

A FILM BY THOMAS KEITH
IN ASSOCIATION WITH THE MEDIA EDUCATION FOUNDATION

Generation M

Misogyny in Media and Culture

Running Time: 60 minutes

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Thomas Keith | Director

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PRAISE FOR GENERATION M

"*Generation M* is concerned about sexism and gender bias in everyday life. Holding up to scrutiny mainstream entertainment -- from children's toys to video games to music -- filmmaker Thomas Keith exposes the consequences of gender stereotypes that are often ignored or taken for granted. By exposing how mainstream American media hypersexualizes girls and promotes violence among boys, *Generation M* ties together complex issues of misogyny, sexism, and pop culture in ways that are sure to stimulate insight and debate. *Generation M* isn't the final word on the subject: The film provides language and tools that helps continue much-needed conversations about these tough topics."

- Shira Tarrant, PhD | Author of *Men and Feminism*

"Thomas Keith, a philosophy professor at California State University-Long Beach, leads this critical investigation into the many forms of misogyny found in popular culture, culling numerous examples from advertisements, television shows, movies, music videos, pop music, and even toys. Perhaps one of the most insidious examples offered here is Lingerie Barbie, a line of dolls dressed up in panties, bustier, and negligee that was discontinued by Mattel after general uproar. Fellow academics, as well as veterans of other Media Education Foundation productions (including Jackson Katz, Jean Kilbourne, and Byron Hurt), contribute to this critique, which also features snippets from classroom discussions and interviews with college-age students (such as a young woman who had an eating disorder) that reveal the pernicious effects of misogyny in media. One study purports that within three to five years of the introduction of television to Fiji -- which has a traditional culture that finds large women attractive -- 74% of young women were dissatisfied with their bodies and 11% had developed eating disorders. For the most part, Keith wisely avoids claiming direct casual relationships between media and culture, instead suggesting the kinds of disruptions in the social environment that media can create. Sure to be a valuable discussion starter that will encourage students to think critically about the ways in which media can shape our perceptions of women, this is recommended."

- *Video Librarian*

"Keith offers an updated version of Kilbourne's *Killing Us Softly* film series (1979; 1987; 2001), presenting still images and video clips of contemporary icons and brands that will probably be familiar to many high school and college students and those in their twenties. Because the argument is so basic -- and includes definitions of terminology such as misogyny -- this film is useful for introducing concepts in gender, media, and communication classes to a younger audience... *Generation M* tackles a wide range of topics, including role models, advertising, the gendering of toys, video games, violence against women, racism, and the nature vs. nurture debate regarding gender."

- Agatha Beins | *Films for the Feminist Classroom*

"Recommended."

- *Educational Media Reviews Online*

FILM SYNOPSIS

Despite the achievements of the women's movement over the past four decades, misogyny remains a persistent force in American culture. In this important documentary, Thomas Keith, professor of philosophy at California State University-Long Beach, looks specifically at misogyny and sexism in mainstream American media, exploring how negative definitions of femininity and hateful attitudes toward women get constructed and perpetuated at the very heart of our popular culture.

The film tracks the destructive dynamics of misogyny across a broad and disturbing range of media phenomena: including the hyper-sexualization of commercial products aimed at girls, the explosion of violence in video games aimed at boys, the near-hysterical sexist rants of hip-hop artists and talk radio shock jocks, and the harsh, patronizing caricatures of femininity and feminism that reverberate throughout the mainstream of American popular culture.

SECTIONS

Introduction | Female Empowerment? | The Doll Wars | Idealized Beauty | The Pink-Blue Dichotomy | Misogyny and Double Standards | Bonus Section: Media Literacy, Education, and Choice

CREDITS

Director, Writer, Producer Thomas Keith
Directors of Photography Michael Enriquez, Jonathan Bennett
Editors Thomas Keith, Michael Enriquez, Jonathan Bennett
Production Assistant Fredy Sedano
Camera Assistants Roxanne E. Suarez, Savina Hernandez
Audio Dawghouse Recording Studio

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BIOGRAPHIES

Byron Hurt is an award-winning documentary filmmaker, a published writer, and an anti-sexist activist. His most recent documentary, *Hip-Hop: Beyond Beats and Rhymes* premiered at the 2006 Sundance Film Festival. To date, *Hip-Hop: Beyond Beats and Rhymes* (BBR) has been selected to appear in more than 50 film festivals worldwide and *The Chicago Tribune* named it "one of the best documentary films in 2007." His first film, *I Am A Man: Black Masculinity in America*, is a 60-minute award-winning documentary that captures the thoughts and feelings of African-American men and women from over fifteen cities across the country. The former Northeastern University football quarterback was also a founding member of the Mentors in Violence Prevention (MVP) program, the leading college-based rape and domestic violence prevention initiative for college and professional athletics. Hurt is also the former Associate Director of the first gender violence prevention program in the United States Marine Corps.

