violence is often the result.³ Jackson Toby states that "violence may be the most appropriate way to protect one's honor, to show courage or conceal fear, especially fear of revealing weakness."⁴ In the lower social status the male is more likely to turn to violence because he is more impotent economically and politically.⁵ He is more likely also to claim authority on the strength of sex rank alone since he is usually forced to share more economic power with women.⁶ These factors are reflected in the higher rates of homicide and violence among poor and black males.⁷

1 Marc Fasteau. *The Male Machine* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1974).

2 Daly, *Beyond God the Father*, p. 63.

3 Rollo May. *Power and Innocence* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1972), p. 39. Jackson, Toby, "Violence and the Masculine Ideal: Some Qualitative Data," *Annals of the American Academy of the Political and Social Sciences* 364 (March, 1966): 19-28, p. 22.

4 Toby, p. 22.

5 May, p. 23.

6 Millet, p. 36.

7 Joan A. Kleba, "Homicide Trends in the United States, 1900-1974." *Public Health Reports*, 90 (May-June, 1975): 195-204.

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The most virulent form of male bravado is machismo. Machismo may be defined as a "doctrine that values sexual prowess, virility and power" above all else.¹ This doctrine is actually prevalent in most males in most patriarchal societies, although it is usually described as being a characteristic of the Hispanic culture and the lower classes. The machismo ethic rigidly defines women as property, adheres to the sexual double standard and glorifies violence, especially as an enforcement of the double standard.² John Paddock studied two small towns ten miles apart in Mexico which had basically the same socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds.³ One was virtually free of homicide while the other had a high homicide rate. The major difference he found was that "machismo was all but absent" in the non-violent community.⁴

The sociologic conditioning of men and women which begins in the home and is continued by the patriarchal society's institutions further teaches and encourages the expression of misogyny. Boys are taught the male roles of competitiveness and aggression while girls are instructed on how to accept their oppression and be victimized.⁵

1 Robert Brent Toplin, *Unchallenged Violence* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1975),

p. 167.

2 Ibid., p. 168.

3 John Paddock, "Values in an Antiviolent Community," *Humanitas*, 12 (May, 1976):183-194, pp. 183-184.

4 Ibid., p. 191.

5 Margaret Gates, "Introduction," *The Victimization of Women*, ed. Jane Chapman and Margaret Gates (Beverly Hills, California: Sage Publications, 1978), pp. 9-28.

Violence is often perceived to be a natural extension of the male role, and misogyny is inherent in the history lessons at school along with the unspoken message of the way women are treated by men throughout the society.¹ The school-aged boy is thought normal when he avoids girls and talks openly of hating them. It may well be that this hatred, conceived in the parenting arrangements and male psyche, is somewhat repressed later by sexual necessity, as well as sexual longings being repressed during this period.

Exposure to literature, history and the media, conceived mainly by men, continues to reinforce misogyny and the sexual roles. Kate Millet has effectively shown how the patriarchal values and misogyny of our culture are revealed in the descriptions of the relationships between characters of opposite sex in the novels of D. H. Lawrence, Henry Miller and Norman Mailer.² Written history has reinforced sex role stereotypes by selectively interpreting facts to make sex roles seem like the natural order, by negating the accomplishments of women by diminishing female historical works.³ Women are systematically discouraged from all creative endeavors and their literary and artistic works usually maligned by male critics.⁴ As Adrienne Rich maintains: "The ancient, continuing envy, awe and dread of the male for the female capacity to create life has repeatedly taken the form of hatred for every other female aspect of creativity."⁵

1 Millet, pp. 32-35.

2 Ibid., pp. 190-230.

3 Daly, pp. 132-133, Leavitt, pp. 10-18, Millet, p. 43.

4 Rich, *On Lies, Secrets, and Silence*, p. 14.

5 Ibid., p. 21.

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The media is replete with sexism in print and advertising.¹ Television's heroes are the perfect embodiment of the male image of aggression and virility complete with frequent acts of violence against women.² Exposure to violent television results in increased expressions of aggression in free play and moral approval of aggressive solutions to problems, especially in boys.³ These outgrowths of the patriarchal system serve to reinforce and continue misogyny.

In modern society, "psychoanalysis has become the chief tool, replacing patriarchal religion, for rationalizing and sanctifying the inferiority of women."⁴ Psychoanalytic theory starting with Freud has strengthened misogyny by accepting the idea that women are naturally defective and postulating that any woman who rebels against a stereotyped role is mentally ill and needs to be cast out by society or "cured" by the patriarchal figure of the psychiatrist.⁵ In the psychoanalytic tradition mothers are blamed for most psychiatric ills, and yet motherhood is the only acceptable role for women.⁶ By basing female psychology on "penis envy," Freud bolsters the idea that women

1 Pingree, p. 194.

2 George Gerbner et. al. "Cultural Indicators: Violence Profile 09" *Journal of Communication*, 28 (Summer, 1978): 196-207.

3 Margaret Thomas and Ronald Drabman, "Effects of Television Violence on Expectations of

Others' Aggression," *Personality and Social Psychology* 4 (Winter, 1978):73-76, p. 76. Gerbner, et. al., p. 203.

4 Ruether, p. 137.

5 Daly, *Gyn/Ecology*. pp. 223-292.

6 Rich, *On Lies, Secrets, and Silence*, pp. 215-222.

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are inferior and therefore worthy of contempt.¹ If little girls envy boys, it is their eventual succession to the elevations of prestige and power that girls see occupied by men that is envied, not their biology.² Thus, psychoanalytic theories and treatment have served men by legitimizing further the oppression of women and contributed to their hatred of the female sex.

Homicide of women is only one of the expressions of misogyny.

Susan Brownmiller has documented the history of rape as an expression of hatred and "a conscious process of intimidation by which all men keep all women in a state of fear."³ This fear serves to reinforce the patriarchal society. The study of rape and rapists has led to the conclusion that it is a crime of violence rather than of passion.⁴ The attitudes of the rapists and police reflect the subconscious attitude of male society, that there is very little wrong with violence against women.⁵

Mary Daly has documented other violent practices against women in history and across cultures as expression of misogyny.⁶ Indian suttee, witchburning, African genital mutilation, Chinese footbinding and western medical gynecology are all examples of institutionalized,

1 Millet, p. 179.

2 Firestone.

3 Brownmiller, p. 5.

4 Donna Schram, "Rape," *The Victimization of Women*, ed.

Jane Chapman and Margaret Gates, (Beverly Hills, California: Sage Publications, 1978), 53-57, p. 55.

5 *Ibid.*, p. 70.

6 Daly, *Gyn/Ecology*.

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rationalized, male instigated forms of sadistic and horrible violence against women.¹ One should not fail to recognize that human beings who are guilty of such horrors against other human beings must feel hatred toward the other group.

Closer to our present reality is the male perpetrated wife abuse which is only just beginning to be documented and fully examined. The patriarchal system which defines women as property of their spouses allows wife beating as an extension of that privilege. Del Martin delineates the history of wife abuse as a lawful privilege of the husband until the late 1800's and as an unofficially sanctioned practice today.² The basic hatred of women that underlies such practices is brought out in the attitude of most wife beaters, that she deserved it.³ Wife abusers are generally men who feel inadequate in some way and need to physically dominate their wives.⁴ Again the shaky male self-esteem that needs to be reinforced by oppression over others and which hates the female characteristics that are so much feared in itself, is operating.

The wife battering syndrome is part of the homicide problem. "Family trouble calls" are defined by the Dayton Police Department to be summons of aid from police from a neighbor or someone in the household

1 *Ibid.*

2 Del Martin, *Battered Wives*, (San Francisco: Glide Publications, 1976).

3 John O'Brian, "Violence in Divorce Prone Families,"

Violence in the Family, ed. Suzanne K. Steinmetz and Murray A. Straus, (New York: Harper and Row, 1974), 65-74, p. 68.

4 Robert Whitehurst, "Violence in Husband Wife Interaction" Violence in the Family, ed.

Suzanne K. Steinmetz and Murray A. Straus, (New York: Harper and Row, 1974) 75-81, p. 76.

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because of violence in the home. A call to police because of wife abuse would come under this heading. A preliminary examination of Dayton Police Department homicide figures during the year 1977 revealed that of 4 women killed by their husbands, two of the households had been involved in "family trouble calls" during the previous year. One third of the women killed in Cleveland area in 1975 were murdered by their spouse.¹ These kinds of figures are substantiated in other epidemiological studies of homicide.² Wife abuse and murder of wives by their spouse is part of the patriarchal system which grants husbands absolute power over their wives.³ Wife abuse needs to also be seen in terms of misogyny, and homicide of wives by their husbands as the final extension of that hatred.⁴ Determining the number of women homicide victims who were seen previously by the Dayton Police Department in connection with "family trouble calls" and examining the police homicide files for indication of wife abuse would help delineate this conceptualization.

The black woman is the most oppressed victim of patriarchy. Victim of double prejudice, that against women and that against the negro race, she is in an especially vulnerable position. The black liberation movement has been partially stymied because its male leadership

1 Herjanic and Meyer, p. 240.

2 Edward Green and Russell Wakefield, "Patterns of Middle Class Violence," The Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology, 70 (Summer,

1979):172-181, p. 178. Harwin L. Voss and John R. Hepburn, "Patterns in Criminal Homicide in Chicago," The Journal of Criminal Law,

Criminology and Political Science, 59 (December, 1968) A99-508, p. 506.

3 Martin, p. 67.

4 Rich, On Lies, Secrets, and Silence, p. 15.

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continued the patriarchal male fallacy of defining themselves in terms of machismo.¹ In their quest for power, too many black men have emphasized the role of oppressor toward black women, emulating their oppressor, white men.² They have insisted that the only role of women in black liberation is that of the supportive wife and mother.³ The myth of the black matriarchy was invented by a white man and resulted in further division of the black sexes as well as further derogation of the black race.⁴ Black women have been discouraged from joining the feminist movement by their men and by the imitative prejudice of white women.⁵ Divide and conquer is one of the best friends of patriarchy.

Many black men are in an extremely volatile position. They need to culturally define themselves in terms of power, yet are kept from economic and political power by the white male hierarchy. Their feelings of impotence often are expressed in violence. Because of patriarchally learned misogyny, that violence is often directed towards black women.⁶ "Her head is more regularly beaten than any other woman's, and by her

1 Michelle Wallace, Black Macho and the Myth of the Super Woman, (New York: The Dial Press, 1978), pp. 32-33.

2 Frances Beale, "Double Jeopardy: To Be Black and Female," The Black Woman (New York:

New American Library, Inc., 1970), pp. 90-100. Paul Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (New York: Herder & Herder, 1972), pp. 29-30. Wallace, p. 29.

3 Abbey Lincoln, "Who Will Revere the Black Woman?" *The Black Woman*, ed. Toni Cade (New York: New American Library, Inc., 1970): 80-84. Wallace, p. 106-107.

4 Wallace, pp. 109-110.

5 Rich, *On Lies, Secrets, and Silence*, p. 303.

6 *Ibid.*, p. 284.

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own man; she's the scapegoat for Mr. Charlie." 1 Black women are killed three times as often as white women. 2 There has been "limited previous treatment of violence as a cause of death among women," and "the literature on black women in this area is virtually nonexistent." 3 This study will attempt to rectify this situation, at least partially.

There is indication from the study of anthropology and sociology that non-patriarchal or less patriarchal societies may have lower rates of violence than ours. 4 There are remnants of matricentric societies in modern times, such as the Zuni Indians in the Southwestern United States, that are nonviolent. 5 There are also studies showing a higher rate of homicide in the Southern section of the United States, a region well known for its excessively patriarchal background. 6 Patriarchal societies maintain the authority of fathers, lovers and husbands over women. A strictly patriarchal society, such as the Sudan, may legitimize killing of wives because of failure to obey. 7

1 Lincoln, p. 82.

2 Webster, p. 9.

3 Maxine Lercher, "Black Women and Homicide," *Lethal Aspects of Urban Violence* (Lexington, Massachusetts: Lexington Books, 1979): 83-90, p. 83.

4 Fromm, pp. 197-199.

5 *Ibid.*

6 Raymond Gastil, "Homicide and a Regional Culture of Violence," *American Sociological Review*, 36 (June, 1971): 412-427.

7 M.O. 4. Malik and O. Salvi, "A Profile of Homicide in the Sudan," *Forensic Science*, 7 (March-April, 1976): 141-150, p. 144.

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The killing of women by husbands, lovers or fathers may be considered as suggestive of patriarchal values in Dayton and other American cities if these numbers exceed the rates of women murdering their spouses or fathers. It may be postulated that the growing feminist movement may tend to increase the rates of men killing women if male machismo and shaky male self-esteem is being threatened. 1 Conversely, it may be possible that our society is becoming less patriarchal, and misogyny is decreasing because of less rigid child rearing patterns at least in the middle class. If this factor is operating, we may see a decrease in rates of homicide of women over the last five years. An analysis of homicide statistics from other cultures in comparison to ours, evaluation of relationships of murderer to victim, inclusion of socioeconomic class of murderer data, and analysis of trends of both Dayton and national homicide of women will be useful for gaining insight into these issues.

The theories that have been traditionally used to explain violence arise from various disciplines and are all inadequate in addressing the problem of homicide of women. The psychological theories of Rollo May and Erich Fromm fail to deal with the possibility of misogyny as a root of violence and do not adequately explain the

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differences in rates of men killing women versus women killing men.² Freudian theories are based on the sexist myth that women are defective.³

1 Evan Stark, et. al., "Medicine and Patriarchal Violence: The Social Construction of a "Private Event," *International Journal of Health Services*. 9 (1979): 461-493, p. 482.

2 May, Power and Innocence. Fromm, *The Anatomy of Human Destructiveness*.

3 Ruether, p. 139.

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His concept that the internal psychic mechanisms are paramount in patterns of destructive hostility is insufficient to adequately explain cultural differences in those patterns.¹

Psychoanalytic theory fails to explore misogyny although Freud does allude to men's fear of women.² Biological theories, such as Lorenz', are deficient both because they do not account for cultures where the incidence of violence is low, and because they omit the possibility of hatred of women.³ The classic sociological theory, Wolfgang's "subculture of violence" is also insufficient because of the omission of misogyny where it would logically occur in the framework.⁴ Failure to do this in most so called "objective" research has resulted in a general legitimization of genocidal practices, such as witchburning, throughout history.⁵

Mary Daly states: "The basic cultural assumptions which make the atrocious ritual possible and plausible remain unquestioned, and the practice itself is misnamed and isolated from other parallel symptoms of the planetary patriarchal practice of female maiming and massacre."⁶

Homicide of women is usually studied as a very small and insignificant part of a general problem of violence instead of within the context of misogyny. The violence itself is seldom connected with

1 Fromm, p. 199.

2 Lederer, p. 3.

3 Konrad Lorenz, *On Aggression* (New York: Bantam Books, 1966).

4 Marvin Wolfgang and Franco Ferracuti, *The Subculture of Violence* (London: Tavistock Publications, 1967).

5 Daly, *Gyn/Ecology*, p. 131.

6 Ibid.

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the overall system of patriarchy in our society in traditional history. These issues need to be addressed. The problem of homicide needs to be looked at holistically, for human beings are integrated. In looking at violence holistically, misogyny must be considered as part of sociological, behavioral and psychological frameworks. Only feminist literature is examining misogyny and the patriarchal society which perpetuates it as one of the roots of violence.¹

Misogyny is an underlying conceptual framework that links feminism, biology, sociology and psychology into a holistic approach to the problem of homicide of women.

Misogyny is defined as the hatred of women. Hatred is defined as "an enduring organization of aggressive impulses toward a person or toward a class of persons" which is "extropunitive" in nature.² It is a habitual, deep seated hostility that can arise when one's values are threatened or can be conditioned into the person by early psychological development and frustrating experiences.³ Sociological conditioning suggests to the person appropriate groups to hate. As has been outlined, our patriarchal parenting patterns, religion, psychoanalytic theories, literature and societal institutions have all combined in a widespread, pervasive, subconscious hatred of women by men. Psychologically, culturally and economically, the power of men is dependent on

the perpetuation of patriarchal hierarchies continuing.

1 Daly, Gyn/Ecology. Rich, On Lies, Secrets, and Silence.

2 Gordon W. Allport, The Nature of Prejudice (Garden City: New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1958): p. 341.

3 Ibid.

21

Misogyny and violence against women are weapons used to maintain the patriarchy. Homicide of women is the final extension of that violence and misogyny. "To permit ourselves to acknowledge the depth of woman-hatred encountered, tolerated, and justified in everyday life is frightening," but recognition and analysis is the first step to constructive action against it.¹

Overview of Study

This study is designed as a combination of the historical and epidemiological approaches to homicide of women. It uses as primary sources, the Dayton, Ohio Police Department official homicide case files which include witness statements, confessions, photographs and other primary evidence. Secondary sources include newspaper accounts and scholarly works published between 1969 and 1979 concerning homicide, misogyny, violence and related topics.

The second chapter presents a review of the literature related to homicide of women. The first three sections address the traditional biological, psychological and sociological (including anthropology) theories of violence and include a critique showing where sexism is apparent in many of the assumptions and where the inclusion of misogyny in those theories would help make them more comprehensive. Four additional bodies of literature are then reviewed. The fourth section of Chapter II presents the literature concerning the male attitude of machismo. This body of knowledge is derived from both sociological and feminist authors and will be shown to be closely connected to the

1 Rich, On Lies, Secrets, and Silence, p. 309.

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concept of misogyny. The next section presents a summary of other manifestations of misogyny and violence against women, past and present. Since women also kill men, and a statistical analysis of those cases is also presented for comparison purposes, the literature concerning female criminality is then presented. Child abuse accounts for a small percentage of female homicide (approximately 8% in this data). Since this phenomenon appears to have separate dynamics from the overall problem of violence against women, it is addressed at length in other research, and accounts for such a small number of cases in this study, the final part of Chapter II is a brief overview of the child abuse literature.

Data analysis provided such a strong indication of the importance of wife abuse as a factor in interspousal homicide (present in 71.9% of the cases of intimate male-female relationship killings in Dayton, the largest category) that a comprehensive review of this literature forms a chapter by itself. The literature concerning the wife battering phenomenon includes the connection to homicide, incidence, theories of causation, societal and historical perspectives, analysis of the victim response and the influence of patriarchy and misogyny on this practice.

Chapter IV consists of the presentation of the data collected from the Dayton Police Department homicide case files, national homicide statistics and cross cultural figures along with the methodologies used and analysis. This data shows trends over time in the Dayton homicide rates for women and for men killed by women in 1968 through 1979 in comparison to national statistics and

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epidemiological studies from other countries. It also demonstrates the relationships of the victims to the perpetrators, the circumstances surrounding each killing, the demographic characteristics of the persons involved, and the number of times the Dayton Police Department was called to the address of the homicide in the year preceding that event for all cases of female homicide and women killing men occurring in Dayton between January 1, 1975 and December 31, 1979. A separate section shows the amount of sexism, obsession with purity and subtle blaming of the victim found in selected newspaper accounts of the killings involving females either as victim or offender during the same years.

The last chapter contains the summary, conclusions and recommendations for further study. It also outlines deduced implications for society and nursing and suggested prevention and amelioration measures for the problem of homicide of women derived from literature and the conclusions herein.

Chapter II

General Theories of Violence

Introduction

A review of the literature concerning homicide and violence presents massive problems. The literature on homicide itself usually emphasizes that this behavior is part of a larger problem of violence and must be analyzed within that context. The amount of literature to be covered is staggering, especially when one approaches all the aspects, including theories of aggression, delinquency, child abuse, criminology, anthropology, ethnology, etc. This author does not claim to have read all the literature concerning violence or related concepts. However, what is being attempted here is a review of the major theories of violence which have been used to explain homicide, including experimental studies refuting or supporting them. They can be divided into three major areas, biological, psychological, and sociological. In addition, a brief review of some concepts considered important in respect to this study are included: female criminality, child abuse, machismo and other instances of violence against women. The epidemiological studies on homicide done in the United States and other countries will be presented in Chapter IV as a basis for comparison with the data from this research. Other cross cultural studies relating to violence will be included under the sociological theories, as will selections considered pertinent from anthropology, and delinquency.

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25 Ethnological studies considered supportive of some of the biological theories will be mentioned, but few of these were read in their original form. Because of the vast amount of literature involved and the multitude of approaches to homicide, this review cannot be considered all inclusive. However, it should indicate the problems with determining causality in homicide and point out the inconsistencies, gaps and bias of the traditional theoretical field when approaching the problem of homicide of women.

Biological Theories

The biological theories of violence can be explored in two main sections: instinctivist and neurological-hormonal. The two frameworks, although derived from at least two very different disciplines, hold in common the idea that violence is biologically determined and both draw heavily from studies of animals.

Instinctivists

Konrad Lorenz's theory on aggression is the best known in the field. He defines aggression as "the fighting instance in beast and man which is directed against members of the same species."¹ He feels that this "intra specific aggression ... fulfills an essential species-preserving function" by

favoring genes for strength, since the stronger male wins the desired female, and by ensuring that the population will not become too dense because of the competition for territory.² Lorenz argues

1 Konrad Lorenz, *On Aggression* (New York: Bantam Books, 1966), p. ix.

2 *Ibid.*, pp. 27 - 28.

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that aggression is spontaneous rather than reactive, that a stimulus is not necessary for its appearance.¹ He talks of how the violent behavior "can 'explode' without demonstrable external stimulation" if it has been held back for a long period of time.² He observes that the main inhibition against members of species completely killing each other off is the ability and desire of animals to flee in nature as soon as dominance of the opponent has been established and before fatal damage has been inflicted.³

Robert Ardrey also sees aggression (which he equates with his term ("enmity")) as an "innate response of an organism to any and all members of its own species."⁴ A former playwright, Ardrey uses observations of animals to postulate that dominance and subordination are inevitable, and aggression and competition insure the genetic transmission of the useful traits.⁵ He believes that humans and animals are fundamentally motivated by the defense and acquisition of territory which, along with enmity explain all violence.⁶ Ardrey characterizes people as becoming violent when they discovered weapons, began to hunt and thereby became predatory and territorial.⁷

1 *Ibid.*, p. A3.

2 *Ibid.*, p. 49.

3 *Ibid.*, p. 232.

4 Robert Ardrey, *The Territorial Imperative* (New York: Atheneum, 1966), p. 272.

5 *Ibid.*, p. 223.

6 *Ibid.*, pp. 252-275.

7 *Ibid.*, p. 258.

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Much time and space has been used to refute the simplistic theories of Ardrey and Lorenz from all perspectives.¹ Suffice it to say here, that they have been criticized severely for poor scholarship, for anthropomorphizing, for equating hunting with aggression, for ignoring evidence of cultures where violence is unknown, for failing to recognize that the fighting of animals of the same species (highly ritualized, defensive, stereotyped and seldom fatal) cannot be compared to the cruel, destructive, and attacking violence of humans, and for ignoring evidence that the early hunting and gathering populations were predominantly peaceful.² Both authors are also operating from sexist bias. Lorenz is one of only two authors found in the entire literature review who actually suggests that women are more aggressive than men when he states:

... in many animals, where only one sex cares for the brood, only that sex is really aggressive toward fellow members of the species ... In many gallinaceous birds, only the females tend the brood, and these are often far more aggressive than the males. The same thing is said to be true of human beings.³

Both authors speak mainly in terms of male behavior, both animal and human, and Ardrey equates childbearing responsibility with inevitable subordination of females.⁴

1 Ashley Montagu, *The Nature of Human Aggression* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976), Erich Fromm, *The Anatomy of Human Destruction* (New York: Fawcett Crest Books,

1973), pp. 22-54; Alexander Alland, *The Human Imperative* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1972), pp. 25-99.

2 Montagu, *Human Aggression*, pp. 9, 85, 165; Fromm, *Human Destruction*, pp. 42, 45, 180; Alland, *Human Imperative*, p. 30.

3 Lorenz, *On Aggression*, pp. 39-40.

4 Ardrey, *Territorial Imperative*, pp. 223-224.

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Other instinctivists have argued that men's predilection for war indicates a basic aggressive instinct in man, and that warfare was important in evolution since the victorious warriors with the most efficient brains were more likely to genetically reproduce.¹ Lawrence Kolb observes that "at best, only ten generations in the era of recorded history have avoided war."² Derek Freeman argues that peoples of peace are relatively rare in the ethnographic record, and says they were usually backward and submissive to a powerful and overtly aggressive neighbor.³ In refutation, Malinowski shows that wars cannot be traced back to the earliest beginnings of human culture, only to the start of written history.⁴ Stanislaw Andreski points out that only a small percentage of the population took part in the early wars.⁵ He maintains that usually people have to be indoctrinated for war, that "martial ardour" has to be stimulated by "playing upon variety, fear of contempt, sexual desire, filial and fraternal attachment, loyalty to the group and other sentiments."⁶ We can see that this could be compared to the fostering of a machismo attitude in men.

1 Derek Freeman, "Human Aggression in Anthropological Perspective," in *The Natural History of Aggression* ed. J. D. Carthy and F. J.

Ebling (London: Academic Press, 1964), p. 110. Robert Bigelow, "Relevance of Ethology to Human Aggressiveness," *International Social Science Journal* 23 (1971): 18-26, p. 23.

2 Lawrence Kolb, "Violence and Aggression: An Overview," in *Dynamics of Violence*, ed. Jan Fawcett (Chicago: AMA, 1971), p. 7.

3 Freeman, "Anthropological Perspective," p. 112.

4 Brenislaw Malinowski, "An Anthropological Analysis of War," *Aggression, Hostility and Violence*, ed. Terry Maple and Douglas R. Matheson (New York: Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1973), p. 23.

5 Stanislaw Andreski, "Origins of War," in *The Natural History of Aggression*, ed. J. D. Carthy and F. S. Ebling (London: Academic Press, 1964), p. 130.

6 *Ibid.*

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As for the contention that peaceful peoples were always in the minority, we can turn to evidence that the preponderance of the peoples living in the "cradle of civilization" (Asia Minor) from approximately 9000 to 5000 B.C. were hunter-gatherers or agriculturalists and apparently lived in a predominantly peaceful manner.¹ For the 800 years so far explored in the excavations of the Catal Hiiyik neolithic peoples, "among the many hundred of skeletons unearthed, not a single one has been found that showed signs of violent death."² Far from being backward, this culture was one of the most advanced of its time.³

The central notion of all the instinctivists is that an instinct is "an inherited tendency to invent action of a specific kind, usually set off by a limited range of stimuli, and having definite survival or biological value - in the struggle for existence."⁴ They find aggression a basic instinct which is "useful to any organism, including man, when it comes to the acquisition of status, property or mates" and thereby having been favored evolutionarily in the development of

animals and humans."5 However, the fighting in animals has been shown

1 Fromm, *Human Destruction*, pp. 169-186; Ruby Leavitt, *Peaceable Primates and Gentle People: Anthropological Approaches to Women's Studies* (New York: Harper & Row, 1975), pp. 17-20.

2 Fromm, *Human Destruction*, p. 180.

3 *Ibid.*, p. 179.

4 L. T. Troland, "The Fundamentals of Human Motivation," in *Aggression, Hostility, and Violence*, ed. Terry Maple and Douglas R. Matheson (New York: Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1973), p. 11.

5 D. A. Hamburg and H. K. H. Brodke, "Psychological Research on Human Aggressiveness," *Impact of Science on Society* 23 (3) (Summer, 1973) 182; Terry Maple and Douglas R. Matheson, eds., *Aggression, Hostility and Violence* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1973), pp. 8, 11.

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to be very different in nature from that of man, in that it is neither sought nor valued and other than defensive combat is usually found only in extraordinary conditions imposed by man.¹ It has also been found that in nonhuman primates, male aggression, territoriality and dominance battles are a minute fraction of the total interactions and the group cohesively strives to keep these disruptive incidents to a minimum.² Craig Wallace points out that there are many animals who are almost entirely passive and yet are thriving as species.³ Aggression leading to the violence has been shown by more recent anthropologists to be maladaptive in early human civilizations and thereby hardly genetically favored.⁵ Whatever happened in the third and fourth century, B.C., to change civilization from peaceful to violent, from cooperative to coercive, from egalitarian to oppressive cannot be explained in terms of instincts and evolution.⁵ It can be understood in terms of patriarchy. The instinctivists have not even considered in their theories the evidence that the earliest gatherer- hunters and agriculturalists were characterized by female deities and matricentric or matriarchal structures as opposed to the violent, patriarchal cultures appearing later.⁶

1 Wallace Craig, "Why Do Animals Fight?" in *Aggression, Hostility, and Violence*, ed. Terry Maple and Douglas R. Matheson (New York: Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1973), pp. 67-68.

2 Leavitt, *Peaceable Primates*, p. 3; *On Human Aggression*, p. 87.

3 Craig, "Why Do Animals Fight?", p. 76.

4 Leavitt, *Peaceable Primates*, p. 36.

5 Fromm, *Human Destruction*, p. 186.

6 Leavitt, *Peaceable Primates*, p. 36; Fromm, *Human Destruction*, pp. 179-184.

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Neurologists and Physiologists

In contrast to the instinctivists, the other branch of biological theories is characterized by controlled laboratory research and generally a recognition that many factors, both environmental and physical, contribute to violence. They also draw extensively from studies of animals, but these have been conducted in the laboratory, mainly because of the ethical considerations involved in research with human subjects, not because they do not grasp the problems in generalizing findings to human beings. This perspective is important in addressing violence from a holistic viewpoint, since it explains the physical basis of the aggression and violence that is seen. The literature in this area is frequently very technical in nature and relies a great deal on graphs, charts and schematic drawings of the brain. This review will be at a less detailed level

but the reader may want to refer to anatomy and physiology texts for further clarification.

The most comprehensive overview of the subject is provided by K. E. Moyer in his book *The Psychobiology of Aggression*.¹ Moyer maintains that aggression is "determined by an interwoven complex of internal, external and experiential factors" which are constantly interacting.² He defines aggression as "overt behavior involving intent to inflict noxious stimulation or to behave destructively toward another organism" which can be direct or indirect (symbolic, such as sarcasm or slander).³ This is close to the definition used by most

1 K. E. Moyer, *The Psychology of Aggression* (New York: Harper and Row, 1976).

2 Ibid., p. xiii.

3 Ibid., pp. 2, 3.

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of the biologists and neurologists writing in this area. In other words, aggression for these authors equates with hostility and includes violence, as opposed to achievement or assertiveness.¹ Moyer's general outline will be used as a basis for this section with evidence and theories from other research woven in where appropriate.

Moyer and other brain researchers are in general agreement that: "Impulses generated in the sensory systems, the cerebral cortex and still undetermined neural structures may activate triggering mechanisms that in turn excite visceral and semantic systems whose activities in concert provide physiologic expression of aggressive behavior."² Moyer is careful to point out that sensorimotor feedback is also important because changes in the stimulus will cut off aggressive behavior showing that aggression is "stimulus bound" contrary to Lorenz's conceptualization.³

Brain research has shown that the limbic system is central to the government of behavior and emotions, and therefore the part of the brain centrally involved in aggressive behavior.⁴ The structures comprising the limbic system are considered to include the upper part of the brain stem (thalamus, epithalamus and hypothalamus) and the deep areas of the cerebrum (amygdala, basal ganglia, hippocampus and midbrain).⁵ The limbic system contains the main afferent and efferent relationships with the neocortex and visceral - endocrine periphery of the brain.⁶

1 Ibid., p. 3.

2 Murray Goldstein, "Brain Research and Violent Behavior," *Archives of Neurology* 30 (January, 1974): 2.

3 Moyer, *The Psychobiology of Aggression*, p. 6.

4 Goldstein, "Brain Research," p. 2.

5 Vernon H. Mark and Frank R. Ervin, *Violence and the Brain* (New York: Harper and Row, 1970), pp. 21-24.

6 Goldstein, "Brain Research," p. 3.

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Knowledge about these structures is being accumulated everyday, and although the research gives an incomplete picture at the present time, the neurologists seem confident that exact mechanisms will be fully explained within our lifetime.¹

Studies of animals seem to indicate that there are several different neural systems for different kinds of aggression.² In animals, as many as fourteen different kinds of aggression have been behaviorally identified: predatory, antipredatory (defence against a predator), territorial, dominance, maternal, weaning (aggressive acts toward the young when weaning is desired by mother), parental disciplinary, sexual aggression in females, sex-related aggression in males, intermale, fear induced, irritable (no good reason for) and instrumental

(in order to obtain something).³ In laboratory experiments with animals, three different kinds of aggression (predatory, irritable and fear induced) have been elicited by electrical stimulation in three different neuroanatomical places.⁴ Electrical stimulation of parts of the limbic system of the brain in humans has also produced evidence of different, although somewhat overlapping, neurological representations in the brain for different kinds of hostility.⁵ Generalizing from

1 Ibid., p. 7.

2 Ibid., p. 8.

3 Montagu, *Human Aggression*, p. 14.

4 Goldstein, p. 8.; K. E. Moyer, "The Physiology of Aggression and the Implications for Aggression Control," in *The Control of Aggression and Violence* (New York: Academic Press, 1971), p. 62.

5 Robert Heath, "Electrical Self-Stimulation of the Brain in Man," *The American Journal of Psychiatry* 120 (December, 1963): 571-577, p. 574; Moyer, "Physiology of Aggression," p. 62.

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these studies, brain researchers have concluded that many different neuroanatomical centers exist for human aggression also.¹

Appropriate stimulus (i.e., pain, danger) when perceived, activates the sensory system involved and alerts the animal (or person), leading to a generalized state of arousal which includes increased sensitivity of the sensory systems (greater responsiveness to the environment) and increased muscle tone. When one of the specific neural systems are active, all neural activity in one area is facilitated. Such substances as amphetamines enhance the activity in the area but do not by themselves initiate activity in the aggressive systems. If any of the systems for aggression is active, the organism is more likely to respond aggressively to appropriate stimulus.²

Studies in animals indicate that there are both facilitatory and inhibiting neural mechanisms for all different kinds of aggression.³ Both surgical interruption of the neural systems for aggression and electrical stimulation of Inhibitory systems in humans have decreased the tendencies toward hostility resulting in neurologists making the same conclusions about our species.⁴ The activation of one system may involve the inhibition of another, as in animals where stimulation of the escape system inhibits aggression."⁵ Four uncontrollably violent patients had a receiver implanted in the brain which simultaneously inhibited areas of the hippocampus associated with rage and

1 Moyer, *Psychobiology of Aggression*, p. 8.

2 Ibid., pp. 6-7.

3 Ibid., p. 8.

4 Ibid., p. 57.

5 Ibid., pp. 8, 10.

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violent aggression and enhanced the activity of brain pleasure sites.¹ The two patients with no demonstrable organic disease, showed "dramatic improvement" while the other two, suffering from organic brain damage, showed "much improvement."² Other neural systems (i.e., higher brain centers in humans) are constantly interacting with the aggressive system, and the "ultimate behavior is a function of those interactions" not under control of the limbic system alone.³

Blood chemistry is also responsible for both inhibiting and facilitating the aggressive neural systems. Again, in animals at least, levels of certain endocrines (i.e., norepinephrine, acetylcholine, dopamine and serotonin) seem to selectively affect different kinds of aggression.⁴

Murray Goldstein has concluded that the "specific neural systems in the central nervous system that synthesize, store and release these agents are differentially engaged" for different kinds of aggression.⁵ For instance, norepinephrine facilitates affective aggression (rage) in humans but inhibits predatory behavior in animals.⁶ The action of these agents may explain the relationship of stress to aggression since both norepinephrine and acetylcholine

1 Robert G. Heath, "Modulation of Emotion with a Brain Pacemaker," *The Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease*, 165 (November, 1977):

300-317, pp. 302-305.

2 *Ibid.*, pp. 305,307.

3 Moyer, *Psychobiology of Aggression*, p. 8.

4 Goldstein, p. 13.

5 *Ibid.*

6 *Ibid.*

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have been identified as part of the stress reaction.¹ Deprivation states (i.e., food and sleep deprivation and morphine withdrawal in addicted rats) have been associated with increased aggression and also causes a stress reaction.² Although there has been no experimental verification as yet, Moyer also hypothesizes: It may well be that frustration induced irritability results from the sensitization of irritable aggressive systems in the brain by the particular hormone balance that characterizes the stress system.³

Other hormones affect both the facilitating and inhibitory mechanisms. It has been shown that testosterone sensitized the brain system involved with inter-male aggression in animals so that it is more easily activated by adequate stimuli.⁴ However, the role of the androgens in facilitating aggression is unclear. Castration has led to a decrease in aggression in a wide variety of animals but does not always do so.⁵ In one study, fighting behavior was restored in castrated mice by the administration of testosterone, but females would not fight even after given testosterone.⁶ Androgens given neonatally to female mice did increase their aggressive behavior

1 Hans Seyle, "The Stress of Life" (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1956), pp. 118, 119.

2 Moyer, *Psychobiology of Aggression*, p. 8.

3 *Ibid.*, p. 11.

4 *Ibid.*, p. 10.

5 Richard E. Whaler, "Hormone-Behavior Analysis," in *The Neuropsychology of Aggression* ed. John Walen (New York: Plenum Press, 1974), p. 149.

6 *Ibid.*, p. 151; Goldstein, p. 13.

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during childhood leading neurophysiologists to postulate that testosterone may influence the organization of the neural systems of aggression during sensitive periods of development and thereby facilitate their stimulation later.¹

The evidence supporting the facilitating effects of testosterone on humans is scarce and mixed. Human castration has helped sexually deviant men but has neither inhibited the aggression of severely violent prisoners nor helped their resocialization.² A plasma testosterone suppressing agent (Medroxyprogesterone Acetate) was administered to eighteen intractably violent prisoners.³ Four were sexually aggressive and when given in a high enough dose to prevent sexual arousal, their violence was controlled.⁴ One half of the others showed "good to excellent" response, two were not helped, three stopped treatment, and one became more

aggressive.⁵ In another study, twenty three girls who were accidentally androgenized postnatally, showed no difference in aggressive behavior from normal females although an increase in "tomboyishness" was noted.⁶ Male puberty causes an increase of

1 Ibid., p. 157; Dietrich Blumer and Claude Migeon, "Hormones and Hormonal Agents in the Treatment of Aggression," *The Journal of Nervous and Mental Diseases*, 160 (January, 1975): 127-137, p. 127.

2 Goldstein, p. 16.

3 Blumer and Migeon, p. 128.

4 Ibid., p. 130.

5 Ibid., pp. 130, 131.

6 John Paul Scott, *Aggression* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958 and 1975), p. 144.

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testosterone levels by an average of ten times the prior amounts but they then fall to one half that level by age 30.¹ One study indicated that the main problem for 103 normal 12 to 14 year old boys was "controlling aggressive impulses," and 25% had committed at least one delinquent act.² Four years later most of their aggression problem had abated.³ The author felt that this was due to sublimation into competitive sports, but it could be explained by hormonal influences. However, testosterone levels are equal in preadolescent girls and boys, but boys are still more aggressive.⁴ The relationship between high violent crime rates and adolescent boys has often been noted even though the testosterone levels have started to fall during the period of highest violence (age 18-25).⁵ The only study found relating to this phenomenon was done by Persky et al. in 1971.⁶ They found that in eighteen males aged 17 to 28, the individual production rate of testosterone was highly correlated with a written scale of aggression; however, there was no relationship for 15 males, age 30 to 66.⁷

1 David A. Hamburg, "Recent Research on Hormonal Factors Relevant to Human Aggressiveness," *International Social Science Journal*, 23 (1971): 36-47, p. 43.

2 Daniel Offer, "Coping with Aggression Among Adolescent Boys," in *Dynamics of Violence*, ed. Jan Fawcett (Chicago: AMA, 1971), pp. 178, 181.

3 Ibid., p. 181.

4 Steven Goldberg, *The Inevitability of Patriarchy* (New York: William Morrow and Co., 1973), p. 108.

5 H. Persky, K. D. Smith and G. K. Basu, "Relationship of Psychologic Measures of Aggression and Hostility to Testosterone Production in Man," *Psychosomatic Medicine*, 33 (1971): 265-277, p. 365.

6 Ibid.

7 Ibid., p. 277.

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Progesterone, as an androgen inhibitor, and estrogen have also been studied in relationship to aggression. Estrogen was found to suppress fighting in domestic fowls and lizards but enhanced it in hamsters and chimpanzees.¹ It did not affect the development of fighting, induced by rearing in isolation for mice, but did inhibit fighting in mature males.² Feelings of irritability and hostility and reports of increased violence in women have been linked to the fall of progesterone premenstrually in women.³ It is unclear whether the decreased progesterone acts by causing hypoglycemia (also linked with decreased inhibition of aggression), by less blockage of testosterone (also present in females), by direct decreased neural inhibition or by the resulting increase in aldosterone (causing sodium and water retention which may block

neural inhibition systems).⁴

However, Moos and his associates found that premenstrual symptoms are not the same across all women, that the mood changes were consistent with the general personality.⁵ Only generally more aggressive or irritable women showed consistent increases in these affective states premenstrually.⁶

Because of the contradictory evidence, most neurophysiologists and ethnologists are very cautious about their conclusions regarding

1 Goldstein, p. 13.

2 Ibid.

3 Moyer, *Psychobiology of Aggression*, pp. 67, 69.

4 Ibid., p. 69.

5 Rudolf H. Moos et. al., "Fluctuations in Symptoms and Moods During the Menstrual Cycle," *Journal of Psychosomatic Research*, 13 (March, 1969): 37-44, p. 43.

6 Ibid.

hormonal influences on aggression. Goldstein points out that aggressive behavior normally involves the presence of androgenic hormones but their absence does not necessarily prevent it.¹ David Hamburg concludes that androgens may predispose an individual to the development of aggressive behavior later but that hormonal effects interact with the conditions of social environment.² Arnold Klopfer states: "Previous conditioning determines behavioral responses to testosterone and estrogen."³ In spite of these careful statements by the physiologists, two theorists have used the evidence presented here to make broad statements about male dominance.

Lionel Tiger states that higher testosterone in men causes machismo behavior, which he describes as "truculence, need of control and commitment to self assertion."⁴ He postulates that evolution favored males with the behavior and with higher levels of androgens, because it was needed for hunting, and that its presence now is reflected in the universal dominance of men.⁵ Steven Goldberg wrote whole book around this theme.⁶ Goldberg insists that patriarchy is universal now and was in the past, ignoring or attempting to refute

1 Goldstein, p. 16.

2 Hamburg, *Factors Relevant to Human Aggressiveness*, p. 41.

3 Arnold Klopfer, "Physiological Background to Aggression," in *The Natural History of Aggression* ed. J. D. Carthy and F. J. Ebling (London: Academic Press, 1964), p. 70.

4 Lionel Tiger, "Male Dominance? Yes, Alas. A Sexist Plot? No," *The New York Times* (October 25, 1970): 35, p. 126.

5 Ibid., pp. 37, 126.

6 Goldberg.

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evidence to the contrary, and also attributes this to aggressiveness from male hormones.¹ Goldberg betrays his bias by such statements as " . . .the leadership and high status roles for which the female is not biologically better equipped (than the male) will be attained by men," and if larger numbers of women were given authority positions, "chaos" would result.² He betrays misogyny when he attacks feminists scholars with such vitriolic phrases as:...their attempt to camouflage their intellectual inadequacies behind a facade of scholarship and a misconception that a profusion of footnotes compensates for a lack of the hard logic and hard mental work of real scholarship ... given its soft intellectual core and its simplistic approach to the complexities of reality, the feminist analysis ...³

Although male hormones may facilitate aggression, they do not cause hostile or dominant

behavior in animals and their effects are even less powerful in men, because "learning is such a potent factor in aggressive behavior in man."⁴ We have seen that cooperation was more highly favored evolutionally, and John Paul Scott points out that the predominantly female function of gathering food was more important for survival in early cultural groups since the hunt's success was unpredictable.⁵ (He, therefore, prefers the term "gatherer-hunter").⁶ Anthropologists have documented past and present cultures which are matriarchal, matricentric or egalitarian, and others in which the men

1 Ibid., pp. 75, 210, 214.

2 Ibid., pp. 110, 117.

3 Ibid., pp. 169, 176.

4 Sloyer, *Psychobiology of Aggression*, p. 62.

5 Scott, p. 152.

6 Ibid.

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show no machismo behavior.¹ The kind of generalizing about aggression from biological research done by Tiger and Goldberg is contrary to most of the evidence accumulated and is detrimental to feminism.

Returning to neurophysiological research, we find that other substances in the blood can affect the inhibitory or facilitating neural mechanisms for aggression. The role of alcohol in this regard is not completely clear. "Learning definitely affects alcoholic behavior," but there may be some selective suppression of the neural mechanisms for inhibition of aggression.²

Approximately half the victims and perpetrators in studies of homicide are found to have been drinking, but murderers are seldom diagnosed as alcoholics.³ However, Nicol et. al. found persistent criminal behavior associated with alcoholism (as well as unemployment, marital failure and psychiatric abnormalities) in prison inmates.⁴ Gerson and Preston analyzed the correlations between violent crime, age, sex, income, population density

1 Margaret Mead, *Male and Female* (New York: William Morrow and Co., 1949); Richard E. Sorenson, "Cooperation and Freedom Among the Fore of New Guinea," in *Learning Non Aggression* ed. Ashley Montagu (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978); Robert Levy, "Tahitian Gentleness and Redundant Controls," in *Learning Non Aggression* ed. Montagu; Colin M. Turnbiu, "The Politics of Non Aggression," in *Learning Non Aggression* ed. Montagu; Leavitt, *Peaceable Primates*; Jean L. Briggs, *Never in Anger* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1970).

2 Moyer, *Psychobiology of Aggression*, p. 84.

3 Donald Goodwin, "Alcohol in Suicide and Homicide," *Quarterly Journal of Studies on Alcohol*, 34 (March, 1973): 144-156, p. 153.

4 A. R. Nicol, "The Relationship of Alcoholism to Violent Behavior Resulting in Long Term Imprisonment," *British Journal of Psychiatry* 123 (1973): 47-51.

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and sales of alcohol in urban areas. The alcohol sales accounted for only 16% of the rate variations in violent crime.¹ Laboratory experiments have shown increased aggression with alcohol ingestion but there is variability in the studies and not all subjects react the same.² It has been hypothesized that increased testosterone levels interact with alcohol to produce increased facilitation of aggression, but in a study of nine alcoholics, testosterone levels were not correlated with aggression and intoxication and three of the men could not be instigated to aggression at all.³ Alcohol has been shown to cause temporal lobe dysrhythmia, which has been

associated with aggressivity under laboratory conditions, but the subjects had all committed acts of violence previously.⁴ Alcohol has also produced abnormal EEG's in some men with ordinarily negative readings.⁵ Bach-Y-Rita found 25 (of 30) violent criminals hospitalized for psychiatric illness to have problems with "pathological intoxication" which he characterizes as loss of control early in the course of intoxication and leading to an outburst of

1 Lowell Gerson and Donald A. Preston, "Alcohol Consumption and the Incidence of Violent Crime," 40 (March, 1979): 307-312, p. 311.

2 Moyer, *Psychobiology of Aggression*, p. 81; John R. Liar and Manoel Penna, "The Study of Human Aggression," in *The Neuropsychology of Aggression*, ed. John Walen (New York: Plenum Press, 1974), p. 172.

3 Jack M. Mendelson and Nancy K. Mello, "Alcohol, Aggression, and Androgens," in *Aggression*, ed. Shevert H. Frazier (Baltimore: The Williams and Wilkins Press, 1974); pp. 226, 237, 244.

4 Ernest L. Abel, "The Relationship Between Cannabis and Violence: A Review," *Psychological Bulletin* 84 (March, 1977): 193-211, p. 204.

5 Mortimer A. Gross, "Violence Associates with Organic Brain Disease," in *Dynamics of Violence* ed. Jan Fawcett (Chicago: AMA, 1971), p. 87.

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explosive violence for which the man was amnesic afterwards, suggesting neurologic predisposition.¹ From these findings, it has been hypothesized that the decreased inhibitions to aggression found with alcohol are related to a prior susceptibility to its effects or an already neurologically or environmentally established proneness to aggression.²

The effects of heredity on the neural bases of aggression are in an equally debatable state. Animal breeding for aggression has been done successfully in bulls and fighting cocks.³ There may be a genetic variability in the sensitivity of specific neural systems and in the determination of hormonal levels in humans, but research has not definitely established any connections.⁴ In the 1960's there was great excitement when the XYY and XXY karyotype were discovered to be prevalent in imprisoned men.⁵ However, recent research found: 1) a great deal of selection bias in the earlier studies, 2) studies of prevalence in normal populations varied widely, 3) lab procedures for testing also varied, 4) the XXY's and XYY's could not be identified on the basis of violent crimes, and that the differences could probably be better explained by lower intelligence resulting in lower socioeconomic class.⁶

1 George Bach-Y-Rita et. al., "Episodic Dyscontrol: A Study of 130 Violent Patients," *The American Journal of Psychiatry* 127 (May, 1971) 1473-1478, p. 1475.

