

CINDY LANGE KUBICK

Are killers born or created?

Tomorrow is my birthday. At midnight tonight, I will light a candle. I will send out a prayer and go to bed.

The candle will not be on a cake, and the prayer will not be for lots of presents.

In the morning, I will read the paper to discover if, in my name, a life has been taken by the state of Nebraska.

Then, like most of the citizens of our state, I will eat breakfast, get dressed, put on my public face and "do my day." When people ask me how I am, I will say that I am fine.

Will I feel any safer? Will I be any safer?

When my child is late coming home from school, a horror movie begins in my mind. Its scenes come from real life: A little girl raped and murdered — lured into a neighbor's home by the promise of a puppy. A young boy disappearing while delivering papers, his naked and mutilated body found days later.

Walking home alone from a night class, unlocking my car in a deserted parking lot, the movie continues — and we all know too well how it ends. We need look no further than the morning newspaper to find a plot.

As a society, dread has become a large part of our daily diet. We watch the news and fear enters our pores like the air.

John Joubert. Roger Bjorklund. Will Otey.

Danny Joe Eberle. Chris Walden. Candice Harms. Jane McManus.

Revenge. How sweet it sounds. "Fry Wili!" The battle cry is in the air.

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Tomorrow this wild justice will be unleashed. The state of Nebraska will look past the existing evidence on the death penalty.

We will ignore its racist implementation. We will overlook the fact that it falls disproportionately on the poor and the mentally ill. We will pass over studies that show the death penalty does not deter crime.

We will play God.

For many, the punishment will fit the deed: "Life for life, eye for eye."

The McManuses will have, we hope, a sense of closure. There will be an end to the incessant media attention that has invaded their already fractured lives.

Their daughter's killer will be dead.

For Nebraska Attorney General Don Stenberg, Gov. Ben Nelson and others, justice will have been served. They will have taken the expeditious route to re-election in a get-tough-on-crime era.

Oliver Stone's recent release, "Natural Born Killers," ponders the question: Are murderers born or made?

Where do killers come from? Are they the products of genetics or environment? Nature or nurture?

The jury is still out. But evidence exists that points to a combination of both; you take the right genetic makeup and the right environment, and you have an Otey or a Joubert or a Bjorklund in the making.

Because we can't determine heredity (yet), perhaps our government should look at environment. Perhaps Nelson should go further than just cracking down on crime and look at the social conditions that breed it.

And perhaps, just maybe, living in a misogynist world spawns misogynist behavior. Our prisons are filled with perpetrators socialized in a system that glorifies violence and degrades women. The subjects of their fantasies too often become the objects of their anger.

Killing Otey will not change the way our society views women. As a female, I know that any of us could be — by the folly of fate — the next Jane McManus or another Candice Harms.

By the grace of God, I will wake up tomorrow to celebrate my 34th birthday.

By decree of the state, Harold Otey will be dead.

Lange-Kubick is a senior news-editorial and sociology major and a Daily Nebraskan columnist.

YOUSUF BASHIR

Muslim veils protect, not hide

Are they ugly? Or are they ashamed? Or are they shy? Or are they scared? Or did their husbands tell them to do so? Or does their religion say so? Or is this a cultural thing?

These are some questions which strike a lot of people when they see or hear about a "woman in veil." First, let me clarify why Muslim women wear veils. It's not because they don't feel good about themselves or feel shy or ashamed. It's because of their religion — and to some extent, their culture.

Let me go back in the history of Islam. Before the birth of Islam, Arabia was a country without a government. Each tribe considered itself to be an independent sovereign. Whatever notions they had of morals, culture and civilization were primitive in the extreme.

Looting, gambling and adultery were common practices. Women had no place in society, and if a daughter was born, she was buried alive.

These people needed a miracle to guide them to civilization. So Mohammad (May Peace Be Upon Him — these words always are said out of respect after naming the Prophet) was chosen by Allah (God) to be the savior of Arabia.

The teachings of Mohammad (MPBUH) were the words of Allah that were compiled in the form of the Quraan (spelled "Koran" in English). Mohammad's teachings led the people of that era to the shore of civilization and flourished in the whole world by the name of Islam.

Islam brought with it a whole new life. People were given their rights, and peace and harmony prevailed. Women — who had been most deprived of their rights in the dark era — were given extreme importance and respect, and their dignity was preserved.

In the Quraan (verse 53 of Sura 33), which was revealed in 627



I think the veil is a very tough order from Allah upon women, but it has its advantages, and wearing it takes a lot of strength to practice — especially in today's world.

A.D., the veil is referred to as "hijab," which literally means "curtain." The veil, or the hijab, serves as a tool for the protection of women.

Protection means more than protection from sins or from other physical harm. It includes protection of one's privacy.

According to Islam, as interpreted by most scholars, a woman has to cover all her body parts and hair when she is in front of her immediate blood relatives. When she is outside confronting other men, she also is supposed to cover her face. Of course, there is nothing hidden from her husband, because with him she shares the intimacies of life.

Women also are not supposed to undress in front of other women. They have to be covered at least from their waists to their knees. This keeps the soul and the body of a woman protected from the worldly sins, as explained by the Muslim Scholars, and is Allah's command.

Again we ask ourselves: Can't the woman be protected without the veil? Does the veil make such a difference?

The only place where the veil is strictly practiced is in Saudi Arabia. In that country, no rape, incest or any other sort of sexual crime occurs. The veil is not useless but a source of protection.

In other countries, when men see women in veils, they do not dare talk to them, because it is obvious the women do not want attention.

Thus, women are protected again.

Another question which comes to mind is: Why do women have to be covered up but not men? Well, men also have orders from Allah in the religion of Islam. They are not allowed to look at women or make conversation until necessary.

Allah knows men still will do these things, however, and that is why women are to be covered — so there is no point of looking! According to the Shariat (the Islamic Law), men have to be covered from their waists to their knees even when they confront other men.

I think the veil is a very tough order from Allah upon women, but it has its advantages, and wearing it takes a lot of strength to practice — especially in today's world. Unfortunately, a lot of people criticize and look down on women who do so, instead of appreciating and accepting them for what they are doing.

To me, these women should be praised and encouraged. May we all have that much strength and commitment toward our beliefs. On the other hand, I'm not saying that Muslim women who dress in Western attire and choose not to wear veils are lesser Muslims or poor followers of the religion.

Don't get me wrong. The main things that count are your beliefs and what is in your heart.

Bashir is a senior food science major and a Daily Nebraskan columnist.

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