Tikkun

POLITICS+SPIRITUALITY+CULTURE

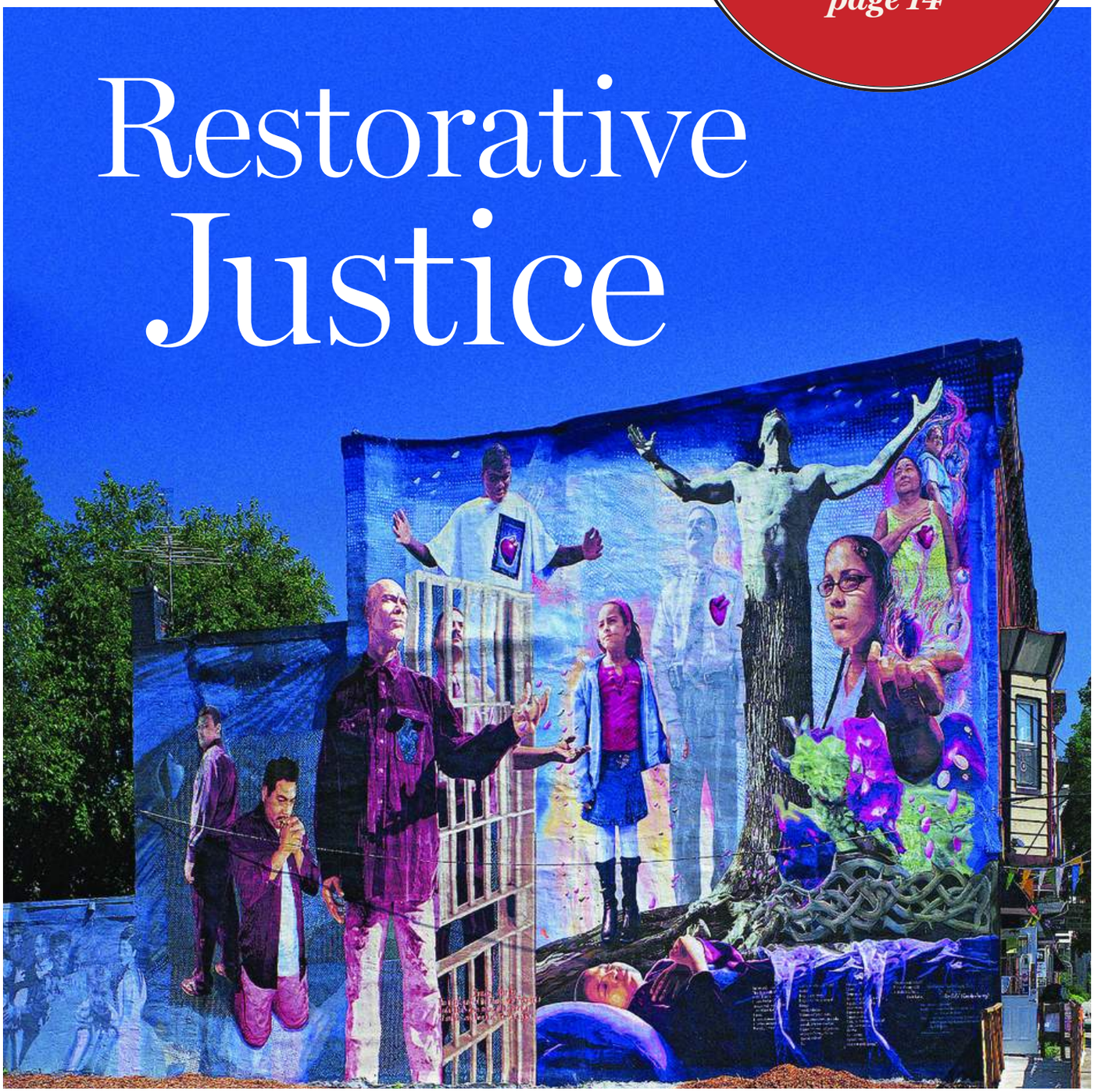
(tē·kün) To mend, repair, and transform the world.

WINTER 2012

THE FUTURE OF WORLD RELIGION

page 14

Restorative Justice



$7.50 U.S. $8.50 Canada

24

0 74470 64858 1

Protect Teachers from the Right's Assault: Teach Empathy

Laughter: the Key to Jewish and Muslim Acceptance in the West?

Identity Politics | Poetry in the Age of Mass Incarceration

Religious Globalization and Postsecular Spiritualities

New York's Occupy Wall Street movement spread to cities across the country—from San Francisco (above) to Washington, D.C. (below). Its activists have endured physical attacks from police and have inspired a long-term movement against the impunity with which financial elites manipulate the American economy and political system. We all—the "ninety-nine percent"—are just beginning to realize the power of our collective voice.

Photos courtesy of Josh Warren-White (top) and Rick Reinhard (bottom)

stones hurled through the windshield of her car when she was a tourist and got lost on her way to Jerusalem. If it were Rae's parents or children, bombarded in their beds night after night with grenades and Katyushas, would she be as benevolent and understanding?

Justice for all is a noble pursuit. But at what cost, Rae? Would you turn the other cheek if your own loved ones were involved? Would you fault your parents for trying to protect you? I do not fault Rae in the least for the aching in her heart for peace in the Middle East and elsewhere. But peace is indeed a two-way street. If Rae is reviled by other Jews, perhaps it is because she too can see only one side: the side that the media choose to cover; the side that has learned to use the media to further its goal of ridding the Middle East of the nation of Israel; the side that celebrates the existence of a Jew who condemns her own.

ALITTA KULLMAN
Laguna Hills, California

Rae Abileah replies:

I HEAR IN YOUR LETTER A GENUINE concern for the future of the Israeli state and your—our—Jewish brethren there, and a fear about the dangers they may face, and I share in your concern. I thank you for asking me questions rather than jumping to conclusions about my beliefs and actions. Here are my responses to just a few of these questions:

I do have family in Israel and hold compassion in my heart for the stress of living under fear of attack. I have learned from groups such as the 9/11 Families for Peaceful Tomorrows, which in the wake of the devastating loss of their loved ones on September 11 one decade ago cried out for our nation not to seek vengeance, not to retaliate and kill more innocent people. I believe seeking understanding and empathy is one of the first steps toward ending the violence.

If I am one day blessed with children, I would not be willing to live in a country where compulsory military service mandates that my child might serve at an illegal checkpoint, demolish a home, or face serious PTSD from serving in an occupying army. My heart goes out to all the mothers (and parents) who have suffered the untimely and unnatural death of their children whether by bus bomb, bulldozer, or gun, and it must stop, in all forms.

What Alitta fails to acknowledge is the systemic, racist oppression of the Palestinian people, which fosters roles of occupier and occupied, not just two sides that hate each other. The "side" I now stand on is the side of peace and justice, which is neither (and perhaps both) pro-Palestinian or pro-Israeli, and for which I have received tremendous support even within the Jewish community. This side is actually rarely portrayed in the mainstream media, but is growing in numbers globally as increasingly more people join the cause for freedom and equality for all people living in Israel and Palestine. Won't you join us?

Tikkun

EDITOR Michael Lerner
EDITOR-AT-LARGE Peter Gabel
MANAGING EDITOR Alana Yu-lan Price
GUEST EDITOR David Belden
ASSISTANT EDITOR Ashley Bates
ART DIRECTION AND DESIGN Design Action Collective
POETRY EDITOR Joshua Weiner
ASSISTANT POETRY EDITOR Lindsay Bernal
FILM CRITIC David Sterritt
LITERARY EDITOR Julian Levinson
WEB DESIGN Craig Wiesner and Derrick Kikuchi
FULFILLMENT Natalie Wollner

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS
Gil Anidjar, Bradley Shavit Artson, Michael Bader, David Biale, Paul Buhle, Arnold Eisen, Roger S. Gottlieb, Josh Healey, Mark LeVine, Shaul Magid, Ruth Messinger, Ben Naparstek, Or Rose, Stephen Zunes

INTERNS AND EDITORIAL ASSISTANTS
Zena Daniela Andreani, Sam Ross-Brown, Sarah Stafford, Martha Woolverton, and Sandra Yolles (editorial); George Altshuler (web); Jaclyn Aida Tobia (art); David Ehrens, Christina Honde, Nancy Kleban, Sara Roffino, and Siddarth Sehgal (archive); Alexandra Eilerson Posey (operations); and Cameron Dicker (editorial and community organizing).

PUBLISHER Duke University Press

Articles in *Tikkun* do not necessarily reflect *Tikkun*'s position on any issue. *Tikkun*'s positions are presented in our editorials. To submit a manuscript, visit tikkun.org/submissions.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR
Send your letters to the editor to letters@tikkun.org

EDITORIAL ADVISORY BOARD
Rachel Adler, Gar Alperovitz, Aliki Barnstone, Michael Berenbaum, Chet Bowers, Paul Buhle, Jay Cantor, Abby Caplin, David Cohen, Dan Cohn-Sherbok, Josephine Donovan, Elliot Dorff, Terry Eagleton, Duane Elgin, Leslie Epstein, Sidra Ezrahi, Lynn Feinerman, John Felstiner, Barry Flicker, Margaret Flowers, Saul Friedlander, Nan Fink Gefen, Laura Geller, Ann Gleig, John P. Geyman, David N. Gibbs, Erik Gleibermann, Nancy Glock-Grueneich, Barbara Goldberg, Jill Goldberg, David Gordis, Jonathan Granoff, Arthur Green, Colin Greer, Mary Grey, Jamey Hecht, Burt Jacobson, John Kelly, David Kim, Reuven Kimelman, Linda Kintz, Richard La Brecque, Joann Locascio, Miriam Maron, Daniel Matt, Bob McChesney, Balmurli Natrajan, Elliot Neaman, David Newman, Greg Palast, Ilana Pardes, Alan Michael Parker, David Pinault, Robert Pinsky, Judith Plaskow, Letty Cottin Pogrebin, James Ponet, Douglas Rushkoff, Aviezer Ravitsky, Wade Clark Roof, Michael Sandel, David Saperstein, Zalman Schachter-Shalomi, Richard Schwartz, Chaim Seidler-Feller, Gerald Serotta, Rami Shapiro, Stanley Sheinbaum, Richard Silverstein, Uri Simon, Starhawk, Graeme Taylor, Emily Warn, Arthur Waskow, John Welwood, Miryam Ehrlich Williamson

ADVERTISING
Journals Advertising Coordinator at journals_advertising@dukeupress.edu

INDIVIDUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS
510-644-1200, subscribe@tikkun.org, or tikkun.org/subscribe

TC OR NSP MEMBERSHIP
Natalie Wollner at 510-644-1200 or natalie@tikkun.org

Tikkun (Vol. 27, No. 1, ISSN 0887-9982) is published quarterly by Duke University Press for the Institute for Labor and Mental Health, 2342 Shattuck Ave., #1200, Berkeley, CA 94704, a nonprofit, tax-exempt organization.

© 2012 *Tikkun* magazine. All Rights Reserved. *Tikkun*® is a registered trademark of the Institute for Labor and Mental Health.
POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *Tikkun*, 2342 Shattuck Ave., #1200, Berkeley, CA 94704. Periodical postage paid at Berkeley, CA, and additional mailing offices. For individual subscriptions, visit www.tikkun.org. For institutional subscriptions, visit www.dukeupress.edu/tikkun. Individual subscription prices for 4 issues: U.S. residents, $29.00; all others, $39.00. Institutional subscription prices: print plus electronic, $100.00; electronic only, $80.00; print only, $95.00. Payment in U.S. dollars required. For information on subscriptions to the e-Duke Journals Scholarly Collections through HighWire Press, see dukeupress.edu/library/eDuke. Printed in USA. Printed on recycled paper.

Tikkun

WINTER 2012

BRING RABBI LERNER TO YOUR COMMUNITY

page 10

3 LETTERS

Editorials

5 **Educators and Academics: Educate Yourselves as Americans Turn to the Right**

9 **The Brilliant and Short-Sighted Strategy of the Israeli Right**

SPECIAL SECTION: RESTORATIVE JUSTICE (PAGE 17)

18 From Individual Rights to the Beloved Community: A New Vision of Justice by PETER GABEL

21 Walking Toward Conflict by DOMINIC BARTER

22 The Day the Jail Walls Cracked: A Restorative Plea Deal by SUJATHA BALIGA

25 Restorative Justice: Some Facts and History by MARILYN ARMOUR

27 Controversies Around Restorative Justice by DAVID BELDEN

30 What's Love Got to Do with It? by FANIA E. DAVIS

33 The Restorative Impulse by KAY PRANIS

35 Healing from Harm and Unlearning Violence by SONYA SHAH

37 A New Vision for Correctional Officers by SUNNY SCHWARTZ and LESLIE LEVITAS

41 Confronting Sexual Assault: Transformative Justice on the Ground in Philadelphia by BENCH ANSFIELD and TIMOTHY COLMAN

45 Decolonizing Restorative Justice by DENISE C. BRETON

48 Shifting School Culture by RITA ALFRED and INA BENDICH

Online Exclusives

Tikkun is not just a print magazine—visit our blog at tikkun.org/daily and our web magazine site at tikkun.org. Don't miss these online-only restorative justice articles:

A Restorative Circle in the Wake of a Police Shooting by ANDREA BRENNEKE

After Twenty-Six Years in Prison: Reflections on Healing by JERRY ELSTER

How Super is Superhero Justice? by MIKHAIL LYUBANSKY

Twenty Years of Restorative Justice in New Zealand by FRED MCELREA

Manhood and Violence by HAMISH SINCLAIR

The Fight Room by ELAINE SHPUNGIN and DOMINIC BARTER

Learning from Rwanda by JOHN STANFIELD

Visit **tikkun.org/restorativejustice** to read all these and more.

Politics & Society

11 **Who's Afraid of Identity Politics?** by DAN MCKANAN
From the women's movement to the Black Power movement, identity-based organizing has transformed our society. Does identity politics really deserve its bad rap?

13 **The Terms on Which Jews and Muslims Join Western Civilization**
by SANDER L. GILMAN
Jews have gained acceptance in part through their use of self-mocking humor. Now some Muslims have launched a sitcom to counter the prejudice they face.

Rethinking Religion

14 **The Future of World Religion: Four Scenarios, One Dream**
by JORGE N. FERRER
Will a single religion arise? Will syncretism proliferate? Will the world develop shared interspiritual wisdom? Let's find a way to energize interfaith dialogue without losing the beauty of religious diversity.

Culture

BOOKS

51 **Socialism in Civil Society**
Envisioning Real Utopias by Erik Olin Wright
Review by JOHN BRUEGGEMANN

53 **Educating for Wisdom**
Teaching Literacy for Love and Wisdom by Jeffrey D. Wilhelm and Bruce Novak
Review by SVI SHAPIRO

55 **Poetry in the Age of Mass Incarceration**
A Question of Freedom: A Memoir of Learning, Survival, and Coming of Age in Prison and *Shahid Reads His Own Palm* by Reginald Dwayne Betts
Review by STEPHEN JOHN HARTNETT

57 **Dancing on the Edge of the Abyss**
The Warsaw Anagrams by Richard Zimler
Review by MICHAEL EAUDE

HUMOR

71 **The Shabbes Wife** by JOSH KORNBLUTH

POETRY

72 **Kaffiyeh on Mississippi Avenue** by REGINALD DWAYNE BETTS

Cover Image: *Healing Walls: Inmates' Journey*
3049 Germantown Avenue
© 2004 City of Philadelphia Mural Arts Program / Cesar Viveros and Parris Stancell
Photo © jackramsdale.com. See page 31 for more information.

Readers Respond

A NOTE ON LETTERS TO THE EDITOR:
We welcome your responses to our articles. Send your letters to the editor to letters@tikkun.org. Please remember, however, not to attribute to Tikkun *views other than those expressed in our editorials. We email, post, and print many articles with which we have strong disagreements, because that is what makes* Tikkun *a location for a true diversity of ideas.* Tikkun *reserves the right to edit your letters to fit available space in the magazine.*

IS BDS EFFECTIVE?

Tony Klug's "The Arab Awakening and the Israeli-Palestinian Connection" (*Tikkun*, Fall 2011) is a very good and reflective article, containing some valuable insights. The one item I take exception to is this: "Israel might find itself increasingly isolated as the boycott, divestment, and sanctions (BDS) movement extends its appeal globally and governments around the world vent ineffectual fury." Why "ineffectual"? BDS is the only serious nonviolent means that civil society can use to get Israel to feel the reality of the consequences of its criminal occupation while the major world powers continue to back Israel. It is in fact very effective, and growing in its necessity, if only to counteract Israel's lobbies, such as AIPAC (the American Israeli Public Affairs Committee) and BICOM (the Britain Israel Communications and Research Centre), and the whole machinery of *hasbara*. It is an effective challenge to Israel's determination to project the image of a Western, hi-tech, and advanced democracy. That image fails while Israel's breaches of international law are revealed and Israel acts like a rogue state out of control. There must be consequences for its actions!

Abe Hayeem
London, United Kingdom

Tony Klug replies:

"Ineffectual" was used in my article to describe not the BDS movement but other governments' likely responses to possible future unilateral steps by Israel. Nonetheless, the letter writer's bold assertion that BDS is "very effective" is questionable, partly because its measure of effectiveness is less than clear. While it is true that it gives people who want to object nonviolently to Israeli policies something to do, this is not the same as affecting those policies or the positions taken by their own governments.

As for any campaign, the key to successful pressure is clarity of goal. The BDS campaign's basic weakness is that it appears to be a coalition of two broad factions, one that campaigns for the end of the Occupation and the other for the end of Israel. They cannot agree on the objective, so they agree on the strategy. But strategies, to be effective, need to be driven by their objectives.

An objective that could command widespread popular support, including crucially among many Israelis and Jews, as well as potentially state governments, is one that focuses on resurrecting the old Green Line, differentiating clearly between the international legitimacy of the Israeli state within its 1967 borders and the illegitimacy of its continuing and apparently indefinite occupation of Palestinian territory, and in particular its colonization project. Such an objective would give rise to a strategy that distinguishes unambiguously between boycotting the settlements (and their products, etc.) and boycotting Israel proper and Israelis in general. The apparent inability of the BDS campaign to clearly make these distinctions is likely, eventually, to be its Achilles' heel.

TRAUMA IN ISRAEL

I share Rae Abileah's longing for peace in the Middle East. Would that pink baskets of toiletries or ribbons or banners could achieve these noble goals. Would that Israel could simply declare peace on its own. Would that this season of repentance could bring an end to violence and hatred.

But as I read through her eloquent remarks in "Fresh Tactics and New Voices in the Movement for Justice and Freedom in the Middle East" (*Tikkun*, Fall 2011), I can't help but note that Rae makes no mention of the endless attempts at peace negotiations undertaken by Israel, some of which (e.g., Camp David) came pretty darn close to giving away the farm, all to no avail. She makes no mention of the fact that Israel withdrew from Lebanon and Gaza and things only got worse. She cries for the Arab mothers and children, yet has nothing to say about the conditions that brought about Israel's response to the Palestinians: the endless attacks and bombings, and children who are taught to hate Jews in school and encouraged to pelt them with stones. My parents were the victims of such an attack. My mother's jaw was broken and her face smashed and she was never the same after "only" being hit with

MORE LETTERS

We receive many more letters than we can print! Visit tikkun.org/letters to read more.

Educators and Academics: Educate Yourselves As Americans Turn to the Right

As Americans increasingly buy into political notions that prioritize budget cuts over the provision of necessary human services, educational institutions across the country find themselves facing severe economic crises. Teachers face layoffs. College professors witness their students increasingly distracted by economic fears. Classes at all levels are overpacked, making individual attention to students' needs increasingly difficult to supply. From kindergarten to graduate and professional schools, the threat of online or computerized teaching replacing face-to-face teaching puts the very future of the education profession in doubt. The resulting economic insecurity pervades teachers' consciousness.

And yet, educators and academics in some ways helped to create this crisis by failing to introduce students to a different worldview that would have protected education and prioritized caring for others over maximizing the bottom line and looking out for number one.

Few of us have any ability to offset the massive indoctrination toward materialism and selfishness offered by the mass media. The call to maximize self-interest at the expense of others and the belief that success is measured by how much money or power you can accumulate, how many consumer items you possess, how much fame you garner, how many sexual conquests you can boast about, or how much your looks conform to popular images of beauty—these are drummed into our heads by the media in subtle but persistent ways, day in and day out.

There's only one group in society that has similar access and ability to shape the worldviews and belief structures of most Americans: teachers and academics. The vast majority of Americans go through school, and many go through colleges and professional schools, where they have an opportunity to learn a different set of values. But most don't. And this is the fault largely (not entirely) of the teachers and academics who play a major role in shaping what those students learn.

Don't get me wrong. I was a college professor for many years and I know how difficult it is to counter the dominant ideology that has already been internalized in the consciousness of most Americans. They believe that they live in a meritocracy, that they are going to "make it" if they really try, that the system is fundamentally fair or can easily be reformed

Thousands of faculty and students staged a walkout on September 24, 2009, to protest dramatic budget cuts, layoffs, and tuition hikes at the University of California, Berkeley. Until students go door-to-door and convince taxpayers that their education has higher societal value than training people to compete for the best jobs, even liberal legislators may perceive no political alternative to cutting public sector funding.

if enough people want to make changes, that class background is irrelevant to future success, and that the world is made up of people who are fundamentally selfish and hence unreliable as potential allies. By the time students reached my classroom, these ideas were not only deeply ingrained—they were also experienced by most students as a "personal" outlook that they had come to by themselves. Most were unaware of how much these ideas had been drummed into their heads and shared by almost everyone around them.

But it wouldn't be impossible to challenge these ideas if schools and colleges were interested in doing so—that is to say, if schools and colleges were to help students reach a more accurate understanding of the world in which they live. Students could be taught that billions of people on this planet want a world based on love, kindness, generosity, caring for each other, environmental sustainability, and joy, but that these same people have come to believe that nobody else really wants that kind of a world. Most people believe that they are being foolish, naive, childish, or unsophisticated if they act to bring such a world into being. And many fear that they will be

CREATIVE COMMONS/BEN CHANEY

humiliated, lose economic opportunities, and find themselves isolated, lonely, and abandoned should they act on these desires. Education ought to help students develop confidence in their own capacities to work for a world based on caring and to develop the skills needed to make such a world work.

For students to believe that such a world is possible, thereby rejecting what their parents and their favorite TV shows have taught them, they would need to have transformative experiences in their educational institutions. Educational institutions would have to intentionally counter the dominant ethos of materialism and selfishness, and replace it with an ethos of empathy. They'd have to foster a genuine understanding that there is no such thing as "human nature" but only the choices that we make together and have made in the past that validate one set of feelings (those that lead us to believe we are alone, surrounded by selfish others, and possibly undeserving of success) and tend to discount another set of feelings (our yearning to live in a world of kindness and generosity in which we have time to take in the beauty and grandeur of the universe). Educational institutions would have to focus on validating the strengths and goodness of students; help them to see the strengths and goodness in each other; reward them for their capacities to cooperate and create new realities with their fellow students; and open them to the long and marvelous history of human beings who have cooperated with each other in creating science, agriculture, cooking, music, literature, ethics, ecology, dance, film, and wisdom traditions that manifest in religions and other philosophies of being. And schools would have to raise students' consciousness about the injustices of global inequalities of power and wealth, as well as inequalities in access to health care, education, clean air, pure water, healthy food, and land.

Students would also have to unlearn messages they had gotten from parents and fellow students that made them feel undeserving of love, friendship, and attention. And they'd have to be freed from the societal messages that told them that learning itself is less valuable than its practical uses—i.e., that learning is only good if it is useful for some external purpose. In short, they'd have to learn the pleasure of learning.

In such a school system, students would learn how to mentor each other and how to educate their parents and their neighbors about the nature of the world and the need for greater caring and generosity, greater sharing of what we have, and more trust and hope in what we can become. And they'd learn how to deal with the tremendous resistance those parents, friends, and neighbors are likely to show when confronted with students who have these ideas.

Students in a school system, college, or university oriented in this direction could be taught how to go door-to-door in their own neighborhoods or in other areas to help fellow citizens understand why social services and education should be funded more fully. They'd make the case for why tax breaks for the rich and for corporations should be replaced by a system of taxation that explicitly seeks to generate greater equality and greater funds for the priorities generated when a society has caring for each other and caring for the earth as its highest goals.

"But this is impossible," you may object. "We can't possibly teach values in our school systems, much less prepare students to be advocates for those values in our public arena. You are talking about indoctrinating others with your values, and thereby undermining the two-hundred-year struggle of liberals and progressives to get religious indoctrination out of schools. What you are advocating is really dangerous."

This line of argument seems persuasive only to the extent that we are unwilling to acknowledge the values already underlying our own educational experiences. We've come to believe that the schooling we receive is value-neutral—that its values are really not values at all but the manifestations of the highest development of rationality. But in fact the alleged ideological neutrality of contemporary social and economic institutions, including our educational system, is a thin veneer covering a powerful commitment to competitive individualism, scientism, materialism, and selfishness.

The alleged neutrality of contemporary education is a sham that covers up the systematic indoctrination of students into the dominant religion of the contemporary world: the slavish subordination of everyone to the idols of the marketplace. Indeed, contemporary education indoctrinates students to believe that it is "common sense" that all people should seek to maximize their own advantage without regard to the consequences for others; that only that which can be validated through sense observation is real; that it is only human nature for people to compete with each other and seek "individual

excellence"; and that schooling should aim to promote economic success, which is supposedly available to anyone who has accumulated the requisite skills and has the requisite intelligence.

In fact, the entire school system in the United States teaches a competitive ethos in which students soon learn that there are only a limited number of places in undergraduate institutions and in graduate or professional schools that open access to the most financially competitive positions. So they must either learn the skills to compete effectively or doom themselves to lower positions in the economic hierarchy. In this setting, the message that we are in a war of all against all is relearned daily in each classroom. The view that human beings are "naturally" competitive and self-seeking seems to students not an imposition from an external ideology, but merely the rational formulation of the life they are experiencing daily in school.

It was not always this way. A spate of recent books, including Jeremy Rifkin's *The Empathic Civilization*; Adam Phillips and Barbara Taylor's *On Kindness*; Martin Marty's *Building Cultures of Trust*; and Sarah Scuzzarello, Catarina Kinnvall, and Kristen R. Monroe's *On Behalf of Others: The Psychology of Care in a Global World* are just the tip of the iceberg of an emerging understanding that the competitiveness and selfish materialism that surround us were not always the dominant aspect of civilized life. The current prominence of materialism, these books argue, is the result of a process and struggle, not the flowering of rationality or wisdom. True, contemporary benevolence and altruism are often dismissed as unrealistic or even utopian. As Taylor and Phillips report, "Most people as they grow up now secretly believe that kindness is a virtue of losers." Yet when Nietzsche and the Nazis who later drew on his work were putting forward that idea in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, it was widely challenged at first as being "unnatural." It is only as the marketplace has permeated our educational institutions that these ideas now appear to be "common sense."

Once one recognizes that public schools today are set up to both embody and teach the dominant values in this society, it seems a bit less outrageous to suggest that there are other values around which schooling should be structured. And that is precisely what we need to do.

An educator might reply, "Well, even if you are right, I'd lose my job if I started trying to organize my school in this direction. We just can't do that without generating tremendous opposition." We need to help our friends in academia and educational institutions face a stark reality and tell them: "If the dynamics of the competitive marketplace continue to shape mass consciousness, you are going to lose your job anyway. This is because most of what teachers do in the narrowly constructed jobs they are being offered can be taught by robots and mass classes on the internet. You will be replaced, and doing so will be done in the name of "progress" and "rationality."

Moreover, if you are a teacher in your forties, fifties, or sixties and think that you will be able to retire before all this happens, please note that one of the first assaults made by the political Right, acting as the representative of the capitalist class, is on retirement benefits, pensions, and social security. So even if you get to retirement, as the current dynamics continue, your retirement funds may easily be withdrawn in the name of societal frugality—and you may be blamed for having been part of the generation that spent too much money creating deficits.

Those educators who just continue to "go along in order to get along" are surely in denial about how much peril they face, unable to see that unless they act now and get their peers to act now with the one thing they have under your control—their school system itself and what is taught in their classrooms—they and their colleagues are doomed.

All this is going to happen whether or not Obama is re-elected. The indoctrination that leads to the present cutbacks in social services and education shapes the range of alternatives that Democrats and Republicans both believe to be "realistic"—they do not favor the continued funding of education except in the narrowest possible terms. In short, educators and academics are already under a massive attack, and the attack will succeed unless they organize to fight back.

To this you might say, "So why can't we just appeal to the populace on the grounds that everyone should see the benefits of the educational system as is? Why do we have to make the kind of huge changes you are calling for?" The reason is twofold. First, most people do not have fond memories of their years in school, college, or university, or if they do, it is usually about the social life, sports, and community experiences that took place outside the classroom. Bad memories persist because schooling has been so closely tied to the society's competitive ethos, and many people felt that the main thing they learned was that they weren't smart enough or good enough to be a real success. Moreover, most students endured lessons presented in ways that were alienating, non-engaging, and irrelevant to their lives. Finding that their schooling did not clarify any of the major questions in their lives—how to find meaning in life, what values to embrace while trying to live a good life, how to understand oneself and others, or how society could work differently—and believing that their schooling experience constituted "intellectual life," many people came away from their educational experiences as anti-intellectuals uninterested in opening a serious book.

The second reason why many citizens feel little interest in funding education is that as most adults look around, they see themselves surrounded by others whose education has given them skills to compete. "Fine, that's reality," they may tell themselves, "but why should I be funding that kind of education for others? What's in it for me? If they are going to get the skills they need to compete, possibly against me and certainly against each other, why should I be paying for that? Let them pay for it themselves, and meanwhile reduce my tax burden!"

Those who think this way didn't get an education that made them feel deeply appreciative of its content or deeply

understanding of the need to build a new societal ethos of mutual caring. And that, in short, is why the current mess is not something independent of what educators do and is at least in part a product of educators' willingness to go along with the competitive marketplace's ethos of selfishness. But now, before it's really too late to save their own jobs or pensions, educators need to take on the system directly and change what education is all about.

Of course they can't do that by themselves. They will need to build allies in the rest of society. Still, teachers and professors have a huge advantage over everyone else, because they have direct access to the next generation and can affect their thinking directly if they dare to do so.

So, if you are involved with a school—as a professor, teacher, student, staff member, school board member, or even a student's parent—please take this essay and circulate it to everyone in that school or college or university, and invite people to a meeting to discuss the ideas. If they don't come, call them and ask them if they'd be willing to meet with you one-on-one.

Second, if you are an educator who belongs to a union, please take this essay and these ideas to that body. The American Federation of Teachers and the National Education Association are filled with decent and principled people who would love to be able to have schools do what they really ought to be doing. But they believe that to be utopian. Your task is to convince them that not creating a different ethos and orientation in schools is actually more utopian and unrealistic if they want to preserve the education profession over the next decades. Of course the leadership of the unions both locally and nationally are going to resist passionately; they have found that union members don't come to meetings and don't seem to care much about the union except when it comes to bargaining for higher wages and benefits, so they are going to believe that your vision represents only a few extremists or spiritual nutcases. So you have to be prepared to challenge them at every turn, if you can't convince them to be your real allies in this. You (yes, you!) will have to run for union leadership to replace those who don't get on board to change the educational system in this fundamental way.

Still, opponents will have a powerful argument: "If we do this," they may say, "the local school board will fire us for politicizing our classrooms and for not giving enough time to develop the skills that are needed to compete globally." And there's only one reasonable response to that: the union has to run candidates for the school board and change its direction. Now, that is a big task, but not an impossible one. Unions can't win such elections if they are seeking power on the school boards to advance their personal interests (namely, getting better wages and benefits for teachers, more money for education, and smaller classroom sizes). All these sound to the public like an agenda of self-interest. If self-interest is what the campaign is about, why should the public back such candidates when they believe their own self-interest would better be served by lower taxes and less money for education? It's only if the union (or a group of educators acting independently of the union) puts forward candidates who want to change the school system so that it trains students to be more caring and socially responsible that Americans are likely to respond in a positive way.

Similarly, college faculty who nominally are in charge of curricula can begin to organize to change the fundamentals of what a college, graduate, or professional school education should be about. The first step might be to convene a mandatory first week of each semester dedicated to educating students (and faculty) on the notion of a caring society. Since the ideas of selfishness and materialism are so deeply ingrained, this week should not be structured as a debate between what will be perceived as utopian ideas versus rationalist common sense. Instead, it should be overtly aimed at raising consciousness about a different worldview, albeit one that has deep roots in humans' intellectual, cultural, spiritual, religious, and psychological heritage.

"Whoa," you might respond, "I am not a political person and your agenda would force me to be involved in struggles that would make me feel uncomfortable." Well, yes, that is true. But you will be more uncomfortable facing the kind of society that's in store for all of us unless we stand up against it together.

"Still can't I get through on my own? Aren't you painting a dark picture? Surely what you are predicting is not about to happen in 2013 or 2014?" Maybe you are right on that count. The destruction of our educational system has been moving apace in bits and pieces, and the process may take many more years. But if the worldview of materialism and selfishness continues to dominate the public sphere as it has in the past thirty years—with Democrats arguing for education funding solely on the grounds that it will make the United States "better able to compete in the international marketplace"—then the logic of cutting educational expenses and commodifying and rationalizing skills until they can be taught by a robot is likely to be unstoppable. When those same values enter public life, they inspire a shrinking of the government because too much government means serving "someone else" in addition to our own personal interests—and then the public demands to spend less money on education.

Of course, this process will not happen all at once. But it is happening very quickly. Perhaps it will first be pensions that get attacked, or maybe the public universities and colleges, or maybe the transformation of the workday and work year for teachers. Bit by bit, education will be transformed, and the careers of educators or academics will be far more precarious, if not totally ended.

So, educators and academics: educate yourselves! And then, start promoting the kind of changes needed to build schools, colleges, and universities filled with students who will join you in challenging the dominant ethos and championing the caring society. Let me know when you've got a group of educators together in your geographical area who agree with this analysis and want to move forward with it. I'd be happy to brainstorm with them about next steps! ■

The Brilliant and Short-Sighted Strategy of the Israeli Right

Ever since 1948, Israeli governments have undermined popular support for a fully socialist society by playing the national security card, forcing people to choose between a civil struggle against fellow Jews who benefit from economic inequalities and an outward-looking struggle against Arab enemies and Palestinians seeking to return to their place of birth. That choice became even more intense in 1977 when Likud and its Thatcherite, Milton Friedman-esque worship of the free market took over. This worship shaped government policies, slowly undermined the public sector, allowed the kibbutzim to collapse under the weight of escalating and unaffordable interest on bank loans, and fostered the economic power of elite billionaires and millionaires whose media and political influence seemed overwhelming. So when a mass uprising began in the summer of 2011, with tent encampments rising in many Israeli cities and engaging hundreds of thousands of people in massive demonstrations, it wasn't surprising that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's government promoted the fantasy that the Palestinian Authority's attempt to get recognition at the United Nations would launch a September intifada against which Israelis had to mobilize and hence not pay more attention to the allegedly solidarity-splitting demands for economic fairness.

A glitch emerged in Netanyahu's strategy, however: since there was no violent uprising in the West Bank, he could not put together a convincing case for why Israelis should stop focusing on the economic transformation of their society. Moreover, Palestinian Prime Minister Mahmoud Abbas seemed to be winning global support for Palestine and an end to the Occupation. But then the Israeli Right pulled out an old trick: Hamas to the rescue!