2 Abel, p. 207; Gross, p. 87.

3 Moyer, *Psychobiology of Aggression*, p. 12.

4 *Ibid.*, p. 13.

5 Goldstein, p. 17.

6 Goldstein, pp. 17, 18; David Owen, "The 47, XYY Male," *Psychological Bulletin* 78 (September, 1972): 290-233, pp. 210, 226; Herman A. Witkin et. al., "Criminality in XYY and XXY Men," *Science* 193 (August 13, 1976): 547-555, pp. 550, 551.

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The effects of epilepsy on aggression has been carefully studied. Usually aggressive acts are not part of temporal lobe seizures.¹ When they do occur, they are described as "bad moods"

rather than destructive or assaultive behavior (occurring in only about 5% of epileptics) which, when it does occur, is frightening to the family but rarely results in criminal acts and does not occur without provocation. In laboratory studies of epileptics, hostility elicited from subjects after temporal lobe electrical stimulation was found to be the result of the use of restraints.² The lack of hostility control manifested may result from damage to inhibitory mechanisms or to structures necessary to learn controls, or even from behavioral problems resulting from the epileptic's interactions with others.³

The periodic or episodic dyscontrol syndrome has been associated with violence. Monroe defines the disorder as: precipitously appearing maladaptive behavior that interrupts the life style and life flow of the individual; the behavior is out of character for the individual and out of context for the situation.⁴

1 Dietrich Blumer, "Epilepsy and Violence," in *Rage, Assault and Other Forms of Violence*, ed. Dennis J. Madden and John R. Lion (New York: Spectrum Publications, 1976), p. 209.

2 *Ibid.*, pp. 210, 211.

3 Allan Mirsky and Nancy Harman, "On Aggression Behavior and Brain Disorders - Some Questions and Possible Relationships Derived from the Study of Man and Monkeys," in *The Neuropsychology of Aggression*, ed. Richard E. Whalen (New York: Plenum Press, 1974), p. 188.

4 Russel Monroe et. al. *Brain Dysfunction in Aggressive Criminals* (Lexington, Massachusetts: D. C. Heath and Company, 1976), p. 1.

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This behavior is contrasted with psychopathic behavior which is a way of life for the individual.¹ Monroe characterized the syndrome as the result of both "faulty learning and faulty equipment."² The neurological basis is theorized to be excessive neuronal discharges in the limbic system which often do not appear on routine (scalp) EEG's but may be manifested using deeply implanted electrodes.³ In studies of violent criminals, some researchers have found a greater incidence of abnormal EEG's unrelated to other structural brain disease (epilepsy or head injuries) than is present in the normal population while others have not.⁴ Control studies of adolescent boys have shown anywhere between 10 to 58% EEG irregularities implying that they may be so common that the concept of abnormal is difficult to apply.⁵ Elliott explains the discrepancies in findings by noting that the EEG abnormalities may occur intermittently leading to researchers often missing them.⁶ Deep electrode tracings seem to show more association of abnormalities with violent crimes but have not

1 *Ibid.*

2 *Ibid.*, p. 6.

3 *Ibid.*

4 Moyer, *Psychobiology of Aggression*, p. 41; Dennis Williams "Neural Factors Related to Habitual Aggression," *Brain* 92 (1969): 503-520, p. 513; Lion and Penna, p. 168; Ahmed Okasha et. al., "Psychosocial and Electroencephalographic Studies of Egyptian Murderers," *The British Journal of Psychology* 126 (January, 1975): 34-40, p. 39.

5 Mortimer, p. 86.

6 Frank Elliott, "The Neurology of Explosive Rage," *The Practitioner* 217 (July, 1976): 51-59, p. 57.

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been used frequently.¹

"Soft" neurological signs such as impaired psychomotor and perceptual ability, history of

altered status of consciousness, history of febrile convulsion, and headaches have been associated with the syndrome.² Hyperactivity has been associated with aggressiveness in children and violent male criminals frequently describe a history of this indication of minimal brain damage.³ Allen and his associates, however, point out that all aggressiveness may be only secondary to the effects of overactivity and may only reflect the way these boys have been dealt with and/or their need for constant stimulation and ways to expend their energy.⁴ The favorable response of some patients to anticonvulsant medications has been used as evidence for the neurological epileptic-like basis for the episodic dyscontrol syndrome.⁵ However, most of the studies were not blind, and in one study that was, there were few dramatic changes with anticonvulsant

1 Mortimer, p. 87.

2 Ibid., p. 88; Barry M. Maletzky, "The Episodic Dyscontrol Syndrome," *Diseases of the Nervous System* 34 (March, 1973): 178-185, p. 179; Frank Spellacy, "Neuropsychological Difference Between Violent and Nonviolent Adolescents," *Journal of Clinical Psychology* 33 (October, 1977): 966-969, p. 168; Frank, p. 54; James R. Morrison and Kenneth Minkoff, "Explosive Personality as a Sequel to the Hyperactive - Child Syndrome," *Comprehensive Psychiatry* 16 (July/August, 1975): 343-348, p. 346.

3 Lion and Penna, p. 169; Bach-Y-Rita, p. 1477; Elliott, p. 54; Morrison and Minkoff, p. 346.

4 Richard Allen, Daniel Safer and Lino Covi, "Effects of Psychostimulents on Aggression," *The Journal of Nervous and Mental Diseases* 160 (February, 1975): 138-145.

5 Bach-Y-Rita, p. 1478; Russel R. Monroe, "Anticonvulsants in the Treatment of Aggression," *Journal of Nervous and Mental Diseases* 160 (January, 1975): 119-126, p. 125.

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medication and the most therapeutic response was from the placebos.¹

It has been definitely established that some serious brain damage may cause otherwise unexplainable violent and aggressive behavior (i.e., brain tumors in the limbic system and temporal lobes, brain trauma and encephalitis) showing that human beings' "neural systems for aggression can be activated by internal physiologic processes."² It is therefore theorized that minimal brain damage can do the same, but the exact neural mechanisms have been variously explained as lack of integration of the nervous system, extra activity in the neural cells responsible for aggression, increased sensitivity to aggressive cues because of general arousal, destruction of inhibitory systems, or destruction of learning systems.³ The results could also be explained by a combination of two or more of the above. As Moyer is careful to stress, some interaction between: 1) a lowered threshold for activation of the neural systems of aggression (caused by heredity), 2) normal threshold, but increased sensitization of neurons (by hormones, activation from other systems, blood chemistry changes from stress and frustration, structural damage) facilitating their activation, 3) normal aggression system activation with decreased inhibition system activation (from decrease in some hormones and other blood substrates and alcohol), and 4) learning is probably the key to chronic behavioral tendencies towards aggression.⁴ Most of the

1 Maletzky, p. 183; Russell et. al., *Brain Dysfunction*, p. 164.

2 Moyer, *Psychobiology of Aggression*, pp. 38, 32.

3 Frank Spellacy, "Neuropsychological Discrimination Between Violent and Nonviolent Man," *Journal of Clinical Psychology* 34 (January, 1978): 49-52, p. 50; Gross, pp. 87, 90; Moyer, *Psychobiology of Aggression*, pp. 10, 28; Kolb, p. 10.

4 Moyer, *Psychobiology of Aggression*, pp. 18-20.

researchers on episodic dyscontrol have noted other psychological and sociological correlates with the syndrome.¹ Researchers in aggressive neurophysiology usually stress the importance of the interaction of social, environmental and hereditary influences.² They are all convinced of the aggressive potential in all human brains, but as Moyer states: Man, of course, learns better and faster than any other animal, It is therefore reasonable to expect that the internal impulses to aggressive behavior would be more subject to modification by experience in man than in any other animal. In addition, because of man's additional ability to manipulate symbols and to substitute one symbol for another, one would expect to find a considerable diversity in the stimuli that elicit or inhibit activity In the aggression system. One would also expect that the modes of expression would be more varied, diverse and less stereotyped in man than in other animals.³

Only a few of the brain researchers imply that most violence could be stopped by surgery, pharmacological agents or electrical pacemakers, or that violence is completely determined by biological mechanisms. The few that do, for instance Mark and Ervin, are severely criticized by the rest, as well as by social scientists.⁴

It must be kept in mind that the biological mechanisms detailed, underlie aggression, not necessarily violence. When applied to violence, these mechanisms may only explain potential for problems, not the violent behavior itself.⁵ Aggressive people are rarely always

1 Maletzky, p. 179; Monroe et. al., p. 82.

2 Goldstein, p. 18; Gross, p. 85.

3 Moyer, *Psychobiology of Aggression*, p. 18.

4 Mark, pp. 155-160.

5 Gross, p. 90.

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aggressive and their hostile behavior may or may not be superimposed on a background of hostility.¹ There are also no automatically elicited behavior patterns of aggression from environmental or electrical stimulus for humans as there are for animals.² Lawrence Kolb points out that the neocortex in humans has "both a facilitory and inhibitory influence on aggressive behaviors characterized by rage" and that it also influences the direction and timing.³

Most of the brain research has been conducted with men, men are unexplainably much more likely to display episodic dyscontrol, and all the researchers use "man" in all of their descriptions of human beings, so it is impossible to tell if they are referring to just the male sex or not in describing conclusions.⁴ Except for the evidence on the influence of hormones which we have seen to be fragmentary and not totally conclusive, the neurophysiologists have not adequately explained the differences between male and female behavior. Females of all species are generally more difficult to stimulate to aggression and once stimulated, express hostility somewhat differently.⁵ It has been found that previous social experience and acquired learning of hierarchical rules are more important than sexual hormones in

1 Lion and Penna, p. 168.

2 Moyer, *Psychobiology of Aggression*, p. 23.

3 Kolb, p. 10.

4 cf. Monroe et. al., *Brain Dysfunction in Aggressive Criminals*; Moyer, *Psychobiology of Aggression*.

5 Scott, p. 131.

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aggressiveness and dominance pattern formation in monkeys.¹ Episodic dyscontrol has also been associated with hypermasculinity as much as with neurological symptoms and it has also been seen with wifebeating and other violence toward women.² An association with misogyny is partially suggested by this data which cannot be explained biologically.

Sociologists and psychologists generally acknowledge the neuronal and blood chemistry basis for aggression, but differ in their perspectives on the major determinants of violence. Sociologists point to the peaceful cultures that exist, and wonder why persons with minimal brain damage in those societies do not behave aggressively if socialization is not more important.³ Josi Delgado asserts that patients with implanted electrodes display hostility when stimulated, "but it is always expressed according to the subject's previous experience and evaluation of his present environment."⁴ The brain researchers have been criticized for diverting attention from our social dilemmas which "contributes to unwillingness to undertake the political solutions to violence which promise to achieve much more."⁵

1 Henri Labout, "The Biological and Sociological Mechanisms of Aggression," *International Social Science Journal* 30 (1978): 727-7A9, p. 738.

2 Maletzky, p. 181; Bach-Y-Rita, p. 1A77.

3 Montagu, *Nature of Human Aggression*, p. 310.

4 Josi M. R. Delgado, "The Neurological Basis of Violence," *International Social Science Journal* 33 (1971): 27-35, p. 33.

5 Lee S. Coleman, "Perspectives on the Medical Research of Violence," *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry* AA (October, 197A): 675-687, p. 685.

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However, as earlier stated, the biological evidence is important in a holistic approach, and cannot be completely refuted as invalid except for the few theorists which may extend the implications beyond their logical conclusions. The neurophysiological bases for aggression can be viewed as background for psychological, sociological and patriarchal influences which may turn the aggression into violence.

Psychological Theories of Violence

Psychological aspects of violence vary a great deal. Many psychologists echo Sigmund Freud's theories that aggression is a basic instinct or drive.¹ Others deemphasize or refute that view and identify other psychological characteristics that characterize the violent person. The basic premise of most psychoanalytic frameworks is that in the violent individual, some basic need or needs have been thwarted, usually by some form of faulty child raising.² The other major branch of psychological theories is derived from behavioral psychology.³ This includes Bandura's social learning theory and Eysenck's biologically rooted conditioning framework.⁴

Psychoanalytic Viewpoints

The psychoanalytic instinctivists are represented by Freud, MacDonald and Abrahamsen. Freud, of course, is not a modern theorist

1 Sigmund Freud to Albert Einstein, 1932, "Why War?" in *Aggression, Hostility, and Violence*, ed. Terry Maple (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, Inc., 1973), p. 21.

2 Marquerite Q. Warren and Michael J. Hindelang, "Current Explanation of Offender Behavior" in *Psychology of Crime and Criminal Justice*, ed. Hans Toch (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1979), p. 172.

3 *Ibid.*, p. 174.

4 *Ibid.*

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and his views have been analyzed extensively elsewhere.¹ Suffice it to say here that by the end of his career he had reluctantly concluded that aggression was a basic instinct, as part of the death instinct and as opposed to eros.² His influence in this regard has pervaded psychoanalytic thought as has his insistence on the inferiority and masochistic tendencies of women.

John MacDonald is a relatively modern psychoanalyst who also writes from the same perspective of an "internal need to discharge hostility."³ He theorizes that murderers are likely to have ego weaknesses resulting in erratic control over aggressive impulses.⁴ Abrahamsen postulates that human behavior has four roots: 1) society at large, 2) community and its subcultures, 3) family, and 4) individual (psychological and physical).⁵ Thus, he acknowledges the multiplicity of causative factors for criminal behavior but still insists that all people have "criminal tendencies," "murderous impulses" and "hidden violence," which are activated when acted upon by internal and external events.⁶

1 Fromm, pp. 486-528.

2 Freud, p. 21.

3 John M. MacDonald, *The Murderer and His Victim* (Springfield, Illinois: Charles C. Thomas, 1961), p. 110.

4 Ibid.

5 David Abrahamsen, *The Psychology of Crime* (New York: The Columbia University Press, 1960), p. 15.

6 Ibid., pp. 23, 25, 30; David Abrahamsen, *Our Violent Society* (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1970), p. 60.

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A corollary of the psychological instinctivists is that frustration is the instigation or stimulus which leads to the expression of aggression.¹ This part of the theory was first advanced in 1939 and was linked to early behavioral psychology language.² It was hypothesized by Dollard and his associates that the occurrence of aggression always presupposes frustration.³ Since then it has been determined in research that frustration does not always lead to aggression and that aggression does not always stem from frustration, nor is it the most potent instigator.⁴ There is also ambiguity about the meaning of Dollard's terms.⁵ However, this concept has been adopted widely because of its simplicity, and we shall see references to it in sociological literature.⁶

One of the basic premises of the drive theorists is that since aggression is a basic instinct, its appearance in behavior will reduce hostile build up and decrease the amount of aggression shown in response to further frustration.⁷ This is the catharsis premise first

1 Abrahamsen, *Psychology of Crime*, p. 185; MacDonald, *Murderer and Victim*, p. 98.

2 John Dollard et. al., "Frustration and Aggression," in *The Dynamics of Aggression*, ed. Edwin I. Magargee and Jack E. Hokanson (New York: Harper and Row, 1970), p. 25.

3 Neal E. Miller, "The Frustration-Aggression Hypothesis," in *Aggression, Hostility, and Violence*, ed. Terry Maple and Douglas R.

Matheson (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1973), p. 104.

4 Fromm, p. 92; Arnold Buss, *The Psychology of Aggression* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1961), p. 27.

5 Fromm, p. 91.

6 Frederick Thorne, "Epidemiological Studies of Chronic Frustration- Hostility-Aggression States," *American Journal of Psychology* 113 (January, 1957): 717-721, p. 720.

7 Dollard, p. 31.

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formulated by Freud and conceptualized by Hokanson as "the idea that the expression of aggression reduces the aggressor's internal state of anger and his general level of physiological tension."¹ One of the outgrowths of the catharsis concept is Megargee's concept of "over-controlled personality types" who display extreme violence.² Megargee theorizes that these persons are instilled with such excessive inhibitions against aggression in childhood that their hostile impulses build up.³ Although the instigation (frustration) for aggression must be much stronger to finally elicit aggressive behavior, when it does appear it is likely to be excessively violent.⁴ Much work has been done to identify these people behaviorally and one psychological tests in prison populations of murderers and violent criminals, and a subscale of the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory was developed (OH- "overcontrolled hostility" -scale) for identification.⁵ The OH scale has not proved to be valid and the whole catharsis concept is in poor repute, so this explanation of violence must be highly questioned.⁶

1 Jack E. Hokanson, "Psychophysiological Evaluation of the Catharsis Hypothesis," in the Dynamics of Aggression, ed. Edwin I. Megargee and Jack E. Hokanson (New York: Harper and Row, 1970), p. 75.

2 Edwin I. Megargee, "Undercontrolled and Overcontrolled Personality Type in Extreme Antisocial Aggression," Psychological Monographs 80 (1966).

3 Ibid., p. 3.

4 Ibid., p. 2.

5 Ibid., p. 7; Charles Henley, "The Gauging of Delinquency Potential," in Psychology of Crime, ed. Hans Toch (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1979), p. 259; Gary Fisher, "Discriminating Violence Emanating from Over-Controlled versus Under-Controlled Aggressivity," The British Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology 9 (February, 1979), p. -5.

6 Megargee, p. 17; Hokanson, p. 85; Fisher, p. 56.

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The catharsis theory is one aspect of psychoanalytic theory which lends itself to empirical testing, and the literature abounds with such research. In earlier studies physiological measures of lowered visceral response after aggression prompted researchers to claim tension reducing properties of expression of hostility.¹ Later, more discriminatory studies showed "clearly that overt aggression does not inevitably lead to either physiological tension reduction or a reduction in subsequent aggression."² Evidence against the catharsis hypothesis comes from other perspectives. The neurophysiologists are represented by Moyer who states, "... a continuing accumulation of aggressive energy relievable only by the expression of aggression is not in keeping with the physiological evidence."³ Both experimentally and in natural settings verbal aggression has not been shown to decrease subsequent physical attack; in fact, the opposite tends to occur.⁴ The watching of violent films, seen by catharsis proponents as a substitution for aggressive behavior, has also been shown to increase rather than decrease later aggression.⁵ It has also been

1 Hokanson, pp. 76-78.

2 Ibid., p. 85; Leonard Berkowitz, "Experimental Investigation of Hostility Catharsis," Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology February, 1970): 1-7, p. 6.

3 Moyer, Psychobiology of Aggression, p. 276.

4 Stanbaz K. Mallick and Boyd R. McCondliss, "A Study of Catharsis of Aggression," Journal of Personality and Social Psychology 4 (November, 1966): 591-596, p. 596; Murray Straus, "Leveling, Civility and Violence in the Family," Journal of Marriage and the Family 36 (February, 1974): 13-29, pp. 18, 25.

5 Berkowitz, p. 3; Dolf Fillman, "Excitation Transfer in Communication-Medicated Aggressive Behavior," *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology* 7 (May, 1971): 419-434, p. 430; Donald P. Hartman, "Influence of Symbolically Modeled Instrumental Aggression and Pain Cures on Aggressive Behavior," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 11 (1969): 280-288, p. 285. 57

observed that watching violent sports tends to instigate aggression rather than lessen it.¹ One of the weakest points of the psychoanalytic view of aggression as a drive which must be expressed is therefore the catharsis assumption. We can also use the examples of past and present peaceful cultures to almost completely discount this instinctivist viewpoint. Freud admitted to his lack of including these societies in this thinking when he said: We are told that in certain happy regions of this earth. . . there are races whose life is passed in tranquility, and who know neither coercion nor aggression. I can scarcely believe it and I should be glad to hear more of these fortunate beings.²

Some of the psychoanalysts speak directly to the problem of homicide of women. However, when they do so, their formulations betray a blind acceptance of the Freudian concepts about women. For instance, John MacDonald states: Some women by their provocative dress and behavior contribute to their selection as victims by sexual offenders. . . it is well known that small girls will sometimes act in a very seductive manner toward strangers and their behavior may be the first link in the chain which leads to their murder. . . . Murder is an occupational hazard of prostitution.³

In another article MacDonald notes: "Many wives provoked their husbands by their domineering, rejecting and flirtatious or promiscuous behavior."⁴ These husbands had murdered their wives and MacDonald is implying that the women's behavior justified their lives being taken.⁵

Abrahamsen

1 Montagu, *Human Aggression*, p. 77; Fillman, p. 430.

2 Freud, p. 26.

3 MacDonald, p. 75.

4 John M. MacDonald, "Homicidal Threats," *The American Journal of Psychology* 124 (October, 1967): 475-482, p. 481.

5 *Ibid.*

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echoes the same sentiments when he says "a woman often unconsciously wishes to be taken by force," and, "It is closer to the truth when we realize that the victim herself unconsciously provokes her husband to murder."¹ Misogyny is illustrated in such statements. Psychoanalysts also theorize that a man killing any woman is a symbolic killing of his mother.² The analysts have glimpsed misogyny in their observations about the homicide of women, but their formulations derive from the oedipal state theories of Freud which are extremely suspect.³

One also finds misogyny in the blaming of mothers for violent sons rampant in psychoanalytic literature. Whether it is because of a "loveless" home, "emotional deprivation," "maternal symbiosis," "mother domination," "maternal deprivation," or "parental neglect," the implication is that the mother has the primary responsibility for child rearing and she has failed in her task.⁴ These theorists also note that the violent men have also frequently been exposed to abusive and alcoholic fathers.⁵

1 Abrahamsen, *Violent Society*, p. 92; David Abrahamsen, *The Murdering Mind* (New York: Harper and Row, 1973), p. 39.

2 Richard Geha, "For the Love of Medrisa," *The Psychoanalytic Review* 62 (Spring, 1975): A9-

77.

3 Iblid., p. 56; Ruether, pp. 138-151.

4 Abrahamsen, *Violent Society*, pp. 21, 230; Seyle, p. 68; Anthony Storr, *Human Destructiveness* (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1972), p. 37; Ismail B. Sendi and Paul G. Blongren, "A Comparative Study of Predictive Criteria in the Predisposition of Homicidal Adolescents," *The American Journal of Psychology* 132 (April, 1975): A23-A27, pp. A25, A26; Abrahamsen, *Psychology of Crime*, p. 68.

5 Sendi and Blongren, p. A25; Joseph Satten et. al., "Murder Without Apparent Motive: A Study in Personality Disorganization," *The American Journal of Psychology* 117 (1960): A8-53, p. A9; Maletzky, p. 179.

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The mechanisms the psychoanalysts believe to be operating here vary. Satter and others postulate that the child is exposed to overwhelming stimuli before mastery of them is possible and thereby has severe defects in ego development resulting in later disturbances in impulse control.¹ Storr feels that the lack of love as a child causes the person not to care about others, to have never learned to control violent impulses and to lack a conscience.² Heacock feels that hostility is generated from exposure to "excessive aggressive stimuli."³ Eisen conceptualizes violence as a result of inability to control aggressive impulses from overpermissiveness in middle class or the atmosphere of danger in lower classes.⁴ Brumberg says that "violent crime occurs, with or without provocation, when the inhibiting, defensive or sublimating mechanisms of the ego are insufficient to curb direct expression of aggressive impulses."⁵ The general theme is that the violent individual is acting out some form of emotional problems.⁶

1 Derde Miller and John Looney, "The Prediction of Adolescent Homicide: Episodic Dyscontrol and Dehumanization," *American Journal of Psychoanalysis* 34 (Fall, 1974): 187-198, p. 191; Satten, p. 50.

2 Storr, p. 37.

3 Dan R. Heacock, "The Black Slum Child and the Problem of Aggression," *American Journal of Psychoanalysis* 36 (Fall, 1976): 219-226, p. 219.

4 Peter Eisen, "The Infantile Roots of Adolescent Violence," *American Journal of Psychoanalysis* 36 (Fall, 1976): 211-218, p. 216.

5 Walter Bromberg, *The Mold of Murder* (New York: Grune and Stratton, 1961), p. 208.

6 Leon Saul, "A Psychoanalytic View of Hostility: Its Genesis, Treatment and Implications for Society," *Humanities* 12 (May, 1976): 171-182, p. 182.

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Terms such as "psychotic," "neurotic," "psychopathic," "personality disorder," "passive aggressive," "self destructive," "paranoid," etc. are used to describe almost every murder or violent individual evaluated.¹ The triad of youthful enuresis, firesetting and cruelty to animals has been identified as common in the childhood of habitually violent men.²

The "individual psychology of the murderer" or violent person is considered the most important factor, and as Abrahamsen states, "emotional disturbances are always at the root of antisocial or criminal behavior."³

There are problems with this conceptualization. The theories are usually derived from small case studies of violent men (rarely any women) and research involving larger groups often uses psychiatric hospital patients as controls (if there are any controls at all) when identifying psychological traits "causing" violence.⁴ The prisoners given psychiatric diagnoses by psychoanalysts have seldom been identified as mentally ill by the courts or other psychiatrists;

the literature often indicates attempts to make the men "fit" into categories even when symptoms and testing show minimal aberrations.⁵ It has been found that the rates of violence for those patients labeled criminally insane (by the courts) is "not remarkably different" from

1 Storr, pp. 37, 86; Sendi and Bongren, p. 424; George Bach-Y-Rita and Arther Veno, "Habitual Violence: A Profile of 62 Men," *The American Journal of Psychiatry* 131 (September, 1974): 1015-1017, p. 1016.

2 Bach-Y-Rita and Arther, p. 1016.

3 Donald T. Lunde, *Murder and Madness*, San Francisco: San Francisco Book Co., Inc., 1976), p. 83; Saul, p. 172; Abrahamsen, *Psychology of Crime*, p. 56.

4 Sendi and Blongren, p. 424; Satten, p. 48, Bach-Y-Rita and Arther, *Habitual Violence: A Profile*.

5 Hanley, p. 256; Barry J. McGurk, "Personality Types Among 'Normal' Homicides," *The British Journal of Criminology* 18 (April, 1978): 146-161, pp. 158, 159.

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the normal population, and the actual psychiatric pathology in criminal populations is estimated at only 18%.¹ If violence and psychiatric illness are so interwoven, it is difficult to explain why former mental patients commit fewer crimes, including violent crimes, than the normal population.² Psychiatrists and psychologists have not been able to consistently and accurately predict dangerousness or violence using psychological tests, psychiatric examination or identification of the childhood "triad."³ The theories do not account for the preponderance of males committing violent offenses, and they share the assumption of the instinctivists (although not as forcefully) that aggression is an innate drive.

A derivative branch of psychoanalytic theory is represented mainly by Erich Fromm, Rollo May and Howard Kaplan. They each conceptualize aggression as a result of the thwarting of some basic human need, differing somewhat in the need identified. These three theorists have moved away from the instinctivist position and are much less sexist in their orientation.

1 Alvin M. Mesnikoff and Carl D. Lauterback, "The Association of Violent Dangerous Behavior with Psychiatric Disorders: A Review of the Research Literature," *Journal of Psychiatry and the Law* 3 (Winter, 1975): 415-445, p. 440.

2 John J. Brennan, "Mentally 111 Aggressiveness-Popular Delusion or Reality," *The American Journal of Psychiatry* 120 (June, 1964): 1181-1184, p. 1184; Kolb, p. 12.

3 Mesnikoff and Lauterback, p. 439; James M. Mullen et. al., "Dangerous and the Mentally 111 Offender," *Hospitals and Community Psychiatry* 29 (July, 1978): 424-425, p. 425; Jeffrey A. Buck and John R. Graham, "The 4-3 MMP, Profile Type: A Failure to Replicate," *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology* 46 (April, 1978): 344; Joseph J. Cocozza and Henry Steadman "Some Refinements in the Measurement of Prediction of Dangerous Behavior," *American Journal of Psychiatry* 131 (September, 1974): 1012-1015, p. 1014.

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Erich Fromm considered benign forms of aggression which are biologically adaptive and life serving (i.e., self assertive aggression, defensive aggression), to be innate while malignant aggression (sadism and necrophilia) is not.¹ As previously indicated, he recognized the peaceful nature of primitive cultures, the equality or dominance of women in these cultures and the preponderance of men exhibiting the cruelty and destruction of malignant aggression.² Sadism is defined as "the passion to have absolute and unrestricted control

over a living being."³ Necrophilia is considered: the passionate attraction to all that is dead, decayed, putrid, sickly; it is the passion to transform that which is alive into something unalive;

to destroy for the sake of destruction; the exclusive interest in all that is purely mechanical. It is the passion to tear apart living structures.⁴

Fromm does not realize how well he is characterizing male behavior under patriarchy with his terms and how logically misogyny would fit into his framework. He attributes the change from peaceful culture to destructive to the change in production from individuals and groups working cooperatively for their own survival to production which emphasized the mind and coercion, conquest and exploitation. Fromm recognizes that a change to male dominance accompanied the changes in production, but does not understand that this was the key to the other changes, the sadistic and misogynous influence which led to necrophilia.⁵ The basic need which Fromm considers as thwarted when malignant aggression appears is the need "to transcend the triviality of his life"

1 Fromm, p. 482.

2 Ibid., pp. 186, 187, 326, 362

3 Ibid., p. 322

4 Ibid., p. 369

5 Ibid., pp. 188, 189.

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to find greater meaning. He feels that although pathological child-rearing and genetics can play a part, the main determinant of malignant aggression is the "dry, banal, pedantic, dishonest, unalive atmosphere" characterizing many families and social situations.¹ He concludes that: Genuine freedom and independence and the end of all forms of exploitative control are the conditions for mobilizing the love of life, which is the very force that can defeat the love for the dead.² Fromm's analysis is more philosophical in nature than research oriented.

He uses the generic "he" and "man" when referring to human beings but otherwise is remarkably nonsexist. His ideas are interesting and useful and will be returned to in the final chapter.

Rollo May also talks about the basic need for a sense of significance but in terms of self-affirmation and self-assertion. His theory can be summed up in the following quote: Deeds of violence in our society are performed by those trying to establish their self-esteem, to defend their self-image and to demonstrate that they, too, are significant. May characterizes aggression as "moving into position of power or prestige" and feels that violence is the expression of powerlessness. He sees power on a continuum from energy to force to violence depending on the amount of blockage the person encounters.³

May is more inclined to characterize aggression or the need for self assertion as an innate drive. Of course, he is defining it more benevolently than most theorists so that peaceful cultures can be included

1 Ibid., pp. 299, 361.

2 Ibid., p. 32.

3 Rollo May, *Power and Innocence* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1972), pp. 21, 23, 35, 39, 99.

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in his scheme. He ascribes to the catharsis theory, asserting that aggression when blocked "erupts" into violence.¹ He recognizes that women are powerless and is relatively nonsexist, but does not explain how women fit his paradigm since they are not nearly as violent as men.

Howard Kaplan's theory is very close to May's in that he ascribes a basic need for self-esteem to human beings and feels that when a person has a history of low self-esteem and self-devaluing experiences, he is more likely to develop hostile and retreating defenses.² People with "negative stable self attitudes" are "predisposed or motivated to seek out and adopt deviant patterns."³ The

deviant patterns alleviate the subjective distress associated with what the person sees as the critical attitude associated with the normative environment and satisfies the need for self-esteem by the "avoidance of, attacks upon or substitution for the normative environment."⁴ The person reacting to a history of self devaluing experiences with hostile defenses is suspicious of others and lacks identification with them and is thereby more likely to use violence."⁵

Kaplan cites Hans Toch's study of 69 male inmates and parolees as support for his theory.⁶ Toch found that almost half of the offenders had used violence to buttress feelings of inadequacy in one way or another.⁷

1 Ibid., p. 45.

2 Howard B. Kaplan, *Self-Attitudes of Deviant Behavior* (Pacific Palisades, California: Goodyear Publishing Co., Inc., 1975), pp. 10, 21.

3 Ibid., p. 67.

4 Ibid.

5 Ibid., p. 21.

6 Ibid., p. 130

7 Hans Toch, *Violent Man* (Chicago: Aldine Pub., Co., 1969), pp. 137, 188.

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Another large group showed evidence of dehumanizing their victims which is associated with Kaplan's hostile defenses even though their self esteem was considered normal.¹ Kaplan maintains that many criminals will not show low self-esteem, because their deviant behavior has resulted in a reduction of negative self feelings.² Thus, it is difficult to prove or disprove his theory by looking at criminal populations. Paul and Julie Yelsma gave the Coopersmith self-esteem inventory to 62 inmates (60 male, 2 female) of a county jail and a forensic center.³ They found that those who were destructive only to themselves (convicted of alcohol related charges) had the lowest scores; those directly violent to others (murder, rape or robbery) also had lower than normal scores, while those who were only indirectly destructive (forgery, drug sales) had higher than normal scores.⁴ From this evidence it can be postulated that there is some support for Kaplan's association of deviance and retreating defenses with low self-esteem, but the reason why the behavior had resulted in more positive self concept for some and not for others is unclear. A small study of ten homicidal adolescents (9 male, 1 female) found "vacillations" in self-esteem and a "lack of cohesion of self."⁵ Other psychologists

1 Ibid., p. 137.

2 Kaplan, p. 91.

3 Paul Yelsma and Julie Yelsma, "Self-Esteem of Prisoners Committing Directly versus Indirectly Destructive Crimes," *Perceptual and Motor Skills* 44 (April, 1977): 375-380, p. 375.

4 Ibid., p. 378.

5 James B. McCarthy, "Narcissism and the Self In Homicidal Adolescents," *American Journal of Psychoanalysis* 38 (Spring, 1978):

19-29, p. 25.

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postulate that negative self-concept accounts for violence in some violent individuals but not in others, or that threatened self-esteem always results in aggression but the aggression is not necessarily destructive.¹

Again, we find the paradigm not completely supported by research and a reliance on male subjects for study. Kaplan insists that his model applies for females, but since women experience more self-devaluing experiences and therefore would be more expected to have negative self-

esteem, the Kaplan model would predict more deviant behavior on one part of women instead of one exact reverse which is actually true.

As has been seen, the psychoanalytic theories and those derived from this framework are characterized by less support from empirical research than those of the biologists and a general excessive reliance on some of the highly disputed assumptions of Sigmund Freud. They generally fail to account for the preponderance of males committing violence and suffer from a predominantly male orientation. The emotional conditions supporting violence are important in a holistic framework, but the psychoanalytic viewpoint has failed to prove that psychological mechanisms are mainly responsible for causing violence. However, there are murderers that must be considered mentally ill. Although "the incidence of psychosis among murderers is no greater than the incidence of psychosis in the total population," occasionally psychotic individuals, 1 Gregory Rochlin, *Man's Aggression*, (Boston: Gambit, 1973), p. 2; Donald Grant, "A Model of Violence," *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry* 12 (June, 1978): 123-126, p. 123. 2 Kaplan, p. 74,

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especially paranoid schizophrenics, are directed by auditory hallucinations or other delusionary systems to commit homicide.¹ Even in these cases, psychological and sociological mechanisms affecting the "normal" murderer also influence the one who is labeled insane.²

Behavioral Psychology

The major branch of behavioral psychology dealing with violence is the social learning theory branch, but first we will look at H. S. Eysenck's framework. Eysenck has divided people generally into extroverts who are characterized by low arousal levels and introverts who have higher arousal levels and are thereby more easily conditioned to inhibit neurological activity.³ He postulates that these characteristics of the nervous system are inborn and that therefore although extroverts can be conditioned, they are more likely to become criminals because of their autonomic nervous system which tends to overreact to aggressive stimuli.⁴ He also has found that alcohol lowers the arousal level and is thereby likely to predispose individuals to aggression, especially extroverts. The Eysenck Personality Inventory was developed to measure extroversion (E) and Introversion (I) and also to reflect psychoticism (P) and neuroticism (N).⁵

1 Donald T. Lunde, *Murder and Madness* (San Francisco: San Francisco Book Company, Inc., 1976), pp. 93, 75.

2 *Ibid.*, pp. 63-105.

3 H. J. Eysenck, *Crime and Personality*, 3rd ed. (London: Routledge and Paul Kegan, 1964), p. 87.

4 *Ibid.*, p. 183, 184.

5 Leon and Barack, "Eysenck's Theory of Criminality Applied to Woman Awaiting Trial," *The British Journal of Psychology* 133 (November, 1978): 452-456, p. 452.

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Eysenck, in his own research, has found prisoners to be higher in the P, E, and N scales.¹ Other research has both supported and conflicted with these findings.² One study using 60 women criminals and a matched control group found that the prisoners scored higher on the P and N scales than the controls but that the E scale did not discriminate.³ Eysenck also fails to account for cultures which are predominantly peaceful.

Social Learning Theory

Albert Bandura is the originator and best known proponent of social learning theory as an explanation for aggression. He himself calls the theory psychological because it grows out of the

school of behavioral psychology, yet it obviously also combines aspects of sociological frameworks.⁴ In a review of literature by Alan Newcombe in 1978 it was found that the "majority of social scientists" are agreeing that aggression and violence are learned rather than instinctive.⁵ It is also not uncommon to find theorists combining aspects of the social learning theory with neurophysiological research.⁶

1 Eysenck, p. 59.

2 Leon and Barack, p. 452.

3 Ibid., pp. 453, 455.

4 Albert Bandura, *Aggression: A Social Learning Analysis* (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice Hall, 1973), p. viii.

5 Alan Newcombe, "Some Contributions of the Behavioral Sciences to the Study of Violence," *International Social Science Journal* 30 (1978): 450-768, p. 75.

6 Laborit, *Mechanisms of Aggression*.

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Bandura defines aggression as "behavior that results in personal injury and in destruction of property," including that the injury "may be psychological."¹ He also notes that the behavior must be labeled as aggressive by society, this labeling determined by the action's intensity, the intentions attributed to the performer by others, and the characteristics of the labelers.² Bandura feels that aggressive behavior may be considered adaptive or destructive depending on the situation in which it is employed.³ He acknowledges the role of biological subcortical structures in producing destructive behavior but believes that the social situation is most important in determining the frequency, form, circumstances and target of the action.⁴

Bandura states: In the social learning view, people are endowed with neurophysiological mechanisms that enable them to behave aggressively, but the activation of these mechanisms depends on appropriate stimulation and is subject to cognitive control.⁵

Rather than arising from instinct or frustration, Bandura postulates that aversive experiences result in emotional arousal, which is perceived in the individual as fear, anger, sorrow or even euphoria depending on their prior learning, cognitive interpretation and other people's

1 Bandura, p. 5.

2 Ibid., pp. 6, 7.

3 Albert Bandura, "The Social Learning Perspective," in *Psychology of Crime and Criminal Justice*, ed. Hans Toch (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1979), p. 200.

4 Ibid., p. 201.

5 Ibid.

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reaction to the same experience.¹ Moreover, "frustration or anger arousal is a facilitative but not a necessary condition for aggression."² Bandura has concluded that the majority of events which stimulates aggression (i.e., insults, status threats, unjust treatment) "gain activating capacity through learning experiences."³ To illustrate this, Bandura points to the many people who have experienced broken homes, parental rejection, poverty, mental illness, brain damage, etc., who have never become violent.⁴ He sees motivation for aggression as reinforcement based, not biologically determined.⁵ The social learning theory of aggression distinguishes between acquisition of behaviors that have destructive and injurious potential and factors that determine whether a person will perform what he has learned . . . because not all that people learn is exhibited in their actions.⁶

The acquisition of aggressive behavior can be learned through modeling or observational

learning or by direct experience or practice.⁷ Performance is determined by both internal (biological and cognitive) and external instigators.⁸ In a 1965 laboratory experiment with 66 preschoolers (33 male and 33 female), Bandura showed the differences

1 Bandura, *Learning Analysis*, pp. 55-57.

2 *Ibid.*, p. 58; Buss, p. 28.

3 Bandura, "Learning Perspective," p. 208.

4 Bandura, *Learning Analysis*, p. 58.

5 *Ibid.*, p. 54.

6 *Ibid.*, p. 65.

7 Mullen et. al., pp. 203, 204.

8 Bandura, *Learning Analysis*, p. 115; Bandura, "Learning Perspective," p. 208.

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between learning aggressive behaviors and performing them.¹ The children were shown a film of a male model being physically and verbally aggressive in many novel and sequentially complex ways.² After there were positive incentives for the children imitating the behavior, a significantly greater number of children did so than had in a spontaneous play situation, showing that although most of the children learned most of the aggressive behaviors, performance depended on other factors.³

Models for aggressive behavior are to be found in the family, the subculture and the media.⁴ Using analysis of a nationwide self report sample of violent behavior and attitudes toward violence, Straus and Owen concluded that the more a child sees or is the victim of violence in his home or in his social structure, the more violence he will perform as an adult, since he has seen the behavior modeled.⁵ Observation of others' behavior also gives clues as to whether or not the action will be rewarded or punished when it occurs.⁶ If a child sees a parent or peer gain status, dominance, resources or power by using violence, he will be more likely to use it himself.⁷

1 Albert Bandura, "Influence of Models' Reinforcement Contingencies on the Acquisition of Initiative Responses," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 1 (June, 1960): 589-595, p. 590.

2 *Ibid.*

3 *Ibid.*, p. 592.

4 Mullen, p. 203.

5 David J. Owens and Murray A. Straus, "The Social Structure of Violence in Childhood and Approval of Violence as an Adult," *Aggressive Behavior* 1 (1975): 193-211, pp. 195, 196, 210.

6 Bandura, *Learning Analysis*, p. 128.

7 *Ibid.*, p. 3.

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It has often been noticed that violent men are more likely to have been abused as a child and these ideas also help to explain why some peer groups (i.e., gangs) and subcultures are known for violence.¹ Bandura found that parents of aggressive boys from middle class homes, although they neither abused their children nor displayed antisocial violence, "repeatedly modeled and reinforced combative attitudes and behavior."² The long term effects of modeling were shown in an experiment where nursery school boys could imitate aggressive behavior shown six months previously.³ The girls, however, in the study showed much less imitative behavior.⁴

The pronoun "he" has been used purposely in this section because the laboratory experiments have consistently found modeled violence more likely to be repeated by males than females.⁵ Many studies only use male subjects, but those that do use a combination have resulted in boys

exhibiting "substantially more imitative aggression than girls."⁶ Bandura explains this phenomena in terms of inhibited performance rather than acquisition since the girls in the preschool study cited above were close to being as aggressive as the boys when

1 Ibid., p. 193; L. B. Silver, C. C. Dublin and R. S. Lourie, "Does Violence Breed Violence? Contributions from A Study of the Child Abuse Syndrome," *American Journal of Psychology* 126 (1909): 404-407, p. 407.

2 Bandura, *Learning Analysis*, p. 94.

3 David J. Hicks, "Imitation and Retention of Film-Medicated Aggressive Peer and Adult Models," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 2 (1965): 97-100, p. 100.

4 Ibid.

5 Bandura, *Learning Analysis*, p. 67; Hicks, p. 100.

6 Bandura, *Learning Analysis*, p. 67.

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the film they watched showed the model being rewarded for his behavior, and when they received positive incentives for this action.¹ However, the girls were still not as aggressive as the boys, and they were significantly less likely to exhibit aggression when their film showed the model being punished for the behavior.²

At least Bandura tries to explain the differences between male and female behavior although his explanations are not completely satisfactory. Other social learning theorists have postulated that males are more likely to emulate aggression, "because boys are provided with greater rewards for aggression" and because boys are more apt to identify with adult males and thus have more numerous aggressive models to emulate than girls.³ Arnold Buss reports on an unpublished study by J. Gillespie showing that males showed more aggression after frustration than women.⁴ Buss concludes: "Perhaps men are more susceptible to frustration or more angered by frustration than are women," but he does not explain why this would be so.⁵

The part that the media and especially television plays in modeling aggressive behavior has often been noted in theories of violence but empirical evidence is mixed. Elizabeth McCarthy and her associates did a five year follow-up on a random sample cross section of 732 children in

1 Bandura, "Influence of Models' Reinforcement on Response," p. 594.

2 Ibid., pp. 592, 594.

3 Jeffrey Goldstein, *Aggression and Crime of Violence* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1975), p. 39.

4 Buss, pp. 31-32.

5 Ibid.

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Manhattan and Houston.¹ She found that heavy viewing of violent programs was associated with two (of three) measures of aggression, fighting and delinquency, as well as with regressive anxiety, mentation problems and depression.² However, Milgran and Shotland found no more imitative results from a television program showing a man stealing (whether or not he was shown to be punished afterwards) watched by male adult subjects who were then given an easy opportunity to do the same, in comparison to a matched control group who watched a neutral film.³ Many studies have shown no effects or unreliable effects of television on violence or aggression.⁴ However, in a extensive review of literature (1956-1976) of 153 studies, Anderson found a weak positive correlation between viewing violence and subsequent aggressive behavior and noted that the more recent studies are showing increasingly positive results.⁵ He feels that this may be due to a cumulative effect of increasingly violent television watching and/or better

methods used in the later studies.⁶

There is no doubt that a great deal of television programming, especially children's programs, depicts violence, and shows violent

1 Elizabeth D. McCarthy et. al., "Violence and Behavior Disorders," *Journal of Communications* 25 (Autumn, 1975): 71-84, p. 72.

2 Ibid., p. 77.

3 Stanley Milgrim and Lance R. Shotland, *Television and Antisocial Behavior* (New York: Academic Press, 1973), p. 46.

4 Robert M. Kaplan and Robert D. Singer, "Television Violence and Viewer Aggression: A Reexamination of the Evidence," *The Journal of Social Issues* 32 (Fall, 1976): 35-70, p. 62.

5 F. Scott Andison, "TV Violence and Viewer Aggression: A Cumulation of Study Results 1956-1976," *Public Opinion Quarterly* 41 (Fall, 1977): 314-331, pp. 318, 319.

6 Ibid., p. 319.

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males as heroes who gain power by its usage.¹ As well as the modeling effect, researchers postulate that heavy violence viewing disinhibits aggressive behavior by showing good triumphing over evil with the use of violence, and by desensitizing and habituating people to violence.² Jeffrey Goldstein's study of people exposed to more violence in real life showed that they also were more likely to prefer violent portrayals in media.³ Jerome Singer also postulates that violence when portrayed as justified may decrease normal inhibitions and anxieties concerning the expression of aggression.⁴ Margaret Thomas and her associates found that the more violence a child had watched in film, the less measured anxiety was shown when they watched a subsequent, supposedly real, videotaped fight between other children.⁵ The effect was significantly greater in boys.⁶ Singer also notes that other factors may also enter into the equation, since it was found that people with patterns of impulsivity or hyperactivity were better able to imitate aggressive behavior seen in a film when frustrated after viewing.⁷ Leyens and his

1 George Gerbner et. al., "TV Violence Profile No. 8: The Highlights," *Journal of Communication* 27 (Spring, 1977): 171-180, p. 178; George Gerbner et. al., "The Demonstration of Power: Violence Profile No. 10," *Journal of Communication* 29 (Summer, 1979): 177-196, p. 180.

2 Bandura, "Learning Perspective," p. 204; McCarthy, p. 72.

3 Goldstein, *Aggression and Crimes of Violence*, p. 39.

4 Jerome Singer, "The Influence of Violence Portrayed in Television or Motion Pictures Upon Overt Aggressive Behavior," in *The Control of Aggression and Violence*, ed. Jerome Singer (New York: Academic Press, 1971), p. 55.

5 Margaret H. Thomas et. al., "Desensitization to Portrayals of Real-Life Aggression as a Function of Exposure to Television Violence," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 35 (June, 1977): 450-458, p. 453.

6 Ibid., p. 456.

7 Singer, p. 54.

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associates found that only previously aggressive boys in their study were increasingly aggressive after watching filmed violence; the less aggressive boys were not.¹ However, the more violent boys showed a modeling effect, because their physical aggression closely paralleled the types shown in the movies.²

The other postulated effect of televised violence is the production of a concept of the world

as a dangerous place.³ Heavy viewers have shown to have more feelings of mistrust and suspicion which may increase their tendencies to use violence in marginally appropriate situations.⁴ George Gerbner, who has done extensive research on the results of television watching, concludes that only 1 to 2 per 1,000 heavy watchers will only actually imitate the violence on television and threaten society, but that the large majority become more fearful, insecure and dependent on authority.⁵

Bandura explains that behavior learned from models is reinforced if the imitative actions are seen to be useful to the person.⁶ Twenty-four male subjects gave more intense shocks to subjects when they were

1 Jacques-Phillipe Leyens et. al., "Effects of Movie Violence on Aggression in a Field Setting as a Function of Group Dominance and Cohesion," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 32 (August, 1975) 346-360, p. 353.

2 Ibid., p. 204.

3 Bandura, "Learning Perspective," p. 204.

4 Gerbner et. al., "Violence Profile No. 10," p. 171; Bandura, "Learning Perspective," p. 204.

5 Gerbner et. al., "Violence Profile No. 10," p. 196.

6 Bandura, "Learning Perspective," p. 207.

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verbally reinforced for doing so.¹ Henri Laborit explains that if aggression is successful and dominance achieved by it, "then the aggression will in itself constitute reinforced behavior because of the gratification that followed."² This mechanism was illustrated in a study showing that fifth grade boys who were measured as aggressive were more likely to reward themselves with tokens for inflicting shocks even when the victim expressed pain, than those who showed low aggression on the inventory.³ Laborit also notes that, "Society's rewards tend to go to the least compassionate members" which is a strong reinforcement for aggression."⁴ Again we can see that there are problems with extending this model to women. However, the social learning theorists postulate that aggressive behavior is a product of the cognitive structure which either inhibits or disinhibits the performance of the activity.⁵ They feel that the socially learned inhibitors to aggression are much stronger for women and that violence is less useful to women.⁶

1 Russell G. Geen and David Stormer, "Effects of Aggressiveness Habit Strength on Behavior in the Presence of Aggression-Related Stimuli," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 17 (February, 1971): 149-153, p. 149.

