

of the book notes, "for women the 'end of history' is little more than a clever phrase." Under the universally present regimes of patriarchy, whether traditional or (post)modern, women continue to struggle against gender relations constituted by national, ethnic, tribal, and religious particularisms.

## **RAPE: A CRIME OF WAR**

Shelley Saywell, Dir. Montreal: National Film Board of Canada, 1997.

## **SCHOOL FOR RAPE : THE BURMESE MILITARY AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE**

Betsy Apple. U.S.A.: Earthrights International, 1998

BY PAM McDERMID

The video, "Rape: A War Crime" and the publication, *School for Rape: The Burmese Military and Sexual Violence* are two examples of the efforts of women worldwide, to expose, and publicize sexual abuse as one systemic expression of two societies misogynist philosophies. In these cases, the perpetrators are the military, employees of the state, and the abuses are part of national military strategy.

The two resources share a tacit understanding that rape is an act of violence using sexual means, not a violent act of sex. It is a form of violence usually, but not exclusively, directed toward women and girls. Apple points out that rape is often overlooked as a tool of psychological warfare and that this surprise element increases its destructive power. In Burma, the *Tatmadaw* (military) routinely use rape as a method to

spread political terror and increase political control. The video emphasizes that, in Serbia and Croatia as elsewhere, rape is not incidental to war but is part of a strategy to win a war.

Apple presents a comprehensive explication of the cultural context of rape in Burma and the structural factors contributing to its continuance. The condensed social and political history included is very helpful in understanding the current situation. Apple describes the military's use of the anti-women aspects of the culture in the training of its soldiers. There are quotations from women interviewed during the preparation of the report, which give a more personal feel to a somewhat formal text. Recommendations and strategies for change are also included.

*Rape, A Crime of War*, uses several "local tour guides" to take viewers through the experience of women in Bosnia Herzegovina. The personal accounts of the Muslim and Serbian women about their horrific treatment at the hands of the military are frequently given in calm, almost dispassionate voices. The contrast between the information and the delivery of it increases the power and poignancy of the testimony.

The experiences of these women illustrate the contemporary situation of women; these acts are being perpetrated in the 1990s. The prisoner of war camp inmates in the film look almost identical to the survivors of the death camps in Nazi Germany. It is a sharp reminder of how far we have not come in our development as civilized societies.

The video emphasizes the point that rape is no longer acceptable as a war strategy. It is now considered as a war crime or crime against humanity and will be prosecuted. There is considerable legal information featuring lawyers from South Africa, Canada, and the United States, related historical data, and comparisons with situations in other countries such as Rwanda. The breaking of the silence and the first instance of

prosecution at the world court in the Hague is encouraging. However the difficulty of conducting the prosecution is dishearteningly familiar to anyone who has worked in the field of abuses against women.

Both resources are excellent for those interested in women's situation in contemporary wars in various parts of the world. They are a reflection of women's continued subservient status in society but changes are occurring. The impact of the video is stronger: the women's voices convey the horror, spark anger, and demand debate of the issues in a way that the book does not. There is a greater feeling of involvement and intimacy. However, the book is a rich source of information on Burma (Myanmar) and, though it is "slow" in some places, the analysis is enlightening.

## **GENDER TRANSFORMATIONS**

Sylvia Walby. London: Routledge, 1997.

BY PATRICIA BAKER

Sylvia Walby's *Gender Transformations* is an ambitious project. Her intent is to describe and analyze "[f]undamental transformations of gender relations in the contemporary Western world." These transformations have occurred, Walby argues, as a consequence of several factors, in particular recent increases in women's education and paid employment, as well as the development of new forms for the political representation of women's interests. Moreover, Walby argues that gender transformations occur variably across time and space, and have wide ranging implications for economic, class, social, ethnic/racial, national, and political relations, and changes both within and across nation states.