Netanyahu wasn't the first Israeli leader to look to Hamas for indirect help: Former Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon developed this strategy to counter Palestinian legitimacy and to undermine the previous support for a peace agreement—support that was building after Yossi Beilin in 2003 had negotiated the Geneva Accord with leaders of the Palestinian Authority. Sharon unexpectedly announced in 2004 that Israel would unilaterally withdraw from the Gaza strip, thereby in effect giving control over Gaza to Hamas rather than to the Palestinian Authority, which had been seeking to negotiate peace with Israel. By rewarding Hamas for its violence, rather than the Palestinian Authority for its willingness to make peace, Sharon continued a strategy that had led Israeli governments to help finance Hamas in the 1980s—the strategy of weakening the Palestinian people by splitting them into two opposing camps.

So in October 2011, Netanyahu took up that strategy again. To free Gilad Shalit, who had been held prisoner by Hamas for four years, and who could have been freed earlier had Israel been willing to engage in a prisoner swap sooner, Netanyahu negotiated directly with Hamas about which Palestinians to free in the exchange. The Palestinian Authority was totally left out of the process, thereby demonstrating a point that Hamas had been making for years and that Hamas made again immediately after the prisoner release: that Israel only responds to force and violence, not to the alleged weakness of the Palestinian Authority, which has been enforcing nonviolence in the West Bank. Hamas, not the Palestinian Authority, had succeeded in freeing the prisoners. Even better, from Netanyahu's standpoint, the media highlighted the most angry and vengeful among the freed prisoners—those who promised to launch new terrorist attacks against Israel. In this way Netanyahu orchestrated an event to show Israelis that they were faced with an intractable enemy who sought nothing but their destruction.

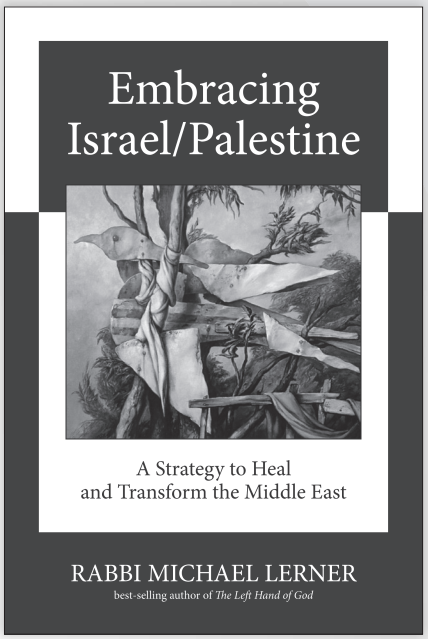
With Israelis' fears renewed, Netanyahu and the Israeli Right were in a much better position to once again play the military danger card, with Hamas playing right along (perhaps soon to capture and imprison more Israelis).

The Palestinian Authority, which in September had grown in public support tremendously, is now losing support to Hamas. And Netanyahu and the Israeli Right, pointing to the new dangers posed by freed Palestinian terrorists, have regained the ability to scare Israelis into anything that would purportedly divide the society (like, for example, serious steps toward social justice in Israel, a country with the greatest divide between rich and poor of any Western society).

So why do we say "shortsighted"? Because as we've argued in detail before, and as I do even more fully in my new book *Embracing Israel/Palestine*, keeping the struggle with Palestinians going in the long run undermines Israel's ability to survive and provokes global anger at the Jewish people, which is perceived as giving blind support to the oppressive and unjust Occupation policies of the Israeli state. But for the moment, this destructive policy has a new lease on life and so the Israeli Right can bask in its "brilliance." ■

Bring Rabbi Lerner to Your Community, University, Church, Synagogue, or Mosque

Rabbi Lerner is available in 2012 and 2013 to come to your city to talk about his new book, *Embracing Israel/Palestine*, or about any other aspect of the *Tikkun* vision. In the past he has frequently served as a visiting scholar at universities or as scholar or rabbi in residence at synagogues and churches for a weekend or a week. He has also spoken at many universities, city clubs, community organizations, and religious institutions. Now that he has recovered from cancer, he is available again. Of course, we can't afford to send him unless he raises some money. But many churches, synagogues, and colleges have found that they can bundle together enough funds to subsidize his visit since he is willing to do many different talks over the course of a day or two.



Here is what some people have said about Rabbi Lerner's latest book:

This book would change the world if there were enough people who would open their eyes and read it. Lerner uses Israel/Palestine as a prism to look at the world as a whole—rife with conflicts of many kinds, a number of which involve the United States. He comes to the wildly "utopian" conclusion that the solution to these conflicts can only come by following the biblical injunctions to love the stranger. Far from being utopian or unrealistic, Lerner shows that this will be the only practical way to keep the alliance of nationalism and capitalism that rules the world today from destroying the fabric of natural and social life. I hope this book will be used widely in courses in political science and sociology in our universities, and not only in courses about the Middle East.

—***Robert Bellah**, professor emeritus at the University of California, Berkeley; author of* Religion in Human Evolution*; and coauthor of* Habits of the Heart

Michael Lerner takes a courageous, enlightening position in *Embracing Israel/Palestine*, not only in speaking as an American Jewish rabbi who cares about both countries, but also in his conviction that only real attention to the suffering and historical traumas of both sides can bring about peace. The intellectual clarity and psychological sophistication of his presentation is matched by his passionate plea for the transformation of religion from a tool for political partisanship to a basis for genuine renewal of commitment to justice and recognition of all peoples. His argument breaks the conventional splitting between the pragmatic and the idealistic, making a convincing case that only respect for the needs of all peoples will bring about the will and the possibility of resolution.

—***Jessica Benjamin**, psychoanalyst and author of* The Bonds of Love

Rabbi Michael Lerner is one of America's most significant progressive intellectuals and political leaders, and *Embracing Israel/Palestine* is not only a great conceptual breakthrough in dealing with the Middle East but also demonstrates a methodology for how best to think about global and domestic U.S. politics. For many decades, Muslims around the world have been cheered by Rabbi Lerner's challenge to the media's demeaning of our religion and dismissal of the rights of Palestinians, just as they have been challenged by his insistence that they recognize the importance of truly and deeply accepting Israel's right to exist in peace and security. I hope my colleagues on Capitol Hill, the cynical media, and leaders in Israel, Palestine, and throughout the world are pushed by ordinary readers to grapple with the brilliant path to peace and reconciliation put forward in this book. Rabbi Lerner's commitment to nonviolence and a path of love and generosity should not be dismissed as utopian. My experience in the Congress leads me to believe, on the contrary, that it is precisely his way of thinking that is the only path that will give Israel, Palestine, and the United States the peace, security, and well-being all three deserve!

—***Rep. Keith Ellison** (D-Minn.), the first elected Muslim to the U.S. Congress and chair of the Progressive Caucus of the U.S. House of Representatives*

I've read dozens of books on the subject, but none has the potential this book has to inform wisely and fairly, mobilize goodwill effectively, and motivate action intelligently toward needed change. Rabbi Lerner's generous Jewish vision warms my Christian heart, and his deep integration of spirituality, theology, political philosophy, and human kindness serves as a model I hope many will join me in following.

—***Brian McLaren**, Christian Evangelical pastor and author of* A New Kind of Christianity

Who's Afraid of Identity Politics?

by Dan McKanan

Critics often blame identity-based organizing for the weakness of the Left, overlooking how it breathes life into social movements. Identity-based slogans—such as this one from a May 1, 2011, protest in Washington, D.C.—can pulse with power.

BILL HUNTER (SHORESHOTPHOTOGRAPHY.COM)

The election of Barack Obama in 2008 marked the culmination of a twenty-year backlash against "identity politics." Students and union members, environmentalists and anti-imperialists, and people of all races and sexualities came together to elect a young, biracial politician who studiously avoided the slogans of the late Sixties. It appeared, briefly, that liberals and leftists had taken to heart Todd Gitlin's warning that identity politics had caused the Left to "cede the very language of universality that is its birthright." Yet the Obama presidency, like the identity politics that preceded it, has so far proved incapable of resisting resurgent conservatism, whether in the form of corporate domination, fundamentalist intolerance, or the temptations of empire. The time has come for a new look at identity politics—and a new effort to integrate its power and passion with common-ground activism.

My own appreciation for identity politics stems partly from the frustrations of the past three years and partly from my exploration of the two-hundred-year history of religious radicalism in the United States. This may seem paradoxical, for religious activists have been among the most vocal critics of identity politics. Many of them see sharply delineated identities as a betrayal of Christian and Gandhian notions of "beloved community." Yet a closer look reveals that identity politics unleashes spiritual power. When previously marginalized and exploited individuals come together and claim new identities, they gain a power not unlike that generated by the "born again" experience or other forms of religious conversion. Even the slogans of identity movements—"Workers of the world unite," "Black is beautiful!" "Out and proud"—pulse with power. Such power has fueled all the most successful change movements in U.S. history. For all these reasons, the Left simply cannot do without identity.

In making a revived case for identity politics, I am not proposing that we turn back the clock to 1969. There was much beauty and much tragedy in that historical moment, and I sympathize with much of what Gitlin and others have had to say about it. The vanguardism that led specific groups to argue that their own liberation was the key to everyone else's was understandable in its context, but not to be emulated today. The macho cult of revolutionary violence destroyed many lives and did little to dislodge institutional violence and oppression. But identity politics did not begin in 1969.

I came to my study of religious movements for social change as a devoted disciple of abolitionist William Lloyd Garrison—like me, a middle-class, married white guy—who embodied a multi-issue, common-ground politics of opposition to slavery, racism,

---

From Prophetic Encounters *by Dan McKanan.* *© 2011 by Daniel Patrick McKanan. Reprinted by permission of Beacon Press, Boston.* *McKanan is Emerson Senior Lecturer at the Harvard Divinity School and the author of* The Catholic Worker After Dorothy: Practicing the Works of Mercy in a New Generation *and other books.*

sexism, and war. I never lost faith in Garrison, but as I dug deeper into the story it became clear that neither Garrison nor the American radical tradition as a whole would have been possible without identity politics.

The flowering of radical politics in the 1830s and 1840s, in particular, was made possible by two small, identity-based groups that came together in American cities in the 1820s. Separately, though often in adjoining neighborhoods, "Working Men" and African Americans discovered their own power by coming together, sharing stories, and claiming a new identity. Many of these early encounters took place in religious congregations, though those who experienced them quickly brought their spiritual energies into the broader public sphere.

The Working Men were urban artisans who simultaneously claimed a new identity and a full share of America's democratic inheritance. Pioneering a class-based interpretation of America, the Working Men gained power by reflecting together on "our real condition." Previous generations of workers had "surrender[ed] their rights to the non-productive and accumulating class," declared one leader, but in the enlightened nineteenth century workers could join "the progressive march of improvement" by insisting on the rights enshrined in the Declaration of Independence. They even rewrote the Declaration to inspire resistance to the "oppression and degradation of one class of society" by another.

Those who argue for common-ground organizing tend to name the early years of the Civil Rights Movement as their ideal. But early events such as the Montgomery bus boycott grew out of identity-based activism. Here, Rev. Ralph Abernathy hugs a member of his church on February 22, 1956, in front of the jail where he was taken for joining the boycott.

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Working Men were theologically diverse enough to include Quakers, Universalists, Methodists, and freethinking admirers of Thomas Paine. Virtually all opposed state-sponsored religion, and they told a common story about church history: the "primitive" teaching of Jesus had been betrayed when Constantine made Christianity the official religion of the Roman Empire. This reading of sacred history inspired opposition to concentrated power, whether that power was ecclesial, political, or economic.

While the Working Men were laying one enduring foundation for American radicalism, the organizers of the free African American community laid another. The two groups had much in common. They lived in the same cities—Philadelphia, New York, Boston, Baltimore—and worked in the same artisan trades. Both groups embraced the legacy of the American Revolution, took pride in their participation in that war, and treasured the freedoms it had brought them. Many Northern blacks, in particular, had been emancipated by state statutes passed after the revolution. And both groups feared that the work of the revolution was being undone by social elites determined to restore Old World hierarchies. Both were often at odds with the "benevolent empire" of voluntary societies created by the heirs of the religious establishment. Confronted with new challenges to their freedom, both groups built up power through identity encounters. Just as white laborers claimed a new identity as "Working Men," their black counterparts found power and solidarity by calling themselves "African."

The word "African," which appeared in the names of the African Society and the African Methodist Episcopal Church, signaled the shared identity of all persons of African descent, whether newly emancipated, long free, or still claimed as slaves in the South. The point was clear when Philadelphia blacks gathered in 1817 to rebuke the newly organized American Colonization Society, which proposed to end slavery gradually by expatriating free African Americans to colonies in Africa. "We will never," they resolved, "separate ourselves voluntarily from *(continued on page 60)*

The Terms on Which Jews and Muslims Join Western Civilization

by Sander L. Gilman

Faced with hostility in eighteenth-century Germany, Jews won some acceptance by poking fun at themselves. Might the Canadian sitcom Little Mosque on the Prairie *do the same for Muslims facing Islamophobia today? Here, protagonists Amaar Rashid (a liberal imam) and Rayyan Hamoudi (a feminist doctor) chuckle at their hen.*

CBC TELEVISION

"Laugh and the world laughs with you." Everyone knows that you have to be able to laugh at yourself. It is a hallmark of being a "good sport" and a member of the team.

But what happens if you are not exactly accepted as a member of "the team"? What happens if you are part of an ethnic or religious group that is demonized, discriminated against, incarcerated without justification, and subject to hate crimes and violence in the society in which you live? And what if those with the most power in your society—the lawmakers, judges, police, corporate leaders, media, and so on—often laugh at you in ways that are cruel and dehumanizing? Such a situation certainly shifts the stakes and the effects of laughing at yourself.

When caricatures of Muhammad were published in a Danish newspaper back in September 2005, the rationale was that if Muslims were going to be part of Danish society, they had to learn to laugh at themselves. The culture editor of the Danish *Jyllands-Posten* (Flemming Rose) presented this stance in the same September 30 issue that contained the caricatures:

> The modern, secular society is rejected by some Muslims. They demand a special position, insisting on special consideration of their own religious feelings. It is incompatible with contemporary democracy and freedom of speech, where you must be ready to put up with insults, mockery and ridicule.

He made this point more explicitly in the *Washington Post* on February 19, 2006, after the furor had blown up, months after the original cartoons appeared:

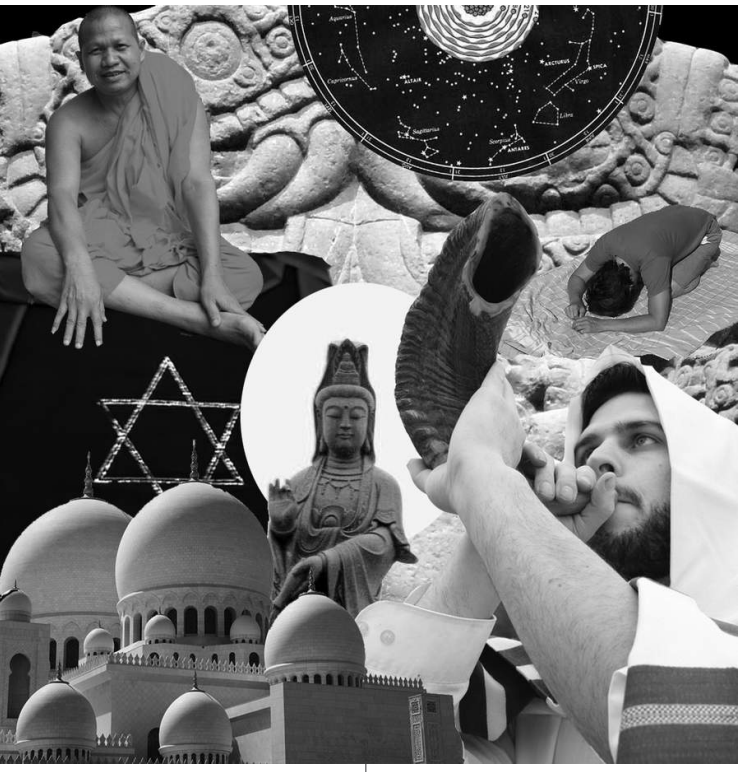
> The cartoonists treated Islam the same way they treat Christianity, Buddhism, Hinduism and other religions. And by treating Muslims in Denmark as equals they made a point: We are integrating you into the Danish tradition of satire because you are part of our society, not strangers. The cartoons are including, rather than excluding, Muslims.

Today this seems a truism to many Christians and Jews. Don't all religions accept that they must be able to be the butt of the joke? Indeed, isn't embracing that ability exactly what makes Jews funny? We laugh at ourselves and can take it when we are laughed at. But this was no natural inclination—Jews learned to laugh at themselves as part of their acculturation into Enlightenment society in the course of the eighteenth century when the meaning and social structure of jokes were laid out in self-help books for the burgeoning middle classes. *(continued on page 62)*

Sander L. Gilman teaches humanities and medicine at Emory University in Atlanta. Having taught earlier at Cornell and Chicago, he is one of the creators of Jewish cultural studies as an academic discipline.

The Future of World Religion: Four Scenarios, One Dream

by Jorge N. Ferrer



As globalization continues, will religious diversity persist, or might all traditions integrate into one world faith?

JACLYN TOBIA (JACLYNTOBIA.COM)

Religious globalization, new religious movements, transnational religions, global proselytism, multiple religious identities, ecumenical services, religious syncretism, secular and postsecular spiritualities—all these are among the many remarkable trends that shape the religious landscape of the beginning of the twenty-first century. Despite the rampant materialism still dominant in an increasingly technocratic world, it is clear that we live in times of rich spiritual diversity, proliferation, and innovation. For instance, when David B. Barret was asked almost ten years ago what he had learned about religious change in the world after several decades of research, he responded, "We have identified 9,900 distinct and separate religions in the world, increasing by two or three religions every day."

Although there may be something to celebrate in this spiritual cornucopia, this apotheosis of the religious imagination can also be the source of profound uncertainty and confusion. Where is the world heading religiously speaking? Will humanity ultimately converge into one single religious credo? Or will it rather continue to diversify into countless forms of spiritual expression often at odds with one another? Alternatively, can we envision a middle path capable of reconciling the human longing for spiritual unity, on the one hand, and the developmental and evolutionary pulls toward spiritual individuation and differentiation, on the other? I believe that we can, and in this essay I offer the contours of such a vision after considering four other scenarios for the future of world religion. As we go through them, I invite you to consider not only their plausibility but also inquire into what scenario you feel is the most desirable: what would you like to see happening?

Religion in the Global Village: Four Scenarios

The first scenario portrays the emergence of a *global religion* or single world faith for humankind. This global religion may stem from either the triumph of one spiritual tradition over the rest (e.g., Catholic Christianity or the Dalai Lama's school of Tibetan Buddhism) or a synthesis of many or most traditions (e.g., the Baha'i faith or New Age

Jorge N. Ferrer, Ph.D., is chair of the department of East-West Psychology at the California Institute of Integral Studies in San Francisco. He is the coeditor of The Participatory Turn: Spirituality, Mysticism, Religious Studies *(SUNY Press, 2008). In 2009, he became an adviser to the organization Religions for Peace at the United Nations on a research project aimed at solving global interreligious conflict.*

One possible future scenario, Jorge N. Ferrer writes, could involve "spiritual creative unions in which diversity is not erased but rather intensified." Icons of the Hindu goddess Pavarti and Jesus remain separate but united in this mural from Agra, India.

spiritual universalism). The former possibility, historically the ambition of most religions, entails the wildly unlikely prospect that religious practitioners, except those from the "winning" tradition, would recognize the erroneous or partial nature of their beliefs and embrace the superior truth of an already existent tradition. The latter means that most traditions would ultimately come together or be integrated into one world faith embraced by all religious people, perhaps as the ultimate upshot of increased interreligious interaction. The dream of a global spirituality—however ecumenically or ideologically conceived—inspires spiritual sensibilities at work in such diverse spheres as interfaith dialogue, transpersonal psychology and integral theory, and many new religious movements.

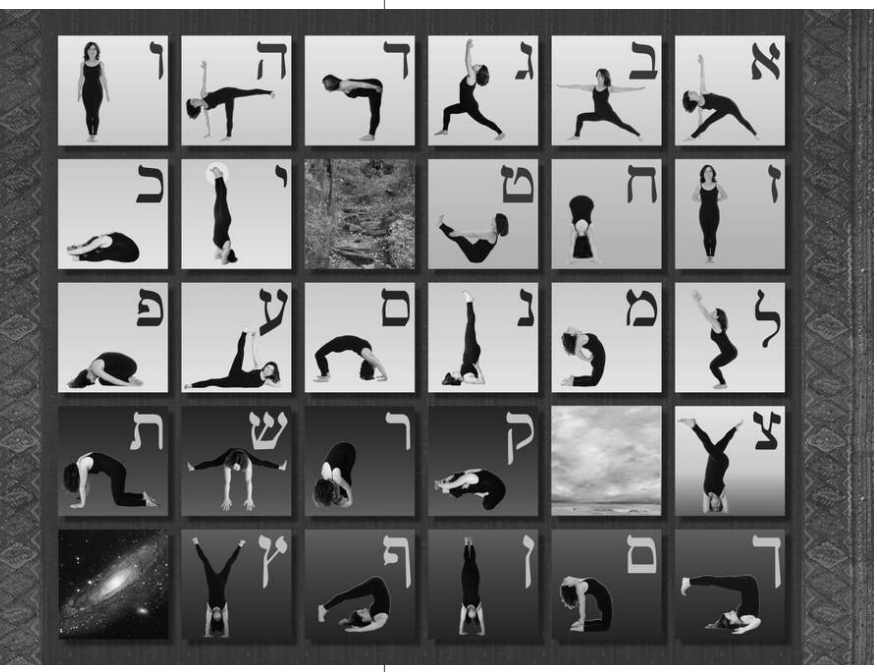
In the second scenario, which we may call *the mutual transformation of religions,* spiritual traditions conserve their identity but are deeply and endlessly transformed through a variety of interreligious exchanges and interactions. The distinctive feature here is that, as Teilhard de Chardin believed, religious cross-pollination will lead to spiritual creative unions in which diversity is not erased but rather intensified. This vision is consistent with not only the adoption of practices from other traditions by members of different faith communities, but also the deepening or re-envisioning of one's own tradition in light of other religious perspectives—a situation that, when mutual, was aptly described by Arvind Sharma as "reciprocal illumination." A historical precursor of this possibility can be found in religious syncretism (i.e., the mixture of two or more traditions), such as the Haitian Vodou's blending of Christianity and African traditions or the Brazilian Santo Daime Church's incorporation of the indigenous use of ayahuasca into a Christian container. Today this religious cross-fertilization is visibly taking place in interfaith dialogue, the New Age movement, and a multitude of eclectic and integrative spiritual groups.

Within this scenario I would also locate the growing phenomenon of "multiple religious participation," in which an individual partakes in the practices and belief systems of more than one tradition, leading to a "multiple" or "hyphenated" religious identity, such as Jewish-Buddhist, Hindu-Christian, Buddhist-Taoist, and so forth. Also related to this picture is the ongoing renewal of many religious traditions through cross-cultural encounters—a trend that can be clearly discerned in contemporary American Buddhism, Neo-Hindu applied spiritualities, and the novel social understandings of salvation in Asia influenced by Western values. An increasingly fashionable way to speak of all these richly transformative interactions, taken today by many to be historically normative, is in terms of a "cosmological hybridization" that is not only doctrinal (of spiritual teaching and beliefs), but also sometimes practical (of spiritual techniques) and even visionary (of spiritual ontologies and cosmologies). "We are all hybrids," is the new motto of this emerging spiritual ethos.

A third scenario stems from the affirmation of an *interspiritual wisdom* or a number of spiritual principles, teachings, and values endorsed by all religious groups and traditions.

CREATIVE COMMONS/R. M. CALAMAR

Hans Küng's proposal for a global ethics heralded this possibility, but it was the late Christian author Wayne Teasdale who offered its most compelling articulation in terms of a universal mysticism grounded in the practice of "interspirituality," or the sharing of ultimate experiences across traditions. Specifically, Teasdale identified nine elements of such interspiritual wisdom: moral capacity, solidarity with all living beings, deep nonviolence, spiritual practice, humility, mature self-knowledge, simplicity of life, selfless service and compassionate action, and prophetic voice. Developing a similar intuition is Beverly Lanzetta's proposal for an "intercontemplative" global spirituality that affirms the interdependence of spiritual principles and can give birth to new spiritual paths. Also related is Robert Forman's articulation of a "trans-traditional spirituality" that feeds on the teachings of all religious traditions but is not restricted by the confines of any particular credo.



Another possible scenario for the future of world religion involves a universal mysticism grounded in the practice of "interspirituality." Ida Unger, the creator of this Sacred Shapes *poster, describes Hebrew letters and the yoga poses they mirror as "mystical conduits for connection between our physical plane of being and Holy Source."*

IDA UNGER (POSTER AVAILABLE AT KOSHERYOGA.NET)

The last scenario, *spirituality without religion*, comprises an impressive number of contemporary developments—from secular to postmodern and from naturalistic to New Age spiritualities—that advocate for the cultivation of a spiritual life free from traditional religious dogmas and/or transcendent or supernatural beliefs. Two prominent trends here are postmodern spiritualities and the New Age movement. Though the former reject or remain agnostic about supernatural or transcendent sources of religion and the latter tends to uncritically accept them, both join hands in their affirmation of the primacy of individual choice and experience, as well as in their criticism of many received religious doctrines and authoritarian institutions. Calls for a democratization of spirit, a direct path to the divine, or the reclaiming of the individual's inner spiritual authority are intimately linked with this scenario. We could also situate here most forms of religious naturalism, modern religious quests, secular surrogates for religion, and postsecular spiritualities. Expressions such as "spiritual but not religious," "religion without religion," and "believing without belonging" capture well the essential character of this orientation.

A Participatory Dream

As should be obvious, with the possible exception of a hegemonic global religion, the above scenarios are not mutually exclusive, and it is likely that they will all shape the future of world religion in the twenty-first century. And yet, there is something intuitively appealing in the search for spiritual unity, and here I would like to outline how a participatory perspective addresses this concern without hampering the arguably wholesome impulses toward religious diversification and spiritual individuation at play in our times.

Participatory approaches understand religious worlds and experiences as co-created events emerging from the interaction of the entire range of human faculties (the rational, imaginal, somatic, erotic, aesthetic, and so forth) and a dynamic and undetermined mystery, spiritual power, and/or generative force of life or the cosmos. To embrace our participatory role in spiritual knowing may lead to a shift from searching for spiritual unity in a global religion organized around a single vision to recognizing an already existent spiritual human family that branches out in numerous directions from the same creative source. In other words, religious people may be able to find their longed-for unity not so much in an all-encompassing megasystem or superreligion, but in their common roots—that is, in that deep bond constituted by the undetermined creative power of spirit, life, and/or the cosmos in which all traditions participate in the bringing forth of their spiritual *(continued on page 63)*

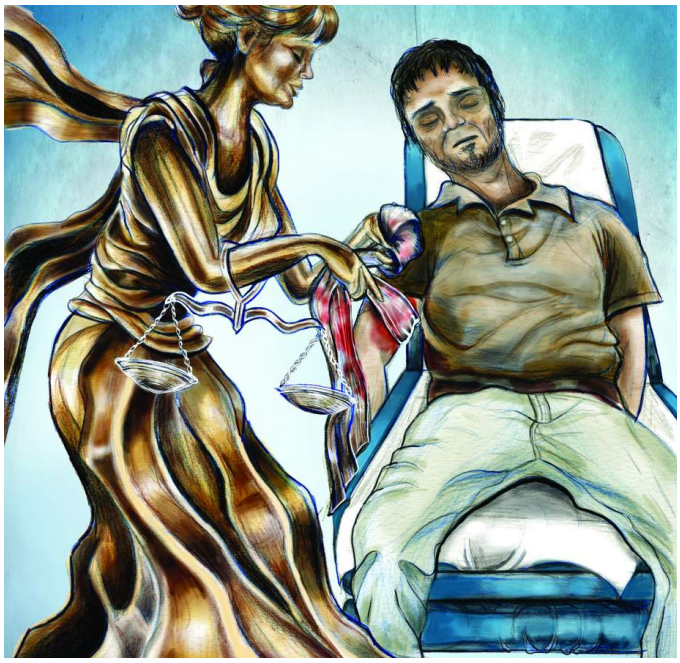
From Individual Rights to the Beloved Community: A New Vision of Justice

by Peter Gabel

Like a rose that has sprouted in a weed garden and induced the weeds to back away in awe, the restorative justice movement has entered American legal culture and is posing an important challenge to core assumptions about human beings and about the very nature of human reality that our legal culture has taken for granted for more than two hundred years.

The United States itself was founded on a principle of human freedom that presupposed an inherent antagonism between self and other, a belief that the essential meaning of liberty was that we need to be protected *against* other people. This Fear of the Other was in part a rational response to the religious, social, and economic persecution that had in part characterized previous historical forms of social life, but it also introduced its own distortion into our liberal social fabric: it gave rise to a conception of social being that conceived of human beings as socially separated "individuals" who might form voluntary relationships with others through love, or through contracts, or through voluntary religious and civic organizations, or through democratically elected governments with strictly limited powers, but who at bottom needed always to hold in reserve the memory that the other posed a threat to one's liberty and who therefore required a binding legal culture that placed "the rights of the individual" above all other social goods.

Implicit in this worldview has been the conviction that we are not inherently connected beings whose fulfillment comes through our mutual recognition of one another, through the inherent bond of our social nature that is completed through the embrace of love and solidarity, but rather that we are cast into the world as disconnected monads who only come into relation after the fact of our individual incarnations, with the borders between us being in need of constant policing to make sure that the seduction of trust never leads us to let down our guard. While we might "voluntarily" engage in any foolish dependency on the other that we choose, the law is always there to guarantee "as a matter of law" that nothing actually *binds* us except our mutual and solemn commitment to our everlasting ontological separation.



What if Lady Justice were omnipartial? A new legal culture based on empathy and care might inspire a better use for that blindfold of hers.

LAURA BECKMAN (LAURABECKMAN.COM)

Liberty as Spiritual Separation in American Law

As you read this from within your own private space, as you float through the solitude of your day, consider how the institutions of American law condition and envelop you in the spiritual prison of your separation. You are a citizen in a democracy, but the most fundamental right that defines that democracy is the "secret ballot" rather than a process expressive of any communal bond that unites us. You are legally bound to all others through a "constitution" that protects you against, and therefore affirms the constant threat of, infringement on your right to freedom of speech, of religion, of association, and your right to be protected against others searching your house or making you quarter soldiers or taking away your guns ... but that binding constitution affirms nothing about our connection to one another and therefore offers no commitment to making

Peter Gabel is editor-at-large of Tikkun *and the author of* The Bank Teller and Other Essays on the Politics of Meaning *(available at tikkun.org/store).*

sure that our social connection will be realized through our legal process. The substantive law of property guarantees that we can own separate land parcels and exclude others from those parcels, but affirms no binding obligation to share the land, or the food that it produces, or the shelters that we construct upon it. The law of contracts guarantees our freedom to enter binding agreements with others, but in a social context that assumes we are competitors in a marketplace whose goal is to get the benefit of our bargains, rather than "cooperators" whose intention is to realize ourselves through mutual fulfillment and shared objectives. Tort law assures we are protected against others who might pull a chair out from under us as we sit down to the dinner table, or intentionally or negligently harm us on highways or in the operating room or through the consumer goods we buy in their stores, but it does not affirm that we have any duty to care for each other, to rescue each other if we are in distress, or to otherwise act in accordance with a bond emanating from our common humanity. Under the law of corporations, shareholders are assumed to be anonymous investors seeking as discrete individuals to maximize their short-term profits and to be bound to each other solely by that goal, rather than to be socially responsible beings united by a corporate aspiration that will further the well-being of the community or the planet. And finally there is the criminal law, which understands social violence of all kinds as freely chosen individual acts against the state calling for punishment of the individual actor rather than as social acts expressive of distortions within an inherently social fabric that call for repair of the social fabric itself.

The conviction that we can only be *bound* by our separation and not by our connection is reflected not only in the substance of law, but also in our forms of legal reasoning and our embodied legal processes themselves. We have learned to equate "due process" with the adversary system, which defines conflicts as contests between opponents who cannot trust each other to tell the truth and who therefore have every right to tear each other down through cross-examination even if one believes the other side is telling the truth. Each side in the gladiatorial combat is encouraged to aggrandize the correctness of his or her own position, to never admit weakness or doubt or frailty for fear of undermining one's case, and to demean and minimize the other side … because that is the only way to absolutely guarantee that no one in the proceeding—neither judge, jury, nor one's adversary—will be taken in by misplaced trust. Evidence is limited to empirical proof of hard facts, past human experiences emptied of feeling and presented as mere observed behaviors, subject to relentless testing for misperception or hearsay, because "allowing in" the meaning and feeling of past events would be inherently subjective and could not be trusted to be presented or heard without bias and distortion. And hovering over the entire proceeding are the rules, with justice being defined as accurate application of the rules to the facts according to an analytical form of legal reasoning—the clever product of the much venerated "legal mind"—that excludes compassion or empathy or care or the aspiration to a world based on love and understanding, and instead valorizes logic and "common sense," the common sense of a world based on individual self-interest and perception of the other as a stranger whose interests clash with rather than complete our own.

The Genius of the Liberal Legal Framework and the Harm Created By It

As unflattering a portrait as I have painted here of our inherited legal culture, we cannot but recognize the genius that animates it and that unifies all its elements. *If* one wished to construct a binding image of the social world that would maximally protect the individual against all of the possible evils of subjection to the other that have occurred throughout history—slavery, serfdom, the burning of millions of women at the stake for heresy and witchcraft, cruel and unusual punishments like drawing and quartering or the stockades, every form of demonization through superstition, projection, and magical thinking—the generations that preceded ours did a remarkable job of inventing a system of justice that was alert to the risk of the threat posed by the other at every turn. And we should admire and embrace the equally remarkable accomplishments for which this commitment to individual liberty has been in significant part responsible—the partial overcoming of the inherited social hierarchies of the aristocracy, and more recently of racism, sexism, and, increasingly, homophobia by gradually eliminating as a matter of law the legitimacy that these stereotypes and negative judgments could formerly claim. While the liberal revolutions of the late eighteenth century could not directly address and overcome the causes of these forms of social injustice because their own worldview recognizes only the rights of socially separated individuals rather than the need for a legal culture and process to heal the social distortions of an inherently socially connected, interhuman universe, it is nonetheless true that the historical affirmation of the dignity of the individual that was born in the Enlightenment and became binding on us one to the other at the end of the eighteenth century has made an immense contribution to our autonomy from the church, the state, inherited caste systems, and all other ways that exploitation and domination by the other had previously been legally justified.

Yet as we now look out at and live within the envelope of the world we have thus created, we must come to realize by a kind of evolution or enlightenment—by "waking up"—that the liberal framework, the framework of separation, is not only inadequate but harmful. It is harmful because it mischaracterizes a hopeful, potentially loving, potentially mutually confirming and anchoring collective destiny as a destiny of solitudes. And because the liberal worldview is not merely a matter of opinion, but is made binding through law on all citizens, it forms a kind of constant unconscious backdrop that others are receding away from us, that we must pursue our own self-interest, protect ourselves, and endure the pathos

"The United States itself was founded on a ... belief that the essential meaning of liberty was that we need to be protected against *other people," Peter Gabel writes. As a result, our legal culture sees humans as isolated individuals, not members of a community.*

EVAN BISSELL (THEKNOTTEDLINE.US)

of our lives and deaths as solitary beings. Still more, because we in reality are not solitary beings but beings animated by the longing for mutual recognition, affirmation, and love, the liberal worldview inevitably generates a kind of chronic social paranoia that results from the contradiction between the interhuman truth of our social nature and the social message that the other cannot be trusted. As a way of "mediating" this contradiction, of trying to satisfy the need for connection with others in a social world in which others are presented as a threat to our individual safety and integrity, many of us are drawn to grandiose, imaginary collective identities of perfect unity (the Nation, God, the Family, the Gang) accompanied by demonization of other groupings who become the repository of our fear of nonrecognition and humiliation that our own longing for love, acceptance, and recognition will be rejected rather than reciprocated. In this way, the liberal paradigm actually tends to create and recreate the very forms of unfreedom and inequality that in its conscious aspect it seeks to delegitimize and eradicate. Thus as Dr. Seuss suggests in *The Butter Battle Book*, in the world as it is we may use legal means to eliminate racism, sexism, and other traditional forms of demonization only to turn to dividing the world between those who butter their bread on one side and those who butter it on the other.