2 Laborit, p. 740.

3 David G. Perry and Kay Bussey, "Self-Reinforcement in High-and Low-Aggressive Boys Following Acts of Aggression," *Child Development* 48 (June, 1977): 653-657, pp. 653, 655.

4 Laborit, p. 746.

5 Edwin I. Megargee, "The Role of Inhibitor In the Assessment and Understanding of Violence," in *The Control of Aggression and Violence*, ed. Jerome Singer (New York: Academic Press, 1971), p. 130; Bandura, "Learning Perspective," p. 224.

6 Bandura, "Influences of Models Reinforcement on Responses," p. 594; Owens, p. 207.

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Much laboratory research has been done to identify and determine the relative strength of the inhibitors, disinhibitions and facilitators of learned aggressive behavior. Most of the studies involve subjects being given the opportunity to aggress by using shock machines. The intensity, duration and number of shocks given is measured to determine the amount of aggression shown. There is much controversy among the researchers as to what conditions are the most powerful in

affecting aggression. Most of the studies use predominantly male college students, and it is questionable whether these laboratory results can be generalized to the rest of the population.¹ For the purposes of this review we will summarize these studies by saying that the effects of: 1) generally arousing films (not necessarily violent), 2) the presence of firing of guns, 3) violence depicted as justified, 4) lowered responsibility for actions, 5) dehumanization of victims, 6) continued aggressive action as self reinforcement, 7) competition, 8) pain cues given by the victim, 9) anticipated punishment, 10) empathy and 11) prior social contact with the victim have all been studied.² The relative strengths of these

¹ Leyens, p. 346; Fromm, p. 93.

² Donald P. Hartman, "Influence of Symbolically Modeled Instrumental Aggression and Pain Cures on Aggressive Behavior," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 11 (1969): 280-288; Goldstein, *Aggression and Crimes of Violence*; Charles Mueller, Robin Nelson and Edward Donnerstein, "Facilitative Effect of Media Violence on Helping," *Psychological Reports* 40 (June, 1967): 775-778; Arnold Buss et. al., "Firing a Weapon and Aggression," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 22 (June, 1972): 296-302; Leonard Berkowitz and Anthony LePage, "Weapons as Aggression- Eliciting Stimuli," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 7 (1967): 202-207; Morte Page and Ride Scheldt, "The Elusive Weapons Effect," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 20 (Dec., 1971): 304-318; Leonard Berkowitz and Joseph Alioto, "The Meaning of an Observed Event as a Determinant of its Aggressive Consequences," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 28 (Nov., 1973): 206-217; Edward Diener, "Effect of altered Responsibility, Cognitive Set and Modeling on [citation continues on next page]

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factors is controversial but the evidence suggests that the first seven may facilitate or disinhibit aggression and the last four have at least some inhibiting effect.

In conclusion, the social learning theory does incorporate biological, psychological and sociological factors of causation of violence. Other theorists have modified and/or amplified Bandura's basic propositions, but the thrust of the arguments remain the same.¹ These authors feel that aggressive behavior, the instigations for hostile activity, the factors which facilitate or inhibit its expression, the appropriate targets, and the mechanism used to display aggression are all learned although somewhat influenced by neurophysiological and psychological mechanisms. As we have seen, there is much empirical evidence to support these conclusions, although the details have not yet been conclusively established. The social learning theorists have not completely adequately explained the difference between male and female aggressive behavior and would benefit from an inclusion of the effects of patriarchy in their scheme. However, the theories account for the effects of different sociological factors in terms of learning.

[citation continued from page 78] Physical Aggression and Deindividuation," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 31 (1975): 328-337; Glen S. Sanders and Robert Steven Baron, "Pain Cues and Uncertainty as Determinants of Aggression in a Situation Involving Repeated Instigation," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 32 (September, 1975): 495-502; Wade Silverman, "The Effects of Social Contact, Provocation and Sex of Opponent Upon Instrumental Aggression," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 5 (December, 1971): 310-316; Ervin Straub, "The Learning and Unlearning of Aggression," in *The Control of Aggression and Violence*, ed. Jerome Singer (New York: Academic Press, 1971); p. 111.

¹ Straub, "Learning and Unlearning;" Buss, *Psychology of Aggression*; Goldstein, *Aggression and Crime*.

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Sociological Theories

The sociological theories of violence generally take into account some of the biological and psychological aspects of causation, but their basic proposition is that social structure and culture are more important.¹ They vehemently reject the idea that aggression is an instinct or drive, and postulate that most violent offenders are basically normal and generally do not act destructively.² Other than these areas of agreement, the sociologists vary widely in their approach. There are theorists who emphasize any one of the following aspects: cultural attitudes fostering violence, the structural violence inherent in our society, social frustration, social disorganization, population density, the influence of poverty, a subculture of violence, and roles. Most of these theories include elements of the others. There is also a body of sociological literature which explores the relationship between suicide and homicide and another group of studies from anthropology which studies the violence in other cultures, past and present.

Cultural Attitudes Fostering Violence

It has often been noted that the United States has a long history of violence being used as a means to achieve ends that are socially approved.³ Owens and Straus point out that "for any set of behaviors

1 D. J. West, "The Response to Violence," *Journal of Medical Ethics* 5 (1979): 128-131, p. 128.

2 Michael R. Chatterton, "The Social Contexts of Violence," in *Violence in the Family*, ed. Marie Borland (Atlantic Highlands, New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1976): 25-33, p. 31.

3 Robert Liston, *Violence in America* (New York: Julian Messner, 1974), p. 16.

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characteristic of a population, there will develop a normative correlation for men between committing interpersonal violence in their youth and approval of the use of violence as an adult."¹ Monica Blumenthal and her associates interviewed 1374 American men with a variety of socioeconomic characteristics and found that one half to two thirds of them could justify the police shooting in situations requiring social control but not involving self defense or protection of innocent people from

bodily harm (i.e., campus protests and property damage from riots or gangs).² 20-30% would advise the police to shoot to kill.³ These researchers feel such attitudes are a "covert message that it is socially acceptable to use violence for instrumental reasons."⁴ In a survey for the National Commission on Violence, Louis Harris found that 51% of Americans agreed or strongly agreed with the statement: "Justice may have been a little rough and ready in the old West, but things worked better than they do today with all the legal red tape."⁵ These kinds of attitudes are used to explain that only four countries have a higher homicide rate (per 100,000) population than the United States.⁶

1 Owens and Straus, p. 210.

2 Ibid., p. 208.

3 Monica Blumenthal et. al., *Justifying Violence* (Ann Arbor, Michigan: Braun-Brumfeld, Inc., 1972), p. 243.

4 Ibid., p. 247.

5 Donald J. Mulvehill and Melvin M. Tumin, *Crime of Violence Vol. 12, A Staff Report Submitted to the National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence* (Washington, D.C.: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1969), p. 481.

6 Henry P. Lundsgaarde, *Murder in Space City* (New York: Oxford Press, 1977), p. 11.

A variation on this theme in different terminology is Henry Lundsgaarde's view of homicide as reflecting the sanctions in a culture. "A sanction is a reaction on the part of a society or a considerable number of its members to a mode of behavior which is thereby approved (positive sanctions) or disapproved (negative sanctions)."¹ Lundsgaarde used an analysis of homicide in Houston, Texas in 1969 to show that official negative sanctions (the police, courts, and laws) against killing can be overcome by covert positive sanctions defining homicide as more permissible in such cases as husband-wife killings or homicides among friends and associates or those among the poor and black.² The homicide rates in these cases is extremely high in Houston reflecting a lowering of negative sanctions against them by public officials and the general public.³

Structural Violence of Society

A closely related theme to the one above is the idea that violence in America reflects the violence inherent in our way of life. David Gil points out that the structure of our society results in "acts and conditions which obstruct the spontaneous unfolding of innate human potential, the inherent drive toward development and self actualization."⁴ He feels that capitalism fosters an "all pervasive, exploitative attitude" which is necessary to get ahead in the system, and that

1 Ibid., p. 186.

2 Ibid., pp. 190, 191.

3 Ibid., p. 192.

4 David G. Gill, "Societal Violence and Violence in Families," in *Family Violence*, ed. John M. Echelaar and Stanford N. Katz (Toronto: Battleworth and Co., 1978), p. 14.

families act as agents of the structure in their stress on hierarchal patterns and arbitrary authority, which transmits those violent attitudes to each succeeding generative.¹ Bergen and Rosenberg echo these sentiments when they talk about our culture as "brutalizing" and our society represented by "competitive striving and lust for power and control over one's fellow and mutual exploitation."² Wolfgang also speaks of the society legitimizing violence by "the labels of virtue" it attaches to methods of social control and the use of military force.³ Feminists would add that the behavior being talked about is primarily masculine and the generating force behind society's brutality is patriarchy.⁴

Social Frustration or Strain Theories

The sociological theories grouped together under the label of strain theory generally postulate that crime and delinquency result when "socially approved ends (eg., material possessions) cannot be achieved through conventional channels and illegal activities are chosen as alternative means of obtaining desired ends."⁵ These theories are some of the oldest in sociology and were first expressed

1 Ibid., pp. 17, 20.

2 Bernard Bergen and Stanley Rosenberg, "Culture as Violence," *Humanities* 12 (May, 1976): 195-205, pp. 196, 197.

3 Marvin Wolfgang, "A Preface to Violence," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 364 (March, 1976): 1-7, p. 3.

4 Robin Morgan, *Going Too Far* (New York: Vintage Books, 1978).

5 Toch, *Psychology of Crime and Justice*, p. 167.

by Robert Merton in 1938.¹ He used the theory to explain the association between poverty and crime and first used the word "anomie" to describe the discrepancies between aspirations and opportunities.² Cloward and Ohlin studied male delinquent gangs in the 1950's and found that gang members anticipated that legitimate channels to goals would be limited or closed to them.³ The boys' sense of injustice led them to attribute legitimacy to delinquent acts.⁴

Social Disorganization

J. P. Scott theorizes that agnostic behavior (which may or may not lead to violence) is adaptive behavior patterns for conflict situations.⁵ He feels that violence developing from agnostic behavior increases as social systems become disorganized on any level.⁶ For example, Scott feels that although violence may be used to establish dominance - subordination relationships, it decreases once they are established and will only increase if threatened.⁷ The term of "anomie" is also used in the social disorganization context. In this case it is used to describe normlessness or confusion of values which can also

1 Robert K. Merton, "Social Structure and Anomie," *American Sociological Review* 3 (October, 1938): 672-682.

2 Ibid., pp. 681, 682; Richard A. Cloward and Lloyd E. Ohlin, *Delinquency and Opportunity* (Glencoe, Illinois: The Free Press, 1960), p. 78.

3 Cloward and Ohlin, p. 97.

4 Ibid., p. 117.

5 J. P. Scott, "Agnostic Behavior: Function and Dysfunction in Social Conflict," *Journal of Social Issues* 33 (Winter, 1977): 9-21, p. 9.

6 Ibid., p. 10.

7 Ibid., p. 11.

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occur at any level of society including the family.¹ "Anomie" rarely appears in recent literature or research, but the concept of social disintegration is woven into other sociological perspectives.

Population Density

The idea of population density leading to violence was derived from animal studies of crowded behavior and the observation that homicide (and other violent crimes) are much more likely to occur in the nation's larger cities.² No significant association has been found in studies measuring population density (population per square mile) and crime when socioeconomic status and ethnic background are controlled for.³ However, one study did find such a relationship with juvenile delinquency when people per room of housing was used as the measure of crowding.⁴ Another study failed to find a relationship using the same measure of density with the incidence of violent crime.⁵ A longitudinal study of Buffalo and Boston showed murder decreasing as size increased and the same cross culturally. Dare failed to find any general

1 Lester D. Jagge, "Delinquency, Proneness and Family Anomie,"

The Journal of Criminal Law, Criminology and Police Science 54 (June, 1963): 146-154, p. 174.

2 Bandura, "Influence of Models' Reinforcement on Responses," p. 2; Claire Russell and W. M. J. Russell, "The National History of Violence," *Journal of Medical Ethics* 5 (1979): 108-117, p. 110.

3 Paul Spector, "Population Density and Unemployment," *Criminology* 12 (February, 1975): 399-401, p. 400; Omar R. Galle, Walter R. Gove and J. William McPherson, *Population Density and Pathology: What are the Relations for Man?," Science* 176 (April 7, 1972): 23-30, p. 25.

4 Galle, Gove and McPherson, p. 26.

5 Spector, p. 40.

relationship between city growth and homicide rates.¹

Poverty

In an effort to further explain the greater amounts of urban violence, especially among poor, black young men, sociologists have theorized extensively.² Lynn Curtis in a study of our 17 largest cities, found that reported urban criminal homicide and aggravated assault is most frequently committed by black males in their teens and twenties who are victimizing other black male friends, acquaintances or strangers, the same age or older, living in close proximity, in the course of relatively trivial altercation.³ Rather than postulating that any one factor causes this violence, the social scientists tended to note various circumstances associated with the cultural setting of the ghetto. Many of them have noted the anger generated by discrimination and racism.⁴ Robert Liston says in this regard, "violence is simply a message, a desperate one, that a situation of inequality, frustration and rage exists that badly needs correction."⁵ Parker and Smith found that the highest correlation between noninstrumental homicide and other factors was poverty, although race and young

1 Dave Archer et. al., "Cities and Homicide: A New Look at an Old Paradox," *Comparative Studies in Sociology* 1 (1978): 73-95, pp. 76, 87.

2 Harold M. Rose, "Lethal Aspects of Urban Violence: An Overview," in *Lethal Aspects of Urban Violence*, ed. Harold M. Rose (Lexington, Mass.: Lexington Books, 1979), p. 5, 6, 7.

3 Lynn A. Curtis, *Criminal Violence*, (Lexington, Mass.: D. C. Heath and Co., 1974), p. 159.

4 Marvin Wolfgang, *Crime and Race* (New York: Institute of Human Relations Press, 1964), p. 58.

5 Listen, p. 151.

adult status was also related.¹ However, another study found unemployment not related to incidence of violent crime.² Lynn Curtis held socioeconomic class constant and found no significant correlation between being black and violent within poverty areas in Boston, Atlanta and San Francisco but did find a correlation in Chicago and Philadelphia.³

There is much discussion in the literature as to whether the association between poor black men and violence is due to poverty and lack of opportunity, social characteristics specific to race, or lower class values. From a study of all the homicide cases reported from across the nation in the *New York Times* from 1955-1975 that were committed by middle and upper class citizens (119 cases). Green and Wakefield report that there were no black offenders.⁵ This argues strongly that the dynamics which operate to cause the young, black male to frequently kill have less to do with his race than with his condition of oppression, coupled with machismo. We might also note that the same research found a 80% male offender rate, showing that the usual sex differences do apply across socioeconomic classes.⁶ In fact 58.1% of the cases involved a man killing a woman which is significantly different

1 Robert Nash Parker and M. Dwayne Smith, "Deterrence, Poverty and Type of Homicide," *American Journal of Sociology* 85 (November, 1979): 614-623, p. 622.

2 Spector, p. 399.

3 Curtis, pp. 150, 151.

4 Rose, p. 8.

5 Edward Green and Russell Wakefield, "Patterns of Middle and Upper Class Homicide," *The Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology*, 70 (Summer, 1979): 172-181, p. 175.

6 Ibid.

from the 16 to 24% usually reported in inner city studies.¹ We can theorize that the middle and upper class male is able to express his machismo ethic effectively against other males in his occupational role, allowing the direct expression of misogyny in murdering a woman to be reflected in a higher proportion of such cases in the total.

To return to the differences between the white and black poor populations, Luchterhard and Weller found white inner city boys to be significantly more verbally aggressive while blacks were more physically so, but the black students were more likely to control aggressive behavior of either kind in the research situation.² Carolyn Balkwell and her associates also found white high school students in Georgia from all social classes more verbally expressive of all emotions than black.³ In contrast, Robert Coles found ghetto children "active, vigorous and more outgoing than the middle class child but quick to lose patience and feel wronged."⁴ He attributes these characteristics to the violence and uncertainty of the ghetto world and the amount of freedom the lower class child has in the street compared to the strict physical punishment he encounters at home.⁵

1 Ibid., p. 176.

2 Elmer Luchterhand and Leonard Weller, "Effects of Class, Race, Sex and Education Status on Patterns of Aggression in Lower Class Youth," *Journal of Youth and Adolescence* 5 (March, 1976): 59-72, pp. 63, 65.

3 Carolyn Balkwell et. al., "On Black and White Family Patterns in American: Their Impact on the Expressive Aspect of Sex-Role Socialization," *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 40 (November, 1978): 743-748, p. 744.

4 Robert Coles, "Violence in Ghetto Children," *Children* 14 (May-June, 1967): 101-104, p. 108. From this author's experience with hundreds of black adolescents, they have been found to be more verbally expressive of all emotions than white teen-agers.

5 Ibid., p. 103.

The idea of social disintegration on the family level is reflected by theorists writing in this area. Moynihan talks about the disorganization of the black family and Scarpitti identifies stability of the home being the most important factor in keeping ghetto children from becoming delinquent.¹ However, these are white theorists making assumptions about a culture which they usually do not understand.² Wade Nobles points out that the black family is a unique cultural form and what may appear to be disintegration to white observers is actually an elastic structure which includes family beyond one household and not necessarily blood related, has flexible and interchangeable role definitions and performance and is child centered.³ Bartz and Levine support these conclusions when they found that black families provide more emotional support than Chicano and Anglo families in the same lower working class neighborhood.⁴ However they found all three groups advocating early autonomy for children, strict controls of behavior and purposeful use of time for children, suggesting that lower class values may be more important than ethnic group membership.⁵

1 Daniel P. Moynihan, "Toward a National Urban Policy," U.S. Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence Violent Crime (New York: George Braziller, 1969), p. 10; Frank R. Scarpitti, "The Good Boy in a High Delinquency Area: Four Years Later," *American Sociological Review* 25 (August, 1960): 555-558, p. 556.

2 Wade W. Nobils, "Toward an Emperical and Theoretical Framework for Defining Black Families," *Journal of Marriage and the Family* AO (November, 1978): 679-687, p. 680.

3 Ibid, p. 687.

4 Karen W. Bartz and Elaine S. Levine, "Childrearing by Black Parents: A Description and Comparison to Anglo and Chicano Parents," *Journal of Marriage and the Family* AO (November, 1978): 709-720, p. 715.

5 Ibid., pp. 71A, 715.

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Generally, the sociological literature reviewed thus far in regard to the violence of urban, young, black males is certainly unsatisfactory in terms of causal theory. As Harold Rose states: The situation of this segment of the population has become increasingly dire and/or the ability to cope with both internal and external forces has become so burdensome that violent acting out, leading to death, has emerged as an adaptive mechanism. Our lack of understanding of what has become the fifth ranking killer of all black males and the ranking killer of those 15-24 bodes ill for the scientific community.¹

Subculture of Violence

This lack of understanding has been addressed in a different way by other sociologists who work from a framework of the idea of subculture of violence. Cloward and Ohlin were the first to develop this theory which they used along with "anomie" to explain the behavior of delinquent male gang members.² They defined the delinquent subculture as "one in which certain forms of delinquent activity are essential requirements for the performance of dominant roles supported by the subculture."³ These theorists postulated that the gang members either: 1) follow norms of criminality by imitating deviant characters that the both common and usually the most outwardly successful men in their environment or 2) follow the "retreatist" model of being "cool" like the hustlers or drug addicts or 3) commit violence to maintain status or a "rep" of being tough.⁴

1 Rose, p. 7.

2 Cloward and Ohlin, *Delinquency and Opportunity*.

3 Rose, p. 7.

4 Ibid., pp. 20, 23, 27.

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Marvin Wolfgang and Franco Ferracuti further refined the theory by extending it from a subculture of delinquency to a subculture of violence. They define subculture as "value judgments or a social value system which is apart from and a part of a larger or central value system." They go on to explain that a subculture has major values in common with the dominant culture but also has values which vary and may conflict with those of the larger culture. These values are transmitted through the learning process of socialization, and they are incorporated into the personality structure through strict, physical childhood discipline, "reinforced in juvenile peer groups and confirmed in the strategies of the street." Wolfgang and Ferracuti identify the subculture of violence as a "potent theme of violence current in the cluster of values that make up the life style, the socialization process, the interpersonal relationships of individuals living in similar conditions." The person's integration into the subculture can be measured by their records of arrest rate, especially assaultive. Participants in the subculture do not necessarily express violence in all situations, but certain stimuli are expected to be responded to with violence.¹

Wolfgang and Ferracuti do not account for the causes of a subculture of violence but postulate that it is present wherever homicide rates are high, such as in urban ghetto areas in the United States and other countries such as Mexico, Columbia and parts of Italy. They also note

that crime rates are as high as in the black urban areas of America, in slums of Italy, Germany, Poland and other predominantly Caucasian

1 Marvin Wolfgang and Franco Ferracuti, *The Subculture of Violence* (London: Tavistock Publications, 1967).

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cultures. Therefore, they conclude that the subculture of violence is based more on poverty, urban blight, and cultural prescriptions than race.¹

Figures from Wolfgang's 1958 study of criminal homicide in Philadelphia were used to substantiate the subculture of violence thesis, but these were only descriptive in nature and the subculture of violence theory has been criticized for its lack of explanatory power.² The problem with blaming the culture of a race or class of violence without identifying the antecedents of that culture is that it becomes a way of subtly blaming the victims (and perpetrators) for creating the culture.³ It must be fully recognized that any subculture of violence in the lower class and/or black culture is due to the systematic denial of opportunity by the white, classist, patriarchal society.

Richard Moran synthesized the subculture hypothesis with the idea that "the more fully low status groups or individuals seek to occupy or maintain status positions based on achievement, the more likely they are to commit criminal homicide." Using homicide data from Boston (1962-1966) Moran found that age had a stronger relationship to homicide than sex or race suggesting that in low status populations the age group 20 to 29, which commits the largest proportion of homicide, does so

1 *Ibid.*, pp. 275, 282, 298.

2 John Hepburn, "Subcultures, Violence and the Subculture of Violence An Old Rut or a New Road," *Criminology* 9 (May, 1971): 87-98, p. 93.

3 Maxine Letcher, "Black Women and Homicide," in *Lethal Aspects of Urban Violence*, ed. Harold M. Rose (Lexington, Mass: Lexington Books, 1979), p. 89.

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because this is the age group which has the most emphasis on achievement. When he looked at homicide rates among ethnic groups, he found that the association between race and homicide was stronger than that between sex and homicide and felt that this "suggests the presence of a subculture of violence among males." Moran's conclusion was: "... a subcultural normative system sanctioning the use of violence during social interaction exists mainly among low status groups of individuals experiencing subjective external restraint."¹

Moran accounts for sex differences in homicide in terms of males being more frustrated by occupational status blocking than females.² He feels that black women are more achievement oriented than other ethnic groups which he uses to explain why those women commit more homicide than white, Italian, Puerto Rican or Irish females.³ In the face of evidence that black women are the lowest paid group in the United States, and their supposed achievement orientation, it is difficult to understand why their homicide rate is only one fourth that of black men. Moran is also failing to account for why the majority of low status males do not act out the subculture of violence. Wolfgang explains the higher rate of black women murderers than white women in

1 Richard Moran, "Criminal Homicide: External Restraint and Subculture of Violence," *Criminology* 8 (February, 1971): 357-374, pp. 358, 363, 367, 372.

2 *Ibid.*, p. 362.

3 *Ibid.*

4 William H. Webster, *Uniform Crime Reports* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice, 1978), p. 10.

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the following way: "Because most of the victims of negro female homicide offenders are negro males, the negro female may be striking out aggressively against the inadequate male protector whom she desperately wants but often cannot find or hold."1 As Maxine Letcher points out regarding the above statement, "This is at best a tenuous assumption and at worst a blatantly sexist one."2 Wolfgang also alludes to the authority position of black women in the home which we have shown to be a faulty assumption.3

An interesting corollary to the subculture of violence theory is the controversy about the existence of a southern version of these values which has diffused into the urban centers by way of migration patterns.4 Raymond Gastil first advanced this idea by noting the high statistical rates of homicide in the South and by linking this with the southern values of exaggerated sense of humor and a historical predilection for violence, which is usually only lightly punished.

Much controversy was raised about whether or not southerners actually were more likely to espouse violence, whether or not southerners were more likely to own guns (versus handguns), whether or not less available and lower quality medical care in the south accounts for the higher

1 Wolfgang and Ferracuti, p. 152.

2 Letcher, p. 88.

3 Wolfgang and Ferracuti, p. 152. See p. 16 above,

4 Raymond Gastil, "Homicide and a Regional Culture of Violence," *American Sociological Review* 36 (June, 1971): 412-27, pp. 412.

5 *Ibid.*, p. 414.

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homicide rates, and whether or not it was southerners who had migrated that were committing northern urban violence.1 The conclusions reached varied widely according to the measures used to indicate southernness and violence approval, the statistical methods employed, and the populations studied, making meaningful comparisons difficult.

Lynn A. Curtis uses the subculture of violence concept as a base and goes on to develop a theory which perhaps best explains sociologically the preponderance of poor, black, urban males committing homicide.2 This theory will be examined at length in the machismo section, but suffice it to say at this point that Curtis joins the other subcultural theorists in noting that a strong influence of defining masculinity in terms of violence is apparent in any subcultural explanations.3 Social scientists have made a valuable contribution in making this observation, but fail to see that this machismo attitude can best explain the subcultural phenomena, that patriarchy has caused and is expressed by machismo and thus has caused a subculture of violence, and that this orientation better accounts for the differences in male female rates of violent crimes.

1 "A Regional Analysis of Homicide Rates in the United States," *Criminology* 13 (May, 1975): 90-101; Alvin Jacobsen, "Crime Trends in Southern and Non Southern Cities: A Twenty-Year Perspective," *Social Forces* 54 (September, 1975): 226-242; James O'Connor and Alan Lizotte, "The Southern Subculture of Violence: Thesis and Patterns of Gun Ownership," *Social Problems* 25 (April, 1978): 420-429; Howard Erlanger, "Is There a Subculture of Violence in the South," *The Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology* 66 (December, 1975): 483-490; William C. Bailey, "Some Further Evidence on Homicide and a Regional Culture of Violence," *Omega* 7 (1976): 145-170; Howard S. Erlanger, "The Empirical Status of the Subculture of Violence

Thesis," *Social Problems* 22 (December, 1974): 280-292.

2 Lynn A. Curtis, *Violence, Race and Culture* (Lexington, Mass: D.C. Heath and Co., 1975), p. 163.

3 Hepburn, p. 93; Erlanger, p. 289; Curtis, *Violence, Race and Culture*, p. 24; Wolfgang and Ferracuti, p. 259.

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Role Theory

Stuart Palmer explains violence in terms of roles. His theory has elements of all of the sociological viewpoints expressed thus far, somewhat rearranged and with different terminology. Roles for Palmer are behaviors which accompany a person's status and "reciprocity" is used to describe "social interactions as a constant process of giving and receiving." Reciprocity is denied lower classes by the upper classes and is decreased when there is social disintegration or a lack of agreement about "basic life values." Reciprocity is increased when there is mutual facilitation of role performances and thereby tension in the social situation decreases. Tension increases and causes a greater likelihood of homicide when each of the people think that the other is blocking his role performance. Therefore, reciprocity and homicide would be inversely related.¹

Palmer explains the higher homicide rates in blacks in terms of their denial of reciprocity and resolves the preponderance of black victims problem by postulating that other blacks become the targets for "the rage that is felt toward whites" because of the situational unavailability of appropriate white victims. He explains the predominance of male homicide offenders over females by saying that "males are engaged in competitive and at times highly unreciprocating interaction to a considerably greater extent than females."² Considering that

¹ Stuart Palmer, *The Violent Society* (New Haven, Conn: College and University Press, 1970), pp. 16, 26, 30.

² *Ibid.*, p. 36, 37.

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every time a female interacts with a male the interaction is "highly unreciprocating," this justification is difficult to accept. Palmer displays sexism in another section while also recognizing the influence of machismo. He states: It is the unreciprocating slights to his masculinity that so often trigger violence. ...Any disparagement of masculinity is cause for the male to aggress, especially if he is of the lower class and black. He is expected to do so.¹ This machismo attitude is then blamed on "dominating mothers who threatened whatever sense of masculinity the offenders were able to develop."²

Homicide and Suicide

Palmer, in a later article, uses his reciprocity theory of violence to address an old theoretical issue, the relationship between homicide and suicide.³ Palmer examined the life history of 62 men convicted of homicide and 98 who had committed suicide for role loss and role reciprocity.⁴ He found that both homicide and suicide were related to low reciprocity but role loss was more related to suicide.⁵ Since both groups were made up of white males only in a geographic area characterized by low homicide rates (New England), the study is difficult to apply to the problem of homicide generally.⁶ A similar study in the

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 58.

² *Ibid.*, p. 56.

³ Stuart Palmer and John A. Humphrey, "Suicide and Homicide: A Test of a Role Theory of Destructive Behavior," *Omega* 8 (1977): 45-58.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 51.

5 Ibid., p. 53.

6 Ibid., p. 51

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same area of again, only white males, showed that early role blockage was related to homicide but an early attainment of roles followed by later loss was more characteristic of suicidal men.¹

The issue of the sociological relationship of homicide and suicide was first advanced by Emile Durkheim who noted that some sociological conditions favor homicide while others favor suicide and some (ie. "anomie") support both, but suicide is more dependent on individual psychology, so that the rates of the two may or may not have inverse relationships in one area.² Many studies have resulted showing both positive, inverse and no relationships between homicide and suicide depending on the area, groups, and time periods examined.³ Conclusions are difficult to reach by comparing these studies, and various sociological and psychological characteristics have been advanced as the determining factor. Therefore, the relationship between the two will be regarded as irrelevant to this study, except in those cases where homicide was followed by suicide.⁴

1 John Humphrey, "Social Loss: A Comparison of Suicide Victims, Homicide Offenders and Non-Violent Individuals," *Disease of the Nervous System* 38 (March, 1977): 157-160, p. 159.

2 Emile Durkheim, *Suicide* (New York: The Free Press, 1951), pp. 356, 357.

3 David Lester, "A Cross-National Study of Suicide and Homicide," *Behavior Science Research* 9 (1974): 307-318; Richard H. Franke, Edward W. Thomas and Allen J. Queenden, "Suicide and Homicide: Common Sources and Consistent Relationships," *Social Psychiatry* 12 (July, 1977): 149- 156; Martin Gold, "Suicide, Homicide and the Socialization of Aggression," *American Journal of Sociology* 63 (May, 1958): 651-661; Alex D. Pokomey, "Human Violence: A Comparison of Homicide, Aggravated Assault, Suicide, and Attempted Suicide," *The Journal of Criminal Law, Criminology, and Police Science* 56 (December, 1965): 488-497; H.4. Lyors, "Depressive Illness and Aggression in Belfast," *British Medical Journal* 1 (February 5, 1972): 342-349.

4 See Chapter IV.

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Anthropology

The studies of anthropologists have rarely been directly focused on the problem of violence cross culturally. Rather, an anthropologist is likely to observe and record all the characteristics of one culture. However, the study of peaceful societies offers some tantalizing clues as to what factors of socialization tend to promote or discourage violence. The fact that there are such cultures is powerful evidence that sociological forces and learning are more important than biology in explaining the occurrence of homicide.¹ In this section, a limited selection of anthropological works regarding peaceful cultures will be examined, noting consistent themes. The literature which attempts to apply cross cultural evidence to violence, and those which study violence in other nations will be reviewed in the final section.

Erich Fromm has devised a classification system that will be used in looking at the cultures. He divides cultures on a continuum wherein System A stands for "life affirming societies" which are characterized by "a minimum of hostility, violence or cruelty among people, no harsh punishment, hardly any crime and the institution of war is absent or plays an exceedingly small role." System B includes societies which are not basically destructive but "aggressiveness and war, although not central are normal occurrences and competition, hierarchy and individualism

are present." The cultures of System C demonstrate "much interpersonal violence, destructiveness, aggression and cruelty, both within the tribe and against others, a pleasure in war, maliciousness and treachery."

1 Ashley Montagn, "Introduction," in *Learning Non-Aggression*, ed. Ashley Montagn (New York: Oxford Press, 1978), p. 6.

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Fromm analyzed thirty primitive cultures in this conceptualization and noted that in System A, "women are in general considered equal to men, or at least not exploited or humiliated," while System B is more "imbued with a spirit of male aggressiveness and individualism" and System C is characterized by extreme competition and "strict hierarchies." He also noted that System A societies treat children with kindness and an absence of corporal punishment, sex is treated permissively and affirmatively and cooperation between the sexes and among men is fostered in comparison to B and C. Fromm also found that System A groups had a variety of economic circumstances, that some lived in areas of scarcity and hardship, and they represented gathering, agricultural and hunting means of food acquirement.¹

As well as the peaceful cultures that Fromm described in his analysis, original anthropological writings on about 15 other basically peaceful peoples were reviewed. A sincere attempt was made to read accounts of all nonviolent cultures mentioned in other sources although not all references could be obtained. This author's main purpose was to look at the relative status of women in these cultures to see if Fromm's conclusions held true. There was evidence in each of the societies that at least direct expressions of misogyny (ie. rape, wife abuse, genital mutilation, etc.) were virtually absent although the status of women varied from female superiority (ie. Mbuti) to virtual equality (ie. Zuni Indians) to relative submission (Utku Eskimos).²

1 Fromm, pp. 194, 195, 196.

2 Turnbull, "Politics of Non-Aggression," p. 218; Briggs, *Never In Anger*, p. 64; Fromm, p. 196.

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Even in those cultures where the female is under male control in one respect or another, there is evidence that women have an important and highly respected role in that society. For instance, the wife in the Utku Eskimo society obeys her husband's wishes, but participates almost equally in physical labor and is recognized as being equally important for economic survival.¹ There is also a consistent theme of the father being equally as involved in child rearing as the mother in all these groups where such information was noted.²

The most striking feature of all the peaceful cultures are the way boys are raised in regards to their definition of masculinity. In all of these nonviolent societies force is considered abhorrent in both males and females, jealousy is unacceptable, and competition frowned upon, while cooperation is regarded as a prime virtue, gentleness is emphasized, nature is glorified, and caution, fear and timidity are either encouraged or considered healthy.³ How different this is from the prescribed male role in patriarchal society!

An example of Fromm's System B, which can be used for comparison, is that of the Australian Aborigines. They are characterized as relatively unaggressive but not totally, because small scale warfare

1 Briggs, *Never in Anger*, p. 154.

2 A.P. Elkin, *The Australian Aborigines*, Natural History Library Edition (Garden City, New Jersey: Doubleday Co. Inc., 1964), p. 53; Joseph W. Earton, "Controlled Acculturation: A Survival Technique of the Hitterites," *American Sociological Review* 17 (June, 1952): 331-340,

p. 333; Mead, *Male and Female*, p. 65.

3 Sorenson, "Fore of New Guinea," p. 27; Levy, "Tahitian Gentleness," pp. 228, 229, 231; Tumbill, "Politics of Non-Aggression," p. 200; Briggs, *Never in Anger*, pp. 329, 345; Robert Knox Denton, "Notes on Childhood in a Nonviolent Context: The Semai Case," in *Learning Non-Aggression*, ed. Ashley Montagu (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), p. 128.

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between males does exist.¹ In this culture marriages are arranged, often in infancy and usually without regard for the women's wishes, and authority is vested in male elders.² However, women play an important part in all important sacred rituals, the predominant spiritual focus is female deities, and although children belong to the father's religious group and tribe, they belong to the mother's social group.³ In aboriginal society both fathers and mothers have an important role in parenting, but the mother is most central the first three or four years.⁴ There is religiously oriented competition although the main stress is on economic cooperation.⁵ Thus, we have a society in which male aggressiveness is played down but has not been eliminated by socialization.

John Paddock examined two small towns in Mexico in the early 1970's with the same ethnic composition and located only ten miles apart, which represent very different points on the continuum of violence versus nonviolence.⁶ Both communities were characterized by low educational levels, low population density, low social disorganization, poverty and high consumption of alcohol. Yet one town was free of homicide (Town A),

1 Catherine H. Berndt, "In Aboriginal Australia," in *Learning Non-Aggression*, ed. Ashley Montagu (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), p. 154.

2 Elkin, pp. 87, 130.

3 *Ibid.*, pp. 53, 190, 226.

4 *Ibid.*, p. 53; Berndt, p. 150.

5 Bemdt, p. 148; Elkin, pp. 190, 192.

6 John Paddock, "Studies on Antiviolent and 'Normal' Communities," *Aggressive Behavior* 1 (1975): 217-233; John Paddock, "Values in an Antiviolent Community," *Humanitas* 12 (May, 1976): 183-194.

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while the other had very high rates (Town B).¹ Four other differentiating characteristics were noted:

- 1) Childrearing was nonviolent in Town A (although discipline was firm and consistent) while in Town B there was a "greater belief in the efficacy of striking a child."
- 2) Local custom does not allow women to vote in either community, but in Town A fourteen year old girls were found to be "psychically and socially stronger" than in Town B.³
- 3) "Machismo was all but absent" in Town A and children were taught to leave or avoid fights, while Town B emphasized traditional masculine behavior and such signs of machismo as cockfights were prevalent.⁴
- 4) Town A had less marital conflict.⁵ (Paddock does not mention wife abuse specifically)

Evidence for the idea that violence can be linked with strong machismo attitudes, forceful domination of women and the use of physical punishment with children can be found in other anthropological studies. Antell and Belak observed interactions between adults and children and between children on playgrounds in Frankfurt, Florence and Copenhagen.⁶ They found that both verbal and physical aggression was by far the highest by adults toward children in Frankfurt, as

was violence between children.⁷

1 Paddock, "Values in an Antiviolent Community," p. 183.

2 Paddock, "Studies on 'Normal' Communities," p. 225.

3 Ibid., p. 231; Paddock, "Values in an Antiviolent Community," p. 191.

4 Paddock, "Values in an Antiviolent Community," p. 191.

5 Paddock, "Studies on 'Normal' Communities," p. 229.

6 Leopold Beliak and Maxine Antell, "An Intercultural Study of Aggressive Behavior on Children's Playgrounds," *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry* 44 (July, 1974): 503-511, p. 504.

7 Ibid., p. 508.

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The rate of homicide is also much higher in Frankfurt than in Copenhagen, and a survey revealed that 60% of German parents believe in beating, "not slapping or spanking, but beating their children."¹ We might also note that the status of women is much higher in Denmark.²

Shirley and John McConahay used a random sample of 17 non-industrial cultures and found a significant correlation between sex role rigidity and violence, measured by punishment in child rearing, the prevalence of rape and murder and the extent of war.³ Divale and Harris found that "frequent warfare is significantly correlated with patrilocal residence, patrilineal inheritance, polygyny, marriage by capture, brideprice, post-marital sexual restrictions on women and male secret societies."⁴ These authors conclude that "hostility between males is an integral part of the male supremacist complex."⁵ James Prescott in a cross cultural review found violence significantly associated with slavery, polygyny, inferior status of low women levels of physical affection shown to infants, rigid values of monogamy, chastity and virginity, low overall infant indulgence, low invidious display of wealth and low

1 Ibid., p. 508.

2 Ibid., p. 509.

3 Shirley A. McConahay and John B. McConahay, "Sexual Permissiveness, Sex-Role Rigidity and Violence Across Cultures," *Journal of Social Issues* 33 (1977): 134-143, pp. 139. 140.

4 William Tulio Divale and Marvin Harris, "Population, Warfare and the Male Supremacist Complex," *American Anthropologist* 78 (September, 1976): 521-538, p. 532.

5 Ibid., p. 533.

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religious activity.¹ These are all characteristic of rigid patriarchal societies. In a study of 57 cultures, Martin Allen found high crime rates in communities where there were also high levels of social and class stratification.² Beatrice Whiteing Studied 6 modern cultures both developed and more primitive.³ The two with the highest incidence of homicide and assault (Khalaphur, India and Nyarsongo, Kenya) both have a warrior and cattle thieving tradition in men, have little participation of fathers in child care, and have customs separating men and women for sleeping, eating, working and playing.⁴ Both cultures also have practices which exhibit misogyny: rape and genital mutilation are prevalent in Kenya and the women in India are kept in purdah (strict isolation and veiling in public) and are forced to "get down on the floor and cover their heads every time a man enters the courtyard."⁵ Whiteing concludes: It would seem as if there were a never-ending circle. The separation of the sexes leads to a conflict of identify in the boy children, to unconscious fear of being feminine which leads to "protest masculinity," exaggeration of the difference between men and women, antagonism against and fear of women, male solidarity and hence to isolation of women and very small children.⁶

1 James W. Prescott, "Body Pleasure and the Origins of Violence," *The Futurist* 9 (April, 1975):

64-74, pp. 66, 73.

2 Martin G. Allen, "A Cross-Cultural Study of Aggression and Crime," *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology* 111 (September, 1972): 259-271, p. 265.

3 Beatrice B. Whiting, "Sex Identity Conflict and Physical Violence: A Comparative Study," Part 2, *American Anthropologist* 67 (December, 1965): 123-140, p. 128.

4 *Ibid.*, pp. 130, 132, 135.

5 *Ibid.*, pp. 131, 133, 136; Fran P. Hosken, "Female Circumcision in Africa," *Victimology: An International Journal* 2 (1977-1978): 487-498, p. 487.

6 Whiting, p. 137; see also Margaret Bacon et. al., "A Cross-Cultural Study of Correlates of Crime," *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology* 66 (1963): 291-300.

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There are other anthropological views regarding the cultural origins of violence. Melvin Ember also found a significant relationship between polygyny and warfare but postulates that polygyny is a result of the high male mortality rate for men from war.¹ Allen Pastron theorized that the violence that occurred regularly and frequently in an Indian culture in Mexico was because of the sanctions against verbal outlets for aggression since nonviolence is idealized.² However, he also noted a "minimal" involvement with machismo, frequent wifebeating and violence based on jealousy.³ Pastron also found that children were "rarely hit," but this method of discipline was used.⁴ Rather than classifying this culture as nonviolent as Pastron does, it seems reasonable to put it further along the continuum toward the violent and misogynous end.

There was one anthropological study that found no association between the status of women and militarism.⁵ However, it can be argued that the status of women cannot be measured simply. Martin Whyte identified 61 measures of female position in a culture and found only weak correlations among them when applied to 93 randomly selected past and present cultures.⁶ It can be theorized that in cultures where male

1 Melvin Ember, "Warfare, Sex Ratio and Polygyny," *Ethnology* 13 (April, 1974): 197-206, p. 202.

2 Allen G. Pastron, "Collective Defenses of Repression and Denial: Their Relationship to Violence Among the Tarahumana Indians of Northern Mexico," *Ethos* 2 (Winter, 1974): 387-404, pp. 388, 400.

3 *Ibid.*, pp. 292, 293.

4 *Ibid.*, p. 291.

5 William Eckhardt, "Anthropological Correlates of Primitive Militanism," *Pease Research* 5 (February, 1973): 5-10, p. 6.

6 Martin King Whyte, "Cross Cultural Code Dealing with the Relative Status of Women," *Ethnology* 17 (April, 1978): 211-237, p. 214.

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dominance is aggressively maintained, a number of different mechanisms can be used to keep women submissive, and although misogyny is a corollary to this male attitude, it is not necessarily overtly expressed. It can also be postulated that the physical punishment of children so often noted in violent cultures is an expression of the emphasis on patriarchal dominance, not just a causative factor of violence in future generations. We also need to note that much of the earlier anthropological studies, on which many cross cultural studies are at least partially based, were written by men using sexist bias.¹ This criticism can be applied to most of sociological literature, which makes any of the findings somewhat suspect.²

However, both the sociological and anthropological literature have been valuable in pointing

us toward a conceptualization of violence emphasizing machismo or compulsive masculinity as a major causative factor in the occurrence of violence.

Machismo

The literature concerning machismo comes from psychological, sociological and feminist viewpoints. The term has various definitions, a variety of characteristics associated with it and many different reasons given for its origins, depending on which author is being read. We will first examine the theories which explain the origins of machismo, and then examine the characteristics associated with it.

1 Leavitt, *Peaceable and Gentle People*, p. 26.

2 Suzanne K. Steinmetz, "The Sexual Context of Social Research," *The American Sociologist* 9 (August, 1974): 111-116.

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From this perspective a definition for use in this paper will be derived. From that point additional evidence showing the connection of machismo and violence will be presented and a theory presented, derived from the work of Lynn Curtis and Michelle Wallace, linking machismo to violence.

Talcott Parsons was the first sociologist to link a machismo-like concept to violence. He, along with Albert Cohen, a 1950's criminologist, postulated that middle class boys seldom see their fathers and never see them at work. They therefore have trouble making a masculine identification but have incorporated some of the feminine characteristics of their mother. When the boys come under social pressure to establish their own masculine identity, they reject their own feminine nature and overemphasize the traditional male values of toughness and hardness and commit deviant acts "as a public pronouncement" that they are "real men."¹

The thesis was then changed by Walter B. Miller in 1958 to account for lower class delinquency because of the pattern of female headed households not providing for male identification.² As we have noted Daniel Patrick Moynihan turned that observation into a racist idea by postulating the concept of black matriarchy as responsible for compulsive masculinity and violence.³ Actually, the percent of female headed families is more closely related to income level than race, and male

1 Dan C. Gibbons, *Delinquent Behavior* (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1970), p. 154.

2 Walter Miller, "Lower Class Culture as a Generation Milieu of Gang Delinquency," *The Journal of Social Issues* 14 (1958): 5019, p. 8.

3 Daniel P. Moynihan, "The Negro Family: The Case for National Action," (Washington, D.C.: U. S. Department of Labor, 1965).

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dominant ideology is most pronounced in lower socioeconomic black groups and least in middle class whites.¹

Psychoanalytic literature attributed compulsive masculinity to dominating mothers, rather typically figuring out a way to blame women.² In reality, as Beatrice Whiting states, "an individual identifies with that person who is perceived as controlling those resources that he wants."³ Relegation of all early child care to females does result in identification with mothers, but when boys realize (after the first two to three years) that the world is obviously dominated by males, they try to change allegiance totally leading to inner conflict.⁴ Anthropological data from Whiting and Margaret Mead documents the problems in primitive societies and polygynous cultures when fathers are completely separated from women and children, and a more violent

society results from compulsive masculinity.⁵ In our own country, lower economic class white fathers have the least role in child rearing. Lower class black males also have less of a role than middle class fathers, but the pattern of men excluding themselves from child care predominates over all groups.⁶ All boys feel they need to prove their masculinity to some extent and reject feminine characteristics that they recognize within themselves

1 Warren D. Ten Houten, "The Black Family: Myth and Reality," *Psychiatry* 33 (May, 1970): 145-173, p. 160.

2 Abrahamsen, *Our Violent Society*, p. 229.

3 Whiting, p. 126.

4 *Ibid.*

5 Mead, *Male and Female*, p. 88; Whiting, p. 126.

6 Ten Houten, p. 170.

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because they see that this is what "wins" in the patriarchal world.¹ Young black boys have plenty of male adult role models to emulate because of the flexible nature of the black family and its inclusion of many figures not necessarily connected by blood.² For both white and black boys, even from female headed households, television and a look at the "street" provide models of masculine behavior.

Lionel Tiger postulated that a proclivity for male bonding is innate, and that machismo type behavior originates from this instinct.³ We can reject the idea of such an instinct by cross cultural data indicating that such behavior is by no means universal.⁴ However, Tiger makes some interesting observations in his study of all male groups. When they are connected with initiations and secret societies in primitive cultures, they become a factor in the breaking of ties with mothers and in maintaining dominance over and social distance from females.⁵ All male groups in any culture tend to facilitate the expression of aggression and provide group standards for maleness such as bravery and toughness.⁶ It is easy to apply these concepts to inner city gangs, motorcycle gangs, Klu Klux Clans, armies, etc.

However, male bonding cannot be regarded as a cause of machismo, only a manifestation. Anthropologists, feminists and psychoanalysts have

1 Whiting, p. 126.

2 Nobils, p. 687.

3 Lionel Tiger, *Men in Groups* (New York: Random House, 1969).

4 Mead, *Male and Female*, p. 88.

5 Tiger, p. 170.

6 *Ibid.*, pp. 175, 182, 183.

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all noted the more or less unconscious fear and envy men have of women because of their unique and awesome ability to bear children.¹ In peaceful primitive cultures this female power is glorified and women are given rightful respect for it, but in patriarchy female power has been denied, ripped away and denigrated.² In patriarchy there is a basic ambivalence toward women originating in "uterus envy" and compounded by guilt, denial, displacement, projection and rationalization.³ Misogyny results, and its expression is machismo.

