



My  
Name Is  
**Andrea**

A PRATIBHA **PARMAR** FILM

**DISCUSSION GUIDE**

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# Introduction

## LETTER FROM THE FILMMAKER

I came to filmmaking from a desire to tell stories that have not been told, stories confined to the margins, ignored or erased. I have especially been drawn to stories of women whose actions, words and focused engagement with human rights have helped shape history.

Andrea Dworkin was one such woman. Through her writings and activism Dworkin changed the language and conversation around violence against women. The film visualizes how she became a renowned voice in her time—and how this is linked to the development of her mind, voice, and critique as a woman brutalized by patriarchy, and morally affected by war, colonialism, and racism.

What interested me was how Dworkin was a wayward, unwieldy, defiant woman—a woman whose imagination refused to be constrained; who thirsted for more; and stretched the boundaries of what is possible, what is allowed, what needs challenging. This vision for more than what is offered is what brought me to Andrea Dworkin.

I realized early on in my creative process that to fully comprehend who Dworkin was and to feel the impact of her work, it was essential to listen to her voice – not just her words, but her voice. Her rigorous, crisp, precise, intentional, piercing voice is the sonic narrative arc unifying the story. Its range of registers from calm and discursive to rage and anger, reveal her incisive and insightful thought and the ferocity of her mental ability. We can feel the power and passion of hearing Andrea speak in speeches, on talk shows and on the radio.

The challenge was how to cinematically convey the fullness of that voice and the person. Listening to hours of radio interviews, and doing a deep dive into archival

footage of Dworkin's public presentations and appearances, made it clear that her story was an opportunity to explore the nexus of reality, fiction and representation.

One of the starting points in thinking through the cinematic language of the film came from Dworkin's memoir *Heartbreak: The Political Memoir of a Feminist Militant*, which begins with a Rimbaud quote, "*Je suis un autre*," which roughly translated means "I am other." She insists on not being defined as any one thing, instead saying, "I'm this. I'm that. I am many things." This also resonated for me, as a filmmaker who refuses to be fixed in any one lane.

The visual and audio vision was inspired by Dworkin's writing style which is replete with repetitions of motifs, risk taking and bold experimentation. Similarly the hybrid approach of the film navigates a cinematic language at the intersections of avant-garde cinema, documentary and narrative film. This approach gave me the creative freedom to craft a complex collage of textures and emotions through the use of multiple storytelling tropes, where electrifying archival footage of Dworkin's powerful voice is laced in with subjective, expressionistic dramatizations that evoke women's experiences of hope, assault, and survival.

I wanted to explore a formal approach that might depict Andrea's visceral experience and the interiority of the trauma of sexual abuse as captured in her words, so that those words and those emotions would seep through



## Introduction

the frame to resonate for anyone who has experienced sexual abuse/violation. The dramatizations with the actresses Amandla Stenberg, Soko, Ashley Judd, Andrea Riseborough and Christine Lahti are scripted using Dworkin's own words.

Cinema is a space of projections and demands a visually bold approach for exploration of Dworkin's multiple selves. The French filmmaker, Robert Bresson once said that there are two types of film – one that reproduces and another one that uses the resources of cinematography and uses the camera to create. My intention with this film was to 'create' a film that crosses storytelling & genre boundaries and craft the story in ways that resonate beyond the specificity of her individual life and speak to the lives and experiences of multiple women across time and space.

I am not new to telling stories of wayward women characterized as outsiders and outlaws by mainstream culture. How does the story of a white Jewish woman who dared to question every single patriarchal given about women resonate with my experiences as a diasporic South Asian queer woman? The experience of sexual abuse and patriarchal violence is not a single story confined to any one culture or nation. Dworkin's insights into women's experience of violation speak to the experiences of far too many women globally. In Dworkin's journey to speech, there are echoes of my own journey.

I share Dworkin's conviction that women must be freed from their inferiority and that freedom can only come from a fundamental reinvention of what we mean by human, because as long as civilization has existed, the category 'human' has been defined to make women insecure within it.

