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Phyllis Chesler

Phyllis Chesler Organization

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Keywords

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**ANDREA REVISED:
ANDREA DWORKIN: THE FEMINIST AS REVOLUTIONARY
BY MARTIN DUBERMAN (THE NEW PRESS, 2020)**

Phyllis Chesler

Phyllis Chesler Organization, USA

KEYWORDS

Andrea Dworkin, Martin Duberman, feminist, feminism, revolutionary, radical, biography, friendship, transgender

AND THERE SHE IS, IN A BLACK-AND-WHITE HEADSHOT, on the cover of Martin Duberman's (2020a) important biography: *Andrea Dworkin: The Feminist as Revolutionary*. She is looking straight at us, her frank J'Accuse-like gaze somehow holding us accountable for all the evil in the world. Andrea is only college-age, but she already looks intense, serious, stubborn, determined, smoldering, formidable—a woman who cannot be easily dismissed even though she is so young. This Andrea resembles the photos of those women workers on strike in the early twentieth century on New York City's lower east side, or even those of partisan fighters somewhere in the European woods, in World War Two.

Duberman may be the first major historian to write a full-length biography of Andrea both as an intellectual and as an activist. I am grateful to him for doing so. I only wish that this had appeared while she was still alive. Knowing her as I do, I bet she'd challenge parts of it far more strenuously than I will do in this review.

I note, with a heavy heart, that so much of our most radical and visionary work (1967-1979), was not only defamed and disappeared within a decade—but that the books about our movement have also been “disappeared” without a trace. Some of the best minds of my feminist generation whose works I once treasured, had to die before they would be taken seriously in the mass media.

For example, both Mary Daly and Shulamith Firestone were dead before they were treated respectfully in the pages of the gate-keeping *New York Times* (Fox, 2010) and *The New Yorker* (Faludi, 2013). Andrea had been dead for fourteen-fifteen years before her work was acknowledged, even praised, and at some length, no fewer than five times in the media that used to savage her work or simply not review that work at all: twice in *The New York Review* (Fateman, 2019; Blair, 2019), twice in the *New York Times* (Goldberg, 2019; Szalai, 2019), and once in *The New Yorker* (Oyler, 2019).

Based on letters in her archives, Duberman depicts an Andrea who, like so many women, put up with verbal, physical, and sexual brutality at the hands of her male lover (in Greece) and thereafter, at the hands of a more dangerously violent husband in Holland. Such male behavior was not uncommon at the time in the bohemian

and activist circles in which Andrea moved and in those decades in general (I remember them well). Such male violence against women is still very much with us.

Shockingly, Duberman shows us how abjectly willing Andrea was to cook, clean, shop, sew, give up her writing, and endure extreme physical and sexual violence in order to make her marriage work; a little girl, a frightened woman trying to please Daddy. Despite all that she would come to write and to symbolize, Andrea retained this “little girl” capacity; she was also shy, funny, timid, sweet, and super-protective of those who took care of her.

Duberman captures Andrea’s enormous frustration about being defamed, damned, “buried alive” both by not being reviewed or by being savagely reviewed often by carefully chosen ideological opponents. He understands her agony about not being able to legally fight back against the most vulgar slander because she could not afford the monstrous costs. He details her chronic disappointment (with friends, publishers, intimates, the universe itself), and finally, her exhaustion, failing health, surgeries, and unexpected, sudden death, far too soon, when she was only fifty-eight.

Still, however distinguished he may be, (and he is), Duberman is an unusual choice as Andrea’s biographer. He is a prize-winning historian but not one especially noted for his ground-breaking feminist work. Duberman came out as a gay man in 1972, founded the Center for Lesbian and Gay Studies at the City University of New York Graduate School, and authored at least twenty-five books. Some books won prizes. Most of his previous biographies were about gay men (Mungo & Duberman, 1995; Duberman, 2007/2008, 2014/2016, 2018b),¹ and about mainly gay *male* movements (Duberman, 1992/2002, 1993/1994, 2018a).² Duberman also wrote important books and plays about racism and about Left-wing anti-racist champions and martyrs (Duberman, 1965a, 1965b/1995, 1965c/2015, 2003/2005, 2012b/2013).³

