

INTRODUCTION

As discussed in this issue, violence against women and children (VAWC) is either direct or indirect. Both contribute to the production and reproduction of patriarchy or the rule of men over women and children.

Direct violence has an identifiable perpetrator acting alone or in concert with others, leaves immediately visible marks upon infliction, focuses on agency and not the social structure, and typically has a masculine face.

The perpetrator of direct violence is:

1. The batterer — He uses superior strength, psychological torture and/or verbal abuse to intimidate and batter his girlfriend, wife and/or child/ren for a variety of reasons: He looks at his victim/s as his private property and fears losing what he owns; feelings of insecurity and personal failure; exaction of obedience from a subordinate; frustration over unmet needs and wants, and the like. No matter the reason, whether conscious or unconscious, battering incidents are assertions of male supremacy.

Lawyers Ma. Luz T. Delfin and Flordeliza C. Vargas in their article, "Battered Woman Syndrome and the Law of Self-Defense," point out that men have the law on their side. Supremacy of men over women and children is well entrenched in law. Indicative of this fact was the way women were lumped together not too long ago with "minors, the insane and the disabled" in need of men's protection. Ironically, the very one whom the law names as the protector of his wife and child/ren uses the institution of marriage to abuse those placed under his care. Because the law holds sacred the principle that "a man's home is his castle"

the state as a rule does not intervene in domestic quarrels. Yet it is in the sanctity of the home where all sorts of abuse like battery, sexual molestation, incest, rape, and verbal abuse are inflicted on women and children. Sadly, the battered wife who kills her husband out of desperation is likely to be convicted of the crime of parricide. Using the battered woman syndrome as a basis for the plea of self-defense is not yet well settled in Philippine jurisprudence. Until VAW is seen as not just a domestic quarrel that must be settled privately by the parties involved and a law criminalizing woman battery specifically is passed, women will never be safe from men's abuse. Neither will men: When cutting the penis or parricide is the only choice left to women pushed on the edge, it is taken. This is proven by the cases cited in the article. What else the said cases can prove, if a study were conducted on what happens to the family when the condemned is sent to prison, is the importance of the wife whom the law does not recognize as the head of the family. However, unlike the husband whose major role is merely as breadwinner the wife has to take on multiple roles to keep the family alive and well. Without her in the family this basic unit of society is imperiled.

Patriarchy as ideology and practice has an inertia all its own. Bauje Miedema and Sandra Wachholz examined why immigrants to Brunswick, Canada who are victims of VAW do not access justice as their right nor avail of institutionalized shelters and safe houses. The scholars found out that the women still cling to the patriarchal culture of their respective country of origin. They put up with VAW because it is perceived as normal in married life and is a private family matter not needing state intervention. Besides, they are aware of what happens when a woman tells on her husband to the police and makes a case out of her experience of domestic violence to be tried in a court of law. The repercussions are the following formidable possibili-

ties. She will be resented by her children for destroying the family; divorced by her husband and left alone in penury; deprived custody of her children; deported; and cast out by her kin group as an undesirable member who has jeopardized the chances of her women relatives from getting married and thus isolated from the rest and deprived of a dependable support group; and ostracised by her own ethnic group in the new country.

The non-acceptance of legal remedies available to immigrant VAW victims pales in comparison to that of Sudanese women. As early as 1946 the Sudanese government already passed legislation outlawing the practice of female genital mutilation (FGM) also referred to as female circumcision (a misnomer because unlike male circumcision where only the prepuce and not the penis is cut, in female circumcision the clitoris is incised). In fact in February 1979 the WHO Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean with the assistance of the Sudanese Government convened a meeting attended by physicians, midwives and health officials from 10 Arab and African nations to discuss traditional practices affecting the health of women and children. FGM was discussed and four recommendations were made:

1. Adoption of clear national policies for the abolition of “female circumcision.”
2. Establishment of national commissions to coordinate activities, including the enactment of abolition legislation.
3. Intensification of general education on the dangers and undesirability of the practice.
4. Intensification of education programs for birth attendants, midwives, healers, and other practitioners of traditional medicine, with a view of enlisting their support (Robin Morgan and Gloria Steinem. ((1980)). “The International Crime of Genital Mutilation”. *Feminist Frontiers, Rethinking Sex, Gen-*

der, and Society. 1983. Laurel Richardson and Verta Taylor, eds. New York: Random House:194).

Results of the Khartoum meeting submitted what is now known as the Khartoum Report to the Secretariat of the World Conference for the UN Decade for Women, which met in Copenhagen in July 1980.

There have been campaigns against the abolition of FGM with no less than the Sudanese Minister of Social Affairs, Dr. Fatima Abdul Mahmood, taking active participation during her incumbency. Some enlightened individuals and organizations from the regions where it has been practiced have also campaigned against it. The health consequences of the practice should be convincing enough to put a stop to the practice. These include "primary fatalities due to shock, hemorrhage, or septicemia, and such later complications as genital malformation, delayed menarche, dyspareunia (pain suffered during intercourse), chronic pelvic complications, incontinence, calcification deposits in the vaginal walls, recto-vaginal fistulas, vulval cysts and abscesses, recurrent urinary retention and infection, scarring and keloid formation, infertility, and an entire array of obstetric complications including the increased probability of injury to the fetus (by infection) during pregnancy, and to the infant during birth. Psychological responses among women range from temporary trauma and permanent frigidity to psychosis" (*Ibid.* 192).