Dworkin was considered 'controversial' in her time - she refused to concede to femininity and always wore overalls. Her loud, in your face provocations through her body and her

writings made people mad, made people dismiss her ideas as too radical, and made many feminists want to distance themselves from her as well. Why are women who speak out dismissively labelled "angry"? Why are they vilified?

I never approached *My Name Is Andrea* as a film about history. I constructed this cinematic space/frame to tell this particular story of Andrea Dworkin because I think Dworkin has something powerful to say today: about cultures of amnesia where women go missing every day and we as societies move on; misogynist cultures which allow for daily murders, bodily violations of women's bodies, trans bodies and cultures: where women's speech is penalized for speaking out about domestic abuse as we have seen with the high profile case of Amber Heard.

I hope this film is helpful in the fight against violence against bodies deemed marginal and unworthy.

### Pratibha Parmar

Director, Writer & Producer of *My Name Is Andrea*



### THE FILM

In *My Name Is Andrea* (90 min.), director Pratibha Parmar presents viewers with a rich, multilayered exploration of the life and work of provocative writer, public intellectual, and unapologetic feminist Andrea Dworkin. Decades before #MeToo, Dworkin offered a revolutionary analysis of male supremacy with iconoclastic flair, calling out the pervasiveness of sexism and rape culture, and the ways it impacts every woman's daily life.

The film intertwines standard documentary footage with actors representing various aspects of Dworkin's life. The unusual juxtaposition plays with and helps viewers notice the conventions and storytelling techniques common to documentaries, and then consider how the techniques relate to the messages.

And the messages are intricate – a fitting reflection of Dworkin's intellect and art. This is not a polemic for or against Dworkin's approach to feminist liberation. Rather, it is a portrait that reveals Dworkin as a complicated person who recognized that ideas shape lives in concrete ways, and that naming the connections provides the conceptual language necessary to advance the pursuit of justice.

In her time, Dworkin was viewed as inspiring by some and polarizing by others. *My Name Is Andrea* helps viewers get past either/or framing, opening up a space to grapple with the ways that a complex life led to complex ideas that are still relevant for our time. And in that deeper understanding of Dworkin, we gain a deeper understanding of ourselves.



## SELECTED PEOPLE APPEARING IN MY NAME IS ANDREA

The lives and work of these people intersected with **Andrea Dworkin**. The descriptions are intended as quick references. Full biographies are easily found with an online search.



**Phil Donahue** – groundbreaking talk show host. His show, which ran in national syndication for 26 years (1970-1996), was the precursor for all daytime TV talk shows. Donahue was married to feminist Marlo Thomas and identified as politically liberal.



**Allen Ginsberg** – renowned Beat poet, gay, Buddhist, best known for the poem “Howl” and critiques of capitalism and conformity; twenty years older than Dworkin, he initially mentored her, but they eventually had a falling out over Ginsberg’s support for pedophilia.



**Catharine MacKinnon** – University of Michigan Law Professor who co-authored with Dworkin their groundbreaking anti-pornography ordinance.



**Kate Millett** – feminist author of *Sexual Politics*.



**Gloria Steinem** – second-wave feminist leader and founder of Ms. Magazine.



**John Stoltenberg** – gay writer, editor, theater reviewer, activist and life partner of Dworkin for thirty years.



**Carole Vance** – activist and one of the leaders of the Feminist Anti-Censorship Task Force, which opposed Dworkin-MacKinnon’s anti-pornography ordinance.

People Playing Different Aspects of Andrea (L to R):



**Amandla Stenberg** as Wild Child

**Soko** as Poet

**Ashley Judd** as Rolling Thunder

**Christine Lahti** as Pariah

**Andrea Riseborough** as Lover

*My Name Is Andrea* includes material related to a variety of topics including:

- |                                     |                                |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| <b>anti-war movement (Vietnam)</b>  | <b>mentors and influencers</b> |
| <b>civil rights</b>                 | <b>patriarchy</b>              |
| <b>documentary film</b>             | <b>poetry</b>                  |
| <b>fascism</b>                      | <b>pornography</b>             |
| <b>femicide</b>                     | <b>prostitution</b>            |
| <b>feminism</b>                     | <b>racism</b>                  |
| <b>gender</b>                       | <b>sex trafficking</b>         |
| <b>gender based violence / rape</b> | <b>sex work</b>                |
| <b>human rights</b>                 | <b>sexual harassment</b>       |
| <b>intersectionality</b>            | <b>social justice</b>          |
| <b>marriage and family</b>          | <b>socioeconomic class</b>     |
| <b>#MeToo</b>                       | <b>Take Back the Night</b>     |
|                                     | <b>writing</b>                 |