Transcending Liberalism: A New Vision of Legal Culture

So as much as we support the great accomplishments of the liberal revolutions and as much as we should continue to fight for the remaining liberal gains not yet won (like the right to gay marriage) within that past and passing paradigm, we need also to support the transcendence of that paradigm toward a new vision of law and legal culture that seeks to foster empathy, compassion, reconciliation with the other, and the fundamental rediscovery that the other is not essentially a threat, but the source of our completion as social beings.

Along with the remarkable Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa, which demonstrated that a legal process can be used in the service of healing even terrible acts of social violence and which made possible the overcoming of Apartheid without the extensive bloodshed and counter-violence common to prior revolutions, the most significant harbinger of the new paradigm has been the restorative justice movement to which we are devoting this special issue of *Tikkun*. The critical difference between restorative justice and the liberal model of justice that we have inherited from prior generations is that restorative justice begins by embracing an ideal of justice not as a blind woman deciding without prejudice which of two equal individuals has the better right to be vindicated under the law, but rather Martin Luther King's ideal of justice as "Love correcting that which revolts against love." In other words, restorative justice begins with a worldview in which we are already in relationship, and in which our greatest aspiration is to realize the possibility of mutual understanding and acceptance through new spiritually alive legal processes that are designed to try to heal the distortions that have masked that possibility of healing and redemption from us.

As you read about the ways of restorative justice in the essays that follow, with their emphasis on the importance of taking responsibility, performing restitution to those harmed, and aspiring to apology and forgiveness as means of reintegrating broken relationships and sometimes knitting together and repairing whole communities, try to imagine a world in which restorative justice processes are being conducted on a daily basis in the city halls and other major civic buildings in the center of the cities or towns that you live in. Imagine how much this change in the legal culture of your city or town would alter the way you perceive your neighbors and the spiritual and moral character of communities and neighborhoods that surround you. For it is in the public manifestations of restorative justice that its true social impact will be felt: its capacity to establish through public visibility and legitimacy that we are coming to recognize and publicly acknowledge what we have known and longed for all our lives—that we are in this together, that we are not infinitely and eternally separated by what divides us, and that while acknowledging and respecting the contributions to us of our forefathers (or, if you like, our "founding fathers"), we can risk leaving them behind. ■

Walking Toward Conflict

by Dominic Barter

At the top of one of Rio de Janeiro's favela shantytowns—one of several recently occupied by heavily armed military police units—an uneasy gathering begins. Where moments before children chased a ball, now local leaders on several sides of Rio's long and complex social divide assemble to hesitantly, courageously look at each other and at what they have in common. The gathering includes members of resident associations, local shopkeepers, elders, youth leaders, police, and members of the drug gangs that, until recently, controlled the running of community life.

A few short weeks before, these same actors had met in the same place but in a completely different way: enmity across class and social divides had exploded into petrol bombs, rubber bullets, and serious injury. Strategies of repression and revolt came to blows; outrage, pain, and fear followed. As the Brazilian saying goes, "we've seen this film before."

Now those present at the gathering form a circle. This simplest, most ancient of social patterns describes an intention—to recognize the other, to share meaning, to invite truth-telling. Guided by precise questions drawn on the wall for all to see, the participants edge forward in that most counter-intuitive of social discourses: dialogue. An occasional hand is raised in emphasis, while the other remains firmly on a military-grade weapon. This is not a truce. It is a new way to engage, a rediscovered force with the potential to transform social reality. As one participant describes in a break, "It's hard. I still remember when he shot my brother. But this is different. When he tries to understand me, we are less enemies. I can see in his eyes it's the same for him."

In less time than it had taken for the previous month's riot to make the evening news, a strategy is agreed upon: a set of voluntary agreements that respond to the key concerns of those present. The parties also agree on a time frame for the implementation and evaluation of the agreements.

The structure and process that guided the meeting that evening began to emerge almost two decades earlier, at the height of police and gang conflict in the mid-1990s. In the years that followed, I worked with others in Brazil to develop an integrated, systemic response to painful conflict, crime, and disagreement. This response encompasses both a unique restorative practice and a specific approach to creating the systemic conditions within which such a restorative practice, and its results, can emerge. As a coordinated whole, this specific response—known as Restorative Circles—represents less a defined procedure and more a dynamically shifting investigation into the power of community self-responsibility and personal responsiveness to the interdependent web of our lives.

In a growing number of favelas in Brazil, like this one in Guaruja, Sao Paolo, systems have been set up so residents can bring their conflicts to Restorative Circles.

RESTORATIVE CIRCLES (RESTORATIVECIRCLES.ORG)

Restorative Circles have been extensively used in schools, court systems, prisons, families, and organizations—and more recently in faith communities, hospitals, universities, and development work. In each of these varied settings, as in each unique subculture in which restorative practices develop, the forms necessarily shift. Nevertheless, the defining characteristics of Restorative Circles remain rooted *(continued on page 70)*

Dominic Barter has been active in the field of nonviolence and social justice in more than fifteen countries. He co-developed the Restorative Circles practice (restorativecircles.org) used in communities and institutions, and in the Brazilian government's UNDP- and UNESCO-supported restorative justice pilot projects.

WALKING TOWARD CONFLICT
(continued from page 21)

in this practice's community origins in the favelas of Rio de Janeiro.

One defining characteristic relates to how, and whom, we see as being in conflict. From history book writers to modern mediation, many tend to see conflict as occurring between two opposing parties, whether individuals or groups. When seen through the perspective of attributing blame, either one party is seen as having committed an offense of which the other is a victim, or both are seen as culpable of mutual aggression. Our formal and informal justice systems seek to define who has done wrong, or who has done the most wrong. However, from the very first experiments involving Restorative Circles with favela youth, it was clear that there were three—not two—parties playing key roles in both the development and the attempted suppression of conflict. This third group—the "conflict community"—is much more than a group of family members, neighbors, colleagues, or witnesses. Indirectly affected by the harm that has been done, community members also contribute to the conditions within which the conflict has occurred. Moreover, they are invested in sustainable transformation, as they recognize the cost to themselves of continued disconnection between people with whom they share community. These three perspectives and their creative solutions are essential voices in a comprehensive response to conflict.

A restorative perspective also recognizes the multiplicity of experience that often accompanies painful conflict, in which many—if not all—parties see themselves as having been wronged, and may simultaneously see others as having offended them. As an imprisoned youth told me, "The only difference between me and the other guy is the time the cops showed up. If they'd have arrived ten minutes earlier, he'd be locked up, and I'd be outside." At the same time, Restorative Circles identify clear distinctions between those who committed the acts in question, and those who bore their brunt. New terminology is required to reflect this new way of seeing. In conversation with residents I coined "author" and "receiver," not as synonyms for offender and victim, but in recognition of who did what and of the possible plurality of victimhood among those involved.

Another distinctive feature of Restorative Circles—developed from necessity—is their focus on recovering the ability of participants to effectively communicate while meeting in the Circle. The pain of misunderstanding and fear can significantly impair the ability of people to accurately hear what others are saying, or even to hear themselves with clarity. Thoughts that diminish the humanity of opponents further complicate matters. While restorative justice is justly valued for giving all parties—and crucially those who seem to have suffered most—a voice, our early gatherings around conflict revealed the limitations of presuming that truths expressed were heard as the speaker intended. In fact, I soon noticed that a facilitated process of mutual comprehension creates the basis for looking at what was done, and learning from it, without further antagonizing those recalling the acts committed.

The recognition of our process as a restorative practice did not come until much later. Without knowledge of sister practices already in use around the world, Restorative Circles had developed to share many of the same basic characteristics. Like other restorative practices, it had roots in the most marginalized communities in society. And like these other practices, it sought to bring together those who had rediscovered, often tragically, that their actions had made a difference in the lives of others, and could therefore do so again, this time for mutual benefit and greater community safety. Like them, it had also reaffirmed the logic of the circle as a space that welcomes truth-telling.

Thus, referring to such restorative encounters as circles is less a description of the form in which participants gather than a description of the intention to share power. For when the social roles that distinguish and separate us become less important than our shared humanity, the implicit threat of punishment for speaking moral truths diminishes. In a courtroom Restorative Circle, a community member objected to her son's explanation of his motives for assaulting a couple in the street. The adolescent replied to her, "You can believe me, Mom, because I'm not scared. I lied to the judge because it was dangerous not to. It's not dangerous to be truthful here."

A key to the growing understanding of how to design such safe spaces—ones where necessary, and at times uncomfortable, truths can be spoken, heard, and integrated—is a recognition of how, when coordinated with others in a community, home, or work setting, new habits of behavior can create environments supportive of just processes and restorative outcomes. Restorative practices are strengthened to the extent that the systemic contexts in which they function serve the same goals. When communities experience direct access to justice systems, and such systems are dynamically responsive to their needs, our ways of approaching conflict begin to edge beyond seeking individual reparation and resolution, and toward questioning how social conditions can be co-created to serve community life, meet our sense of justice, and actively support the well-being of ourselves and others.

This brings us back to the immediate question of our life with others. It invites us to do that most unexpected thing—to walk toward, and not away from, conflict. Because doing so takes us toward, rather than away from, each other, it becomes a seed of new or renovated community. This is what occurred on that Rio hilltop. This is what I had heard months beforehand in the tired, pained, and ultimately transformative words of a man who responded to my question of why he agreed to participate in the Circle: "I cannot say I want to go. I do not want to look at the face of the mother who lost her child because of what my child did. I would rather try and forget. But I will be at the Circle because my God wants me to go." ■

The Day the Jail Walls Cracked:
A Restorative Plea Deal

by Sujatha Baliga

When I got the call from Howard Zehr, I balked at the idea.

"In a capital case? He shot her in the head? No chance, Howard."

Howard agreed, but encouraged me to speak with the young man's mother and explain, from a restorative lawyer's perspective, why it wouldn't work.

"Go ahead and give her my number. But I don't have anything good to tell her. What I do here with kids in Oakland is never going to happen in a capital case in Florida."

Within the hour I was speaking with Conor's warm and tenacious mother, Julie McBride, who tearfully told me how a few months earlier her nineteen-year-old honor student, planning to take his own life, shot his fiancée instead. Conor drove himself to the police station and confessed. She went on to explain that "everyone" wanted the case resolved through restorative justice.

"Even the victim's parents?" I asked.

"Yes! Kate and Andy Grosmaire are the ones who told me about restorative justice."

"You're in contact with them?"

"I just had breakfast with them last week. My husband, Michael, meets with Andy every Friday. And both of Ann's parents visit Conor in jail."

"Julie, it sounds like a remarkable situation. But I'm just not sure what we can do in a first-degree homicide case at this stage of the game."

I went on to explain how I facilitate restorative practices in Oakland to meet victims' needs while keeping children out of the juvenile justice system for crimes like burglary and teen dating violence. I told her about family group conferencing—how victims, families, police, the district attorney, and affected community members meet face-to-face with the child who caused harm to develop a plan to repair the harm and support the young person to follow that plan.

"But not yet for cases with gun charges or for homicides, let alone first-degree murder. Julie, it took me years to build the kind of trust I have with the DA's office here. So even if your son and the victim's family are amenable, I just can't imagine

Andy Grosmaire talks about his daughter, Ann, who was killed by her fiancé, Conor. The Grosmaires asked for a restorative justice process to resolve the case, a highly unusual request from the parents of a murder victim.

MIKE EWEN (TALLAHASSEE.COM)

Sujatha Baliga is a senior program specialist at the National Council on Crime and Delinquency and the founding director of the Paragate Project, an organization dedicated to walking with people who are exploring forgiveness.

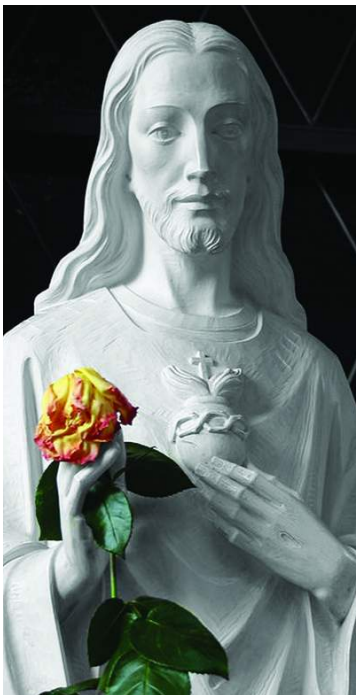
how we could pull this off in a homicide case in the Florida panhandle. So I just can't let you hire me since I can't imagine how I can help you."

"I understand that you can't make any promises, but please, if you just talk with the Grosmaires, I think you'll want to be involved in this case," Julie pressed.

"Sure," I said, never expecting to hear from them. Jaded by my past work as a defense lawyer, I dismissed Julie as another wonderful mother holding out an impossible hope.

But the very next day, I was listening to Kate and Andy Grosmaire tell the story of how they lost their daughter, Ann. It brought tears to my eyes to hear that when Conor's father walked into the hospital, Andy embraced him. Then Kate shared how, despite knowing that her youngest daughter would be taken off life support later that day, she visited Conor in jail to tell him they had forgiven him. I learned that all of this was grounded in their deep Catholic faith.

"If God forgives us, how can we not forgive Conor?" Andy asked.



Kate and Andy Grosmaire were deeply affected by Catholic teachings about forgiveness.

MARK CABRERA

As I listened to the Grosmaires' story of seemingly impossible love and forgiveness, my feeling that nothing could be done started to shift. While forgiveness is not a prerequisite for starting restorative work, nor even required as an outcome, if by some spiritual or psychological grace it has already taken place in one or more of the survivors it can be extremely helpful.

"We met with the State's Attorney; the death penalty is already off the table," the Grosmaires explained. "We don't need Conor to serve the rest of his life in prison and we have no interest in this case going to trial. We'd like to have restorative justice be the way this case gets handled."

But even with victims so willing to come to the table, achieving a restorative outcome in a homicide case would be an uphill battle. This was a conservative jurisdiction on the Florida panhandle with severe penalties for gun crimes. Conor McBride had fired a shotgun at Ann Grosmaire at close range, and his confession made clear that while it wasn't premeditated, it wasn't an accident, either. Restorative dialogues in cases this serious do happen, but only after a defendant is well into his/her lengthy prison sentence. But something in the voices of both Ann's and Conor's parents—a wisdom and beauty and creativity growing out of an unthinkable horror—made me incapable of saying "no chance" as flippantly as I'd said it to Howard Zehr the day before.

I thought about how restorative justice, at its best, uses participatory dialogue to centralize victims' needs, and how it uses collaborative decision making to decide the outcome of a case. The Grosmaires were asking for restorative justice at its best. They wanted to meet with Conor now—not in fifteen years—to explain the impact of his crime and ask the kind of questions victims never get answered in our traditional justice system. They had a right to know: How could this have possibly happened? What were my daughter's last words? How can we be sure you'll never harm someone else again? And as the ones truly aggrieved by Conor's crime, they deserved to be *a part of fashioning the legal outcome* in this case.

"OK." I took a deep breath. "I'll talk to Conor's lawyer and see if there's something that we can do."

The first words out of Conor's lawyer's mouth were not unexpected.

"Never heard of anything like it. You want us all to sit down together and figure out what should happen to Conor? *Face to face inside jail*?"

I responded that while I understood his discomfort, restorative processes are by no means unheard of. People have been doing this for millennia all around the world, and it's an idea whose time has come in the United States. So by the end of our conversation I was a member of the defense team as the restorative justice expert. Conor's lawyer had a clear understanding that I was not a traditional defense team member, but rather held a space in the middle where I could work to meet the needs of everyone involved in this case. And Ann's parents understood that I was a member of Conor's defense team to preserve the confidentiality of the process, not because I was on "the other side."

I heard those same words—"never heard anything like it"—from the prosecutor, from jail staff, from reporters, and from community members: "Ma'am, in my twenty-six years of running this jail, I've never seen such a thing." "I would love to be a fly on the wall for that conversation." "What a remarkable idea." Each person whose approval or help I needed would stay on the phone just a few minutes longer. In those extra moments I felt hearts and minds open to a different way of doing things.

The legal vehicle for this process was the pre-plea conference. Traditionally, the pre-plea conference is a meeting between the defense attorney and the prosecutor in which plea deals get duked out. No one else, not even the defendant, is present for those meetings. Like all settlement conferences, nothing that comes out in those meetings is admissible at trial. The idea arose to have everyone be a part of that process: Conor, his parents, the Grosmaires, their priest, and the two attorneys.

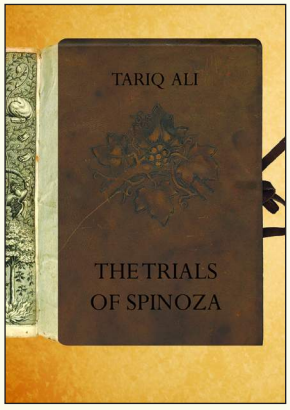
I was confident about each person's capacity to bring honest feelings and realistic expectations to the process. In our weekly phone calls, Conor was consistent in his acceptance of

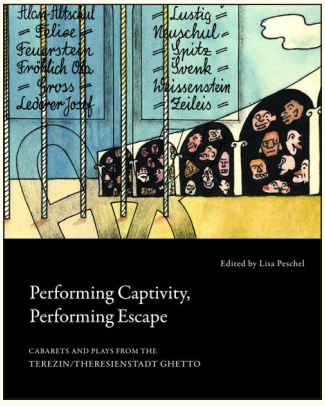
responsibility, and seemed deeply sincere in his desire to spend the rest of his life repaying an unpayable debt. His parents were able to hold him responsible while loving him unconditionally. Michael came to the table with a profound capacity to explore how his parenting had affected Conor. And the Grosmaires were dedicated to Ann's death being transformed into a seed of something transcendent. They were willing to participate in this process knowing that the truth of what happened that day might test their capacity to forgive. Both the defense attorney and the prosecutor needed to step out of their traditional adversarial roles. And Conor's jailers had to believe that it was safe to allow all of us to sit in a room together. At Kate Grosmaire's request, Conor was to be unshackled.

I flew in a few days before the pre-plea conference to match some faces and places to the hearts and minds I had come to love. In Tallahassee I got to know more about the one person I will never get to meet—Ann. She was revered for her great compassion towards animals. A devout Catholic, an honor student, and a stage manager with a quirky sense of humor, Ann was just becoming comfortable as an actress in her own right. She was extremely private, keeping from even her sisters—her best friends—that Conor's anger was growing out of control.

Wanting to understand the depth of the loss, I had accepted the Grosmaires' invitation to stay in their home. Some of my lawyer friends had questioned that choice, worrying about "boundaries." Kay Pranis, my mentor and friend, put it so beautifully.

NEW FROM SEAGULL BOOKS





The Trials of Spinoza
Tariq Ali
CLOTH W/ DVD $20.00

Performing Captivity, Performing Escape
Cabarets and Plays from the Terezin/Theresienstadt Ghetto
Edited and with an Introduction by Lisa Peschel
With a Preface by Ivan Klíma
PAPER $25.00

Seagull BOOKS

Distributed by the University of Chicago Press
www.press.uchicago.edu

KATE GROSMAIRE

Ann and Conor posed in the Grosmaires' backyard on the day of their senior prom, May 2009.

"Boundaries? In this work we are trying to get rid of boundaries, Sujatha. The important thing is to have a strong center, not strong boundaries."

In a tiny cinderblock room in the Leon County Jail that would hold five hours of sorrow, confessions, trauma, love, and forgiveness, we created that strong center. We draped a piece of cloth on the floor and decorated it with representations of Ann. A trophy. A box filled with notes between Ann and Conor. A rubber teething giraffe that Ann suggested to customers at the baby boutique she worked in. A plaster cast of Ann's hand made while she was lying in her hospital bed. Ann had remarkably long, delicate fingers.

Father Michael Foley, the Grosmaires' priest, opened with prayer. The prosecutor briefly summarized the charges and the facts of the case. Then, the Grosmaires shared the story of their beloved daughter—what her life had been and what her death had taken from them. Without vindictiveness, they did not spare Conor the totality of what he had done. When they finished, we listened to Ann's favorite hymn, "Angel Band," and then sat in silence for a few minutes to honor her.

All eyes turned toward Conor. I asked him to tell us, in his own words, how he'd taken Ann's life. The story was not so different from what the police had recorded in his confession. But hearing it from his mouth in the presence of Ann's parents was devastating. As Kate said in a radio interview a few months later, after Conor spoke, "we had to remind ourselves that we had forgiven him."

After everyone was given time to speak, we turned to the difficult question of what Conor needed to do to begin to redeem himself. There was talk of anger management and domestic violence counseling. Conor agreed to speak at high schools about teen dating violence. He also spoke of the types of volunteer work that Ann would have done had she lived; Kate told Conor he carried the burden of doing the good works of two people when he was eventually released.

The last question was by far the most challenging. How much time should Conor serve? I had asked everyone to think about this far in advance of this day. *(continued on page 64)*

Restorative Justice: Some Facts and History

The number of people incarcerated, on parole, and on probation in the United States roughly equals the populations of Los Angeles, Chicago, and Boston combined. And then there's that extralegal prison at Guantánamo.

EVAN BISSELL (THEKNOTTEDLINE.US)

by Marilyn Armour

In the United States, the criminal justice system is undergirded by a thirty-year era of "get tough" policies that have bred high rates of recidivism, a focus on punishing lawbreaking rather than attending to the harm experienced by crime victims, and ever-increasing expenditures that exceed amounts spent on education and health in some states' budgets.

Under the current system, over 6.7 million adults or 3.1 percent of the adult population is behind bars, on probation, or on parole. Research shows that incarceration—instead of curbing crime—makes nonviolent offenders into violent criminals and is a revolving door in and out of prison. Yet we continue to spend over $52 billion a year on corrections. The overuse of prison and extended probation casts a long shadow that devastates families and communities throughout the country. For example, African American men are imprisoned at six times the rate for whites. This disproportionality severs offenders from their children, who become the hidden or forgotten victims of crime today and are too often the newly incarcerated tomorrow. Our criminal justice system also burdens many ex-offenders with a felony record, which robs them of employment and leads many into homelessness, vagrancy, and future criminal behavior, in addition to robbing the state of possible income tax revenues.

This is an out-of-control system that is fed, ominously, by students who are referred to alternative education programs. In Texas alone, the 100,000 students referred to such programs annually are five times more likely to drop out than their peers in mainstream schools, making them probable candidates for the school to prison pipeline. Roughly 80 percent of prison inmates never finished high school.

As a society, we are in desperate need of a different approach to the problems created by crime and social injustice—an approach that puts energy into the future, not the past, an approach that begins with who has been hurt and what their needs may be, and finishes with giving wrongdoers a way back instead of guaranteeing them a lifetime of hardship.

What Restorative Justice Offers

Restorative justice is a fast-growing state, national, and international social movement and set of practices that aim to redirect society's retributive response to crime. Restorative

Marilyn Armour, Ph.D., directs the Institute for Restorative Justice and Restorative Dialogue at the University of Texas at Austin, School of Social Work, and is coauthor with Mark Umbreit of Restorative Justice Dialogue: An Essential Guide for Research and Practice *(2010).*

justice views crime not as a depersonalized breaking of the law but as a wrong against another person. It attends to the broken relationships between three players: the offender, the victim, and the community. Accordingly, restorative justice seeks to elevate the role of crime victims and community members; hold offenders directly accountable to the people they have harmed; and restore, to the extent possible, the emotional and material losses of victims by providing a range of opportunities for dialogue, negotiation, and problem solving. Moreover it views criminal acts more comprehensively than our judicial system because it recognizes how offenders harm victims, communities, and even themselves by their actions.

The ultimate aim of restorative justice is one of healing. If survivors of crimes receive appropriate emotional and material reparation, the harm can be redressed; by seeking to repair the damage caused, the offender can be reconciled with the victim and reintegrated back into his or her social and familial networks; and through such reconciliation and reintegration, community harmony has a chance to be restored. This manner of healing gives the actual victims and the community, as well as the offenders, the opportunity to take an active part in the justice process instead of a traditionally passive role.

History and Development of the Restorative Justice Movement

Restorative justice is a young field that emerged during the 1970s as alternative approaches to the court process, such as alternative dispute resolution, were becoming a national trend. It emerged alongside the victims' rights movement, which argued for greater involvement of crime victims in the criminal justice process, as well as for the use of restitution as compensation for losses. Although many of the values, principles, and practices of restorative justice hearken back to indigenous cultures, a 1974 case in Kitchener, Ontario, is considered the beginning point of today's restorative justice movement. This "Kitchener experiment" required two teenagers to meet with and pay restitution to every one of the twenty-two people whose property they had vandalized.

From the late 1970s to the early 1980s, a number of experimental programs, modeled after the Kitchener program, were initiated in several jurisdictions in North America and Europe. These initiatives, however, remained small in size and number, having little impact on the larger system. In 1994, restorative justice took a giant step toward becoming mainstream when the American Bar Association endorsed victim-offender mediation, a program usually associated with first-time offenders and minor crimes. Additional support came from the National Organization for Victim Assistance, which published a monograph entitled *Restorative Community Justice: A Call to Action*, and from the United Nations, the Council of Europe, and the European Union, all of which have committed to promote restorative practices. Today, thirty states either have restorative justice principles in their mission statements and policy plans or legislation promoting a more balanced and restorative juvenile justice system. This institutionalization is further buttressed by the American Bar Association, which began offering grants in 2008 to develop restorative justice initiatives in criminal law settings.

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

restorativejustice.org

iirp.edu

emu.edu/cjp/restorative-justice
cehd.umn.edu/ssw/rjp

irjrd.org

Core Restorative Justice Practices

The most widely used approaches in restorative justice are victim-offender mediation, family group conferencing, circles, and victim-offender dialogue. All put victims and offenders in direct dialogue, nearly always face-to-face, about a specific offense or infraction. They also have in common the presence of at least one more person who serves as the facilitator, and they usually involve advance preparation of the parties so they will know what to expect. The focus of the encounter most frequently involves naming what happened, identifying its impact, and coming to some common understanding, often including reaching agreement as to how any resultant harm will be repaired. These practices are also used in non–criminal justice settings such as schools or neighborhoods.

Victim-offender mediation is the oldest practice and is typically used with victims and offenders of property crimes and minor assaults. Participants include the victim, offender, and facilitator. The face-to-face meeting is centrally focused on the victim and the offender, accompanied by a small number of support persons (such as parents or friends).

Family group conferencing originated in New Zealand as a means of diverting young offenders from formal adjudication. It routinely involves support persons for both victims and offenders, as well as additional participants from the community. This approach emphasizes supporting offenders in taking responsibility for their actions and in changing their behaviors. Thus, the involvement of the offender's family and other support persons is critical to this approach; the offender's community of care helps build understanding and provides the opportunity for the offender to shift back from the role of offender to that of community member.

Circles are variously called "peacemaking circles," "repair of harm circles," and "sentencing circles." The numbers and types of participants are similar to those gathered for conferencing but include wider community member participation, either as interested persons, representatives of the criminal justice system, or as additional circle keepers or facilitators. Circles are more focused on the harm done to the community than the other approaches. Circles also serve to build community. Circles feature shared leadership and consensus-based decision making as core to the functioning of the group and the development of the group's process.

Victim-offender dialogue is an outgrowth of victim-offender mediation. It is used in crimes of severe *(continued on page 64)*

Controversies Around Restorative Justice

by David Belden

Restorative justice is a movement with traction. People are excited by it. They are volunteering in growing numbers to make it happen. Some people are even getting paid to do it, especially in schools, and usually through nonprofits like Restorative Justice for Oakland Youth, Community Works, and the Insight Prison Project (all discussed in this issue). Marilyn Armour's article (page 25) sums up the progress so far.

Its practitioners say the movement's innovative practices have immediate benefits and radical long-term potential.

There is hope, first, that it will keep young people and especially young people of color out of the criminal justice system, out of the school-to-prison pipeline. Once that is well under way, many believe that other visions will appear possible, all the way to the end of prisons as we know them and a reconception of the entire legal system (see Peter Gabel's piece on page 18). Many hope this movement can also provide new ways of responding both to conflicts in general (Kay Pranis, page 33) and to the inherited oppressive structures of race and class (see Fania Davis's piece on page 30, Denise Breton's on page 45).

Restorative justice may be poised for a breakthrough into public awareness. It would be a boon for budget-cutting politicians and taxpayers if only the public could buy into it. For example, in the San Francisco Bay Area it costs around $50,000 to run a juvenile offender through the justice system, not counting the cost of incarceration if there is to be any, versus about $4,500 for a restorative process that typically leaves the victim much more satisfied, the young person reintegrated into the community *without even being charged with a crime* and much less likely to reoffend, and many community members relieved and grateful. Multiply the criminal justice cost many times for adults locked away for years.

EVAN BISSELL (THEKNOTTEDLINE.US)

But the rub is, punishment is nowhere seen in this process—unless, when you have harmed someone, you consider listening to them express their pain to be punishment, rather than a chance to develop empathy for them, see yourself in a different light, and learn and change in whatever way you now perceive is needed. Some consider that process tougher even than receiving punishment. Others think it's being "soft on crime."

Can a justice movement not based on punishment grow fast enough to win at the ballot box, even in an über-liberal city? In September the *New York Times* noted that "Restorative justice has long had proponents in some corners of the criminal justice system, but it is now gaining prominence in an unlikely forum: the San Francisco district attorney's race." We go to press too soon to know the result.

David Belden, D.Phil (Oxford), has been a religious worker, agnostic countercultural collectivist, novelist, carpenter, college teacher, business writer, and managing editor of Tikkun *(until this April). He is currently writing about and studying restorative justice.*

The restorative justice play Man.Alive. Stories from the Edge of Incarceration to the Flight of Imagination, *featuring three formerly incarcerated individuals including Ivan Corado (right) and Reggie Daniels (center), as well as community artist Freddy Gutierrez (left), was performed widely in the San Francisco Bay Area in 2010. It was produced collaboratively by the nonprofit Community Works, the University of San Francisco, and the San Francisco Sheriff's Department.*

Or will restorative justice appeal more to small-government and traditional-values conservatives? Some of its elements do appeal to the Right, others to reformist liberals, others to radicals, including prison abolitionists. Of course, there are also elements that each of these players may dislike or hate. And no one will resist it more than the prison-industrial complex and the politicians in its pockets.

How it is presented by the media will be critical, but perhaps not decisive: it is how well it works in practice, in those places innovative enough to fund it, that will likely be decisive.

How We Talk about Controversies

Most articles in this issue come from progressive and radical activists, scholars, lawyers, and teachers who are writing wholly from within the restorative justice movement. We are centering their voices because it is they who have both the strongest hope for the transformative power of the movement and the most practical understanding of how the vision of restorative justice can take shape on the ground.

While most restorative justice practitioners initially seem to present a unified front, there are certainly differences among them if you listen more closely. Some authors in this issue raise controversial issues within the movement directly, others by inference only. If they criticize anyone, notice how gently they do so. The movement has only got where it has by its practitioners' commitment to reach out to the humanity in the other, to listen, to suggest and not to judge. A South Asian Buddhist goes to a conservative Florida town to support white Christians in developing a groundbreaking restorative approach to plea bargaining in a murder case (page 22). A survivor of child abuse works with prisoners in San Quentin prison, most of them serving life sentences for violent crimes (page 35). These practitioners could not do their groundbreaking work if they allowed either left-wing or right-wing stereotypes of prosecutors, conservative Christians, or lifers to cloud their vision. That doesn't mean that restorative practitioners are blind to the realities of power and white supremacy, the legacies of genocide and slavery, the depredations of profiteers, or the violence inherent in the structure of our prison system. But their whole practice is to reach across any divide and connect, empathically.

I am writing this article from a slightly different place, as a kind of sympathetic cartographer of the movement. I have felt drawn to restorative justice since first writing about it in *Tikkun* (September/October 2009) and have started to attend trainings in the field. So with one foot planted inside the restorative justice movement as a student and the other in more journalistic territory, I am hoping to offer a different perspective: a beginner's bird's-eye glance at some of the controversial issues both outside and within the movement, and at factors that may be enabling it to gather traction. I am offering this analysis not in a spirit of divisiveness but with the genuine hope that it will help readers who have never heard of the restorative justice movement to grasp the diversity of worldviews within it and understand where opposition and support are likely to arise. It is important for those within the movement to understand ways in which restorative justice is seen by individuals and groups from different places on the political spectrum, from conservative to moderate, and liberal to radical.

Conservative Reactions to Restorative Justice

Once restorative justice becomes a well-known policy option, I assume that small-government conservatives will welcome the budget savings and tax relief, provided they can be convinced that diversions from prison are not dangerous to society. The remarkable experience of New Zealand, which for over twenty years has run its entire juvenile justice system on restorative principles, and has closed its juvenile detention centers, should reassure them. As this experience is not well known in the United States, we are delighted to share an excellent survey of it by one its leading proponents, Judge Fred McElrea, as an online-only article accompanying this print issue.

NOT JUST ILLUSTRATIONS: The paintings on pages 20, 25, 27, 29, and 43 come from *The Knotted Line*, a participatory, internet-based project investigating the history and future of incarceration and its relationship to education and labor in the United States from 1495–2025. *The Knotted Line* weaves together a dynamic, narrative painting of over seventy-five historical moments. Its evolving online interface will also enable visitors to learn and add to the history, as well as share their personal experiences related to incarceration. When completed in the spring of 2012, *The Knotted Line* will also include a book version and free curricula for high school classes and community organizations. All of the paintings are created by Evan Bissell. For more information on the artist or project, visit www.evanbissell.com or www.theknottedline.us.

RUTH MORGAN (COMMUNITYWORKSWEST.ORG)

Many social conservatives, especially of a traditional Christian bent, already warm to the notion of bringing offenders to a point of remorse and genuine accountability, and then to redemption, a true change of heart. Chuck Colson, one of the players in the Watergate scandal (long since reformed as a born-again Christian), is considered by many to be America's leading prison reformer as well as one of its leading Christian conservatives. Excoriating overcrowding and inhuman conditions, Colson signs on to a faith-based strand of restorative justice.

However, the centrality of religious conversion to Colson's version of restorative justice presents a concern for the mainstream movement. Further, conservative philosophy typically blames the individual's sinful human nature rather than environmental factors in generating crime. Mainstream restorative justice operates from a different model. It is based neither on a medical model of the pathology of the offender, nor on a Christian model of the offender's sinful nature and dependence on a Higher Power. Instead, a model of mainstream restorative justice is more likely to include concepts such as mutuality, respect, active listening, empathy for ourselves and those we have harmed or been harmed by, a focus on self-empowerment and attendance to the deeper needs of those involved, and the questioning and unlearning of prevailing punitive belief systems. For instance, the behavioral changes noted in violent men through mainstream restorative practices typically result from their coming to understand how they developed strategies to survive child abuse, poverty, racism, police brutality, or other environmental stresses and bought into the prevailing "male role belief system"; from this understanding, as well as from the care of peers and facilitators, flows empathy for their younger selves and then for their victims. The hope of many restorative justice practitioners is that such transformed men (and women) will become participants in reforming the social conditions and inequities that so restricted their options, in addition to practicing emotional maturity in their daily relationships.

Many Christians find this development of empathy and social responsibility entirely compatible with Christianity, whether it involves Christian belief or not, but this is not the typical Christian conservative view. However, to an observer like me, both Colsonesque and mainstream restorative justice seem to have much in common—both believe in the individual's ability to change. As more violent offenders transform themselves through both paths and meet and talk, I assume there will be cross-fertilization.