The study of Ahmed M. Abdel *et al.*, "Re-Circumcision: The Hidden Devil of Female Genital Mutilation, Case Study on the Perception, Attitudes and Practices of Sudanese Women" reveals why the practise persists. Through the operation of patriarchal ideology, a practice that is detrimental to women's health and which goes against women's rights to their own bodies has become so institutionalized through custom (it is considered a rite

done for the family honor to keep the virginity of its unmarried women and prevent promiscuity through the deadening of its women's desire for sexual pleasure) and religion (conformity with dictates of religious beliefs) that its victims find no reason for stopping its practice. If women did not practice it, they will have a problem in finding a place for themselves in society, which is undeniably a man's world. And so every after delivery and every six months or even more often, women have their genitals recut and re sewn because of the husband's desire and fear of divorce.

Two groups of women were the subjects of the study. Criteria of selection conformed to the aim of the study which wanted to show whether the level of income and education has something to do with the perception attitudes and practice of FGM. Findings show that differentials in education and wealth did not significantly affect the practice of re-circumcision. What is significant is the correlation between a high level of education and the circumcision of subjects' children. Only 50% of the group of more educated women had their children circumcised in comparison to 82% of the lesser educated group. This means that education is an effective way of combating the practice of circumcision.

2. The **sexual harasser** — He is described in Sadaf Ahmad's article, "Sexual Harassment in the Workplace: A Case in Pakistan" as a man who uses his superior position in the workplace over women subordinates for securing sexual favors. When he can not get what he wants from his intended victim, he resorts to retaliation. He can make life in the office for his victims "a living hell" as one such woman is quoted in the study.

The case study involves a high ranking official of an international organization based in Pakistan. When a case of sexual

harassment was filed against him by his victims, patriarchy reared its ugly head. The accusers (originally 11 but dwindled to six when pressures were applied on them to drop the case) faced another form of harassment—harassment from men bonding together in the office to save their own and preserve the system. By this time, the case which was lodged in 1998 and submitted to RWS for publication in 1999 by Dr. Fouzia Saeed must have been decided—hopefully, in favor of the victims of sexual harassment.

3. The torturer in war — The saying that “all is fair in love and war” takes on another meaning when we read the article of Kinyanda Eugene and Seggara Musisi, “War Traumatization and Its Psychological Consequences in Women of Gulu District”. If VAW is considered part of the love life of husband and wife, so is it considered as part of war. Victors look at women as war booty and do with them as they please. What the study documented in the war in Gulu is that the torture which is meant to extract information from both sides has gender dimensions. Torture for women focused on their sexuality. They were raped, sexually harassed and molested, and/or subjected to genital mutilation. In most cases, especially where rape is concerned, this took place in the home of the woman victim in the presence of her husband and children. Apparently, she was seen not as a person but merely a tool for humiliating her husband and her tribe. The study also reveals that the trauma suffered by women as a consequence of torture will disable them for a long time for the serious task of nation building. Furthermore, due to their suffering, it is entirely possible that they would turn to vendetta that fuels the cycle of violence. Which means that the war ongoing for a long time now in Uganda cannot be stopped in the near future.

What is to be done about VAW?

Firstly, there ought to be a law. Delfin and Vargas recommend the passage of a law that criminalizes woman battery specifically and the courts' acceptance of the battered woman syndrome as a strong ground for pleading self-defense in cases of parricide and homicide committed by battered women. Ahmad recommends the passage of a law in Pakistan that specifically criminalizes sexual harassment in the workplace and improvement of the delivery of justice by the courts.

Secondly, where there is already a law, it must be popularized so that those in need of its application can access justice. Moreover, something more has to be done. Miedema and Wachholz underscore the need to make immigrant women understand the dynamics of culture, more specifically, patriarchal culture, so that they can see where they are and where they ought to be in the power game people play for looking after their own interest. Magied et al.'s study leads to the same direction.

What is left unsaid so far constitutes the third. This is taken up by Roselle Leah K. Rivera's *Finding the "Me" for Building the "We", a Feminist Action Research on Violence against Women*. Rivera proposes feminist action research. This is a method where participants, in this case VAW survivors in Camarin, were introduced to feminism and how this can empower women in useful and non-threatening ways so that they can construct viable selves that can deal with their experience of VAW while at the same time convince them to form a support group to help other VAW survivors and form pro-active anti VAW formations.

Sylvia H. Guerrero's research report entitled "Monitoring the Progress and Impact of Intervention Progress to Prevent and Eliminate Violence against Women and Children" uses Schuler's (1992) gender violence strategies framework "in the selection of interventions and programs designed both to understand violence (through research) and respond to violence in terms of immediate action (e.g., shelters and support services) and long-term programs that attack the roots of violence (e.g., women's empowerment, media advocacy, political action)."