The film will be of particular interest to people teaching or studying:

- |  |                          |
|--|--------------------------|
| <b>cinema / film (documentary)</b>             | <b>peace studies</b>     |
| <b>creative writing / English / literature</b> | <b>philosophy</b>        |
| <b>gender studies</b>                          | <b>political science</b> |
| <b>history (modern U.S.)</b>                   | <b>psychology</b>        |
| <b>law</b>                                     | <b>sociology</b>         |
|  | <b>women’s studies</b>   |

# Using this Guide

This guide includes suggestions for a range of educational settings, interests, and objectives. For discussion leaders, looking at all the prompts can be helpful as preparation to anticipate comments, but in practice, often one or two questions is enough to jumpstart a vibrant conversation. Consider which questions will help viewers think most deeply given your situation and goals. Start with those and let the interests of the audience guide the discussion from there.



## CLASSROOM USE

A screening associated with a particular course is likely to have specific learning goals. In this case, you might consider using a discussion prompt (or two) prior to viewing. Letting people know what they'll be asked in the follow-up discussion can help viewers focus attention on the most important material for the class.

Watching the film in its entirety is the best way for students to understand the interconnectedness of the issues and understand how Dworkin's ideas were shaped by her life experiences, though you may want to pause briefly after particularly salient segments to check for comprehension and allow students time to process what they've heard.

Because class lengths don't always allow for screening an entire film, the guide includes a section with suggestions for clips. These feature particular issues in segments short enough to fit into a single class period and still have time for discussion.

The guide's discussion prompts can also be used as writing prompts for journaling, persuasive essay assignments, or assessment (to evaluate understanding of key issues).

► *My Name Is Andrea* includes "adult" language and content, including nudity, swear words, and frank discussions of sex, pornography, rape, sexual assault, and battery.

# Discussion Prompts

## GENERAL

### Opening Prompts

These questions can help jumpstart a discussion.

- In a word (or short phrase) what's your initial reaction to the film?
- Was there a particular moment in the film that you found especially compelling or moving? What was it about the moment that resonated for you?
- If you were going to text a friend to explain the main message of this film, what would you say?
- What did you learn from Dworkin or the film about \_\_\_\_\_ [fill in the blank with the course topic that connects most deeply to the film].

Before/After prompts are another option.

Prior to viewing, check in about existing knowledge or perceptions on a topic relevant to your audience. After viewing, open the discussion with a prompt inviting viewers to share ways that the film affirmed, challenged, or added to their knowledge or beliefs. For example,

- Prior to viewing ask, "On a scale of 0-10, how much do you know about Andrea Dworkin?" Ask everyone who answered anything other than "zero" to jot down a few core things they know. At this stage, don't yet ask people to share their ranking or what they wrote.
- After viewing ask people how they ranked knowledge level before viewing. Use a show of hands to get a quick sense of the pre-existing knowledge level in the room. That will give you a sense of how to proceed.

- "How many ranked their knowledge at 0-3? 4-7? 8-10?"

Follow-up with:

- "If you knew something about Dworkin before seeing the film, did the film alter or augment your view of her? In what ways?" and/or
- "If you knew nothing about Dworkin before seeing the film, what did you learn about her from the film that was most surprising or meaningful to you?"
- If most of the audience was unfamiliar with Dworkin at the start, you might continue the discussion by inviting them to ponder why she wasn't well known to them given her fame during her lifetime.





### Opening Activity

In situations where audience members may be reluctant to offer responses, you might try this activity instead of a discussion prompt. It gets everyone involved, but they can remain anonymous in the initial stage:

After viewing, distribute an index card or piece of paper to each person and ask everyone to jot down one adjective to describe Andrea Dworkin. (Note: this can also be done in collaborative digital spaces rather than with cards, as long as people are able to write their answers anonymously.)

