

# Self-righteous stomping on Men Walking

by Naomi Klein

"Men have to start educating themselves."

So goes the mantra of women's groups since men began the feminist-envy complex. Not surprising, considering that women are constantly put in the frustrating and time-consuming position of having to teach their male counterparts about their own violence and having their events and meetings hijacked by men who want to be included (and absolved).



The irony in the controversy over Men Walking Against Male Violence is that they are doing exactly what women have been asking men to do for so long. They are educating themselves and each other, asking only for guidance and a level of approval which would ensure their accountability. However, groups like NAC (National Ac-

tion Committee on the Status of Women) and OFS (Ontario Federation of Students) have become so blinded by the power of self-righteous finger pointing that they didn't even notice the change, preferring instead to use their moral authority to undermine the group's very important work.

Rather than criticizing the government for underfunding shelters, rape crisis and women's centres, they attack this group for "stealing" women's resources. Rather than criticizing the media for its male bias, they attack this group for "hogging" media coverage.

Men Walking Against Male Violence is by no means perfect. It is however, better than most. We all must be careful not to turn these men into heroes for joining in the work which women have been doing for years and they must be careful not to let their voices drown out those of women which must remain at the forefront of any movement fighting for women's empowerment and safety.

Like any men's group seeking to walk the fine line of cooperation with feminism, Men Walking needs to keep communication with feminists open and receptive. Having kept up its end of the bargain, it is now up to women's

groups to do their part in ensuring that Men Walking Against Male Violence is given the opportunity to be accountable to them.

Men Walking Against Male Violence are speaking to young men about their complicity in the war against women. The same war which is being waged on our campuses as we speak. When women are the only ones trying to end the war, the onus for change is placed on the victim instead of the aggressor.

We must acknowledge that with 80 per cent of sexual assaults committed in an acquaintance of dating context, women are often prisoners within their own homes, and probably safer on the streets. We fight for funded escort services, better lighting, stancher security and more money for women's shelters, rape crisis centres and sexual harassment offices knowing all the while that in the war against women, these crucial services are the relief agencies which will be in never-ending demand until the war ends.

Men Walking Against Male Violence is doing the kind of work which might end the war by convincing men to lay down their weapons; by talking to men while they are still young enough to change; and by acting as anti-vio-

lence pro-feminist role models.

This is work which women have long since asked men to do for themselves. Women's support should not be blind but it should also come with the conviction that any act that can prevent a future act of terror is worth supporting.

Men Walking Against Male Violence has been compared to the Dec. 6 White Ribbon Campaign and dismissed on that basis. The two groups could not be more different. The White Ribbon Campaign functioned with no dialogue with women's groups and offered men the opportunity to make a symbolic gesture without challenging themselves.

Men Walking does just the opposite. It does not take over the days which women have fought for, it creates its own separate sphere of activism. It is not about public displays but internal examination and real change.

To NAC, OFS and other groups choosing the self-righteous route of knee-jerk vilification rather than that of crucial solidarity: know thy enemy.

Naomi Klein is the editor of U of T's student newspaper, The Varsity.

## Concrete lots a trap for autophiles

by John Ferguson

More tombstones have risen. York has built yet one more memorial to a dying breed. Yet another parking area has been built. It waits in ambush as unsuspecting vehicles swarm mysteriously to its gates. It waits to feed on the currency of the day. Every time you choose to travel by vehicle remember its appetite. Remember, York's parking office cannot wait until you get here with a full wallet.

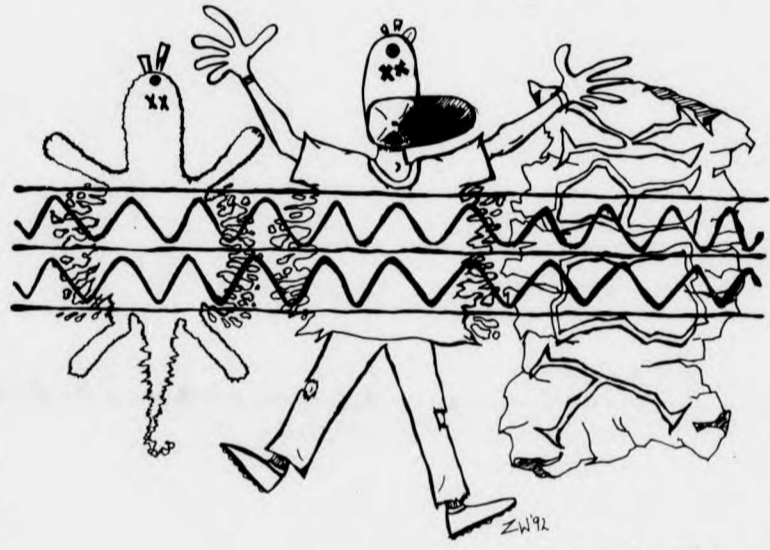
A new breed of slave plunders on. Once, driving was thought to be dignified, especially in expensive cars. Times have changed. Now the car owner is no more than a vassal to an angry, polluting, monstrous, bellicose, frustrated, calamitous Lord. Yes, a new master enslaves John Q Driver: the Lord of Habit named Auto.