Direct Violence Against Children

Carolyn Sobritchea, Remedios Mondiguing and Susan Ortega's study, "Abuse, Exploitation and Discrimination, The Stark Reality (A Policy & Action Research on Filipino Female Children in Specially Difficult Circumstances)" presents a situationer on child abuse to guide policy makers. Stella Guerrero-Manalo, on the other hand, carefully studied data on physically abused children aged six and below. Her findings show that abused children's speech development is impaired, among other symptoms.

Indirect Violence

Indirect violence has no identifiable perpetrator, leaves no immediately visible marks upon infliction, has no face, and is generated by social structures.

Indirect violence as a function of patriarchy and capitalism is brought to light by Arlie Russel Hochschild in her lecture entitled "Global Chains of Care". The Filipino mother who leaves her own children in the Philippines under the care of a maid she pays cheap, so that she can take care of a child of an American couple presents indirect violence wrought by patriarchy and capi-

talism. If shared parenting were an institutionalized practice in America and if uneven development among national economies did not exist, there would be no demand in the labor market for the Filipina's childcare services. But because American husbands still leave most of the care needed by their children to their wives, and the Philippines is poor while America is rich, there is a need for the Filipina maid. One conscientizing way to look at this situation is to contextualize it in the framework of globalization: the movement of a commodity from the South to the North and its cost accounting. Who gains and who loses? The Filipina caregiver deprives her own children her love and care as she showers it on her American ward for which she gets the income she won't be able to get in her home country. But: Isn't it child abuse to throw children at the mercy of lowly paid strangers because their mothers are forced to work overseas? Isn't it child abuse to deprive children the love and care of their own mother? For that matter, aren't mothers abused when they are forced by the system to love and care for the offsprings of others at the expense of their own children? Isn't globalization promoting institutionalized abuse of both mothers and their children because economic forces at work necessitate the export of a Southern mother's love and care to a Northern society? Indeed, globalization has brought down care and love to the level of zinc and copper as an export commodity.

It is no secret that in most households in the Philippines, especially where the mother is out earning a living, the TV set is used as a caregiver substitute. In view of this, the study on violence on Philippine television should provoke serious thoughts regarding the safety of Philippine homes

The contributions on the art criticism section dwell on body politics. Roland Tolentino's article on bomba films which spe-

cializes in the display of women's bodies for men's pleasure, asks this question: Who owns women's bodies? Certainly not the movie stars who have sold their bodies to the movie producer. If the biological body is not theirs, neither is the cinematic body created from the first. For that matter, neither does the movie producer own the cinematic woman's body. Movie house owners penetrate the bomba film by adding pornographic portrayals of women's bodies from foreign films in order to attract a larger viewership that brings in the profits. Tolentino, himself, is an addition to the list of owners of women's cinematic bodies. He appropriates cinematic bodies of selected bomba films for his own use: to make them look like the embodiment of national development plans of Philippine presidents from the martial law regime onwards. Who owns women's bodies?

Michiyo Yoneno Reyes uses the anthropological concept of distance in evaluating the art exhibit entitled "Who Owns Women's Bodies?" Because to Yoneno Reyes, art is mimesis, she asks why women are portrayed as mere victims of oppressors when in real life they enjoy a high status in society (compared to their Japanese sisters) and seem to be empowered. Gender, she says, provides the answer. Male artists suffer from distance: They can not see women as feminists see women. Hence, the inability to see the progressive movement of feminist artists to reclaim women's bodies to their rightful owners—women themselves.

In the First Person section is the unedited "Confession" of Roselle Pineda who was gang raped by male acquaintances who were challenged by her being a lesbian. To heal herself she turns to art, specifically writing. So does Virginia Z. Tolosa, a victim of incest. The genre she chooses is poetry. "I don't care if others think that what I wrote is not a poem," she told the RWS editor.

“What is important is that it IS my poem.” Yes, Virginia, there is a poem.

The section on masteral thesis privileges what was marginalized before: qualitative over quantitative research, the feminist point of view over the gender-blind or patriarchal point of view. Rachele L. Layda studied the counterfactual thinking of Filipino battered girlfriends expressed in their narration of their ordeal; Filomin A. Candaliza centered her sociological research on the victims of rape; and Prescilla dela Peña Tulipat employed feminist participatory research in studying incest in the Philippines.

For our book review we have Anicia Manalang reading Sylvia “Guy” Estrada Claudio’s book, *Rape, Love and Sexuality: The Construction of Women in Discourse*. Her reading is not in the expected academic mode the primary concern of which is to match, if not surpass the writer’s expertise on the subject, especially with regards to research methodology. Manalang simply read herself in the text as a woman who knows what being a woman is in a man’s world is all about.

We close the issue with two art works sent for publication by Kalakasan member Dazzle Rivera. They offer positive discourses on women, they with the “eternal wound”.

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