Collect the responses, mix them up, and hand a card to each person (so now they're holding a card with an adjective on it, but it is not likely to be the card they wrote). One at a time, have each person read aloud the word on the card in their hand.

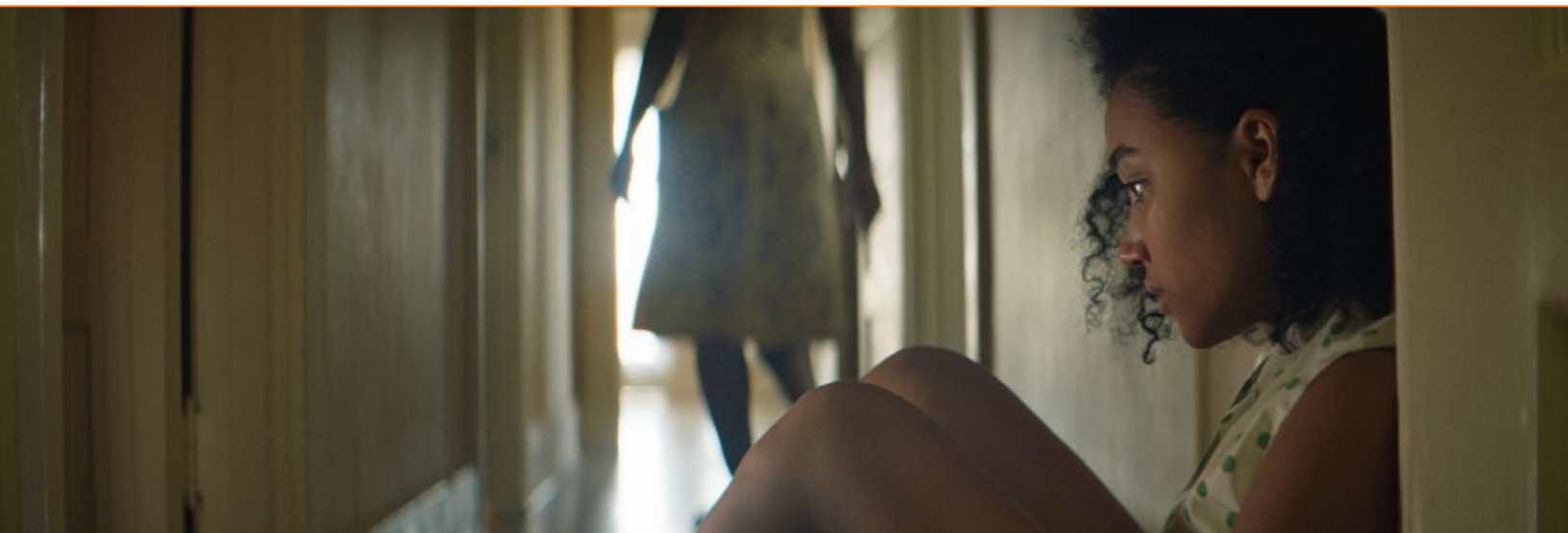
Begin the discussion of the film by inviting people to name any patterns they notice in the responses. Was any response particularly surprising? Affirming? Troubling?



### Closing Prompts

Sometimes it can be more difficult to bring closure to a discussion than to start it. Having a question in mind to help people synthesize what they've seen and heard can help.

- Learning about Andrea Dworkin's life and work is relevant today because \_\_\_\_\_.
- If you could require one person (or group of people) to watch this film, who would it be and why? What do you hope their main takeaway(s) would be?
- What is one thing you saw (or learned from the discussion) that you wish everyone knew? How would your life (or the lives of people in your community) change if everyone knew it?
- One thing I heard that I want to learn more about (or think more deeply about) is \_\_\_\_\_.
- What questions do you have that weren't answered in the film? What else do you want to know?

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS BY THEME****Women Hating**

The film opens with Dworkin's main character from her novel, *Mercy*, declaring, "My 'nom de guerre' is Andrea One." In what ways did the film's opening line foreshadow what was to come? Why might Dworkin think a woman would need a "nom de guerre"? Who is at war? What's at the heart of the dispute? What would need to happen to end the conflict? What would winning achieve? Based on what you heard/saw in the film, how would Dworkin answer those questions?