EVAN BISSELL (THEKNOTTEDLINE.US)

Still, many conservatives who do believe in redemption see it as entirely compatible with punishment. Anyone harmed by crime is likely to feel colossal anger and so traditional notions of "an eye for an eye" will always have great appeal, especially if no mechanisms exist for satisfying the victim's needs for empathy, answers, or restoration. If restorative options start to divert large numbers from prison, conservative investors in the prison-industrial complex will surely mobilize to protect their investment. They are likely to fund emotive appeals for punishment, many of them in traditional (and selective) biblical terms, and possibly with racist overtones.

The essence of mainstream restorative justice is a practice of listening and empathy that is by nature corrosive of ideology and self-righteousness. Thus, combining thorough personal accountability with an *understanding of the ways one's environment has molded one* is a complex task, not easily assimilated into some conservatives' worldview. But that may change.

Middle America's Reactions to Restorative Justice

On balance, I assume that most hardcore conservatives will not go for mainstream restorative justice. However, many middle-of-the-road people, including many evangelical Christians, may well support it when they see how well it works for crime victims they know and for any of their own relatives and friends who are arrested for offenses. In a recent case it was remarkable how quickly some police families came around to wanting a restorative justice option when one of their own kids was caught in a possible offense. If approval grows in middle America, it will mainly be because of positive personal experiences that will contradict the media stereotypes and polemics approving punitive justice.

Liberal Reactions to Restorative Justice

The appeal for liberals may be obvious: take better care of victims; drastically reduce the prison system; spend the money on education and public aid instead; reject ugly emotions of revenge; and reintegrate offenders into the community where they can lead productive lives and pay taxes.

But what would liberals make of Peter Gabel's vision of an astonishingly different kind of legal system? Some might feel that's going too far. That's to admit that fear of the other has been central to the liberal project all along. That's to allow that the vaunted rationality of liberalism never has been free of emotion, but has too often been put to *(continued on page 65)*

What's Love Got to Do with It?

by Fania E. Davis

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. defines justice as "love correcting that which revolts against love."

Dr. King made this visionary and audacious declaration at the first mass meeting of the Montgomery Improvement Association at the Holt Street Baptist Church on December 5, 1955, just days after the arrest of Rosa Parks. It was the meeting where Rev. Ralph Abernathy put forward the resolution to initiate the Montgomery bus boycott. The church was located in a black working-class section of the city. Both the sanctuary and the basement auditorium were filled, and an overflow crowd outside listened via loudspeakers. Many reporters, photographers, television crews, and black leaders were present. The meeting opened with two hymns, "Onward Christian Soldiers" and "Leaning on the Everlasting Arms."

King then delivered an address that included this definition of justice as love correcting that which revolts against love. He later recalled his thoughts before the address:

> How could I make a speech that would be militant enough to keep my people aroused to positive action and yet moderate enough to keep this fervor within controllable and Christian bounds? I knew that many of the Negro people were victims of bitterness that could easily rise to flood proportions. What could I say to keep them courageous and prepared for positive action and yet devoid of hate and resentment? Could the militant and the moderate be combined in a single speech?

Is Dr. King's definition of justice context-bound? Or is it a universal definition of justice that withstands the test of time? Is it relevant today, or is it bound by the particulars of place and circumstance?

At first blush, on a personal level, this definition of justice bears no resemblance to the justice I pursued in my lifetime as an activist and civil rights lawyer. Love seems to have had little to do with my warrior-activist pursuits, whether as a militant black student fighting against racism and in support of the Black Panthers in the 1960s, or as a socialist fighting the evils of capitalism, or as a black woman fighting to save my sister Angela Davis from a legal lynching based upon fabricated charges of murder and conspiracy to murder a Marin County judge in the 1970s.

For the restorative justice movement to grow strong, it must recall its past, like the Sankofa bird.

RJOY (ELEANOR COONEY)

We were at war. Our relentless pursuit of social, racial, and economic justice in those days had nothing to do with love. It was us versus them. Or so it seemed.

And this continued through the 1980s after I became a civil rights lawyer fighting all-out civil rights wars in the courtroom against employers and on behalf of clients who were victims of employment discrimination.

What does love have to do with the hypermasculinist, hyperrational, aggressive, warrior-like personal qualities I was compelled to cultivate in order to be successful in these pursuits?

The New Jim Crow

Moving to the present day, this definition of justice as love correcting that which revolts against love appears to have little to do with our existing horrific and retributive paradigm of criminal justice. It has little to do with our rapidly expanding—or more appropriately, metastasizing—prison industrial complex, which has trapped the largest number of prisoners in the history of humanity. It has little to do with the death penalty or with the recent execution of Troy Davis. Nor, for that matter, with the execution of Lawrence Russell Brewer, a white man executed in Texas on the same day as Troy Davis, for the hate crime of dragging to death a black man, James Byrd, thirteen years ago.

It has little to do with the appallingly racialized justice described by civil rights advocate and litigator Michelle Alexander in *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*. She tells us that today, more African

Fania E. Davis is co-founder and executive director of Restorative Justice for Oakland Youth (RJOY).

The Healing Walls project brought together men in a Pennsylvania state prison, their loved ones, crime survivors, and victims' advocates to explore the complicated journey of dealing with the aftermath of violence. Healing Walls: Inmates' Journey *(on this* Tikkun *issue's cover) deals with feelings of remorse and atonement for crimes committed.* Healing Walls: Victims' Journey *(above) focuses on the absence of loved ones and changes in identity that survivors of crimes experience. The complex and at times difficult dialogue that evolved in the process was captured in an independent movie,* Concrete, Steel, and Paint.

HEALING WALLS: VICTIMS' JOURNEY
3049 GERMANTOWN AVENUE
© 2004 CITY OF PHILADELPHIA MURAL ARTS PROGRAM / CESAR VIVEROS AND PARRIS STANCELL
PHOTO © JACKRAMSDALE.COM

Americans are incarcerated, or on probation or parole, than were enslaved before the Civil War began. And that, as of 2004, more African American men were disenfranchised (due to felon disenfranchisement laws) than in 1870, the year the Fifteenth Amendment was ratified, guaranteeing black males the right to vote. A black child born today is less likely to be raised by both parents than a black child born during slavery. And Alexander teaches that the recent disintegration of African American families and communities is due in large part to the mass imprisonment of black parents and their children and the constant cycling from their communities to prisons and back again.

Further, a large majority of African American men in some urban areas have been labeled felons for life (nearly 80 percent in the Chicago area) and are part of a growing undercaste permanently relegated by law to a second-class status. They can be denied the right to vote, automatically excluded from juries, and legally discriminated against in employment, housing, access to education, and public benefits, much as their grandparents and great-grandparents were during the Jim Crow era.

What does love have to do with this searing and heartrending picture of the justice we know today?

A Lofty but Utopian Vision?

Are we then to conclude that Dr. King's definition of justice as love correcting that which revolts against love is a lofty but ephemeral and utopian vision, bearing little relationship to the way things are? A time-bound definition that is not true for us today?

Addressing this first on a personal level, about fifteen years ago, I reached a point in my life as warrior-lawyer-activist when I became so burnt out and starved for spiritual sustenance that, through a series of synchronistic events, I ended up shutting down my law office and then found myself apprenticing to a South African traditional healer. Intuitively, I realized I was out of balance and needed an infusion of more feminine, healing, and spiritual energies in my life to re-equilibrate. Thus I imagined I would never return to the law and to the hyperrational, hypermasculinist, bellicose qualities I was required to cultivate as a trial lawyer.

But after receiving my Ph.D. in African Indigenous studies, I started practicing law again by default because I could not find any way to do this healing work on a remunerative basis. However, with the experiences in Africa, I was beginning to sense that law and spirituality, and justice and love, are not the polar, irreconcilable opposites I once conceived them to

Fania E. Davis (at right) engages with students at Restorative Justice for Oakland Youth's Castlemont Peacebuilding Academy, summer 2011.

RESTORATIVE JUSTICE FOR OAKLAND YOUTH (RJOY)

be. I could be a lawyer *and* a healer—a healer of the social body.

Dr. King's definition of justice actually foresaw and prophesied this shift in my personal journey. But the shift that Dr. King foretold is not at all limited to my own story of transformation; it is the story of the evolution of justice itself.

In the last three-and-a-half decades, a new paradigm of justice has emerged on the historical stage—a justice that seeks not to punish, but to heal. A justice that is not about getting even, but about getting well. A justice that seeks to transform broken lives, relationships, and communities rather than damage them further. A justice that seeks reconciliation rather than a deepening of conflict. A justice that seeks to make right the wrong rather than adding to the original wrong. A healing justice rather than punishing justice. A restorative justice rather than retributive justice. This new but ancient justice is none other than love correcting that which revolts against love.

Not long after I re-entered the practice of law after returning from Africa, I learned about restorative justice from Ronnie Earle, former District Attorney for Travis County (Austin) Texas, at a retreat with Peter Gabel and the Project on Integrating Spirituality, Law, and Politics. Listening to Ronnie provoked an epiphany and marked a climax in my own years-long movement toward wholeness, integrating the warrior, healer, and lawyer within me. Now I could be all these things at once. This led me to co-create Restorative Justice for Oakland Youth in 2005. Our mission is to promote a cultural shift from punitive responses to youthful wrongdoing that add to harm to restorative responses that heal and repair it.

Restorative Justice's Promise

As the late cultural historian Thomas Berry noted, if we are to move into a viable future, we must re-invent what it means to be human. That is our historical imperative. Ultimately, I think restorative justice can help midwife a new evolutionary shift of the species into what Berry calls the Ecozoic Era: an era in which humans will no longer be entranced with ways of being and thinking that create domination, discord, and devastation, but will be present upon the earth in mutually enhancing ways—ways that bring about healing and wholeness and holiness with one another and with all of creation. My dream is that restorative justice might help move us from an ethic of separation, domination, and extreme individualism to an ethic of collaboration, partnership, and interrelatedness. In this sense, I would say this movement is more subversive than any of the revolutionary movements in which I have been involved since the 1950s. All previous social justice movements have kept us trapped in discordant, binary, either-or, right-wrong, and us-versus-them ways of being present to one another and to the earth.

On the civil rights plane, restorative justice also has remarkable potential to push back the New Jim Crow of mass incarceration which, due in no small part to Michelle Alexander's ground-breaking work, is increasingly being recognized as the major human rights challenge of our era.

Pitfalls

Having done this work now for several years, however, I have observed that we are generally perceived as—and too often behave as—a white movement. This is an enormous challenge, raising grave questions as it does about our future as a movement and about our ability to fulfill its extraordinary promise. We clearly have what it takes on technical levels to offer effective and healing alternatives to racialized mass incarceration. The question is whether our movement has the will to meet this historic challenge.

If you google restorative justice and race you will find little or nothing. There is a wonderful blossoming and veritable creative explosion of essays, books, and articles written on restorative justice in the last two-and-a-half decades, but not even a handful address race, or the Civil Rights

Movement and restorative justice, or mass incarceration and restorative justice, or disproportionate minority contact—the overrepresentation of youth of color in the juvenile justice system—and restorative justice.

I believe we have not learned from the history of the peace, women's, and environmental movements' initial failures to intentionally engage issues of race. I believe we have forgotten our recent historical roots. We have forgotten who we are. Restorative justice is an heir not only to the victim's rights, feminist, mediation, prison abolitionist, and Mennonite movements, but it also has its spiritual roots in the Civil Rights Movement—in nonviolence, ahimsa, satyagraha, truth-telling, engaging the enemy with compassion, consistent with Dr. King's and Mahatma Gandhi's visions of justice. While several historical antecedents converged to give rise to the restorative justice movement, the Civil Rights Movement was a principal contributor, having a defining impact on its thrust and spirit.

Dr. King's definition of justice foreshadows restorative justice. His core vision of creating the beloved community is closely akin to the relationship and *(continued on page 68)*

The Restorative Impulse

by Kay Pranis

I believe that the restorative justice movement is a manifestation of something much larger than itself: a fundamental shift in how Western culture understands the nature of our species and the nature of the universe.

Assumptions about human nature and the universe underlie all our social institutions and all of our relationships—with self, with others, with the natural world. These assumptions shape the actions we take each day in the context of institutions such as our families, faith communities, neighborhoods, workplaces, schools, social services, and justice systems.

My friend Howard Vogel, who teaches at Hamline Law School, talks about the "restorative impulse." This term may be more helpful than the term "restorative justice." As my work has evolved, the scope and depth of change required for a shift toward a restorative impulse in all situations seems greater and greater. Restorative justice was never about crime for me. It was always about community and how we live with one another. However, I did not understand at the beginning how much we had to change our worldview to shift how we respond to things that go wrong.

It has taken years for some of that worldview shift to seep into my understanding—and I am deeply grateful to Native American and First Nations teachers, especially Mark Wedge, Harold Gatensby, and Yako Tahnahga, as well as Pema Chodron from the Buddhist tradition, for opening my heart and mind to other ways of relating to the universe. And I am very grateful to modern physics and biology for helping me understand how we can integrate those spiritual understandings with modern society.

Half-Surrender *by Kinnari Sutariya. Acrylic.*

PRISON CREATIVE ARTS PROJECT

I want to note here that the spiritual teachings I am talking about are not dogma. I don't believe in any particular spiritual tradition. The concept of a Higher Being does not work for me, but I find a set of core values infusing most spiritual traditions that are the same as the values I see underlying the restorative impulse. These are the values that describe how to be in good relationship with one another. So spirituality is one

Kay Pranis is an independent trainer in restorative justice and peacemaking circles. She was formerly the restorative justice planner for the Minnesota Department of Corrections. She has coauthored several books on circles.

of the ways people can relate to the restorative impulse and find motivation to act on that impulse. And there is a lot of life wisdom in many spiritual teachings.

An important shift in worldview that could move us toward daily use of the restorative impulse is the shift from seeing the parts of the universe as distinctly separate to the understanding that we are profoundly connected to every one and every thing in the universe. That means that what happens to any part of the universe will affect me—including anything I do to another part of the universe. It also means we cannot drop out, kick out, or get rid of anything. We must deal with one another and with our environment. From this worldview "getting rid of" is *never* a solution because we are never really rid of anything—we are always still connected. When we think we are not connected, we are often not paying attention to how the connection is impacting us.

The analogy of garbage and the environmental movement helps me understand this idea. Not that many decades ago, we "threw things away"—like tossing a bottle out the car window—and genuinely thought we had gotten rid of it and it was no longer a problem. It turned out that the places to which we were "throwing things away" were poisoning our groundwater and our soil. As one person said to me, "What we have learned is there is no 'away.'"

PRISON CREATIVE ARTS PROJECT

The sign on the cage in this painting, Deep Sense of Need *by incarcerated artist Bryan Picken reads, "For Disposal." This acrylic painting and the art on pages 33, 35, and 38 all come out of the Michigan-based Prison Creative Arts Project.*

Our social structures still operate as if there is an "away." Our solution to many problems in relationships is to "get rid of." We try to get rid of the difficult employee, we expel kids from school, we send people to prison, we cut ourselves off from those with whom we have conflict, or we move out of the "bad" neighborhood. We do all of this without looking at the systemic structure that is involved in the problem behavior. We take these actions without looking at our own part in the dysfunction. And we pretend that this solution does no harm to us. The restorative impulse requires us to look at the context of the situation, to look at our own role in harmful behavior, and to recognize that harm to anyone else is harm to us as well.

The emphasis on interconnectedness is not unique to restorative justice. There are countless other movements or initiatives for peace and nonviolence that come from the same philosophy. A contribution of the restorative justice movement is that it came with specific processes that help us to turn the philosophy into action. And it can be applied to daily life, so we get constant opportunities to practice a different way of being with one another when harm happens between us. Restorative justice turns out to be very practical as a way to promote a fundamental shift, even though it sometimes requires us to turn our habits upside down.

Another important concept of restorative justice is non-domination. The practices of restorative justice require an equal voice for all stakeholders. If you are affected by a decision, you get to be part of that decision. Decisions are made by consensus in restorative practices so one interest cannot simply be run over by another interest with a larger number of participants. In a restorative approach, we practice democracy in a fundamental way.

The use of restorative practices is currently only on the margins, but the growth is steady, especially in schools. The vision of interconnectedness and non-domination is a very powerful vision. The power of that vision, combined with the practicality of restorative practices, has enormous potential to move Western culture through a paradigm shift. Western science suggests that interconnectedness and nonhierarchical self-organization are the scientific nature of the universe. The paradigm shift represented by restorative justice is consistent with emerging science.

Human beings are genetically bound to community in some form. We evolved in community. We are programmed genetically for collective survival rather than individual survival. We need others. Current Western culture thwarts that need in many ways. There is a deep human yearning for connection and community. Restorative practices offer a pathway for shifting social structures to be more responsive to that need.

The fear of not belonging and the pain of feeling that one doesn't belong are at the root of much violence and harm in the world. Living as if everyone belongs might be the biggest violence prevention measure we could ever devise. ■

Healing from Harm and Unlearning Violence

by Sonya Shah

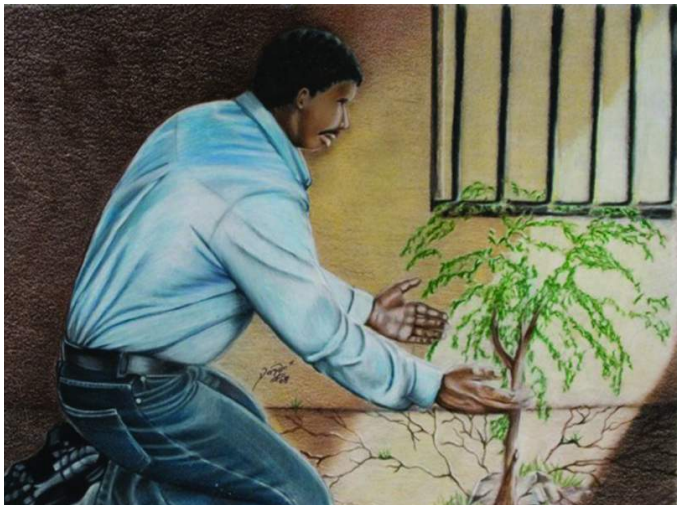
"I just want to know," Mack paused and took a moment to ask what was in his heart, "how do I live with the stigma of being a murderer?" Mack was on the brink of tears. His face was red with vulnerability. Serving twenty-five to life, this man in his mid thirties was participating in a dialogue between victims and offenders at San Quentin State Prison in California. He had just finished revealing the details of his crime thirteen years earlier and was left with more truthful questions about the meaning of his life.

On the surface, Mack had just "taken accountability" for the violence he had committed. But in the deeper poetry of accountability, Mack held the pieces of his life in his hands, felt each for texture, and placed them on the table. Then, in the nakedness of truth, he began the painful journey of fitting them together until the real picture of his life unfolded in a circle of ten incarcerated men, three facilitators, and three victims of violent crimes in the room.

In this exercise, offenders meet with "surrogate" victims—real victims, but of harm caused by other offenders. I was one of three victims serving a surrogate role. Before Mack spoke, I had just finished explaining how childhood sexual abuse had stunted my emotional development. I talked about the years I had spent unlearning patterns I had adopted at age six for survival, and the grueling process of learning new patterns in my twenties and thirties. I told the group I still have trouble trusting men; that I still shove my feelings inside and, like an untended pressure cooker, I explode periodically onto the closest bystander, an emotional event that has cost me many meaningful relationships.

Offenders and Victims Talk Face-to-Face

For many, the moment when a victim and an offender come together is a peak moment of a restorative process. This is the moment when the victims express how they were harmed and what they need today and the offenders take accountability for their crimes. But what is all of the "invisible" work that comes before this moment? For me it's a commitment to confronting negative behaviors and stunted emotional growth that originated in my childhood. And for the "offenders"— what does it take for them to truly articulate their crime and its impact? What does it mean to make accountability not a buzzword but a solid foundation for a life path? Can one engage in processes of accountability *without healing,* and shouldn't they be connected?



Perpetuation *by Darius White. Prisma Pencil.*

PRISON CREATIVE ARTS PROJECT

True accountability can't be faked. True accountability requires an offender to commit to entering those deep, dark, scary, shut-down places and attempt to heal. Healing is hard work. There is nothing easy about finding a new relationship to unresolved trauma in one's life. There is nothing easy about picking apart how exactly one is locked into the emotions and thinking of a child. There is no simple or singular way out of feelings of shame and humiliation from childhood experiences of abuse or poverty. And for some offenders, what does it take to confront the structural oppression and the historical legacy of colonialism, slavery, immigration, war, or genocide that are lodged in their bodies?

Sonya Shah is an assistant professor at the California Institute of Integral Studies, a volunteer facilitator in the Victim Offender Education Group (VOEG) at San Quentin, an activist, and a writer.

Members of a Victim Offender Education Group graduating class of 2010 in San Quentin prison pose with facilitators Rochelle Edwards (at front), Jaimee Karroll (at back), and Jack Dison (far left).

LAURA BOWMAN SALZSIEDER

When offenders can see how all of the pieces of their past fit together, they can connect the dots of their life that led up to a crime and experience accountability in a deeply embodied way. There is a saying in this work: "the only way out is through." It means the way to self-liberation, the way to hold the stigma of murder, to reclaim one's rightful place in humanity, to repair relationship to community, is to commit to "doing the work" of healing. In restorative justice, we need to embrace all of the important restorative processes—in particular the lifelong work of healing that victims, offenders, and people in the community need to undertake in order to repair.

The Process of Unlearning Violence

A year later, I am a volunteer facilitator in the Victim Offender Education Group program at San Quentin, the same program where I sat as a surrogate victim. The program was founded by Rochelle Edwards based on the work of David Doerfler, and is heavily influenced by the principles of restorative justice. It is a twelve-to-eighteen-month program that is spreading: five classes are offered in San Quentin, which is an all-male prison, and 125 men are on the waiting list there. The program is reaching prisons in Dublin and Alameda, and working with post-release programs such as Homeboys in Los Angeles. This is thanks to the tireless work of Edwards and the staff of Insight Prison Project, the nonprofit that houses the Victim Offender Education Group.

I often step back and ask myself why programs like the Victim Offender Education Group or the Resolve to Stop the Violence Program in San Francisco are successful. What makes these models, above others, work? In my heart there is also "the other" questions. The questions that we as a society are dying to know because our humanity depends on it: If "violence is learned and can be unlearned," how do we know when someone has changed? How do we know when someone is no longer violent? What is the evidence? How does someone transform, exactly?

Periodically I study the literature on violence and its causes with the excuse of presenting it to my undergraduate students. I review James Gilligan's work around shame and humiliation; I look at the complex sociopolitical and historical patterns of different genocides. But mostly I pay attention to the men at San Quentin: I listen to what they say in trainings, graduations, and in my class; I talk with my co-facilitator, Jaimee Karroll; and I write down the words of wisdom that the men at San Quentin, Edwards, Karroll, and other facilitators say in passing. Their anecdotes are precious evidence of transformation and how it occurs as a real process of liberation from violence.

The other day I went to an information session for the Victim Offender Education Group. Edwards stepped up to the microphone in the San Quentin Catholic Chapel and rattled off a list of "evidence" of transformation to a room full of more than one hundred men waiting to get into the program. The evidence, although delivered casually, is teased out of an assessment that the Insight Prison Project is conducting of its programming and impact. Below is the gist of some of Edwards's comments (italicized), followed by my own observations:

After attending the Victim Offender Education Group, the men in the program report:

1. *A decrease in violent or negative behavior*. This is perhaps the most significant, tangible, and commonly heard evidence. I heard a story at the program's graduation a few months ago that captured this. The graduate said, "Yesterday a man on the yard came up behind me and smacked me on the back of the head with a few rolled up sheets of paper. Then let me tell you where my mind went—it went to taking a baseball bat and beating him up. But that isn't what I did. I walked away, man; I just walked away."

2. *The ability to connect the dots of their life to the day of their crime*. At a training session for outside facilitators, one of the program's inmate facilitators captured it in a way no one else could: "How did I go from being a boy who wouldn't step on an ant to a gun-toting gang banger? In this program I was able to retrace my steps, learn, and apply the tools to process that."

3. *A real connection to one's emotional self*. At that same training session, another man said: "When I came to the program I was skeptical. I am an intellectual and not in touch with my emotions. But people said to me—if you want to go home, you have to go to the Victim Offender Education Group. I had to know my emotional side. I know stuff about everything else but not me. In the program, I learned about me."

4. *An increase in thinking critically*. Critical thinking and critical self-reflection are important mechanisms the men in this program learn to build into any moment in which they are triggered by someone else's actions or behaviors. By creating the reflective space to step back, step away, or go talk to a friend, a man can move away from engaging in a violent incident to "checking in with himself," meaning processing on an emotional, intellectual, cultural, or historical level why he was triggered.

5. *Recognition that anger is not a primary emotion but a secondary emotion*. Once a man recognizes he is getting angry, he can look for the feelings behind the anger to primary emotions such as fear or hurt.

6. *An increase in empathy*. At the program's graduation, a man said, "In my family we shed blood before we shed tears. Not only did I learn how to cry in this group, I couldn't stop crying when I heard the other brothers in the group tell their stories." Once he developed compassion for himself, he was able to develop empathy and compassion for others.

7. *A better understanding of the body-mind connection*. Another inmate co-facilitator commented, "Mind-body connection is paying close attention to one's experience in the moment without the mind judging or evaluating that experience. It has a lot to do with redirecting the activity of the mind to feeling bodily sensations." *(continued on page 69)*

A New Vision for Correctional Officers

by Sunny Schwartz and Leslie Levitas

Incarceration has been failing for decades as a means for promoting public safety. More often than not, the finger is pointed at the unreformed inmate as the source of that failure. What about those who work in prisons and jails? What responsibility do they bear for promoting real change that reduces crime and restores communities? What difference could they make if they were trained in the basic principles of human relations, business management, and motivational change, not to mention restorative justice?

In this article we share our experience, as longtime developers of restorative practices in a San Francisco County Jail, of the deputized staff who have assisted in bringing about a new vision. We honor the courage of those mavericks, and acknowledge the desire of many more to be a part of that vision. We recognize how a profession that is unavoidably brutal can, with the right institutional leadership, encouragement, and training, take steps toward becoming the noble vocation that many correctional officers long for it to be.

We have known decent, smart, and compassionate people who have worked as deputies or correctional officers. If that surprises you, you may be prejudiced. But you would not be alone, because the nature of the prison system encourages each of us to take sides and dehumanize everyone on the other side. The most inspiring people behind the clanging doors of jail and prison are those individuals—whether wearing prisoners'

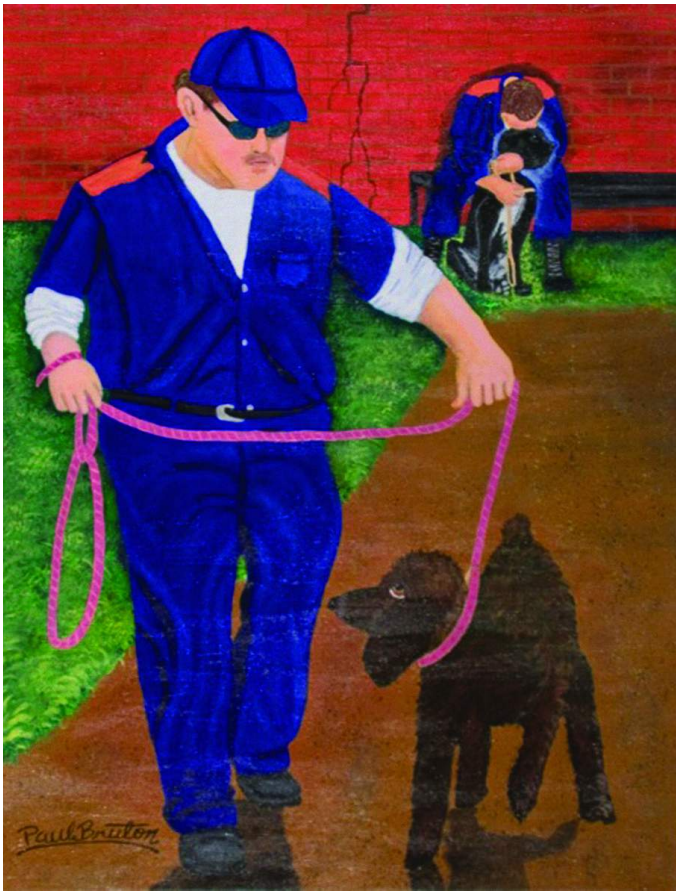
Sunny Schwartz is the author of the book Dreams From The Monster Factory: A Tale of Prison, Redemption and One Woman's Fight to Restore Justice To All *and has worked in the San Francisco Sheriff's Department for thirty-one years. Leslie Levitas, M.A., has worked for the San Francisco Sheriff's Department since 1996. She has coauthored articles on a variety of topics related to criminal justice and social justice. Her writing and photograpy were included in the recent anthology* Razor Wire Women: Prisoners, Activists, Scholars, and Artists *(SUNY Series in Women, Crime, and Criminology).*

fatigues, law enforcement uniforms, or civilian clothes—who resist that temptation and, in doing so, help to build humanity where it is in short supply.

How Prisons Fail Correctional Officers

Let's be clear, there is nothing ennobling about our current prison system. The traditional way of incarcerating and releasing people is a "crime after crime." Most members of the general public now know what industry insiders have known for forty years. In the typical jail or prison, men or women sleep in their bunks, play dominoes and cards, watch *The Jerry Springer Show* on TV, and scheme. About two-thirds of those released are rearrested within three years. The corrections system has failed the victims of crime and our communities' needs and expectations. It has failed the people inside, and their families. What many of us do not yet realize is that the system has also failed the professionals who run it.

For sure, deputy sheriffs (or "deputies") who work in county jails and prison custody staff (commonly referred to as correctional or corrections officers, COs, or sworn staff) have careers that appear attractive and are lucrative. They are paid to attend a mandatory four-to-six-month pre-employment training/academy. They begin their careers free of student loan debt. Many undergrads would envy that, along with the starting base salary between $45,000 and $65,000, an extensive benefit plan and defined-benefit pension that provides for retirement at age fifty-five with 85 percent of salary for life.



PRISON CREATIVE ARTS PROJECT

A prisoner paints a guard: Someone Cares, *by Paul Bruton. Acrylic.*

But the content of the standard training does not adequately prepare them for the realities they face on the job or the highly stressful and inhumane things they are asked to do. Occupational stress is a pervasive problem within all correctional jurisdictions. Deputies and corrections officers face the daily challenges of effectively managing the inmate population as well as their own stress levels.

A correctional officer's life expectancy is heartbreaking. On a national level, according to the Correctional Peace Officers Foundation project statistics published in 2004, there were thirty-nine deaths in the line of duty in the four years preceding the report. The suicide rate for corrections has been recorded as 39 percent higher than that of other professions (Archives of Suicide Research, 1997). The Society of Actuaries reported in 1994 that Corrections Officers had the second highest mortality rate of all occupations. The Metropolitan Life Actuary Statistics reported in 1998 that the average life expectancy of a corrections officer is fifty-eight.

Our goal for the sworn staff is not just to reduce this stress level by developing more collaborative and humane ways to manage prisons. It is to give them a positive role in creating better communities in the low-income locales from which most inmates come, and from which many of sworn staff also come. We envisage a future in which restorative justice spreads nationally and prisons are drastically reduced in number, but in which the sworn staff are partners in this vital approach, utilizing their experience in holding people accountable, in combination with restorative practices, thereby gaining the respect of all segments of the community.

Corrections Staff Training for the Monster Factory

What goes through the minds of the deputy sheriffs and corrections officers as they enter the jail to start their shift? It may be the pride that comes with a career in public service. Or it may be fear of real and valid threats to the safety of themselves and their co-workers. It may be the thought of eight hours doing a job that has elements of boredom and repetition. It may be the frustration and disgust of seeing the same individuals returning to custody year after year, each time looking and acting the worse for the wear.

From day one, the typical training to become a sworn officer focuses on learning defensive tactics, crowd control, and physical take-downs. There is minimal, if any, discussion of the psychology of inmate populations from a humanistic perspective, and little light is shed on the pathways into the criminal justice system. The core curriculum does not cover issues related to the complex socioeconomic backgrounds of their charges. The required classes to work in a jail make no mention of restorative justice or other vehicles of hope for change.

Furthermore, all of the training to work in this area reinforces an us-them mentality that these professionals

learn early in their training: "We" (sworn staff) are the good guys, and "they" (the inmates) are the bad guys. "They" (the prisoners) are the worst dregs of humanity, the underbelly of our communities who have histories of hurting people, including us, and who are destined to hurt our families when they get out.

The professional program staff and volunteers who provide a range of educational, restorative social programs for inmates are often considered to be more a part of the "they" than the "we": they may be seen as "bleeding heart liberals," lazy, protected by the sworn staff, useless (because the inmates are seen as unable to change—"once a criminal always a criminal"), expensive to the taxpayer, and even colluding with inmates. Program staff may be seen as offering a community-college-level education free to criminals—an education that the sworn staff have to pay for their own children to receive.

As with any culture that you become a part of, whether the most progressive or the most conservative, you are expected to uphold the tenets and ideology of that culture. Members of the law enforcement culture develop a brotherhood/sisterhood that carries a fierce loyalty and mutual respect that enable them to function in the adversarial, difficult, and at times dangerous conditions of the jail. It is likened to being in the foxhole together during times of war.

But there is a backlash to the group mentality: it often results in members of the group succumbing to peer pressure, secrecy, collusion, and the infliction of cruelty. We must not forget the 1971 Stanford Prison Experiment, led by professor Philip Zimbardo and others, which demonstrated a classic abuse of power by ordinary citizens. A group of students were randomly divided into prisoners and guards and relegated to a mock prison in the basement of the Stanford Psychology Building. Those in the role of "guards" took their authority to extremes, including enlisting some of the "prisoners" to assist in psychologically torturing others. These were not "bad people," they were educated people placed in an inhumanly unequal and oppositional system that is hard to withstand.

A Different Way of Doing Business

Over 50,000 arrested or charged individuals go through our revolving jail doors each year in the city and county of San Francisco. The men and women behind bars here, like those incarcerated across the country, have been abandoned to society's scrap heap. Those who committed crimes not only hurt their victims, they also hurt themselves, their own families, and their communities. Many of them have suffered violence and abuse as children and their crimes only perpetuate the cycle of violence. As adults, they have violated the public's trust and many people want them locked away for a long time, even in the relatively forgiving environment of San Francisco. But most prisoners will eventually be back on the streets, so it is essential that they are released with the skills to lead a better life.

Time in jail or prison provides a break from the chaos of dysfunctional lives and the cycles of insanity so an inmate can reflect on past behavior or gain skills for the future. When this time is enhanced with evidence-based treatment programs and educational services, it has the potential to dramatically change a person's life for the better, interrupting the cycle of crime that can affect generations to come.

Drawing on this perspective, in 1990 the San Francisco Sheriff's Department opened its first program facility where, in professor Linda Zupan's words, "a new generation of jail management" existed. A new architecture promoted civil and humane management. Equally important was redesigning the selection, training, and management of jail staff. Starting with leadership: a civilian (who was himself an ex-offender) was appointed as the overall facility director with responsibility similar to any prison warden. Being an ex-felon is not a prerequisite for this job, but having the backbone and the belief in people's ability to change is fundamental.

He chose to institute policies that were more integrative and inclusive of all staff, which resulted in collaborations between sworn and civilian staff, better officer safety, and an eye on reducing the recidivism. Civilian staff were cross-trained in fundamental safety and security measures, while correctional officers were cross-trained in programmatic content and delivery of services. Essential to the success of this was the partnership of a high-ranking sworn officer who led by example and inspired the ranks to buy into a concept that went counter to everything they had learned before about how to do their jobs.

