

FOREWORD

By Tom Hayden

Chiva is an elegantly-told struggle with drug addiction that weaves the personal (a lover relapses into heroin) to the community (a small New Mexico village experiences an epidemic) to the global (the war on terrorism revives the poppy trade in Afghanistan) — in a tale that concludes, without preaching, that "healing is one and the same as the work of decolonization."

On any of these levels, the book is interesting enough; but multi-layered, it is stunning. It should be read alongside the works of Luis Rodriguez (*La Vida Loca, Hearts and Hands*) by anyone groping for personal, policy and political alternatives to the failed wars on drugs, gangs and terrorism.

On the most personal level, the most vulnerable, Chellis Glendinning describes a romance that fails between herself, a white woman who moves to the tiny community of Chimayó, New Mexico, and a man named Joaquin Cruz, whose life has consisted of migration, the barrio life of East LA, incarceration, and heroin addiction. His demons apparently are insurmountable, and at one critical moment he admits he's intimidated by her — and too ashamed to accept any help.

Shame is the festering wound of addiction that heroin seems to treat. "The more trivial the cause of the shame, the more intense the feeling of shame," writes Dr. James Gilligan in *Violence*. Shame and addiction visit people of all classes, of course, but shame falls like a blanket on the dispossessed who, by definition, have nothing yet desperately attempt to make a reputation out of that very nothingness. Some of them are literally dying to catch a bullet or kill another as a mirror of themselves. Glendinning describes Joaquin in flight as a "man/child tragically arrested by pain too piercing to remember, clumsily pressing his desperation upon a world as shattered, scattered, and harsh as broken glass."

This is the suicide, she suggests, that arises when the land is taken, the race is humiliated, the language

is censured, the culture is rendered feeble, and the weapons of self-destruction are pleasurable. As Franz Fanon wrote of his Algerian patients who experienced a kind of death in life:

[he is] threatened in his affectivity, threatened in his social activity, threatened in his membership in the polis, the North African brings together all the conditions that create a sick man. His first encounter with himself will take place in a neurotic mode... he will feel empty, lifeless, fighting bodily against death, a death that comes before death, death that exists in life.

What to do? Is there a "programmatically" response to addiction, as jobs are a programmatic response to unemployment? Is this where politics and organizing end - in the local cemetery? In Fanon's generation, which lasted from the Algeria of the Fifties to the era of the Black Panthers, the proposed catharsis was personal violence amidst anti-colonial revolution. But experience has shown that such violence, far from withering away in the birth of the "new man," can go on existing in a sort of institutionalized vendetta, or machismo. But one of Fanon's teachings has proven durable, that participation in recovery — on all levels — must be led by the dispossessed themselves. As

Glendinning describes it, the men's and women's groups at the Hoy Recovery Program creating a "fellowship in the spiritual sense"... "creating their own code of ethics for recovery and for life" based on the best of their own traditions.

She doesn't say it, but Glendinning seems to imagine a new revolutionary culture based on recovery groups as a key element in the struggle to replace the system of corporate globalization with its narco-networks, slush funds and unsavory alliances.

Where to begin? Glendinning's answer seems to be that everything must change — and that the macro of everything is reflected in the micro.

She is surprised, given her roots in radical politics, to find herself wanting federal drug agents to bust the local dealers in 1999. She has second thoughts, too, about the merits of drug legalization. "It would transfer the profits to multi-national pharmaceuticals [and] might increase addiction — look at alcohol after prohibition." She draws us into the dilemmas, trade-offs and traps that come with the need for short-term enforcement measures. She might be wrong in her analogy to alcohol prohibition, that addiction to booze rose with its legalization. At least the violence associated with illegal distribution of alcohol declined with the end of

Prohibition, a lesson that is little mentioned in the current debate about drugs. As to legalization increasing addiction, it might be said that the form of alcohol legalization was problematic — the liquor lobby became just that, bankrolling politicians with their profits, plowing unlimited funds into advertising, suppressing studies linking alcohol with violence, minimizing regulation through state alcoholic beverage commissions, and so on. The legalization of drugs could be designed on a medical model rather than a corporate one, but Glendinning's caution about drug legalization is reality-based and brave.

Most important is her description of community-based efforts to deal with addiction outside the criminal justice system. Her stories of the Hoy Recovery Program and a mobilization by indigenous people invoke the idea of community healing among a people whose land, traditions and economic livelihood have been stolen by outsiders. In her hopeful view, the communal life of Chimayó in its entirety must become a self-managed rehabilitation program. *La cultura cura*.

Chellis Glendinning once again is to be thanked for sharing her maps of the personal, the bioregional, cultural and global. One can only wish that the elites of corporate globalization would read her story and

respond. Instead they seem bent on displacing blame for the "coming anarchy" on the dispossessed underclass itself. Robert Kaplan, for example, stimulates First World fears with his claims that globalization is "Darwinian":

It means economic survival of the fittest — those groups and individuals that are disciplined, dynamic and ingenious will float to the top, while cultures that do not compete well technologically will produce an inordinate number of warriors [animated by] the thrill of violence...slaughter and blood and the choking groans of men.

Against these apocalyptic predictions, Glendinning's focus on one small crossroads of the world may seem hopeless. But there is a sense of hope throughout this painful book, based on the faith that those who have survived thus far in the crevices of capitalism and colonialism are yet able to recover their capacities to live as free human beings.

TOM HAYDEN

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[Tom Hayden has been involved in progressive social movements for four decades. He served 18 years in the California legislature and has written 10 books, including *Street Wars: Gangs and the Future of Violence*.]