Jackson Katz is one of America's leading anti-sexist male activists. An educator, author and filmmaker, he is internationally recognized for his groundbreaking work in the field of gender violence prevention education with men and boys, particularly in the sports culture and the military. He has lectured on hundreds of college and high school campuses and has conducted hundreds of professional trainings, seminars, and workshops in the U.S., Canada, Australia, and Japan. He is the co-founder of the Mentors In Violence Prevention (MVP) program, the leading gender violence prevention initiative in professional and college athletics. He is the director of the first worldwide domestic and sexual violence prevention program in the United States Marine Corps. He is also the creator and co-creator of educational videos for college and high school students, including *Tough Guise: Violence, Media, and the Crisis in Masculinity* (2000) and *Wrestling With Manhood* (2002), and he appeared in *Spin the Bottle: Sex, Lies and Alcohol* (2004). His new book, *The Macho Paradox: Why Some Men Hurt Women and How All Men Can Help*, was published by Sourcebooks in 2006.

Jean Kilbourne is internationally recognized for her pioneering work on alcohol and tobacco advertising and the image of women in advertising. Her films, slide lectures and television appearances have been seen by millions of people throughout the world. She was named by *The New York Times Magazine* as one of the three most popular speakers on college campuses today. Her book, *Can't Buy My Love: How Advertising Changes the Way We Think and Feel*, won the Distinguished Publication Award from the Association for Women in Psychology in 2000. She is also known for her award-winning documentaries *Killing Us Softly*, *Slim Hopes*, and *Deadly Persuasion*. Her new book, *So Sexy So Soon: The New Sexualized Childhood and What Parents Can Do To Protect Their Kids* is about how children become sexual objects and how to prevent it.

Kimberly Salter is an Organizational Psychologist and Marriage Family Therapist in partnership with Dr. Santiago Estrada (her husband) they co-founded Santiago Estrada & Associates (S.E.A.) an employee assistance and management resource company in 1983. She is past president of the California National Organization for Women and currently sits on the board of the Center

for Global Peace & Prosperity in Laguna Beach, CA. Dr. Salter has facilitated many conferences, locally, statewide and nationally. She was chair of the CA NOW State Conference in 1999; co-chair of “Girls 2000: Choices and Dreams” Orange County, CA; co-chair of the 2001 Association for Women in Psychology (AWP) National Conference “Embracing Diversity: A Feminist Odyssey”; co-chair V-Day Laguna Beach 2003 and 2004; and she has appeared as Eleanor Roosevelt in “Women Making a Difference”. Kimberly has traveled around the state and the United States as a speaker, workshop presenter, and forum facilitator on subjects ranging from psychological well-being and empowerment to women’s herstory and women’s rights.

Nancy Gruver is the brains behind *New Moon*, the long-running independent ad-free magazine for girls. *New Moon* also just launched NewMoonGirls.com, a new subscription-based online community for girls. As the founder and CEO, she has worked for years to create an empowering environment for girls to express themselves and voice their opinions. She has also written the book *How To Say It To Girls: Communicating With Your Growing Daughter*, which provides advice for parents on how to talk to their daughters of all ages on a range of uncomfortable subjects, as well as how to open general lines of communication.

Carolyn Costin’s first love was teaching. She served as a high school teacher and counselor for 8 years prior to dedicating her career to the full time treatment of eating disorders. After recovering from her own eating disorder, Carolyn became a therapist in 1977 and has been treating people suffering from eating and body image problems since that time. After serving as founder and clinical director of several hospital-based eating disorder programs, Carolyn new she wanted to create something different. Her first facility, Monte Nido was established in 1996 and the success of that program has led to several Monte Nido affiliates including her day treatment program, The Eating Disorder Center of California, her residential program in Eugene Oregon, Rain Rock, and her newest program Monte Nido Vista, a sister program to Monte Nido located 15 minutes from the original site. Carolyn writes extensively for magazines, newspapers, and journals and has been a contributing author to several books on eating disorders. She is most proud of her three books, which have all become popular with professionals as well as the lay public and those suffering from eating disorders themselves, *Your Dieting Daughter*, *The Eating Disorder Sourcebook*, and *100 questions and Answer About Eating Disorders*.

Karen Sternheimer is the author of *Kids These Days: Facts and Fictions About Today’s Youth* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2006), *It’s Not the Media: The Truth About Pop Culture’s Influence on Children* (Westview Press, 2003), and *Connecting Popular Culture and Social Problems: Why The Media is not the Answer* (Westview Press, 2009). She is also the editor and lead writer for everydaysociologyblog.com. Dr. Sternheimer currently teaches in the Sociology Department at the University of Southern California, where she is also a faculty fellow at the USC Center for Excellence in Teaching. Her research focuses on issues related to popular culture and youth, particularly trends in youth behavior. Specific topics of inquiry have included youth violence, kidnapping, substance use, child obesity, teen pregnancy, teen driving, and fears about the effects of media on children. Her current research examines American celebrity culture from both contemporary and historical perspectives.