What do you think Dworkin meant when she said, "We live under what amounts to a military curfew enforced by rapists"? Is it, as she says, a lie to call yourself a "free citizen of a free country" if the threat of rape is ever present?

In a lead-up to a Take Back the Night March, Dworkin observes, "Every woman walking alone is a target. Every woman walking alone is hunted, harassed, time after time, harmed." Has this been your experience? If so, how do you cope? What sorts of things do you or women you know do to prepare to go outside alone? How about the men or non-binary people you know? If you take precautions, which of your peers or family members are aware of the precautions you take?

Dworkin describes her violent marriage: Neighbors heard the screams and did nothing. "Words were useless to the likes of me. I had run away and asked for help and had been sent back many times. My words didn't seem to mean anything, or it was OK to torture me." How does this compare to stories of domestic abuse that you've heard or witnessed? How does Dworkin's description expand the notion of who is responsible for domestic abuse? How can it help victims heal?

Dworkin reflects, "What I learned from watching what happened to Anita Hill is that there is no woman in the world respectable enough to make charges of sexual abuse against a man in power." Do you think the #MeToo movement has changed that?

Dworkin reads aloud a poem by Aimé Césaire, who calls attention to the culpability of the middle class, because they didn't take the rise of fascism seriously, and though they might not have actively supported the Nazis, they didn't act to oppose them: "But then it is only Nazism, fascism, it won't last." How does Dworkin link this concept to misogyny? Do you see any parallels to events today?

## Discussion Prompts

### Pornography

Dworkin describes pornography as “the sexualized subordination of women. It means being put down through sex, by sex, in sex, around sex.” How would you complete the sentence “Pornography is...”? What’s the difference between pornography and erotica?



A 1979 protest sign – “Porn teaches rape” – reflects Dworkin’s notion that “pornography is very largely responsible for the idea that is widely held in this society, that women want violence and brutality done to them...” Have you encountered the idea that women want to be brutalized? Where? Peers or partners? Games? Music? Other media? Who benefits from repeating or normalizing this idea and in what ways?

Dworkin acknowledges that “initially, pornography was seen to be a vehicle of liberation [but what the pornographers did] was to take the sexual freedom that we had been fighting for, and they turned it into a profit-making, product-oriented, woman-hating industry.” What do you imagine would happen if people weren’t able to earn a profit from making or disseminating pornography?

In addition to provisions that enabled individual women to sue for compensation based on specific harms (such as being coerced to perform sexually degrading acts on film), the civil rights framework of the Dworkin-MacKinnon ordinance was the first legislative approach that cast pornography as injurious to women as a class. How so? What is the difference between framing the issue as an

obstacle to equality and framing it as an obscenity/free speech issue?

What are the benefits and drawbacks of defining pornography as a violation of women’s civil rights? Why would some feminists see the Dworkin-MacKinnon ordinance as an important tool in pursuit of women’s equality while others saw it as potentially restricting women’s freedom? Who is most likely to have the resources to pursue civil litigation and why might that matter?

In your view, can sex workers who choose to perform in or create pornography ever characterize their work as feminist? If yes, under what conditions? If no, why not?

In your view, should pornography be considered speech that is protected by the First Amendment? Explain your position in a way that addresses both the pro and con positions expressed by people in the film.

How might the civil rights framing of the Dworkin-MacKinnon ordinance inform current legislative attempts to deal with pornography created by AI, including deepfakes masquerading as real people, sexually explicit material that does not depict anyone real, and/or revenge porn disseminated via social media?

What do you think of the links Dworkin makes between Nazi culture and the violence she sees in pornography?: “I believe truly that the Nazis changed the world in that sadism, public sadism, became much more acceptable to greater numbers of people. I think that that’s a victory of the Nazis, and I think that the pornographers are their heirs.”

Dworkin’s life partner, John Stoltenberg, observes that having to study toxic content in order to dissect, critique, analyze, write about pornography takes Dworkin to a “dark place.” What are the effects of sustained work involving disturbing content?