The situation is further compounded by the identity problem. As Joan Weimer states, the young boy learns that "his mother is powerless but his father offers no intimacy."⁴ Yet male aggression may be his only hope for "money, prestige and status" and he must deny all that is gentle within him.⁵ Femininity becomes a threat and ordinarily one responds to a threat by

trying to escape from it or trying to destroy the threatening object.⁶

Learning theory explains some of machismo. Television is replete with male heroes using violence to achieve goals without negative

1 Wolfgang Lederer, *The Fear of Women* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, Javanovich Inc., 1968), pp. 1-10; Mead, *Male and Female*, p. 88; Phylis Chester, *About Men* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1978) p. 38.

2 Turnbull, *Politics of Non-Aggression*, pp. 168-171.

3 Lederer, p. 282; Chester, p. 71; Joan Myers Weimer, "The Mother, The Macho and The State," *International Journal of Women's Studies* 1 (January-February, 1978): 73-82, p. 73.

4 Weimer, p. 77.

5 Arnold Buss, "Aggression Pays," in *The Control of Aggression and Violence*, ed. Jerome Singer (New York: Academic Press, 1971), p. 17.

6 Ruth E. Hartley, "Sex-Role Pressure and the Socialization of the Male Child," in *Men and Masculinity*, ed. Joseph H. Pleck and Jack Sawyer (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall Inc., 1974), p. 9.

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sanctions.¹ In a survey of programming from 1967 to 1975, it was found that the "good" guys were most likely to be the killers.² Women were the most often killed and the heroes treat women with disdain.³ Even the commercials show male authority.⁴ Children's books (including classroom texts) and movies display the same themes.⁵

The training for the male role starts very early. More stringent demands are made on boys than on girls at an early age and enforced more harshly.⁶ Rohner found boys age two to six already more aggressive in 71% of the societies in a cross cultural study, but there was great differences in the amount of that aggression depending on how the children were raised.⁷ Ruth Hartley found kindergarten boys already restricting their interests and activities to those traditionally masculine while girls took another five or more years to do so gradually.⁸ Male school and peer group activities are explicitly organized around struggle and boys are encouraged to hunt, fish, fight and play war

1 George Garbner and Larry Gross, "Living with Television: The Violence Profile," *Journal of Communication* 26 (Spring, 1976): 173-199, p. 189.

2 *Ibid.*, p. 190.

3 *Ibid.*

4 Renate L. Welch et. al., "Subtle Sex-Role Cues in Children's Commercials," *Journal of Communications* 29 (Summer, 1979): 202-208, p. 207.

5 Annette Rickel and Linda Grant, "Sex Role Stereotypes in the Mass Media and Schools: Five Consistent Themes," *International Journal of Women's Studies* 2 (March 4, 1979): 164-179.

6 Hartley, p. 7.

7 Ronald P. Rohner, "Sex Differences in Aggression." *Ethos* 4 (Spring, 1972): 57-72, p. 62.

8 Hartley, p. 7.

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games by their fathers.¹ Boys at eight and eleven were found to be saying "they have to be able to fight in case a bully comes along" and they are expected "to be noisy" and "to get into trouble more than girls."² Young men are required to spend long periods in apprenticeship, schooling or unemployment before they can achieve a sense of efficacy in our society by obtaining employment.³

Violence can be viewed "as a clandestine masculine ideal in western culture."⁴ Male heroes

are John Wayne and playboy swingers, both of which treat women with disdain.⁵ "Macho, macho man, I want to be a macho man" is the first line of a recently popular song.⁶ The ideal male wields authority, especially over women, has unlimited sexual prowess, is invulnerable, has competition as his guiding principle, never discloses emotion, is tough and brave, has great power, is adept at oneupsmanship, can always fight victoriously if he needs to and doesn't need anyone.⁷ This is, of course, an impossible standard and creates anxiety in men because of their inability to reach it.

1 Montagu, *Nature of Aggression*, p. 105; Andrew Tolsen, *The Limits of Masculinity* (New York: Harper and Row, 1977), p. 25.

2 Hartley, p. 10.

3 Lionel Tiger, "Introduction," *International Social Science Journal* 23 (1971): 9-17, p. 15.

4 Jackson Toby, "Violence and the Masculine Ideal," *American Academy of Political and Social Science* 364 (March, 1966): 19-28, p. 19.

5 Jack O. Balswick and Charles Peck, "The Inexpressive Male: A Tragedy of American Society," *The Family Coordinator* 20 (October, 1971): 363-368, p. 364.

6 Village People, "Macho Man" (Los Angeles, California: Casa Blanca Record and Film Works, Inc., 1978).

7 Marc Fasteau, *The Male Machine* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1974).

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The man who feels any sort of inadequacy or is powerless in the male world is most likely to use force and violence where he can, in the home and in his neighborhood.¹ Karl Bednarik finds modern man generally in a crisis of masculinity.² Only a few men actually achieve dominance in work and economically, and their traditional male role in the home is being threatened.³ He describes the symptoms of this crisis as an "impotent anger" demonstrated by outbursts of blind rage and mysterious acts of violence, and the transfer of women into a sexual commodity.⁴ John Gagnon notes that "physical strength has lost its salience in the modern day world" which is threatening to men.⁵ The lower class male is the least powerful man and the farthest from the ideal in society and is therefore likely to be more overt in his machismo behavior. Andrew Tolson notes that working class masculinity is characterized by an "impulsive, aggressive style" more so than the middle class.⁶ Normal masculinity in the lower class is a threatening demeanor and "drunken violence is the last line of defense."⁷ He is more likely to insist on his "conjugal right" to authority in the home

1 James T. Tedeschi et. al., "Aggression and the Use of Coercive Power," *Journal of Social Issues* 33 (Winter, 1977): 101-125, p. 111.

2 Karl Bednarik, *The Male in Crisis*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1970).

3 Ibid., pp. 10, 22.

4 Ibid., pp. 24, 49.

5 John H. Gagnon, "Physical Strength, Once of Significance," in *Men and Masculinity*, ed. Joseph H. Pleach and Jack Sawyer (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1974), p. 28.

6 Tolsen, *Limits of Masculinity*, p. 28.

7 Ibid., p. 30.

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and an exemption from domestic work.¹ Violence is used when his power seems to be slipping or needs to be increased.²

Many characteristics have been cited as part of machismo behavior. Beatrice Whiting identifies "a preoccupation with physical strength and athletic prowess, or attempts to demonstrate daring and valor or behavior that is violent and aggressive."³ Thrill seeking behavior, inability to express emotions, independence, egotism and support of the military have been noted by other authors.⁴ Misogyny is inherent in machismo. This is shown by the valuing of sexual virility, the treatment of women as commodities and conquest objects, the insistence on female subjugation, the inability to cooperate with women, and the adherence to the "unwritten law" that female sexual infidelity must be avenged that have been associated with machismo in the literature.⁵ The dangerousness of machismo to women is illustrated in this quote from McComack: "Machismo is an attitude of male pride in sexual virility, a form of narcissism, that condones the sexual use and abuse of women, and, in the extreme,

1 Ibid., p. 70; Mirra Kunarovsky, *Blue Collar Marriage* (New York: Vintage Books, 1964), p. 235.

2 Hannah Arendt, *On Vengeance* (New York: Hancourt, Brace and World, Inc., 1969), pp. 46, 87.

3 Whiting, p. 127.

4 Robert A. Lewis, "Socialization Into National Violence: Familial Correlates of Hawkish Attitudes Toward War," *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 33 (November, 1971): 699-707, p. 702; Balswick, p. 364; Peter Greenberg, "The Thrill Seekers," *Human Behavior* 6 (April 1977): 16-23; Robert Brent Toplin, *Unchallenged Violence* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1975), p. 168.

5 William Sherwood and John H. McGrath III, "Why People Own Guns," *Journal of Communications* 26 (Fall, 1976), p. 613; MacDonald, *Murderer and Victim*, p. 8; Toplin, p. 167; Miller, *Milieu of Gang Delinquency*, p. 8; Lewis Coser, "Some Social Functions of Violence," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 364 (March, 1966), p. 11; Tedeschi, p. 114; Bromberg, *Mold of Murderer*, p. 29.

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violence as a dimension of sexual gratification and instrumental to sexual goals."¹ We can also note Jackson Toby's tape recorded interview with an imprisoned armed robber who said he would kill his wife if she messed around because "it's my wife."² He wouldn't do anything to the other man, just kill the woman. Machismo, therefore, is the male attitudes and behavior arising from and supported by the patriarchal social structure which expresses misogyny, glorifies violence, emphasizes virility, despises gentleness and expressing any emotions except anger and rage, and is used to enforce the subjugation of woman.

There is considerable evidence of linkages between machismo attitudes and violent behavior. One of the additional characteristics of machismo behavior is owning and/or carrying a gun.³ In a multistate sample of 1504 American men and women, the most significant correlation with gun ownership was a willingness to use violence and approval of violence.⁴ Whites were more likely to own guns than blacks, but the races are about equal in handgun ownership.⁵ Having been a victim of violent crime

1 Thelma McCormack, "Machismo in Media Research: A Critical Review of Research on Violence and Pornography," *Social Problems* 25 (June, 1978): 544-545, p. 545.

2 Jackson Toby "Violence and the Masculine Ideal: Some Qualitative Data," *Annals of the American Academy of the Political and Social Sciences* 364 (March, 1966): 19-28, p. 221

3 Toplin, *Unchallenged Violence*, p. 168; James D. Wright and Linda L. Marston, "The Ownership of the Means of Destruction: Weapons in the U.S.," *Social Problems* 23 (October, 1974): 93-107, p. 101.

4 Williams and McGrath, p. 22.

5 J. Sherwood Williams and John McGrath, "A Social Profile of Urban Gun Owners," in *Violent Crime*, ed. James A. Lonciardi and Anne E. Pottieger (Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1978), p. 55.

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showed no correlation with gun ownership, suggestion that other variables, such as machismo, are more important than realistic and well founded fear.¹ Firearm ownership is concentrated in rural areas, the south and among veterans.² The rural gun owners may use their guns primarily for hunting, but more than 58% of the possessors in urban areas do not hunt. Handguns cannot be considered as a cause of violence.³ However, many researchers conclude that the only difference between assault and murder is the severity of the outcome, and guns are by far the most lethal weapon.⁴ Guns in the home, ostensibly kept for defense, are at least sometimes used impulsively in the heat of an argument without death being intended by the perpetrator.⁵ 74.8% of the respondents to a nationwide survey favored gun control legislation and women were significantly more likely to do so than men.⁶

Many other indicators link violence with machismo. Two of the countries with the highest homicide rates in the world, Columbia and Mexico, also have strong machismo ethics.⁷ The highest rates of homicide in the United States are found in the deep south (Mississippi, Alabama and Louisiana) and in the west (Texas, New Mexico and Nevada),

1 Williams and McGrath, "Why People Own Guns," p. 22.

2 Williams and McGrath, "Profile of Gun Owners," p. 53.

3 Ibid., p. 53.

4 Mulvihill, p. 239.

5 Ibid., p. 240.

6 Williams and McGrath, *Why People Own Guns*, p. 22; Wright and Marston, p. 101.

7 Weimer, p. 73.

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both areas characterized by exaggerated machismo.¹ These six states have an average homicide rate of 13.6 per 100,000 population which is almost four times greater than the rate in all of New England, an area that less idealizes rugged masculinity.² We can also note that Arizona, Texas and Mississippi have the highest number of guns per capita while New England and the Eastern United States have approximately half the percentage of households owning guns than the South and West.³ Marshall Clinard and Daniel Abbott, when determining the differences between two slum areas in Kempala, Uganda, found that the area characterized by fewer negative attitudes toward fighting, more prostitution and more wife beating was also the area of greatly higher crime rate.⁴ Richard Sipes found that cultures exhibiting a great deal of war-like activity were significantly more likely to engage in a great deal of combative sports activities.⁵ Both Hepburn and Erlanger conclude from separate reviews of empirical research concerning the subculture of violence theory that a "subculture of masculinity" better explains the evidence.⁶

Several studies of murderers have noted machismo characteristics. Ruotolo described only four male murderers, but noticed that they all

1 Webster, p. 42; Doemer, "Index of Southerners Revisited", pp. 52, 53.

2 Webster, p. 40.

3 Ramsey Clark, *Crime in America* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1970), p. 104.

4 Marshall Clinard and Daniel Abbot, *Crime in Developing Countries* (New York: J. Wiley and

Sons, 1973), p. 164.

5 Richard G. Sipes, "War, Sports and Aggression: An Empirical Test of Two Rival Theories", *American Anthropologist* 75 (February, 1973), p. 71.

6 Hepburn, p. 93; Erlanger, p. 289.

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"confused gentleness with weakness".1 Maletzky examined 22 male subjects with a long history of violent behavior.2 Sixteen had a history of hyperactivity, 19 had fathers who beat them, 16 had problems with alcohol, 7 had a history of head trauma, 14 had abnormal EEG's, but all "appeared hypermasculine".3 Bach-Y-Rita's group of 117 male inpatients whose chief complaint was explosive violent behavior also showed a variety of incidence of neurological symptoms but were "generally outwardly hypermasculine and intent on physically defending their masculinity against other men".4 In psychiatric exams of 367 men accused of murder in Scotland, Gillies found evidence of tolerance of brutality, drunkenness, wifebeating, robbery, murder and rape."5 One hundred and one of these men had killed women.6

A series of laboratory experiments also show the connection between aggressiveness and machismo characteristics. Perry and Perry found that aggressive boys are likely to perceive signs of suffering as indications of success of their aggression.7 They found that when a victim did not express pain, these boys became very hostile and gave

1 Andrew K. Ruotolo, "Neurotic Pride and Homicide", *American Journal of Psychoanalysis* 35 (Spring, 1975): 1-18, p. 16.

2 Maletzky, p. 179.

3 Ibid., pp. 179-180.

4 Bach-Y-Rita, et. al., "Episodic Dyscontrol: A Study of 130 Violent Patients", p. 1477.

5 Hunter Gillies, "Homicide in the West of Scotland", *The British Journal of Psychology*, 28 (February, 1976): 105-127, p. 116.

6 Ibid., p. 105.

7 David G. Perry and Louise C. Perry, "Denial of Suffering in the Victim as a Stimulant to Violence in Aggressive Boys", *Child Development* 45 (March, 1974): 55-62, p. 55.

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increasingly intensive shocks.1 Taylor and Smith found that male students exhibiting traditionally dominant attitudes toward women also showed more aggressive behavior towards both males and females.2 Using electronically measuring pillow clubs, Young et. al. showed that young men favoring subordinate status for women were less aggressive toward female opponents when the women were passive and only defended themselves.3 However, when the females attacked, the traditionalists increased significantly the intensity of blows, much more so than the egalitarian males.4 Dogmatism (measuring authoritarianism) was related to aggression and hostility for males but only to hostility in females in yet another study.5 Although erotic stimuli stimulated increased aggression by both males and females, male subjects gave the strongest shocks in research conducted by Yoran Jaffe and his associates.6 Although caution must be exercised in applying laboratory data on aggression to real life, these studies add to the support of the association of various characteristics of machismo with aggression in males.

1 Ibid., p. 60.

2 Stuart P. Taylor and Ian Smith, "Aggression as a Function of Sex of Victim and Males Attitude Toward Female", *Psychological Reports* 35 (December, 1974): 1095-1098, pp. 1096, 1097. '

3 David M. Young et. al., "Is Chivalry Dead?", *Journal of Communication* 25 (Winter, 1975):

57-64, p. 63.

4 Ibid.

5 Steven Heyman, "Dogmatism, Hostility, Aggression and Gender Roles", *Journal of Clinical Psychology* 33 (July, 1977): 694-698, p. 695.

6 Yoran Jaffe et. al., "Sexual Arousal and Behavioral Aggression", *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 30 (December, 1974): 759-764, p. 762.

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It has been shown that machismo is present to some extent in most men, but that its outward display is more prevalent in lower class males. There is also empirical evidence for the idea that machismo is especially evident in black males.¹ Black gang members were more likely to rate images of sexual virility, approval of pimping (objectification of females), and defense of a fighting or tough reputation higher than middle or lower class black or white teenaged boys.² As Michelle Wallace points out, machismo attitudes in black men are not a result of racial characteristics or the family heritage of slavery.³ They resulted from the systematic degradation of black men (and equally so, black women) by white racist society, which was revolted against by black men in the 1960's with an image of strength and violence.⁴ Along with this image came misogyny which was in part an adoption of white male patriarchal values (it works for them), partially a result of encouragement for this sentiment by white racists, and somewhat a scapegoating mechanism.⁵ "Black Macho" has been fostered by the continuing powerlessness of the black male.⁶

Lynn Curtis has developed a theory to explain the prevalence of criminal violence in black, poor young men. He first identifies

1 Ten Houten, p. 160.

2 Robert Gordon et. al., "Values and Gang Delinquency: A Study of Street Corner Groups", *American Journal of Sociology* 69 (September, 1963) 109-128, p. 123.

3 Michele Wallace, *Black Macho and the Myth of the Superwoman* (New York: The Dial Press, 1978), pp. 13-29.

4 Ibid., p. 36.

5 Ibid., pp. 24, 116, 161.

6 Ibid., p. 30.

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subcultural values of the majority of people who are black and poor. They are different from the values of the dominant culture (which includes middle class blacks), but they do not include violence. However, there is a group of poor black males who hold different and opposing values to the dominant culture that Curtis identifies as a violent contraculture. These men have found it impossible to express the characteristics of the ideal male through economic or occupational roles, and rather than accepting their fate or turning hostility inward through mental illness or drug addiction, they have accepted attitudes that foster violence. These include an "emphasis on physical prowess and toughness", on "sexual prowess and exploitation, ... on shrewdness and manipulateness" and on "thrill seeking and change." These can be identified as machismo values. Curtis also conceptualizes that the high rate of intra male black violence further reflects the acceptance of a violent resolution of conflict, the prevalence of jealousy, a "brittle sensitivity", and the abundance of gun carrying by these men.¹

Curtis notes the attitude of exploitativeness toward women held by these men, but fails to see the misogyny that is as much an aspect of the macho behavior as is the violence. He recognizes the higher percentage of males assaulting females in black families than vice versus

but fails to analyze wife abuse as a major factor.² He fails to see the jealousy noted as an outgrowth of male dominance and ownership.³ Curtis discusses an idea that women are more verbally skillful than men and

1 Curtis, *Violence, Peace, and Culture*, pp. 12, 23, 24, 29, 30, 50-52.

2 *Ibid.*, p. 58.

3 *Ibid.*, p. 50.

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feels that black husbands may resort to violence to "shut her up."¹ That any sort of verbosity or lack of it is a justifiable reason for homicide is a subtle way of blaming the victim, and Colin and Romanowski found that there was no difference in amount of verbal aggression expressed between males and females in a study of college students.² Curtis also states: "The considerably higher percentage of wife offenders in black marital homicides than assaults leads to the speculation that...⁴ black wife may have more determination to kill than the husband once a violent course of action is initiated."³ However, Curtis can be agreed with that black ghetto women are less likely to adhere to the contraculture values than black men but "may of necessity" have a "certain acceptance of violence when the situation demands it."⁴ The extreme misogyny of black men seems to be demanding it more and more.⁵

Lest it be forgotten that machismo is widespread in our society, the images of women being sexually and physically abused in pornography, on record albums, in fashion magazines and in men's magazines and on billboards are rampant.⁶ The masculine mystique in American politics

1 *Ibid.*, p. 58.

2 Sanford Golin and Michael A. Romanowski, "Verbal Aggression as a Function of Sex of Subject and Sex of Target," *The Journal of Psychology* 97 (September, 1977): 141-149, p. 147.

3 *Ibid.*

4 Curtis, *Violence, Race, and Culture*, pp. 58, 59.

5 See Chapter IV

6 Julia Landon, "Images of Violence Against Women," *Victimology: An International Journal* 2 (1977-1978): 510-524, p. 510; J.J. Gayford, "Sex Magazines," *Medicine, Science and the Law* 18 (January, 1978): 44- 51, p. 48.

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is obvious.¹ Seven out of ten American men think it is a good idea for their sons to engage in fistfights.² Machismo is not only a characteristic of poor black men; it is just often more directly expressed in that culture because white, racist patriarchal society has rendered those men powerless except on the street and in their own homes. This can at least partially explain both the high rate of male, black, ghetto murderers and also the higher rate of black female homicide victims than that of white female victims.³

Machismo has been shown to be substantially linked to violence in our culture and cross culturally. Machismo attitudes have also been shown to include misogyny and to originate from patriarchy along with misogyny. It can therefore be theorized that misogyny plays an important part in homicide of women.

1 Gloria Stéiném, "The Myth of Masculine Mystique," in *Men and Masculinity* ed. Joseph H. Pleck and Jack Sawyer (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1974), p. 134.

2 Rodney Stark and James McEvoy, "Middle Class Violence," *Psychology Today* 4 (November, 1970), p. 110.

3 Maxine Lercher, "Black Women and Homicide," *Lethal Aspects of Urban Violence*

(Lexington, Massachusetts: Lexington Books, 1979), p. 84.

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Gynocide

Homicide of women can be viewed within the context of other violent practices directed against women. Men use various mechanisms to generate fear in women and thereby insure the continuation of the patriarchy and their continued domination.² Homicide of women is only one such practice. Andrea Dworkin defines gynocide as "the systematic crippling and/or killing of women by men."² Practices of gynocide can be considered as evidence of general misogyny, and can be traced throughout history. There are simply no examples of correspondingly serious and lethal victimizations of men by women.

Witchburning, the wholesale slaughter of women who did not conform to the stereotyped role of the subservient medieval woman, is the earliest well documented form of gynocide in history. "Tens of thousands of female peasant lay healers and midwives were burned as witches" in Europe from the 1500's to the 1700's.³ These women were often only guilty of passing along to other women traditional knowledge about childbirth, abortion and contraception.⁴ They were usually strong and independent women who lived in an age where the Church was sacrosanct and had decreed that the female sex in general, and sexual knowledge in particular, were inherently evil.⁵ The Church had denied formal

1 Ellen Frankfort, *Vaginal Politics* (New York: Bantam Books, 1972), p. 5.

Andrea Dworkin, *Our Blood* (New York: Harper and Row, 1974), p. 16.

2 Claudia Dreifus, "Introduction," *Seizing Our Bodies*, ed.

3 Claudia Dreifus (New York: Vintage Books, 1977), p. xxi.

4 *Ibid.*, p. xxii.

5 Mary Daly, *Gyn/Ecology* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1978), p. 184.

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education to women and yet decreed in the 14th century, "If a woman dare to cure without having studied, she is a witch and must die."¹ Another part of their heresy was the midwives' and healers' treatment of the poor which challenged the Church's doctrine that suffering on earth would bring reward in the hereafter.² Also caught in the witchburning frenzy were many psychologically disturbed old women who had no sheltering families.³ A few nonconforming men were also killed, but the pattern of destruction was overwhelmingly anti-female.⁴

In another culture, that of India, which was and is equally patriarchal, another form of gynocide was taking place. The practice of Sutte or the inclusion of the widow in the male's funeral pyre was firmly based on the belief that the wife was responsible for her husband's death, if not in this life, then in her previous lives. Since the practice was for a man to have many wives and concubines, they were also included in the ritual. We commonly think of suttee as a form of suicide, but when women historians have studied the ritual it was found that the widows were often drugged or coerced. Even if not forced, the women realized that their alternatives were few. Widowhood in India was a form of punishment, first for the wife's causing of the man's death and second for not committing suttee as she should have.

1 Helen Marieskind, "The Woman's Health Movement: Past Roots," in *Seizing Our Bodies*, ed. Claudia Dreifus (New York: Vintage Books, 1977),

2 *Ibid.*

3 *Ibid.*

4 *Ibid.*

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A surviving widow could either sell herself into prostitution, if young enough, or throw herself on the mercy of her husband's relatives for a life of servitude or starvation. The romanticized version of devoted suicide which is common knowledge about the practice is a myth originating with male, 19th century scholars. Only British law began to end the practice in the 1800's, but enforcement was always a low priority. Suttee still occasionally occurs today, and the Indian beliefs about the low and expendable nature of the female sex in general continue to persist. The modern gynocide in India consists of insisting that men eat before women so that females often go hungry and the starving of undesirable female babies.¹ It has also been noted that men kill wives and daughters for "public embarrassment," especially "habitual disobedience," and for having illegitimate children in India in contemporary times.²

Another historical pattern of female destruction is the Chinese practice of footbinding. Again, male historical myth has encouraged us to believe that this was some twisted form of female vanity. In fact, no Chinese woman was considered attractive to males unless her feet were tiny stumps which had been stunted by years of excruciatingly painful binding during childhood.² As in other early patriarchal societies, the Chinese woman was worthless without a husband. She may

¹Daly, pp. 114, 115, 116. 122-133.

² Edwin D. Driver, "Interaction and Criminal Homicide in India," *Social Forces* 60 (December, 1971): 153-158, pp. 155, 156.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 137.

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not have been killed, but she was, in effect, crippled. She was made into the ultimate example of total dependency on her husband, unable to move more than a few steps without assistance, let alone run away from him.¹

These examples of destruction of women from history are more than isolated cases from barbaric cultures. Such infliction of pain and horror originating in beliefs of male superiority that survived for centuries cannot be dismissed lightly. These practices not only destroyed vast numbers of women, but they served to remind survivors that their lives were also in great jeopardy if they dared to challenge the established order of patriarchy. All patriarchal cultures have a history containing practices like these that have institutionalized the degradation of women. Our own is no exception. Perhaps it is somewhat less barbaric, but it is no less horrifying.

After our own witchburnings ended in the 17th century, this country seemed to be mainly occupied with expansion and the destruction of the American Indian and the exploitation of the slaves. Both black males and black females were dehumanized by slavery, one no more so than the other.² The black woman was occasionally the sex partner of the master, but she usually gained no special favors for her service, and the practice often involved aspects of rape.³ For the most part, the

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 136.

² Wallace, pp. 17, 20, 21. 130.

³ G.J. Barker-Benfield, "Sexual Surgery in Late Ninetenth Century America," in *Seizing Our Bodies*, ed. Claudia Dreifus (New York: Vintage Books, 1977), pp. 14, 21, 27.

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slave family was a fairly intact, stable unit with the father having as much prestige and power as the mother. His opportunities for special distinction in the community were actually more impressive and varied than hers. The practice of slavery generally can be seen as part of the

patriarchal pattern of domination and oppression.¹

By the late nineteenth century a development was occurring in America which was again destructive specifically to women. The nature of a woman was thought to be totally a function of her female organs. She was encouraged to direct all of her efforts towards reproduction and though to be constantly on the verge of insanity because of the dominance of her sexual organs. Within this context, American gynecologists began to practice the surgical treatment of women's psychological problems. Clitoridectomy, oophorectomy or female castration, or hysterectomy were thought to be the definitive treatment for such problems as masturbation, insanity, deviation from the proper female role, overactive sexual appetite and rebellion against father or husband, and cure was proclaimed when the woman returned to a docile, subservient role in relation to that male.² Between 1880 and 1910, at least 150,000 female castrations alone were performed.³

1 Wallace, pp. 17, 20, 21, 130.

2 G. J. Barker-Benfield, "Sexual Surgery in Late Nineteenth Century America," in *Seizing Our Bodies*, ed. Claudia Dreifus (New York: Vintage Books, 1977), pp. 14, 21, 27.

3 *Ibid.*, p. 24.

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Misogyny is rampant in the medical profession in America today. In spite of the gains that women have made, their health is still in the hands of an overwhelmingly male controlled and male practiced health care system. The research upon which our medical knowledge is based was almost always carried out with male subjects. The men who control medicine have been shaped by the same patriarchal society as has produced female destroyers throughout history. Their misogyny may be unconscious, but there is considerable evidence that it exists. The education of physicians has been and still is fraught with sexist language and ideas. The practice of medicine is a form of violence against women. As stated by Claudia Dreifus, "these men have unique on-the-job opportunities to act out their misogyny."¹

The textbooks of physicians reveal both the sexism of the doctors writing them and the attitudes passed on to the medical students learning from them. The 1971 revision of Willson, Beecham and Carnington's standard text, *OBSTETRICS AND GYNECOLOGY*, which in 1977 was being used in 60 of the nation's medical schools, is replete with sexism.² Women are depicted as "childlike, helpless creatures with animal like" natures who are dominated by a need for pain and suffering.³ Other texts may only imply such sentiments but these authors actually state: "The traits that compose the core of the female personality are feminine narcissism, masochism and passivity."⁴ The text goes on to

1 Claudia Dreifus, "Introduction," in *Seizing Our Bodies*, ed. Claudia Dreifus (New York: Vintage Books, 1977), p. xix.

2 Kay Weiss, "What Medical Students Learn About Women," in *Seizing Our Bodies*, ed. Claudia Dreifus (New York: Vintage Books, 1977), p. 213.

3 *Ibid.*, pp. 213, 214.

4 *Ibid.*, p. 215.

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describe the physician as innately superior to women and states that most women could benefit from psychiatric care.¹ In 27 other medical gynecological texts reviewed in 1973, all were still teaching the myth that vaginally stimulated orgasm was preference, in contrast to the 1966 findings of Masters and Johnson.² Nine of 12 of these texts openly advocated the traditional female role for women.³ Even as textbooks are hopefully presently being revised to eliminate

some of this sexual bias, we must remember that most physicians were educated in this manner and worse.

The tragedy for women is that when physicians have been taught to hold these attitudes, the females that they treat may be misdiagnosed and given poor treatment as a result. In 1972, 40 percent of the United States female population were prescribed mood altering drugs, "mainly tranquilizers, as their only medication." About half of these women manifested symptoms of physical disease that were not treated.⁴ Dysmenorrhea and nausea of pregnancy are examples of disorders that have well documented organic etiologic causes yet are generally suggested to be psychologically originating. Dysmenorrhea is described in Krupp and Chattan's 1972 gynecology text as being pain which "is always secondary to an emotional problem."⁵ When a physician believes that symptoms are due to psychogenics, his attitude toward the patient may deteriorate. Childbirth was once the exclusive arena of women. The climate of the witch hunts, during which many midwives were burned, began the takeover of

1 Ibid.

2 Ibid.

3 Ibid., p. 220.

4 Ibid., p. 309.

5 K. Jean Lennane and R. John Lennane, "Alleged Psychogenic Disorders in Women-A Possible Manifestation of Sexual Prejudice," *The New England Journal of Medicine* 288 (February 8, 1973) pp. 288.

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childbirth by male physicians in the 17th century.¹ Obstetrical practice evolved into a ritual in which the woman was reduced to a semihelpless state, strapped into a position anatomically detrimental to delivery of a child but convenient to the doctor who became the star of the birth process.² During most childbirths the doctor controls completely the course of labor, the medication received, the level of consciousness of the mother and even the onset of labor. The Willson et al. *OBSTETRICS AND GYNECOLOGY* textbook cited before teaches that "most" women need to be given a labor inducing drug because of their neurotic fears which will probably interfere with the normal progress of labor.³

The traditional religious and patriarchal attitude that a painful labor is women's lot in life still has ramifications today. The natural childbirth movement, although to be applauded for its movement away from doctor-oriented childbirth, was founded by a thoroughly sexist physician, Dr. Grantly Dick-Read. Dick-Read writes of the "inborn dependence of women" and maintains that giving birth is woman's most important purpose of life.⁴ His attitude has reinforced the traditional ideas that pain in childbirth is psychological in origin in spite of well documented evidence of the physical etiology. He writes scathingly that "one shrieking woman can ruin a dozen labours" and "should be looked upon as a definite menace in a maternity hospital and treated accordingly."⁵

1 Dreifus, "Introduction," p. xxii.

2 Adrienne Rich, "The Theft of Childbirth," in *Seizing Our Bodies*, ed. Claudia Dreifus (New York: Vintage Books, 1977), pp. 149, 150.

3 Weiss, "What Medical Students Learn," p. 215.

4 Rich, "The Theft of Childbirth," p. 150.

5 Lennane and Lennane, "Alleged Psychogenic Disorders," p. 290.

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Poor women are especially victimized by the male medical system. Before the 1974 federal

guidelines against coercive sterilizations, there was a wave of this destructive practice. In one major teaching hospital in Los Angeles between 1968 and 1970 elective hysterectomy increased by 742 percent, elective tubal ligation by 470 percent, and tubal ligation after delivery by 151 percent.¹ Many of the women involved were Spanish speaking and did not know what they were signing. Others never understood the permanence of the procedure. Most were approached during the late stages of labor while in pain and/or medicated, and some never gave permission at all.² A survey of 154 of the major teaching hospitals in the United States, revealed that at least 36 were in noncompliance with the federal regulations six months after they were issued. Two thirds of the hospitals queried never granted the investigating American Civil Liberties Union the courtesy of a reply.³

Thousands of poor women are being denied safe abortions yearly by laws which restrict this medical treatment to those who can pay. No matter how one feels about abortion as a moral issue, the prejudice involved as the situation stands must be questioned. However the issue is to be decided, it is discriminatory to women that the laws regarding a situation so intimately involved with being female, will be debated and decided in the overwhelmingly male institutions of medicine, the Church, the legislators and the courts.

1 Claudia Dreifus, "Sterilizing the Poor," *Seizing Our Bodies*, Claudia Dreifus, ed. (New York: Vintage Books, 1977), p. 116.

2 *Ibid.*, pp. 106-116.

3 *Ibid.*, p. 119.

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The true saga of the birth control pill is another example of the male medical system's violent assault on the health of women. The FDA's decision to approve the first version was based on clinical studies of only 132 women who had taken it continuously for a year or longer.¹ The studies were mainly conducted for efficacy not for detrimental effects.² "Three women died but were not even autopsied."³ By 1969 evidence against the pill was accumulating and detailed consumer labeling was advocated by the FDA and HEW. However, the AMA objected strenuously and only the briefest of labeling was included.⁴ During the Congressional hearings on the pill one doctor testified that, "If you tell a woman she's going to get a headache, she will," as an argument against warning women of the dangers of oral contraception.⁵ In spite of the ever increasing documentation about the health endangering side effects of the birth control pill and the presently more detailed warnings included, usage continues to be widespread and doctors seldom explain all the ramifications to the users.

Millions of young women were exposed to another medication which is also potentially fatal, while still in the womb. The drug is diethylstilbestrol or DES, a carcinogen. The medication was prescribed for threatened abortion in the 1950's when doctors were unaware of its

1 Barbara Seaman, "The Dangers of Oral Conception" and "The Dangers of Sex Hormones," In *Seizing Our Bodies*, Claudia Dreifus, ed., (New York: Vintage Books, 1977), p. 78.

2 Barbara Ehrenreich, "Gender and Objectivity in Medicine," *International Journal of Health Services* (Fall 1974), p. 621.

3 Seaman, "The Dangers," p. 78.

4 Ehrenreich, "Gender and Objectivity," p. 621.

5 *Ibid.*

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dangers.¹ Where sexism is operating now is in the reluctance of physicians to cooperate with the efforts to find the women who were prescribed the drug so that any resulting female children can

be closely monitored for signs of cancer.² The motive often cited for the lack of enthusiastic searching of old records is lack of time, but it may be suspected that fear of malpractice lawsuits is also affecting the situation.³ The AMA advocated widespread publication of the danger as an adequate measure, but the women who took the drug often were not told what it was, and DES was frequently combined with vitamins and other ingredients.⁴ The FDA reacted slowly to the evidence and DES is still used in cattle feed.⁵

One third of all hysterectomies performed are unnecessary according to a study performed by doctors working for Ralph Nader.⁶ The rate of hysterectomies done in the United States is twice that of England and Wales, and yet the death rate from cancer of the uterus is less than that from hysterectomies and complications in this country.⁷ The debilitating radical mastectomies usually performed by physicians for

1 Seaman, "The Dangers," p. 167.

2 Ibid., p. 168.

3 Ibid.

4 Ibid.

5 Ellen Frankfort, *Vaginal Politics*, (New York: Bantam Books, 1972), p. 101.

6 Ibid., p. 25.

7 Julia Graham Lear, "Women's Health: The Side Effects of Sex Bias," *The Victimization of Women*, Jane Roberts Chapman and Margaret Gates, eds., (Beverly Hills, California: Sage Publications, 1978), p. 229.

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breast cancer are no more life extending than lumpectomies and radiation.¹ Estrogens are prescribed by many doctors routinely to postmenopausal women even though they are ineffective in retarding the side effects of aging and can cause cancer.² There have been at least 17 deaths, 110 septic abortions and 800,000 women with complications ranging from severe cramps to severe infections necessitating hysterectomy, caused by the intra uterine device called the Daikon Shield. This crime against women was perpetrated by an unholy alliance of a male physician, a male-operated drug company and a male inventor who used shoddy research, unethical promotion and inadequate testing to make a great deal of money by victimizing women.³ The physical harm done to women by the male medical profession is extensive and frightening. Equally destructive is the branch of medicine that deals with women's minds.

Starting with Freud's concept of "penis envy" the psychiatric tradition has been one of the severest forms of crippling for women. Even most psychiatrists and psychologists today maintain that normal women are passive, gentle, quiet, security seeking, narcissistic and noncompetitive.⁴ Women who challenge that kind of role are often labeled neurotic and guided through therapy to a "better adjustment." Traditional therapy tends to reinforce crippling sex role stereotypes, negate

1 Rose Kushner, "The Politics of Breast Cancer," In *Seizing Our Bodies*, Claudia Dreifus, ed., (New York: Vintage Books, 1977), p. 188.

2 Seaman, "The Dangers," pp. 172-176.

3 Mark Dowie and Tracy Johnston, "A Case of Corporate Malpractice and the Daikon Shield," *Seizing Our Bodies*, Claudia Dreifus, ed., (New York: Vintage Books, 1977).

4 Susan Stanford Friedman, *A Woman's Guide to Therapy*, (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1979), p. 11.

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personal potentials, diagnose healthy rebellion as illness and foster dependence on male figures.¹ The therapeutic relationship itself is an almost total surrender of power to the usually male

therapist. The psychiatrist has an emotional stake in keeping his patient passive, dependent and subservient and gets sexual confirmation from her admiration.² Trying to maintain independence is labeled resistance and catalogued as another symptom.³ The therapist becomes a mystical, all knowing patriarchal father figure who has tremendous influence over a woman patient's feelings about herself.

Twice as many women as men are labeled psychotic or neurotic who are in psychiatric treatment according to a survey reported by Phyllis Chesler.⁴ The reasons for this are many. First, all men are usually allowed a greater range of acceptable behavior before getting a psychiatric diagnosis. Secondly, the disturbances of men are given different labels like personality disorders, alcoholism or drug addiction, conditions not usually treated by incarceration.⁵ There is more social tolerance for help seeking behavior and displays of emotional distress from women, not that this behavior is "either valued or treated with kindness."⁶ Finally, our patriarchal environment holds all kinds of psychologically stressful forces and double binds for women. Unfortunately, psychology and psychiatry maintain that "people's problems stem from

1 Ibid., pp. 6-14.

2 Ibid.

3 Ibid., p. 30.

4 Phyllis Chesler, *Women and Madness*, (New York: Avon Books, 1972), pp. 42-43.

5 Ibid., p. 38.

6 Ibid.

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individual hang-ups rather than from basic injustices in the society as a whole."¹ Therefore, the woman is treated with the goal of having her conform to society rather than giving support for a challenge of that society.

One of the most destructive aspects of the psychiatric field is the sexual exploitation of female patients. Alarming numbers of women are reporting outright rape by therapists or subtle insinuation that sex would be a good adjunct to therapy.² The vulnerability of a woman in therapy in terms of her original emotional distress, her desire for the approval of her therapist and the awe with which she has a tendency to regard him makes sexual exploitation easily possible.³ The damage to the woman's condition and self esteem is incalculable.

The violence being perpetuated by the American medical profession is relatively subtle in comparison to current gynocidal practices in other cultures. Perhaps the most horrifying example is the genital mutilation which is practiced in much of East, West and Central Africa and parts of the Near East.⁴ The procedure can have one of three forms:

1. Sunna circumcision: removal of the prepuce and tip of the clitoris...

2. Excision or cliterodectomy: removal of the entire clitoris together with the adjacent parts of the labia minora and all external genitalia except the labia majora.

1 Friedman, *A Woman's Guide to Therapy*, p. 9.

2 Ibid., pp. 33-36.

3 Ibid.

4 Fran P. Hosken, "Female Circumcision in Africa," *Victimology: An International Journal* 2 (3—4) (1977-1978): 487; Diana E. Russell and Nicole Van de Ven, ed., *Crimes Against Women*, (Millbrae, California: Los Femmes, 1976), p. 37.

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3. Infibulation or Excision and Infibulation: removal of the whole clitoris and labia minora as well as part of the labia majora. The two sides of the vulva are then closed over the vagina

except for a small opening posteriorly to allow passage of urine and menstrual blood. The closing is made of thorns or sewn with catgut... Women who have been infibulated must be cut to allow intercourse and they must be cut further to permit delivery of a child.¹

This is often done in villages without anesthesia, on the ground, "using "knives, glass splinters, or, most often, razor blades." It is also done by physicians in modern urban hospitals. The practices can cause death, damage to adjacent structures, infertility and severe infections. Rough estimates indicate that 25-30 million young girls and women are victimized by this brutal practice each year.²

Men everywhere in these Moslem and African cultures require that the procedure is done before they will marry a woman: therefore, it originates in the patriarchy whether actually performed by woman or a man. It denies the woman sexual pleasure even in its mildest form. Infibulation leaves her sexual activity completely under patriarchal control. The father has her closed; the husband opens her to a desired size for his pleasure and can have her reinfibulated after childbirth. That these operations are practiced in areas where the status of women is lowest comes as no surprise. If nothing else demonstrates misogyny, this atrocity does.³

These same cultures reinforce male dominance with other forms of

1 Hosken, "Female Circumcision in Africa," pp. 489.

2 Ibid., pp. 491, 494.

3. Daly, pp. 151-177.

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violence against women. Wives can be killed with very little negative sanction for failure to obey their husbands.¹ In the Islamic culture: If an Arab woman commits adultery, either her husband, her father or even her brother will kill her, because she has brought disgrace upon both her husband's family and her own family. The killing of the woman is called "the honor debt." Her dead body will restore honor to the family name.² In Algeria, if a bride is not proved a virgin on the wedding night, she will be killed by her father or brothers.³ A Saudi Arabian princess was executed (along with her lover) by her grandfather for committing adultery in 1977, although her husband had left her.⁴ An anonymous prominent woman interviewed in respect to that case speculated that the princess was made into an example because she tried to publically revolt against the prescribed, completely subjugated role of women in that culture."⁵

These violent practices against women keep them subordinate through instilling very realistic fear. Cultures which positively sanction such gynocide have also been linked with high general rates of homicide. Tibamanya Mushanga studied twelve African tribal cultures and found many which were basically nonviolent.⁶ For instance, in Ankole, violence against wives by husbands is severely sanctioned.⁷ "The man risks losing status and being subjected to ridicule and shame," and, not surprisingly,

1 M.O.4. Malik and O. Salvi, "A Profile of Homicide in the Sudan," *Forensic Science* 7 (March-April, 1976): 141-150, p. 146.

2 Russel and Van de Ven, p. 100.

3 PBS, "Death of a Princess," 12 May 1980.

4 Ibid.

5 Tibamanya Mushanga, "Wife Victimization in East and Central Africa," *Victimology: An International Journal* 2 (1977/1978): 479-485.

6 Ibid., p. 482.

7 Ibid.

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this culture was not listed as practicing genital mutilation.¹ Mushanga concludes from his research: "In such societies, the annual rate of criminal homicide tends to be lower."² Machismo and misogyny are apparently discouraged.

An instance of violence against women which is prevalent in all patriarchal cultures is rape. Andrea Dworkin states: "Rape is no excess, no aberration, no accident, no mistake - it embodies sexuality as the culture defines it."³ Rape appears in many forms: sexual abuse of children, gang rape, forced intercourse with wives, sexual torture of female prisoners, intercourse with therapists, bride capture and group rape as a puberty rite, as well as the most common form.⁴ Rape is "an exercise of domination and the infliction of degradation upon the victim" and serves to restrict the independence of women and remind them of their vulnerability, thereby keeping them subjugated across all patriarchal societies.⁵

Rape is a crime of violence, not sex. The recent increases of rape, assault and murder in the United States all follow the same curve.⁶ Dorothy Lewis and her associates found that the characteristics of violent offenders resemble closely those of rapists.⁷ A study of 133 convicted

1 Ibid; Hosken, p. 487.

2 Mushanga, p. 482.

3 Andrea Dworkin, *Our Blood* (New York: Harper and Row, 1974), p. 46.

4 Susan Brownmiller, *Against Our Will* (New York: Bantam Books, 1975).

5 Donna Schram, "Rape" in *The Victimization of Women*, ed. Jane Chapman and Margaret Gates (Beverly Hills, California: Sage, 1978), p. 78.

6 Charles R. Hayman and Charlene Lanza, "Sexual Assault on Women and Girls," *American Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology* 109 (February, 1971): 480-486, p. 483.

7 Dorothy O. Lewis, et. al., "Juvenile Male Sexual Assaulters," *American Journal of Psychiatry* 136 (November, 1977): 1194-1196, p. 1196.

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rapists in Massachusetts found that power or anger motives were dominant in all their acts of rape; sexuality was being used to express them.¹ The same study found a great deal of ambivalence toward women generally in the rapists.² The rapist ranks high in prison hierarchy, and prisons are probably the ultimate macho society.³ Murray Cohen also found that most rapists exhibit "exaggerated masculine behavior."⁴ A Lustig et. al. found that fathers who commit incest have a great need to appear as strong patriarchs.⁵ Eugene Kanin discovered that aggressive male college students were significantly more likely to have made some forceful attempt to carry out coitus with their dates than nonaggressive young men.⁶ The goal of rape is to "dramatize the possession of power."⁷ To decide with Carol Smart that "rape is a violent expression of hatred for women, not of sexual desire for them," is the logical conclusion.⁸

As with all gynecidal practices, myths and sexist research have surrounded the practice in order to erase male responsibility for the crime

1 A. Nicholas Groth et. al., "Rape: Power, Anger, and Sexuality," *The American Journal of Psychiatry* 134(November, 1977): 1239-1234, p. 1240.

2 Ibid.

3 Kurt Weis and Sandra Borges, "Victimology and Rape: The Case of the Legitimate Victim," *Issues in Criminology*, 8(Fall, 1973): 71-115, p. 85.

4 Murray Cohen et. al., "The Psychology of Rapists," in *Forcible Rape*, ed. Duncan Chappell et. al. (New York: Columbia Press, 1977), p. 298.

5 Captain Noel Lustig et. al., "Incest," *Archives of General Psychiatry* 14(1966): 31-40, p. 38.

6 Eugene Kanin, "Sex Aggression by College Men," *Medical Aspects of Human Sexuality*, 4 (September, 1970): 25-40, p. 38.

7 Gilbert Geis, "Introduction," in *Forcible Rape*, ed. Duncan Chappell et. al. (New York: Columbia Press, 1977), p. 30.

8 Carol Smart, *Women, Crime and Criminology* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1977), p. 97.

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and legitimize its occurrence.¹ The familiar theme with rape is that the woman somehow asked for it, that she 'precipitated' the crime, and therefore the man is less guilty. Menachim Amir found a 19% rate of "victim precipitation" in his study of rapes in Philadelphia, but he classified all women who had a "bad reputation," were known as promiscuous, admitted having sex before with the offender, were not a virgin if younger than 18 years old, or had been raped before and didn't prosecute as having precipitated their abuse.² Lynn Curtis defined precipitation in rape as having invited sex initially and then refusing and found only a 2% rate in 16 cities.³ Rape is better defined as "all acts of sex forced on unwilling victims," whether they be unwilling early or later, in marriage or outside of it.⁴ The police and courts have taken up the theme by insisting that it really isn't rape unless "the assailant is a violent stranger, the victim reports the rape immediately afterwards and she can provide evidence of the attack and of her active resistance."⁵ The prevailing myths are female masochism, no woman can be raped unless she wants it, women like an element of sadism in sex and that women will "cry rape" for revenge on some innocent man.⁶

1 Daly, pp. 132, 133.

2 Menachim Amir, *Patterns in Forcible Rape* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1971), 'pp.' 1307 2'67".

3 Lynn Curtis, *Criminal Violence* (Lexington, Massachusetts: D.C. Heath and Co., 1974), p. 85.

4 Brownmiller, p. 425.

5 Weis and Borges, p. 72.

6 Ann Wolbert Burgess and Lynda Lytle Holmstrom, "Rape: The Victim and the Criminal Justice System," in *Victimology: A New Focus*, Vol. 3., Crimes, Victims and Justice (Lexington, Massachusetts: Lexington Books, 1975), p. 27; Brownmiller, *Against Our Will*.