We designed a comprehensive implementation program that set out clear goals and ways to measure success. We asked how helpful each program was to both prisoners and staff, and brought program staff and custody staff into each others' meetings so that they shared responsibility for each others' tasks. We designed various methods to keep open lines of communication and to emphasize at every opportunity the shared mission of both staffs.

We brought the elephant into the room by stating clearly what everyone had been expected to believe, naming all the misconceptions and stereotypes that sworn and program staff had about each other and about the prisoners. We stated that our goal was to create a professional environment free from misconceptions and stereotypes. Our challenge was, "Imagine yourself as an agent of change" and, "Remember: resources are not the problem, lack of commitment and leadership is!"

The San Francisco Sherriff's Department implemented programs at this facility that addressed the issues needed to get people out of their lives of crime: deficits in education and literacy; comprehensive family services including re-unification, when appropriate, and expanded visitation while in custody; violence prevention; relapse prevention; and job training and vocational readiness, to name a few.

How It Has Worked for the Sworn Staff

The success was overwhelming, with recidivism rates going down and in-jail violence significantly reduced. Deputies who worked in the program facility reported that these benefits

carried over into their personal lives, with stress reduction and less time off for work-related injuries. Eventually, many of the staff who had at first resisted the integration began requesting to be assigned to this facility. One deputy said:

> I kept hearing about the "love jail programs" and thought what a bunch of crap ... then I was forced to work there for cross training and thought I may have to quit ... I have to be honest, after two weeks of working at the program facility, I noticed when I got home, and my wife noticed it too, I wanted to do more things with my family and play with my kids. I never thought I'd say this but these programs are good for us also.

Over the years, the programs at this facility have evolved to include a restorative justice approach to working with male inmates. We mandate people to attend programs that help them stop their hurtful behavior and we offer the victims something they almost never get from the criminal justice system: empathy, support, and direct services. The Resolve to Stop the Violence Project, which works with violent men and those harmed by their violence, the Community of Veterans Engaged in Restoration for incarcerated veterans, recovery programs, and our own charter high school are examples of this approach.

The Possibilities of What Could Be

Imagine every jail and prison to be a place where we create and provide no-nonsense programs that invest in people's success and our public safety. Imagine that all uniformed staff in our jails and prisons are trained to be interventionists and educators who hold people accountable for their behavior by providing opportunities for those prisoners to change the behavior that brought them to prison. Think about it: being a correctional officer is probably one of the most thankless and stressful jobs. A man or woman is in a pod or tier or dormitory eight to ten hours a day, depending on their shift. All around our nation, these shifts exist around the clock, 365 days a year, in which professionals can have a profound, positive influence on the millions of prisoners that come in and out of our jails and prisons. If those uniformed staff are encouraged and rewarded for their humanity, role modeling, and contribution, this would have everlasting public safety benefits by returning individuals back to our community more prepared to become pro-social, law-abiding citizens and participants in restorative justice efforts. That would put true meaning to the title of "correctional officer."

It is time to bring our social justice principles to a higher ground for prisoner and worker alike. Just as programs have been developed that change the culture for inmates, changing the culture for those who work in the jails boils down to the question of leadership.

Now is the time for a new approach to training corrections officers throughout the country. We now have "realignment" in California, whereby those formerly sent to state prison for nonviolent, nonsexual crimes will stay in county jails or participate in community-based supervision programs. Many shudder at this change, but if done right, intelligently, and with heart, this can be a way out of the madness of doing business as usual with matters of crime and punishment. We can change the way we sentence, incarcerate and release prisoners that will improve public safety, reduce cost, and ultimately enhance our civilization. Now, and in the future, we have the opportunity to bring more effective and more humane conditions both to those who live and those who work within the walls of our prisons and jails.

Ideally, restorative justice is about creating alternatives to prison altogether, but we can do it both inside and outside as everyone has a stake in this, Republican or Democrat, big tent liberal or small-government conservative; this isn't a partisan issue, it is a human one. We can actually use the prisons to make us safer if we realign the way we operate our jails and prisons. If our prisons really correct behavior, we all win. It will only happen with a new vision and expansion of what the sworn staff can do for their and everyone else's health and safety. ■

In the Man.Alive *play (see caption on page 28) Reggie Daniels (left) accounts for his actions, speaking through the piece to his often-neglected eldest son (played by Freddy Gutierrez, at right) who is now caught in the same street life that enveloped him.*

RUTH MORGAN (COMMUNITYWORKSWEST.ORG)

Confronting Sexual Assault:

Transformative Justice on the Ground in Philadelphia

by Bench Ansfield
and Timothy Colman

JENNA PETERS-GOLDEN

Lee was all too familiar with the impact sexual assault can have on lives, communities, and social justice organizing. After being sexually assaulted by a prominent anti-poverty organizer, Lee felt confused and betrayed. He stepped back from the campaign the two of them had been working on together and began to avoid the organizer as much as possible. It was months before he told anyone about the assault.

Eventually, he joined a support group for survivors of sexual violence, and began to work through some of the numbness, shame, and fear that had developed after the assault. As he began to confront these feelings, what emerged from within him was a deep well of grief and anger. It became more and more difficult to see the organizer at community meetings or friends' parties. He started getting angry with his housemates for inviting the organizer to events at the house, even though they had no knowledge of the assault. Much of his anger stemmed from the lack of repercussions facing the organizer, as well as the lack of power he had to protect himself from the organizer's ongoing presence in his life.

Lee knew that he did not want to report the sexual assault to the police, for a whole long list of reasons. He would lose control of his story if he reported it; he would be forced to tell the details of what happened to the police and to testify in court; a number of painful details about his own life and history might emerge; and he would almost definitely lose the case. But more importantly, the idea of pressing charges felt like its own tragedy. He had become politicized in the anti-police brutality movement and was now involved in prison abolition organizing. Lee's sense of justice, what would make him feel like the anti-poverty organizer had faced his due, had nothing to do with courts or cops or prisons. Finally, no matter the verdict, he didn't believe a court case would make the organizer change. Lee wanted him to somehow understand the harm he had done, take responsibility for it, and transform whatever it was inside him that had made him do it. But Lee didn't want to be the one to push the organizer to change—he couldn't even bear to be in the same room with him. And so he just tried to forget the incident had ever happened.

Lee's story—which we are sharing with his permission, having changed his name and identifying details—evokes the frustratingly limited options available to survivors of sexual assault in most U.S. cities and the urgency of creating new systems. This is a helpful starting point to begin discussing transformative justice approaches for addressing sexual assault.

What would happen if our responses to sexual assault came from a vision of the world we want to live in? A scattering of groups, including UBUNTU in Durham, Safe OUTside the System Collective in Brooklyn, Young Women's Empowerment Project in Chicago, Community United Against Violence in San Francisco, and others across the United States and Canada, are working to create community accountability and support networks based not on the punitive and coercive methods of the criminal justice system but rather on principles of care and harm reduction.

In Pennsylvania, two organizations involved in this work are Philly Stands Up and the Philly Survivor Support

Bench Ansfield is an organizer with Philly Stands Up and Philly BDS. Timothy Colman is an organizer with the Philly Survivor Support Collective, a former member of Philly's Pissed, and a contributor to The Revolution Starts at Home: Confronting Intimate Violence Within Activist Communities *(South End Press, 2011). If you are interested in learning more or donating to support their work, please visit: phillysupportstands.wordpress.com.*

Collective, groups that trace their roots back to 2004, when a group called Philly's Pissed formed out of a burning rage at the lack of options for survivors of sexual assault in their communities. Based in West Philadelphia, both groups work in collaboration to shift cultural responses to sexual assault, bring healing and accountability to the fore, and challenge the punitive response of the state. Faced with a criminal legal system that routinely disempowers survivors and an exploding U.S. prison population, it is clear that we are in dire need of alternatives to prevent, confront, and heal from sexual assault and intimate partner violence.

One way to move away from the punitive methods of the criminal legal system is to turn toward the idea of community accountability. Our work is about realizing the potential carried by our families, communities, and networks to address violence without relying upon the police, courts, prisons, or other state and nonprofit systems. We did not invent this strategy; many of our guiding principles have been made possible by indigenous communities' responses to violence, both historically and contemporaneously, as well as INCITE! Women of Color Against Violence's groundbreaking efforts to document community accountability models.

Instead of interrogating and victim-blaming the survivor, then punishing and demonizing the person who perpetrated assault, we envision and construct systems of community accountability that are grounded in safety, self-determination, healing, and the human potential to change. Central to this generative project is an understanding that instances of sexual violence occur within larger systems of structural violence and oppression. We must confront each individual act of sexual violence within its systemic context. At the same time, we must build alliances with movements both in Philadelphia and beyond to end all forms of interpersonal and state violence. We call this work transformative justice, and we practice it as part of an inspiring movement that is germinating throughout North America.

Forging Paths to Safety, Justice, and Healing

Applying a transformative justice approach to the issue of sexual assault means working to support individual survivors while building real options for safety, justice, and healing outside of punitive and disciplinary state systems. Efforts to create alternative systems such as this are underway from North Carolina to California. Here in Pennsylvania, the Philly Survivor Support Collective is working to create and maintain systems of support and accountability wholly outside the framework of the criminal legal system.

Our commitment to transformative justice comes out of a recognition that the criminal legal system dehumanizes and disempowers all survivors, in addition to increasing the amount of violence in all of our lives. This negative impact is most acute for survivors and communities who are already disproportionately targeted by state violence, including communities of color and indigenous communities, and survivors who are sex workers, incarcerated, and/or transgender. We believe that efforts to transform our communities must be grounded both in the present moment—in the form of ensuring survivor safety and prioritizing survivors' self-directed healing—as well as in the long haul: working toward a vision of the world we want. In order for the movement to end sexual assault to be led by those most directly affected, we must build our capacity to support each other's healing, ensuring that as survivors, we are able to bring the fullness of our wisdom and experience to the work.

For many people, it is difficult to even conceive of a way of responding to violence—whether sexual assault or other kinds—that does not rely on the courts, police, or prisons. We are eager to share a description of our work in Philly with the hope that it will encourage others to join in the growing movement to create alternative approaches to addressing harm.

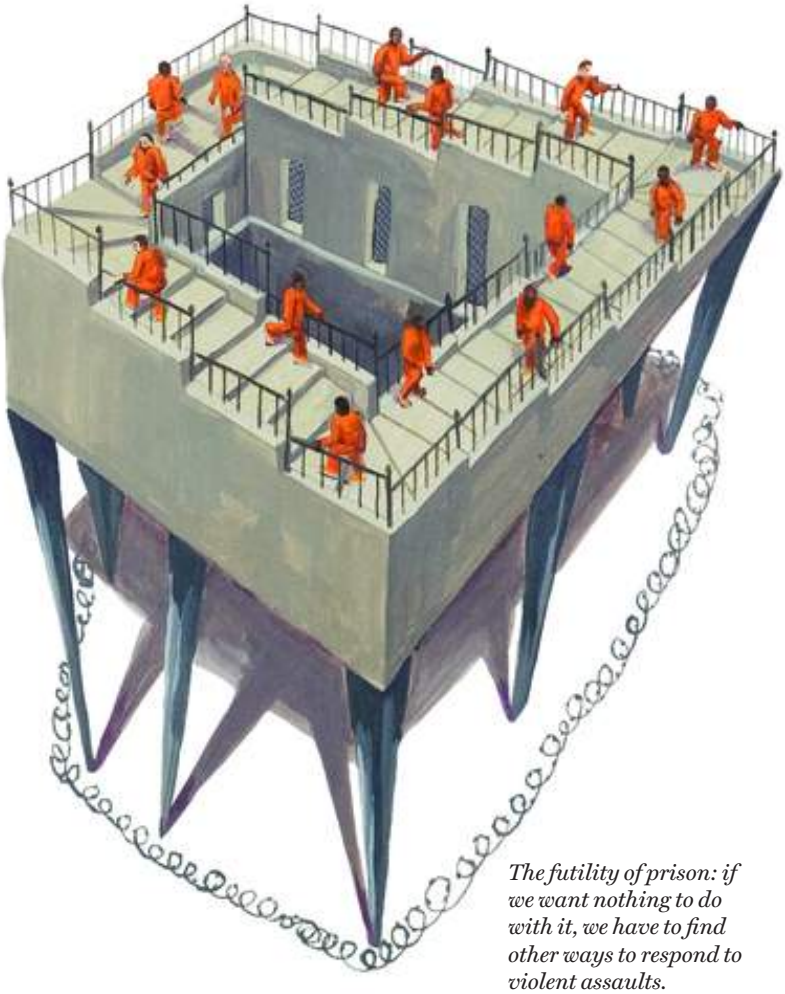
On an individual level, our work is always directed by the survivor. Our role is to listen to them, meet them where they're at, offer emotional support and resources, and create solutions together. We ask survivors if they have initial priorities that they want to focus on as a first step; after they identify these, we creatively plan together how to address them. These often include immediate health or safety needs, such as emotional support, medical care, counseling, strategizing to engage the support of people close to them, acupuncture, child care, safety planning, travel to get away from a harmful situation or to be near loved ones or concrete resources, or any number of other needs.

After these urgent needs are met, we stay present with survivors as they begin to explore options for accountability, justice, and healing. Transformative justice offers a lens through which survivors can examine the underlying conditions where the violence occurred, and identify what change they might want from the person who harmed them, their community, or the broader world. Survivors might pursue individual or collective paths to healing, might make demands for accountability or transformation from the communities or organizations where the assault occurred, and might make demands of the person who harmed them or leave that person aside altogether. During this process, we work to transform the community, people, or institutions that surround the survivors, increasing the capacity of the community to be responsive to the survivors' needs.

Each situation we take on offers its own challenges, which are also possibilities for growth and transformation. If a survivor chooses to make demands for accountability from the person who caused harm, we may assist the survivor in engaging the support of friends or community members to communicate these demands, or in facilitating an accountability process with Philly Stands Up. If the person who caused the harm is still in the survivor's life or community, we can work with the survivor to create a safety plan or ask for certain shared-space policies.

Safety planning is a tool often used by survivors who are in a relationship with an abusive partner, to minimize potential harm and to have a plan to draw upon quickly if they need to leave. Shared-space policies are commitments made by loved ones, community members, or organizations to take certain actions, as determined by the survivor, in the event that the survivor is put in the position of sharing space with a person who has harmed them. These policies can act as one alternative to a restraining order. The action requested by the survivor might be to ask a person who has caused harm to leave spaces where the survivor is present until that person has demonstrated a behavior change, or to have support teams on hand that can offer solidarity, support and safety to the survivor when the person who caused harm is present. Another option survivors might pursue is identifying harmful practices or attitudes endemic within their community or the larger culture that contributed to instances of sexual violence, such as victim-blaming, silencing, sexism, racism, transphobia, transmisogyny, classism, ableism, criminalization of sex work, and many others, and calling upon people to work collectively to eradicate these attitudes.

It is important not to place the burden for ending sexual assault on survivors. We must fight the idea that the survivor of a sexual assault is responsible for transforming the person who harmed them or preventing that person from sexually assaulting someone else. Our work is founded in the transformative justice principle that we are *all* responsible for addressing the root causes of sexual assault, and that together, we hold the power to transform our communities.



The futility of prison: if we want nothing to do with it, we have to find other ways to respond to violent assaults.

EVAN BISSELL (THEKNOTTEDLINE.US)

Toward a Non-Punitive Accountability

It can be a harrowing process to let ourselves open up to the hope that someone who has perpetrated assault can truly be accountable, especially given the shortage of models of justice that are not entrenched in retribution, dehumanization, and incarceration. Transformative justice processes—like those that Philly Stands Up facilitates with people who have perpetrated assault—are fundamentally about altering our ideas about what seems possible, reminding us that we can no longer afford to dismiss people who harm others as inescapably violent. Our accountability processes are inspired by our faith that we really can dream up and practice methods for confronting sexual violence that move us toward safer, more self-determined communities, as well as gnaw at the structural underpinnings fostering cultures of violence.

Our interventions are rooted in the safety, healing, and demands of the survivor, but often go beyond these foundations to ask how we can identify and transform the patterns of behavior that enabled the assault in the first place. As we work to shift accountability away from the survivor and onto the person who perpetrated assault, we have to define what accountability means in each unique situation. The contours of each process look quite different from one another, but they share the same core objectives. Over the course of weeks, months, or years, our weekly meetings strive to push the person who perpetrated assault to recognize the harm they have done (regardless of their intentions), acknowledge the harm's impact, make appropriate restitution, and develop skills for transforming attitudes and behaviors that are harmful to self or others.

Whenever possible, an intervention treats as its grounding document a list of demands from the survivor that have been shared with us by the survivor directly or through the survivor support collective. These demands can range from "do not share space with the survivor" to "compose a letter of apology" to "disclose to your current and all future partners." The demand list guides us throughout an intervention and offers a tangible checklist we can use to measure our progress.

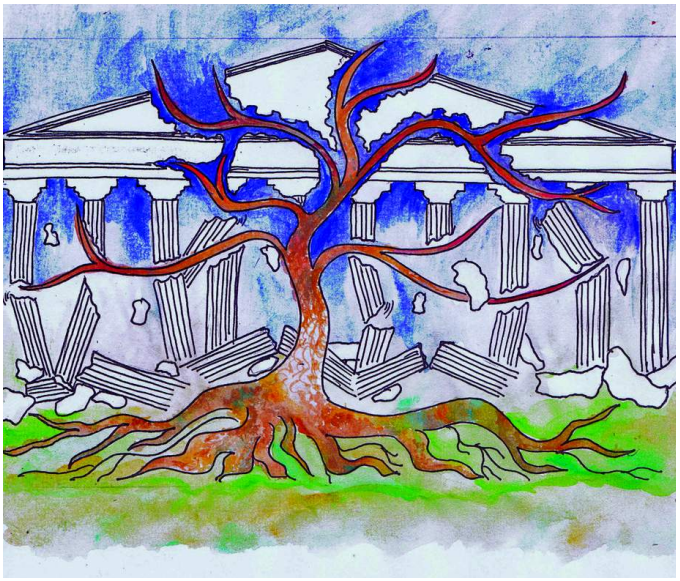
Frequently, though, our processes are forced to reckon with issues unprompted by a survivor's demands. When a person who has just been called out for sexual assault first comes to us—either on their own volition or due to community pressure—their life is often in shambles. Before we can start recounting specific violent incidents or reading over a demand list, we have to make sure that they have secure housing, a decent job, and a steady diet. It is not unusual for us to help them obtain a suitable therapist or assist them in reaching out to their loved ones for support and guidance. These tasks are critical for most any transformative

justice process, as they enable the capacity for change by collaboratively cultivating tools for finding balance and grounding. Through this methodology, we not only build trust and model interdependence, we also work toward eliminating a mainspring of sexual assault—instability and insecurity.

Often the most difficult challenge facing an intervention is earning "buy in" from the person who perpetrated assault. Because we reject the forceful violence intrinsic to the criminal legal system's interventions into sexual assault—such as forced "rehabilitation," incarceration, or, so frequently, inaction—we are forced to devise creative techniques to consensually pull someone into a process. Although we sometimes have to rely upon the use of community leverage to persuade someone to work with us, we make every effort to draw someone in by helping them acknowledge their own call to change.

It is critical to tailor an accountability process in such a way as to make the person we are working with understand that they *need* the process. Of course, this acknowledgement can only arise in a trusting and comfortable atmosphere. For this reason we keep our meetings small and intimate, with two members present for each intervention. Often we meet in public spaces like a park or a train station so as to avoid making the person who perpetrated assault feel cornered or attacked. And we collaboratively design a process around their needs and abilities. During one intervention, any given meeting might have involved visual activities like sketching and mapping, breathing exercises, or poetry. These strategies reflect an ongoing balancing act as we strive to make the person who perpetrated assault feel safe enough to respect the process and be vulnerable, while still being open to the challenges we are posing.

As an accountability process slowly gains traction, we begin to identify harmful patterns of behavior as potential sites of transformation. Facilitating the recognition of deep-seated and destructive cycles of behavior can be one of the most trying elements of an intervention. Most often, this requires naming and unpacking the ways that various privileges and internalized oppressions play out in relationships. For instance, we may have to unravel how ableism was at work in an able-bodied person's repeated coercion of her partner to have sex during flare-ups from an autoimmune disorder. Or we may have to map out how a cisgendered man's patriarchal socialization contributed to a general imbalance of control in a heterosexual relationship. In a similar fashion, our interventions frequently scrutinize how oppressive race and class dynamics contribute to a relationship atmosphere ripe for sexual assault. As facilitators, this is often the most hazardous ground to cross. Acting as both witness and mentor to a transformative justice process is alternately frustrating and enlivening, appalling and regenerative.



SOFIA SAIYED AND ANNA GRANT

It is critical to note that our work is not about "curing" the person who perpetrated assault. A lifelong and cross-generational project rooted not in that person's rehabilitation, nor in the restoration of the community that existed pre-assault, transformative justice is, rather, a consistent movement toward community safety and individual/collective transformation.

By way of illustration, our intervention with Jesse (again, a pseudonym) lasted two years, and continues with occasional check-ins. At the beginning of his process, Jesse showed up to meetings recalcitrant and invulnerable. Certain that he had done nothing harmful, he argued that his ex-partner—the survivor in this situation—was getting revenge on him by "misrepresenting" as assault an incident that was in actuality a simple issue of poor communication. In order to sustain the process and keep him coming to meetings, we put the assault in question on the back burner for the first six months, dedicating our time together to building trust and helping him secure a new home. Slowly, as facilitators, we began to identify his harmful patterns of behavior—including pent-up anger, narcissism, and an inability to communicate his needs. Correspondingly, we set about cultivating relevant tools, such as empathy-building, anger management, communicating in stressful contexts, and establishing consent during sex. By the time Jesse was amenable to discussing the specific incidents of assault, we had already developed a wide set of tools for empathizing with the experience of the survivor, identifying his destructive actions, and practicing a different course of action in a similar context. Many months later, when Jesse had met the survivor's demands, indicated his capacity for healthy relationships, and demonstrated a command over his own damaging behavior, we began transitioning out of the process. Yet even now, with the intervention no longer active, our check-ins with Jesse confirm that he is pressing on with the critical work of self-transformation, effectively keeping the accountability process alive.

Seven years out, it still feels as though we are reaching through the dark nearly as often as we are coming up against familiar scenarios. As one small piece of a growing movement, we know it is only through our risks and mistakes that we can collectively forge creative responses to violence. ■

The biannual Dakota Commemorative March retraces the 150-mile forced march imposed on about 1,700 Dakota people in 1862. The photographer, Reuben Kitto, marches with his family every time in memory of his ancestor Pazahiyayewin, who endured the march at age twenty-six with her four children and elderly mother, at the same time that her husband was sentenced by a military tribunal to death by hanging. Is restorative justice able to address harms on the scale of genocide and white supremacy?

REUBEN WAMBDI KITTO JR.

Decolonizing Restorative Justice

by Denise C. Breton

When I first heard about restorative justice, I remember feeling liberated and inspired by the idea of a movement that advocates responses to harm that do not inflict more harm. What a concept! It gave me hope that the untold harms in this world could be addressed in healing ways—ways that addressed why harms were happening in the first place. We could put our energies and resources into repairing whatever needed mending and changing whatever was generating hurt. Because there is no part of our lives where conflicts, hurts, and harms do not arise, restorative justice can be revolutionary to virtually everything we do. The concept seemed so simple yet so profound.

Restorative justice still gives me hope, but my experiences and conversations on the 2004 Dakota Commemorative March, and my reflections since then, have dramatically changed my orientation to the restorative justice movement. I still believe that it holds huge promise for helping us learn how to coexist, but I now think the very essence of restorative justice as a philosophy and way of life calls us to expand our focus to include more than person-to-person harms. What about our history—how we got to where we are as peoples? How did we end up with this "square pegs only" pegboard, and at what cost?

These are the more fundamental questions—those that make us look at the roots of harm. As we do, we are challenged to apply what restorative justice practitioners have learned about healing harms between individuals to healing harms between peoples. This is the direction restorative justice must go, I believe, or it will fall short of fulfilling its promise. Indeed, it will risk joining the other side and becoming part of the institutions that not only deny the greatest causes of suffering but also actively perpetuate harm.

The Dakota Commemorative March

Participating in the Dakota Commemorative March was like watching, all week long, a movie about the terrible ways the white colonizers have treated the indigenous people in my home state of Minnesota, only I was in the movie and living it. I still am. The march commemorates what

Denise C. Breton is the co-founder and executive director of Living Justice Press, a nonprofit publisher devoted to restorative justice. Coauthor of four books, she is now writing Colonizers No More: Who Are We—Winners, Losers, or Relatives? *This article was adapted from an essay published in* In the Footsteps of Our Ancestors: The Dakota Commemorative Marches of the 21st Century, *edited by Waziyatawin Angela Wilson (2006, livingjusticepress.org).*

happened at the end of the U.S.-Dakota War of 1862, when about 2,000 Dakota people surrendered to the U.S. army with the assumption they would be treated humanely as prisoners of war. The organizers of the march explain on their website (dakota-march.50megs.com) what ensued:

> The men were separated out and tried as war criminals by a five-man military tribunal. As many as forty cases were tried in a single day, some taking as little as five minutes. Upon completion of the trials, 307 men were condemned to death and sixteen were given prison sentences. The remaining Dakota people, primarily women, children, and elderly, were then forced to endure brutal conditions as they were forcibly marched to Fort Snelling and then imprisoned in Minnesota's first concentration camp through a difficult winter.
>
> As both groups were paraded through Minnesota towns on their way to the camps, white citizens of Minnesota lined the streets to taunt and assault the defenseless Dakota. Poignant and painful oral historical accounts detail the abuses suffered by Dakota people on these journeys. In addition to suffering cold, hunger, and sickness, the Dakota also endured having rotten food, rocks, sticks, and even boiling water thrown at them. An unknown number of men, women and children died along the way from beatings and other assaults perpetrated by both soldiery and citizens. Dakota people of today still do not know what became of their bodies.
>
> This ethnic cleansing of Dakota people from Minnesota was one part of the fulfillment of a larger policy of genocide. Governor Alexander Ramsey had declared on September 9, 1862, that, "The Sioux Indians of Minnesota must be exterminated or driven forever beyond the borders of the state." The treatment of Dakota people, including the hanging [of thirty-eight Dakota political prisoners] in Mankato and the forced removal of Dakota people from Minnesota, were the first phases of Ramsey's plan. His plan was further implemented when bounties were placed on the scalps of Dakota people, which eventually reached $200. Punitive expeditions were then sent out over the next few years to hunt down those Dakota who had not surrendered and to ensure they would not return. These actions cleared the way for white settlement of Minnesota.

Gov. Alexander Ramsey

CREATIVE COMMONS/ LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

During the commemorative march, I saw a look on the faces of the Dakota, especially the elders, when they saw me—blond as can be, clearly white and not raised among them. Many had endured lifetimes of suffering at the hands of white colonizers—nearly boiling water poured on children's hands in boarding schools as punishment for speaking their own language, beatings and sexual abuse in schools, rapes and murders never even investigated much less brought to justice, children stolen from their parents, continually dehumanizing stereotypes and messages about them in colonizer society, exclusion from economic opportunities, and complete denial that injustices had ever been done. Though not ungracious, the Dakota elders did not come up to me, shake my hand, and say how glad they were to see me there. How could they?

Restorative justice does involve bringing together victims and offenders, but only after considerable preparation has been done on both sides. Forcing those harmed to come together with those who have benefited from those harms prematurely could inflict greater damage, especially during times when the victims of harms want nothing more than to be left alone to grieve their losses. As for us colonizers, we are far from doing our preparation for such a meeting.

When I identify myself as a "colonizer," it is not a label I take on with pride. Rather, with a heavy heart I apply this term to myself to reflect my realization that no matter how deeply I seek to align myself with anti-colonial struggle in the present, the reality of my white skin, the family into which I was born, and the subtle ideologies I was raised with place me on the wrong side of history. I apply the colonizer label to myself and to other white people in the United States to remind us to expand our awareness of how we have been programmed to be racist and of how we now function as colonizers, not only by benefiting from past harms but also by justifying them, so that the status quo that secures our advantage remains unchanged.

Most of us have not seen this movie of catastrophic harm to "others." We live oblivious to the immensity of harms done, so we are not even considering what preparation on our part would be necessary for a restorative justice meeting with Native peoples.

Minnesota's colonizer society has responded to this history and its effects mainly through social service programs or, if those fail, through the criminal justice system—in other words, by imprisoning Native people. Yet neither of these responses addresses the roots of harm. Quite the opposite, they keep the movie's plot going in its original genocidal direction, because the aim of both institutions—social services and criminal justice—is forced assimilation into colonizer society. They are not designed to honor the Dakota People or to rectify longstanding harms against them. As Waziyatawin, Ph.D.—author of *What Does Justice Look Like? The Struggle for Liberation in Dakota Homeland*, *For Indigenous Eyes Only: A Decolonization Handbook*, and more—so clearly explains, a

social service mindset further blames the victims of genocide, racism, and colonization; it does not promote decolonization by challenging these realities as the roots of harm.

Restorative justice could offer a more appropriate response, because it requires acknowledging that at the root of these harms lie criminal acts—indeed, immense crimes against humanity. The issue between Minnesota's colonizer population and the Dakota People is a criminal issue first. All the social, economic, and political issues that Native people face today follow from this central truth: crimes have occurred that have never been rectified or brought to justice.

How Restorative Justice Is Losing Credibility With First Nations

As with any victim-offender situation, restorative justice processes begin when the perpetrators of harm acknowledge what they did and take responsibility for the harms they caused. Acknowledging the crime and rectifying its effects are central to helping both the victim and the offender recover and be able to live good lives. Only when the crime is addressed to the victim's satisfaction can the victim and the offender begin to explore whether or not they are able to be in a good relationship with each other.

REUBEN WAMBDI KITTO JR.

If, however, the crime is not even acknowledged, much less repaired, victims are continually revictimized. In fact, they are often blamed for the harm, as if they deserved to suffer or as if it were their fault; they are blamed for failing to "bounce back"; or they are blamed for the dismal condition that the crime left them in. The assumption is always that something is wrong with the victim. In the meantime, the offenders not only go scot-free with the booty but also continue to harm their victims by not holding themselves accountable for the ongoing suffering they are causing.

If the restorative justice movement fails to address the colonial crimes embedded in our history, it will risk losing credibility in this country, as it seems to have already done in Canada. Many First Nations now reject restorative justice, and precisely on these grounds. The core vision of going to the roots of harm and doing what it takes to put things right is experienced as empty rhetoric, invoked only when colonial power structures deem it advantageous to do so. Instead of working toward wholeness for colonized peoples, restorative justice functions as another tool of colonizer institutions, whose goal is not healing but for one group to justify and reinforce their domination of another. Restorative justice is simply used to make the violence of the criminal justice system—the colonizers' control-by-fear fist—seem more humane. Instead of addressing the wider contexts that generate harm, the focus stays on trying to fix person-to-person conflicts. Individuals, families, or communities are viewed as "the problem," while the larger reasons that individuals, families, or communities have problems remain invisible. Restorative justice is used to serve the needs of the colonizer state, not to empower communities and liberate peoples.

This does not mean that we as individuals—colonizers or Original People—should not be held accountable for the harm we do. Yet here in Minnesota, we colonizers have not been held accountable *at all* for state-sanctioned, citizen-supported crimes against humanity—and yet we describe ourselves as international leaders in restorative justice. How could Dakota people—or anyone else who knows the history—take restorative justice seriously if we diligently hold this or that offender accountable for drug possession or stealing a car or even doing graffiti while we fail to hold ourselves accountable for genocide that we committed so we could steal an entire state's worth of land and bequeath it to our own, generation after generation? If we were to apply our own laws about murder and stolen property to this case, we would have to rule that every time we sell a house in Minnesota, we commit a felony, and every Minnesota realtor should be imprisoned for dealing in stolen property gained through murder.

What White People Can Do

Restorative justice does not have to be hijacked into being an accomplice to colonization, for its roots are not there. If restorative justice embarks on large-scale healing between entire peoples, the systemic issues causing suffering to Native peoples will begin to be addressed and rectified. Together we can acknowledge the massive harms done, name racism as it operates to hurt Native peoples, arrange substantive land return, honor the inherent sovereignty and self-determination of Native peoples, make restitution and reparations, return the billions of dollars missing from trust funds that have been accumulating from the white use of Native resources (the 2010 Cobell settlement did not begin to repay what was stolen), respectfully cease behaviors that denigrate Native peoples (such as using them as sports mascots), and teach everyone the full history of this land.

These steps of healing justice give us an agenda to work on, yet we do not have to wait for local, state, *(continued on page 69)*

Shifting School Culture

by Rita Alfred and Ina Bendich

"That's not fair!" This phrase was uttered daily by many of the students in Oakland's public school system. Even when they were caught in an act that violated school rules, students did not readily take responsibility for their actions. They were simply playing their role in our punitive system, in which most students tend to blame others rather than accept the consequences for their behavior. Our search for ways to change this paradigm led us to explore the practice of restorative justice.

Training to Change the System

During the fall of 2005, I (Rita) was employed by the Oakland Unified School District as a case manager working with students and their families who were referred for expulsion. As case managers with backgrounds in counseling and mental health, we were charged with finding alternatives to suspensions and expulsions. In December 2005, I was mandated to attend a four-day training on restorative justice, organized by a local community agency, Restorative Justice for Oakland Youth. The training was facilitated by Roca, a youth development agency from Chelsea, Massachusetts.

After completing the training, I was assigned to Cole Middle School and worked closely with the principal and assistant principal as a case manager for the school's Pupil Disciplinary Hearing Panel. The administrators and I had several conversations about student suspensions and expulsions and lamented that the children returned to school showing no behavior changes. It was a vicious cycle, an unending revolving door. This situation exacerbated the already chaotic school culture of fights and defiance.

My job was to create a paradigm shift within the school context by introducing restorative justice as an alternative to the traditional discipline system. After my training with Roca,

Harsh school discipline drives many students into juvenile and adult prisons. Students illustrated the school-to-prison pipeline at a Representing the Pipeline event in Chicago in July 2010. See suspensionstories.com.

SUSPENSION STORIES (SUSPENSIONSTORIES.COM)

I returned renewed and ready to try this new way of working with student violations. The principal, having had several years of experience as an assistant principal, agreed that suspensions and expulsions did not work to change student behavior. Together, we began the restorative justice journey at Cole.

Year One: Bringing Teachers On Board

I began the restorative justice educational process by offering support meetings for teachers to vent and reflect on

Rita Alfred and Ina Bendich are co-founders of the Restorative Justice Training Institute in the San Francisco Bay Area. They provide trainings and consult with schools interested in implementing restorative justice practices to build positive school climates. They are also dedicated to eliminating the school-to-prison pipeline through preventing and/or mitigating the harmful effects of punishment and zero tolerance in schools.

A circle meets at Cole Middle School in Oakland, California. The restorative justice pilot program at Cole, which Rita Alfred coordinated, was so effective in reducing suspensions, expulsions, and violence that staff at about twenty schools sought training and assistance to bring restorative practices to their sites. In large part due to these efforts, in January 2010, Oakland's school board passed a resolution adopting restorative justice district-wide as official policy.

JULIE MALLOZZI

their experiences with the students in the classroom. Many of them were in their first year, and classroom management was especially challenging. I built close relationships with several teachers and offered assistance to them in their classrooms whenever I could.

In August of 2006, after several planning meetings with the principal, we launched a year of training for the teachers. We unearthed conflicts among staff and used the restorative justice process to work through them. At the same time I was facilitating restorative circles with students and discipline conferences with students, families, administrators, and teachers when needed. We started out with a two-day training in August, negotiated a monthly staff training using the process, a follow-up two-day training in November, and another follow-up two-day training in the spring.