Although Duberman is not a feminist activist or theorist,⁴ he wrote the Foreword and collected the essays for a Lesbian and Gay Studies Reader, *Queer Ideas* (CUNY Center for Lesbian and Gay Studies, 2003), and included essays by Joan Nestle, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, Judith Butler, Monique Wittig, Barbara Smith, Esther Newton, Cherrie Moraga, and Alisa Solomon.⁵

¹ *Liberace, The Worlds of Lincoln Kirstein, Hold Tight Gently, Luminous Traitor*

² *Cures: A Gay Man’s Odyssey, Stonewall, Has the Gay Movement Failed?*

³ *In White America, The Anti-Slavery Vanguard: New Essays on the Abolitionist, Paul Robeson, Haymarket, Howard Zinn: A Life on the Left*

⁴ Duberman (1991) did write a play, *Mother Earth*, about left-wing anarchist and feminist, Emma Goldman, and a book called *A Saving Remnant: The Radical Lives of Barbara Deming and David McReynolds* (2012a) about feminist-lesbian Barbara Deming and David McReynolds, a gay man, who were both involved in the civil rights and anti-war movement. Most recently, Duberman (2020b) also introduced the Collected Essays of another long-time left-wing feminist friend, Naomi Weisstein, now dead: *Naomi Weisstein: Brain Scientist, Rock Band Leader, Feminist Rebel (Her Collected Essays)*.

⁵ I happen to love Barbara Smith’s and Monique Wittig’s work. Their work is hard core feminist and woman-centered. Smith writes about class and race as well as about being an African-American lesbian and feminist. At a time of great division, she wrote with great sensitivity about anti-Semitism as racism. Wittig is an out lesbian feminist but her work is woman-centered and on a grandly mythic and literary level. I have gone on record praising Joan Nestle as a writer.

Most of the lesbians included in Duberman's *Gay Reader*, identify themselves more as "lesbians," or "queers," than as women. With some exceptions, these are lesbian feminists who are pro-sex/pro-sex work; ardent followers of Jaques Lacan, deconstructionism, and the drama of "narrative." May I suggest that they have "gay male heads." They write about male homosexuality,⁶ drag queens,⁷ "gender performativity,"⁸ the AIDS crisis, and queer nuptials.⁹

Like Duberman, all are also proudly left-wing and conform to a left-wing view of foreign policy, especially in the Middle East.

Perhaps they have all written widely about incest, rape, woman-battering, pornography, prostitution, and female poverty but if so, such work does not define or identify them.

I suggest that Duberman's sense of "sisterhood" with lesbians may primarily be related to the ways in which they are like gay men: focused on sex, sexual and gender identity, sexual activity, butch-femme roles, promiscuity, marginalization, persecution, exile, symbolic resistance, etc. and not so much in terms of their analyses of women's unique fate as "the second sex."

Duberman first met Andrea in the mid-70s in anti-Vietnam war, poetry, and theatrical circles. Duberman is matter-of-fact about his sexual promiscuity and his hiring of gay male hustlers for sex. Andrea was "multi-sexual" in her youth and, according to Duberman, extremely tolerant of her life partner John Stoltenberg's gay sexual practices (p. 75).

Andrea definitely had a "dark" side, an early life of drugs, promiscuity, poverty, and existential angst, but she was also battered, raped, and self-prostituted. She did not buy men or women for sex. She offered sex in exchange for food, money, and shelter. Andrea was far more cynical than I ever was, and she wore her cynicism proudly as a badge of courage.

Despite her burning hot radical feminism, Andrea was also a Euro-centric leftist. She sent money to the Black Panthers, was anti-war, anti-prison, anti-mental hospital, anti-taxation without representation and, in her early days, was the kind of anarchist

⁶ Kosofsky Sedgwick, writing about Henry James's grammar, calls our attention to "potential queer erotic resonances" in his work. She claims that James either gives his "readers the vicarious experience of having their rectums penetrated with a finger or a fist, or of their own 'probing digit' inserted into a rectum."

