

Good and Mad: The Revolutionary Power of Women's Anger by Rebecca Traister

Or: How To Domesticate Your Rage And Get In On A System That Exploits And Torments Women All Over The World

By Toni Redtree

Rebecca Traister is a commentator on politics from a feminist perspective. In her book *Good and Mad: The Revolutionary Power of Women's Anger*, she exposes how anger works for men in ways that it does not work for women within the system—and how women's anger has been the fuel often igniting movements for social change in the history of the U.S. Traister goes after the rampant misogyny that marked the 2016 election, and the more general and pervasive oppression that female political candidates and women in the professions and business must face. To be clear: there is valid exposure of this in her book including in the treatment of Hillary Clinton. But the election of the first female president would not have changed this, nor will Traister's prescriptions do anything but keep the same machine that generates that oppression going.

Traister in *Good and Mad* posits the problem as government not being truly representative, prescriptively implying that if that representation can be wrested from these white patriarchal men the majority of women could be free from subjugation. She states in her chapter *Let's Get Elected*: "In the wake of Trump's defeat of Clinton, a gang of women were eyeing the aging cast of men who'd been hogging America's political power ... forever, and imagining they might replace them. **Replacement. It was a particularly charged concept...**" [Emphasis ours]

Yes and no. Yes, in the sense that fear of being "replaced"—backlash against the relatively minor concessions made to women and people of color—has fueled the rise of the Trump/Pence regime and the fascist movement more generally. But—much more fundamentally—NO! **Replacement—that is, changing the faces in a system that remains fundamentally the same—does not make it represent those groups this system continues to oppress. "Replacement" just means you want to get to the top of it and grab "your" share of the spoils too.**

Traister's Fantasies vs. Historical Evidence

While a constant refrain, it is one that is thoroughly refuted by a mountain of historical evidence that women (and oppressed people) can come to the head of oppressive governments *while the majority of the people they supposedly represent remain locked in subjugated existences and change anything significant for those people over any length of time.* Did Obama's election and presidency fundamen-

tally change the situation of the vast section of Black people in the U.S.? Nearly every single country in South Asia has had women in power, sometimes for decades, with no real change in the horrifying oppression of women. There is more than enough evidence that women are equally capable of being pigs—presiding over a monstrous system—from Hillary Clinton to Teresa May to Angela Merkel.

There is NO historical evidence that women being equally "represented" in government have been able to fundamentally change or "reform away" the basic functioning of the capitalist-imperialist system, the very functioning of which engenders and reinforces—every second of the day—the systemic oppression and worldwide subordination of women. To the degree legal rights have been extended to women and other oppressed groups, it has largely required tremendous struggle and sacrifice from "below," from the people—not merely granted from on high!

Along with slavery, patriarchal rule was encoded into the nation's founding—something Traister recognizes—but the fact is that the oppression of women *continues* to be integral to this system's ability to function and exist. Even while a vast majority of the world's female population has been drawn into the labor force, forces of reaction that aim to reassert and reinforce patriarchy have gained ascendancy. Mike Pence, a Christian fascist, now sits within a heartbeat of the presidency; someone who believes in the literal biblical relegation of women to a man's authority, and won't sit alone in a room with a woman.

Revolution Does NOT Mean Old Wine in New Bottles

Anyone who gets into the halls of Congress must play by the rules required by the system's functioning and learn to "compromise," as we hear incessantly from the Democrats... and as their actions prove. The subordination of women in this system cannot be "reformed," "elected" or "represented" away—it's in the nature of the beast.

None of this—especially changing faces atop this monstrous system—is remotely "revolutionary," despite what Traister may claim. An actual revolution means a DIFFERENT system, not just different people administering oppression. An actual revolution requires the OVERTHROW of the system. It speaks to the ignorance of this society that one can get away with using the word revo-

Look at all these beautiful children who are female in the world. And in addition to all the other outrages which I have referred to, in terms of children throughout the slums and shantytowns of the Third World, in addition to all the horrors that will be heaped on them—the actual living in garbage and human waste in the hundreds of millions as their fate, laid out before them, yes, even before they are born—there is, on top of this, for those children who are born female, the horror of everything that this will bring simply because they are female in a world of male domination. And this is true not only in the Third World. In "modern" countries like the U.S. as well, the statistics barely capture it: the millions who will be raped; the millions more who will be routinely demeaned, deceived, degraded, and all too often brutalized by those who are supposed to be their most intimate lovers; the way in which so many women will be shamed, hounded and harassed if they seek to exercise reproductive rights through abortion, or even birth control; the many who will be forced into prostitution and pornography; and all those who—if they do not have that particular fate, and even if they achieve some success in this "new world" where supposedly there are no barriers for women—will be surrounded on every side, and insulted at every moment, by a society and a culture which degrades women, on the streets, in the schools and workplaces, in the home, on a daily basis and in countless ways.

Bob Avakian, *Basics* 1:10

lutionary in the service of women motivated by something as hideous as getting atop—or their fair share in—a system as predatory, monstrous and outmoded as U.S. capitalism-imperialism!

Hillary Clinton—Exhibit A for Traister... and an Exposure of the American Chauvinism Saturating Her Approach

If there is a single example of the logical outcome of the political solutions in this book, it lies in Rebecca Traister's shameless apology and support for Hillary Clinton.

Let's state what *should be* an obvious and indisputable truth: Hillary Clinton is NOT a standard bearer for the liberation of women—**she is a woman who is a war criminal.** Just to take two examples:

- She is a woman who proved her hawk credentials as head of the Obama state department—leading the charge to depose the Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi, as part of U.S. efforts to dominate the region. Traister, who laments Clinton's inability

to show emotion, has conveniently forgotten her Hannibal Lecter-worthy performance gleefully announcing the slaying of Muammar Gaddafi. As Libya plunged into chaos, Clinton's "competent" fingerprints are all over the crime scene of the thousands dead and the refugees fleeing the collapse of Libyan society, drowning as they try to cross the Mediterranean to Europe.

- Clinton's fingerprints can also be found on the women and children stranded in squalid encampments at the U.S.-Mexico border. In 2009, the U.S. ambassador to Honduras told Secretary Clinton that the removal of the elected president, Manuel Zelaya, a left leaning liberal populist, would be an "an illegal and unconstitutional coup." Despite this, and while issuing mild criticisms, Clinton lent legitimacy to elections that forbade Zelaya's participation. The regime brought to power with the coup was openly fascist and pro-U.S., plunging the Honduran people even more deeply into the grip of U.S. domination,

Continued on back page