The staff built a closeness and willingness to work through differences. By the end of that year, the majority of the adults at Cole were ready to bring this new practice to the students and their families. We experienced some good results in the first year: a reduction in fights, suspensions, and referrals for expulsion. We also saw close to 100 percent retention of teachers—this was unprecedented as turnover was usually around 50 percent—with just one teacher leaving for higher studies. And we all experienced a more positive school culture.

Year Two Onward: Students Take It On

In 2007 we continued with an initial two-day training for staff in August, monthly restorative justice staff meetings/trainings, and a one-day training in the spring. A teacher and I taught a restorative justice elective class for eighth-grade students. Students from this class presented a restorative justice workshop at the annual middle school conference. Teachers and administrators referred cases to the restorative justice process. Many of these cases were resolved successfully. Fights were down again, and fewer students were referred for expulsion. In 2008, our principal left the area and a new principal came on board. The teachers and I were on the hiring committee and were able to garner a commitment from the new principal for this healing work to continue at Cole. He was enthusiastic about the process.

Students identified the restorative justice process as "fair," and with some encouragement, many admitted when they did something wrong. Suspensions fell by 87 percent. Students continued to embrace these practices in high school: their principal noticed that Cole students actually accepted responsibility when they committed harm and expected adults to include them in the restoration process.

Perhaps the most rewarding part of this work arose when the Cole students moved on to high school. In 2005, the larger comprehensive school, McClymonds High, was broken into two small schools. Thus Cole students had the option to choose between BEST, which offered an entrepreneurial track, and EXCEL, which offered a law and international trade track. The EXCEL Law Academy director solicited Cole students. Her plan was to incorporate restorative justice into a youth court program that had previously handled teacher and administrator referrals using the traditional adversarial process. Within three to four weeks, Cole students were actively facilitating restorative justice circles based on referrals submitted by teachers and administrators.

These students not only handled conflicts that arose between other students, they were also able to manage

conflicts among themselves. One afternoon, a former Cole student was engaged in a verbal battle with another student that threatened to become physical. This incident took place in front of the principal's office when the Law Academy director happened upon the scene. She put her hand on the shoulder of the Cole student, and reminded her that she knew what to do. Almost immediately, the student stopped and, with her peer, responded to the familiar series of questions posed by the adult. This restorative conversation kept both students from receiving a suspension once the principal became aware of their willingness to solve the problem constructively.

Lessons Learned for Restorative Justice in Schools

Restorative justice is a philosophy and set of practices that move us from being punitive toward someone who has done something wrong to being receptive and constructive while holding the person accountable. It first began in the juvenile justice system, but in the last fifteen years, schools have begun to adopt its principles and practices. Schools have found that for these to effectively help students to change their behavior, practitioners need to build a wider culture that can support the changes in behavior that students are trying to learn. We also found that students need to be supported after experiencing the practice. Hence restorative justice encompasses the intervention and also the community-building and culture change necessary to provide the caring conditions in which change can be made and re-integration can occur.

"School House Jail House" reads the text on this painting by a student at the Representing the Pipeline event.

SUSPENSION STORIES (SUSPENSIONSTORIES.COM)

In many schools, some structures already exist to support a culture of caring. Many schools implement Second Step, Too Good for Violence, Too Good for Drugs, and Tribes—programs that assist in building a foundation of caring and help students and adults work collaboratively to solve problems and resolve conflicts. Conflict mediation, victim-offender dialogue programs, and youth courts are also in place to correct wrongdoing, in addition to structures such as school support teams, school attendance review teams and review boards, parent/teacher conferences, and case management, which bring people involved in a student's life together to help the student. These structures may or may not be restorative.

Being restorative is many things—it is holding onto *and practicing* values that promote ideals such as inclusiveness, respect, responsibility, honesty, compassion, love, open-mindedness, kindness, and consensus-based decision-making. It is a way of being in relationship with all people and, in some cultures, being in relationship with all things, including nature and other animals. Thus restorative practices embody many of the ideals of religious and moral thought.

Justice, on the other hand, attends to the harm caused. Justice occurs when people who have been harmed can ask for what they need and get what they need to move on. Justice occurs when those who were harmed are allowed to communicate the impact of the harm to the person who harmed them and finally feel that they have healed. Justice occurs when people who have caused harm realize what they have done, feel remorse, discover the underlying causes that led them to commit the harmful acts, heal, and are motivated to take actions that begin to right the wrong and finally to promise that they will not cause such harm again.

Justice occurs when the community gets involved whenever harm happens to anyone within the community and assists both the person harmed and the person who caused the harm. It is the community's responsibility to adopt applicable lessons from each situation into daily interactions among community members.

Implementing restorative justice in schools will require recreating our culture and how we interact with each other. Restorative justice and many of the structures and programs mentioned offer some ways to rethink and build on the caring culture that already exists. This will require taking a hard look at the way we *are* in our schools—how we behave, how we think about harm, how we hold and share power, and how we shift existing practices that undermine the culture of caring and accountability that we are advocating. This takes time and involves a process of inquiry that we are just now embarking on at the district level. ■

Culture

BOOKS | FILM | MUSIC

[BOOKS]

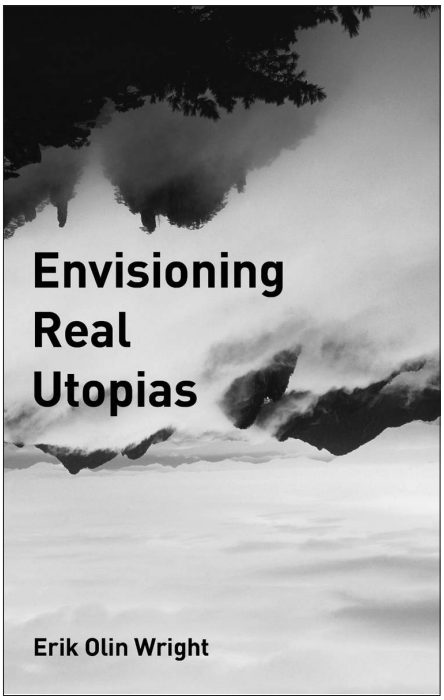
Socialism in Civil Society

ENVISIONING REAL UTOPIAS by Erik Olin Wright
Verso, 2010

Review by John Brueggemann

Near the end of the third and final volume of his masterpiece, *Capital*, Karl Marx raises an important issue. He writes, "The question to be answered next is: 'What makes a class?'" Marx had much to say about social class, but he never answered his own question very clearly. The book ends a few lines later with a cryptic note from his long time collaborator, Friedrich Engels: "At this point the manuscript breaks off. —F.E." Since then countless people have tried to clarify what Marx thought about class. One of the most productive efforts has been sustained by the sociologist Erik Olin Wright. He continues to argue persuasively that class relations constitute a fundamentally powerful force in world history.

From the perspective of "analytical Marxism," Wright argues that the goals of socialism are both compatible with rigorous empirical sociological research and plausible. In recent writing, he has actively turned toward a more accessible, public orientation, which is best exemplified in his ambitious new book, *Envisioning Real Utopias*. In this project he seeks to document, in a manner intelligible to a broad audience, the main problems of capitalism and the realistic possibilities for overcoming them. The inherent tension in the phrase "real utopia" is purposeful. Wright aspires "to achieve a clear elaboration of workable institutional principles that could inform emancipatory alternatives to the existing world."



The book is divided into three loosely related parts. The first offers a concise summary of the problems in capitalism, which have mostly been elucidated in his previous work. Capitalism perpetuates unnecessary human suffering, fosters consumerism, corrodes community, limits democracy, fuels militarism, and damages the natural environment. This part and those that follow are free of naiveté, hyperbole, and hysteria. Wright is diligently candid about tradeoffs and uncertainties.

The second part, the most interesting in my view, delineates a number of "real utopias." It begins by clarifying the strengths and weaknesses of Marxist theory in addressing the problems of capitalism. Among the shortcomings, we find four key predictions of Marx unfulfilled. The crisis of overproduction in capitalism is not imminent. Society has not polarized into two classes. The working class appears unwilling and/or unable to advance its own interests. Revolutionary transformation has been unsuccessful in realizing socialistic ideals. Therefore, the transition from capitalism to socialism will not unfold the way Marx suggested it might.

But there is genuine possibility for "social power" in civil society. Therein people are impelled to make certain decisions by way of persuasion (in contrast to the bribery of the market or coercion of government). Under the right circumstances people could make collective decisions via inclusive, civil processes that are beneficial to many over the long run, thereby realizing the

goals of socialism. But the first step is the expansion of imagination.

In this context, Wright reviews a broad range of real utopias (which are extant noncapitalistic activities that embody morally promising ideals), as well as *realistic* utopias (that is, comparable activities that appear viable but have not yet been attempted). He outlines large-scale frameworks, specifically market socialism and non-market democratic economics. He conjures untried radical programs, including "Unconditional Basic Income."

But the most interesting possibilities are particular experiments currently underway. The participatory city budgeting of Porto Alegre, Brazil, offers a concrete model of inclusive government. The Mondragon worker-owned cooperatives of the Basque region exemplify collectively profitable and mutually beneficial enterprise. Wikipedia is celebrated as an egalitarian system for generating and sharing knowledge; thousands of unpaid editors participate in democratic governance while maintaining quality comparable to the profit-oriented and hierarchical organization of *Encyclopedia Britannica*. At a recent conference where Wright was discussing his book, he mentioned public libraries as an inspiring and ubiquitous example of socialism. At his local library in Madison, Wisconsin, he noted, tools and instruction materials for plumbing and other home improvement work are available as well as books, videos, and the usual stuff. There is more socialism alive in the world than we might notice at first glance.

The third part of *Envisioning Real Utopias* is about how to realize broad transformation. Here the argument begins with the basic sociological premise that all aspects of social life must be reproduced every day. Millions of people make countless decisions, consciously and unconsciously, in ways that serve the continuity of culture. This recognition suggests that just as specific choices serve the reproduction of society, different choices could activate its reconfiguration. In the efforts to maintain a society's way of life, there are always gaps and contradictions, Wright explains. For example, the necessary autonomy of the modern state is persistently in tension with the goals of unregulated capitalist production. Such inconsistencies could be exploited by transformative strategies.

Wright outlines three categories of such strategies. The "ruptural" approach has been attempted in several revolutions with mixed results at best. "Interstitial" strategies refer to "various kinds of processes that occur in the spaces and cracks within the dominant social structure of power." Organic grocery cooperatives, fair-trade networks, women's domestic violence shelters, and civic environmental councils are common examples. The third approach is "symbiotic" transformation, epitomized by class compromise among capitalists and workers. Such arrangements can yield creative solutions to mutual problems like underconsumption or weak buy-in on the part of employees. The book's final chapter reviews the trade-offs of these strategies and argues that no one approach is especially promising but that some combination is eminently feasible.

As a professional sociologist who takes the ideals of socialism seriously and who aspires to live in accordance with Judeo-Christian values, reading this book was illuminating, inspiring, and troubling. I thought to myself: Has there ever been a bigger gap between what sociologists have learned through careful study and what public discourse says about the social world? And has there ever been a time when the insights of sociology were more urgently needed in coming to terms with the volatile ways we are all connected? At a moment when many of us have a harder time picturing the containment of unbridled corporate capitalism than we do the collapse of civilization as a whole, the effort to calmly conjure up other viable scenarios is a heroic act of conscience with potentially enormous practical implications.

However, there are troubling aspects of this work that represent missed opportunities. First, Wright mentions the importance of ideology in contributing to the ongoing reproduction of capitalist relations, but only in passing. Why did Americans forget the culprits behind the recession so quickly? In the wake of the BP oil spill, how has the Tea Party been able to depict our problems in terms of too much government? Why is taxation of those enjoying record profits in the context of a hemorrhaging economy a hard sell? Amid legitimate threats of terrorism, why will so few elected Republicans and Democrats talk seriously about the waste of voluntary wars in Iraq and Afghanistan? These questions are all tied up with the potent use of ideology. Moreover, so is any effort to imagine a different future. How we understand the moral order of society as it is and the one we hope for is fundamental to our perception of such issues.

A second problem involves religion. Like Karl Marx before him, Wright is not interested in religion. He briefly acknowledges that church groups often facilitate social empowerment and help people deal with the big questions—and then moves on. In fairness, though, organized religion does not seem interested in Wright or Marx either. Robert Putnam and David Campbell document in *American Grace* that Americans across religious traditions are less concerned about social justice than are those people reporting no religion. The moral sensibilities that most distinguish Americans of faith, according to their data, revolve around conservative stances on abortion and sexuality. Putnam and Campbell do corroborate the familiar finding that religious people generally give more money away and volunteer more. People of faith care about the needy. But the expectation that a broad overhaul is in order or that the government will take active steps to help facilitate economic justice is very limited. In general, American religious practices remain cozily embedded in the dominant culture driven by capitalism.

However, this complicity is neither permanent nor inevitable, as historical traditions of liberation theology among Catholics, Protestants, and Jews remind us. Nor is it the whole story, as the persistent efforts of the Catholic Worker

Movement, the American Friends Service Committee, Lutheran Services, the Emerging Church, B'Nai B'Rith, Jewish Funds for Justice, and many specific emancipatory projects across religious categories demonstrate.

Wright recently described himself as committed to the principles of the Enlightenment and the study of "facts." He suggested that any ideological framing of the Left would be just as much a lie as the spin used by the Tea Party, were progressives to employ such tactics. This stance, which is perhaps consistent with the stance of the secular Left more broadly, is separated by a wide chasm from the views of the religious Left. Many religious progressives who feel rooted in sacred texts understand the struggle for justice to be a matter of competing narratives of what is possible in the world.

In any case, the common ground that progressives of a secular or religious bent can muster around is the pragmatic possibility of collaboration among different elements of civil society. That is, many ideals of social transformation delineated by Wright concern organized religion as well as organized labor, academia, journalists, artists, voluntary associations, and various civic groups and social movements.

Those people who care about social justice, including religious progressives, need the sober analysis of Wright's critique of capitalism. They need to understand and bear witness to the unnecessary degradation perpetrated by corporate capitalism. They need to grasp, in both senses, the possibility of realistic solutions. Most of all, they need to be shaken from their cynicism, complacency, and narrow-mindedness.

But it occurs to me that Marxists like Erik Olin Wright might benefit from collaboration with religious progressives as well. Although *Envisioning Real Utopias* could be read by a broad audience, it won't be. Certainly not by those with the most to gain. They would not recognize themselves or their stories in the pages of this book. In the meanest book review I have ever read, historian Russell Jacoby says this of Wright: "His vast theoretical apparatus is jimmy-rigged and empty. The graphs are inane, the writing atrocious. To call this book dull as dish water maligns dish water. Wright is a man of the Left and undoubtedly supports with his heart, mind, and resources good causes. Yet only sociologists force-fed as graduate students will not choke on this book."

As depressing as Jacoby's take is, in all his self-congratulatory cleverness, he has a point. The book's theoretical focus and academic tone will ensure a narrow audience. By ignoring religion in particular, Wright is overlooking a potentially important set of allies who could help translate his ideas into a broadly accessible narrative of hope and serve on the front lines in its pursuit. On the ground where people live and hurt, down beneath the aloof prognostication of the ivory tower and the church steeple—that is where ideas really matter. ■

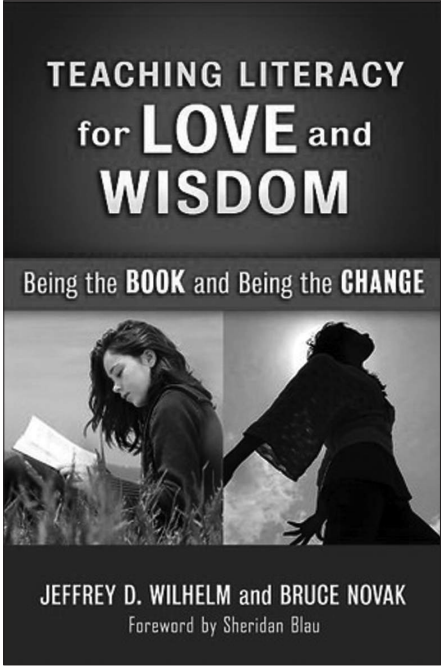
John Brueggemann is professor of sociology and Quadracci Professor in Social Responsibility at Skidmore College. His most recent book is Rich, Free, and Miserable: The Failure of Success in America *(Rowman & Littlefield, 2010).*

EDUCATING FOR WISDOM

TEACHING LITERACY FOR LOVE AND WISDOM
by Jeffrey D. Wilhelm and Bruce Novak
Teachers College Press, 2011

Review by Svi Shapiro

THE DISSONANCE BETWEEN the vision that now animates public education in this country and the view offered by Jeffrey Wilhelm and Bruce Novak in their new book on teaching English is sharp indeed. The most recent cheating scandals that have rocked the public schools in Atlanta and Philadelphia only underline the disconcerting direction in which our schools are headed. Public education continues to be gripped by debilitating mantras of utility and accountability.



Leaders focused on "utility" insist that the overriding goal of education in America is to provide the skills and aptitudes needed in the job market. Education is to be seen, first and foremost, as a vehicle for transforming students into the human capital demanded by the economy. Of course the plausibility of this educational "need" is belied by high levels of unemployment and underemployment and the inability of so many with educational credentials and qualifications to find suitable (or any) employment. Job projections in the United States offer a bleak picture of the lack of fit between the "output" of our educational institutions and the prospects of meaningful, decently paid, and appropriate work. Contrary to the myths of an economy requiring masses of highly skilled, cognitively sophisticated employees, for many the future looks to be one of low-skilled and insecure labor. On this basis we may as well dispense with the importance of public education for a large swath of our young people. Indeed this is already part of the Tea Party educational agenda, which sees well-supported public education as a pointless and futile expense—one more area where we can save our tax dollars and limit the function of government.

By now the deleterious consequences of our fixation on educational accountability have been well documented. Even some of those who, like Diane Ravitch, were advocates and architects of the accountability "regime"

have concluded that it has become a blight that is destroying much that was good in our classrooms. Accountability has, among other things, limited what counts in education to only those things that can be counted. It has reduced learning to those things that can be made into testable items in the form of standardized tests. It has made classrooms into places where the primary focus is on preparing for the next test. It has meant a curriculum that has increasingly limited what children encounter or are exposed to—especially in terms of learning that encourages artistic expression, creativity, imagination, individuation of understanding, critical interrogation of ideas, and the joyful unfolding of curiosity and interest. Learning has followed the one-size-fits-all model of seeking out standardized and homogenized answers—preset responses to preset questions. Whether intentional or otherwise, the regime of accountability is one that induces boredom, passivity, and conformity among students. And, not least, it is a regime that makes school a place of enormous stress with its focus on endless competition and meeting the bar of increasing test result expectations. For many of us who have followed this development, the epidemic of cheating (involving not just students but also teachers and school administrators) comes as little surprise.

It is in this damaging and dispiriting context that we encounter Wilhelm and Novak's book. To say that much of what they write echoes the words of a great many other educational visionaries in no sense detracts from the importance of their words. What they have to say represents a light in dark times. Their book offers not just an uplifting vision of what education for literacy might be, but also the wealth of the authors' accumulated teaching experiences. They have written a book that is at once a sophisticated philosophical treatise on education and a radical guide for those who teach kids in the classroom. I cannot do justice in this short space to the scope of this book, but it is worth, I believe, highlighting a few important dimensions of their writing.

In the first place the book provides a powerful countervision to the desiccated, depersonalized, alienating experience that pervades so much of the learning culture of schools today. It suggests that, more than anything, the purpose of teaching (in their case, teaching English) is nothing less than to evoke and animate the life energies of students. Teaching is that experience that can allow us to encounter the power, beauty, and force of human existence itself. In other words, education can provide us with experiences that are catalysts for discovering the significance of our humanness. In this sense teaching is not merely for some extrinsic or instrumental purpose (a grade, a test, even a job), but the means by which we can discover the depth and richness of human life itself. The authors make the radical (by today's criteria) assertion that education is nothing if it is not a joyful or pleasurable process—one in which the individual feels more alive and more connected to others in the world.

Like many before them in the progressive educational tradition, they insist that for education to be meaningful it must connect with the world of the student—his or her concerns, interests, desires, passions, fears, and fantasies. Without this connection the classroom becomes a place where learning is nothing but a process of "banking" inert, dry, abstracted bits of information good only for regurgitating at exam time. From their perspective it matters little whether or not students are reading the canon of "good" literature or the latest horror fantasy or teen zine. What is key is whether or not reading becomes the means for reflection on the questions that animate our lives, concerns, and purposes. Does it enable us to deepen our understanding of what it means to be human?

This process, they make clear, is not a solitary one. The classroom is a place for encountering the other—whether the other is the voice in a text or the voice of one's fellow student. Indeed the classroom *as a community* is central to their pedagogic vision. The deep evoking of being human requires seeing ourselves in the face and experience of the other. In the words of the feminist theologian Beverly Harrison, we nurture ourselves into being through our connections to others. So the aliveness that is so prized by Wilhelm and Novak demands an openness to the authentic lives of others. The classroom they promote is one that continually asks for students to open their lives to others. In breaking through the armor and defenses that separate us from others, we can see how alike we are in our concerns, fears, and hopes. In this sense the authors are critical of the overemphasis in the critical discourse of the language of difference that highlights what separates rather than what unites human beings. It is perhaps for this reason that they speak little to the more usual concerns of critical inquiry with its focus on race, gender, class, and sexuality.

There is, in this work, an attempt to offer a spiritual vision that emphasizes the commonality in the human condition. This concern is reflected too in their impatience with the deconstructive character of so much critical inquiry in literature, which distances and analyzes rather than promotes the spirit of empathy and immersion in life that is so important to their educational project. In this sense, however, I believe that the authors shortchange the critical tradition, especially in education, where there is ample evidence of writers (from Paulo Freire on) who insist both on a deep interrogation of the social and political interests that govern education *and* on providing a transformative vision of a life-giving, democratically-inspired pedagogy.

Still, what is to be applauded in this work is the insistence that the goal of education must not be seen as something purely personal. Like Dewey, who asserted that when we educate we make a world, Novak and Wilhelm assert that education's purpose is, in the end, a matter of what kind of society we are creating. Meaningful education for them is always about bringing individuals together to discover and affirm our shared concerns and fate. The classroom is a place where human beings can meet in the fullness of their being. In coming together to share and face one another

in ways that allow and encourage honest, open, and authentic dialogue, we create the kind of community that is the wellspring for real democracy (not to be confused with the polarizing intransigence that now characterizes our dysfunctional politics).

Like Maxine Greene or Hannah Arendt, Wilhelm and Novak understand democracy's essence not simply as a mechanism for decision making, but as a vehicle through which human beings come into reciprocal interaction, augmenting their powers of reflection and expanding human capacities for empathy and ethical consideration. The classroom as a place for communal conversation here becomes a site in which, as the authors note, wisdom—not just knowing—is encouraged. This is a crucial distinction in which teaching that focuses on "decontexualized information and skills ... and totally impersonal ... factual and procedural knowledge" is contrasted with the kind of learning that engages students existentially in the totality of their lives as thinking, feeling, and acting beings.

The aesthetic dimension is the defining focus of Wilhelm and Novak's pedagogy. For them it is the capacity to see human identity and consciousness as a story that can be told, reflected on, and transformed through engagement with others and with texts (all are forms of language communication) that is the lynchpin of all cultural studies. This is undoubtedly an important assertion that opens the door to seeing ourselves in ways that liberate us from what appears fixed and unalterable in our personal as well as social lives.

I, however, am less inclined to accept the power of the aesthetic unless it is explicitly situated within a moral framework that is committed to social justice and the incompatibility of our present economic system with a humane, compassionate, and environmentally responsible world. I believe that the questions that must be posed about the stories we live by do not inevitably arise in the classroom, even when there is the freedom to talk and exchange ideas. This requires educators who have the courage and moral commitment to question the injustice and inhumanity of our national and global communities. The validation and affirmation of our personal narratives still requires us to challenge and deconstruct those beliefs, assumptions, and attitudes that support, however unwittingly, the destructiveness and dehumanization that are deeply insinuated into the dominant worldview of so many of our students. Yet these are matters for debate among friends and should not detract from the overall importance of this work. This book is a powerful and inspiring contribution, not just for the teachers of English, for whom it is especially intended, but for all of us who hope and struggle for the vision of an education that liberates our minds and encourages us to repair or reconstruct our world. ■

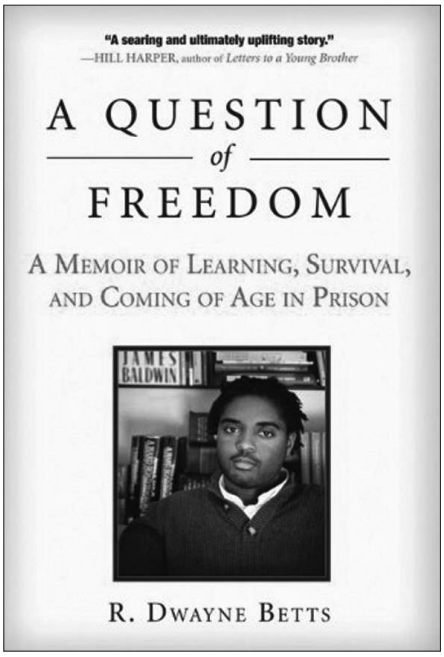
Svi Shapiro is a professor of education and cultural studies at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. His most recent book is Educating Youth for a World Beyond Violence: A Pedagogy for Peace *(Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).*

POETRY IN THE AGE OF MASS INCARCERATION

A QUESTION OF FREEDOM: A MEMOIR OF LEARNING, SURVIVAL, AND COMING OF AGE IN PRISON
by R. Dwayne Betts
Avery, 2009

SHAHID READS HIS OWN PALM
by Reginald Dwayne Betts
Alice James Books, 2010

Review by Stephen John Hartnett

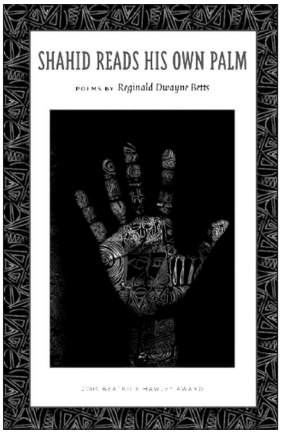


Richard Nixon campaigned for the U.S. presidency on a platform of strident anti-Communism and renewed law and order. In the wake of devastating urban riots all across the nation, cresting anti-war activism, a vibrant countercultural network of poets and musicians and other provocateurs, and the dual successes of the Civil Rights Movement and Women's Liberation, Nixon and his crowd had had enough. And so, to reclaim the nation from those they saw as tradition-trashing hooligans, they filled the nation's airwaves with "war on crime" rhetoric, influenced national and state budgets to reflect Nixon's priorities, and urged legislatures around the nation to extend sentences and build new prisons. Before long, the children of Martin Luther King Jr.'s America would be described by conservative leaders not as the nation's redeemers—as its brave inventors of a new democracy shorn of centuries of racism, patriarchy, and war-mongering—but as its depraved destroyers.

Media corporations then realized that producing terrible tales of violence and mayhem fueled profits, and so the nation was blanketed with a stunning array of cops-'n'-robbers TV dramas, spectacular nightly news footage, and "thug life" consumer items of every variety. As media critic Bill Yousman notes, the nation's media consumers fell hard and fast into a love affair with a peculiarly American version of "happy violence," which left them repulsed, titillated, and ever more susceptible to the worst forms of fear-mongering about crime waves and drug wars. And so, between Nixon's victory in 1968 and

Barack Obama's victory in 2008, the nation's prison population skyrocketed to over 2.3 million; more than 5 million additional former prisoners languish on parole, probation, or house arrest, making the United States' carceral apparatus the largest in the world.

Not counting policing and judicial expenditures, and not counting the more than $40 billion the federal government spends each year on its disastrous drug war, funding this incarceration system costs state governments roughly $68 billion per year. To cover these costs, states all across the nation are cutting funding for education while boosting funding for prisons. In the 2012-2013 budget year, for example, California is scheduled to spend $15.4 billion on its prisons, more than the $15.3 billion it will spend for its once-vaunted and now crumbling post-secondary education system. No wonder that prison activist Ruthie Gilmore has taken to calling California a "golden gulag."



As a result of this transformation of America into an incarceration nation, the now-bursting prisons have become hotbeds of testimony, poetry, art-making, and speechifying. Activists, artists, and educators have identified the nation's prisons as crucial sites of engagement. As a result, the nation is now awash in prison-based art (e.g., the Annual Exhibition of Art by Michigan Prisoners, held in Ann Arbor), prison-based poetry (e.g., *Captured Words/Free Thoughts*, *Can Anyone Hear Me Scream?*, *Inside/Out: Voices from the New Jersey State Prison*, *Open Line*, and *Doing Time/Making Space*), prison-based debate programs (hosted by Georgia State, Central Michigan, Ball State, and other colleges and universities), prison-based educational programs (e.g., the Philadelphia-based Inside-Out Education Program or the San Quentin College Program), prison-based theater programs (e.g., Jonathan Shailor's Shakespeare Prison Project, or Robin Sohnen's Each One Reach One program), and others. In each of these programs, activists, artists, and educators assume that their programs will help prisoners reclaim their lives from crime, violence, and incarceration. Breaking the nasty legacy bequeathed to the nation by Nixon and reinforced by every president since him, such programs hope to renew democracy by making space for incarcerated people to rejoin the conversation.

The books of Reginald Dwayne Betts, which are part of this flood of prison-based testimony, recount the tale of a young man who entered prison as a confused sixteen-year-old but who now, more than a decade later, has embarked on a career as a writer. The fact that Betts made it out of the system alive is a triumph; that he writes so honestly of his experiences is a gift. Repeating his success story confronts the rest of us as an obligation. And so readers will nod along in agreement as Betts notes, toward the end of his award-winning first book of poems, *Shahid Reads His Own Palm*, that "there is a lesson in this somewhere."

Unfortunately, Betts's books do not offer many clues regarding what that lesson might be. Instead, we encounter a young man's journey through pain; while the consequences of that pain are illustrated powerfully, its causes remain shrouded in mystery. In *A Question of Freedom*, Betts recounts how he was arrested in 1996, at the age of sixteen, when he weighed 126 pounds and still wore the dental braces of adolescence. Because he committed six felonies in one night, including armed carjacking, Betts was bumped up from juvenile detention to adult prison facilities. Opening his coming-of-age memoir with a description of himself as another "black boy in jail," Betts chronicles his initiation into the world of mature lifers, where fathers, grandfathers, and older brothers endure endless sentences with a mixture of bravado, delusion, boredom, and occasional kindness. Unlike the great prison writings of Etheridge Knight, Malcolm Braly, Michael Hogan, and Spoon Jackson, however, Betts's telling of his story is strangely flat: we encounter few characters, events, or images that leap from the page.

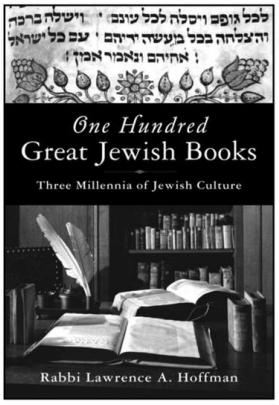
Part of this flatness stems from Betts's wavering authorial voice. For his memoir, he calls himself R. Dwayne; for his book of poems he is Reginald Dwayne; in both books he assumes the moniker of Shahid to honor the writer/witness from the Qur'an. He is searching for a name, for an identity. As part of this quest, Betts's works look for the meanings missing from his life, yet rather than offering keenly felt portrayals of the complexities of his situation, "Shahid reads his own palm." This is a gesture of inward looking, yet in studying his palm Shahid finds only confusion. For example, at one point early in his memoir, still traumatized by his arrest and conviction, he confesses, "I thought shit just happened." The world passes behind his back, mysteriously, driven by hidden motives.

Rabbi Lawrence A. Hoffman

One Hundred Great Jewish Books

Three Millennia of Jewish Conversation

NEW!



An introduction to one hundred great Jewish books, arranged as a concise and thought-provoking guide to the Jewish conversation across many centuries. Each of the entries features one work in its historical and cultural context, provides a summary of content and author, and reflects on its relevance for today's readers.

9781933346311 368 pages Paperback $16.95

BlueBridge bluebridgebooks.com

Betts later wonders "what it was that caused a young dude to do something that's so against everything his family believed in, everything he believed in." His own behavior baffles him. "I was seventeen and had no real clue about the way the world was moving around me," he writes.

The celebrated prison testimonies of Malcolm X, Mumia Abu-Jamaal, Edward Bunker, and Jimmy Santiago Baca pull readers from confusion to clarity, propelling us along with them toward political commitment and occasional spiritual reverie; that empowering sense of propulsion is lacking here, as Betts and his neighbors—both in prison and in the free world—are portrayed as trapped in a netherworld of pain and confusion. The pain of the prisoners he encounters is so inexpressible that they "still wouldn't / give a fuck if God was listening." Denied the gift of elocution, such men rumble through the day steeped in rage, and so "men would list / the pain all in swears, confusing the meaning, / until each shit, bitch & muthafucka / was solemn." Such solemn cussing points toward the "horror of everything" that "cuts at / what's left of this world."

Betts thus conveys the existential agony of prisons as stemming in part from this "cutting," this chipping away at language and sense of self, which leaves his cellmates left with only solemn cusswords. Even the now-older poet is left looking at the world as a mystery, as he writes:

Parole
had been dumped for truth in
sentencing & GM
had laid off half the people in a city I've
never visited.
There is a secret in all of this....
... A head fake if you will.

A "head fake" indeed. The young poet knows he finds himself entombed in a Virginia Prison because of larger forces, strange "secrets" launched from far away and long ago, yet he cannot access these causes. And so he, and we readers too, can only mutter along with the prisoners, "shit, bitch, muthafucka." When such confusions are rendered in prose, they feel flat and unmotivated, there is too much left unsaid; but when Betts crafts such moments as poetry, which naturally lends itself to more elliptical and suggestive thinking, then such lines feel grand and true, for what is life if not a startling head fake?

Most everyone who has studied the prison system, taught in it, or lived in it notes the powerful ways racism impacts arrest patterns, sentencing rates, judicial processes, and appeal and parole norms. Betts describes how our nation's traumatic histories of racism pour into an urge for vengeance. When his friend Sam lashes out, Betts tells us that "all Sam's anger toward the police was taken out on an unsuspecting white couple." Betts observes that "we were passing on to each other a warped way of dealing with anger that we didn't know we had." Betts does not, however, seek to analyze the psychodynamics behind violent attacks by black people aimed at other blacks, nor does he share a concrete vision for how to break the patterns of violence that landed him in prison. The memoir raises more questions than it answers, portraying a dire situation with no clear solution.

While readers may find the writing in the memoir to be flat and shorn of political insight, readers of Betts's angular and often gorgeous poetry will discover a courageous young voice depicting the absurdities and glimmers of hope of "a man handcuffed to life in prison." Betts is now free from those handcuffs, and so we will have to wait for his next book to learn where poetry leads him. In the meantime, we can celebrate his first book of poems as evidence of how, under the right circumstances, brave young men can fight their way through poverty and incarceration to build lives of dignity. ■

To read a poem by Reginald Dwayne Betts, flip to page 72 of this issue of *Tikkun*.

Stephen John Hartnett is a professor and chair of the Department of Communication at the University of Colorado Denver. His edited collection Challenging the Prison-Industrial Complex *won a 2011 PASS Award from the National Council on Crime and Delinquency.*

DANCING ON THE EDGE OF THE ABYSS

THE WARSAW ANAGRAMS
by Richard Zimler
Overlook Press, 2011

Review by Michael Eaude

In *The Warsaw Anagrams*, his eighth published novel, Richard Zimler has reached the very heart of his essential theme: the Holocaust itself. It is as if, in his previous books, dealing with the persecutions of Jews and of non-Jews—whether people in colonial India (*Guardian of the Dawn*), enslaved Africans in the United States (*Hunting Midnight*), Germans (*The Seventh Gate*), or Palestinians (*The Search for Sana*)—he had been approaching, in ever-narrowing circles, this extraordinarily painful moment.