⁷ Esther Newton's dissertation was about drag queens, which she later published as *Mother Camp: Female Impersonators in America* (1972/1979), she also published a work titled *Cherry Grove, Fire Island: Sixty Years in America's First Gay and Lesbian Town* (1993/2014). With all due respect (Newton's work is ethnographically impeccable), her focus was not primarily on lesbians or female realities. *Cherry Grove* had few lesbians and was overwhelmingly populated by gay men.

⁸ Judith Butler is the queen of "gender performativity," uses the singular "they" pronouns, publishes works about gender fluidity and transgender realities, and is profoundly anti-Israel, and just as profoundly pro-Islam, despite the widespread persecution of homosexuals in Muslim countries.

⁹ Alisa Solomon is a playwright and theater critic. She has written about Larry Kramer, Tony Kushner, the AIDS crisis, gay nuptials, a queer TV series, Gaza, as well as about White racism. Together with Kushner, she edited and introduced *Wrestling with Zion: Progressive Jewish-American Responses to the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict* (2003).

who wanted no government—but who still wanted the non-existent government to provide free housing, free food, free health care, and free education.

She lived in Europe as an expatriate, but then returned to America “to join the fight.” She was critical of *amerika*, believed that a revolutionary is someone who throws her body down on the barricades, and who, as has been said, must dislike Israel “even more than necessary”—but this is not what Andrea’s original contributions were about.

Everything and everyone that did not save her, or assist her, deeply wounded her—but Andrea was also defamed, mocked, dishonored, misunderstood, and legally gagged for telling the truth about women’s lives. She had the kind of power that attracted a cult-like following—according to Duberman, “she breathed fire” (p. 190)—but she also warred with everyone (many of us did; some lucky few did not). Andrea cut people off, cut people down. Still, her work was a world apart from the works of Duberman’s “go-to” lesbians.

For example, Andrea was a masterful, lyric prose writer. She wanted her readers to understand and be captivated by every single word on her page. This is so unlike Judith Butler’s mystifying and off-putting Mandarin prose.

Andrea wrote as a woman—and for women. Her primary identity was not in terms of her sexual or gender identity, or her sexual activity. We must have had a thousand conversations in which we never discussed this as an issue. I had no idea whether she was sexual, asexual, bi-sexual, lesbian, heterosexual, or something else entirely. Perhaps she talked of nothing else to others; I will never know. Duberman tells us more than I need to know about what John Stoltenberg told him about how he and Andrea made love (p. 75).

Duberman knows that Andrea-the-thinker is not like gay men, or gay-male identified lesbians. She is “a feminist, not the fun kind,” as she would say. Andrea stood for Woman Brought Low but, to some extent, she could also be viewed as very male-identified. Here is a part of the review I published about her 1993 novel, *Mercy*.

“Andrea Dworkin is, without question, a great writer, a writer’s writer: as “masterful” as Miller or Mailer; as passionate as Fanon; as gentle and as world-weary as Baldwin; as much a troubadour on the literary high road as Whitman or Ginsburg or Kerouac; raw and rough and cynical and fierce; pitiless as she challenges God on His lack of “mercy.” Dworkin is bitter, shocking, like Baudelaire or Rimbaud, when they were new in the world; brave, heartbreakingly brave, like Leduc—except the truth is, Dworkin really has no predecessor.”

She told me that she wanted to be buried together with this review. This reveals her kinship with male, not female writers—but these are the writers who have been allowed to succeed, not only because they are great writers but because they are men.

Duberman’s biography confirms that in high school and college, other than George Eliot, Andrea read male writers only: Ferlinghetti, Baldwin, Burroughs, Ginsberg, Henry Miller, Norman Mailer, Genet, D.H. Lawrence, Orwell, Rimbaud, Kafka (pp. 14-15). No wonder she loved my review of *Mercy* in which I compared her to these very writers.

Great thinkers are complex, not simple. Andrea had many sides.

