

The Writer and Her Critics

by Phyllis Chesler



Oh, to be a writer in America today! The field is so crowded, and if one is not a person of color either in America or abroad; an “out” member in good standing of the alphabet people (LGBTQIA); in the midst of transitioning, or a victim who is willing to Tell All, one’s work will not get widely reviewed. And, although all writers are ahead if your name and book title are spelled correctly, one always has a problem with the Reviewing People.

For example, while REQUIEM got wondrous [endorsements](#), and wondrous reviews up at Amazon; one truly fabulous review—there was also one scathing review by a feminist abolitionist that damned me for daring to acknowledge that Wuornos was a serial killer instead of insisting that she killed in self-defense seven times because each man raped her, one after the other; and also damned me for acknowledging that Wuornos might be mentally ill without stressing enough that it was not her fault, that men made her that way.

On the other hand—REQUIEM received another non-feminist review from someone who at least noted that my writing was good. Otherwise, this reviewer seems to want to tell the entire Wuornos story herself instead of reviewing my book (essentially, she's written a very long book report); but she gets many facts wrong; and contrary to the abolitionist reviewer for whom no prostituted woman can ever be blamed—the book report reviewer writes that prostitution would not exist if women did not “raise their skirts” and that prostituted women are not in any danger because they have pimps and bodyguards to “protect” them. Not kidding. It's what she wrote.

Between these two lost critics, the only people who really “get” what I've done/what Wuornos is about seem to be a handful of wonderful women and a large number of male true crime authors and interviewers.