He was named after an idea, the idea of automatism. Yet, there is little that is automatic about Auto. He requires Driver's assiduous indulgence. Each second that passes, brings Driver to his service. Worse still, in Driver's zeal to enter the clutches of usury, he enslaves others. He puts unconsenting fellow citizens at the mercy of this obsequious servitude called driverhood.

Now not only Driver, but all who come close to him are at the mercy of the plume of exhaust Auto excretes, the accelerated consumption of resources which Auto perpetrates, the public funds which Auto consumes in keeping his pathways commodious, the dangerous overweight, neglectful and hasty manner in which Auto conducts himself.

Drivers wonder why they never have time to do all the work of studying and advancement. Ponder the time they spend starting, stopping, driving, parking. Ponder their senescence future among the living. Consider their grades and their aspirations. Recall the advantages of membership among the healthy — on the wings of public transit we are able to read 20 to 40 pages in relative comfort on a 30 minute ride home.

Moreover, Auto's waste extends beyond the entropy generated by his catalytic monstrosity. The very finitude of time rages past Driver as the



graphic by Zane Waldman

indignity is Auto's, each moment he drives Driver to school/work. Driver, please remember, you can always make back spent money, but spent time, and honour, is an irrevocable loss.

Further still Driver's enslavement extends. The parking office at York now claims a lengthy leash on you. Parking rides fast and loose on Driver's unsavoury addiction. Indeed, they profit from Driver's conspicuous capacity for ostentation and consumption. Parking offices everywhere have pegged Driver's penchant, and yoked Driver's yearning for self-importance. Remember, also, how the dignity Driver seeks in drivership is but the illusion of nepotism. It spins as only the redundant spiral of Auto's wheels. The respect, which Driver aspires to gain emanates only from within Driver's own ilk. It remains self-referential, as turning only incestuously in the circle of carbon, sulfur and nitrogen combustion enthusiasts.

Only Driver's own kind can appreciate Driver. Only those who are similarly enslaved can see Driver as preserving a modicum of dignity. Consider a wider association. How pitiful you look to the healthy (i. e. cyclist or transit rider). What a mountain of time, energy, and cash you are apparently willing to pay for this little world on four wheels.

Oh, Driver, you poor misunderstood soul. Would that we could liberate you from your serfdom. Would

that we could show you the greatest contribution to a healthier world that you could make. We lament your absence. Yet, we pray that it is temporary, and that soon you will confront the true enormity of your enslavement. We miss you out here, and we truly suffer in your absence. Please come back to Earth and join us.

John Ferguson is a student at York University.

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Everybody was fluent in English, and seemed like they were born, or grew up in Canada. Everybody expressed their opinions about the issues the professor posed. I felt I had something to say, too. Once I opened my mouth to say it, I noticed the mocking smile of one of my classmates. I also felt hidden sentiments against me from some of the others. Was it because of my accent, I asked myself. My heart started beating faster, and my hands began to shake.

I thought the instructor might be more understanding. However, if a student hesitates while talking, the instructor takes over the conversation, as if he is in severe competition with the students. He seems to be saying, "If you are not fast enough, shut up." Anyway, I got shut up.

After a while, the professor asked about the Referendum. A girl said that she didn't feel comfortable with the idea of a bunch of men behind closed doors talking about the constitution, and then providing us with a package telling us to vote Yes. She didn't think that was fair.

Someone (a male) responded, "This is a democracy. If you want, and have the ability, you can try to get elected. Any woman can." He added,

"I don't like Judy Rebick saying..."

Although I am male, I had something to say in disagreement. I wanted to say, "Hey, wait a minute. Are you relating inequality in society to women's incapability? Why is it that even though two human beings of opposite sex are born very much equal, after a few years one becomes dominant and the other powerless? Of course the reason for this should be sought in society, and their living conditions. If there isn't a mechanism, other than traditional democracy, such as positive discrimination for women, men are going to ride the horse by themselves."

Of course, I didn't say any of this. I shut my mouth running out of the class. I went to the bathroom to wash my face, and started walking towards the Central Square cafeteria to have some coffee alone.

H. Varesh

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