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The history of rape is beautifully traced by Susan Brownmiller, showing it to be "first and foremost a violation of male rights of possession, based on male requirements of virginity, chastity and consent to private access as the female bargain in the marriage contract."¹ Rape has evolved from patriarchy, expresses misogyny, is encouraged by machismo, is an act of violence and intimidates all women. These characteristics are true of all the gynocidal practices reviewed and are also basic to wife abuse to be examined in Chapter III. They are also true of homicide of women.

FEMALE CRIMINALITY

Anyone who suspects that women are not capable of violence, cruelty and sadism should read Kate Millet's *The Basement*.² Women kill; women mutilate; women commit atrocities. That they do so in far fewer numbers than men is uncontested in the literature of violence, and theories to explain the disparity range from the biological to the cultural theme of learned submission. Explanations for what female criminality there is are few and far between, and little of the theories of causality for male violence applies to women. This study analyzes cases of women who murder as well as those of women who are killed. It therefore needs to include a

review of literature on female violence.

Crimes committed by women constitute less than 16% of the total.³ Marguerite Warren states: "This low contribution to the crime rate of a part of the population constituting more than 50% of the total remains the

1 Ibid., p. 423.

2 Kate Millett, *The Basement* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1979).

3 Marguerite Warren, "The Female Offender," in *Psychology of Crime*, ed. Hans Toch (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1979), p. 445.

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most consistent, significant and unexplained fact in criminology."¹ Jenson and Eve used a multivariate analysis of a self report study of male and female delinquency.² Even allowing for differences in male and female respect for the law and differences in the amount of supervision of girls, there was still a statistically significant direct contribution of sex to the rates of delinquency.³ It has been theorized that machismo in males may at least partially explain this disparity. However women who do commit crimes, and especially those who commit acts of violence, have not yet been accounted for.

Otto Pollack, In 1950, theorized that the "criminality of women reflects their biological nature in a given cultural setting." He felt that much of female crime was hidden because the nature of women's lives gives them greater opportunities to conceal crime such as poisoning and shoplifting.⁴ Another early idea was that delinquency in women represented a rejection of femininity and a highly thwarted aggressive drive.⁵ The psychiatrists, rather predictably, have blamed female violence on mental illness, including homosexuality.⁶ This may be because of the myth that there is something abnormal about any woman who acts aggressively.

1 Ibid.

2 Gay J. Jenson and Raymond Eve, "Sex Differences in Delinquency," *Criminology* 13 (February, 1976): 427-488, p. 444.

3 Ibid., p. 443.

4 Otto Pollack, "The Masked Character of Female Crime," in *The Criminology of Deviant Women*, ed. Freda Adler and Rita James Simon (Boston: Houghton Mifflin and Co., 1979), p. 44.

5 Gisela Knopka, *The Adolescent Girl in Conflict* (Englewood Cliffs: New Jersey, 1966), pp. 122, 123.

6 See for instance: Robert Cloninger and Samuel Guze, "Psychiatric Illness and Female Criminality," *American Journal of Psychiatry* 127 (1970): 303-311, p. 304.

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Actually, in a comparison of 45 violent and nonviolent female prisoners, the nonviolent group showed more evidence of psychiatric pathology.¹ One psychiatrist studied 111 incarcerated female murderers, and although he attributed the behavior to masochism, found wife abuse a significant causal factor.² The third largest group that he studied, after psychopaths and psychotics, killed their husbands after years of abuse, often while being beaten or in fear for their lives, and these women were characterized as usually "stable and successful."³ Negative self concepts have been found in black female delinquents but not in white, suggesting more of a racial explanation for poor self esteem than this being a cause of female criminality.⁴

Other findings are equally inconsistent. David Ward studied 444 violent female criminals and concluded that most homicides and assaults by women occur suddenly and impulsively, as a result of interpersonal conflicts associated with alcohol intoxication.⁵ Conversely, Rasko found

that most of a random sample of 125 women murderers were motivated not by "sudden impulse but by long lasting emotional conflict."⁶ He also found that almost one half of the husbands or lovers killed were "pro

1 Carlos E. Clement et. al., "Epidemiological Studies of Women Prisoners, I: Medical and Psychiatric Variables Related to Violent Behavior, *The American Journal of Psychiatry* 130 (September, 1973): 989-990, p. 900.

2 K. E. Cole, Gary Fisher and Shirley S. Cole, "Women Who Kill," *Archives of General Psychiatry* 19 (July, 1968): 1-8, p. 2.

3 Ibid.

4 Susan K. Dantesman et. al., "Female Criminality: An Application of Self and Opportunity Theories," *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency* 12 (July, 1975): 107-123, p. 111.

5 David A. Ward et. al., "Crimes of Violence by Women," in *The Criminology of Deviant Women*, ed. Adler and Simon, p. 132.

6 Gabriella Rasko, "The Victim of the Female Killer," *Victimology* 1 (Fall, 1976): 396-402, p. 401.

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vocative" and characterized by alcoholism, brutality towards and humiliation of their wives.¹ Cernkovich and Giordano concluded that delinquent behavior in girls is significantly linked to a perception of blocked opportunity (especially for black girls); however, as pointed out by Warren, since women are as highly motivated toward material goals as men and women have less in the way of legitimate opportunity to achieve, the female rate should be higher instead of lower than the male.²

Recent interviews of 32 convicted homicidal women, conducted by Trisha Biggers, revealed some interesting findings. Most of the women "viewed their crimes as acts of self-preservation and justified revenge." 25 had killed a male lover or husband, three had killed strangers in car accidents while intoxicated and one murder was associated with a robbery. All of them "had witnessed violence either in their own homes or in their neighborhoods and considered violence a normal fact of surviving in society." The author concludes that violence "had become a learned behavior" and was "an assertion of power" for women for whom socioeconomic factors made legitimate power unattainable.³ Again, there are problems applying a powerlessness theory to the lower rates of female homicide, but the social learning thesis may have some validity.

Freda Adler and other authors have generated much controversy with the theory that the women's liberation movement and the subsequent blurring

1 Ibid., p. 397.

2 Warren, p. 452; Stephen A. Cernkovich and Peggy C. Giordano, "Delinquency, Opportunity and Gender," *The Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology* 70(Summer, 1979): 145-151, p. 151; see also Frances Heidensohn, "The Deviances of Women: A Critique and an Inquiry," *The British Journal of Sociology* 19(1968): 160-175, p. 166.

3 Trisha A. Biggers, "Death by Murder: A Study of Women Murderers," *Death Education* 111(1979): 1-9, pp. 4,5,6,7,8.

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of sex roles has resulted in the dramatic increase in recent years of female criminality.¹ However, even Adler (along with a host of other authors) notes that the female rates of murder and aggravated assault have remained fairly constant.² Female violent crime may have increased slightly, according to one recent study, but only as much as male.³ Historically, no increase in female assaultive crime accompanied the period of feminism in the early 1900's when women

were enfranchised.⁴ Criminal statistics show that the preponderance of female juvenile delinquents are arrested for incorrigibility, running away and sexual delinquency, which can hardly be called crimes at all.⁵ It is difficult, therefore, to ascribe validity to the purported increase in female violence shown by increases in arrests of girls for delinquency.⁶

The rate of women arrested for property crimes, especially larceny, has increased, but whether or not this is related to role convergence or attitudes of feminism is unclear.⁷ Studies have also shown that women

1 Freda Adler, *Sisters in Crime* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1975);

Peggy Giordano, "Girls, Guys and Gangs: The Changing Context of Female Delinquency," *The Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology* 69(Spring, 1978): 126-132, p. 127.

2 Adler, *Sisters in Crime*, p. 10; Dorie Klein and June Kress, "Any Woman's Blues," *Crime and Social Justice* 5 (Spring/Summer, 1976): 34-49.

3 Lee H. Bowker, "The Incidence of Female Crime and Delinquency: A Comparison of Official and Self- Report Statistics," *International Journal of Women's Studies* 1(March-April, 1978): 178-192, p. 181.

4 Wolfgang and Ferracuti, p. 259.

5 Heda Chasney Lind, "Judicial Enforcement of the Female Sex Role," *Issues in Criminology* 8(Fall, 1973): 51-70, p. 51.

6 *Ibid.*

7 Rita James Simon, "Arrest Statistics," in *The Criminology of Deviant Women*, ed Freda Adler and Rita James Simon (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1979), p. 106.

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rarely initiate acts of serious criminality; they are more likely to be acting in conjunction with or at the instigation of males.¹ Gloria Leventhal found that the majority of 25 incarcerated women felt that women should be submissive and their place was in the home.² It has been suggested that the police and courts are just becoming less chivalrous, that women are merely being arrested and convicted more frequently.³ It would be difficult to account for all of the increase in this manner. Lee Bowker has concluded that the idea most consistent with the evidence is that women are using illegitimate expressions of legitimate female⁴ demands without necessarily being influenced by the rest of feminism.⁴

There is an old (1951) hypothesis which states that "The percentage of female participants (both victims and offenders) is high in areas where homicide is of low frequency, and low in those areas of high frequency."⁵ Recent statistics, in both the United States and other countries, tend to disprove that theory.⁶ However, four statistical observations run constant throughout patriarchal cultures: 1) women are more likely to kill members of the family, especially spouses, than men, 2) men are more likely to physically precipitate their own death,

3) "the great majority of homicide offenders are males ... and the

1 Lee Bowker, *Drug Use Among American Women, Old and Young*, (San Francisco, California: Rand E. Research Associates, Inc., 1977), p. 57; Dale Hoffman-Bustamarte, "The Nature of Female Criminality," *Issues in Criminology* 8 (Fall, 1973): 117-165, p. 131.

2 Gloria Leventhal, "Female Criminality: Is Women's Lib to Blame?" *Psychological Reports* 41 (December, 1977): 1179-1182, p. 1181.

3 *Ibid.*, p. 1182.

4 Bowker, p. 62.

5 Paul Bohannon, *African Homicide and Suicide* (New York: Atheneum, 1976), pp. 240, 241.

6 Ibid., p. 241; Curtis, *Criminal Violence*, p. 46.

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percentage of women among victims is usually higher than among offenders," and 4) in cultures where women are especially dominated their rate of homicide is especially low.¹ The last finding can probably be accounted for in terms of fear and learned submission. The third is explained, at least in part, by machismo. Victim precipitation shall be given greater attention.

The concept of victim precipitation was first identified and defined by Martin Wolfgang in 1957.² This study uses his strict definition of victim precipitated homicide, which is cases in which "the victim was the first to use physical force, show and/or use a weapon or strike a blow."³ His early study of Philadelphia homicides (1948-52) showed that 6% of the cases of female homicide were victim precipitated in comparison to 31% of the cases where there was a male victim.⁴ He also found that a significantly greater number of husbands than wives physically precipitated their own slaying.⁵ These findings have been replicated in many other studies.⁶ The victim precipitation concept has been more loosely defined by other authors to the extent that the victim can get blamed for such offenses as rape, as discussed in the prior section. However, in cases

1 Curtis, *Criminal Violence*, pp. 34, 46, 84; T. C. Chao, "Homicide and Suicide in Singapore," *Medicine, Science and the Law* 13 (April, 1973): 98-102, p. 98; Joab M. Wasikhongo, "Uniformities in Aggravated Assaults in St. Louis (Missouri) and Mombasa (Kenya): A Cross Cultural Replication," *International Journal of Criminology and Penology* 4 (February, 1976): 9-24, p. 19.

2 Martin Wolfgang, "Victim Precipitated Criminal Homicide," *The Journal of Criminal Law, Criminology and Police Science* 48 (May-June, 1957): 1-11.

3 Ibid., p. 2.

4 Ibid., p. 4.

5 Ibid.

6 Curtis, *Criminal Violence*, p. 84.

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of homicide and assault the concept can be operationalized fairly easily and definitively applied. The greater extent of male victim precipitation supports the idea that at least some of the explanation for female violence lies in the area of self defense.¹

The fact that women are more likely to kill members of their own family than men is often attributed to the fact that women spend more time in the home and therefore are in contact with outsiders less frequently.² It can also lend support for the idea that when women do kill, it is the result of a longstanding conflict, not an impulsive act of aggressiveness.³ It might also be noted that women are not governed by the machismo ethic of violent resolution of conflict if necessary to save face when they do interact with people outside the home. The killing of their own children is included in acts of violence by women against members of the family, but this is usually either the result of psychosis or an unintended consequence of child abuse.⁴

David Luckenbill has identified an interpersonal pattern of homicide that he found to hold true in all of 71 cases of murder (except for infanticide) regardless of age, sex or race.⁵ He summarizes this transaction as follows: "Participants develop a working agreement, sometimes implicit, often explicit, that violence is a useful tool for resolving

1 Lynn R. Curtis, *Violence, Race and Culture* (Lexington, Massachusetts: Lexington Books, 1975).

2 Ibid., p. 58.

3 Rasko, p. 401.

4 Bromberg, pp. 54, 331. Phillip J. Resnick, "Child Murder by Parents: A Psychiatric Review," *The American Journal of Psychiatry*, 126 (September, 1969): 325-334, p. 327.

5 David Luckenbill, "Criminal Homicide as a Situated Transaction," *Social Problems* 25 (December, 1977): 176-186, p. 186.

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questions of face and character."¹ This would support the concept that violence is learned behavior and could be used as support of a subculture or contraculture of violence theory. However, the author does not specify how many of his cases were women, and if it was a random sample, there were probably very few.

The question of the causality of female violence can thus be seen as in even a more tenuous state than that of male. It is known from the neurophysiological evidence on violence that all people have the biological capacity for aggression. It can be theorized that women have been taught to be generally less violent than men, and that those females who do commit murder may have learned that violence is a way to resolve conflicts in their homes and from the cultural attitudes around them. It can also be deduced that the white patriarchal blocks to black opportunity, power and success can explain the higher rate of homicide among black women than white, especially since we know that unemployment is highest among black women and "black women have no status at all" even in the black community.² The strong element of self defense in the motivation of female killers has also been noted. If the differences between the male and female rates of homicide can be attributed to male misogyny and machismo, these may be some fairly plausible hypotheses of causality for female violence.

Child Abuse

A very brief review of some of the literature on child abuse will be presented here. Only a fraction of the literature on this phenomenon was studied, since the causes of child abuse are not considered central to this study. The Dayton data includes ten cases in which a female child

1 Ibid.

2 Wallace, p. 120; Letcher, pp. 87, 88.

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was killed by an adult or an adult female killed a child. Two of these cases were judged to be infanticide (committed by an apparently psychotic mother) while the other eight cases appeared to be the unintended result of child abuse. However, ten cases are far too few to draw any conclusions from.

The etiology of infanticide seems to be distinct from that of child abuse.¹ Death in murders of children, as opposed to the repetitive nature of fatal child abuse, is usually caused by a single, direct attack, and usually different types of injuries are involved than the ones of battered children.² Since only two studies of homicide of children by parents could be found, and even these included child abuse fatalities, no firm conclusions can be drawn.³ However, there seems to be some indication that actual psychosis is more involved in the murderers of children than the 5% incidence of psychotic child abusers estimated by Blair Justice.⁴ Even though the two studies were done by psychiatrists, when they speak of psychosis, we can assume they are not overdiagnosing, at least not by too much. Resnick found that 67% of the 88 mothers, and 44% of the 43 fathers were psychotic.⁵ 40% of the parents had been seen by a psychiatrist or a physician for psychiatric symptoms shortly before the act.⁶

1 Marc F. Maden and David F. Wrench, "Significant Findings in Child Abuse Research," *Victimology* 2 (Summer, 1977): 196-224, p. 197.

2 Ibid.

3 P.D. Scott, "Parents Who Kill Their Children," *Medicine, Science and the Law* 13 (April, 1973): 120-126; Resnick, "Child Murder by Parents."

4 Blair Justice and Rita Justice, *The Abusive Family* (New York: Human Sciences Press, 1976), p. 48.

5 Resnick, "Child Murder by Parents," p. 330.

6 Ibid., p. 332.

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In P.D. Scott's study of 67 parents who killed their children (those not committing repeated assaults) 32 mothers and 14 fathers were diagnosed mentally ill or as having organic problems.¹ Because of the ambiguity of the language in the latter study, the findings must be viewed with caution. The patriarchally inspired mechanism of killing unwanted or illegitimate children was also noted in these studies. In the Scott sample, 5 unwanted children were killed by a male parent-and one by the mother.² Resnick found that 11% (n-10) of his mothers killed an illegitimate infant and 19% of the fathers (n-8) killed a baby whose paternity was in doubt.³ The infanticide of illegitimate children is fairly common in the strictly patriarchal cultures of Arabia and India.⁴

In a review of recent literature of child abuse, Maden and Wrench report several interesting findings. They have found that mothers are more likely to abuse children than fathers, but this may be accounted for in terms of the mother being with the children a greater portion of the time.⁵ If the father is unemployed, data suggests that the difference is eradicated.⁶ Mothers are more likely to be the first abuser, but "subsequent acts of abuse are frequently committed by the father".⁷ Mary Van Stolk also concludes

1 Scott, p. 126

2 Ibid., pp. 126, 127

3 Resnick, "Child Murder by Parents", p.330

4 Tahir Mahmood, "Child Abuse in Arabia, India and the West - Comparative Legal Aspect", in *Family Violence*, ed. John M. Eckelaar and Stanford N. Katz (Toronto: Butterworth and Co., 1978), p. 284

5 Maden and Wrench, p. 206

6 Ibid

7 Ibid., p. 212

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that there is actually an equal preponderance of male and female abusers.¹ Maden and Wrench also report that previous criminal activity is significantly related to the abuse of children by males and that child abusing fathers and stepfathers are likely to also abuse their wives.² These authors also have theorized that: Boys are more likely to be reported as cases of child abuse, but a higher proportion of the female cases are likely to be confirmed or even fatal. These findings suggest that the same act which is seen as abuse when applied to a young male child may be interpreted as appropriate discipline of a girl. Since sexual discrimination is well established in many areas of American life, it should not surprise us if one of its forms is greater tolerance of aggression against females than against males.³

However, Murray Straus has noted from a self report survey of 229 male and female university students, that boys receive more physical punishment than girls, and Gelles found a close to equal incidence in the sexes.⁴ In one Gil study, the severity of injuries was equal in boys and girls, but both Resnick and Scott found a slightly greater percentage of female battered children

who died than male.⁵

In a study of 29 battering fathers whose children's injuries resulted in death, 19 of the men had previous criminal histories and 8 were considered

1 Mary Van Stolk, "Beaten Women, Battered Children", *Children Today* 5 (March-April, 1976): 8-12, p. 9

2 Maden and Wrench, pp. 206, 207

3 *Ibid.*, p. 212

4 Murray Straus, "Some Social Antecedents of Physical Punishment: A Linkage Theory Interpretation", *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 33 (November 1971): 658-663, p. 660; Richard J. Gelles, "Violence Toward Children in the U.S.", *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry* 48 (1978): 580-592, p. 588

5 David G. Gil, "Violence Against Children", *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 33 (November, 1971): 637-648, p. 642. Resnick, p.327; P.D. Scott, "Fatal Battered Baby Cases", *Medicine Science and the Law*, 13 (July, 1973): 197-206, p. 199

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"predominantly aggressive."¹ All the men were characterized as interpreting normal infant behavior as willful and disobedient, and they reacted to this threat to their dominance with violence.² A long term follow-up study of 58 abused children found that sexual abuse of the girls by a father or stepfather was also commonly found.³ Incest may also be considered as a form of child abuse, as well as a genocidal practice.⁴ Two hundred thousand children are reported to be sexually molested each year in the United States.⁵ Ten times as many small girls are the victims as boys and the perpetrator is almost always an adult male.⁶ In more than 50% of the cases, it is the father, a relative or a parental figure to the child.⁷ All of the above findings related to child abuse can be considered marginal evidence that machismo and misogyny may be operating in fathers exhibiting child battering behavior. David Gil postulates that: A further causal dimension of child abuse is a society's attitude toward the use of force as a legitimate means for attaining ends, especially in imbalanced, interpersonal relations such as master-slave, male-female, guard-prisoner and adult-child.⁸

1 Scott, Baby Cases, pp. 201,202 2 *Ibid.*, p. 199

2 *Ibid*

3 Harold Martin et al., "The Development of Abused Children", *Advances in Pediatrics* 21 (1974): 25-73, p. 40

4 Kee MacFarlane, "Sexual Abuse of Children", in *The Victimization of Women*, ed. Jane Roberts Chapman and Margaret Gates (Beverly Hills, California: Sage Publications, 1978)

5 *Ibid.*, p. 88

6 *Ibid*

7 *Ibid.*, p. 86 g

8 David G. Gil, "Unraveling Child Abuse", *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry* 45 (April, 1975): 346-356, p. 351

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There are four other theoretical models of child abuse. The first is psychological in origin and hypothesizes that battering parents have been abused as children themselves.¹ Causation is accounted for in terms of the learning of violence from the parental modeling in childhood and/or the resulting emotional deprivation of the abusing parent causes him or her to seek nurturance from their child that he or she is unable to give.² Suzanne Steinmetz has found that physical punishment or fighting as a means of conflict resolution is apparent in several generations of the

same family, and that children of parents who use physical aggression between themselves and towards their offspring, are more likely to fight physically with their siblings.³ Gelles' study supports these findings which lends credence to the theory.⁴ Other authors have noted a high incident of abusive parents having been battered as children, but this is not true in all cases.⁵ There is no way to adequately test the idea that parents who batter are seeking nurturance from their children, and

1 Jay Belsky, "Three Theoretical Models of Child Abuse: A Critical Review", *Child Abuse and Neglect* 2 (1978): 37-47, p. 40.

2 Ibid.

3 Suzanne K. Steinmetz, "The Use of Force for Resolving Family Conflict: The Training Ground for Abuse", *Family Coordinator* 26 (January 1977): 19-26, pp. 20, 22.

4 Gelles, "Violence Toward Children in U.S.", p. 584.

5 Margaret Varma, "Battered Women; Battered Children", in *Battered Women*, ed. Maria Roy (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold Co., 1977), p. 268; Phyllis A. Jameson and Cynthia Shellenback, "Sociological and Psychological Factors in the Backgrounds of Men and Women Perpetrators of Child Abuse", *Child Abuse and Neglect* 1 (1979): 77-83, p. 80; Larry B. Silver et al., "Does Violence Breed Violence? Contributions from a Study of the Child Abuse Syndrome", *The American Journal of Psychiatry* 126 (September, 1969): 404-408, p. 305; Selwyn Smith and Ruth Hanson, "Interpersonal Relationship and Child Rearing Practice in 214 Parents of Battered Children", *The British Journal of Psychiatry* 127 (December, 1975) 513-525, p. 523.

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one psychiatric study found no evidence of this need even when it was being looked at.¹

Sociological scholars note that child abuse is more common in lower socioeconomic classes and amongst the unemployed, postulating that the frustration from this plus the stressors of such factors as social isolation, too many children too close together and too soon after marriage, serious life changes, and marital discord and household disorganization combine to cause child abuse.² All of these factors have been associated with child abuse in more than one study.³ However, there is speculation that the strong association with poverty may be at least partially explained by underreporting of middle class incidence, and although correlation has been shown with these social characteristics, causation has not been proved.⁴

The third type of theory focuses on the effect of the child or the caregiver and/or an absence of mother-child bonding. Some authors have noted that abused children are described as more difficult to care for and more demanding than other children. Delayed mother-child contact after birth after premature delivery and unplanned pregnancy may cause problems in the formation of a bond between mothers and babies and such dyads have been found to be at risk to develop into abusive ones.⁵ This concept, although

1 Belsky, p. 41; Smith and Hanson, p. 552

2 Justice and Justice, p. 26; Belsky, pp. 42,43

3 Jameson and Schellenback, "Background of Perpetrators of Child Abuse"; Gil, "Violence Against Children"; Gelles, "Violence Toward Children"; Justice and Justice, *The Abusing Family*; Mary Hanemann Lystad, "Violence at Home: A Review of the Literature", *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry* 45 (April, 1975) 328-341

4 Leory H. Pelton, "Child Abuse and Neglect: The Myth of Classlessness", *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry* 48 (October, 1978): 608-617, p. 610; Lystad p. 334

5 Belsky, p. 44

probably valid, does not account for all child abuse and does not explain abuse by fathers only, since fathers seldom have an opportunity to bond with infants in hospitals. It is also not known whether or not the complaints about abused children are merely a justification for the beatings by battering parents.

The last group of experts feel that child abuse reflects the structural violence and attitudes supporting violence in our society.¹ David Gil concludes that child abuse is endemic in the United States since physical punishment is allowed and encouraged.² A national sample of 2,143 adults living as members of conjugal units revealed that 81.5% expressed at least some approval of slapping a twelve year old child.³ Murray Straus reflects that socialization processes are usually "congruent with the type of personality needed to cope with the typical life circumstances which the child will face as an adult", and it is appropriate, especially for the working class, to foster aggression in children, particularly boys.⁴ Most of the evidence in child abuse literature is consistent with "cultural transmission of violence".⁵ Since our culture is patriarchal, and there is little doubt

1 Gil, "Unraveling Child Abuse"; Gil, "Violence Against Children"; Stolk, "Beaten Women, Battered Children".

2 Gil, "Violence Against Children", p. 644

3 Ursula Dibble and Murray Straus, "Some Social Structure Determinants of Inconsistency Between Attitudes and Behavior: The Case of Family Violence", *Journal of Marriage and the Family* XLII (February, 1980): 71-79, p. 73

4 Straus, "Linkage Theory Interpretations", pp. 659, 660

5Maden and Wrench, p. 212

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that patriarchal structure fosters violence, we find in this some support for the idea of patriarchy encouraging child abuse. However, this is not meant to imply that direct causation is being formulated. Undoubtedly, the explanation for child abuse is a multidimensional one and a more thorough examination of the literature plus significantly more empirical data than this study provides would be required before a theory could be advanced.

Summary

The biological, psychological and sociological theories and empirical findings relating to violence have been reviewed extensively. Although some important associations have been noted, one is inclined to agree with Dorie Klein when she describes the bulk of literature in this manner: The basic assumptions and technocratic concerns of these writers have produced work that is sexist, racist and classist; assumptions that have served to maintain a repressive ideology with its extensive apparatus of control.

We have noted that much of the research concerning violence has used male subjects and is written by men. It generally fails to account adequately for the disparity between male and female aggression and male and female crime.

It has been postulated here that the mutually inclusive concepts of machismo and misogyny and the patriarchal structure can fill the gaps in a holistic theory of violence and parsimoniously provide an explanation for the difference between male and female violence. Given that all

1 Dorie Klein, "The Etiology of Female Crime", *Issues in Criminology* 8 (Fall, 1973): 3-30, p. 28.

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human brains have the neurological basis for aggression and the capability for learning violent

behavior, it can be hypothesized that machismo and misogyny direct the motivations, define the appropriate victims, and determine the stimulations for aggression and violence. Misogyny is continuously expressed in the dominance and control of women in most societies. Gynocidal practices are most overt and lethal in some patriarchal cultures which serve to keep women in complete submission. In other patriarchal societies, like our own, most of the gynocide is more subtle or has been made less obvious by myths and supposedly objective research, and women have consequently been able to gain at least more of the veneer of equality. However, machismo and misogyny run deep, and when men are thwarted from demonstrating dominance in their occupations or economically, they are likely to react violently against other men and women. Wife abuse, rape and homicide of women are an atrocious trio of gynocidal practices which serve to warn and remind all women of the ultimate power of the patriarchy, and can be used to enhance the control of individual women by individual men. Violence committed by women can be seen to also reflect the same neurological, learning and social factors as does violence performed by men. However, there is an added dimension, at least in regards to homicide. It seems likely that homicide enacted by women is a desperate defense against continued gynocidal acts by her actual or estranged husband, boyfriend or lover in a significant number of cases. The data gathered from the Dayton Police Department on homicide by and of women from the 1975 through 1979 official homicide case files, will provide correlational (not experimental) support for this theoretical framework. The partial review of newspaper accounts of the crimes will show how the female

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victims are denied or defined as worthless and/or blameworthy which helps to obscure the horrifying nature of the act, justify the prevalence of the crime and lessen the culpability of the men who kill women.

Chapter III

Review Of Wife Abuse Literature

Introduction

One of the most significant findings of this study is the strong connection of wife abuse with homicide of women. During the five years studied in Dayton, 64.3% of the cases of the female victims killed by husbands, boyfriends, estranged husbands of estranged boyfriends mention prior wife abuse.¹ The body of literature concerning wife abuse is generally more recent than the bulk of general violence literature, of necessity includes women in the research populations, and is written, at least in part, by female scholars. Much of it also includes an awareness of the influences of patriarchal society on this particular aspect of violence. Therefore, the conceptual frameworks regarding wife abuse, although not completely formulated and tested, provide the most pertinent theoretical framework for the study of the relationship of misogyny to the homicide of women, at least regarding those homicides occurring in intimate male-female relationships.

The most recent national homicide statistics, compiled by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, indicate that of 4,451 women murdered in 1978, approximately 1% were killed by their husband (including common-law) or boyfriend.² This does not include any women killed by

¹ See Chapter IV.

² William H. Webster, FBI Uniform Crime Reports (Washington, D.C: US Department of Justice, 1978), p. 9.

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estranged husbands and boyfriends, which was found to be a significant category in the Dayton statistics. Data collection by close inspection of police records for this study also revealed that some of the cases officially reported under the "friend" or "other family" category were actually also intimate male-female relationship members. Therefore, it can be stated with confidence that at least one third of the women homicide victims in the United States in 1978 were killed by an actual or estranged husband or boyfriend. The data from this research suggests that wife abuse was a significant factor in these homicides.

The connection between wife abuse and homicide has been noted in other research efforts. The most direct relationship was found in a study by Margaret Gregory who learned that the majority of husbands who killed their wives in England and Wales between 1957 and 1968, had previously assaulted them.¹ Del Martin cites a Kansas City Police Department study indicating that 40% of the homicides in that city were spouse killing spouse.² Another study of homicide in England and Wales, this one covering 1967-71, shows 58% of the female victims were married to or sexually intimate with their killers.³ P.D. Scott, in a study of 40 men who murdered their wives, found that 20 of them had battered their spouse previously.

1 Margaret Gregory, "Battered Wives," in *Violence in the Family*, ed. Marie Borland (Atlantic Highlands, N.J.: Humanities Press, 1976), 107-128, p. 107.

2 Del Martin, "Battered Women: Society's Problem," in *Victimization of Women*, ed. Jane R. Chapman and Margaret Gates (Beverly Hills, Calif.: Sage Publications, 1978), 111-140, p. 115.

3 R. Emerson Dobash and Russell Dobash, *Violence Against Wives* (New York: The Free Press, 1979), p. 17.

4 P. D. Scott, "Battered Wives," *The British Journal of Psychiatry*, 125 (November, 1974): 433-441, p. 439.

In Atlanta In 1972, 31% of the 255 total homicides listed "domestic quarrels" as a factor in causation.¹ Host of the major scholars who have written about wife abuse agree that the potential for battering to escalate to homicide is a very real danger. As Lenore Walker states, "Thus, homicide between man and woman is not a 'crime of passion' but rather the end result of unchecked, long-standing violence."²

Battered wives themselves are certainly acutely aware that they are in danger of being killed.³ They frequently give this as the reason for staying in the abusive relationship, but this has not always been treated as a realistic fear.⁴ The Dayton data from this study shows that 30% of the female homicide victims from 1974 to 1979 who were killed by a husband or boyfriend, had divorced, separated from or broken up with that man. Several other cases were the result of the female partner trying or threatening to break off the relationship. Richard Makman theorizes that violent husbands are often dependent on control of their wives for continued self-esteem and that actual or threatened loss of the spouse by separation or divorce may lead to "paranoia", increasing the danger of further violence and murder.⁵ Hargaret Elbow asserts, "The abusive husband in formal or common law marriages is

1 Richard J. Gelles, *The Violent Home* (Beverly Hills, Calif.: Sage Publications, 1972), p. 21.

2 Lenore E. Walker, *The Battered Woman* (New York: Harper & Row, 1979), p. 27.

3 *Ibid.*, p. 75.

4 Haria Roy, "A Research Project Probing a Cross-Section of Battered Wives," in *Battered Women*, ed. Haria Roy (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold Co., 1977), 24-45, p. 31.

5 Richard Hakman, "Some Clinical Aspects of Inter-Spousal Violence," in *Family Violence*, ed. John H. Eekelaar and Sanford N. Katz (Toronto: Butterworth & Co., 1978), 50-57, p. 56.

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strongly opposed to his wife's terminating the relationship to the extent of threatening to kill her, and in some instances, carrying out the threat."¹

Incidence

Wife abuse or wife battering is most commonly defined as "severe, deliberate and repeated demonstrable physical violence" inflicted on a wife or cohabitee by her spouse.² Some authors have included emotional or psychological violence in their formal definitions.³ Others have pointed out the importance of even one incident of violence against a wife as an instance of intimidation and "debasement of human life" that can set the tone of that relationship for its duration.⁴ The other significance of a single physical attack against a wife is the tendency for it to be followed by repeated beatings.⁵ Lenore Walker, drawing from her comprehensive study of several hundred battered women, concludes: "Having struck a woman a first time seemed to make it easier for the man to do it again. It is as if a taboo is broken and the behavior, once released, becomes uncontrollable."⁶

¹ Margaret Elbow, "Theoretical Considerations of Violent Marriages," *Social Casework*, 58 (November, 1977): 515-526, p. 515.

² J.J. Gayford, "The Aetiology of Repeated Serious Physical Assaults by Husbands on Wives," *Medicine, Science and the Law*, 19 (January, 1979): 19-24, p. 19.

³ Walker, p. 15.

⁴ Murray A. Straus, "Wife Beating: How Common and Why?" *Victimology*, 2 (Fall-Winter, 1977-78), 443-458, p. 444.

⁵ Natalie Shainess, "Psychological Aspects of Wifebeating," in *Battered Women*, ed. Maria Roy (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold Co., 1977), 111-136, p. 117.

⁶ Walker, p. 79.

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In trying to determine the incidence of wife abuse, virtually all authors have relied upon physical abuse as the criterion for estimation. Incidence estimates of severe and repeated battering range from 10 to 50% of the approximately 47.5 million married couples in the United States.¹ The wide variation is accounted for by various means of extrapolation from a number of different studies using different populations, the impreciseness of police data on assaults and family disturbance calls and the lack of reporting of wife abuse to authorities (estimated at only 1 of each 270 cases).² Perhaps the most systematic and accurate indication of the amount of wife abuse is from the only national, representative sample survey of family violence done by Straus, Gelles and Steinmetz in 1976.³ The Survey showed 16 out of every 100 couples having violent confrontations during the course of a year and 4 of each 100 wives being seriously beaten within the same time period.⁴ This translates into at least 1.8 million abused wives per year in this country alone. Estimates from other nations indicate equally widespread and serious incidence.⁵ These women can be identified as a population greatly at risk for homicide.

¹ Roger Langley and Richard Levy, *Wife Beating: The Silent Crisis* (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1977), p. 3.

² Suzanne Steinmetz, "Wifebeating, Husbandbeating-A Comparison of the Use of Physical Violence Between Spouses to Resolve Marital Fights," in *Battered Women*, ed. Maria Roy (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold Co., 1977) 63-71, p. 63.

3 Straus, p. 445.

4 Ibid.

5 Sarah Heffner, "Wife Abuse in West Germany, *Victimology*, 2 (Fall- Winter, 1977-78): 472-476, p. 472. Robert Chester and Jane Streather, "Cruelty in English Divorce: Some Empirical Findings," *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 34 (November, 1972): 706-710, p. 709.

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Causation

The literature on the causes of wife abuse reflect the perspective of the various authors addressing the problem. As with the literature on violence in general, there are viewpoints which emphasize the psychological, sociological and biological determinants, and for the first time there is a body of literature which emphasizes the patriarchal and misogynous roots of this practice which so endangers women. The literature also reflects many serious and commendable attempts to integrate these causes and resist the temptation to rely on simplistic, single cause formulations.

Psychiatric Viewpoints

The early literature on wife abuse was generally from the psychiatric field and tended to focus on the individual pathology of the abuser and especially his victim. For example, in 1964, a group of psychiatrists, drawing from twelve case studies from private practice, conclude, "We see the husband's aggressive behavior as freeing masochistic needs of the wife and to be necessary for the wife's (and the couple's) equilibrium."¹ This kind of study generally used small samples, often drawn from already diagnosed mentally ill populations, and are biased by adherence to the Freudian conceptualization that all women have masochistic tendencies.² The main body of literature, written from 1970 on, concludes that wife abusers are no more likely to

1 John Snell et al., "The Wifebeater's Wife," *Archives of General Psychiatry*, 11 (1964): 107-102, p. 110.

2 Dobash and Dobash, p. 23.

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be diagnosably mentally ill than the rest of the population and dismissed female masochism as a myth.¹

In spite of this overwhelming rejection of masochism as a causative factor in wife abuse, some vestiges of the theory remain even in recent literature. Natalie Shainess, in a 1979 issue of the *American Journal Of Psychotherapy* redefines masochists as women who do not enjoy suffering but do employ an "all pervasive cognitive style" of submission and self destruction which makes them more vulnerable to violence.² She betrays her bias when she starts a sentence by saying, "The masochistic woman (and happily there are some women who are not)..." (my italics) This author joins the preponderance of experts on wife abuse in condemning the myth of masochism for causing much of society, many members of the helping professions, and more devastatingly, the abused women themselves, to feel that battered wives ask for and are to be blamed for their victimization.⁴

Another vestige of this kind of misogynous thinking can be detected when authors overemphasize the role of the wife in provoking her abuse. On the basis of 23 cases of men in custody for murdering or

1 Jean Renvoize, *Web of Violence* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978), p. 34. Suzanne Steinmetz, *The Cycle of Violence: Assertive, Aggressive and Abusive Family Interaction* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1977), p. 36.

2 Natalie Shainess, "Vulnerability to Violence: Masochism as Process," *The American Journal of*

Psychotherapy, 33 (April, 1979) 174-189, p. 174, 188.

3 Ibid., p. 179.

4 Marie Borland, "Introduction," in *Violence in the Family*, ed. Marie Borland (Atlantic Highlands, N.J.: Humanities Press, 1976), p. ix. Alexandra Symonds, "Violence Against Women-The Myth of Masochism," *American Journal of Psychotherapy*, 33 (April, 1979): 161-173, p. 161. Walker, p. 15.

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assaulting their wives, Faulk concludes that nine of the wives were so "demanding" that the husband finally "exploded" and attacked her, implying that her behavior was the problem.¹ It is impossible to morally justify murdering, attempting to murder or doing grievous bodily harm to someone because of excessive verbal demands. As Lenore Walker states, "By perpetuating the belief that it is rational to blame the victim for her abuse, we ultimately excuse men for the crime."² The sentences that Faulk's offenders received reflects this mechanism. Five were placed on probation (including two who had killed their wives and had not pleaded self defense) because their lack of previous offenses and the circumstances of the cases led the "court to a sympathetic approach."³

A separate viewpoint of psychiatric literature is represented by George Bach and Peter Wyden who maintain that fighting between married couples is necessary for true intimacy.⁴ They prefer verbal conflict and advocate rules to keep the fights fair but assert, "We believe that the exchange of spanks, blows and slaps between consenting adults is more civilized than the camouflaged or silent hostilities of ostensibly well-behaved fight-evaders..."⁵ In contrast to this view, there is substantial evidence from studies of abused wives showing that physical

1 M. Faulk, "Men Who Assault Their Wives," *Medicine, Science and the Law*, 14 (July, 1974): 180-183, p. 180.

2 Walker, p. 15.

3 Faulk, p. 183.

4 George R. Bach and Peter Wyden, *The Intimate Enemy*, (New York: William Morrow and Co., Inc., 1969) p. 1.

5 Ibid., p. 111.

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attack is often preceded by verbal arguments, that spouses who use screaming also tend to use violent means of conflict resolution, that as the level of verbal aggression increases, the level of physical aggression increases even more rapidly, and that physical abuse, once begun, escalates over time.¹ Bach and Wyden are operating from a catharsis belief which the wife abuse literature has tended to disprove adding to the weight of evidence against it from other studies reviewed earlier.²

Alcohol

Alcohol is a factor which has consistently been noted in connection with wife abuse but which has not been proved as a cause. In the Dobash study of 109 battered women, 25% of the wives described their husbands as often drunk during violent episodes.³ Over half of the Walker sample of 120 women indicated a relationship between battering and drinking.⁴ 60% of the 101 women in the Ann Arbor shelter for abused women studies by Carlson reported alcohol abuse in their spouse and 10% said they themselves abused alcohol.⁵

1 Steinmetz, *Cycle of Violence*, p. 24. Dobash and Dobash, p. 98, 124. Murray Straus, "Leveling, Civility and Violence in the Family," *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, xxxvi (February, 1974), 13-29, p. 18.

2 Murray Straus, "Violence in the Family," *Nursing Digest*, 2 (November-December, 1974): 138-146, p. 138. Richard Gelles, "No Place to Go: The Social Dynamics of Marital Violence," in *Battered Women*, ed. Maria Roy (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold Co., 1977), 46-63, p. 57.

3 Dobash and Dobash, p. 118.

4 Walker, p. 24.

5 Bonnie Carlson, "Battered Women and Their Assaultants," *Social Work*, 22 (November, 1977), 455-465, p. 457.

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52 of the 100 women in Gayford's sample in England stated that the husband was frequently drunk.¹ In 60 abusive marriages evaluated when the wife was referred for psychiatric evaluation by the medical staff of an emergency room, alcohol was a significant problem for 56 of the husbands.² Maria Roy's study of 150 abused wives revealed alcohol or drug abuse problems in 85% of the men.³ Data from battered women using a Detroit shelter shows 112 of 429 (26%) assaultants using alcohol heavily and 98 (23%) using illegal drugs.⁴ Thus, the percentage of abusive men involved with alcohol varies considerably and so does the method of gathering and reporting the data. Many questions remain unanswered. Is the husband always drunk when he is abusive? Conversely, is he always abusive when drunk? Is alcohol or drug abuse a major problem in his life or is it only connected to wife abuse? Is the husband intoxicated or only had a few drinks? Until more of these questions are answered, the extent of the role of alcohol in wife abuse is difficult to more precisely identify.

45% of 100 wives of diagnosed alcoholics reported being beaten by their husbands in one research study.⁵ This is a higher percentage of abusive behavior than is estimated to occur in the normal population. At the same time it suggests that slightly more than half of alcoholic

1 J.J. Gayford, "Wife Battering: A Preliminary Survey of 100 Cases," *British Medical Journal*, 1 (January 25, 1975): 194-197, p. 195.

2 Elaine Hilberman and Kit Munson, "Sixty Battered Women," *Victimology*, 2 (Fall-Winter, 1977-78): 460-470, p. 461.

3 Roy, p. 39.

4 Women-In-Transition, *Annual Statistical Report*, (Detroit, Michigan: Women-In-Transition, Inc., 1979), p. 5.

5 Scott, p. 438.

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husbands do not batter their wives. John Byles found that violence was more than twice as likely to occur in families with alcohol problems than those without in a survey of disintegrating families.¹ Gelles notes that although 48% of his battering husbands had problems with alcohol and most of their wives felt that no violence would have occurred without intoxication, drinking did not necessarily lead to violence in his sample, and the violent men were not necessarily drunk.² The preponderance of evidence tends to reveal some degree of correlation, not causation.

In an effort to unravel the connection, Bard and Zacher studied 1,388 occasions of family disturbance involving a police visit. The police officers, who had received special training in observational and data recording skills for family crises, perceived alcohol to be the primary cause of the dispute in only 14% of the cases. The complainant had been using alcohol in 26% of the cases and the other party in 30%. These authors also conclude from their study and a review of others that alcohol cannot be said to cause violence in family disputes.³

However, there is still a strong connection to be explained. Such researchers as Gayford and Bard and Zacker relay upon the disinhibiting effect on violent behaviors for explanation.⁴

Carlson also sees alcohol

1 John A. Byles, "Violence, Alcohol Problems and Other Problems in Disintegrating Families," *Journal of Studies on Alcohol*, 39 (March, 1978), 551-553, p. 551.

2 Gelles, *The Violent Home*, p. 114.

3 Morton Bard and Joseph Zacker, "Assaultiveness and Alcohol Use in Family Disputes," *Criminology*, 12 (November, 1974): 281-292, p. 282, 283, 287, 292.

4 *Ibid.*, p. 282. Gayford, "Aetiology of Assaults," p. 24.

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as a disinhibitor but in addition regards its abuse as a symptom of structural stress and frustration which she feels is the main cause of wife abuse.¹ Richard Gelles advances an interesting analysis of the relationship of alcohol. He observes that there are cultures where drunkenness is not followed by disinhibited behavior, concluding that "drunken deportment is situationally variable and essentially a learned affair."² He goes on to note that alcohol can become a way of disavowing reprehensible behavior and provide an "excuse in advance," since alcoholism is regarded as an illness in our society and behavior under the influence seen as uncharacteristic and uncontrollable.³ Lenore Walker found that for the problem drinkers described by her sample of battered women, "Drinking seemed to give them a sense of power" which was then demonstrated by violence.⁴ Downey and Howell conclude that battering men may drink in order to carry out violence.⁵ In conclusion, a correlation between alcohol abuse and wife battering has been established, although the details have not been thoroughly studied. Furthermore, alcohol as a cause of wife abuse has neither been claimed nor shown and explanations for the connection vary considerably.

Sociological Viewpoint

The majority of researchers in the field of wife abuse operate from a sociological perspective.

They tend to emphasize social learning and/

1 Carlson, p. 489.

2 Gelles, *The Violent Home*, p. 114.

3 *Ibid.*, p. 115, 116, 118.

4 Walker, p. 24.

5 Joanne Downey and Jane Howell, *Wife Battering* (Vancouver, Canada: United Way of Greater Vancouver, 1976), p. 51.

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or situational stress or frustration factors as the main causes of wife abuse. However, most of these authors recognize the interrelationship of factors which lead to the battered wife phenomenon. Murray Straus and his associates, Suzanne Steinmetz and Richard Gelles, have written the most extensively from this viewpoint. Straus has developed a multifactoral system which recognizes the societal background of a high level of violence in our culture, sexist organization of the society and its family system and cultural norms legitimizing violence between family members. With this background of societal influences, Straus points out that the family is inherently at high risk for violent interaction because of the great number of hours family members spend interacting, the broad range of activities over which a conflict can occur, the intensity of emotional involvement of the members, the involuntary nature of membership, the impingement of family members on each other's personal space, time, tastes and lifestyles, and the assumption of family members that they have the right to try to change each other's behavior. Within these societal and family contexts, these authors believe that people can be socialized to use violence for conflict resolution. Children learn this by observing parental

violence, experiencing physical punishment, seeing their parents tolerate sibling fighting, and, if boys, being taught pro violence values. This socialization teaches the association of love with violence and justifies the use of physical force as a morally correct means of solving disputes.¹

There is much evidence to support the idea of wife abuse being

¹ Straus, "Wifebeating," pp. A50, A51, A5A.

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learned as a child. 81.1% of the Roy sample of violent husbands were reported to have been victims of child abuse or their parents used violence on each other.¹ Steinmetz found, in a study of 57 families, that all patterns of conflict resolution repeat themselves for at least three generations with a consistent degree of violence.² Other samples show variations from 27% (experiencing actual child abuse only) to 51% and 59% of abusive men having witnessed or experienced violence in their home as a child.³ Again we are dealing with descriptive statistics of specific populations with these studies, but research done by Joseph Carroll used a control group of nonviolent individuals and is therefore somewhat more conclusive.⁴ His results showed a significantly higher incidence of physical punishment (36.6%) used in the childhood of those violent toward a spouse than those who were not (14.5% had experienced physical punishment).⁵ Suzanne Steinmetz summarizes this causative factor as follows: "Those who have witnessed or experienced family violence as a child, tend to approve of the use of violence and use violence themselves to resolve family conflicts."⁶

Another aspect of learning which is suspected to promote wife abuse is the influence of television. The most attractive men on TV illustrate

¹ Roy, p. 30.

² Steinmetz, *Cycle of Violence*, p. 6. p 95

³ Carlson, p. 457. Gayford, "Wife Battering," p. 195. Dobash,

⁴ Joseph C. Carrol, "The Intergenerational Transmission of Family Violence," *Aggressive Behavior*, 3 (1977): 289-299, p. 292.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 294.

⁶ Steinmetz, *Cycle of Violence*, p. 6.

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the compulsive masculinity syndrome, dominate their heterosexual relationships and use violence without sanctions. Most television husbands control absolutely their families and such programs as "All in the Family" teach the appropriateness of verbal abuse. Aggression is shown as an effective way to achieve power and success and maintain control. Lucien Beaulieu feels that this "important, insidious and pervasive impact" of television which fosters "norms, values and attitudes which favor violence" is an important factor in family violence.¹

Some authors have also linked learning theory to the woman's role as victim. Richard Gelles theorizes that the more frequently a woman was hit by her parents, the more vulnerable she is to being a victim of marital violence.² The mechanism supposedly working here is that a woman learns to be a victim by prior conditioning.³ Unfortunately, this theorizing echoes the old masochism myth in a slightly different form; because women have learned to be victims, they somehow precipitate and then accept their further victimization.