Duberman himself quotes Andrea as being “scornful” of Betty Friedan for insisting that women have made progress. In 1979, Andrea wrote:

We are concerned about wife battery, marital rape, incest, and the many forms of child abuse. We are concerned about the poverty of women as a class...about sexual harassment...about the proliferation of woman-hating propaganda (Duberman, 2020, p. 154).

In our time, most publishers demand serious fact-checking, legal vetting, and onerous, “politically correct” readings inflicted upon innocent authors by outside “sensitivity” experts on race and gender. This was my experience for two of my 21st century books. I endured an intense legal vetting in 2013 for *An American Bride in Kabul* (2013) and an even more intense legal vetting for my 2018 book, *A Politically Incorrect Feminist*. I had to field at least 3,500 separate editorial challenges both from insiders and outsiders. The legal vetting is not included in this number which alone took four very intense months. After all, I was writing about people, some of whom were and still are alive, are powerful, even iconic, and can afford to sue.

Perhaps these odious rules do not apply to every author.

I cannot fact-check everything in Duberman’s biography. What I can do is fact-check four things about which I have personal and credible knowledge. These may be Duberman’s only mistakes; or not.

1. While Duberman devotes three pages to my supposedly “nasty break” with Andrea, (pp. 123, 124, 125), one which the reader is allowed to think lasted forever—he buries his own long-lasting “nasty break” with Andrea in footnote 14, on pages 297-298. Apparently, Andrea believed that Duberman had bad-mouthed her book *Woman Hating* at Dutton even though Duberman was the very man who had brought her there. Duberman (2020a, p. 298) writes: “If nothing else, (Andrea’s belief) may well explain why we (Duberman and Dworkin) grew apart as friends.”

Intellectuals and political activists have fallings out with each other all the time, just as civilians do. Duberman (2018c) himself, in his memoir, *The Rest of It: Hustlers, Cocaine, Depression, and Then Some 1976-1988*, describes many of his own.

In fact, according to Duberman, Andrea found no peace, no peaceable community, not in Sugarloaf Key with Barbara Deming, not in the feminist and lesbian communities in Northampton, Massachusetts, not in feminist and lesbian New York City. She routinely submitted articles that were far too long for magazines. Andrea laced into both Gloria Steinem at *Ms.* and Merle Hoffman at *On The Issues* for having to shorten her pieces. *Ms.* once caught Holy Hell for having changed a single word in Andrea’s piece. On page 190, Duberman quotes a letter that Andrea wrote to *Ms. Magazine*:

I don’t want anything more to do with *Ms.* ever. Not ever. As a feminist courtesy, I have never made public my deep political objections to the way... (*Ms.*) trivializes feminism...We brought you extraordinary information...and you turned what we gave you into shit.

Andrea complained to me about every major feminist with whom she was in touch. She complained to me about John’s stealing her ideas and then getting larger book advances than she could ever command. She complained to me about Kitty (MacKinnon) for being better rewarded for what were Andrea’s ideas and being rewarded for them because Kitty was blond, thin, Christian, well-spoken, wealthy, and very smart. I’m sure that Andrea complained about me as well, and not only in a letter to Leah Fritz (pp. 124-125).

Duberman disappeared the very long and passionate relationship I had with Andrea. This is particularly odd since I had already described a small part of that relationship in 3,103 words in *A Politically Incorrect Feminist*. He was familiar both with this work and with my 2005 *The Death of Feminism*. He cites both books on page 305 in footnotes 17 and 18. Duberman could easily have challenged what I wrote; he did not. What he did, instead, was to disappear our relationship. He handled Andrea's breakup with Barbara Deming, which lasted a long time, with some compassion (pp. 300-301, footnote 35; p. 302, footnote 14). In my case, my first breakup with Andrea has me looking really bad.

One must wonder why.

My relationship with Andrea did not end then and there.

But first, here's how we met. Like a number of other feminists, Andrea was a bit of a street person and she approached strangers as if they were intimates or as if they owed her something. It was a little frightening to those who had been more privileged than she had been. It was also thrilling—like having Genet or Rimbaud demand money for a meal.