Bettina Casad received her B.S. in Psychology from the University of Washington, and her M.A. and Ph.D. in Social Psychology from Claremont Graduate University. Her research falls in the domains of social cognition and intergroup relations, where she examines gender and race stereotypes, prejudice, and discrimination. Her particular research focus is on stereotype violation and how individuals who violate expectations are evaluated and treated. Most recently, she is examining how being a stereotype violator affects one's identity, psychological well-being, and physical health. To do this she has examined targets of prejudice and discrimination who violate stereotypes including: women in male-dominated careers, men in female-dominated careers, employed mothers, stay-at-home fathers, female leaders, lesbian women, and child free women. Her research seeks to integrate and refine theories through the use of multiple types of measurement including explicit, implicit, objective, and behavioral.

NOTABLE QUOTES FROM *GENERATION M*

JEAN KILBOURNE: “They’re still playing out such a pornographic image of female sexuality, such a cliché, such a stereotype. It doesn’t have anything to do with real female sexual desire or sexual agency, and it’s happening in a culture where there is still such a terrible double standard. Women who are sexually active and have many different partners are still labeled sluts. Women still feel often that they need to be drunk in order to have any kind of sexual activity. So it’s not as if there is real sexual freedom or real sexual agency for women and girls today. There isn’t. What there is is a whole new opportunity for them to participate in their own exploitation.”

SHELLY NELSON: “I wanted my family to love me. I wanted boys to love me. I wanted to be looked at and seen as someone pretty, and if it meant losing a lot of weight, if it meant changing my hair color, if it meant trying new makeup products, then I was going to do it, just to see. And it was never enough. There was never any makeup product that made me look just like someone in the magazines, or I didn’t lose enough weight to look like someone in the magazines, and there were no clothes that made me have this attention from men that I wanted – the right attention. Hearing about people with eating disorders in the film industry or music industry or anything like that, it just made it more normal. It made it more okay to be anorexic or to have an eating disorder.”

CAROLYN COSTIN: “Fiji is this two thousand-however-year-old culture that predominately – you are attractive if you are large – it meant you were healthy and you had status. Fiji didn’t know dieting. It didn’t know eating disorders. In 1995, television was introduced to the Fijian islands. Within three years, you now have the Fijian girls who were interviewed are not only dieting but somewhere around eleven percent are vomiting to lose weight. Now this is just from watching television, the only introduction into this culture. In fact, the woman, Anne Becker, who did the study actually thought she was going to set out to prove the culture, the media can’t have that big of an effect on a culture like Fiji, and she was completely shocked at what happened.”

JEAN KILBOURNE: “A lot of the images of women throughout the media express a real kind of contempt for women. But not only a contempt for women – a contempt for qualities that are considered feminine. And this to me is one of the great tragedies that when human qualities, qualities that we all share, and that we all need, and that we all have the potential to develop, get divided up and polarized and get labeled ‘masculine’ and ‘feminine.’ And then we’re told that you can only have one set of qualities, so that women are told, for example, that the feminine qualities are compassion, empathy, nurturance, sensitivity, also passivity, dependence, powerlessness. And this leaves women to devalue ourselves and each other, and it also causes men to devalue not only women but also all these qualities that get labeled ‘feminine’ by the culture.”

JACKSON KATZ: “So when Eminem write lyrics about, you know, ‘put anthrax on your Tampax and slap you ‘till you can’t stand,’ and talks about ‘kicking bitches in the stomach’, and ‘this

pregnant bitch,' all this just rolling off his tongue. The cultural context in which he's producing these lyrics and presenting them and performing them is a culture in which the level of men's violence against women is pandemic."

JW WILEY: "The problem is our educational system is flawed. That's the problem. We continue to turn out teachers every year that are clueless about their racism, their sexism, their ableism, their classism, their homophobia. They're clueless about it because we have not immersed our children in an educational system or process where they are learning about respect of differences."

TESSA JOLLS: "We are participators. We are contributors. We are not just passive viewers. We can really do a lot to put out the kind of media messages that we want to see."

FILMMAKER'S BIOGRAPHY

Dr. Thomas Keith received his bachelor of arts in philosophy from California State University, Long Beach and then received both his Masters and Ph.D. in philosophy from Claremont Graduate University, Claremont, California. He specializes in American philosophy and pragmatism with an emphasis on issues of race, class, and gender. He has published several articles in professional journals where Dr. Keith emphasizes inclusiveness and a multidisciplinary approach as the proper direction issues of race and gender studies should take instead of compartmentalizing, and hence, marginalizing these important issues. He has, in the past few years, expanded his area of interest to include media studies in an effort to evaluate the images and values that resonate in popular media and culture today. Fusing philosophy and media studies, Dr. Keith initiated what he calls "Media Ethics" into introductory courses in ethics and value theory at the college and university level, while also becoming a strong voice in the advocacy of media literacy at the earliest ages of primary education. Currently, he teaches courses in philosophy at California State University-Long Beach and California Polytechnic University-Pomona and is traveling around the country conducting screenings and leading discussions on the issues raised in his film, while writing the manuscript for his first book, *Sexploitation*, which will be completed in 2009.