Actually the data tends not to support this theory nearly as strongly as the learning influence on male behavior is upheld. In Roy's sample, only 33.3% of the abused wives observed or experienced violence as a child.⁴ Lenore Walker found that only a small number of her sample

¹ Lucien Beaulieu, "Media, Violence and the Family," in *Family Violence*, ed. John M. Eekelar and Sanford N. Katz (Toronto, Canada: Butterworth & Co., 1978), 58-67, pp. 60, 61, 62.

2 Gelles, "No Place to Go," p. 60.

3 Shainess, "Psychological Aspects of Wifebeating," p. 116.

4 Roy, p. 30.

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of battered women were beaten as a child.¹ In Gayford's study, 23% came from a home where violence was a regular occurrence.² Joseph Carrell, using a control group of nonviolent couples, was surprised to note that, "In fact, daughters who received less physical punishment from their fathers were more likely to report that violence was a problem" (in their own conjugal relationship) than those subjected to a high amount of punishment.³ Only 29% of the abused wives studied by Dobash reported any violence at all in their childhood home.⁴ In all the studies the level of childhood violence was significantly higher for the abusers than the victims.

The social scientists writing about wife abuse also emphasize the situational and societal stressors as causative factors in wife abuse. As Suzanne Steinmetz points out, the family has to absorb emotional tension from external as well as internal sources.⁵ This approach echoes the frustration leading to aggression theory on general violence. This is theorized to be especially important in the family since, "In general, people tend to take out their frustration on those to whom they are closest."⁶ Central to this argument is the idea that poverty or low social status creates excessive stress in the family. As Bonnie Carlson states this case, "Sources of family violence are complex structural circumstances creating environmental stresses that are

1 Walker, p. 35.

2 Gayford, "Wife Battering," p. 195.

3 Carroll, p. 297.

4 Dobash and Dobash, p. 95.

5 Steinmetz, Cycle of Violence, p. 1.

6 Shainess, "Psychological Aspects of Wifebeating," p. 112.

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distributed unevenly across the social structure."¹ Her sample of 101 cases of abusive families included 29% unemployed males and 37% making less than \$9,000 a year.² Only 7.6% of the battering husbands were professionals.³ JJ Gayford found a 33% unemployment rate in his abusing husbands and a majority in the lowest social classes.⁴ He concludes from his research that wife beaters have a low frustration tolerance, have seen crises solved with aggression and violence, and when they are faced with extra frustration from outside the home and experience stress inside the home, violence may result, especially if inhibitions are lowered by alcohol.⁵

P.D. Scott also finds the majority of wife batterers in the lower social classes and feels that wife abuse is a function of failure of adaptation to societal stresses.⁶ In another study, unemployment was present for two thirds of the men and "educational, economic and social deprivation found to be the norm."⁷ A survey of petitioners for English divorce citing repeated physical beatings revealed an overrepresentation of abusers in the category of unskilled workers.⁸ Middle class divorce applicants in Greater Cleveland were found to be less likely to cite

1 Carlson, p. 458.

2 Ibid. p. 456.

3 Ibid.

4 Gayford, "Aetiology of Assaults," p. 20.

5 Ibid., p. 24.

6 Scott, p. 433.

7 Hilberman and Munson, p. 461.

8 Robert Chester and Jane Streater, "Cruelty in English Divorce: Some Empirical Findings," *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 34 (November, 1972): 706-710, p. 710.

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physical abuse as a reason than lower class applicants.¹ From a national survey of 72,000 representative households, Deirdre Gaquin found that spousal abuse was more likely to occur in homes with income below \$7500 per year but did not find any difference between black and white respondents.²

Other data tends to contradict these findings. John Flynn found no relationship to socio-economic status in his review of police records on familial assaults but did find the majority of his families to be under stress of some kind.³ Montgomery County, Maryland, one of the nation's richest suburbs, reports a high incidence of verified assaults on wives.⁴ During the same time period in 1974, Norwalk, Connecticut, a middle class community, and Harlem, New York, has an approximately equal incidence (per 100,000 population) of wife abuse reported to police.⁵ Jean Renvoize, along with many other authors, asserts that battering is spread throughout the socio-economic strata.⁶ She acknowledges that the major studies do not reflect this but reasons that it is because middle and upper class victims are less likely to report its occurrence to police, resort to wife abuse shelters which

1 George Levinger, "Sources of Marital Dissatisfaction Among Applicants for Divorce," *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 36 (October, 1966): 803-807, p. 805.

2 Deirdre Gaquin, "Spouse Abuse: Data from the National Crime Survey," *Victimology*, 2 (Fall-Winter, 1977-78): 623-643, p. 638.

3 John Flynn, "Recent Findings Related to Wife Abuse," *Social Casework*, 63 (January, 1977): 13-20, p. 17, 18.

4 Langley and Levy, p. 7.

5 Carolyn Barden and Jim Barden, "The Battered Wife Syndrome," *Viva Magazine* (June, 1976): 79-81, 108-110, p. 80.

6 Renvoize, p. 25. Del Martin, *Battered Wives* (San Francisco: Glide Publications, 1976), p. 86. Walker, p. 24.

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provide most of the samples studied, or utilize other social service agencies.¹ The other problem with citing poverty and/or unemployment as the main stressor leading to wife abuse is that it fails to account for the preponderance of males who are doing the battering when the wife in such a situation would be equally frustrated or stressed.

The theory is better supported and made more explanatory when linked to the male prescribed role in society and when data covers in more detail the couples' employment and education status. Langley and Levy express this formulation when they state, "Many wifebeaters regard themselves as inadequate in some aspect of the prescribed male role in our society."² Another way of describing the same mechanism is to talk about the husband using violence to compensate for his lack of resources (financial, educational, occupational) needed to maintain his assumed dominant role in the family and in the culture.³ John O'Brien's study of 150 middle and working class applicants for divorce showed that more of the abusing husbands were underachievers in their work role in terms of education or satisfaction with their job than those who were nonviolent.⁴ Richard Gelles found a higher level of abuse when the wife's job was of higher status than the husband, where the husband's occupational status was lower than the neighbors' and when unemployment was a threat in the man's job.⁵ Prescott and Letko also

found low job

1 Renvoize, p. 25.

2 Langley and Leve, p. 53.

3 Suzanne Steinmetz and Murray Straus, "Intra Family Violence," in *Violence in the Family*, ed. Suzanne Steinmetz and Murray Straus (New York: Harper & Row, 1974) 3-23, p. 9. Carlson, p. 458, 459.

4 John O'Brien, "Violence in Divorce Prone Families," *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 33 (November, 1971), 692-698, p. 695.

5 Gelles, *The Violent Home*, p. 125, 132, 124.

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satisfaction related to severer forms of violence against wives.¹ Bonnie Carlson's sample contained 26 (of 58) couples where the wife had more education than the husband, while only 17 couples showed the opposite pattern.² This is a very different relationship from the one ordinarily found in married couples. Thus, there is considerable data to support this reworking of the stress, lack of resources or frustration as causation of wife abuse basic premise.

Other stressors which have been identified in at least one study as being linked to wife abuse are: fewer verbal skills on the part of the husband, social isolation of the family resulting in decreased social support, pregnancy and other family developmental crises, differing religions and health problems.³ When they link these stresses plus the ones already reviewed to social learning theory and the norms and values regarding violence and marital relationships in our culture, the social scientists have adequate theories concerning wife abuse, although again, nothing has been proved. The final viewpoint on causation, that of the feminists, would only point out that the sociologists' error is in a lack of parsimony and in terms of emphasis, not faulty reasoning. Although such researchers as Straus mention"— the male dominance and machismo values and norms which form a subtle but powerful part of our sexual and family system," they fail to see this as the major causative factor, underlying all the rest.⁴

1 Suzanne Prescott and Carolyn Letko, "Battered Women: A Social Psychological Perspective," in *Battered Women*, ed. Maria Roy (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold Co., 1977), 72-90, p. 89.

2 Carlson, p. 456.

3 Gelles, *The Violent Home*, p. 186.

4 Steinmetz and Straus, p. 20.

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Feminist Viewpoint

The misogynous nature of the patriarchal system and resulting hatred toward women and especially wives is deeply imbedded in our culture and can be argued to be the actual root cause of wife abuse.¹ Dobash and Dobash express the idea in the following phrase: "...the legacy of the patriarchy continues to generate the conditions and relationships that lead to a husband's use of force against his wife."² The other contributing factors which have been previously reviewed can best be understood within this context. Alcohol can be seen as a disinhibiting agent which weakens the weak social prescription against doing physical harm to women which prevents the wholesale slaughter of women that the extent of misogyny would predict. Alcohol, as a depressant, decreases the man's ability to control the deep, mainly unconscious, rage that he feels against women in general and his wife as their representative.³ Intoxication can then be used as a convenient excuse for battering a woman, since our society teaches that such behavior is less reprehensible when under the influence. Alcohol, therefore, can give a man the courage, the

excuse and the convenient loss of social veneer necessary to behaviorally express the misogyny which is often at the core of his being.

Misogyny also fits into social learning theory and the idea that

1 Margaret Gates, "Introduction," in *The Victimization of Women*, ed. Jane R. Chapman and Margaret Gates (Beverly Hills, Calif.: Sage Publications, 1978), 1-9, p. 9.

2 Dobash and Dobash, p. 9.

3 Shainess, "Psychological Aspects of Wifebeating," p. 115.

stresses and/or frustration may result in wife abuse.¹ It is the patriarchal family arrangement that teaches the men who it is appropriate to express his frustration toward. Straus and Steinmetz point out that husbands who hit wives are "carrying out a role model learned from parents and brought into play when social stresses become intolerable."² Actually the model is the one learned from the father, an identification with the aggressor and the oppressor.³ In J.J. Gayford's study, 41.6% of the abusive husbands saw their father being violent, while only 6.9% experienced a violent mother.⁴ Joseph Carroll also found only male sex linkages, between violent fathers and battering sons, in the intergenerational transmission of violence.⁵ Dobash and Dobash further explain social learning when they state, "Thus, all men see themselves as controllers of women, and because they are socialized into the use of violence, they are (all) potential aggressors against their wives."⁶

It is learned and psychically originating misogyny which causes the husband to take out on his wife, rather than other people, his frustration at not being able to fulfill the expectations of the male dominant role. Mary Lystaad states: "Violence at home occurs when social needs and expectations of the individual are unsupported by either the family or by other social institutions and when such a mode of expression seems eminently available and legitimate to the

1 Prescott and Letko, p. 77.

2 Steinmetz and Straus, p. 7.

3 Shainess, "Psychological Aspects of Wifebeating," p. 113.

4 Gayford, "Aetiology of Assaults", p. 20.

5 Carroll, p. 299.

6 Dobash and Dobash, p. 22.

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individual."¹ The availability and legitimacy of the wife as victim, determined in antiquity by the patriarchy, is what allows this behavior to occur.² Patriarchy is what causes male dominance to be a need and expectation for the man. When that need is threatened, hatred of women heightens and is all too often, directly expressed.

The most frightening aspect of wife abuse as it relates to misogyny and its roots, patriarchy, is that it is primarily purposeful.³ Only feminist literature has faced squarely this causation although data from other sources tends to support it also. Violence against wives usually has aspects of enforcing or reasserting the control of one particular man in a relationship, thereby reinforcing the whole of patriarchy.⁴ Most wife abusers are staunch supporters of the traditional male role of dominance and authority, and their behavior is designed to perpetuate that role both at home and in society.⁵ As Terry Davidson notes, "the wifebeater intends to cause injury and pain" and assumed that there will be no retaliation from patriarchal society.⁶ He finds three common attitudes in most wife abusers: 1) The behavior is acceptable and/or justified. 2) The man is unsure of the reasons for the battering other than it is a continuation of a ritual. 3) There is a lack of guilt and shame and a mystification that the law should

1 Mary Hanemann Lystaad, "Violence at Home," *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 45

(April, 1975): 328-345, p. 339.

2 Dobash and Dobash, p. 32.

3 Ibid., p. 24.

4 Martin, *Battered Wives*, p. 11.

5 Prescott and Letko, p. 76. Walker, p. 36.

6 Terry Davidson, *Conjugal Crime* (New York: Hawthorne Books, Inc, 1978), p. 3.

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object.¹ The purposeful and misogynous nature of wife abuse is shown in many ways. The wife beaters' justifications are often trivial. For example, Del Martin cites these cases: a woman broke the egg yolk when frying her husband's breakfast, another wife wore her hair in a ponytail, and a third served a casserole instead of fresh meat.² As Martin points out, these are only excuses, not reasons for beatings.³ Several authors have noted that wife abuse is not always preceded by verbal argument or conflict at all.⁴ Lenore Walker found that: "It is not uncommon for the batterer to wake the woman out of a deep sleep to begin his assault."⁵ Surely this is indicative of intent and deep hatred. Walker also states: "Although these women often did or said things to make the batterer angry, it was obvious he would have beaten her anyway."⁶ Alexandra Symonds reports that the largest group of wife abusers can be categorized by a machismo attitude, little guilt, a violent character structure and a pathological need for control.⁷ Not surprisingly, other authors have noted machismo, which was explored

1 Ibid., p. 23.

2 Martin, *Battered Wives*, p. 122.

3 Ibid.

4 Walker, p. 14, Dobash and Dobash, p. 98.

5 Walker, p. 61.

6 Ibid., p. 14.

7 Symonds, p. 165, 170.

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earlier as an attitude linked with misogyny, in battering husbands.¹

The machismo and misogynous attitudes of wife beaters is shown in their sexual relationships with their wives. Del Martin notes that these men see conquest as an integral part of sex.² Several samples have shown sexual abuse as a part of the pattern of victimization.³ Stark, et. al. felt that the deliberate, sexual nature of wife abuse is shown in the predominance of injuries to the face, chest, breast and abdomen.⁴ Walker found that the majority of abusing men in her sample used sex as an act of aggression, many had mutilated their wives sexually, some forced their wives into extraordinary sex practices and most of the women felt as if they had been raped at least once during the marriage.⁵ She also notes: "The violence and brutality in the sexual relationship seem to escalate over time."⁶ Other researchers have noted that when the wife refuses sex, it becomes a provocation to the husband.⁷ This can be viewed as a part of the need for dominance and machismo syndrome, and when seen in the context of the frequent sexual abuse, refusal of sex seems to be a reasonable action on the part of the wives.

1 Murray A. Straus, "Sexual Inequality, Cultural Norms and Wifebeating," *Victimology*, 1 (Spring, 1976): 54-70, p. 63. Martin Symonds, "The Psychodynamics of Violence-Prone Marriages," *American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 38 (Fall, 1978): 213-222, p. 216. Martin, *Battered Wives*, p. 45. Downey and Howell, p. 33.

2 Martin, *Battered Wives*, p. 67.

3 Prescott and Letko, p. 81. Roy, p. 28.

4 Stark, et. al., p. 467.

5 Walker, pp. 105, 108, 118.

6 Ibid, p. 126.

7 Renvoize, p. 48.

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As Martin Symonds points out, "Violence is a force intending to harm or injure another and is used to compel submission."¹ Hilberman and Munson drew the following conclusion from their interviews: "Violence erupted in any situation in which the husband did not immediately get his way."² They also found that the majority of the men in their sample were "making active and successful efforts to keep their wives ignorant and isolated" and therefore more submissive.³ Robert Whitehurst also notes that husbands frequently turn to violence in order to better control a situation to their satisfaction.⁴ In Gelles' study, many of the men tried to control their wives' activities by restricting or trying to restrict their access to the car and/or money.⁵ If the wife rebelled or disobeyed, a beating resulted, being used as a "last means of controlling the behavior of his wife."⁶ The majority of wife beaters have been found to be traditionalists, "believing in male supremacy and the stereotyped sex roles in the family."⁷ He is apparently willing to resort to violence to impose that ideology and his supremacy on his wife.

Dobash and Dobash explore this theme in more detail. Within patriarchal society the woman's life is divided into two parts: preparation for marriage and marriage itself. The stage of preparation

1 Symonds, M., p. 214. See also Shainess, "Psychological Aspects of Wifebeating," p. 114.

2 Hilberman and Munson, p. 462.

3 Ibid., p. 461.

4 Robert Whitehurst, "Violence in Husband Wife Interaction," in *Violence in the Family*, ed. Suzanne Steinmetz and Murray Straus (New York: Harper and Row, 1974), 75-81, p. 76.

5 Gelles, *The Violent Home*, p. 140

6 Ibid.

7 Walker, p. 36.

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for marriage is culminated by the courtship which is the final learning period for wifely submission, the seeds of which were planted in early childhood. Drawing from data from 109 battered women, these authors found the courtship phase characterized by increasing isolation of the woman and increasing possessiveness of her by the man. The few incidents of battering during courtship (experienced by 23% of the women) were sparked by issues of male possession and authority. Upon marriage, most of any remaining independent social activity by the wife swiftly ended, while the man retained his habits of going out with his friends.¹

When a woman gets married in patriarchy, her primary responsibility becomes child rearing, domestic labor and "personal and psychic service" to her mate.² The household responsibilities are seen as a service to the person in authority, the husband, and how well they are done is a symbol of "commitment and subservience."³ This helps to explain the often trivial nature of the incident preceding battering; it is often over the woman's performance of a small household chore. If done poorly or reluctantly in the perception of the man, it is a symbol of some spark of rebellion against his total dominance. Such possible revolt must be quelled swiftly, with force if necessary, and such force has great symbolic meaning for the future. This principal is well known to all oppressors.⁴

1 Dobash and Dobash, pp. 81, 84, 85, 87.

2 Ibid., p. 90.

3 Ibid., p. 91.

4 Jean Baker Miller and Ira Mothner, "Psychological Consequences of Sexual Inequality," *Nursing Digest*, (Fall, 1978): 27-31, p. 27.

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Dobash and Dobash found that the first beating in a battering relationship usually occurred within the first six months of marriage. Only 8% of the 109 wives experienced a first instance of physical abuse after five years of marriage. This shows the husband's attempt to establish complete control early in the marriage. The verbal argument of the incident immediately prior to the beating almost always concerned female performance of domestic work or jealousy.¹

Jealousy, noted by almost all authors as a major cause of the wife beater's behavior, and also as a major cause of husbands killing wives, is most logically and parsimoniously viewed within the context of the husband's effort to maintain control over his wife. One of the dictionary definitions of jealous is "vigilant in maintaining or guarding something."² Ownership is implied. Since women are considered the possession of a husband, real or imagined sexual infidelity is the gravest threat to male dominance. In Hilberman and Munson's sample, jealousy, especially on the part of the husband, was present in 57 of the 60 battering marriages.³ 66 of Gayford's sample of 100 abused women cited their husband's jealousy as the main cause of abuse, while only 17 had ever actually been unfaithful in comparison to 44 of the husbands.⁴ The beaten wives in Walker's study "almost universally reported irrational jealousy" shown by the males.⁵ Maria Roy found

1 Dobash and Dobash, pp. 94, 98.

2 Clarence L. Barnhart, *The American College Dictionary* (New York: Random House, 1947), p. 655.

3 Hilberman and Munson, p. 461.

4 Gayford, "Aetiology of Assaults," p. 22.

5 Walker, p. 114.

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jealousy as a close second to money disputes as the major contributing factors to husband-wife arguments ending in male violence.¹ Money is also most logically seen as an authority and control issue. Robert Whitehorse concluded from his study of 100 court cases: "At the core of nearly all the cases involving physical violence, the husband responded out of frustration at being unable to control the wife, often accusing her of being a whore or having an affair with another male, usually without justification."² In a review of all wife abuse literature, Sydney Brandon found that jealousy was second only to alcohol in frequency, when causes of wife battering were enumerated.³ Jean Renvoize illustrates well the connection between jealousy and dominance when she states: "The jealousy so often manifested by battering husbands may be one aspect of the need for one partner to have complete power over the other."⁴

Other aspects of jealousy connected with wife abuse have also been discovered. Lenore Walker finds that the "batterer's need to possess his woman totally" often causes her to leave or lose her job.⁵ The man becomes jealous of her work relationships even when she feels her home role is most important, lets him control all her earnings and tries hard to convince him that he is still head of the family.⁶

1 Roy, p. 39.

2 Sydney Brandon, "Physical Violence in the Family: An Overview," in *Violence in the Family*, ed. Marie Borland (Atlantic Highlands, in N.J.: Humanities Press, 1976), 1-24, p. 2. See also

Davidson, p. 31.

3 Brandon, p. 2.

4 Renvoize, p. 34.

5 Walker, p. 33.

6 Ibid., p. 33, 34.

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Other authors have also noted that the abusive husband is threatened when the wife wants to get a job.¹

Another manifestation of jealousy and the desire for complete ownership is the frequent wifebeating that occurs when the woman is pregnant.² Richard Gelles was apparently the first identifier of this phenomenon when he found that ten of 44 abused wives were assaulted while pregnant.³ He sees these incidents as a possible conscious or unconscious attempt to terminate the pregnancy and as arising out of the increased stress of this time of family developmental crisis.⁴ He also blames sexual frustration on the part of the man and the bio-chemical changes in the female which "cause them to become more critical of their husband's behavior."⁵ None of these interpretations are based on data from the involved parties and the last two betray bias in Gelles' thinking helping to explain why he is unable to see pregnancy as the threat to male dominance that it is, since a child can divert some of a wife's loyalties away from the husband.⁶

One half of Flynn's sample of 33 wife abuse victims had been beaten while carrying a child.⁷ In 481 Emergency Room female patients, battered women were found to be three times more likely than nonbattered

1 Prescott and Letko, p. 74.

2 Martin, *Battered Wives*, p. 45.

3 Gelles, *The Violent Home*, p. 145.

4 Richard J. Gelles, "Violence and Pregnancy: A Note on the Extent of the Problem and Needed Services," *Family Coordinator*, 24 (January, 1975): 81-86, p. 82.

5 Ibid.

6 Dobash and Dobash, p. 91.

7 Flynn, p. 18.

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women to be pregnant when injured.¹ Lenore Walker found that most of the women she interviewed reported more severe and more frequent violence during pregnancy and, importantly, during the child's early infancy.² She also concludes that this phenomenon is directly related to the husband's possessiveness. Stark and her colleagues find assault during pregnancy, along with the preponderance of injuries to the face, breasts and abdomen, to be indicative of the deliberate, sex related nature of wife assault.³ All these kinds of jealousy, cited so often as a cause of wife abuse in and of themselves, are seen from the feminist viewpoint to be part of the larger, overall cause of the patriarchal system and its substrates, the need for male dominance and misogyny.⁴

William Goode relates family violence to the theoretical framework of social systems and social stratification.⁵ He views the family as a power system like all other social units, which "all rest to some degree on force and its threat" to operate.⁶ Feminists may protest against the inevitability implied here, but the framework is useful for explanation.⁷ Goode points out that there are four ways by which people can be made to serve the ends of those in authority: 1) Force and its

1 Evan Stark, et. al., "Medicine and Patriarchal Violence," *International Journal of Health*

Services, 9 (1979): A61-A93, p. A67.

2 Walker, p. 105.

3 Ibid.

4 Ibid., p. 36.

5 William Goode, "Force and Violence in the Family," *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 33 (November, 1971): 62A-636, p. 62A.

6 Ibid.

7 Robin Morgan, *Going Too Far* (New York: Vintage Books, 1978), p. 6-17.

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threat (power) 2) Economic variables 3) Prestige or respect 4) Likeability, attractiveness, friendship or love.1 Within the marriage relationship, a combination of these factors is used to preserve male dominance. The threat of force is used more frequently than, and in conjunction with, actual violence.2 Physical abuse enters into the picture more often, according to Goode, when the other three persuasive mechanisms fail or when the male feels his authority is threatened.3 Thus battering behavior is more likely to appear when the man's control is challenged by the woman's job, pregnancy or the possibility of infidelity and if the man feels insecure about his own power from other means.4 As Anthony Storr states: "It is the insecure and inadequate who most easily feel threatened and who resort to violence as a primitive way of restoring dominance."5 Del Martin also points out that the assaultive husband is usually a "loser" in some basic way and beats his wife to make up for feelings of low self esteem and insufficiency.6 We can return to the data on unemployment, lack of skills and lower levels of education in many battering men as an illustration of this mechanism. It has also been suggested that the high incidence of child abuse or excessive physical punishment in the background of many wife beaters has contributed to a basic sense of inadequacy in these men which is later

1 Goode, p. 624.

2 Gelles, *The Violent Home*, p. 74.

3 Goode, p. 635.

4 Davidson, p. 27.

5 Anthony Storr, "Introduction," in *Family Violence* ed. John M. Eekelaar and Sanford N. Katz (Toronto, Canada: Butterworth & Co., 1978), 2-8, p. 7.

6 Martin, *Battered Wives*, p. 45.

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easily elicited leading to anger and rage.1

Returning to Goode's basic premises, other characteristics of wife abuse can be explored. In order to use the third and fourth means of influence, prestige or love, a husband needs to be verbally persuasive. Several authors have listed poor communication skills as a factor predisposing to abuse.2 Goode postulates that lower class males may have fewer verbal skills as well as less prestige and decreased economic resources, and therefore have to rely more frequently on brute power to maintain their position in the family.3 He contrasts this to the middle class male who he characterizes in the following way: "The greater the other resources an individual can command, the more force he can muster, but the less he will actually deploy or use force in an overt manner."4 Goode goes on to note that the middle class male has been taught to avoid the use of force by his childhood training.5 However, as we have seen, the evidence is contradictory when it comes to the prevalence of wife abuse in different social classes. Robert Whitehurst maintains that the only difference according to class is in terms of degree and frequency; the issue is still control and dominance.6 The middle class husband is more likely to

hit his wife only once at a time and then regain his control as he considers the

1 Shainess, "Psychological Aspects of Wifebeating," p. 115.

2 Symonds, M., p. 219. Gelles, *The Violent Home*, p. 186.

3 Goode, p. 628.

4 Ibid.

5 Ibid., p. 631.

6 Whitehurst, p. 78.

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consequences to his position if he were known as a batterer.¹ Yet even one blow is a powerful symbol of force and authority. As Stark and her co-authors describe, the most probable interpretation of these characteristics of wife beating is that: "Complex social factors may determine whether and in what combination physical, ideological, political and economic force will be used to control women..."²

In summation, the feminist viewpoint on the causation of wife abuse can be seen to provide an underlying theory which explains the other factors that have been noted to correlate with wife abuse. Patriarchy as the root cause of battering behavior can also predict and explain the two remaining factors which have been advanced as sources of physical assault on wives: cultural support and historical precedent. These have both been remarked upon by feminists and social scientists alike. As the Dobashes implore: "In order to understand and explain violence between husbands and wives, we must go beyond the interacting couple...⁴ and place the violent behavior in its proper historical and contemporary setting."³

Cultural Support for Wife Abuse

In a national, representative 1968 poll of 1,176 American adults, one-fifth approved of "slapping one's spouse on appropriate occasions.

1 Ibid.

2 Stark et. al., p. A81.

3 Dobash and Dobash, p. 27.

4 Rodney Stark and James McEvoy, "Middle-Class Violence," *Psychology Today*, A (November, 1970): 52-56, 110-112, p. 52.

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62% of a primarily male sample of college students and middle class businessmen felt that violence would sometimes be appropriate if the spouse was involved in extra-marital sex.¹ 27.6% of Straus' national sample of married people thought that slapping a spouse was either necessary, normal or good.² However, the authors warn that consistency between attitudes and behavior cannot be taken for granted according to their research.³

More specific and behavioral but less generalizable evidence for the presence of societal attitudes supporting wife abuse is shown by two laboratory studies. In one such study done by Murray Straus, student subjects were given a description of an assault of a woman by a man which resulted in her losing consciousness.⁴ If the couple was said to be married, the subjects suggested a significantly less severe punishment for the man than if they were described as "going together."⁵ Another laboratory study, involving a staged physical attack on a female by a male, resulted in 65% of the subjects intervening when they had been led to believe the pair were strangers versus only a 19% intervention rate when they thought the couple was married.⁶

1 Robert Whitehurst, "Violence Potential in Extramarital Sexual Responses," *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 11 (November, 1971): 683-691, p. 688.

2 Ursula Dibble and Murray Straus, "Some Social Structure Determinants of Inconsistency

Between Attitudes and Behavior: The Case of Family Violence," *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 42 (February, 1980), 71-79, p. 7.

3 Ibid., p. 79.

4 Straus, "Sexual Inequality," p. 62.

5 Ibid.

6 Lance R. Shotland and Margret K. Straw, "Bystander Response When a Man Attacks a Woman," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 34 (November, 1976): 990-999, p. 992. 198

Those authors concluded: "If bystanders and, one would guess, society do not regard wife beating seriously, this act cannot be controlled."1 A frightening example of behavior in real life is the reason given by one witness who saw but did not report to police the brutal murder of Kitty Genovese in New York in 1964.2 (Only four of the 38 witnesses were able to formulate a reason; the rest said they didn't know why.)3 Even though the young woman screamed, "I'm dying!" and "He stabbed me!" during her 35 minute ordeal, the witness said, of herself and her husband, "We thought it was a lover's quarrel.

Wife abuse can also be viewed in the context of behavior which is thought to be appropriate for the male sex in general. The National Commission on the Causes of Violence found that proving masculinity in our culture may require "frequent rehearsals of toughness" and the exploitation of women.5 As Robert Whitehurst states, "When all other sources of masculine identity fail, men can always rely on being 'tough' as a sign of manhood."6 Jean Renvoize mentions the mining communities of England and Wales where physical strength is important to men and "roughing up" wives considered normal.7 We can also understand why verbal arguments may escalate to battering when we know that,

1 Ibid, p. 999.

2 A.M. Rosenthal, *Thirty-Eight Witnesses* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964, p. 44.

3 Ibid.

4 Ibid.

5 Davidson, p. 11.

6 Whitehurst, "Violence in Husband Wife Interaction," p. 78.

7 Renvoize, p. 24.

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"Men are reared to believe that backing down is to deny one's masculinity."1 Carlson notes that masculinity is equated with dominance in our society.2 Dobash and Dobash note that men who assault their wives were living up to cultural prescriptions that are "cherished in Western society, aggressiveness, male dominance and female subordination."3 These attitudes are not new; they originated with patriarchy and can be traced in its history.

Historical Perspective

E. Emerson and Russell Dobash place wife abuse in its historical context as a form of behavior which has: existed for centuries as an acceptable, and, indeed, a desirable part of a patriarchal family system within a patriarchal society, and much of the ideology and many of the institutional arrangements which supported the patriarchy through the subordination, domination and control of women are still reflected in our culture and our social institutions.4

Two excellent and comprehensive historical studies of the history of wife abuse have been done: Terry Davidson's "Wifebeating: a Recurring Phenomenon Throughout History" and the Dobashes' research reported in their book, *Violence Against Wives*.5 A review of original

sources is beyond the scope of this study, but it is important to briefly outline some of the findings of the previously mentioned works in order to

1 Goode, p. 633.

2 Carlson, p. 460.

3 Dobash and Dobash, p. 24.

4 Dobash and Dobash, p. 31.

5 Terry Davidson, "Wifebeating: A Recurring Phenomenon Throughout History," in *Battered Women*, ed. Maria Roy (New York: Van Nostrand Co., 1977), 2-21 Dobash and Dobash, pp. 34-75.

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convey the magnitude of historical precedent. The Bible provides our earliest prescription for physical punishment of wives.¹ Deuteronomy 22: 13-21 gives a law condemning brides to death by stoning if unable to prove virginity.² In early Rome, husbands and fathers could legally beat or put women to death for many reasons but especially adultery or suspected infidelity, reflecting "not so much thwarted love but loss of control and damage to a possession."³ Jesus was more egalitarian in his thinking, but the sexist statements of St. Paul set the tone for the Christian Church.⁴ Constantine, the Emperor and religious leader of the Byzantium branch of Christianity, set the example for treatment of wives by putting his own young wife to death by scalding.⁵ By medieval times, the widespread nature of wifebeating has been documented in several ways. It was written in Spanish law that a woman who committed adultery could be killed with impunity.⁶ In France, female sexual infidelity was punishable by beating as was disobedience.⁷ Italian men punished unfaithful women with severe flogging and exile for three years.⁸ A medieval theological manual refers to the necessity of men beating their wives "for correction"

1 Ibid., p. 7

2 Ibid., p. 8.

3 Dobash and Dobash, p. 37.

4 Davidson, "Wifebeating: A Recurring Phenomenon," p. 10.

5 Ibid., p. 11.

6 Dobash and Dobash, p. 46.

7 Ibid.

8 Ibid.

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according to church doctrine.¹ A Catholic Abbe decried the common cruelty to and murder of the wives of prominent Christian men.²

The Dobashes explain that the medieval "age of chivalry" was actually an attitude based on the ideal of female chastity before marriage and fidelity afterwards which were important aspects of male property rights and outward signs of the master maintaining control. This glorification of women as asexual, weak adornments actually contributed to their subjugation and was associated with the use of male force in rescues and tournaments. The close of the middle ages saw the rise of the nuclear family along with the development of modern states and the beginning of capitalism, all of which eroded the position of women and strengthened the authority of men. In sixteenth century England there was a campaign in support of the nuclear family and loyalty to husband and the King who was trying to consolidate his power. Allegiance to fathers and husbands was equated to loyalty to the King and God.³

Capitalism and Protestantism rose together. The basic unit of production moved outside of the family and for the first time wages were paid for work on a regular basis.⁴ Wives became

separated from production and exchange and because domestic work received no wages, it became devalued.⁵ The Protestant religion idealized marriage and equated

1 Davidson, "Wifebeating: A Recurring Phenomenon." p. 1.

2 Ibid., p. 11.

3 Dobash and Dobash, pp. 44, 48, 49.

4 Ibid., p. 50.

5 Ibid.

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wifely obedience with moral duty.¹ The head of the household gained much of the power which used to belong to priests.² Martin Luther is considered less misogynist than most of the men of his time, but even he equated female anatomy with the woman's role and admitted to boxing his wife's ear when she got "saucy."³ John Knox insisted that the "natural" subordination of women was ordained by God.⁴ Wife beating was discouraged by the Protestant theologians, but the husbands right to do so was acknowledged and the practice was widespread.⁵ During the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in the Western world, there was little objection to the husband using force as long as it did not exceed certain limits.⁶ The wife could be beaten if she "caused jealousy, was lazy, unwilling to work in the fields, became drunk, spent too much money or neglected the house."⁷ A nagging wife could be sentenced to the "ducking stool, placarding (as in *The Scarlet Letter*) or whipping."⁸

While the Reformation set the tone in the rest of Europe, Napoleon influenced France, Holland, Italy and parts of Switzerland and Germany.⁹ He thought of wives as "fickle, defenseless, mindless beings, tending

1 Ibid.

2 Ibid., p.52.

3 Davidson, "Wifebeating: A Recurring Phenomenon," p. 14.

4 Dobash and Dobash, p. 54.

5 Ibid., p.55.

6 Ibid., p.56.

7 Ibid.

8 Ibid., p.59.

9 Davisons, "Wifebeating: A Recurring Phenomenon," p. 14.

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toward Eve-like evil" and deserving of punishment for such misdeeds as "causing" bankruptcy or criminality in her husband.¹ He is quoted as saying to the Council of State: The husband must possess the absolute power and right to say to his wife: "Madam, you shall not go out, you shall not go to the theatre, you shall not receive such and such a person; for the children you bear shall be mine."² The common saying of the times was, "Women, like walnut trees, should be beaten every day."³ In France it was perfectly legal for the husband to beat his spouse as long as she was not killed or maimed.⁴

British common law in the eighteenth century also established the legal right of men to use force with their wives to insure that she fulfilled her wifely obligations, "the consummation of marriage, cohabitation, conjugal rights, sexual fidelity and general obedience and respect for his wishes."⁵ John Stuart Mills petitioned Parliament to end the brutal treatment of British wives in 1869.⁶ The changes in law that resulted were directed not toward eliminating the practice of wifebeating but to limiting the amount of damage that was being done.⁷

In our own country, founded on the rights of men, not of women,

John Adams rejected his wife's plea for better treatment of women in

1 Ibid., pp. 14, 15, 16.

2 Christopher Herold, *The Age of Napoleon*, as quoted in Davidson, "Wifebeating: A Recurring Phenomenon," p. 15.

3 Ibid., p. 14.

4 Dobash and Dobash, p. 14.

5 Ibid.

6 Davidson, "Wifebeating: A Recurring Phenomenon," p. 16.

7 Dobash and Dobash, p. 74.

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the new government.¹ Sir William Blackstone's interpretation of English law which upheld the husband's right to employ moderate chastisement in response to wifely improper behavior, was used as a model for American law.² In 1824 the state of Mississippi legalized wifebeating, and in 1886 a proposed law to punish battering husbands was defeated in Pennsylvania.³ North Carolina passed the first law against wifebeating, but the court pronounced that it did not intend to hear cases unless there was permanent damage or danger to life.⁴ As late as 1915, a London police magistrate reaffirmed that wives could be beaten at home legally as long as the stick used was no bigger than the man's thumb.⁵ "The law has been condoning violence to wives for centuries."⁶ The influences of the history of wifebeating are with us today, not only in the behavior of husbands but in the attitudes of the courts, police and society toward them. The conclusion of the Dobashes is appropriate summary: The ideologies and institutions that made such treatment both possible and justifiable have survived, albeit somewhat altered from century to century, and have been woven into the fabric of our culture and are thriving today.⁷

1 Davidson, "Wifebeating: A Recurring Phenomenon," p. 18.

2 Ibid., p. 19.

3 Ibid.

4 Ibid.

5 Dobash and Dobash, p. 74.

6 Davidson, "Wifebeating: A Recurring Phenomenon," p. 2.

7 Dobash and Dobash, p. 31.

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The Victim

A large part of the literature on wife abuse is focused on the victim. This portion is important in terms of how the practice of wifebeating contributes to the individual subordination of the victims involved and thereby supports the subjugation of women in general. It is also useful as illustration of how society and its institutions continue to support wife abuse and practically force the woman to stay in a battering situation.

Most of the authors have remarked upon the low self esteem of the wives caught in abuse relationships. This is understandable in terms of how married women in patriarchy are taught to define their sense of worth in terms of their domestic work and family service.¹ As Lenore Walker found, most battered women are traditionalists and believe strongly in the prescribed feminine sex role stereotype.² When her husband beats her, it is a "powerful statement of her worthlessness," which, when repeated often enough, is devastating to self esteem.³ An authentic sense of self esteem is necessary for self determination and movement of women toward equality.⁴ Other oppressed groups are also plagued by low feelings of self worth which is a powerful tool for the maintenance of the status quo for the oppressor.⁵

1 Jean Baker Miller, *Toward a New Psychology of Women* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1976), p. 53. Dobash and Dobash, p. 125.

2 Walker, p. 31.

3 Dobash and Dobash, p. 125.

4 Miller, pp. 98, 118.

5 Paul Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, (New York: The Seabury Press, 1970) p. 49. Miller and Mothner, p. 28.

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The extreme fear of these victims interacts with the low self esteem to create a psychological state of "paralyzing terror."¹ Hilberman and Munson described this reaction as one of unending stress, chronic apprehension of doom, overwhelming passivity, and a pervasive sense of hopelessness.² Alexandra Symonds has likened this state to the reaction seen after natural or war caused catastrophes in victims, when they become paralyzed by terror or mental confusion and exhibit passivity and apathy.³ She also compares the wife of an abuser to victims of other violent crimes who have been noted to show shock and denial, appeasement behavior and/or depression, withdrawal and guilt.⁴ In such an emotional state the woman is likely to turn her natural retaliatory aggression inward and blame herself.⁵ She knows that to retaliate will bring worse punishment.⁶ It is not uncommon for abused women to make suicidal attempts or gestures and to feel guilty.⁷

Lenore Walker has analyzed the psychological and behavioral reaction of battered women in terms of "learned helplessness" theory.⁸ This phenomenon was first seen in dogs but has been replicated in humans in experimental laboratory settings and is described as the behavior

1 Hilberman and Munson, p. 464.

2 Ibid.

3 Symonds, p. 167, 168.

4 Ibid., p. 169.

5 Hilberman and Munson, p. 464.

6 Dobash and Dobash, p. 109.

7 Gayford, "Wife Battering," Prescott and Letko, p. 84.

8 Walker, p. 43.

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resulting when an "organism has learned that outcomes are uncontrollable by his responses and if seriously debilitated by this knowledge."¹ When taught that a painful experience occurs randomly and whether or not anything is done to try to avoid or stop it, a person or animal becomes less motivated to try measures to end the pain, has trouble learning that responding controls outcomes generally, and exhibits anxiety, depression and dependence.² Wife abuse usually also occurs randomly and whether or not the victim does anything to precipitate it or anything to stop it.³ "Once the women are operating from a belief of helplessness, the perception becomes reality, and they become passive, submissive and helpless."⁴ The emotional state of battered women, however characterized, allows their further subjugation and also impedes their leaving.

The tendency of abused wives to stay married to their husbands and/ or return to him after leaving, and/or drop assault charges against him, has both baffled and exasperated the scholars in the field and those trying to help them.⁵ We have rejected masochism as an explanation for this behavior and have shown that continued fear of the man is a realistic and powerful reason for it.

In addition, the psychological state of the woman, her lack of alternatives to the relationship and the dearth of support for and actual prohibitions against her leaving of our

1 Steven Maier and Martin Seligman, "Learned Helplessness: Theory and Evidence," *Journal of Experimental Psychology*, 105 (March, 1976), 3-46, p. 4.

2 *Ibid.*, p. 7.

3 Walker, p. A8.

4 *Ibid.*, p. A7.

5 Gelles, "No Place to go," p. 60.

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societal institutions, combine to trap her in the situation. These can all be related to the oppression of women in the marital relationship.

As we have seen, the overwhelming feelings of helplessness, powerlessness, depression and apathy may result in the woman's inability to figure a way out. Alexandra Symonds points out the parallels between abused wives and brain washing victims.¹ Brain washing uses the technique, in isolation from peers, of humiliation and degradation by the captors followed by kindness which is always accompanied by threats of return to the previous state of horror.² Wife batterers isolate their wives from contact with others and proceed to verbally and physically degrade them.³ Lenore Walker has identified a period of kindness and contrite behavior on the part of husbands following severe battering incidents.⁴ Yet the woman realizes that the threat of beating is always there and attributes omnipotence to her husband as does a brain washing victim to the captor, and other oppressed groups to their oppressor.⁵ Brainwashing results in "apathy, despair and finally total submission" in its victims.⁶ Wife abuse may do the same.

The situation becomes more entrapping when we realize what usually happens when women try to seek help for their condition. If they seek help from psychiatrists they are often treated as being mentally ill and

1 A. Symonds, p. 169.

2 *Ibid.*

3 Walker, p. 166.

4 *Ibid.*, p. 65.

5 Walker, p. 75. Freire, p. 50. A. Symonds, p. 169.

6 *Ibid.*

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encouraged to behave more submissively.¹ physicians are likely to see battered women in the emergency room or as their general practitioner. 80% of the wives interviewed by the Dobashes saw their family doctor at least once for injuries inflicted by their spouse.² Usually the woman will not mention the origin of her injuries unless asked because of the stigma involved, and the doctors seldom inquire or if they do, they accept obvious lies.³ In a review of records of 481 women who sought treatment in a hospital emergency room during one month for any reason, Stark and her associates found 10% who had definitely been battered at least once, 15% who had trauma histories pointing to husband assault, and another 16% with current injuries suggesting abuse.⁴ Of these 197 women, only 13 were identified by the attending physician as wife abuse victims.⁵ 24% of the battered women were prescribed minor tranquilizers (as opposed to 9% of the nonabused) and 15% (versus 4%) were referred to psychiatrists.⁶ Their stress related symptoms were disparagingly referred to as "psychosomatic" in the records and their behavior often called "self-destructive."⁷ J.J. Gayford's sample of 100 abused wives contained 71 who were taking antidepressants or tranquilizers prescribed

1 Walker, p. 229.

2 Dobash and Dobash, p. 181.

3 Hilberman and Munson, p. 469. Dobash and Dobash, p. 182. Stark, p. 465.

4 Stark, p. 465.

5 Ibid., p. 469.

6 Ibid., pp. 469, 473.

7 Ibid.

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by a physician.¹ These medications, psychiatric referrals and labels reinforce the traditional female role, continue the wife's dependency, imply that she is the sick person in the relationship, ignore the issues involved and help perpetuate the wife's subordination and entrapment.²

Other sources of help are equally detrimental. Clergymen usually emphasize the sanctity of the family.³ In Prescott and Letko's sample, of ten women who contacted a minister or priest for advice, only one found him helpful.⁴ The 109 wives in the Dobash research were most likely to seek help from parents, relatives and friends but were usually advised on how to cope, not leave.⁵ These women were least likely to seek help from social agencies because of fear of condemnation and the cultural prohibition against seeing social workers for marital problems.⁶ Lenore Walker reports that in England, physicians, service professionals and policemen have the highest incidence of abusers within professional categories.⁷ This gives us an idea of what kind of attitudes abused women may encounter when they seek help from these men.⁸

The police would ordinarily be the first agency called when assault occurs and are thought to generally protect a citizen from further harm

1 Gayford, "Wife Battering," p. 195.

2 Stark, p. 475.

3 Dobash, p. 173.

4 Prescott and Letko, p. 88.

5 Dobash and Dobash, p. 168.

6 Ibid., p. 200.

7 Walker, p. 24.

8 Ibid.

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from an attacker. Yet police do not even always respond when they receive a call from an abused wife. In a study of the dispatch rate of police in Vancouver, Canada, it was found that a cruiser was sent in 100% of the cases of battered wives only if a weapon was mentioned and there was a child present.¹ The dispatch rate dropped to 75% when alcohol was involved and a child present.² It went down to 67% if only alcohol or a weapon were indicated.³ The report did not mention what happened if a woman only said, "My husband is beating me." In Syracuse it has been learned that a wife calling about abuse has only one chance in two of getting more than advice from the police dispatcher.⁴

Only 10% of the Walker sample of battered wives ever called the police, and most of those who did found the police ineffective and were more severely beaten after they left.⁵ In contrast, two thirds of the women interviewed by Maria Roy had reported their abuse to the police at some time, but again the majority said the police avoided making an arrest and did not tell them of any other alternatives.⁶ Dobash and Dobash found that the decision of whether or not to arrest the assaulter made by police was based more on the attitudes of the husband and wife

1 Downey and Howell, p. 65.

2 Ibid.

3 Ibid.

4 Raymond Pamas, "Police Discretion and Diversion of Incidents of Intra-Family Violence," *Law and Contemporary Problems*, 36 (Autumn, 1971), 539-565, p. 545.

5 Walker, p. 26.

6 Roy, p. 36.

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rather than on the seriousness of the incident.¹ Arrest was more likely if the husband was verbally abusive to the police.² In New Hampshire, a certain number of stitches have to be needed or broken bones found in order for an assault to be charged and an arrest made.³ Footlick and Sciolino tell the frightening story of an abused woman whose husband was a former professional football player.⁴ When she called police after being beaten, they often ended up talking football with her attacker rather than arresting him.⁵

It is unfortunately true that more policemen are killed or injured when they respond to domestic disturbance calls than in any other situation.⁶ However, this does not excuse them for tendencies to avoid the victim's need for protection and medical care.⁷ Telling the couple that there is nothing they can do is the most frequent response, and this gives the husband a license to continue his assault.⁸ As quoted by Eisenburg and Seymour, an Ann Arbor, Michigan Police Training Academy outline shows the procedure in at least one police department for handling domestic calls:

1 Dobash and Dobash, p. 214.

2 Ibid.

3 Gelles, "No Place to Go," p. 60.

4 Jerrold K. Footlick and Elaine Sciolino, "Wives Who Batter Back," *Newsweek*, 90 (January 30, 1978): p. 54.

5 Ibid.

6 Alan D. Eisenberg and Earl J. Seymour, "The Self-Defense Plea and Battered Women," *Trial*, 14 (July, 1978): 34-36, p. 36.

7 Marjory Fiels, "Representing Battered Wives, or What to do until the Police Arrive," *The Family Law Reporter*, 3 (April 4, 1977): 4025- 4029, p. 4025.

8 Ibid.

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a. Avoid arrest if possible. Appeal to vanity.

b. Explain the procedure of obtaining a warrant.

1. Complainant must sign complaint.

2. Must appear in court.

3. Consider loss of time.

4. Cost of court.

c. State that your only interest is breach of peace.

d. Explain that attitudes usually change by court time.

e. Recommend a postponement.

1. Court not in session.

2. No judge available.

f. Do not be too harsh or critical.

In other words, some policemen are being systematically taught to avoid and discourage arrest and pressing charges, thereby denying the wife her right to protection. They are also being

warned against being critical of the husbands which may provide the men with encouragement for continuing their abuse.