Thus, in 1974, she called me quite out of the blue and did one of her “You're so great and I'm being crushed” routines which worked so well for her. Andrea had accused her publisher of “sabotaging” her book *Woman Hating*. We had yet to meet—but Andrea said that Jack Macrae of Dutton had specifically told her that if I had not endorsed her book, it could not be that good. Andrea was either planning or had already carried out a sit-in in Macrae's office. Those were such heady times that I gave her a quote over the phone, before I had even read the book. I also admonished her for believing him—and for not calling me first. And then I invited her over.

The first time Andrea met my mother was an unforgettable moment. My mother said to Andrea, who always wore denim overalls, like a farmer: “And who are you? The garbage man?”

Both Andrea and I were shocked and tried not to laugh. My mother broke the ice by declaring, “My daughter is no better than you. She doesn't dress like a professor. What is wrong with the women in your group?”

Now Andrea was shocked. “Mrs. Chesler, Phyllis is one of the most glamorous women in our movement.”

Who knew that Andrea noticed such things?

Before our first “break up,” I endorsed *Woman Hating* (1974). I also spoke to people at Dutton on her behalf. I marched with Andrea outside the Times Square movie theater which was featuring the movie *Snuff*. After our first “break,” I stood with her at the conference on pornography at NYU and was castigated in the *New York Times* on Christmas Day for what I said about pornography; I had compared it to Hitler's *Mein Kampf*.

Down the decades, Andrea continued to turn to me over and over again for help, advice, support, confirmation, funding, my signature on a letter or a petition, to read her work (always at the last minute), to ask for endorsements, and to invite me to accompany her to her lectures and have dinner afterwards with her, John, and our mutual agent, Elaine Markson. We strategized responses to published works that were over-the-top in terms of misogyny: the Joel Steinberg and Hedda Nussbaum atrocity, Bret Easton Ellis's novel *Psycho*, and Jennifer Levin's murder by Robert Chambers. We marched on behalf of the victims. In 1986, Andrea spoke at the custody

speakout that I organized together with Noreen Connell, then-President of NOW-NYS. In 1987-1988, Andrea supported my anti-surrogacy activism and in 1991, she introduced me to some women in Florida and North Carolina and helped me strategize my initial involvement in the Aileen Wuornos case in Florida.

In any event, our relationship lasted for about 30 years. We frequently talked on the phone and often met for dinner. She knew my very young son. Most charmingly, both she and Kate Millett spoke to him as if he were an adult. She and John Stoltenberg attended many of my family events: birthday parties, book parties, holidays.

Quite simply, I loved her. I thought she was a force to be reckoned with, a powerful writer, perhaps a genius. Although her enemies never became my enemies (many remained my friends and allies), I still had her back. When we really parted company, I really missed her.

I remember walking down Seventh Avenue in Park Slope, Brooklyn. Andrea was with John, but she stopped, smiled so sweetly, and congratulated me on my work on anti-Semitism. I thought this was particularly gallant of her since part of our final breakup had something to do with this subject. (I choose not to share the other reason involved since this would only dishonor Andrea.)

2. On page 123, Duberman writes that “our mutual (literary) agent (Elaine Markson) fired me because I had accused Andrea of “plagiarism.” Elaine Markson did not “promptly tell me to find another agent” and in fact, she continued to represent me. I acknowledged her in a number of books that I published long after *Woman Hating* came out. For example, she represented me on *About Men* (1978), *With Child: A Diary of Motherhood* (1979), *Mothers on Trial: The Battle for Children and Custody* (1986), and *Sacred Bond: The Legacy of Baby M* (1988). One may see my Acknowledgements to Elaine as my agent in each of these books. At one point, I was the jerk who left Elaine; I have regretted doing so ever since. Elaine and I were so close that when an apartment became available in her building near Washington Square Park, she asked me whether I would be interested in it.

Why did Duberman publish something that is simply not true? Why did he not fact-check this with me?