Zimler, who was over forty when his first novel was published and is now only in his fifties, has a considerable body of work behind him, most notably the four novels in his Sephardic Cycle featuring members of the Zarco family. The four are set in different historical periods, cities, and countries. The first, *The Last Kabbalist of Lisbon* (1998), tackles the massacre of 2,000 Jews in Lisbon in 1506. Its clearest purpose is to bring home to today's Portuguese an obscured part of their history (Zimler has lived in Oporto since 1990). In Spain and Portugal, there is little understanding of the expulsion of the Jews, which ran from the fourteenth to the sixteenth centuries. This of course did not mean polite escort onto boats into exile, but rape, murder, theft of property, and not just the cultural and social destruction of the expelled Jews (and Moors), but also the weakening of the supposedly pure Christian society left behind.

Novels of Anger and Calm

"As a writer, I want to make people look at things they don't want to," Zimler frequently comments. Unlike many historical novels, his are not escapist.

Rather, by obliging readers to see the past, they illuminate the sources of injustice today. And he writes with ferocious anger: the scenes of violence are horrific—a headless baby on a shovel. These scenes are not sanitized as, say, in a typical war movie. When people are brutalized or murdered in Zimler's books, their suffering comes through.

Righteous anger, however, does not make a good writer. And Zimler is good: he controls his material. He writes in calm, clear prose adorned by the occasional glistening image like a jewel in a fast-flowing stream. His novels are not descriptions of a series of brutal events (*The Last Kabbalist of Lisbon* is something of an exception) that either numb readers or weary them with their gruesome repetitiveness. Rather, violence is more select: it roars suddenly into normal day-to-day tasks. One moment of racist or sexual violence changes everything forever. These moments hit as suddenly as the axe that severs a character's arm in one of his lesser-known novels *The Search for Sana*, a bold investigation of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

Another of Zimler's qualities as a writer—and this too helps him channel his rage at injustice—is that he is not at all Manichean. He does not believe that all Jews were good and all Christians bad. He explains the historical and social background; the evil friars of *Last Kabbalist* are not only evil by nature, but act evilly in a world in which the monarch, the Church, and rising social classes in conflict combine to scapegoat the Jews. This perception spills over into a broader, more general criticism of racial and sexual oppression, which means that *Last Kabbalist*'s portrayal of the close connection between war and sexual atrocity can reflect events like the Bosnian war, which took place as Zimler wrote the book. His is not historical writing that tells stories about a closed past: Zimler's past is still open, an uncured wound, and lives on in the present.

The preceding paragraph may make Zimler appear something of a materialist historian or a didactic essayist. For sure his books are very well researched, but he is above all a novelist in the sense of exploring people's behaviors and feelings. The research, the thorough historical and social background, serves to highlight the particular world in which his main characters struggle to grow. And in their growth, victories, and defeats, they show a deep spirituality, which gives his novels a further dimension. In nearly all his novels there is a character or characters with a mystic vision of the world: some are students of Kabbalah, trying to approach God through meditation. "In Kabbalah, all books can be read on four levels: literal, allegorical, ethical, and mystical," Zimler told me in an interview in 2007. "I wanted to try to do something similar in *Last Kabbalist*."

Thus, *Last Kabbalist* is the outraged history of an outrageous massacre; a crime thriller in which Berekiah Zarco, the protagonist, seeks to solve one particular murder; an intense kabbalistic meditation; a coming-of-age novel in which Berekiah encounters sex, betrayal, and murder in a few intense days; and a sustained reflection on the meaning of life and God in the midst of racist slaughter.

Four Stories of Hurt Children

The Zarco tetralogy was not conceived as a series of connected novels, like the Rocky films, but is rather an overarching project within which Zimler's themes could be worked out: "relatives, rather than sequels," in his words. Each of the four novels is entirely independent, but read as a whole their common themes fall into focus. Following *The Last Kabbalist of Lisbon* came *Hunting Midnight* (2003), *Guardian of the Dawn* (2005), and *The Seventh Gate* (2009).

Hunting Midnight is a grand historical saga that starts in the Portuguese city of Oporto, which is threatened by a possible return of the Inquisition in the late eighteenth century. Jews have to live in careful secrecy while demented Christian preachers incite the ignorant to murder. The novel travels to a Virginia slave plantation (a passage narrated by the young slave woman, Morri—a daring and successful attempt on Zimler's part) and ends up in New York in the early nineteenth century. This is both a wider canvas than *Last Kabbalist* and also shifts the focus of interest away from the world of Portuguese Jews. John Zarco becomes secondary to the remarkable Kalahari Bushman called Midnight, whose perceptions of the world are so intelligent and different from those of Europeans. The portrayal of Midnight works wonderfully well: both mystic and highly practical, Midnight is careful with people, a psychologist of sorts.

The most intensely lyrical pages in all Zimler's work are the first seventy of *Hunting Midnight*. The pampered John Zarco and his friends, the street kids Violeta and Daniel, joyfully grasp young life and believe they can mold the future to their desires. But John learns loss and guilt too young, as Violeta's diamond-bright personality is crushed by her rape and he cannot save Daniel from disaster. This progress from childhood to adulthood is common to most of Zimler's novels. His protagonists have to grow up too soon by learning things they are not ready to learn. John sets out on an epic quest to find Midnight, the person who cured him of guilt and depression when he was young. On his route he encounters Charleston Jews—some of whom are themselves slave owners—bidding to integrate into Southern white society. Zimler's answers are never easy: the Jews are not always the good guys but are buffeted around by ideology and the societies they live in.

The third Zarco novel is not as spectacular as *Hunting Midnight*, but is in several ways the most satisfying of his books. *Guardian of the Dawn* is set in late sixteenth-century Goa, a thriving Portuguese spice colony on the west coast of India. Here again, Zimler recreates a distant world in all its colors, smells, and sounds. Again he dares to show the deep happiness of childhood and the marvelous potential of his characters' lives. And again he does not flinch from describing the violence and

death that make former happiness seem so cruelly distant. The Inquisition—attacking Jews, Protestants, and Indian religions alike—is the main tool of Portugal's colonial domination of Goa. It destroys the closest bonds of family and friendship, ruining young Tiago's life. Readers, drawn into the story through Tiago's point of view, long for him to be ennobled by his suffering and are delighted by the revenge he exacts so cunningly on his jailor and on the vicious priest who lured his Indian friend to prison and death. (Zimler always writes great adventure stories.)

This is not, though, the ultimately harmonious world of Alexander Dumas, in which a wrongly imprisoned Count of Monte Cristo wreaks vengeance on the powerful crooks who abused him. It is the universe of Jacobean "revenge tragedy," in which revenge is all too sweet, maybe justified, but is corrupting too. The noble Tiago turns into Iago, the murderous outsider in *Othello*. Unlike *Hunting Midnight*'s protagonist John, who comes through his trials, Tiago is debased into the mirror image of his persecutors. It is a novel about evil. Evil behavior for Zimler is not innate, but stems from both the ruling class's ideas and individual choices.

The last of the Zarco tetralogy, *The Seventh Gate*, tackles the rise of Nazism in 1930s Berlin. Through all the Zarco novels, the centuries-old persecution of the Jews is at the fore; and in all, he takes care to show that our rulers not only persecute Jews, but also divide and rule by scapegoating homosexuals, the physically disabled (as in *The Seventh Gate*), or any other minority. In *The Seventh Gate*, there is another young protagonist who has to find herself, working through her anger at the world.

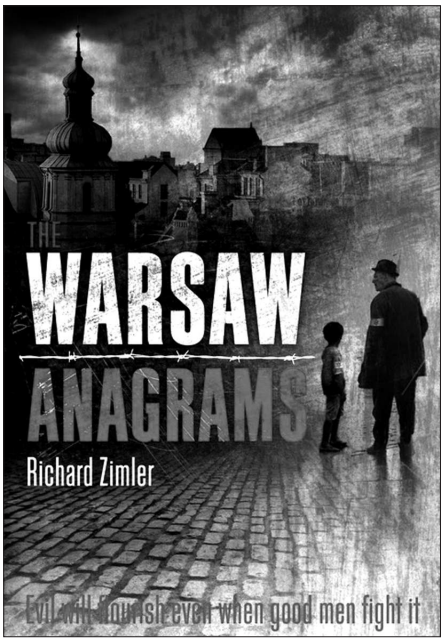
A Nightmare of Collective Imprisonment

Zimler's latest novel, *The Warsaw Anagrams*, moves forward a few years to 1940 and 1941. Erik, a distinguished elderly psychoanalyst, has to leave his comfortable flat and move into the Warsaw Ghetto, the walled "island" where the Jews were confined during the Nazi occupation of Poland. In the tiny apartment of his niece, Stefa, and her nine year-old son, Adam, he must not just adapt to a frozen, starving life on the edge of death, but learn to overcome his selfishness. It is the child Adam who sets the old man on this road.

The novel is narrated by a dead man. How could it be otherwise? This is not the broad canvas of *Hunting Midnight*, but the nightmare of collective imprisonment in an overcrowded, ever-shrinking area. *The Warsaw Anagrams* is no story of heroic struggle and those few who escaped; it deals with the everyday frailties and courage of a varied cast of ordinary Jews as they try to survive. They stink, their teeth fall out, children tell lies and risk their lives to steal rotting vegetables, young women sell themselves, and the old freeze to death. Almost all die in the novel, and the dead man Erik, an *ibbur* (spirit wandering the world), is the fitting recorder of their lives.

The Warsaw Anagrams is a highly realist murder mystery, despite being narrated by an ibbur. As in *The Last Kabbalist of Lisbon*, the narrator sets out in the midst of massacre to solve one particular killing: the murder of Adam, whom Erik loved and was responsible for protecting. The murder removes all future from Erik's life. Like Tiago, Erik loses his fear of death; all that matters is tracking down the killer. One might wonder: why bother with one person's death when slaughter is all around? "We owe uniqueness to our dead" is the imperative that Erik comes to understand. By remembering the unique quality of each dead person, that person's humanity is maintained and the Nazis are defeated in their desire to reduce the Jews to nameless ash.

Zimler's books, even this one in the grimmest of settings, have a surprisingly jaunty style and an optimistic feel. If you look squarely at brutality and find that even in the harshest situations people are capable of growth, kindness, and loyalty, then optimism can sprout. As well as the many non-Jewish Poles who



didn't want to know about the ghetto, a few of Zimler's characters risk and give their lives to protect Jews. Zimler's style, too, assists optimism. It is clear, direct, and full of telling details of life's ordinary pleasures: a cigarette, the joy of children singing, warmth on a frosty morning, a budding plant or the sun peeking through storm clouds. This straightforward style is not sentimental or simple, but laced with flashing insights and subtle psychology. Smells and colors make all Zimler's books very physically evocative and immediate.

Erik succeeds in telling his story. The dead are remembered. Like the Zarco novels, *The Warsaw Anagrams* is both a fast-moving, readable mystery and a rich, serious novel. Despite the many books and endless discussions on the Holocaust, Zimler offers a fresh voice, one that has endured anger and terror to offer us optimism. He has seen the worst of human behavior and now dances joyfully on the edge of the abyss. His writing reaches the stature of his vision: looking without flinching at the most terrible events, then enjoying life, for it's the only one we have. ■

Michael Eaude, born in London, lives in Barcelona. He writes on Spanish literature in the U.K. press and has published books on Barcelona, Catalonia's history and culture, and the Spanish writer Arturo Barea.

IDENTITY POLITICS
(continued from page 12)

the slave population of this country; they are our brethren." This vision of racial solidarity was new: throughout the eighteenth century, religious identities had been more prominent than racial ones, and free blacks in the South and the Caribbean sometimes held their own slaves. By 1817, Philadelphia blacks knew that racial prejudice undermined liberty even in the shadow of Independence Hall. Their generously inclusive response inaugurated a half-century of agitation against slavery and racism.

By calling themselves "African," the Philadelphians were not renouncing their "American" identity. They pointed out that they had been in North America for as long as their white neighbors; that they were "the first successful cultivators of the wilds of America"; and that they had fought for freedom alongside white patriots. They bristled at the Colonization Society's insinuation that they were a foreign element that could not be integrated. At the same time, they refused to accept any false dichotomy between racial solidarity and full participation in American society. Most of those who repudiated the Colonization Society had walked out of white churches that refused to treat them as fully human. Some were willing to contemplate black-led colonization schemes as a possible response to America's betrayal of its revolutionary values. In their willingness to separate from institutions that had betrayed the American Revolution, they affirmed their identity as true American radicals.

The sense of identity cultivated in the 1820s has reappeared through history and among a wide range of identity groups, among them the women's rights advocates who gathered at Seneca Falls and the industrial workers who built the Socialist Party and the Industrial Workers of the World. But it took on a particularly influential form, I believe, in the early years of the Civil Rights Movement—precisely in those years that critics of identity politics often lift up as the ideal of common-ground politics.

A few months after the African American citizens of Montgomery, Alabama, began boycotting a bus system that denied their human dignity, Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. published an article in *Liberation* that explained the meaning of this action. The article, ghostwritten by Bayard Rustin, explained that over centuries of slavery and segregation, many African Americans had "lost faith in themselves," believing "that perhaps they really were what they had been told they were—something less than men." Many wondered if "we Negroes had the nerve" to fight segregation, it added. But the boycott *did* succeed: from the very first day, virtually no blacks rode the city's buses, and they kept up their discipline for more than a year, until the authorities (prompted by the Supreme Court) accepted their demand for a fully integrated seating policy. Even before this result was achieved, King's article concluded that "*We Negroes have replaced self-pity with self-respect and self-depreciation with dignity*.... Montgomery has broken the spell."

These words expressed the founding revelation of the Sixties Left. Ordinary African Americans—maids and sharecroppers, schoolteachers and professors—had unleashed power by encountering one another in a new way. On dusty sidewalks they discovered the power to bring the white system to a standstill; gathered in their churches they found new energy in old hymns. Veteran activists were surprised by their neighbors' new enthusiasm—had not Rosa Parks heard others "mumbling and grumbling" about the waste of time when she stood up to aggressive drivers previously? Suddenly the whole community was meeting violence with courage, as when King's home was bombed and his neighbors defied the police to stand vigil until King personally assured them he was safe. Shared protest, wrote one activist, created "a new person in the Negro. The new spirit, the new feeling did something to blacks individually and collectively.... There was no turning back!"

Montgomery pushed the encounter of identity to the center of American radicalism. Over the next decade, one movement after another—student sit-ins, campus free speech, feminist consciousness-raising, Chicano farm worker organizing, gay and lesbian liberation—sought the power that had kept black Montgomerians on their feet through the chilly winter and hot summer of 1956. Earlier movements had begun with empowering encounters among African Americans or workers or women, but they had achieved national scope only after other encounters, crossing the boundaries of class or race, brought privileged allies into the struggle. Many activists, notably the founders of the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), had come to believe that boundary-crossing encounters were the source of radical power. Once Montgomery had revealed the power of identity encounters, activists rethought their vision. Soon even persons of relative privilege were organizing around particular identities.

Montgomery is not always remembered as the birthplace of identity politics. White Americans especially recall the early Civil Rights Movement as a time of "black and white together," epitomized by the famous photographs (taken in Selma in 1965, not Montgomery in 1956) that show equal numbers of blacks and whites, among them nuns and rabbis, marching for freedom. But white people scarcely figure in the experiences that led Montgomerians to declare that a new Negro was being born. For a handful of local white allies, the boycott was a time of transformative interracial encounter. But there just weren't enough radical whites to encounter all the blacks drawn into the movement. For blacks in Montgomery, the significant meetings were with one another.

These meetings were not unlike the founding gatherings of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, or Margaret Fuller's "Conversations" for women, or the encounters among wage workers during the strikes of 1934. Yet they evoked a different response. Earlier encounters of identity generated either terror or condescension from outsiders, a pattern that held true for white Southern

responses to Montgomery. But perhaps because the Southern freedom struggle was the first encounter of identity to be televised, it stimulated a different response from more distant observers. These people saw a new form of power, and many reacted with wonder, admiration, or envy. Such responses enabled a rapid transition from protest to structural change, as Congress passed legislation banning formal segregation and disenfranchisement less than a decade after Montgomery. In contrast to the changes of the Civil War, the Progressive Era, and the New Deal, all of which were orchestrated by the privileged allies of slaves and workers, these changes were the direct work of the rising wave of newly empowered African Americans. While Abraham Lincoln gave credit for emancipation to Garrison, Lyndon Johnson honored Martin Luther King Jr. by declaring "we shall overcome!" in calling for a voting rights act. Visible success inspired emulation.

In addition to television, nonviolence was crucial to the positive response to Montgomery. Past identity encounters had evoked fear among privileged people who sensed that social institutions might be transformed in ways beyond their own power. Sometimes the encounters were accompanied by threats of violence, but the empowerment alone was frightening. King's repeated profession of love for his adversaries mitigated that fear. But nonviolence was generally possible only for those who had already experienced some degree of empowerment, as activist Jo Ann Robinson discovered when she was arrested. After being pushed and harassed by a police officer, she realized that he was more frightened by her defiance than she was by his violence. Inundated by "sorrow and pity," she prayed that he would find peace.

Seen from the perspective of practices of encounter, the contrast between Montgomery and CORE activism in the 1940s was sharper than that between Montgomery and late 1960s Black Power. In principle, King and his lieutenants embraced the integrationist goals and nonviolent strategies pioneered by CORE. But in practice, Montgomery was worlds away from CORE's scripted actions undertaken by disciplined, racially balanced teams. The Northern acolytes of nonviolence saw Montgomery not as a culmination of their own efforts, but as a stunning new fact in radical history. "As I watched the people walk away," Bayard Rustin mused during his first visit to Montgomery, "I had a feeling that no force on earth can stop this movement. It has all the elements to touch the hearts of men." Eight years later, Dave Dellinger was still marveling at the way Southern blacks had rewritten the Gandhian script. "There is no doubt in my mind," he wrote, "that the Negro nonviolent movement is sounder because its direct knowledge of Gandhi is so slight."

The work of mutual empowerment pioneered in the Southern freedom struggle has been at the heart of radical activism for the past half-century. It is evident in energetic movements for Native American, Latino, Asian American, and African American rights; in womanist and mujerista movements that exist alongside white feminism; in gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, and queer activism; and among self-consciously evangelical, Buddhist, and Jewish radicals. Much of this diversity did not flower until the 1970s. In the 1960s themselves, the circle of encounter was expanded first by the mostly Northern pioneers of the Black Power movement, the women who raised their own consciousness while working in the South, the Chicano farm workers organized by Cesar Chavez, and—most prominently—the army of radical students who saw themselves as the vanguard of a new American revolution.

During the 1970s, the feminist movement flowered as the most vital embodiment of identity politics in the United States. As some women entered the halls of power, others built new centers of radical strength, ranging from rape crisis centers and lesbian communes to women's studies departments and the National Organization for Women. But this mobilization was rarely at the expense of other radical traditions. Feminists transformed and revitalized struggles for peace, economic justice, and racial liberation, challenging their brothers to share the leadership of these movements.

Much the same can be said of today's movement for queer liberation. Anyone who spends time on college campuses knows that most young people today—whatever their personal sexual identities—have been inspired by the struggles of gays, lesbians, bisexuals, and transgender persons to celebrate their full identities. The idea that love itself can be radical has an inherent appeal, and radicals would be foolish indeed not to tap into that source of power.

This is not to say that alliances among causes and identities will be easy or automatic. As a Harvard professor and pacifist, I have been deeply dismayed by my university's decision to welcome the Reserve Officers Training Corps (ROTC) back to campus after a forty-two year hiatus. Needless to say, the original decision to terminate ROTC had nothing to do with discrimination against gays and lesbians in the military and everything to do with the Vietnam War. Yet, even as the United States is enmeshed in new imperialist adventures in the Muslim world, Harvard has welcomed ROTC back simply on the grounds that queers are now free to fight and die alongside straight people.

Nevertheless, I know many radicals who cried tears of joy when "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" was repealed. And there can be no radical success without the power of that joy. We face a choice between death-dealing imperialism and the life-affirming energies of queer sex, between authentic identities born of struggle and false masks foisted on us by consumerism. It is time, quite simply, for radicals to refuse to choose between identity and common ground. Our identities are our power and our future. ■

Embracing Israel/Palestine
Read Rabbi Lerner's new book and create a study group with others. Help spread the message. Become involved.
Here's how: tikkun.org/nextgen/eip

WESTERN CIVILIZATION
(continued from page 13)

German Anti-Semitism and the Origins of Jewish Humor

Germany's eighteenth-century self-help handbooks were aimed at teaching Germans how to become good middle-class citizens, but they applied, it seemed, even more to Jews. German Christians (especially in Prussia) moving into the middle class had only to learn rules of a class game that had evolved in the nobility over centuries; Jews had to learn how to be "proper" Germans first.

The Mr. Manners of his day—whose handbook of correct behavior became (and remains) the bestseller on social etiquette—was Adolf Freiherr von Knigge. For Knigge, having a good sense of humor was a sign of civilized behavior. But he warned his readers about the Jews: "It is necessary we should look very sharp in all our dealings with Hebrews of the common class. It is natural that a Christian should not rely upon their conscientiousness and solemn protestations." But Knigge notes that he is not speaking about those Jews "who have (perhaps not for their own happiness) transformed themselves to follow the morals of Christians." That is to say, those who have unhappily acquired a sense of humor.

For Germans of the time, humor was a national quality rather than an individual one. Immanuel Kant noted that it is the "witty-humorous that is the wellspring of a clear and spontaneous sensibility." Kant further stated that "French wit is superficial."

And what about the Jews? Well, Kant's contemporary, the philosopher-reformer Moses Mendelssohn, made it very clear that for him Jews only "acquire" a sense of humor in the Enlightenment when they are civilly emancipated. He condemned "ordinary, caviling wit" and argued for the "sublime and admirable." He was against "an empty glitter that is more blinding than illuminating." And the Jews becoming Germans seemed to agree.

Giving Jews rights as Germans meant quite simply insisting that they, in turn, assume a particularly German sense of humor, neither French humor nor caviling wit but the humor that defines the German as cultured and social. While these distinctions seem hairsplitting in the extreme, they provided Jews with one means of joining a newly evolving German civil society.

Immediately a new genre of literature appeared: the Jewish joke book written for Jews and containing jokes about Jews. The first we have is L. M. Büschenthal's *Collection of Comic Thoughts about Jews, as a Contribution to the Characteristic of the Jewish Nation* (1812). In his preface he wrote that for some Jews (as for women) humor was a weapon: "Necessity and weakness—this the female sex teaches us—give rise to deception and deception is the mother of humor. Therefore one finds this much more frequently among persecuted and poor rural Jews than among rich ones." But middle-class German Jews aimed their weapons at themselves. As the Jews became good Germans, they learned to laugh at themselves, joining the non-Jews who already did so. It was a guidebook but also proof to show the Germans—look, we know how to laugh at ourselves.

But a century after the Jews began to acquire a sense of humor, the Jews' problem quickly became that their seemingly German sense of humor turned out never to be quite respectable enough. It wound up being seen as too caviling, too corrosive, too destructive—in other words, too Jewish. In 1904, the epitome of Jewish self-hatred, Otto Weininger, wrote that Jews and women, for example, have no "true humor," for true humor must be transcendent. He added that Jews "are witty only at [their] own expense and on sexual things." Jews like women are "devoid of humor and addicted to mockery."

Even those who applauded Jewish difference at the time noted the singularity of Jewish humor. Rabbi Solomon Schindler of Boston's Temple Israel wrote in 1887 that "it remains a fact that we spring from a different branch of humanity, that different blood flows in our veins, that our temperament, our tastes, our humor is different from yours; that, in a word, we differ in our views and in our mode of thinking in many cases as much as we differ in our features."

Are Jews funny? Never appropriately funny enough for some, for good or for ill. Being funny remains, however, a touchstone of what defines belonging or not belonging to a group—Germans or Jews.

Sigmund Freud's Analysis of Jewish Jokes

Certainly someone who believed that Jews were funny and that Jewish jokes, told by Jews about Jews, were revealing of more than Jewish acculturation, was Sigmund Freud. In his study "Jokes and the Unconscious" (1905) he wrote:

> We make no enquiries about [the] origin [of our jokes] but only about their efficiency—whether they are capable of making us laugh and whether they deserve our theoretical interest. And both these two requirements are best fulfilled precisely by Jewish jokes.

To define humor's broader importance for everyone—Jews and Germans alike—Freud returns to the Enlightenment, not to Knigge but to the philosopher Georg Christoph Lichtenberg, to claim that while earlier human beings would attack people physically, now,

> brutal hostility, forbidden by law, has been replaced by verbal invective.... Since we have been obliged to renounce the expression of hostility by deeds—held back by the passionless third person, in whose interest it is that personal security shall be preserved—we have developed a new technique of invective, which aims at enlisting this third person against our enemy. By making our enemy small, inferior, despicable or comic, we achieve in a roundabout way the enjoyment of overcoming him—to which the third person, who has made no efforts, bears witness by his laughter.

But do Jews tell jokes about Jews to make them small, inferior, despicable, or comic? Or to show that as "civilized" people they can take having jokes told about them?

Freud tells jokes about the Eastern Jews whom he and his urban contemporaries found infinitely amusing:

> Two Jews meet near a bathhouse:
> "Have you taken a bath?" asked one of them.
> "What?" asked the other in return, "is one missing?"

So Jews laughed at Jews, but it made it easier if they could split themselves from the people at whom they were laughing. Non-Jews simply laughed at all Jews; Jews were much more selective about those Jews they found funny. At least in Freud's Vienna and perhaps even Jerry Seinfeld's or Woody Allen's New York. Do you really learn to laugh at yourself as part of the "civilizing" process or rather, do you learn who you are not, so that you can laugh at "them"?

A Bid for Acceptance in a Hostile Society

Becoming "civilized" is simply learning the rules of a world that has grudgingly allowed you to enter and is still suspicious of you because of your perceived difference. Learning these rules turns you from a "greenhorn" into an accepted member of that society. Much is gained and lost by groups that decide to make this bargain. Some of the worst violence in human history—including imperial wars, colonization, the enslavement of millions, the imposition of gross economic inequalities and inhumane living conditions on workers, and the destruction of our natural environment—has been committed by those who have considered themselves the most "civilized" among us. The decision to assimilate into the status quo of a Western society is an ambivalent one at best. It can be destructive but also benign. It is a difficult choice.

Like Jews in eighteenth-century Germany, some Muslims in Canada have, since September 11, embraced self-deprecating humor, perhaps in a similar bid for acceptance in a society where they face discrimination. The result is a sitcom on the Canadian channel CBC entitled *Little Mosque on the Prairie*, about Muslim integration into the multiculturalism of America's northern neighbor. The show was created by Zarqa Nawaz, a Muslim journalist and filmmaker who was born in Liverpool, England, and raised in Toronto. The show's head writer, Al Rae, explained the show's intent in a January 23, 2007, article in the *Toronto Star*:

> The attention is driven by the uniqueness of the premise but also the inaccurate feeling a lot of people have that Muslims have no sense of humour. It's based on two incidents: the Danish cartoon fiasco and Salman Rushdie's satirical version of the story of Muhammad. The difference between those incidents and the intent of our show is that, in both [the Danish and Rushdie] cases, the intention was to provoke in a negative fashion.

The Israeli Jewish response to anti-Semitic cartoons was not all that different. When the Iranians decided to have a competition for the nastiest anti-Israeli and anti-Semitic cartoons in 2006, an Israeli illustrator Amitai Sandy announced an anti-Semitic cartoon contest open to Jews only: "We'll show the world we can do the best, sharpest, most offensive Jew hating cartoons ever published! No Iranian will beat us on our home turf!"

While *Little Mosque on the Prairie* does not embrace quite the same degree of edgy self-deprecation as Sandy's anti-Semitic cartoon contest, it does seem that its creators and viewers are tapping into the same strategy of self-deprecating laughter that Jews in the eighteenth century found so useful in gaining acceptance in a hostile society. Two centuries from now, will a new generation of Muslim comics have swept in to compete with the legacies of Woody Allen and Jerry Seinfeld? ■

FUTURE OF WORLD RELIGION
(continued from page 16)

insights and cosmologies. The recognition of these shared roots naturally paves the way for a global approach to religious diversity that preserves a deep sense of communion across differences.

An important practical consequence of this approach is that, if religious people were to adopt it, they could then, like members of a healthy family, stop attempting to impose their particular beliefs on others and might instead become a supportive force for practitioners' spiritual individuation both within and outside their traditions. This mutual empowerment of spiritual creativity may lead to the emergence not only of a human community formed by fully differentiated spiritual individuals, but also of a rich variety of coherent spiritual perspectives that can be (potentially) equally aligned to the mystery. In this context, different spiritual perspectives can mutually illuminate and transform one another through unlimited doctrinal, practical, and visionary hybridizations. And this access to an increased number of spiritual insights, practices, and visionary worlds may in turn foster further human spiritual individuation as it expands the range of choices available for individuals in the co-creation of their spiritual paths.

It is important here to distinguish sharply between the modern hyper-individualistic mental ego and the participatory selfhood forged in the sacred fire of spiritual individuation. Whereas the disembodied modern self is plagued by alienation, dissociation, and narcissism, a spiritually individuated person has an embodied, integrated, connected, and permeable identity whose high degree of differentiation, far from being isolating, actually allows him or her to enter into a deeply conscious communion with others, nature, and the multidimensional cosmos.

In this scenario, it will no longer be a contested issue whether practitioners endorse a theistic, nondual, or naturalistic account of the mystery, or whether their chosen path of spiritual

cultivation is meditation, social engagement, conscious parenting, entheogenic shamanism, or communion with nature. (Of course, it may be desirable to complement each pathway with practices that cultivate other human potentials.) The new spiritual bottom line, in contrast, will be the degree into which each spiritual path fosters both an overcoming of self-centeredness and a fully embodied integration that make us not only more sensitive to the needs of others, nature, and the world, but also more effective agents of cultural and planetary transformation in whatever contexts and measure life or spirit calls us to work.

The affirmation of our shared spiritual family naturally calls for the articulation of a common—nonabsolutist and contextually sensitive—global ethics. This global ethics, however, cannot arise exclusively out of our highly ambiguous moral religious past, but needs to be crafted in the tapestry of contemporary interfaith interactions, comparative religious ethics, cross-cultural dialogue on global human rights, and cooperative spiritual inquiry. In other words, it is likely that any viable future global ethics will be grounded not only in our spiritual history, but also in our critical reflection on such history in the context of our present-day moral intuitions (for example, about the pitfalls of religious dogmatism, fanaticism, narcissism, and dissociation). Besides its obvious relevance for regulating cross-cultural and interreligious conflicts, the adoption of global guidelines—including guidelines for dealing with disagreement—seems crucial to address some of the most challenging issues of our global village, such as the exploitation of women and children, the increasing polarization of rich and poor, the environmental crisis, xenophobic responses to cultural and ethnic diversity, and unfairness in international business.

Let me draw this essay to a close with the following: situated at the creative nexus between the mystery's generative power and our own psycho-cultural dispositions, spiritually individuated persons might become unique embodiments of the mystery, capable of co-creating novel spiritual understandings, practices, and even expanded states of freedom. If we accept this approach, it is plausible to conjecture that our religious future may bear witness to a greater-than-ever plurality of visionary and existential developments grounded in a deeply felt sense of spiritual unity. Such spiritual unity, however, may not be found in the heavens (i.e., in mental, visionary, or even mystical visions) but deep down into the earth (i.e., in our embodied creative connection with our shared roots). This account would be consistent with a view of the mystery, the cosmos, and/or spirit as moving from a primordial state of undifferentiated unity toward one of infinite differentiation-in-communion.

If you let me wear my visionary hat just a bit longer, I would say that the future of world religion will be shaped by spiritually individuated persons engaged in processes of cosmological hybridization in the context of a common spiritual family that honors a global order of respect and civility. This is the scenario I would personally like to see emerging in the world and that I am committed to help actualize. ■

JAIL WALLS
(continued from page 24)

Kate began by saying no less than five years, and no more than fifteen. Andy said ten to fifteen, and the McBrides also suggested ten years. The Grosmaires preferred probation time over a longer sentence, with the terms of probation including public service. Conor declined to comment, saying that his fate was in the hands of those around him. The prosecutor did not feel at liberty to agree to anything that day but said that he had heard and understood what everyone was suggesting. A few weeks later he came back with an offer for twenty years, and included the anger management, speaking in high schools, and other ideas for repair in the terms of probation that would follow Conor's incarceration. Although it was more time than the Grosmaires had wanted, it was far less than the prosecutor would have offered in another case. As he said in a recent newspaper article, "There's no way I would have—based on these facts and circumstances—agreed to a sentence this lenient had they not asked me and sincerely expressed to me how important it was to them to allow them to heal."

The morning after the conference, Julie McBride said that there were times when it felt as if the cinderblock walls in that tiny room would crack from all the sorrow and heartache that poured forth in our five-hour meeting. Looking back, I think those jail walls did crack, not from the sorrow and heartache, but from the honesty, bravery, and willingness to try something our criminal justice system rarely sees: including victims in deciding what happens to the people who did them unthinkable harm, and a chance for their wrongdoers to begin to try to repair the irreparable before the case ever reaches the courthouse doors. ■

SOME FACTS AND HISTORY
(continued from page 26)

violence, such as murder, vehicular homicide, or serious felony assault. It is strictly victim-initiated, not stipulated by the court, and occurs post-conviction and usually during incarceration. It involves a lengthy period of preparation for both victims and offenders and requires experienced facilitators.

Emerging Areas of Practice

An increasing number of hybrid or modified practices are developing in response to specific social issues. Circles are being used in prisons, for example, to bring together surrogate or unrelated victims and offenders for dialogue. Family group conferencing is being integrated into the child welfare system to give families more power and control over developing permanency plans for children who are in or at risk of entering foster care due to parental abuse or neglect. Adaptations in core approaches also allow restorative justice to be used experimentally for seemingly intractable problems such as domestic violence. Although controversial because of concerns about the victim's ongoing safety, a number of new programs are using

modified restorative justice processes for domestic violence and reporting positive results.

Similarly, restorative justice programs are being used experimentally for social reform such as defense-initiated victim outreach in capital murder cases, an outreach initiative that gives survivors of crime and the defense team access to each other for the purpose of meeting those survivors' needs. Although contested because of legal considerations, careful and sensitive application of restorative justice principles has advanced this sort of outreach as a viable practice at both federal and state levels.

Contextually oriented variations on victim-offender mediation, family group conferencing, circles, and victim-offender dialogue will likely become the restorative justice norm. Movement away from a purist model, however, has, in some instances, made restorative justice programs difficult to identify. Indeed, much gets named restorative justice today that wanders far from its basic core values.

Evidence of Effectiveness

Evaluations of victim-offender mediation and family group conferencing are extensive and, in relationship to youth, these approaches have been examined over a longer period than most others in the juvenile justice system. The eighty-five studies and four meta-analyses that have been generated over the past thirty years show consistently high rates of participant satisfaction in a variety of sites, across many cultures, and in cases involving both mild and severe offenses.

Preventing recidivism is often used as a long-term measure of effectiveness. A recent meta-analysis of 12,000 juveniles found a 25 percent reduction in recidivism, leading the researchers to claim that victim-offender mediation is a well-established, empirically supported intervention for reducing juvenile recidivism. Victim-offender mediation and family group conferencing also affect the well-being of crime victims. A recent randomized and controlled trial of victims of robbery and burglary found one-third fewer post-traumatic stress symptoms at six weeks among victims involved in restorative justice practices than among victims in the control group, and 40 percent fewer symptoms at six months.

