

Susan Faludi's article on Ann Simonton (Miss Teen Covina's Revenge, April, 1988) is a total disappointment. In her search to find an 'angle' on Ms. Simonton, Faludi almost completely ignores the substance of Simonton's work. Connecting popular images of women in the media to the violence perpetrated on women in real life is controversial enough, and of far more import and interest to Mother Jones' readers than probing Simonton's psyche (unless Faludi is trying to capture the People Magazine crowd for MJ).

Faludi's 'analysis' of Simonton contributes nothing to a much needed discussion of the connection Ann Simonton is making for the public. Instead, Faludi's article in many respects undermines the work Simonton is doing. I found a similar theme in Faludi's article entitled 'Fatal Distortion' (March, 1988). In 'Fatal Distortion,' Faludi devotes most of her attention to the male dominated Hollywood decision making structure, and the attitude, influence and actions of the movie's male producer. Throughout much of the article she seems to show the reader that these two factors resulted in the 'distortion' of Fatal Attraction's original theme. Yet, after pages of this discussion, in a few concluding paragraphs she leaves the final blame with Lansing. A more accurate and productive conclusion might have explored the fact that despite Lansing's position as one of the most powerful women in Hollywood, she seems to have very little power. Lansing herself might even secretly agree, although she probably wouldn't want to admit it and undermine her already circumscribed ability to get things done.

Similarly, Faludi's focus on Ann's private conflict with the camera shifts the focus from the public problem of women's image in the media to a private dilemma. It is not even a well constructed discussion of the means/ends conflict faced by many leftist organizers. Faludi's portrayal of Simonton as 'compliant', her use of the media as 'peculiar' and a 'mystery,' shifts attention from the really important subject of the legitimation of violence against women by the mainstream media. I don't mean to be unsympathetic to Simonton's dilemma, but I am sure she would agree with me that focussing on her conflict with the camera only ignores the substance of her work. In doing so, Faludi has done a great disservice to the subject.

Dear Mother;

I often take the risk of being portrayed as "foolish," yet *Miss Teen Coyina's Revenge* (April 88) sets a new standard. Yes, I am often turned into a sideshow especially when the principles of my work are omitted as they were in this article.

Feminism empowers people and validates the emotions that they experience living in this quickly rotting patriarchy. Unfortunately, whenever a female public figure shows her emotions, such a display gives license for everyone to trivialize and belittle her worth as well as her message.

I encourage women in my work not to be victims, and not to obediently swallow their anger at being second-class citizens. Faludi's descriptions of me as malleable and weak-willed are, therefore, even more disturbing.

Media Watch and I are both staunchly anti-censorship, pro-nudity and pro-sexuality, but that was never mentioned. This troubling omission gives the reader the impression that our work condones censorship. Our work is based on educating people about the inextricable effects the media has on our lives. We offer alternative viewpoints to facilitate a more critical analysis of the media's insular and myopic image of life.

For Faludi to describe my modus operandi in catchy phrases such as, "wary but compliant," one who "looks uncomfortable, but goes along with it, does as she is told, and a "good model, always smiling," is to dismiss the very essence of my transformation into a feminist. According to Faludi my transition somehow isn't complete. For her I am haplessly caught in those murky shadows of my former self, dreading public and photographic scrutiny. Wrong. I consciously make choices about my life in hopes to promote the wonders of feminism and end male supremacy. I alone decide what cameras I face and what strategies I use. I actively and joyfully work to heal the wound inflicted upon me for being born female in this woman-hating world.

The Beauty Pageant mentality is magnified throughout our culture; therefore, our intentionally humorous Myth Counter-pageant is often misrepresented by the press. Faludi's introduction to the article and our pageant protest as a duplicate of the "other" pageant trivializes the vital work hundreds of enthusiastic feminists are doing in San Diego and all over the country.

I'm disappointed that this magazine didn't have the courage to run a piece that explored the deeper more troublesome and controversial themes that our feminist movement addresses. Where is an in-depth analysis of how the media takes intolerable images of women and children and makes them tolerable, fun and entertaining?

It is rare to see a radical feminist profiled in *Mother Jones*. Isn't it interesting that it is a woman writer who distorts our work? If Susan were a

Samuel, the whole tone of the article might seem suspect. Would this magazine's hero, Daniel Ortega be given the same treatment I received? And would such a portrayal include a description of a fan clamoring over chairs to give him a kiss? A "niggling question" indeed.

Sincerely

Aun Simanta