The basic, though complex and

non-linear, transformation taking place, Walby maintains, is a shift from a system of gender relations, or gender regime, based on women's confinement to the domestic sphere, to one in which women are ever-more present in the public sphere. This change ultimately came about as a result of efforts by first-wave feminists to win political citizenship for women in the early twentieth century. Also influential have been changes in state policies with respect to equal opportunities in education and employment (the existence and effectiveness of which depends upon historically-developed, effective representation of women's interests in political decision-making), in trade union attitudes and behaviour toward women, and in family forms and practices. However, as western economies restructure and deregulate in the face of global economic competition, new opportunities for women in Europe and America have been accompanied by new forms of inequality between women and men. Women's labour-force participation is increasing, but often in jobs and under conditions inferior to those of men.

Relations of inequality based on age, class, region, and ethnic/racial differences among women have been shaped by gender transformations as well. For example, Walby convincingly demonstrates that some younger women are reaping the benefits of increasing access to education and stable, full-time employment (both of which make access to full citizenship more realizable), and hence are more involved in a public gender regime; older women, on the other hand, are more likely to have less education and access to lower-level, part-time, flexible employment, their lives having been shaped by their participation in a more domestic gender regime.

At a macro level, economy and social relations are structured by national and supra-national political institutions. Walby illustrates this in

her analysis of the European Union's expanding role in the regulation of labour markets, and hence of gender relations, in its constituent countries more generally and the United Kingdom in particular.

In focusing on gender transformations, Walby considers both women's and men's actions in gender politics. The extent to which women have been able to make advances in workplaces, unions, educational and political institutions, and social policy depends to some extent upon men's opposition to or support for those advances. She challenges the notion that women are politically quiescent, charting historical and cross-cultural instances of women's struggles to attain civil, political, and social citizenship, thereby making possible further changes in gender relations and patriarchal structures.

Walby's analysis is complex. Interwoven with often densely detailed descriptions such as those of changes in women's employment nationally and locally in the United Kingdom are interesting syntheses and critiques of theoretical debates concerning: changes in women's employment and the sex composition of various industries; the significance of women's life cycles and biographies to their participation in paid employment; the treatment of gender in political sociology; and the relation of citizenship to gender and class. However, the effectiveness of Walby's arguments is hindered by the book's awkward and unclear organizational structure. The origin of several of the chapters as previously published papers is apparent in the recurrence of sometimes virtually identical sentences and paragraphs in different chapters. Moreover, while the first chapter introduces the topics to be dealt with in more detail throughout the book, this chapter lacks a coherent explanation of how and why the chapters are linked to one another — an explanation not provided elsewhere in the book.

The descriptive and analytical complexity of *Gender Transforma-*

*tions* is an overwhelmingly positive feature of the book. Nevertheless, Walby could provide more detail about two issues directly germane to her arguments concerning women's increasing presence in paid employment: feminist critiques of how women's skills are defined and undervalued; and the extent to which women in higher-level jobs in fact attain the highest managerial positions.

Notwithstanding these criticisms, I would recommend *Gender Transformations* to readers interested in a sophisticated exposition of the complexities, contexts, and contradictions of gender relations in late twentieth-century western societies.

## **LETTERS OF INTENT: WOMEN CROSS THE GENERATIONS TO TALK ABOUT FAMILY, WORK, SEX, LOVE AND THE FUTURE OF FEMINISM**

Anna Bondoc and Meg Daly. Eds.  
New York: The Free Press, 1999.

**BY CANDIS  
STEENBERGEN**

While a steady tradition of feminist activity occurred throughout the twentieth century, distinct demarcations separate the turn-of-the-century women's movements from the activism and ideologies that emerged in the 1960s. While the early feminists' demands concerned issues such as suffrage, education reform, legal rights, improved employment opportunities, and financial independence, the "new feminism" of the 1960s attempted to make women's issues visible and valuable in the public sphere, agitated for the elimination of sexism, and struggled for equal rights and opportunities for women in the workforce.

The women's movement has been