### Activism

Dworkin rejects those who point to historical progress for women and urge patience:

“...those of us who are berated for being radicals have said, that is not the way we measure progress. You see, we count the dead bodies. We count the numbers of rapes. We count the women who are being battered. And when those numbers start to change in a way that is meaningful, we will then talk to you about whether or not we can measure progress.”

How do you measure progress? Is fitting in to places previously inaccessible progress? As you look at your community, who determines which measures of progress are used by those who have the power to implement change? Can you think of other instances where people on different sides of a struggle define progress differently?

In what ways do Dworkin’s overalls function as resistance?

What’s the difference between nudity as protest (e.g., women disrobing at the 2017 Femicide is Genocide protest in Argentina) and nudity as exploitation or objectification of

women (e.g., in pornography)?

Dworkin asserts that “we know who the rapists are! They did it to our best friend. We know who he is. We know that it happened.” Do you know “who he is”? What did/do you do with that knowledge?

Dworkin urges rally-goers: “In memory of our sisters [who have been battered, raped] we fight back! I am asking you to retaliate against rapists... I’m saying to you, if the law won’t do anything, you must do something. I’m asking you to be fierce and proud about fighting.” In your view, what would effective retaliation look like? How do things like race, socioeconomic class, age, or gender identity affect the ways in which people can “fight”?

The film ends with this Dworkin quote: “I have used everything I know in my life as a compass for my writings to show what I believe must be shown so that it can be faced.” Describe what you learn from Dworkin about using writing as activism.

### Intersectionality

Dworkin parallels the sex trafficking of women associated with production of pornography with the trafficking of slaves: "...if you think about trafficking in human beings, that a human being is for sale, for sexual use or to pick cotton in your plantation, it doesn't matter, you're talking about the complete degradation of the human spirit, of human dignity." Describe the case that Dworkin is making about the ripple effects for societies that accept the sale of human beings, no matter the form that the sale takes. Is any form of human trafficking possible without objectifying or dehumanizing the people being sold?

In a Cambridge University debate, Dworkin expands on James Baldwin noting that the original design of American "equality" was to leave out everyone except wealthy white men and that meant ignoring the value of contributions by others. She asks: "Do you hear the silence?" She explains that those who don't must think that only wealthy white men had anything of value to contribute, and that belief is called "racism" and "sexism" and is "staggeringly arrogant." How can one "hear" silence? How does helping people notice what's missing (and not just what's there) help them link struggles against racism with struggles against sexism? When you look at the world you live in, what/who do you notice is missing?

Speaking after the Montreal Massacre, Dworkin asks how we can – or are permitted to – adequately grieve such an event. She observes that public officials and media are comfortable with women's tears (because, after all, in a stereotyped role it's acceptable for girls to cry) but they try to silence those who respond with anger. Have you seen examples of this? Why does the stereotype approve of crying but not anger? How might the limits on grieving misogynist violence relate to "thoughts and prayers" offered after mass shootings based on racism or antisemitism?

Georgia Bea Jackson, mother of George Jackson, gives an extended commentary on American violence, noting with some irony that the people who criticize protestors for violence committed in self-defense or in the struggle for justice are quick to use those same justifications for American violence in Vietnam, around the world, and throughout U.S. history. Dworkin sees connections between this aggressive violence and an acceptance of violence against women. What connections do you see?

Dworkin admires the defiance of activists like Black Panther founder, Huey P. Newton. What is particularly powerful about defiance? What if survival depends on not being defiant?

The filmmaker includes a reference to George Floyd, even though his murder occurred years after Dworkin's death. What's the significance of mentioning Floyd? What might the connections be between Dworkin's work and Black Lives Matter protests?

How do you think Dworkin might react to current debates about the inclusion of trans women in women's sports? Explain your reasoning.

### Hope

Dworkin's positive experiences with her father give her hope that men can be different: "I don't think male aggression against women is inevitable." What do you think? Is male aggression towards women innate? Is misogynist violence inevitable?

Addressing a conference of men, Dworkin asks for a single day of "truce, when not one woman is raped." If you could experience that day, what would you do differently?

Dworkin's life included many traumas, large and small. What did you learn from the film about healing from such traumas?

