

Gurstein argues that the modern feminist conviction that “the personal is political” leads these writers astray. They fail “to realize that the impassioned words that one utters to a lover in private to make a particular impression are an entirely different thing from a considered statement of one’s political commitment.” In fact, Goldman never did sacrifice her principles for Reitman: “She went to prison, was deported . . . spoke the truth about the brutality of Soviet Russia, and was a pariah among her former comrades for the rest of her life.”

The tormented love letters, Gurstein says, shouldn’t have led biographers to ask what’s wrong with Emma Goldman, but what’s wrong with the ideal of free love.

For all of her outspokenness, Goldman never spoke publicly about her innermost agonies and yearnings. She retained, in other words, a sense of privacy and intimacy. That her private feelings now seem merely clichéd and incomprehensible to contemporary critics, Gurstein says, is a measure of how much our appreciation of the private and the intimate has shrunk.

What Drives Wives to Murder?

“Until Death Do You Part: The Effects of Unilateral Divorce on Spousal Homicides”
by Thomas S. Dee, in *Economic Inquiry* (Jan. 2003), Texas A&M Univ.,
Dept. of Economics, College Station, Texas 77843-4228.

Between the late 1960s and the mid 1970s, a majority of states changed their divorce laws so that one spouse could end a marriage despite the other’s objections. The intent, in part, was to let women with violently abusive husbands escape their domestic prisons. But the reforms, argues Dee, an economist at Swarthmore College, had a perverse result: Some wives whose husbands wanted to leave them—and now could—became so desperate to avoid divorce and the consequent economic hardship that they resorted to homicide.

Between 1968 and 1978, an average of 17 men (and 19 women) died at the hands of their spouses in each of the 50 states and the District of Columbia. Nearly 42 percent of the murders took place when “unilateral” divorces were allowed. When other possible influences, such as the unemployment rate, are taken into account, Dee finds that the

introduction of unilateral divorce had “no detectable effect” on the level of lethal violence by husbands. But it boosted by 21 percent the incidence of wifely homicides, and the slayings were concentrated in states where laws on the distribution of marital property do not favor wives.

Do the findings mean that making divorce more restrictive would save some men’s lives? Not necessarily. Women today may have adjusted to “the new realities of the weakened marriage contract,” Dee speculates, and taken steps to ensure that divorce would not leave them economically bereft. So they have less reason to resort to murder. Even so, he suggests, “a stronger marriage contract” could enhance women’s bargaining power within marriage and help them obtain, when necessary, adequately generous divorce settlements. And that, he notes, would benefit their children as well.

The IQ Obstacle

“IQ and Income Inequality in a Sample of Sibling Pairs from Advantaged Family Backgrounds”
by Charles Murray, in *The American Economic Review* (May 2002),
2014 Broadway, Ste. 303, Nashville, Tenn. 37203.

How much more egalitarian would America be if every child grew up in an intact two-parent family, free of the modern-

day plagues of illegitimacy, poverty, and divorce? Not that much, claims Murray, a fellow at the American Enterprise Institute and