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Editorial Comment and Editorial Board

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Editorial Comment

Although the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment presumably safeguards the interests of women, we were denied the right to vote until 1920. This right was not won by remaining silent, but was a result of protests, imprisonment and even death. In 1992, women run for public office, yet we are faced with a Senate body which has only two female members. We are still fighting for the right to decide the fate of our own bodies, our futures, and our lives.

In the past year, we have witnessed a series of disillusioning legal events -- the Thomas/Hill hearings, the William Kennedy Smith and Mike Tyson rape trials, and the Rodney King verdict. These proceedings were experienced by many as a set-back from the hard-won achievements of the civil rights movement and indicate a disturbing change in our political climate. In spite of their damaging effects, these events have served as a catalyst to renew the demand for change.

We challenge both the judicial and educational systems to reevaluate their most cherished reasoning devices: objectivity and value neutrality. For too long, legal and political decisions that adversely affect the disempowered have been justified in the name of precedent and with the force of law. Most educational institutions present academic theories and methodologies as established constructs that compartmentalize knowledge into orderly arrangements with rigid, square, and quantifiable answers. In order to provide a more comprehensive approach to education, some schools have developed Women's Studies, African-American Studies, and Critical Legal Studies programs. These programs represent legitimate, alternative perspectives to conventional education, though they remain on the fringe of academic culture. In fact, they are often the first programs to be eliminated in the face of budgetary constraints.

Our individual dissatisfaction with the limits of traditional legal analysis compelled us to initiate a dialogue with each other about our classroom experience. We realized that we shared a similar need to express alternative ways of thinking about our education. Despite the diversity among us, we formed a circle -- a place from where we could insert ourselves into dominant discourses.

CIRCLES' voices are not exclusively by women, for women, or about women. They speak to women and men of all color and economic class, the physically challenged, gay and lesbian, and old and young. It is our hope that by sharing ideas, society will begin to respond, not just to the privileged few, but to all of us. We invite you to explore the ideas, thoughts, and feelings expressed in the pages that follow.

* * *

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