To indict policemen in general as harmful to abused women is unfair. In Bonnie Carlson's study of 101 battered wives, 36% called the police and although 25% of those found the police hostile and not helpful, 36% related that the police were helpful and concerned.² In Prescott and Letko's survey, 15 (of 40) women had contacted the police and 3 found them helpful, 4 not helpful and the remaining 8 described their assistance somewhere in between.³ It must also be understood that many women withdraw charges they have made before they are to appear in court.⁴ Whether this is because of threats from their husbands and fear of his retaliation or because of her psychological

1 Eisenberg and Seymour, p. 36.

2 Carlson, p. 457.

3 Prescott and Letko, p. 88.

4 Downey and Howell, p. 457.

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state, this behavior results in police feeling that arrest is a waste of time.¹ Out of genuine concern for the battered women (or at least concern about the danger for officers) many programs that give special training to policemen for handling of domestic crises have been started across the country.² The officers are trained to encourage the parties to reason with each other and to refer them to appropriate social service agencies.³ Evidence about the success of these programs is mixed, and it can be wondered if this is the appropriate response by police in terms of the woman's continued danger. As Eisenberg and Seymour state:

"Try to imagine another situation in which police would be officially advised to encourage a victim to 'reason' with an attacker, none exists."⁴

75% of other assaults led to arrest versus only 16% of the assaults against wives, and these all resulted in only misdemeanor charges in one study. Michael Freeman found that of 104 arrests of physically abusive husbands, only three men were given sentences, so that nearly 99% were free to retaliate against their wives for calling the police.⁶ Until 1962 in England, wives were not allowed to sue their husband for assault and battery at all because of the idea that they "were one flesh, and

1 Eisenberg and Seymour, p. 36.

2 Michael Freeman, "Le Vice Anglais-Wife Battering in English and American Law," *Family Law Quarterly*, 11 (Fall, 1977): 199-251, p. 226.

3 Morten Bard, "The Study and Modification of Intra-Familial Violence," *The Control of Aggressive and Violence*, ed. Jerome Singer (New York: Academic Press, 1971), 149-164, p. 156. Pamas, p. 552. Freeman, p. 227. Fields, p. 4027.

4 Eisenberg and Seymour, p. 36.

5 Dobash and Dobash, p. 207.

6 Freeman, p. 224.

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such litigation would be unseemly, distressing and embittering."¹ Until the 1950's the states of Texas, Utah and New Mexico granted immunity from prosecution to husbands who beat their wives.² Courts in both England and the United States can issue injunctions against the husband, but these are only pieces of paper and are frequently violated and difficult to enforce.³ A House of Commons Select Committee on Violence meeting from 1974 to 1976 indicated that prejudice against women in cases of wife abuse was to be found among government ministers, civil

servants and the police.⁴ Marjory Fields gives a scathing indictment of the American judicial process from her experience as a lawyer representing abused women.⁵ She finds that prosecutors impose extraordinary conditions on women before they will accept the case.⁶ Judges do not believe the woman (especially if her husband has status) without photographs, witnesses or medical reports and often dismiss cases or give light or suspended sentences in Fields' experience.⁷ In summary, it seems appropriate to question as does Michael Freeman, "Is it any wonder that battered wives are reluctant to invoke the criminal justice system against their husbands?"⁸

1 Ibid., p. 228.

2 Dobash and Dobash, p. 209.

3 Sarah McCabe, "A Note on the Reports of the Select Committees on Violence in Marriage and Violence in the Family," *The British Journal of Criminology*. 17 (July, 1977): 280-285, p. 283.

4 McCabe, p. 282.

5 Fields, p. 4025-4027.

6 Ibid., p. 4025.

7 Ibid., p. 4026-4027. g

8 Freeman, p. 224.

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If, in spite of her terror and despair, in spite of the knowledge that the courts and police are unlikely to protect her from further retaliation, in spite of the principle that she shouldn't have to be the one to leave, she finds the courage to pack up herself and her children and leave, where is the battered woman supposed to go? She usually lacks independent financial resources and her family frequently will encourage her to return.¹ The consensus of the Chief Circuit Judges in Florida was that abused wives stay in the relationship because usually there are no viable alternatives.² Housing authorities do not see wives who have left their assaultive husbands as technically homeless, and therefore do not provide public housing or assistance in obtaining shelter.³ Because battering incidents usually happen at night or on the week-end, few social agencies are open.⁴ Fortunately, there are beginning to be shelters for abuse victims that are open 24 hours a day in this country and in England, but as yet there are not enough.⁵ Almost 100% of the 150 abused women who called a crisis hotline said they would have used a shelter if one were available; unfortunately, there weren't any in that community.⁶

1 Dobash and Dobash, p. 145. Straus, *Victimology*, 1 (1976) p. 64.

2 Barry Kutum, "Legislative Needs and Solutions," *Battered Women*, ed. Maria Roy (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold Co., 1977), 277-287, p. 279.

3 McCabe, p. 283.

4 Gelles, "No Place to Go," p. 60.

5 McCabe, p. 283.

6 Roy, p. 32.

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Even though it is difficult, battered women do try to leave their husbands. 81 of the 100 women in Gayford's sample had left on more than one occasion.¹ 36 of them had left more than four times.² The majority had returned because their husband had found them and promised to reform or had threatened and/or demonstrated further violence.³ Dobash and Dobash interpret this behavior of leaving temporarily and returning, which they also noticed, as part of a process of testing the outside resources and gathering resolve to make a final break.⁴ Unfortunately, the women find most of the rest of the world unsympathetic to their plight and divorce difficult and

still a stigma.⁵

Patriarchal society perpetuates many myths about wifebeating, such as: women are masochistic and ask for abuse, battered women are crazy, abused wives are free to leave at any time, and these women deserve to get beaten.⁶ Paul Freire explains how myths are used by oppressors in order to maintain the status quo by keeping the oppressed passive.⁷ The oppressed are encouraged to internalize these myths, and, indeed, Lenore Walker found that her sample of battered women believed all the myths of wifebeating.⁸ These myths have influenced the behavior of and are

1 Gayford, "Wife Battering", p. 195.

2 Ibid.

3 Gayford, "Aetiology of Assault," p. 243.

4 Dobash and Dobash, p. 159.

5 Straus, "Sexual Inequality," p. 64, 65; Walker, p. 31; Roy, p. 31.

6 Walker, p. 31.

7 Freire, p. 135.

8 Walker, p. 31.

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perpetuated by the police, the courts and many of the helping professionals which helps to keep the abused women trapped and enslaved. Walker has also identified prejudicial myths that are prevalent in regards to other areas of violence against women: rape, incest, pornography, prostitution, job-related sexual harassment, and sexual relations between clients and male psychotherapists.¹ When taken in conjunction with the commonly held false beliefs about wife abuse, these myths serve the patriarchy by keeping women from feeling the full outrage about their persecution. They all emphasize the woman's part in her own victimization and thereby mask the misogyny inherent in these practices.

Unfortunately, a new myth has been started by a respected, female, author in the field of wife abuse. Suzanne Steinmetz has concluded that husband abuse is close to as prevalent as wife abuse, the major difference being the husband's ability to do more damage because of his greater physical strength.² The conclusions in her 1977 book and article are beginning to be reflected in other wife abuse literature, and one can see a new myth, that of husband abuse being as widespread and serious as wife abuse, being born.

The Myth Of Husband Abuse

Steinmetz bases her conclusions on a study of 57 families, urban and suburban, with a wide range of economic statuses, ethnic groups and geographical locations being represented. The study used a

1 Ibid., p. 15.

2 Suzanne Steinmetz, "The Battered Husband Syndrome," *Victimology*, 2 (Fall-Winter, 1977-78): 499-509, p. 499.

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combination of questionnaires and interviews inquiring of mothers, fathers and eldest children about the methods used for conflict resolution in their families. The survey revealed that the husband and wife were approximately equal in the type and frequency of violence that they used against each other during conflicts throughout the duration of the marriage. Not only is the sample size extremely small to make national generalizations about (as Steinmetz admits), but only one person (a wife) used hitting with hands on an "almost always" basis. The rest of the spouses who used various means of physical force used them on a "hardly ever" or "sometimes"

basis.¹ Steinmetz did not really find more than one possible case of husband and/or wife abuse in her sample; she is only describing general violence within families.

Steinmetz backs up her proposition with other data. She cites the Straus, Gelles and Steinmetz national survey of 2,143 couples as showing, again, an equal number of husbands and wives who ever used violence in their marriage. She admits, however, that this same survey showed only .5% of the husbands, in comparison to 7% of the wives, experiencing severe enough violence to be considered battering.³ This translates to 150 abused wives versus 11 abused husbands. Such data is explained by Steinmetz in terms of the husband being more ashamed of admitting abuse and the wife's lesser ability to do damage.⁴ It is difficult to say with certainty who is more reticent about their abuse, husbands or wives,

1 Steinmetz, *The Cycle of Violence*, pp. 6, 9, 89.

2 Steinmetz, "Battered Husband," p. 502.

3 Steinmetz, *Cycle of Violence*, p. 98.

4 *Ibid.*

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although both are undoubtedly ashamed. In the Hilberman and Munson sample 56 of the 60 women were identified as abused only because they were asked directly about it.¹ Murray Straus, in a careful analysis of the shame and guilt involved in family violence concludes: "Underreporting of violence is greater for violence by husbands than it is for violence by wives."² Steinmetz also uses Gelles' study of 80 (non-randomly selected) families as support.³ In this sample, 49% of the husbands had used violence against their spouse at least once in comparison to 32% of the wives.⁴ These percentages are fairly close, but Steinmetz fails to mention that 25% of these men used physical force on a regular basis versus only 11% of the wives.⁵ As pointed out by the Dobases, the Gelles data also shows husbands using more severe forms of violence, a wider range of techniques and more use of threats of force than the wives.⁶

Most of the data on wife abuse tends to disprove Steinmetz's contention. George Levinger's survey of 600 couples applying for divorce in Cleveland revealed 36.8% of the wives in contrast with only 3.3% of the husbands claiming that their partner had hurt them physically.⁷ Of 1,032 cases of intra-family violence processed through

1 Hilberman and Munson, p. 469.

2 Straus, *Victimology*, 2 (1977-78), p. 448.

3 Steinmetz, "Battered Husband," p. 502.

4 Gelles, *The Violent Home*, p. 51.

5 *Ibid.*

6 Dobash and Dobash, p. 19. See also Gelles, *The Violent Home*, p. 51, 74.

7 Levinger and Levy, p. 805.

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the Edinburgh and Glasgow courts in 1974, 73.5% of the offenders were husbands who had attacked their wives, while only 1.1% were husband-assaulting women.¹ The Dobashes also cite a survey of police responses to family disputes in 1974-75 in which 84% involved assault and 94% of those attacks were against wives.² Gayford maintains that, "Husbands may be subjected to marital violence, but it is extremely uncommon for them to be subjected to torture."³ Torture is defined by Gayford as the "premeditated infliction of physical injury performed in a sadistic setting."⁴ This type of beating was reported by 15 of her sample of 100 abused wives and was also noted by the Dobashes and Walker.⁵

Another problem with Steinmetz's data and other studies on general violence between

husbands and wives is that it does not reflect who hit who first. If as many married women hit, push or throw things at their spouse as conversely, it may only be indicative of retaliation for prior acts of violence. Hilberman and Meyer found in their study that: The few women who resorted to counterviolence did so as an act of desperation when there was no other option... This is in contrast to the minimal provocation which precipitated violence by the husbands.⁶ The majority of the women in the Dobash sample of battered wives said they never (33%) or seldom (42%) attempted to use force against their

1 Dobash and Dobash, p. 247.

2 Ibid., p. 120.

3 Gayford, "Aetiology of Assault," p. 19.

4 Ibid.

5 Dobash and Dobash, p. 120. Walker, pp. 105, 108, 111.

6 Hilberman and Munson, p. 462.

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husbands.¹ The remaining 24% did so on at least a few occasions but never in the magnitude or frequency of their husbands.²

Steinmetz also uses the statistics on homicide to support her position: Thus it appears that men and women might have equal potential toward violent marital interaction, initiate similar acts of violence, and, when differences of physical strength are equalized by weapons, commit similar amounts of spousal homicide.³

It is true that most studies of interspousal homicide in the United States show close to equal percentages of husbands and wives killing each other.⁴ At least two other authors writing about wife abuse have picked up on these figures and are echoing the same conclusions.⁵ However, these authors talk in percentages and not in actual numbers which better indicate the magnitude of difference. For instance, the 1978 FBI figures on homicide show 4.3% of the total victims as husbands In comparison to 5.6% being wives.⁶ In actual numbers, we are talking about 804 husbands and 1047 wives. Steinmetz mainly uses the figures from Wolfgang's study of homicide in Philadelphia in this regard.⁷ His research does show approximately equal numbers of husbands and wives

1 Dobash and Dobash, p. 108.

2 Ibid.

3 Steinmetz, Cycle of Violence, p. 90.

4 Flynn, p. 16.

5 Ibid. Langley and Levy, p. 196.

6 Webster, p. 9.

7 Steinmetz, Cycle of Violence, p. 90.

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killing each other; however, Steinmetz fails to indicate a part of his data which changes the picture importantly. Wolfgang found that a significantly greater number of husbands using a weapon or striking a blow ("victim precipitation") in interspousal homicide situations.¹ He also noted that husbands were significantly more likely to use "severe violence" (using more than five separate acts of physical attack to kill) than wives and were almost alone in beating a spouse to death.² This suggests more intent to kill and less of an element of self defense when husbands murder wives.

Dobash and Dobash note that in the United States, women are motivated by self defense when they kill 70% more often than men.³ The courts are becoming increasingly likely to rule

self defense in cases where an abused wife kills her husband.⁴ The general rule is that before people can legally defend themselves, they must "retreat to the wall or take all available escape routes known" unless they are in their own living quarters.⁵ It is beginning to be recognized that the woman has a right to be in her own home and has difficulty escaping the battering situation.⁶ The other legal self defense criteria is "immediate threat of great bodily harm or death."⁷ Judges and juries

1 Martin Wolfgang, "Victim Precipitated Criminal Violence," *The Journal of Criminal Law, Criminology, and Political Science*, A8 (May- June, 1957): 1-11, p. 2.

2 Ibid.

3 Dobash and Dobash, p. 265.

4 Footlick and Sciolino, p. 5A.

5 Eisenberg and Seymour, p. A1.

6 Ibid., p. A2.

7 Ibid., p. A1.

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have set precedents in Illinois, South Dakota and New York by allowing a long record of brutality against the wife to constitute an acceptable threat of great danger even though there was no immediately preceding use of great force of weapon.¹ One would assume that future statistics will find an even greater proportion of wives being found innocent in the eyes of the law for killing a battering husband than is presently true. Lenore Walker's sample of 120 abused wives contained four who had killed their husbands after severe and longstanding repetitive abuse, and "many" others who had lashed back with knives and other lethal weapons.² In each case the woman said, "she only wanted to stop him from hurting her more."³

It is undoubtedly true that there are husbands who are abused by wives. It is also a fact that some couples are equally assaultive toward each other. However, in the opinion of most of the experts on battering, the kind of repetitive (weekly and sometimes daily), prolonged (occasionally as long as 45 minutes to more than five hours), serious assault involving broken bones, resulting in miscarriages, sexual mutilation, unconsciousness and serious internal injuries, done with minimal provocation, intent and in the interest of coercive control, that constitutes actual abuse, is almost exclusively reserved for wives.⁴ This wife abuse does much to explain the nearly (but not totally) equal

1 Eisenberg and Seymour, p. 34. Footlick and Sciolino, p. 54.

2 Walker, p. 70.

3 Ibid.

4 Dobash and Dobash, pp. 12, 120, 237, 248.

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numbers of wives killing husbands as the opposite and cannot be explained entirely in terms of physical strength alone.¹

Wife Abuse Within The Setting Of General Family Violence

Steinmetz's main purpose in her book is to show that family members are generally violent toward each other and that such behavior as wife abuse, child abuse and husband abuse are only extremes within a continuum of means of conflict resolution, which are learned in the family of origin.² She also contends that the societal factors which contribute to violence in general in a society serve to increase family violence.³ These viewpoints are also espoused by other scholars in the field.⁴ Steinmetz's data does indicate a higher percentage (60%) of spouses using physical force on at least one occasion against each other than most would like to think, and this may well

reflect societal forces supporting violence.⁵

Steinmetz also contends that whatever causes family members to be violent in other situations (for instance committing extrafamilial homicide, assault, battery, rape and assassination) serves to make them more violent within the family.⁶ The evidence supporting this is somewhat mixed. Gayford's study of 100 battered women indicated 33 of

1 Gayford, "Aetiology of Assault," p. 19.

2 Steinmetz, *Cycle of Violence*, p. 132.

3 *Ibid.*, p. 122.

4 Gelles, *The Violent Home*, p. 190. Renvoize. Brandon.

5 Steinmetz, *Cycle of Violence*, p. 86.

6 *Ibid.*, p. 122.

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the abusive men having committed other violent crimes.¹ Lenore Walker found only 20% of her assaulting husbands as ever having used any type of violence outside of the home.² The rest of the studies do not speak to this issue. It is probably true that the pattern of violence within the home for some men is an indication of a general lifestyle of using physical force, perhaps reflecting a machismo attitude, but data which conclusively shows the extent of this pattern is not available at this time.³

The connection of child abuse to wife beating is also used by some authors to indicate a pattern of some families being generally violent. Steinmetz found that the methods of conflict resolution, be they predominantly physical aggression, verbal aggression or discussion and compromise, that were usually used between spouses were reflected in the methods used in parent-child settlements of differences.⁴ Again she is discussing primarily non abusive families. The relationship of child abuse and wife abuse has been explored in several studies with mixed results. Jean Renvoize cites the British NSPCC's battered children national research of 1975 as finding that 36% of the child abusing husbands also assault their wives.⁵ 43% of the children in the Prescott and Letko sample of battered women were abused by the father.⁶

1 Gayford, "Wife Battering," p. 195.

2 Walker, p. 24.

3 See Chapter IV, p.

4 Steinmetz, *Cycle of Violence*, p. 76.

5 Renvoize, p. 371.

6 Prescott and Letko, p. 81.

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In research done by E. Emerson and Russell Dobash, of 933 cases involving wife abuse, only 62 (6.6%) included actual child abuse by either parent.¹

Fifty-four per cent of Gayford's wife battering husbands (and 37% of the wives) were violent toward their children, but the author does not indicate if she is referring to child abuse, physical punishment or including some other behavior.² Physical punishment is used extensively among parents in general and Gelles found little difference in the extent of this practice between parents who were violent towards each other and those who were not.³ The rest of the data reflects some of the same problems with the terms the author uses. Lenore Walker's research indicated one third of both the battering husbands and the abused wives "beating" their children.⁴ In the Roy sample of 150 cases, 45% of the abusive men also "assaulted" the children.⁵ Thus, the evidence linking wife abuse and child abuse is whomeewhat contradictory and suffers from a lack of comparable data and terms being used.

The statistics mentioned thus far also provide a mixture of results on the issue of which partner in a battering relationship is doing the child abuse when it occurs. Douglas Bersherov submitted testimony to Congress indicating that in families exhibiting concurrent child and wife abuse, the husband was also the child abuser in 70% of those families.⁶

1 Dobash and Dobash, p. 130.

2 Gayford, "Aetiology of Assault," p. 23.

3 Gelles, *The Violent Home*, p. 55

4 Walker, p. 27.

5 Roy, p. 33.

6 Walker, p. 157.

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Again, this data is difficult to compare with other studies because it covers families identified on the basis of child abuse only. However, it does suggest a pattern of some men being generally violent.

An interesting sidelight of the study of general family violence is a pattern of wife abusers also being incestuous toward daughters which as noted by two authors.¹ The extent of this phenomenon is far from being identified, but it provides some support for the idea that wife abusers are misogynist. When one looks at family violence in general, one is struck by the contention of the Dobashes: "Violence in the family is not randomly distributed among family members but is disproportionately directed at females,"² The Edinburgh and Glasgow study mentioned earlier showed attacks on wives as comprising 75% of all the assaults occurring within the family setting.³ Therefore, although studying wife abuse in the context of general family violence suffers from inconsistencies in the actual behavior being looked at and may "... lead to the blurring of crucial differences in the violence that occurs between various family members," it does suggest the widespread nature of the use of physical force at home and lends support, albeit indirectly, for the notion that wife abuse reflects misogyny.⁴

1 Renvoize, p. 180. Hilberman and Munson, p. 463.

2 E. Emerson Dobash and Russell P. Dobash, "Wives: The Appropriate Victims of Marital Violence," *Victimology*, 2 (Fall-Winter, 1977-78): 426-442, p. 433.

3 *Ibid.*, p. 437.

4 Dobash and Dobash, *Violence Against Wives*, p. 20.

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Summary

The wife abuse literature has been reviewed in terms of the connection to homicide, incidence, causation, past and present societal forces supporting the occurrence and its place within family violence in general. It has been shown that the most logical, totally explanatory and parsimonious understanding of wife abuse is in terms of coercive control of women reflecting the misogynist nature of past and present patriarchy. This is not an overly simplistic view of causation, because it has been demonstrated how both the structure and ideology of patriarchy contributes to the other correlates of wife abuse: alcohol, stress and frustration, societal attitudes supporting the practice, historical precedent, machismo in the abusers, and the psychological and physical entrapment and desperation of the victims. Murray Straus identifies nine ways that the "male dominant structure of the society and of the family create and maintain a high level of marital violence" as follows:

Those leading to abusive male behavior:

1. The prescription that males should always have authority leading them to physically

enforce that authority if necessary.

2. Compulsive masculinity (machismo)
3. Women regarded as male property

Those discouraging women from leaving or stopping their abuse:

4. Economic discrimination against women leaving them with few independent resources
5. The female's primary responsibility for child care
6. The myth of the single parent household leading to problems in children
7. The pre-eminence of the wife role as the most important role for women
8. Negative self image of women
9. Male orientation of the criminal justice system

1 Straus, "Sexual Inequality," p. 63-65. (Paraphrased).

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Lenore Walker has also added a tenth mechanism, the myths surrounding wife beating. The significance of this theoretical background as an important conceptual framework for this study as it relates to inter-spousal homicide is Walker's statement: "As we begin to see more battered women, we also realize the high probability that as the violence escalates, they will eventually be killed by or kill their men."¹

1 Walker, pp. 15, 53.

Chapter IV: Methodology And Data Analysis

Introduction

This study centers around the analysis of two separate data collections. The major focus is on the cases that involve women either as victim or perpetrator from the City of Dayton Police Department homicide files from January 1, 1975 to December 31, 1979 plus basic statistics on homicide rates in that city from 1968 to 1979. The other portion of data was taken from selected newspaper accounts of the cases analyzed.

Setting

The city of Dayton, Ohio has a population of almost 200,000 people, approximately half of which are black.¹ The city has changed from a population of 262,000 with 21.8% black in 1960 to 244,000, 30.5% black in 1970 to the present estimate of 191,000 with about 50% black.² The male to female ratio is approximately equal.³ The average income of Daytonians is about that of most American urban residents.⁴ In 1977, the breakdown of occupations was as follows: 30% factory employees, 18% service workers, 17% government employees (including teachers), 19%

1 City of Dayton Planning Board, Dayton, Ohio.

2 Bureau of the Census, Statistical Abstract of the United States (Washington, D.C.: US Department of Commerce, 1979), p. 24; Ibid.

3 City of Dayton Federal Aid Office, 1980.

4 Barbara Hayde, Assistant Director, Montgomery County Employment and Training Office, 1980.

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wholesale or retail employees, 12% professionals or management, and 4% other categories.

Unemployment rates in Dayton in 1979 were 6.7%.¹

Dayton ranks 66th in population size of 162 major American cities (population 100,000 or more).² The City of Dayton Police Department traditionally divides the area into five districts. The First District is mainly the near East Side of Dayton which is characterized by a concentration of poor, white, Appalachian citizens. The Second District is an area further east of

the city which is mainly white and middle or working class. The area most closely resembling a ghetto in Dayton is in the Third District, comprised mainly of originally single family homes which have been converted to apartments or house many people and several low income housing projects. The population is almost entirely black, and the citizens are generally poor. The fourth or Central District is the downtown area which has a few apartment buildings but is basically non- residential. Part of the Fifth District, covering northeast and northwest Dayton contains middle and upper class homes. The other part, called Dayton View, was the site of great change in racial proportions in the 1960's and now has areas of abject poverty and middle class homes within close proximity of each other. Table 1 (p.233) shows the percentages of homicides occurring in each district from 1974 to 1979. This data is taken from the homicide statistical summary sheet compiled each year by the police department and turned over to the Federal Bureau of Investigation. As can be seen in this table the highest percentages of homicide were consistently found in the poorest areas of the city with the west side, ghetto area accounting for over one third to over one half of the murders.

1 Ibid.

2 Bureau of the Census, p. 24.

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Table 1

Homicides By District, Dayton, Ohio, 1974-1979

Districts	1	2	3	Central	5	Total
1974	19 (18.8%)	10 (9.9%)	53 (52.5%)	(No Central at that time)	19 (18.8%)	101
1975	10 (13.9%)	7 (9.7%)	44 (61.1%)	(No Central at that time)	11 (15.3%)	72
1976	8 (11.9%)	8 (11.9%)	24 (35.8%)	3 (4.4%)	24 (35.8%)	67
1977	15 (21.4%)	7 (10%)	38 (54.3%)	1 (1.4%)	9 (12.8%)	70
1978	10 (17.5%)	1 (1.8%)	27 (47.4%)	2 (3.5%)	17 (29.8%)	57

Source: Dayton Police Department Homicide Summary Sheets, 1974-1979.

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Ohio as a state has a homicide rate of 6.9 (victims per 100,000 population) which is just under the median for the 50 states.¹ Dayton was noted as having an especially high homicide rate in 1967 (21.7) when it ranked fifth of 56 cities with a population of 250,000 or more.² In that same year Dayton's rate of forcible rape was also high, eleventh, suggesting some linkages between the violence and machismo of both crimes.³ More recent rankings of cities according to homicide rates have not been done. The FBI Uniform Crime Reports lists rates for metropolitan areas which include suburbs which are difficult to compare. Caution must also be used in

identifying the rates from just one year as being indicative of a general trend. The Dayton Metropolitan Area homicide rate in 1978 was 9.0, considerably less than the city rate of 32.5.⁴ This rate is close to the median in comparison with other major metropolitan areas and exactly the same as the national rate.⁵

The characteristics of homicide in Dayton cannot be generalized across the nation. However, this study follows in the tradition of at least nine major research efforts which have looked at homicide in other urban areas to identify the factors affecting inner city homicide, which accounts for the majority of this form of violence in our country.⁶ The

1 William H. Webster, *Uniform Crime Reports* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice, 1979), p. 40.

2 Donald J. Mulvihill and Melvin M. Tumin, *Crimes of Violence*, 13 vols. (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1969), 11:153.

3 *Ibid.*

4 Webster, p. 63.

5 *Ibid.*, pp. 59-79.

6 Lynn A. Curtis, *Criminal Violence* (Lexington, Massachusetts: D.C. Heath and Company, 1974), pp. 2-3.

unit of study identified is criminal homicide which, in the United States includes murder, non-negligent manslaughter and negligent (involuntary) manslaughter.¹ Negligent manslaughter usually involves an automobile accident and has significantly different circumstances; therefore, these cases were excluded from this study. Intra male cases were also not considered except in terms of overall rates, since the focus of this study is on cases involving women.

Methodology

After obtaining permission from the City of Dayton Police Department, the homicide files of cases which involved a female as either victim or perpetrator were read and analyzed. These files contain transcripts of interviews with witnesses and suspects, police photographs taken at the scene, description of police activities in relation to the case, autopsy reports, prior arrest records of both parties, reports of tests for alcohol intoxication, arrest warrants, results of polygraph tests when done, and occasionally newspaper clippings and notes regarding the resolution of the case in court. In cases where the file had been lost or misplaced, information about the homicide was taken from the calendar book for that year which contains an entry including the basic facts surrounding the crime for every homicide occurring on the date when it happened. Generally speaking, the files were more complete and less likely to be missing for the most recent years of the study. Information for rates and sex and race of victim was taken from the yearly summaries compiled by the Dayton Police Department and turned into the Federal Bureau of Investigation. In cases where the crime was unsolved, the conclusions reached by the detectives on the case were included in the data. For instance, if

1 *Ibid.*, p. 3.

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physical evidence had persuaded the police that the offender in the case was a male, this information was included in the data even though the case is officially unsolved and the perpetrator has therefore not been listed as a male in the official statistics. In a few other cases (6) the police were convinced that they had found the murderer because he had failed a polygraph test ("lie detector" test) and/or the weight of evidence pointed in a particular direction. (None of these cases involved female offenders.) The detectives regarded these cases as solved even though there was not enough evidence to bring them to court. Four of them had occurred

late in 1979 and the detectives involved were in the process of collecting more evidence and were confident that the suspect would face charges soon. In these six cases, the conclusions of the police were accepted and the data recorded accordingly. It must be understood that the person identified as the offender or perpetrator is actually only a suspect arrested for the crime by the police. However, except in the six cases already mentioned or those listed as unsolved, the offender described had either confessed to the killing or was found guilty in court.

The information on previous police calls to the address of the homicide was compiled by a police department computer search matching the address with any dispatches to that scene during the previous two calendar years. This data must be viewed as tentative because the family involved may have moved to the address of the homicide within the year previous to the incident. The total number of calls was entered and a second number of calls suggesting family violence was determined by adding the calls listed as family trouble, assault, assault and battery, threats and other indications of violence when the address was a private home. It is possible that these cases included people outside the family but violence between

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intimates usually happens in the home while violence between casual acquaintances and friends more frequently occurs away from a residence.¹

The data was recorded by case, and the information later divided into categories by year and for the entire five years. The police files use names for identification and although the victims in each case are dead, the families and offenders are still living. In order to protect the anonymity of these people, no names were recorded and no case will be described in its entirety. Permission from the living subjects was not sought since police records are considered to be public record.

Gathering information from the newspaper accounts on the homicides resulted in far less data than had been originally anticipated. Most of the cases were reported by a single paragraph on a back page listing the bare facts surrounding the incident as released by the police. Therefore, only selected more detailed accounts were closely analyzed.

This study is exploratory and descriptive in nature; therefore, the data is presented in whole numbers and percentages without any attempt at statistical analysis. Some trends and theoretical support are indicated, but the questions of the etiology of homicide of women are not solved conclusively. Experimental research on homicide is obviously impossible. Only retrospective studies can be used to identify possible causes.

Data Analysis

In order to determine if Dayton homicide patterns are similar to nationwide rates, a comparison is presented in Table 2 (p. 238). Homicide

David J. Pittman and William Hardy, "Patterns in Criminal Assault," *The Journal of Criminal Law, Criminology and Police Science* 55 (December, 1964): 462-470, pp. 464-465.

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Table 2

City Of Dayton Homicide Rates By Year In Comparison With Local Unemployment Percentages And National Homicide Rates

Sources: Ohio Department of Labor, Columbus, Ohio.

FBI Uniform Crime Reports of each year.

*1979 FBI Uniform Crime Reports not yet published.

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rates are calculated by number of victims per 100,000 population. As can be seen, the Dayton rates are considerably higher than the national rates which is true of most urban areas. The only unemployment percentages available were for the whole of Montgomery County, but they generally reflect the changes in the unemployment of city residents, since suburban and rural workers generally enjoy fairly steady employment. The pattern of Dayton homicide rates more closely resembles the national homicide figures than the percentages of local unemployment. The highest rates of homicide ever recorded in this country (records began in 1933) occurred in 1973, 1974 and 1975. This same bulge can be seen in the Dayton rates, but it preceded the drastic jump in local unemployment in 1975 and 1976.

Homicide rates fluctuate annually and over time, so no one year can be considered indicative of major trends. However, the national murder and non-negligent manslaughter rates more than doubled between 1963 and 1973, and this increase has caused much speculation about possible precipitating factors. Perhaps the most persuasive theoretical analysis is that of Archer and Gartner who studied cross cultural and American homicide data from 1911 to 1973 relative to wars. Their data shows significant increases in homicide between the five year prewar periods and the same time spans after major wars in the majority of 29 nations engaged in armed conflict during those years. Their findings were consistent with the theoretical model that the government implies that homicide is acceptable in certain conditions by glorifying killing in war.¹

¹ Dave Archer and Rosemary Gartner, "Violent Acts and Violent Times: A Comparative Approach to Postwar Homicide Rates," *American Sociological Review* 41 (December, 1976): 937-963, pp. 937, 946, 947, 959, 960.

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Wars also tend to glorify the machismo ethic in men and enforce patriarchal values. The killing of Vietnamese women and children, the murder of protesters and the exaltation of the Marines which were all perpetuated by the governing patriarchy during the Vietnam War era are related not only to machismo and the legitimization of violence but also to misogyny in that they attempted to deny and destroy characteristics gentle and feminine. The cause of the increase in national homicide rates between 1968 and 1974 seems to have affected the Dayton rates more than the local economic picture. If the Vietnam War resulted in the increase, the period of

influence should be over in the near future.

Table 3 (p. 241) gives a picture of homicide trends by sex and race in Dayton and in comparison with national figures where available, giving a more complete representation. These patterns are difficult to comprehensively analyze but certain aspects are readily recognizable, such as the sharp increase in black male rates in 1972-1974 and the subsequent and equally sharp decline. This magnitude of change is not reflected in the national figures although the pattern is. Although significantly higher than the national figures, the Dayton black male rates are actually comparable to other urban areas.¹ The decline in these rates may reflect the recent decrease in the black macho ethic, indicated by a decrease in black power rhetoric, wearing military type clothing, etc.; however, this behavior was probably at its height in Dayton in 1969-1972, not later. The national rates cited by Yongstock show a black male rate of 41.9 in 1960, 50.7 in 1965 and a rate of 72.8 in

¹ See for instance, Robert Munford, et. al., "Homicide Trends in Atlanta," *Criminology* 14 (August, 1976): 213-232, p. 217, citing black male rates of 180 per 100,000 in Atlanta in 1971 and 1972.

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Table 3

Homicide Rates (per 100,000 Population), Dayton, Ohio And National According To Race And Sex

Year	Race	Sex	Dayton, Ohio		National	
			Rate	Population	Rate	Population
1960	Black	Male	72.8		41.9	
1965	Black	Male	50.7		50.7	
1971	Black	Male	180			
1972	Black	Male				
1973	Black	Male				
1974	Black	Male				
1975	Black	Male				
1976	Black	Male				
1977	Black	Male				
1978	Black	Male				
1979	Black	Male				
1980	Black	Male				
1981	Black	Male				
1982	Black	Male				
1983	Black	Male				
1984	Black	Male				
1985	Black	Male				
1986	Black	Male				
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2006	Black	Male				
2007	Black	Male				
2008	Black	Male				
2009	Black	Male				
2010	Black	Male				
2011	Black	Male				
2012	Black	Male				
2013	Black	Male				
2014	Black	Male				
2015	Black	Male				
2016	Black	Male				
2017	Black	Male				
2018	Black	Male				
2019	Black	Male				
2020	Black	Male				

Sources: Dayton Police Department Homicide Summary Sheets and Bureau of the Census, Statistical Abstract of the United States (Washington, D.C U.S. Department of Commerce, 1979), p. 79. (Yingsock Shin, et. al., "Homicides Among Blacks," *Phylon*, 38 (December, 1979), p. 400. (National figures unavailable for remaining years).

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1970. This may parallel the rise of black macho which Wallace dates as beginning in 1964 to

1965 and growing in intensity from there.¹ There may also be the influence of the Vietnam War to consider. The one factor that can be tentatively ruled out is the effect of unemployment since the jobless rates (mainly affecting the black population) increased sharply in 1975 and 1976, when black male homicide rates dropped, and have remained as high or higher than the years of the highest rates of murder and non-negligent manslaughter in black males.

The erratic rate of black female homicide victims in Dayton over time points out graphically the problems with looking at homicide rates for just one year. There is little discernable pattern here except for a period of increase that roughly parallels the time of extremely high black male rates. This is logical, since black women are most often killed by black men and the increased violence of black men during those years was expressed in some degree toward black women. Again, a slight decline in black male machismo since the early 1970's in Dayton may explain the gradual drop in black female rates; however, this pattern is not clearcut. The mean of the black female homicide rate between 1968 and 1973 is 28.8, while the mean between 1974 and 1979 is 19.6 lending some support for this contention, but this division is somewhat arbitrary and further analysis plus a more accurate measurement of machismo behavior of black males is needed. Norman Rushforth found a threefold increase in nonwhite female homicide rates in metropolitan Cleveland between 1962 and 1968 which parallels the development of the black macho misogynous ideology. Rushforth's black female victimization rates

1 Yongstock Shin, et al., "Homicide Among Blacks," *Phylon* 38 (December 1977): 398-440, p. 400. Michelle Wallace, *Black Macho and the Myth of the Superwoman* (New York: The Dial Press, 1978), pp. 7-13.

2 Norman Rushforth, et. al., "Violent Death in a Metropolitan County," *New England Journal of Medicine*, 297 (September 8, 1977): 531-538, p. 536.

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then stayed high through 1974 when his study period ended.¹ The Atlanta black female homicide rate in 1971 and 1972 of 35.0 is also comparable to the Dayton female rate.²

The white male rates in Dayton have shown a steady increase since 1968 which has not been noticed in any other studies, somewhat because the most recent study of rates found ends in 1974. The increase parallels that of black males until 1974 when it peaked, but the 1979 rate is even higher. This phenomena may reflect the migration of middle class whites to the suburbs, leaving a higher concentration of mainly working class white families behind. The urban white working class population in Dayton is characterized by a strong influence of Appalachian culture, traditionally a culture of strict adherence to male dominance, patriarchal stratification values of both the sexes and the races and a great deal of machismo. The macho ethic in these men is shown in the popularity of cockfighting in Dayton and other strongly Appalachian areas nearby.³ John Paddock uses the presence of cockfighting as a measurement of machismo in his anthropological studies.⁴ The increase may also reflect the post Vietnam War effect, although this effect should be decreasing, not increasing. In 1979 the white male rate has risen to approximately the same level as the black male rate, a finding which supports even more strongly that machismo and violent behavior is not confined to black males.

The white female homicide victimization rate logically follows the white male rate in the trend of general increase, since, as with their

1 Ibid.

2 Munford, "Homicide Trends," p. 217.

3 Dayton Daily News, 10 June 1979, p. 1.

4 John Paddock, "Studies on Anti Violent and 'Normal' Communities," *Aggressive Behavior* 1

(1975), 217-233, p. 218.

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black counterparts, white women are usually killed by white men. Again it can be theorized that the greater concentration of lower class whites is the main causative factor. There may also be some effect of the feminist movement, although it has not had a major effect on this culture in Dayton. Some small strivings for equality in these women may have prompted their men to enforce their dominance with violence and also to respond with increased direct misogyny and violence generally as their values were threatened. If this concept is accurate, the pattern should continue. The Dayton homicide data certainly shows a greater incidence of white women being killed than has been true in earlier studies. The racial proportion for female homicide victims in Dayton from 1975 to 1979 was 56.2% (41) black and 43.8% (32) white contrasting with the 70% black female rate versus 30% white rate found in Detroit in 1975.¹

Table 1 (p. 238) also shows the changing racial nature of Dayton homicides. In 1979, District 1, the mainly poor white Appalachian area, had almost as high a proportion as District 3, predominantly black. However, during the years of the study (1975-79), the mean rate of black male offenders was still significantly greater than that of white males (68.4 versus 38.4) and this is reflected in the greater preponderance of black males killing women.

Table 4 (p. 245) also offers some interesting information about male and female homicide. Notable is the consistently low proportion of females killing each other, especially striking in comparison with the constant highest proportion of intra-male homicide. The machismo ethic emphasizes competition with other men and defines the use of violence

¹ maxine Lercher, "Black Women and Homicide," in *Lethal Aspects of Urban Violence* ed. Harold Rose (Lexington: D.C. Heath, 1979), p. 84.

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Table 4

Summary Of Homicide Data, Dayton, Ohio 1968 Through 1979

Year	Number and Percent of Homicides												Total Victims				
	(Victim-Offender)				(Offenders)				Victims								
	(M-M)		(M -F)		(F-M)		(F-F)		(Male)		(Female)			Male	Female		
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%		No.	%		
1968	30	50.0	13	21.7	16	26.6	1	1.7	46	76.7	14	23.3	43	71.7	17	28.3	60
1969	37	56.1	11	16.7	17	25.9	1	1.5	54	81.8	12	18.2	48	72.7	18	27.3	66
1970	42	68.9	10	16.4	7	11.5	2	3.2	49	80.3	12	19.7	52	85.2	9	14.8	61
1971	45	54.2	16	19.3	21	25.3	1	1.2	66	79.5	17	20.5	61	73.5	22	26.5	83
1972	58	73.4	5	6.3	15	19.0	1	1.3	73	92.4	6	7.6	63	79.7	16	20.3	79
1973	71	67.6	14	13.3	18	17.2	2	1.9	89	84.8	16	15.2	85	80.9	20	19.1	105
1974	71	68.9	15	14.6	16	15.5	1	1.0	87	84.5	16	15.5	86	83.5	17	16.5	103
1975	45	64.3	9	12.9	14	20.0	2	2.8	59	84.3	11	15.7	54	77.1	16	22.8	70
1976	34	59.6	11	19.3	10	17.5	2	3.6	44	77.2	13	22.8	45	82.5	12	17.5	57
1977	46	66.7	9	13.0	13	18.8	1	4.5	59	85.5	10	14.5	55	79.7	14	20.3	69
1978	32	55.2	10	17.2	15	25.9	1	1.7	47	81.0	11	19.0	42	72.4	16	27.6	58

1979									

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as an appropriate way of settling disputes. When two men confront each other and are both holding these values and if either is carrying a weapon, death for one of the participants may well ensue. The proportions of men killing women is fairly consistently greater than women killing men although the mean percentages are relatively close. As will be shown later, the female killing male phenomena is actually more a reaction to male violence and/or abuse than a measure of female homicidal tendencies. These mean proportions of intra and inter sex homicide rates are almost exactly equal to those found by Herjanic and Meyer in urban St. Louis in 1973.¹ Table 4 also shows that the female offender proportion of homicide has not increased over time which is supported in national statistics and argues against the theory that feminism is causing women to become more violent.

We can see the same trend in Table 5 (p. 247) which shows a parallel increase in female offender rates with male in 1973-1974, and the same subsequent decrease although the differences are not nearly as large. Feminism came late to Dayton and can be said to have had its greatest impact in the last four to five years. Rather than these years showing an increase in female rate, they show decline.

The final table in this section, Table 6, focuses on the age groupings of the female victims and offenders in the years of analysis. The highest numbers of murdered women nationally is in the 20 to 24 age bracket followed closely by the 25 to 29 category.² This finding is also true of Dayton. There is a greater number of black female victims in the 50-59 category than one would expect from national figures. Black women in Dayton in this

¹ Marijan Herjanic and David Meyer, "Notes on Epidemiology of Homicide in an Urban Area," *Forsenic Science* 8 (November-December, 1976): 235-245, p. 242.

² Webster, *Uniform Crime Reports*, p. 9.

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Table 5

Homicide Rate Per 100,000, City Of Dayton, Ohio 1968 Through 1979

Sex of Offender

Year	Male	Female	Total
1968	37.4	11.4	24.3
1969	43.9	9.8	26.9
1970	40.2	9.8	25.0
1971	55.9	14.4	35.3
1972	64.0	5.3	34.8
1973	81.7	14.7	48.2
1974	82.9	15.2	49.3
1975	57.3	10.8	34.0
1976	43.1	12.7	28.1

*Average population for the period was 217,940.

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Table 6

City Of Dayton Homicide Data, Age And Race Of Female Victims And Offenders

Female Victims				Female Offenders					
Age	White	%	Black	%	Age	White	%	Black	%
Infant under 1	3	9.4	0						
1-4	2	6.3	3	7.3					
5-9					15 and			2	4.5
8-10-14		0			under				
15-19	4	12.5	3	7.3	16-18			3	6.8
20-24	6	18.7	6	14.7	19-24	5	62.5	6	13.6
25-29	5	15.6	5	12.2	25-29	1	12.5	12	27.3
30-34	1	3.1	1	2.4	30-34	0		8	18.2
35-39			4	9.8	35-39	0		5	11.4
40-44	2	6.3	3	7.3	40-44	0		3	6.8
45-49	1	3.1	2	4.9	45-49	0		0	
50-54	1	3.1	5	12.2	50-54	0		3	6.8
55-59	3	9.4	5	12.2	55-59	1	12.5	1	2.3
60-64	1	3.1	1	2.4	60-64	1	12.5	1	2.3
65-69	0	0	2	4.9	65-69	0		0	
70-74	3	9.4			70-74	0		0	
75 and over			1	2.4	75 and over	0		0	

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age group were most often killed by their husband although two were robbery victims. The black and white women killed over age 60 were most often also the victims of violent theft perpetrated by younger men. An increase in elderly women being killed is apparent from national homicide statistics in the last four years.¹

Women aged 19 to 35 most often commit homicide in Dayton. The Uniform Crime Reports does not report ages of arrested murderers according to sex but shows the highest rates overall during the last five years to be in the 25 to 29 age group. This is similar to the Dayton figures on women. Ages of all homicide offenders in Dayton were not collected since the study focuses on homicide of women. The age groupings showing the highest proportions of both victims and

offenders is the age when most women are married. The high rates in those years are explained by the preponderance of women both killing and being killed in some form of domestic relationship.

Summary

Generally, the homicide data from Dayton, Ohio has been shown to be comparable to national statistics in trends and to other urban areas in rates and demographic characteristics. Trends in both national and local homicide rates have been identified but interpretation and analysis is limited because of the paucity of comparable recent data on homicide from other urban areas. The significant trend of increase in white male homicide victimization rate may only be a local phenomena, but it should be watched in the future. The analysis of homicide rates and proportions lends only minimal support to the inclusion of machismo and misogyny in a causative theoretical framework for violence and murder. The closer and systematic analysis of cases of homicide involving women in Dayton

1 Webster, Uniform Crime Reports, 1974-1978.

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from 1975 to 1979 shows much stronger empirical substantiation.

Homicide of Women

The major thrust of this study is to identify the circumstances surrounding the homicide of women. The majority of women are killed by men. In Dayton, of 73 females killed from 1975 to 1979, 65 (89%) were killed by males. This is exactly the same percentage as reported by the FBI nationally for 1977 for single female victim/single offender.¹

Eleven (16.9%) of the females murdered by men in Dayton were killed by their husband, 7.7% (5) by a boyfriend, and 15.4% (10) by an estranged husband or boyfriend. Therefore, 40% of the women were killed by a male authority figure. These figures are close to the 1978 national statistics when 18.1% of women were killed by their husband and 7.8% were killed² by a boyfriend.² The estranged category is not noted by the FBI. Five women (7.7%) were killed by total strangers and four of these cases occurred during a robbery. Eight women (12.3%) were killed by an unidentified male assailant and five of them were also raped. A total of 8 women (10.8% of entire sample) were sexually abused as well as murdered. This is the most violent of rapes, the most misogynous of murders.

These are the infamous sex murders which receive large attention in the media yet actually occur infrequently. In a study of 444 homicide cases evaluated at a forensic psychiatric clinic in a large urban area in the northeastern United States, Swigert and her associates found only five such cases (1.1%).³ This is a lower percentage than in the Dayton study;¹ Uniform Crime Reports, 1977, p. 9.

² Webster, Uniform Crime Reports, 1978, p. 9.

³ Victoria Swigert, et al., "Sexual Homicide: Social, Psychological and Legal Aspects," Archives of Sexual Behavior, 5 (Sept., 1976): 391- 401, p. 392.

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however, it must be kept in mind that the majority of the Dayton rape murder offenders were never apprehended. Joseph Constantino found a 8.3% sexual assault murder proportion in his 1977 study which is similar to Dayton.¹ In three of the Swigert sample cases, there was homosexuality involved and the male murderer was given a life imprisonment.² The two men who raped and killed a woman (one woman was terribly mutilated) received only 10-20 years imprisonment.³ This suggests some interesting dynamics about how severely our society sanctions the horrible atrocity of rape and gynecide. As in the Dayton study, none of the five

killers Swigert analyzed were declared insane.⁴

The majority of killers were well known to the victim, and she was most often killed in her own home (72.3% of cases). As well as the categories already mentioned, 13.9% of the females were killed by other male members of the family. Thus we have a total of 35 (53.8%) of the women killed by males they were intimate with. In addition, 5 (7.7%) were killed by a sex partner (casual) and one murdered by a friend. That women are more often killed by family members or people close to them has been noted in other urban and cross cultural studies.⁵ Voss and

1 Joseph P. Constantino, "An Epidemiologic Study of Homicides in Allegheny County, Pennsylvania," *American Journal of Epidemiology*, 106 (October, 1977): 314-324, p. 316.

2 *Ibid.*, p. 398.

3 *Ibid.*, pp. 392, 398.