## Discussion Prompts

### Attempts to Distract, Dismiss, Discredit

In a montage of women protesting rapes and murders, a protestor holds a sign that reads: "Don't tell me how to dress. Tell them not to rape." What do you notice about who is targeted for behavior modification after a crime of rape, sexual assault, sexual harassment, or mass shooting has occurred? How do Take Back the Night Marches address this question?

Dworkin asks, "What does it mean that one in three girls will be sexually assaulted before they reach adulthood?" How would you answer that question? Given the statistic, why do you suppose that some girls who survive sex crimes still come away thinking that they're the only one?

Such statistics can change over time. How would you respond to someone who questioned the precision of the statistic to discredit the notion that sexual abuse reinforces male privilege and sexist discrimination? What if it was only one in five or one in ten girls? Would it matter?

Dworkin explains that sexual violence stories can't be told in a linear way because the ability to survive often depends on your brain suppressing memories of certain details. How does this insight challenge the expectations we have

of survivors testifying against their attackers in court, the place that women are supposed to go to get justice?

Several interviewers mischaracterize Dworkin's work, putting her in the defensive position of explaining in one way or another, "That's not what I said." Who benefits from misrepresenting Dworkin's arguments?

Why do you suppose so many interviewers and talk show audience members want to attribute Dworkin's conclusions about sexism and misogyny to her personal experiences, and only to her personal experiences? What does Dworkin force people to confront every time she insists that what happened to her is a common experience for many women?

Why does Dworkin critique questions like "What were you doing there at that time of night?" or "How were you dressed?" or "How did you get yourself into that position?" Who benefits when the issue is framed as being about individual responsibility (as if it's just related to something specific in that particular woman's or girl's life at the moment she is assaulted) rather than as a critique of society?



## Discussion Prompts

### The Power of Words

What's the significance of the film's title and its repetition throughout the film?

An interviewer asks Dworkin if she's "angry." After humanizing herself by noting that she is "patient, and calm, and cool, and gentle, and relatively kind," she says she is "outraged" about the way society treats women. What's the difference between being "angry" and "outraged"?

After being attacked by a stranger in a movie theater, Dworkin recalls her mother repeatedly asking "Did anything happen?" What did her mother mean by the question, and how did it devalue aspects of the trauma that didn't include the risk of pregnancy or losing virginity?

After surviving her husband's violent abuse, Dworkin recalls that reading Kate Millet's work helped her name her experience. Why is having language that accurately describes misogyny essential to women being able to process trauma?

Several decades ago, Dworkin named violence against women an "emergency." Is it still? Has your community responded as if it is an emergency?

Dworkin and her allies and followers are called "radical" and "militant" feminists. What are the connotations of those labels? How do they aid or hinder her political work?

Dworkin's analysis of heterosexual intercourse is based, in part, on the words that many male writers have used to describe it: invading, occupying, possessing, etc. Is she correct that this depiction defines women as inferior, and if so, what's an appropriate response?

Give a one line response to these Dworkin one-liners:

- "Objectivity, as I understand it, means that it doesn't happen to you."

- "I think women really, for the first time, began to see men as equals. And the problem was that men did not reciprocate."
- "There's nothing that I've written about that's happened to me that isn't a common experience of women. And that's why it's a political problem, not a personal problem."
- "When we read the work of male writers, they can have had terrible and tragic lives, and we read their books for what they give us. And I want you to read my book for what it can give you, and forget about me and just read the book because the book matters."
- [insert your favorite quote from the film here]



## Discussion Prompts

### Unmuting

Today, “I believe her” is a common refrain from supporters of women who report rape, molestation, domestic abuse, or sexual harassment. What did you learn from Dworkin about the role of being believed in women having voice?