Victim-offender dialogue in crimes of severe violence also shows substantial results. An ethnographic study found that 80 percent of participants reported that the dialogue process had a profound effect on their lives. Important factors for victims included letting go of hate; obtaining answers to questions such as "Why did you did this to me?"; placing the anger where it belongs; and experiencing an offender's ownership and remorse. Important factors for offenders included being accountable, seeing their victim as a human being, understanding the effects of their actions, being able to give something back, and being more open to their own feelings.

The effectiveness of circles has principally been evaluated in schools. In Minnesota, almost half of the school districts use some form of restorative practices, including circles. The number of acts of physical aggression recorded per year in one Minnesota elementary school dropped from 773 to 153 over 3.5 years of application. Circles are also being used for offender re-entry. Research on circles of support and accountability for high-risk sex offenders in Canada showed that sexual reoffending decreased by 83 percent for offenders engaged in restorative justice circles in contrast to the matched comparison group and actuarial projections. The dramatic results of these studies are beginning to turn heads in mainstream society. With all hope, future studies will continue to document the effectiveness of restorative justice methods in making our communities safer and more well.

Restorative justice has come to the fore globally at a time when many are realizing the systemic failures of the dominant model of crime control. By calling on those who are harmed, wrongdoers, and their affected communities to share the responsibility of responding to violence, restorative justice promotes repair, reconciliation, and the rebuilding of relationships. By honoring the healing power of story; teaching us to listen deeply to the woundedness within others and ourselves; and working with the energy of conflict and people's intense emotions, restorative practices can transform pain into hope. ■

CONTROVERSIES
(continued from page 29)

the service of a set of fears that serve neither love nor connection. To consciously serve love might be to infect public discourse with emotionality, spirituality, and even religion, in something of a creeping revolution.

Radical Reactions to Restorative Justice

Something that's too revolutionary for many liberals should sound good to radical anti-racists and anti-capitalists. Yet, there is something highly distasteful, or suspect, about restorative justice for many radicals.

The greatest difficulty for the radical Left is implicit in Fania E. Davis's words in this issue: "I would say this movement is more subversive than any of the revolutionary movements in which I have been involved since the 1950s. All previous social justice movements have kept us trapped in discordant, binary, either-or, right-wrong, and us-versus-them ways of being present to one another and to the earth." Binaries are as central to the Left as they are to the Right. Many people have considered Right and Left to be equally self-righteous, equally prone to demonize the other side.

It's not just that someone like Sunny Schwartz (page 37) works for the sheriff's department and expresses a vision for how corrections can become a noble profession, which looks to many radicals

YOUNG AUTHORS
We are looking for creative writers, poets, artists, creative academics, and activists under forty to join our community of writers. Please submit articles and encourage your friends to do so too!
Submit online: tikkun.org/submissions

like collaboration with the imperialist and racist state. It's also that restorative justice seeks to foster a sense of personal accountability in individuals who have perpetrated crimes. Doing so requires more focus on individuals—including on convicted members of oppressed races and classes—than some radicals are comfortable with. Some fear that restorative justice's focus on individual accountability suggests that it's the individuals' fault they are in prison, not the fault of the system.

If you imagine that Sunny Schwartz is compromising too much with the American empire, it is worth noting that the central anti-violence teaching in her program is provided by Manalive, which was developed by Hamish Sinclair. Sinclair cut his teeth organizing coal miners and their families in eastern Kentucky and autoworkers in Detroit in the 1960s who were all losing their union jobs as capital sought higher returns elsewhere. He saw his part of the Detroit resistance movement destroyed by the violent objections of union men toward women in their lives who wanted to share in the organizing. Sinclair dedicated his life to building programs for working-class men that would enable them to opt out of the "male role belief system," in order to organize effectively with women when the times became conducive to organizing once more. Personal accountability and political organizing are two equal sides of Sinclair's coin; he understands that neither comes easily and neither is complete without the other. One could argue that failure to grasp this has been the bane of most revolutions by radical utopians and of most elected social democratic parties as well. *Animal Farm* tells the classic tale of revolutionaries who both demonize the oppressor and, because they harbor romantic notions about the ability of the oppressed to be loving and just when they gain power, fail to learn the skills of accountability, empathy, and self-restraint (which a program like Sinclair's Manalive teaches to highly competitive men).

Combining *thorough personal accountability* with an understanding of the ways one's environment has molded one is a complex task, not easily assimilated into some radicals' worldviews. But that may change.

Restorative Justice or Transformative Justice?

Prison abolitionists argue that our current prison system is unreformable. Critical Resistance, a national grassroots group seeking to dismantle the prison-industrial complex, writes:

> We call our vision "abolition," and take the name purposefully from those who called for the abolition of slavery in the 1800s. Abolitionists believed that slavery could not be fixed or reformed—it needed to be abolished. As PIC [prison-industrial complex] abolitionists today, we also do not believe that reforms can make the PIC just or effective. Our goal is not to improve the system; it is to shrink the system into non-existence.

Groups like these that see the restorative justice movement as already too fatally implicated in the criminal justice system (and unrealistic in its idea that there was anything good to be restored in the first place) tend instead to rally around the idea of "transformative justice."

Unlike restorative justice projects, which are often related in some way to the criminal justice system, either as an intervention meant to prevent incarceration or as an effort partly within the prisons to promote healing of offenders and victims, transformative justice projects tend to focus on creating a community-based system wholly outside the prison and courts system, thereby resonating more strongly with the prison abolitionist movement.

Each side in this debate can push the other's buttons. Failure to be sufficiently adversarial toward the criminal injustice system can look unconscionable to transformative justice activists. The use of more adversarial language and practices (e.g., in transformative justice, survivors making demands on those who have harmed them) and a perceived excess of theory over empathic practice can make restorative justice people doubt how transformative these other folks really are.

But as Bench Ansfield and Timothy Colman's article on a Philadelphia-based transformative justice project makes clear (page 41), at the heart of both is the development of empathic practices that work, that increase the sense of safety for survivors of violence, and that help those who perpetrated the harm to change. People who line up on both the restorative and transformative sides of the spectrum already meet and talk, and will do this more as their movements grow. Again, the focus on empathic listening will make it more likely that they will hear each other. Insofar as restorative practices actually work, transformative justice projects will adapt and adopt them, and vice versa.

To me, both look like unfinished attempts at the same kind of thing, but starting from different positions *in* society as well as *about* society. Many restorative justice proponents start as professionals already in the system (the justice system or the school system—see Rita Alfred's piece on page 48), who try to work it so that programs can get under way. While their methods may be those of reformers, working with district attorneys, within prisons, grade schools, or law schools, they have hugely transformative dreams. To them, the criticism from prison abolitionists may seem understandable but premature. Both movements, if successful, can end with prisons abolished, or reduced to housing only a tiny number of specific cases; one restorative justice lawyer speculated to me that this number might be as small as 2,000 people in the United States but added that the debate was fruitless at this point because it will be a matter of what works and how well we manage to create alternative methods for keeping people safe and transforming violent behavior. The movements are complementary, this viewpoint holds.

And it does behoove restorative justice people to think how they would do things if there were no state-violence

sanctions at all in the background of their work: If the alternative to a family or community circle were not criminal charges, or if there were no literally captive audience for male role rethinking, would there be enough motivation for enough violent offenders to participate? What does a community do with those who refuse? When an offender is loose in the community and no one is going to call the cops, what sanctions of disapproval, of demands, can be brought to bear to bring the person to a community circle? It certainly may get to sound a little adversarial. But working out how to do this is a challenge that many restorative justice people already recognize.

What Change Is Most Radical?

What we think of as radical depends on what we think the root is. Is the root of human problems to be found in human nature as selected for by evolution, or is it sin, or private property, capitalism, patriarchy, racism, dominance, abusive parenting, or failure to prioritize empathy? For evangelical Christians, being born again is the most radical act. For some left-wing activists, "restorative" does not sound radical enough. For others it's the word "justice" that is the problem: it suggests traditional binary categories of victim and offender, even of right and wrong, when what is needed is to jettison such notions and move to the radical view that everyone has the same set of legitimate human needs, everyone is trying different strategies to meet their needs, and barriers to communication and efforts to suppress conflict actually result in reduced safety and increased violence (see Dominic Barter's article on page 21 of this issue).

So there are differences, and people feel strongly about them. However, in my communications with restorative and transformative justice practitioners on different places on the spectrum, I have found everyone reluctant to criticize the other; they all seem aware that, while their own visions sustain them, they have much reason to maintain bridges to each other. This is entirely within the empathic ethos of these movements, and distinguishes them from those who, whether on the Left or the Right, embrace adversarial approaches.

Stories of Transformation and Freedom

There is little philosophically different in restorative justice from other nonviolent organizing. Other branches of that broader movement have their enthusiasts. Why is this branch growing more rapidly?

One answer becomes clear as soon as you talk to the enthusiasts. They are less likely to talk theory than they are to tell you stories of transformation, healing, and freedom. Whatever they are doing, it is giving them experiences that astonish them—experiences they want to share.

Dig deeper and the talk turns to practices. One central practice is the circle, in which everyone can be heard and no one dominates. Different practitioners have different ways of doing circles. A cloth may be spread on the floor with objects evocative of the participants' values and lives. A poem or prayer or other words that speak to the culture of those present may be read. A talking stick may be passed around, each person speaking in turn, answering a question set by the facilitator. They may start by saying how they want the circle to run, what values it should embody, what they need from the others in order to feel safe enough to speak frankly, what kind of confidentiality, respect, commentary, etc., they require. With agreement reached on this, the circle goes ahead to fulfill the purpose it has been called for: hearing from a person who has been harmed, agreeing on a plan to redress the harm, reviewing how well the plan has been implemented, or other steps inherent to that particular practice.

People find that the circle structure frees them to speak more authentically. Victims tell how it was. People cry. Offenders hear, and then tell their own stories of pain and loss. A teenage offender is astonished to find that in the circle called to decide how to repair the harm he has caused, he can speak as long as he needs to, while the district attorney, paying a visit to see how the process works, cannot speak until it is his turn to do so. A "reverse Miranda" agreement has already been reached with the DA, that nothing said in the circle will be used as evidence, should the case go to court after all. A math tutor whose car was burgled by a teenager ends up giving the teen free tutoring. A young man who burgled two homes and fled returns two years later to offer restoration because his girlfriend is pregnant and he wants to make a fresh start; he agrees to pay the families in full for what he stole, and they, impressed by his attitude, ask him to spend the money on parenting lessons for himself and his girlfriend, to help stop the cycle of abuse he has suffered from: this becomes part of the plan he must fulfill to avoid criminal charges.

The various practices and stories of transformation are the core of the movement. However, it is not growing simply because the stories are memorable and rewarding to all concerned, but also because they are replicable and can find regular niches in existing institutions—schools, juvenile halls, and prisons—where their value is recognized in terms of dollars saved and in metrics like reduced recidivism. These practices do not depend on charismatic personalities but can be taught widely, so that facilitation emerges from within the community and does not have to come from "above," from a professional. At the same time, how much to certify and professionalize is an issue that may become contentious: institutions and funding foundations frequently want credentials, and expertise is indeed needed, and there must be ways of working out who has it.

Experientialism and Theory

For a debate on the value of the term "restorative justice" versus other terms, it's worth looking at Howard Zehr's September 2011 posts on his blog (http://emu.edu/now/restorative-justice). Zehr is one of the movement's founders and leading thinkers. One of his links is to a 2009 post by Catherine Bargen, who writes of those who would like to drop the word "justice" when restorative practices are not linked to the criminal justice system:

> It may be that it is easier to focus on restorative because it's the nice value stuff but it's harder to focus on justice because that may start to involve power issues. And it might get personal.... We have to give up privilege to bring justice into situations. Many of us leading the restorative justice movement are privileged.

Commenting on that post, another practitioner in the field thanks Bargen and notes the difficulty of raising such issues in the movement, which he finds excessively self-congratulatory, adding, "I've started wondering if there might be a strand of anti-intellectualism in the broader 'restorative' movement—that somehow issues of restoration, justice, healing, accountability, inclusion, etc. are simple issues not in need of fretting over too much."

I find a strong analogy to the Christian movements that in my doctoral thesis I termed "experiential movements." Christianity has been far more concerned with creedal belief than most religions, but it has always had strands that were concerned most with mystical experience, behavioral transformation, emotional states, or ethical actions. Theological terms may be of little concern to such movements. Anti-intellectualism has been a likely companion of such movements, and so has resistance among middle-class and white proponents to questioning their own privileges. But in other such movements, falling "in love with the values and the amazing transformations we saw happening," in Bargen's words, has led people into major campaigns for structural redress, including slavery abolition, trade unions, universal suffrage, and building the welfare state.

It appears to me that restorative practices are a modern version of these movements of personal renewal. Unlike earlier ones, this movement is secularized in presentation and thought, deliberately formulated to be open to people of all beliefs and none, but it is as experientially spiritual as its practitioners wish it to be. Its radical embrace of empathic listening and action makes it incompatible with divisive ideologies, creeds, or therapies—in a word, with any kind of cultism.

This version of personal renewal is also connected much more strongly to modern understandings of social structure, racism, imperialism, and inherited inequality. If the movement listens to leaders like Fania Davis, who argues powerfully for whites in the movement to educate themselves more deeply in the reasons racism persists and in the ways the criminal justice system is acting as a new Jim Crow, then we will start to have the kind of integration of personal change with structural change that many of us have been arguing for years is the only way a caring society can be built. ■

WHAT'S LOVE GOT TO DO WITH IT?
(continued from page 33)

community building that is at the heart of all restorative practices. His Riverside speech, challenging America to engage its enemies—at that time Ho Chi Minh and the Viet Cong—and listen to one another's stories anticipates the profound encounter and truth-telling themes of restorative justice.

When Dr. King declared at the 1963 March on Washington, "I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave-owners will be able to sit down together at a table of brotherhood," he foresaw the Coming to the Table project in Virginia and the Welcome Table project in Mississippi—two contemporary restorative justice initiatives designed to heal historical harms of slavery and Jim Crow. The Virginia program literally brings together descendants of slaves and slave owners, in some cases from the same blood line, to engage in racial healing dialogue. Dr. King also prefigured the restorative and racial healing work being done by the DeWolf family and growing numbers of allies in connection with the Traces of the Trade project.

Sankofa, Race, and Restorative Futures

If we are to fulfill restorative justice's extraordinary potential we must not forget our roots—either our deep indigenous roots and values that relentlessly remind us of the sacred bonds of our interrelatedness, or our more recent civil rights roots that resolutely remind us of the centrality of race in any effective U.S. social transformation movement.

We as restorative justice practitioners and allies must be intentional about impacting racial disparities as we create and implement programs, whether in schools, communities, or the justice system. We also need to craft program evaluation strategies that keep an eye on and measure impact on racial disparities.

To remain vigilant within our own ranks and to model the race-conscious changes we want to see in the world, we must embed unlearning racism components and tutorials on the New Jim Crow and school-to-prison pipeline in all our standard restorative justice trainings, be they victim-offender mediation, family group conferencing, or peacemaking circle trainings. We need to think and talk more about the subject, write about it, and hold study circles and symposia on it.

As Dr. Kenneth V. Hardy notes, the moral question of our time is whether we will choose to promote healing or jailing. Indeed, our historic task is to challenge and provide alternatives to our culture's overreliance on racialized strategies of mass punishment and incarceration. Through advocacy and well-researched studies, we need to influence policy makers to redirect resources from incarcerating to healing and educating. And we must also be mindful and practice noticing whenever punitive or racialized ways of being rear their head both in our thoughts and daily interactions. So much of what we do, if we are to be effective, involves practicing mindfulness and being the change we want to see in the world. If we are not modeling what we are teaching, then we are teaching something else.

What Love Has to Do with It

When Dr. King addressed the overflow audience at the Holt Street Baptist Church in Montgomery, Alabama, in December 1955, history was being made in two ways. First, as is well-known, the occasion marked the inauguration of the Montgomery bus boycott that ultimately changed the world. Secondly, and less well known, that evening marked the early glimmerings of humanity's historic shift toward a new vision of justice, foretelling the emergence of the restorative justice movement some twenty years later, another movement that is also destined to change the world.

And what does love have to do with this new but ancient justice? Everything. ■

HEALING FROM HARM
(continued from page 37)

8. *Learning conflict resolution skills and better communication skills.*

9. *Healthier relationships with family members and friends.*

10. *A desire to "give back."* Some of the men at San Quentin find that with healing and transformation comes the next step—the desire to share, teach, and facilitate others through the same process.

This is not just a list. The more time I spend with the men in the Victim Offender Education Group, the more I see how they actualize these transformations in everyday interactions. I also see the desire these men have to continue to grow and learn about themselves. Most importantly, as a witness to the process of transformation, I am convinced this evidence of change confirms that violence is a product of social conditions; that violence is learned and it can be unlearned. It gives me great hope for our shared humanity. ■

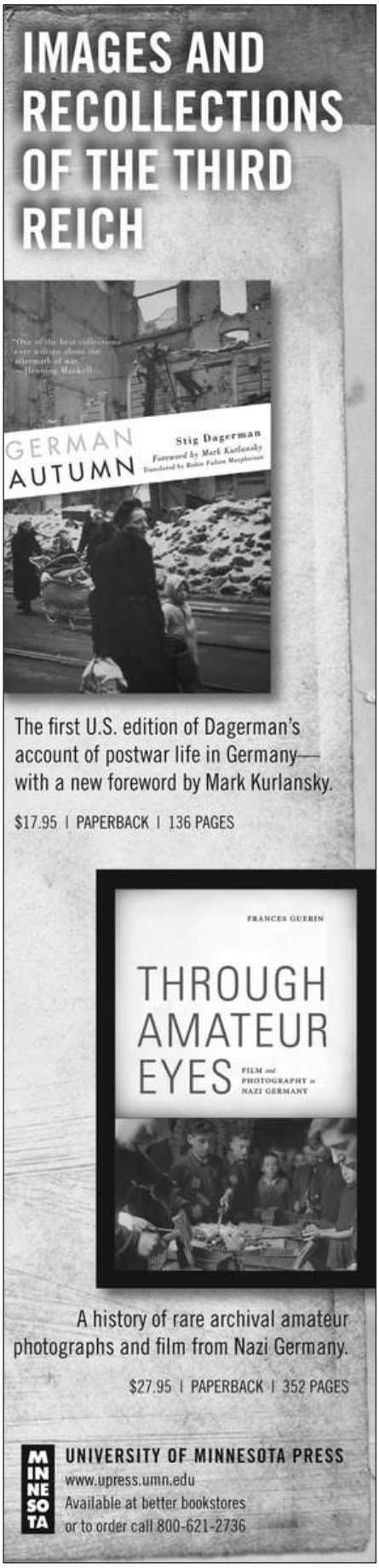
Stay Connected
Keep up with web articles, art exhibits, and more. Join our email list: tikkun.org/mail.

DECOLONIZING RESTORATIVE JUSTICE
(continued from page 47)

or federal governments to begin this work. White people who are committed to seeking restorative justice between peoples can also do a great deal as individuals. We can talk to other white people and find ways to educate each other about our history and our internalized programming. These are things we can all do. Our history and our programming are not personal; virtually all whites have been subjected to it—but it hurts persons, ourselves included. Parents in particular can work on exposing the racist and colonizer programming and one-sided histories presented in children's books and school curricula.

And we can take action. For example, many white people who have no children, such as myself, might consider returning the stolen land we live on to the Dakota people in our wills. My mother and I have made such land-return arrangements for the home we now live in, and my sisters, both of whom *do* have children, agree and support us in this personal step of land return. Many religious congregations are finding their numbers dwindling and are deciding to fold and sell their church property. This land could be returned as well. These individual and group actions by no means reduce the necessity of people-to-people, nation-to-nation rectification of harms; quite the contrary, they contribute to building the public and collective will to do so.

All such efforts contribute to healing our relationships by grounding them in economic, social, political, and basic human justice. It may take decades or even centuries to rectify harms of this magnitude. Yet the enormity of the harms and scope of righting them should not stop us from taking the first steps. Native people affirm how much we can do right now to change our relations as peoples. No Native person I know advocates doing to whites what we did and still do to their ancestors and relatives. We can begin the journey today to be in a good way with those to whom we owe everything: our lives on this continent. ■



The Shabbes Wife

BY JOSH KORNBLUTH

Growing up as a totally secular Jew, I was always intrigued by the idea of the *shabbes goy*—a non-Jew who would perform certain tasks for Jews on the Jewish Sabbath, tasks they were forbidden to do themselves (such as turning on a light, which would count as "work" on the day of rest). It seemed pretty sneaky to me—a way to follow the letter of the holy law while violating it in spirit. By which I mean to say: I dug it. The only flaw, it seemed to me, was that you would then be dependent on the presence of a Gentile—Elvis Presley, say, or the Pope (just to pick two at random)—who was willing and able to perform these mundane tasks for you. What if Elvis had a Friday-night concert? Or if the Pope wanted to go bowling on Saturday afternoon? Then you'd be stuck.

Of course, since I myself observed none of the Jewish laws (unless, perhaps, by accident), this wasn't a real issue for me. I could turn on (or, to use the language of my immigrant grandparents, "open") the light whenever I wanted to. So I never spent that much time grappling with the whole shabbes goy concept. But now, in middle age, I've begun exploring certain aspects of Jewish practice: I go to temple (sometimes), I read the Torah (in portions, and in English), I even believe in God (not really, but I just wanted to hedge my bets here). This year, for the first time, I totally fasted for Yom Kippur—going so far as to forswear my beloved coffee (resulting in the holiest headache of my life). And I think it was during this fast that I looked over at my wife, who is not Jewish, and thought: *hey, maybe she could be my shabbes goy!*

It seemed perfect! After all, we live together, so she wouldn't have to drive in from somewhere. And as a schoolteacher, she's usually at home all weekend, grading papers and such, so there wouldn't be many schedule conflicts. The more I thought about it, the more this idea made sense to me. But then I was visited by a shocking insight: *My wife had already been my shabbes goy for years—only not just on the Sabbath!* For instance, she'd long done most of the housework and the cooking, even though her job is infinitely more exhausting than mine. In fact, in all her interactions, she is profoundly ethical—often spending lots of time and energy on little thoughtful things (like sending out thank-you notes) that would never occur to me to do (busy as I am with important tasks like opening the refrigerator, closing the refrigerator, and napping).

This, in turn, was followed by a revelation: *it was my Gentile wife who had inspired me to explore Judaism.* Living with someone who is so profoundly loving and moral, who does work (at school and at home) that is so often selfless, I had become aware of an absence—or at least an incompleteness—at my own center: call it spiritual. And as it happens, my neighborhood *shul* is a place where people grapple with such issues all the time, seeking wisdom from tradition and from one another. By necessity, as we are all imperfect, we do this imperfectly. Sometimes, some of us may even cut corners. (Though, to reiterate, I *totally stayed off coffee* this Yom Kippur!) But we fight the good fight, and we do it together.

Looking around at my fellow congregants, I am often struck by how they know the prayers so much better than I do. Certainly, most if not all of them are far more observant than I am. And even though we're in Berkeley, I'd daresay that many of them even believe in God. But that's OK. Because I realize now that I am in training for something I have yet to become. I know it won't be easy. I'm sure there will be ups and downs. But one day, if I study Judaism as deeply as I can, and get off my butt more around the house, perhaps I can achieve my new goal: to become my wife's *shabbes Jew*—for one day a week, at least, or maybe even seven. ■

Josh Kornbluth is a monologuist who lives in Berkeley, California, with his wife and son. His latest solo show is Andy Warhol: Good for the Jews? *You can follow his doings at joshkornbluth.com.*

STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT, AND CIRCULATION

Publication title: *Tikkun.* Publication number: 0887-9982. Filing date: 10/01/11. Issue frequency: quarterly. Number of issues published annually: 4. Annual subscription price: $29. Complete mailing address of office of publication: 2342 Shattuck Ave., #1200, Berkeley, CA 94704. Complete mailing address of office of publisher: Michael Lerner, 2342 Shattuck Ave., #1200, Berkeley, CA 94704. Publisher: Michael Lerner, 2342 Shattuck Ave., #1200, Berkeley, CA 94704. Editor: Michael Lerner, 2342 Shattuck Ave., #1200, Berkeley, CA 94704. Managing Editor: Alana Yu-lan Price, 2342 Shattuck Ave., #1200, Berkeley, CA 94704. Owner: Institute for Labor and Mental Health, 2342 Shattuck Ave., #1200, Berkeley, CA 94704.

Total number of copies (net print run): yearly avg. 13,711; most recent 8,698. Paid/requested outside-county mail subscriptions: yearly avg. 5,524; most recent 5,648. Paid in-county mail subscriptions: yearly avg. 0; most recent 0. Sales through dealers and carriers, street vendors, counter sales, and other non-USPS paid distribution: yearly avg. 5,193; most recent 450. Paid/requested circulation by other classes mailed through USPS: yearly avg. 21; most recent 20. Total paid and/or requested circulation: yearly avg. 10,738; most recent 6,118. Free distribution by mail outside county: yearly avg. 1,013; most recent 1,003. Free distribution by mail inside county: yearly avg. 0; most recent 0. Free distribution by mail in other classes mailed through USPS: yearly avg. 0; most recent 0. Free distribution outside the mail: yearly avg. 184; most recent 177. Total free distribution: yearly avg. 1,198; most recent 1,180. Total distribution: yearly avg. 11,936; most recent 7,298. Copies not distributed: yearly avg. 1,775; most recent 1,400. Total: yearly avg. 13,711; most recent 8,698. Percent paid and/or requested circulation: yearly avg. 89 percent; most recent 83 percent.

© WILLIAM MERCER MCLEOD (WILLIAMMERCERMCLEOD.COM)

KAFFIYEH ON MISSISSIPPI AVENUE

History is a black and white scarf tied on the head of
a boy who lost his brother on inauguration night,
call it a kaffiyeh, because it is & the black knots

at the end a fist, a little weight to keep the head
bent towards the ground, where the bodies are left,
& it is silence that keeps you from talking about them,

the young people who write their lives into the space
a newspaper obituary offers. My closed mouth a flask
tilted to the heavens as he spoke, the kaffiyeh's knots

swing, bullets & death and the way you tie the scarf like so,
around the neck, because it hides part of your face,
prepares everyone to pretend: there is a justice some

place that is faceless, & as ruthless as a group
of eighth graders stomping out the boy who didn't
run fast enough—& the truth here

is that the kaffiyehs I see on the heads of young boys
who talk shit, call each other goons & rep neighborhoods
they call 3rd world, the scarves have nothing to do

with the little girl who stood in a school house of
dust & ash after the bombs stopped falling in Palestine,
the kaffiyehs, sold at a flea market near Eastern Market

have made their way into a school filled with the after
math of a bombing, without the bombing—the quiet
revelations about death, when a country rocks

in celebration and no one hears the gun shots, &
the kaffiyeh is nothing but a word in a poem,
a word that pulls the blood of the world into one spot

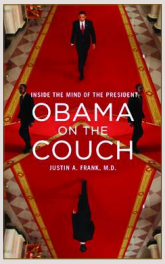
& makes the living boy's brother something dead,
yes, but also something else, another body buried
in a story that none of us is aware of.

— Reginald Dwayne Betts

Tikkun RECOMMENDS

OBAMA ON THE COUCH

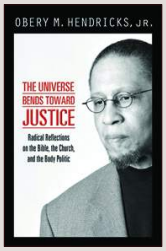
Justin A. Frank
Free Press, 2011



Coming at a time when many of the loyal volunteers who helped run Obama's 2008 presidential campaign are feeling abandoned and lied to by the current president, Frank's self-described attempt to go "inside the mind of the president" provides some welcome analysis. Frank eschews one-dimensional explanations of the president's transformation from "hope candidate" to "accommodator-in-chief": he portrays Obama neither as a politician dissuaded by death threats from following his progressive instincts nor as a self-conscious liar, nor as a black man forced to conform to the will of the white power structure in order to accomplish anything in office. There is nothing dismissive in this book. Instead, Frank makes brilliant use of psychoanalytic categories to paint a multi-layered picture of the forces inside and outside Obama that have pushed him to be who he is. This first-rate study convincingly concludes that there is no "superman" Obama secretly waiting until 2012 to get re-elected and then suddenly fight for all the good ideas his supporters thought they heard him advocate for in 2008.

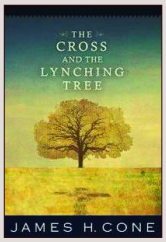
THE UNIVERSE BENDS TOWARD JUSTICE

Obery M. Hendricks Jr.
Orbis Books, 2011



THE CROSS AND THE LYNCHING TREE

James H. Cone
Orbis Books, 2011

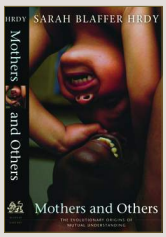


Subtitled "Radical Reflections on the Bible, the Church, and the Body Politic," Hendricks's collection of essays plays to his strength: commentary on liberation theologians who emphasize the continuity between the teachings of Jesus and of social-justice-oriented prophets of the Hebrew Bible. Hendricks challenges those "Christians" (quotes are his) who hold "corporate interests as sacrosanct, while doing the utmost to dismantle the social safety net that is the last line of aid and succor for the struggling American masses." Following a path increasingly maligned as the Tea Party extremists gain power over contemporary American political discourse, Hendricks seeks to "recover the radicality of the message of Jesus and the prophetic witness of the Hebrew Bible." But he goes much further than others before him, providing a detailed path for applying biblical insights to contemporary spiritual, political, and economic realities both inside and outside the Christian world.

Cone analyzes how Christianity's aspirations for transcendence intersect with its participation in the structure of American racism—a story frequently told in the heyday of the Civil Rights Movement but now largely forgotten. A professor of systematic theology at Union Theological Seminary, Cone played an important role in educating Protestant ministers in the Sixties on the importance of supporting the Civil Rights Movement, and his earlier book *A Black Theology of Liberation* became one of the most significant Christian theological texts in the world. Here he is, forty years later, once again urging Christians to reject dogmatic formulas and tap back into the liberation energies he once stirred.

MOTHERS AND OTHERS

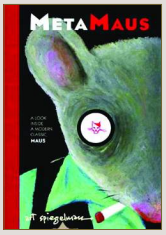
Sarah Blaffer Hrdy
Harvard University Press, 2011



For those of us who believe that one of the most important political tasks facing the human race is to dramatically develop our capacity for empathy, this book about the evolutionary origins of mutual understanding comes both as an inspiration and confirmation that we've been thinking on the right track. Though many capitalist economists find the idea of reflexive altruism irrational, researchers have produced plentiful evidence to support the idea that altruism is indeed hardwired into the human psyche. In fact, other primates possess neural mechanisms for imitation and rudimentary capacities to identify with others, as well. Hrdy offers a bold and nuanced account of how the tendency to help one another has enabled human beings to survive and evolve. She also fosters a renewed appreciation of the role of mothering not only in a child's physical development but also in the development of a child's capacity for inter-subjective engagement.

METAMAUS

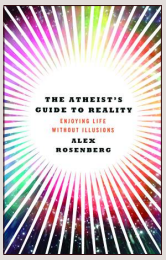
Art Spiegelman
Pantheon, 2011



Maus is one of the great classics of the contemporary Jewish world, retelling the story of the Holocaust in comic book form. It depicts not only the struggle between Jewish mice and the Nazi cats seeking to destroy them, but also how the Holocaust's legacy gets internalized and relived by succeeding generations of post-Holocaust Jews. In *MetaMaus*, Spiegelman offers up *Maus*-related sketches, notebooks, and rough drafts, alongside interviews with editor Hillary Chute. The original *Maus* is enclosed on a DVD. Spiegelman is a master of self-exploration, and in this new volume the reader is startled by the degree of brilliance in his quest to connect to his battered survivor father. In conversation with Chute, he gets to shine again. Yet don't be surprised that the greatest pleasures of this book come from indulging in the beauty of Spiegelman's art for *Maus* and the opportunity to experience once again the joys and sorrows that came with the first reading of that amazing book.

THE ATHEIST'S GUIDE TO REALITY

Alex Rosenberg
W.W. Norton & Company, 2011



This book promises to show how to enjoy life without illusions. Rosenberg, the chair of the Philosophy Department at Duke University, tells us to give up the fantasy of learning lessons for the future from the past. History has no patterns that can help us predict the human future, he argues. The past is bereft of meaning. What is adaptive in one environment becomes maladaptive in another one. Rosenberg offers a lively defense of the scientism that *Tikkun* often challenges, yet he is not oblivious to the value of those religious communities that bind people together in attempts to ameliorate the human condition. He argues, however, that secular humanists can best improve our lives by letting go of residual desires for meaning and accepting a wholly scientific account of reality. In what is either a brilliant spoof or a perfect example of the logic of the kind of atheism Rosenberg espouses, he offers the following advice to those readers who still can't sleep at night, even after accepting science's answers to life's biggest questions: "Take a Prozac or your favorite serotonin reuptake inhibitor, and keep taking them till they kick in!"

We Can End the Suffering of the People of Palestine and the People of Israel

To do so will require changing Western societies in a profound way. *Embracing Israel/Palestine* shows how—it's a book not just about the Middle East but about how to rethink our entire approach to social and political change.

Embracing Israel/Palestine is a must-read for those who care about peace in the Middle East. It is provocative, radical, persuasive, and, if given the attention it deserves, could make a major contribution to reconciliation. Please read this book!

—Archbishop Desmond Tutu

Embracing Israel/Palestine is a terrific book by a pioneer of global transformation. Out of love for both Israelis and Palestinians as equal creations of God, Rabbi Lerner offers us the deepest way out of the bloody conflict—an approach that draws from a deep psychological and political understanding of the dynamics of the Middle East.

***—Avrum Burg**, former chair of the Jewish Agency and World Zionist Organization, speaker of the Knesset, and interim president of the State of Israel*

Rabbi Michael Lerner is one of America's most significant progressive intellectuals and political leaders, and *Embracing Israel/Palestine* is not only a great conceptual breakthrough in dealing with the Middle East but also demonstrates a methodology for how best to think about global and domestic U.S. politics. For many decades Muslims around the world have been cheered by Rabbi Lerner's challenge to the media's demeaning of our religion and dismissal of the rights of Palestinians, just as they have been challenged by his insistence that they recognize the importance of truly and deeply accepting Israel's right to exist in peace and security.

***—Rep. Keith Ellison** (D-Minn.), the first elected Muslim to the U.S. Congress and chair of the Progressive Caucus of the U.S. House of Representatives*

As a Palestinian activist in the West Bank, I am truly grateful for *Embracing Israel/Palestine*'s powerful contribution to peace, justice, kindness, and sanity!

***—Sami Awad**, executive director of Holy Land Trust in Bethlehem, Palestine*

Rabbi Michael Lerner provides us with a brilliant and hopeful vision of how to transform the Middle East from a cauldron of violence to a vanguard of peace. I hope every American will read this book and apply its lessons to change how we deal with the Middle East.

—President Jimmy Carter

Rabbi Michael Lerner is one of the great prophetic figures of our time. This book should be the indispensable work on the delicate and difficult effort to keep track of the precious humanity of Jews and Palestinians in the epic struggles for security and justice.

***—Cornel West**, author of* Race Matters *and professor of African American studies and religion at Princeton University*

This book would change the world if there were enough people who would open their eyes and read it. Lerner uses Israel/Palestine as a prism to look at the world as a whole. I hope this book will be used widely in courses in political science and sociology in our universities, not only in courses about the Middle East.

***—Robert Bellah**, professor emeritus at UC Berkeley, author of* Religion in Human Evolution, *and coauthor of* Habits of the Heart

Order it online at tikkun.org/embracing or send a $20 check made out to *Tikkun* to 2342 Shattuck Ave, #1200, Berkeley, CA 94704. Questions? Call 510-644-1200. Also, please spread the word by asking your local bookstore to order it. Stores can call Random House Customer Service at 1-800-733-3000 or email customerservice@randomhouse.com. Rabbi Lerner is available to do talks at your local college, university, synagogue, church, mosque, ashram, or community center—to organize one, email ashley@tikkun.org.