3. Why would Duberman also disappear Andrea’s relationship with Merle Hoffman who both published and funded her work? For example, Duberman merely notes that “**someone** suggested that the Diana Foundation in **California** might be receptive” to giving Andrea a much yearned for grant (p. 254). That someone was me and, by the way, the Diana Foundation was based in New York, not California, and had been founded by my good friend, Merle. Duberman writes: “Miraculously, the Diana Foundation decided to award Andrea a \$5,000.00 grant. It was a huge relief” (p. 255).

Who or what led Duberman to obscure Andrea’s relationship to Merle and to *On The Issues* magazine? Merle is the very woman whom I persuaded to hire John Stoltenberg as her managing editor. He once worked there. Merle also funded and coordinated Andrea’s trip to Washington D.C. to interview Congressman John Lewis and she published that interview (1994). Merle published Andrea’s work (1995). I published my review of *Mercy* there—but can no longer find it online.

Through the Diana Foundation, Merle also funded Andrea’s research on Judaism, the Holocaust, and Israel. I arranged for Andrea to accompany me to feminist Israel.

4. Duberman claims that Andrea had disliked Jan Raymond's prescient book *The Transsexual Empire* (1979; Second Edition, 1994); that *she* had viewed it as "transphobic" and had told Jan so (p. 161; p. 309, footnote 12). In this same footnote, Duberman quotes John Stoltenberg, for having defended Andrea against the charge of "transphobia." John wrote this long after Andrea died. His piece is cited in a footnote that one cannot access—but it can be found online at the *Boston Review*, dated April 6, 2020. Titled: *Andrea Dworkin was a Trans Ally*, John writes:

After Andrea's death I became increasingly concerned that she and the radical politics I learned from her were being misappropriated by some to argue—in the name of radical feminism—for a biologically essentialist notion of 'real womanhood'... (para. 11).

Duberman writes that Andrea also "deplored" (p. 161) Raymond's analysis. Duberman claims (p. 161) that Andrea "let Raymond know (her view) at some length; however, the paragraph he refers to actually appeared in Dworkin's 1974 *Woman Hating*. Andrea wrote:

I know of transsexuals in Europe as a small, vigorously persecuted minority, without any recourse to civil or political protection. They lived in absolute exile, as far as I could see, conjuring up for me the deepest reaches of Jewish experience. They were driven by their ostracization to prostitution, drugs, and suicide, conjuring up for me the deepest reaches of female experience...I perceived their suffering as authentic. Male-to-female transsexuals were in rebellion against the phallus and so was I. Female-to-male transsexuals were seeking a freedom only possible to males in patriarchy, and so was I... every transsexual is entitled to a sex-change operation, and it should be provided by the community as one of its functions.

Thus Spake the Young Andrea.

This letter/passage in *Woman Hating* was written a long time ago, long before the transgender issue became something of an aggressive men's rights cult; before billionaires, surgeons, pharmaceutical companies, and mental health professionals saw Big Business in diagnosing and treating *gender dysphoria* (Bilek, 2018); long before men who identified as transgender women began to harass (Hamm, 2019) and deplatform (Gender Health Query, n.d.) radical feminists (whom they denigrated as Trans-exclusionary Radical Feminists or TERFS), and before their demand to compete (Aschwanden, 2019) against biological females in sports (Ingle, 2020), etc.

Both Duberman and Stoltenberg want to enlist Andrea's ghost into supporting the contemporary transgender movement. To do so, they are using her work of 46 years ago to conflate Dworkin's concept of a small, persecuted, and powerless minority of transsexual prostitutes in Europe with our contemporary, aggressive, well-funded transgender movement. Also, they are downplaying or deleting reality.

For the purpose of this review, I contacted the esteemed Jan Raymond who told me that as she was writing *The Transsexual Empire*, Andrea "read the manuscript in process and contributed an endorsement." The paperback edition of *The Transsexual Empire* includes this on the back cover. It read:

Janice Raymond's *The Transsexual Empire* is challenging, rigorous, and pioneering. Raymond scrutinizes the connections between science, morality, and gender. She asks the hard questions and her answers have an intellectual

quality and ethical integrity so rare, so important, that the reader wants to think, to enter into a critical dialogue with the book.

This does not sound like someone who “deplored” this work.