4 *Ibid.*

5 Alex D. Pokorny, "A Comparison of Homicide in Two Cities," *The Journal of Criminal Law, Criminology and Police Science* 56 (December, 1965) 480-487, p. 480. L. Harwin Voss and John R. Hepburn, "Patterns of Criminal Homicide in Chicago," *The Journal of Criminal Law, Criminology and Police Science*, 59 (December, 1968): 499-508, p. 506. Margaret Zahn, "The Female Homicide Victim," *Criminology*, 13 (November, 1975): 400-415, p. 413.

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Hepburn also note that women are more likely to be killed as a result of a "domestic quarrel" than men.¹

Women Killed by Male Relatives

A domestic quarrel may be a euphemism for wife abuse. Table 7 shows that of 28 women killed by a husband, boyfriend or estranged husband or boyfriend, 18 (64.3%) had been physically abused formerly by that man. This was noted either in prior arrest records or by witnesses or family interviewed. This is strong indication that wife abuse can indeed become lethal and that misogyny and issues of male ownership of wives or girlfriends are involved in homicide of women. Further support for the previous incidence of serious wife abuse is the fact that in 15 of the 18 cases the police had been called to the home on a family violence call within the past two years prior to the homicide. In one case where there was evidence of wife abuse the police had been at the residence because of "family trouble" five times previously, in another, twelve times. One would like to think that the police could have intervened to protect the woman by arresting and prosecuting the man before he killed her.

Table 8 (p.253) shows the reasons given for the homicide in the same relational category, either by the perpetrator in a confession or deduced from police and/or witness reports. Jealousy, which has been interpreted here as basically an issue of male control, was cited in 52.9% (18) of the cases. An important segment of the jealousy cases were the eight cases where the woman had left or divorced or had threatened to do so. In all but one of these cases there was also a history of wife abuse. This strongly supports the idea that abused women are being realistic when they cite being afraid of retaliation as a reason for staying in an abusive

1 Voss and Hepburn, "Patterns of Criminal Homicide," p. 506.

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Table 7

Dayton, Ohio, Homicide Data, Homicides Involving Females, 1975 Through 1979

Relationship	History of
(BF-GF, H-W,	Wife Abuse

Victim Estranged H-W, BF-GF)

[No page 254]

relationship. Other male dominance issues such as the woman refusing to get more wine, refusing sex or refusing to give the man money accounted for 14.7% of these killings. In this relational category, there were only 3 cases (10%) where either some issue of male control and/or a history of wife abuse did not precede the killing. In two of the three cases the woman was the first to show a weapon (victim precipitation), and in both of these instances, the husband was acquitted on grounds of self defense. As for the contention that husband abuse may be as prevalent as wife abuse, there were two cases in the entire sample in which there was a definite history of both partners using violence toward each other. In both cases the woman ended up getting killed, but from the histories of reciprocal shootings and knifings that had preceded the killing, it seemed apparent that death could have gone in either direction. However, in the total sample there were 41 cases indicating prior wife abuse and only these two showing equal violence on the part of the wife.

Four of these intimate male-female relationship killings of women had elements of particular cruelty and sadism, such as the man handcuffing the woman before shooting or the man keeping the woman a prisoner for 6 months as he slowly beat her to death. In 17 (60.7%) cases excessive violence was used by the man (shooting or stabbing more than once or beating to death). In 5 of the same cases there was evidence of premeditation. It is theorized that a single shot or punch or stab can be delivered in a momentary loss of control during an argument, without there being an intent to kill, but that excessive violence indicates more determination on the part of the perpetrator that the victim will die.¹ Excessive violence and sadism seem to also indicate misogyny.

¹ Voss and Hepburn, "Patterns of Criminal Homicide," p. 506.

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The husband or boyfriend or ex-husband or boyfriend that kills his wife frequently exhibited characteristics of machismo. He used a gun in 78.6% of the cases and in almost all the incidents the gun (if registered) was registered to him. In the other six cases he used his hands. Nineteen of the 28 men had a history of other violence, as indicated in a prior arrest record for violent crime or by witness descriptions of a man accustomed to using physical force to solve disputes. One of these men belonged to a violent male group, a locally notorious motorcycle gang. Ten (35.7%) of the men were intoxicated at the time of the killing. This is a higher percentage of intoxication in perpetrators than in any of the other categories (Table 8), but it falls within the range of intoxication reported with wife abuse in Chapter III. As has been noted: alcohol intoxication cannot be considered as an excuse for violent behavior because learning governs much of

intoxicated behavior; alcohol is associated with machismo attitudes, alcohol does have some neurologically based disinhibition properties, and some men do seem to have a pathologically violent neurological reaction to alcohol. Of course, one can argue that those men would have chosen to avoid alcohol if the violence associated with it was unacceptable to them. It should also be noted that the majority (64%) of these men were not intoxicated at the time of the killing. In contrast, only three of the intimately related female victims were intoxicated at the time of the slaying (10.7%). One of these women was also one of the two female relational preceptors of the crime. Thus, it is shown that alcohol intoxication can play a part in female violence also.

More than three fourths of the men were black (78.6%) and there was one case of a black man killing his white girlfriend who was threatening to break up with him. The majority of black offenders reflects the

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machismo in black men discussed earlier, plus the lack of opportunity to exert power and control afforded to black people in patriarchal society. Generally white men in the study years were less likely to kill women than black. This may reflect the more secure role of dominance that the white Appalachian male has in his home than the black husband. Black men espouse dominance but black women are less likely to submit totally.

Not enough employment information was available in most categories in the study to draw conclusions from. However, in this intimate relational category there was more data on occupation to use. Twelve of the men (50% of those for which such information was given) were unemployed, and the other half were blue collar employees. Of the blue collar workers, one was a security guard and one a retired policeman. These occupational statistics concur with findings from other urban studies on homicide in general and also suggest the involvement of machismo.¹ The lower involvement of white husbands and boyfriends in homicides of women may also reflect the better ability of white and/or middle class men to control their wives in other ways related to status and/or economics besides brute force which is also apparent in wife abuse patterns.² The unemployment rate for these men is particularly high in comparison with urban averages and indicates an especially threatening situation for them in terms of the masculine role. Machismo behavior may be the way that these men cope with the psychic threat of unemployment and misogyny suggests the appropriate victim especially if the woman is rebelling against total domination.

Two of the men committed suicide immediately after the homicide.

1 cf. Robert Munford, et al., "Homicide Trends in Atlanta," *Criminology*, 14 (August, 1976): 213-232, p. 229.

2 Women-In-Transition, Inc., Annual Statistical Report, (Detroit, Michigan: Women-In-Transition, Inc., 1979), p. 2.

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These were the only murders followed by suicide in the study, which was noted by Boudouris to happen primarily in domestic relationship homicides.¹ An epidemiological study of homicide in Baltimore from 1960 to 1964 found 14 homicides (of 626) followed by suicides and similarly, all of the perpetrators were men, all but one killed a family member or intimate, and all 14 killed at least one woman.² Seven of the women and one daughter. Motives listed were jealousy (5), "derangement" (6), "domestic quarrel" (2), and unknown.³ Male dominance issues are thus indicated.

Only some of the psychoanalytic literature addressed causation of this phenomenon, and they

are difficult to analyze, because the participants are dead. However, both of the Dayton cases involved an extreme amount of violence and reflected male control issues. In one case the woman had divorced her husband because of a long history of wife abuse. Her husband threatened to kill her and she had sought police protection and had moved several times to escape him. He found and sadistically killed her, her mother and her sister, using excessive violence. His suicide note reflected no loss of contact with reality but indicated premeditation and obsession with ownership of his wife. In the other case a boyfriend went on a shooting spree after finding out his girlfriend wanted to break off with him. He ended up killing her, another young woman and a man who happened to get in the way of his escape. He also shot

1 James Boudouris, "A Classification of Homicides," *Criminology* 11 (February, 1974): 525-540.

2 Christine Purnell, Angela F. Colaianni and Richard G. Sullivan, *Criminal Homicides in Baltimore, Maryland* (Baltimore, Maryland: Criminal Justice Commission, Inc., 1967) p. 59.

3 *Ibid.*

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two other women. These suicides can be interpreted as a guilt reaction to the enormity of the crimes or as an indication of severe depression.

It is interesting to note the extreme violence toward women in these incidents, although only two cases is far too few to generalize from.

For these two men, at least, misogyny and male control seemed to be the total focus of the last day of their life.

There were no men who killed their wife, girlfriend or estranged same in Dayton from 1975-1979 who were judged to be psychotic at the time of the murder; however, there were four cases with these dynamics in the other cases of men killing women. In two of these other cases a psychotic son killed his mother. Another case involved a nonpsychotic son killing his mother because of rage when she and his stepfather evicted his girlfriend from the house. Sons killing their mothers is generally not separated out from other family relationship statistics in other studies of homicide, so the extent of this phenomenon nationally is not known. Again, this specific kind of case is only addressed in terms of causality by psychoanalytic authors. These men feel that matricide is the result of unresolved oedipal issues and that all homicide of women by men reflects a symbolic murder of the mother.¹ Since the Freudian concept of an oedipal complex has been rejected in this study, we would be more inclined to refer to Dinnerstein's formulations of the mother as an omnipotent and ominous figure to the infant who does not always meet its needs.² Both boys and girls come away from the pre-reasoning period of infancy with ambivalence toward that figure, but the girl makes a later identification with her

1 Richard Geha, "For the Lone of Medusa, A Psychoanalytic Glimpse into Gynecocide." *The Psychoanalytic Review*, 62 (Spring, 1975): 49-77, p. 56.

2 Dorothy Dinnerstein, *The Mermaid and the Minotaur* (New York: Harper and Row, 1977), p. 100.

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mother while the boy is taught to reject and hate all that she stands for, thus the roots of misogyny.¹ Perhaps, then, in this sense, homicide of women does represent matricide unconsciously, but there seem to be more direct mechanisms of machismo and male control operating in most of the cases. However, when a son kills a mother, especially if psychotic, it can be theorized that the early infant misogyny is operating. It is interesting to note that in all of this

author's literature search, no case of matricide by a female was found.

There were three cases of child abuse in the homicides of women by men. In two of these cases the killer was the mother's boyfriend and the baby had a different father. Both cases seemed to reflect a jealousy issue more than any direct animosity toward the child, and probably death was not intended, although the beatings were obviously brutal. The third female child homicide case was a mother and father both abusing a 15 day old infant. The homicide file was very sketchy on this case and further analysis impossible.

The only other case of a woman being killed by a relative was a case where a nephew shot his aunt, apparently accidentally, while trying to break up a fight in the aunt's "bootleg joint."

Women Killed by Non-related Men

The remaining 30 women (46.1%) killed by males, were killed by men outside of an intimate and/or family relationship. This is a somewhat higher percentage than most of the other urban studies show, but all the studies use slightly different relationship categories and they were done using data from the 1960's primarily. The FBI does not record relationship categories according to sex so the Uniform Crime Reports do not offer any

1 Ibid., p. 103.

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comparisons.¹ However, the Dayton data offers some interesting differences between this group of female homicide victims and the intimate male-female relationship group which will be analyzed even though generalizability is impossible to determine.

The largest relational group was casual which refers to a person who is recognizable to the victim but not a person in frequent contact with them (i.e., a neighbor one could recognize but would not visit with). More than half of these 12 women (7) were killed in conjunction with a robbery. Two of the other three robbery homicides of women were committed by total strangers and one by a "friend."² This friend also raped his victim as well as robbing and killing her.

Therefore, the female robbery-homicide victim seems to be most often known to her slayer, at least slightly. It might also be noted that six of these nine victims were age 60 or above which indicates that the murder was certainly not necessary in order to carry out the theft. It can be theorized that these men killed the woman in order to keep her from identifying him later.

However, if robbery was the main motive, it is surprising how little money the perpetrators gained by their act; in five of the cases the amount was \$30 or less. One case stands out in this regard. Two teenaged boys decided to visit an elderly worn an neighbor. She let them into her house and offered them refreshments. While she was in the kitchen they decided to kill her during a mutual one-upsmanship conversation. They beat her to death and robbed her as an

1 Webster, Uniform Crime Reports, p. 9.

2 This case file was either lost or misplaced so the exact nature of the relationship is unknown. Although the police tend to use this category fairly frequently, this author found that on closer inspection, the category sexual partner, or casual acquaintance was a better descriptor.

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afterthought.¹ Excessive violence was used in five more of the robbery homicide cases.

Elements of sadism, machismo and misogyny can be seen in these incidents, as much or more evident than the desire for money.

The other five women killed by casual acquaintances reflect a variety of circumstances. Two were killed in a fire bombing apparently directed toward a third, although it occurred at night and the man knew the other women lived there. One of the cases involved a nun killed by a diagnosed schizophrenic man. He had killed his wife who was pregnant at the time 17 years

earlier, had killed a man 2 years before that and had been arrested for attempting to rape his daughter. That such a person was allowed parole from his life imprisonment sentence for murdering his wife, which was his second murder, is a frightening indictment of our criminal justice system. Another case involved a woman who reached for a gun in her purse when a man persistently propositioned her. He shot her and was able to prove self defense at his trial. The final case was a woman who was told about the violent escapades of a motorcycle gang by one of its members at a bar. He decided that she knew too much and took her to his car where he killed her. Misogyny seems to be a common theme in these murders, as well as treating women as objects, not human beings.

The second largest group of non-related killers of women were unidentified (26.6%). As previously mentioned, the majority (5) of these involved sexual abuse, two others were robbery-homicides, and the last was a young woman found killed for no apparent reason. An interesting phenomena was apparent in the investigations of these unsolved homicides. When they involved young, white "virginal" women and rape (N-2), the investigation generated more papers in the files, increased numbers of

1 Information extracted from a confession by one of the killers.

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detectives assigned to the case, and more publicity. The cases involving an elderly and/or black woman, or women who were not sexually abused, were diligently investigated but did not attract as much attention by the police or the media. In the case of a 27 year old white woman who was raped and then killed, the detectives writing the reports continually mentioned that she had apparently been "picked up" in a bar the evening in question, that she was "promiscuous," and that marijuana was discovered in her apartment. Her male acquaintances who were interviewed also talked about how "easy" this woman was, with a sort of "why bother about her?" attitude. Although a prime suspect was found who failed to pass his polygraph examination, sufficient evidence was never accumulated to indict him. One tends to wonder if the police would have worked harder to bring him to trial if she had been sexually inexperienced. This evidence illustrates the "obsession with purity" that Daly links to gynocidal practices.¹ It also shows a form of blaming the victim diminishing male responsibility for the crime.²

Five (16.6%) of the women in the non-relational category were killed by total strangers. This is only 7.7% of the total female victim sample, although some of the unidentified offenders may have also been strangers. It is close to the 1978 FBI figures showing that only 13.5% of all murderers are unknown to their victims.³ This seems to be especially true of women throughout the country.⁴ However, Lynn Curtis has found the

1 Mary Daly, *Gyn/Ecology* (Boston, Massachusetts: Beacon Press, 1978), p. 131.

2 Ezzat A. Fattah, "The Use of the Victim as an Agent of Self-Legitimization: Toward a Dynamic Explanation of Criminal Behavior," *Victimology* 1 (Spring, 1976): 29-53, p. 32.

3 Webster, *Uniform Crime Reports*, 1978.

4 Voss and Hepburn, "Patterns of Criminal Homicide," p. 506.

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percentages of strangers committing homicide is increasing in urban areas in the United States, but he does not differentiate according to sex.

Cross cultural studies of family or friend versus stranger relationships vary widely and patterns are difficult to ascertain, other than the previously mentioned tendency for women to be killed by family members.¹

The remaining non-relational homicide category is sex partner which accounted for another

five female victims. This category was used to identify a relationship in which the two people had engaged in sex with each other but were not in any kind of long-term relationship (thus distinguished from the boyfriend-girlfriend cases). The only victims in this category were females. Three of the five murders were committed with excessive violence and two involved rape, even though the woman had sex willingly with the man before. Two of these victims were killed by the same teenaged boy, in one case acting alone and with a male friend in the other. In both cases the two had intercourse first (one of the young women was allegedly willing, one was raped), and he killed them afterwards.

Male dominance was involved in one case because the man tried to force oral sex after genital intercourse, but the woman refused and left the car. When he drove away he hit and killed her with the car. Both were extremely intoxicated and the man is claiming that the killing was accidental. The detectives were inclined to believe him when this author last talked with them, but he did not turn himself in voluntarily when the body was found. This was the only case between sex partners where the offender was intoxicated. In another case two men drowned a young woman after having intercourse with her. They admit to sex but deny murder, telling
1 Lynn A. Curtis, *Criminal Violence*, (Lexington, Massachusetts: Lexington Books, 1974), p. 48.
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the police she was high from sniffing glue and claiming she drowned herself accidentally. This young woman had run away several times and had an arrest record stemming from this and "incurability." Similarly to the case of the "impure" woman described above, both men have failed a polygraph test, but not enough additional evidence has been found to charge them.

The final case in this group involved a man throwing a fire bomb into the apartment of a woman that he had had casual sex with, killing her and her grandmother and her two children. The police are quite positive that this man committed the crime, but he has refused to take a polygraph exam and they are unsure of the motive. All of these cases seem to involve misogyny and the machismo attitude of treating women as sex objects.

The 30 non-relational murders involved more white (17) than black (13) victims. Of the known offenders, six were white and two black. This contrasts to the significantly higher proportion of black female victims in intimate male-female relationship homicides, while other family relationship category involved seven white victims (two from child abuse) and two black (one of which was child abuse). These other family slayings seem to have special dynamics as we have seen. The preponderance of white male murderers in the non-relational killings points out two things: women should be just as frightened of white men as many of them seem to be of black and white men are as likely to express violent misogyny and machismo as black outside of intimate relationships.

Noticeable in the non-relational category is the excessive violence used by the men in 70% of the cases. This suggests a great deal of misogyny involved since the men did not know the women well enough to hate them for other reasons and apparently were not acting from impulse or in the heat of the moment. 93% of these cases were not preceded by any kind of argument and victim precipitation only occurred once which also supports the theory

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of misogyny as a causative factor.

Women Killing Women

The remaining eight female homicide victims were killed by other women. This accounted for 2.5% of all the homicides committed in Dayton between 1975 and 1979. Women seldom kill (3.8% of homicides in the United States) or assault (7.1% of assaults in the United States) each

other either in our country or in other cultures.¹ This low percentage has not changed over time. No literature was found addressing specifically this phenomena so a brief attempt will be made here using the Dayton data (admittedly there are too few cases to draw any firm conclusions from). Undoubtedly a large proportion of cases of women killing another woman are cases of child abuse or infanticide. In Dayton two apparently psychotic women killed their young children in cases of infanticide. Two other female children died from repeated child abuse and one of these was beaten by both her father and mother as previously discussed. The female children were killed by two black mothers and two white.

The remaining four women who killed another woman were all black, perhaps reflecting the greater violence in the ghetto black culture. In one of these cases a black woman killed a white woman "friend" during an argument over a stolen income tax check. The second case involved a black woman shooting another black "friend." The nature of the argument was never given. The files on both these cases were sketchy, both perpetrators stayed at the scene and freely admitted the crime, so the cases were quickly closed. In neither case were either of the women intoxicated and none of the four had a history of violence. The third case involved a

¹Curtis, *Criminal Violence*, pp. 32, 33.

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romantic lesbian triangle in which both the parties had a history of violence and the victim had shot the offender six months earlier. Interesting here was the way in which the police kept mentioning the homosexuality involved in their questions to witnesses and descriptions of the case. Even though there were eyewitnesses to the crime and the victim did not have or show a weapon, the case never went to court. Because of the homosexuality, the impurity of the female victim, and the previous violence involved, it seems as though the fact that a human life was taken did not matter. The victim was apparently judged worthless. Jealousy was also involved in the last of the four cases, this time over a man. In this case the victim was the first to show a weapon and the offender had a history of violence. None of the four cases involved excessive violence or premeditation suggesting impulsivity. These four cases seem to involve elements of imitation of the oppressor in regards to the violent jealousy and carrying guns and becoming violent over trivial matters.

Perhaps the key issue here is why so few women kill each other rather than why these four women did. Given the powerlessness of all women and black women in particular, the violent nature of our societal structure, and the violence that has become expected in much of ghetto life, it is significant that so few women take out their frustrations on each other. Of course, women are not socialized to compete or show dominance over each other, but perhaps the most explanatory theory is presented by Dorothy Dinnerstein. She reasons that women identify with other women as fellow sufferers overcoming the ambivalence toward the mother figure felt by all young children.¹ The finding that matricide is apparently never committed by women supports this concept.

¹ Dinnerstein, *The Mermaid*, p. 103.

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Women Killing Men

Women do kill men. The analysis of these cases from the Dayton data is mainly for comparison purposes so the particulars of the cases will not be presented. 37.1% (A3) of the victims in the sample were men killed by women in comparison to the 56% (65) cases where women were killed by men. (The remaining 8% were women killed by other women.) Three of the male victims were children. The total child abuse or infanticide picture in Dayton is

summarized in Table 9. All of the children killed were two years old or less, suggesting that lethal child abuse is somewhat associated with the physical vulnerability of very young children, not an intent to kill. This sample is obviously too small to draw conclusions from, but the data tends to reflect the patterns reported in Chapter II in regards to sex and race as follows: 1) Infanticide is primarily committed by psychotic women in this country, 2) Both males and females commit child abuse in close to equal proportions, 3) Girls are somewhat more likely to be victims of lethal child abuse than boys, and 4) The phenomena is not associated with race.

A total of eleven men (26.6%) were killed by women they had no intimate prior relationship with. The dynamics of these cases are compared with the cases of men killing women of no relation in Table 10. The differences are striking. Of the total of 70 cases of adult intra sex homicide females killing non-related males accounts for 6.4% of the total. In contrast, men killing little known women is 2.9% of the total. The largest group in both types of cases had an ostensible motive of robbery, but in only three of the female offender cases was the woman acting alone and actually pulled the trigger. This is not to excuse the action of the other five women who were with men who kill, but just to point out how seldom a woman actually murders a man outside of her family. Three of

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Table 9

Homicide Of Children In Dayton, 1975 Through 1979

Type	No. of Victims	Sex of Perpetrator		Sex of Child		Race of Perpetrator*	
		Male	Female	Male	Female	Black	White
Infanticide (Mother psychotic; no prior abuse)	3	2		1	2	1	1
Child Abuse	6	3	4	2	4	3	4
Totals	9	3	6	3	6	4	5

*Race of victim was the same as his or her killer in all cases.

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Table 10

Homicides Of Men And Women Without Prior Intimate Relationship

Victim	Males Killed by Females	% of Males Killed by Females	Females Killed by Males	% of Females Killed by Males
Male	11	100		
Female			30	100
Black	10	89.0	13	43.3
White	1	11.0	17	56.6
Intoxication	4	36.4	2	6.9

History of Violence	4	36.4	1	3.4
Offender				
<hr/>				
Male			33	100
Female	13	100		
Black	13	100	14	42.4
White			9	27.3
Intoxication	1	7.7	10	30.3
History of Violence	0	0	11	33.3
Used Excessive				
Violence	0	0	21	70.0
Reason				
<hr/>				
V.P.	4	36.4	1	3.3
Robbery	8	72.7	10	33.3
Eventual Charoe				
<hr/>				
Self Defense	4	36.4	1	3.3
Negligent Homicide	1	7.7	1	3.3
Actually Did Killing	8	61.5	32	97.0

Total Cases: 41

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these women were between the ages of 18 and 22 and belonged to a violent gang of young men and their girlfriends. This may represent the most tragic extreme of a woman defining herself in terms of her relationship and service to a man. These mechanisms are common in women but fortunately do not often so totally submerge the authentic self.¹

Other significant differences are apparent from the table. The male victims were significantly more likely to be intoxicated and/or have a history of violence than the female. Both differences also hold true for the male perpetrators. Precipitation is much more common for male victims which results in the much higher percentage of women being eventually judged as defending themselves. All of this evidence points to the significance of self defense when women kill. In fact, except for the five women involved in robbery, none of the females who killed men outside their family were found guilty of anything in court. The striking difference in using excessive violence between men and women when they kill suggests an element of hatred in men which is not present in women.

The total exclusion of white women from this category is also significant. Four of the black women were defending against the attack of black men, five watched while a boyfriend killed, and one killed accidentally when trying to break up a fight in her "bootleg" joint by firing a warning shot that ricocheted. These cases suggest black female reaction to the male violence in parts of the poor black culture. The other three women had apparently adopted personally this violent ethic.

Women Killing Related Men

The largest category (67.4%) of men killed by women were actual or

1 Jean Baker Miller, *Toward a New Psychology of Women* (Boston, Mass.: Beacon Press, 1976), pp. 60-67.

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estranged husbands or boyfriends. The important characteristics of this group as compared to the woman killed in this relationship are presented in Table 11. The number of cases here are approximately equal, and the couples are predominantly black, both of which parallel national urban statistics.¹ However, when authors like Langley and Levy conclude, "When it comes to spouse killing, there is true equality between the sexes," they are making generalizations without looking closely at the data. Curtis found in his national survey of 17 major cities that victim precipitation in homicide and assault was "considerably more likely" among "males of both races" than females.² Yet Curtis negates the impact of this data when, in a later work, he refers to victim precipitation as follows: "Husbands, in particular, may give their wives a push. . ." making the precipitation sound minor. These are prime examples of what Daly calls, "legitimization of the (hynocidal) ritual by the rituals of 'objective' scholarship - despite appearances of disapproval."³ She goes to explain: The basic cultural assumptions which make the atrocious ritual possible and plausible remain unquestioned, and the practice itself is misnamed and isolated from other parallel symptoms of the planetary patriarchal practice of female maiming and massacre. . . this kind of writing not only "records" (erases) the original rituals but also provides "Explanations" and legitimations for them. . .

The analysis of the Dayton data used the original strict definition of victim precipitation (as do most studies of homicide): the "victim is the first to use physical force, show and/or use a weapon or strike a

1 Lynn Curtis, *Violence, Race and Culture* (Lexington, Massachusetts: Lexington Books, 1974), pp. 58, 67.

2 Curtis, *Criminal Violence*, p. 84.

3 Daly, *Gyn-Ecology*, p. 133.

4 *Ibid.*

Table 11

Homicides Of Men And Women In Intimate Relationships

	Males Killed by Females	% of Males Killed by Females	Females Killed by Males	% of Females Killed by Males
Victim				
Male	29	100	28	100
Female	26	87.7	21	75.0
Black	3	10.3	7	25.0
White	4	14.3	15	51.7
Intoxication History of	3	10.7	17	58.6
Violence History of	23	79.3	2	7.1
Abuse of Partner				
Offender				

Male	29	100	28	100
Female	25	86.2	22	78.6 21.4
Black	4 9 9	13.8	6	35.7 67.9
White	5 0	31.0	10	60.7 64.3
Intoxication History of		31.0	19	
Violence Used Excessive		17.3	17	
Violence History of		0	18	
Abuse				
Relationship				
Husband-Wife	22	75.9	12	42.9
Boy friend-Girl friend	3	10.3	5	17.9 39.2
Estranged	4	13.8	11	
Reasons				
Victim Precipitation Male	23	79.3	2	7.1
Jealous Female Jealous	10	34.5	18	64.3
Male Dominance Other	2	6.9	0	0
	8	17.8	5	17.9
	4	13.8	5	17.9
Ruled Self Defense	14	48.3	2	7.1
Previous Police Calls to	15	51.7	15	53.6
Home for Family				
Violence				

Total Cases: 57

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blow."¹ In Dayton, victim precipitation was always actual showing a weapon or striking a blow (punching or slapping), and usually the blows were repeated. None of the offenders, male or female, were provoked to murder by "a push." The overall precipitation rate was 7.7% (5) for female victims compared to 60.5% (26) of the male victims. For females and males in intimate relationships, the percentages were 7.1% (2) of women using force initially and subsequently being killed versus 79.3% (23) of the men.

The higher proportion of cases where a woman killed an intimate male, which were eventually ruled self defense, reflects the high rate of male victim precipitation. The criteria for a ruling of self defense varied greatly from case to case. The police usually charged the offender with a form of manslaughter originally, thus the inclusion of the case in the official homicide statistics.² These charges can be dropped or changed at several points in the legal process. The homicide detectives can change their own original determination after accumulating more evidence. The determination of a suspect by investigation or confession is followed by a brief hearing before a judge who can decide that either an arrest is indicated or the charges should be dropped because of self defense or when the homicide was accidental. The case may then continue to the Grand Jury which can also determine self defense and discontinue the process. If the

¹ Martin Wolfgang, "Victim Precipitated Criminal Homicide," *The Journal of Criminal Law, Criminology and Police Science*, 48 (May-June, 1957): 1-11, p. 2.

² Manslaughter in Ohio law involves "extreme stress" or "reasonable provocation" which can be

emotional or physical in nature. The difference between involuntary and voluntary manslaughter is fuzzy; involuntary implying less intent or having occurred during the commission of a misdemeanor or felony by the victim. Manslaughter is a lesser charge than aggravated murder which implies premeditation and is always applied when the killing occurs during a felony committed by the offender. (From an interview with Sergeant Dungan, Homicide Detective, Dayton Police Department, 9/25/79.)

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case goes to court, self defense can be ruled by the jury, or the charges may be lessened by plea bargaining. The indication of eventual charge was recorded according to police files as far along the process as the detectives had noted, so, the "eventual charge" notations are not always comparable. The police usually indicated when self defense was ruled by the original judge or Grand Jury but did not always note the later court determination. Therefore, the self defense category may have become larger, but would not have exceeded the rate victim precipitation rate.

The self defense rulings for men killing women were generally made in similar kinds of circumstances with a fairly clear indication of threat to the man's life. Self defense rulings for females who killed a male were less comparable. Occasionally the judge or Grand Jury ruled self defense when a history of severe wife abuse preceded the homicide, and only minimal physical provocation (one slap or punch) occurred at the time of the crime. Conversely, in at least four cases the woman suffered a fairly severe beating immediately preceding the killing, had also been abused repeatedly in the past and yet was still arrested and brought to trial. Two of these women went to jail, but the trial verdict was not recorded for the others.

The comparisons of history of abuse by the victim and perpetrator in the intimate relationship category are also significant. Male victims had beaten their spouse in 23 or 79.3% of the cases. Female victims had been at least equally violent towards the spouse prior to the homicide in only two (7.1%) of these cases. Eighteen (64.3%) of the male killers had beaten the woman involved but none of the cases concerning female killers indicated prior husband abuse. The police were starting to ask women and/or witnesses about prior abuse in 1978 and 1979, indicating their

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beginning awareness of the part battering plays in homicide. When abuse was noted before 1978, it was usually because of a recorded spontaneous comment by the woman and/or her neighbors, relatives and/or friends, or a part of the man's arrest record, rather than as a result of police inquiry. Therefore the prevalence of prior wife abuse may have actually been even greater. It is doubtful that any of the women killed by men were abusive to her husband previously, because the man would have been sure to mention this as part of his justification.

More indication of prior abuse stems from the records of police calls to the home for family violence within the past two years in more than half the cases. Since the prevalence of prior husband abuse is so low, it seems likely that most of the calls were because of wife abuse, although some of them could have been for violence with other people in or outside of the family. However, this still suggests a violent man. Eleven of the 57 homes had been visited by the police for "family trouble," assault or other violence more than three times and the police were called to one home 13 times and another 12 for these incidents. Each of these eleven extremely violent households had also been involved in numerous other police dispatches; one had been visited 56 times by the police in the two years prior to the homicide. It can thus be seen that these families are well known to the police, yet the sexism and other weaknesses of our criminal violence system allow the situation to continue until someone gets killed. Boudouris comments, "One wonders if an assault and battery may be a warning signal that if some action to

change the relationship is not taken, one of the parties to the interaction may later become a homicide victim." 1

It should be also noted that the men killed by a wife, girlfriend

1 Boudouris, "A Classification of Homicides," p. 538.

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or estranged wife or girlfriend were much more likely to be intoxicated and/or have a history of violence than women victims in the same relationship, supporting machismo theories. A significant proportion of the male victims had started the precipitating argument over jealousy or male dominance issues, indicating a violent insistence on control of the woman. In two cases the argument was begun by the woman because of her jealousy, but jealousy was five times more likely to be true of the men in the relationship. Similarly, a study conducted in Kansas City and Detroit found that in 66 of 90 family conflict homicides, the male was defining the female as an object of personal property and acting on that basis. 1 This kind of thinking is indicative of misogyny.

The data on women killing men in intimate female relationships show a preponderance of black offenders (87.7%). However, one of the most startling finding in this study was that only three women (all black) in the sample killed their husband, boyfriend or estranged husband or boyfriend without a history of being battered by that man if not actual immediate precipitation. This is not saying that the women solved the problem of abuse in a healthy manner or that they did not act with violence, but it does point out the element of desperation and self defense in their crime and the misogyny of the men that they killed. The data also suggests that black, poor women are affected by the contraculture of violence that occurs in the ghetto and the extreme oppression of their position in society.

Children Witnessing Homicide

An interesting sidelight to the homicide data is the fact that twelve children under the age of 15 witnessed the murders or were the first to find

1 Margaret Gates and Jane Chapman, eds. *Victimization of Women* (Beverly Hills, California: Sage Publications, 1978), p. 24.

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the body. Frequently, either the victim or perpetrator was a parent of the child's. These twelve children would have to be powerfully affected by this killing. The emotional consequences cannot be anticipated, and one cannot help but wonder what these children learned about violence from the incident. Will they be so horrified that they will forever have strong inhibitions against using violence or will they learn that the world is a deadly place in which using violence is the only way to resolve conflicts and/or survive?

Summary of Analysis of Cases

The data analysis of homicide cases involving women in Dayton, Ohio from 1974-1979 supports the theoretical framework of male misogyny and machismo of women. It has also been shown that these factors are frequently present in men that are killed by women, and that these women are most often motivated by self defense when they kill. Both males and females have the neurological capacity to kill and to learn to use violence to solve interpersonal conflicts. The models of violence, the powerlessness that may instigate violent behavior and the contraculture that accepts violence are more likely to be present in the ghetto which is reflected in the higher rates of black homicide. However true this may be, the data that has been analyzed here shows that machismo and misogyny override these causative factors and determine the far greater percentages of men killing women in both races, especially if cases involving victim

precipitation are eliminated. If all homicide cases in Dayton between men and women where the victim (male or female) was the first to show a weapon or strike a blow are discovered, sixty men killed women (77.9%) and seventeen women killed men (22.1%).

Newspaper Accounts

The reading of newspaper accounts of the homicides analyzed led to an
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unanticipated finding. Most homicides in Dayton were reported by a few lines giving basic facts buried deep in the paper. There was no sexism in these accounts and no differentiation between the reporting of cases of men only and those involving a woman. Since most of the people were black and poor this can be considered an example of defining the victim as worthless and unimportant and thereby negating their loss of life. However, if the homicides had been more prominent, they would have appeared on the average of one or more times a week in the past ten years and the journalists could have been accused of glorifying violence and overemphasizing the prevalence of murder among black citizens.

What is noteworthy is the homicides that were chosen for extensive coverage. A. M. Rosenthal, an editor and former newspaper reporter, when writing about journalistic coverage of homicide states, "How much attention it gets still depends largely on where it befalls, and to whom."¹ James Halloran notes that the news selection process is done according to what the public wants, and selections are also made to maintain the status quo of power.² The main mechanism operating in the selection of homicides to be covered extensively in Dayton was the obsession with purity of female victims. If the victim was young, white and ostensibly virginal, the murder was front page news along with pictures. If she was black and young and sexually abused, the crime rated a few paragraphs further back. If she was an older woman, promiscuous, intoxicated and/or married (in other words "used merchandise"), the story usually was only a few lines in a "News Brief" type section. Even exceptional brutality or unusual circumstances,

¹ A. M. Rosenthal, *Thirty-Eight Witnesses* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964), p. 17.

² James D. Halloran, "Mass Communication: Symptom or Cause of Violent," *International Social Sciences Journal* 30 (1978): 816-833, p. 822.

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such as the fire bombing that killed three women or the matricides or the husband who hunted and sadistically murdered his ex-wife, her mother and sister received only limited coverage. The last example got a four inch column on the front page in one paper but was summarized as being the result of a "domestic quarrel" suggesting that the woman could be blamed at least in part and obscuring the man's total culpability and misogyny.¹

When the reporters covered the homicide in more depth than the usual four or five lines, sexism tended to appear along with more obsession with purity and mechanisms that subtly blamed the victim. Nudity was frequently mentioned in cases where the body was found in that condition, but interestingly, rape was not. This may have been a result of rape not having been confirmed by the coroner or perhaps an effort to "spare the family." However, it also had the effect of blunting the misogyny of the deed. When the offender had been apprehended, his occupation was far more likely to be mentioned than hers. In the most extensive coverage of a homicide, the killing which involved a white young middle class woman, the contrast between the two papers was instructive. The morning paper discussed primarily the woman's educational achievements and career.² The evening paper gave details of her high school social life and emphasized her traditionally female characteristics without mentioning her educational achievements or the signs of struggle against her attacker given in the other paper.³ Both papers

referred primarily to this twenty year old woman as a girl.

The most blatant problem with most of the newspaper reporting that was

1 Dayton Daily News, 2 September 1978, p. 1.

2 Dayton Journal Herald, 10 September 1977, p. 3.

3 Dayton Daily News, 10 September 1977, p. 34.

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noticeable in both papers was the subtle blaming of the women apparent in almost all the reports of intra sex killings of more than a few lines. The reporters almost always referred to such killings as being the result of "arguments" or "domestic squabbles" or "domestic quarrels" even when there was clear indication from the homicide files that the women played no part in her own death (i.e., when she was handcuffed before being shot), or the homicide was premeditated (i.e., when a boyfriend sought out his girlfriend at her place of employment and shot her seven times) or when the woman was acting in self defense and killed her spouse. It is true that the police tend to describe such homicides in these terms, but it would only take a few questions by the reporter to fix the blame where it belongs. Anyone reading these accounts gets an impression that the woman is as much to blame as the man.

Not all the newspaper accounts of the crimes were read and some of the homicides apparently did not appear in the papers at all. However, more than one third of those accounts that were analyzed did show elements of sexism, obsession with purity and subtle blaming of the woman. The proportion climbed much higher (close to 75%) when the incident was given more than a few lines of coverage. Halloran points out how media can "define, give emphasis, amplify, confer status, convey meanings and perspectives, provide labels and stereotypes and indicate approval and disapproval. . ." concerning violence.¹ Journalism has contributed to the failure to recognize the misogyny connected with the homicide of women.

Summary

Analysis of the cases of homicide involving women in one urban area

1 J. D. Halloran, "The Mass Media and Violence," *Forensic Science*, 5 (June, 1975): 209-217, p. 211.

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can only be considered as indicative of patterns and trends in the one city studied for only that five year time period. However, the data from Dayton does seem to be fairly representative of urban areas throughout the country. The facts that were found that seem startling or new are pieces of data that were not looked for in other studies, or categories that were not used, or combinations of facts that were not looked at together. This relatively new picture that has been put together supports some of the findings on wife abuse reported in Chapter II, that wife abuse is closely tied to homicide of women and to cases where females kill their spouse, and that misogyny and machismo are present in men who abuse and may eventually kill their spouse or be killed by her. It also supports Wallace's theory of the presence of machismo in many black men and points out the violence and misogyny associated with machismo attitudes in black or white males.¹ Finally, the data analyzed supports the inclusion of homicide of women into Daly's concept of gynocidal practices which directly express misogyny, have been obscured by research conducted mainly by males, are negated by blaming the victim, and the horror of which is erased by obsession with purity of the women or myths that surround the practice.² These practices originated with the patriarchal stratification of society and it is to the system of patriarchy that we must turn our attention in terms of prevention.

1 Wallace, *Black Macho and the Myth of the Super Woman*.

2 Daly, *Gyn/Ecology*, pp. 131-133.

Chapter V

Summary, Conclusions, Implications, And Recommendations

Summary

The study of the relationship of misogyny to the homicide of women uses a combination of historical and epidemiological research methodologies in analyzing the literature concerned with the topic, cases of homicide involving women in Dayton between 1975 and 1979 and the newspaper accounts of these incidents. The main purpose of epidemiological research is "the understanding of disease etiology" and to thereby derive possible preventive measures.¹ Epidemiology involves identifying populations at risk and patterns of incidence of the health problem being studied.² Historical research is the "systematic collection and critical evaluation of data relating to past occurrences, which is undertaken to test hypotheses or answer questions concerning causes, effects, or trends relating to past events which may shed light on present behavior or practices."³ Historical methodology in this paper was used in analyzing the cases of homicide and in the critical analysis of other current theories being used to explain violence and homicide in the literature.

The review of literature became an enormous part of this study. All

1 Marijan Herjunic and David Meyer, "Notes on Epidemiology of Homicide in an Urban Area," *Forensic Science*, 8 (November-December, 1976): 235- 245, p. 236.

2 Ibid.

3 Dorothy Fiorino, *Historical Research: Guidelines to Methodology* (Dayton, Ohio: Wright State University, 1979), p. 13.

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of the theoretical viewpoints reviewed had a different approach to the problem of violence in our culture. Some were found to be blatantly misogynous; others concentrated mainly on violence between men and virtually ignored the inconsistencies when applying their theories to women; still others perpetuated myths that obscure the dynamics of violence against women. In contrast, the theorists writing about wife abuse, machismo and gynocidal practices provided a useful theoretical framework of misogyny that can be applied to homicide of women.

Other causative factors operate in violence as well as misogyny. The neurophysiologists have accumulated persuasive evidence about the neurological mechanisms we are all born with that make violence possible. They have pointed out that such factors as alcohol, stress, male hormones and certain neurological defects can either enhance activity in the centers for aggressive behavior in the brain or partially counteract the normal physiologic inhibition processes for behavior. However, they are generally careful to point out that the neurological basis explains aggression mechanisms, not violent behavior and that other factors are stronger in governing the incidence of that behavior.

Learning is one such factor, examined in detail by the social learning theorists. Again, we have impressive evidence that violence can be learned, but the exact behavioral response to that learning cannot be predicted in individuals. The sociologists have identified social factors that tend to accompany violence, yet these circumstances do not lead to violence in most people who experience them.

The concept of machismo was seen in many of the writings from social learning, sociology, psychology, anthropology, criminology, abuse and feminism. However, few authors concentrated on the phenomena as a causative

factor of violence. It was more likely to be a part of another theoretical framework. By identifying misogyny as part of machismo and tracing their development by psychological, learning, and sociological mechanisms, we have found a holistic framework that has been connected with violence generally and other forms of gynocide.

The framework was then applied to homicide in Dayton, Ohio which was shown to be at least somewhat representative of homicide in urban areas across the country. The cases of homicide that involved women from 1975 to 1979 were analyzed for indication of misogyny and machismo in the men involved. It was found that although not totally explanatory, the theoretical framework was supported by much of this data.

Conclusions

The study is not conclusive. Misogyny and machismo need to be operationalized empirically, and the study replicated in other urban areas before firm conclusions can be drawn. An analysis of the cases of males killing each other in Dayton was not done, so the empirical evidence is weak in supporting the theory of machismo as a cause of male violence generally.

The study is useful in that it examines closely a part of homicide that has not been thoroughly addressed before, homicide of women. It is one of the few studies of homicide or conceptual frameworks of violence which is written from a feminist viewpoint using primarily female subjects. This author, along with other-feminist scholars, is arguing that the homicide of women should be looked at as part of a total picture of oppression, sexism and gynocidal practices identified by other feminists which serve to keep the patriarchy intact by instituting fear in women. The

mechanisms used by individual males and different patriarchal cultures to maintain their dominance over women vary greatly. Some involve violence; most do not, but they all reflect a basic misogyny which is almost always more or less deeply buried in each male psyche. The fact that most cultures are patriarchal is evidence of misogyny.

Men do not sit down together and "plot" how to keep women oppressed. They usually do not consciously use gynocidal practices in order to maintain dominance. Many of the violent practices used against women are part of tradition and cultural learning, but the fact that men can insist on their wives being infibulated, for instance, indicates sadism, pleasure with the status quo of dominance and misogyny. When a man murders a woman or beats her, he is often reacting to a perception of a threat to that dominance and in those situations of stress, anxiety and resulting rage he strikes out blindly. He is not consciously thinking about maintenance of the entire patriarchy, but the effect of maintaining subjugation of women still results. The Dayton cases also show misogyny in the excessive violence and sadism used against many of the women. The matricides and rape-murders are especially indicative of a deep hatred of women.

The most significant findings of the study in terms of prevention were the prevalence of wife abuse as a predisposing factor in homicide between men and women in intimate relationships and the amount of self defense involved when women kill men. The population most at risk for homicide of women is battered wives. Their husbands are also in danger. Both these findings are partially supported in other research, but the magnitude of influence found here has not been totally recognized.

Implications

One can become immersed in a study of this kind and begin to feel that

human beings must be basically evil to commit such atrocities. One is struck by the evidence of Fromm's conceptualizations of sadism and necrophilia in the killings. The pictures of horror fall out of the homicide files and one feels compelled to look and try to imagine. Is this an attempt to fully understand or necrophilia? Can we all be pushed to such extremes by social factors or do social factors only limit innate destructiveness?

Yet most people do not kill. We can all be cruel and destructive, but we seldom act out aggressive impulses with violence. The evidence from peaceful cultures shows that with the right conditions, whole societies can be mainly cooperative, life supporting and completely nonviolent. We need to work at discovering those conditions and creating them in our world. Each and every life is precious and each time a life is taken by violence, an unnecessary death has occurred.

The study of homicide is unusual in nursing. Yet nursing is centered around promoting life and health. The conditions that allow and promote violence in our society can be considered as disease and death producing and therefore within the realm of nursing to correct. Nurses can work within many contexts to prevent homicide from occurring, at the societal, community and individual level.

We first need to abolish patriarchal societal structure. Needless to say, this is a long-term goal. However more than half the world's population are women and by joining together the task can be accomplished. Great progress, at least in our culture, has already been made. As Robin Morgan beautifully says: We know that serious lasting change does not come overnight, or simply, or without enormous pain and diligent examination and tireless, undramatic, every-day-a-bit-more-one-step-at-a-time work. We know that such change seems to move in cycles . . . and we also know that those

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cycles are not merely going around in circles. They are rather, an upward spiral, so that each time we reevaluate a position or place we've been before, we do so from a new perspective.¹

Nursing needs to reevaluate its position in respect to medicine, feminism and the patriarchy. Nursing must work to foster the attitudes that support life, which Fromm believes can eradicate sadism and necrophilia.² This means working at the societal level to combat war and the militaristic postures of government, to preserve and enhance nature, to expose and correct the iatrogenic diseases of medicine, to support and enhance feminism and to research, identify and prevent worldwide gynocide.

Specific measures already before the legislature, although buried deep in some committee or legislative process or task force recommendations, can be brought back before the public eye, shaped into bills and passed into laws by a concerted effort of nurses spearheading a public campaign to do so. The passage of the Equal Rights Amendment, anti pornography measures, National Health Insurance, gun control legislation, laws to eliminate violence and sexism from television, mental health promotion appropriations, minimal subsistence payments, unemployed training acts, school integration legislation, laws to strengthen the prosecution of rapists, wife abuse protection measures and the like will not eradicate violence in and of themselves but they all will promote life and health.

On the community level, nurses need to work to change our parenting arrangements and work against using physical punishment in disciplining children, at home and in schools. This can be done by supporting and teaching childbirth education classes, parenting education classes and

1 Robin Morgan, *Going Too Far* (New York: Vintage Books, 1978), p. 14.

2 Erich Fromm, *The Anatomy of Human Destructiveness* (New York: Fawcett Crest, 1973), pp. 483-485.

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family life classes in high school and by conducting public education programs to explain the importance of fathers taking an equal part in infant care and the detrimental effects of physical punishment.

Wife abuse shelters can be created and supported by nurses. Nurses are also a necessary addition to their staffs to provide holistic health care to the women and children staying there. Abused women are a population gravely at risk to be killed or to kill if the situation is left uncorrected. Nurses in emergency rooms, doctors' offices, community mental health centers and health departments need to start diligently looking for and asking about abuse so that these women can be identified. Once identified these women need to be helped with their multiple health problems, but more importantly, intensively counseled by nurses as to the serious dangers involved in abuse and what can be done. Marital counseling should be looked upon as a final alternative instead of the treatment of choice. The abuser is the one who needs therapy and the woman should be supported emotionally, financially and legally in leaving him, at least until he gets it. He can be considered as having a serious, potentially lethal disease which can be transmitted to others. The carriers of such diseases are isolated and given treatment until they are well. The criminal justice system has the potential to at least isolate these men, although treatment in such settings is unlikely without massive reform. *New Society* magazine reported on the establishment of a "Men's Aid" center in London which provided weekly therapy sessions to men who had problems controlling violence while their abused wife was in a shelter.¹ While this sounds commendable, perhaps the model could be changed to a residential center where husbands are committed by law after abuse for treatment. Then the wives and children could stay in their home,

1 "Wife Batters," *New Society* 37 (August 19, 1976).

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