Might Andrea have been ambivalent, undecided, or have changed her thinking on this issue over the next forty-six years? Might she even have changed her mind in order to please John? That’s very possible, she’s done so before. However, more to the point, her bright, blazing focus was on woman-centered realities such as rape, incest, sexual harassment, battering, child abuse, pornography, prostitution, and female homelessness and poverty.

Perhaps Andrea did idealize the concept of gender-busting and saw it as a way out of patriarchy, even out of biology, but this was merely an enticing “idea,” similar to Shulie Firestone’s hope that babies could be born in test tubes and might thus serve as woman’s way out of both patriarchy and biology.

To some extent, Duberman’s Andrea is really John Stoltenberg’s Andrea—or, in fact, is sometimes John Stoltenberg himself. Perhaps John is trans-channeling Andrea; perhaps Duberman is being led down the garden path by John. I am surprised that Duberman followed right along. He is better than that.

As for Andrea—we will not see her like soon again. Rainer Maria Rilke, in his *Letters to a Young Poet (1929/1993)*, wrote:

Dear Sir: I cannot give you any advice but this...if, as I have said, one feels one could live without writing, then one shouldn't write at all.

Andrea could not live without writing, she was born to write, she wrote all the time, and she has left us an incredible legacy.

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AUTHOR BIOGRAPHY

Phyllis Chesler, Ph.D, is an Emerita Professor of Psychology and Women’s Studies at City University of New York. She is a best-selling author, a feminist leader, a retired psychotherapist and an expert courtroom witness. Dr. Chesler is a co-founder of the Association for Women in Psychology (1969), The National Women’s Health Network (1975), and The International Committee for the (Original) Women of the Wall (1989). She is a Ginsburg/Ingerman Fellow at The Middle East Forum, and a Fellow at the Institute for the Study of Global Anti-Semitism and Policy (ISGAP).

Dr. Chesler was an early 1970s abolitionist theorist and activist: She wrote about and delivered speeches which opposed rape, incest, pornography, sex and reproductive prostitution, and sex trafficking. She organized and/or participated in demonstrations outside the movie Snuff; organized the first-ever Speak Out on mothers losing custody of children; marched outside Dorian’s Red Hand to protest the murder of Jennifer Levin by Robert Chambers after a night of drinking there; organized repeated demonstrations outside the Hackensack, New Jersey courthouse where the Baby M hearings were underway and outside the surrogacy pimp Noel Keane’s NYC clinic; outside the courthouse when Joel Steinberg was sentenced for the murder of Lisa Steinberg; she assembled a team of expert witnesses for the trial of Aileen Carol Wuornos, none of whom were ever called upon.

She is the author of 20 books, including the feminist classic *Women and Madness*, as well as many other notable books including *With Child: A Diary of Motherhood*; *Mothers on Trial: The Battle for Children and Custody*; *Sacred Bond: The Legacy of Baby M*; *Feminist Foremothers in Women's Studies, Psychology, and Mental Health*; *Letters to a Young Feminist*; *Woman's Inhumanity to Woman*; and *Women of the Wall: Claiming Sacred Ground at Judaism's Holy Site*. After publishing *The New Anti-Semitism* (2003), she published *The Death of Feminism: What's Next in the Struggle For Women's Freedom* (2005) and *An American Bride in Kabul* (2013), which won a National Jewish Book Award. In 2016, she published *Living History: On the Front Lines for Israel and the Jews 2003-2015*, in 2017 she published *Islamic Gender Apartheid: Exposing A Veiled War Against Women*. In 2018, she published *A Family Conspiracy: Honor Killings*, and a Memoir: *A Politically Incorrect Feminist*, and in 2020, she published *Requiem for a Female Serial Killer*.

Dr. Chesler has published four studies about honor-based violence, focusing on honor killing, and penned a position paper on why the West should ban the burqa; these studies have all appeared in *Middle East Quarterly*. Based on her studies, she has submitted affidavits for Muslim and ex-Muslim women who are seeking asylum or citizenship based on their credible belief that their families will honor kill them. She has archived most of her articles at her website: www.phyllis-chesler.com

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