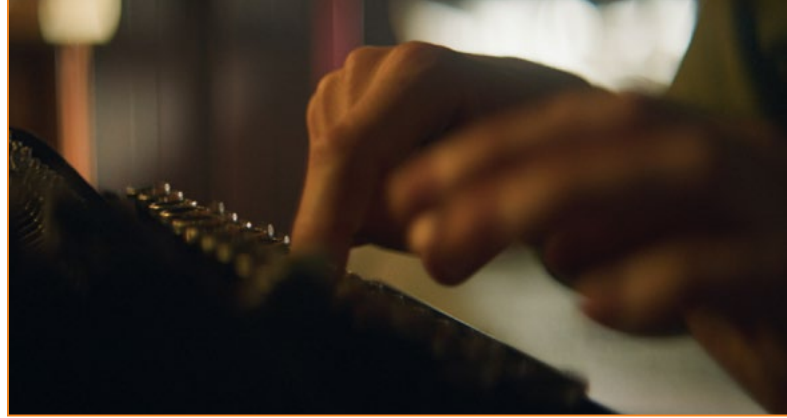
What does “losing speech” mean to Dworkin? At what moments does it happen? How does the presence of speech turn the tables?

In the 1980s, feminist theologian Nelle Morton wrote about “hearing people to speech.” Who did this for Dworkin and how did she do it for others?

Dworkin sees in a Vietnamese monk’s self-immolation an example of “pain past words” – when the hurt is so deep it defies description. What are the consequences for society when those who have been traumatized lose their capacity for speech?

As a young woman, Dworkin goes to Europe to give herself the critical distance and inspiration she hopes will help her become a great writer. She aspires to achieve the genius she sees in others’ work, but especially to let “the mute speak.” Who were “the mute”? To whom did Dworkin ultimately give voice and whose voices remained to be represented by others?

Dworkin says, “For women, language is this extraordinary privilege in a culture in which we’ve had no room, no space, no freedom, no justice, no fairness. The language has only been used against us... Speech depends on believing you can make yourself understood, that a community of people will recognize the experience in the words you use, and they will care.” What role does audience play in a person’s capacity to tell their “truths”? In a digital world where people amass thousands or even millions of followers, what’s the difference between having an audience and having people who hear?



### Writers and Writing

Dworkin asks herself what it means to be a writer. How would you finish the sentence “Being a writer means...”?

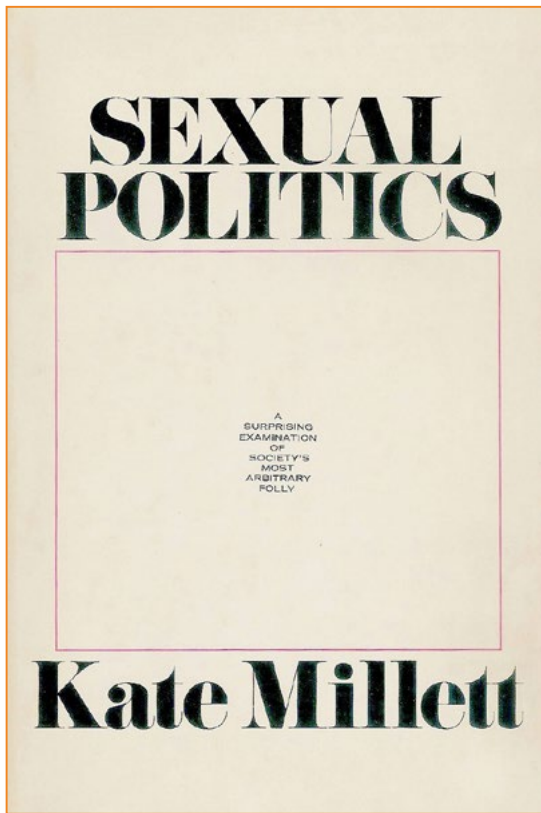
Dworkin says she carries a poem in her pocket and wants to “know if I can write prose, a poetry so strong that nothing can break its back.” What do you think she meant? Is there a poem or piece of prose that you find so compelling you would carry it in your pocket?

Dworkin used as inspiration the fact that her New Jersey street was also once home to Walt Whitman, musing that he was “a visionary, a prophet of love. And I loved, according to his poems. I had a vision, too, like his. But I will never write a poem like his, a song of myself.” Her work certainly drew from her own life experiences, so what do you think she meant when she said she would never write a “Song of Myself”?

About writing and her feminist activism Dworkin says, “It is this indifference to pain, which is real, that enables one to keep going. One develops a warrior’s discipline or one stops.” What did you learn from the film about the impact on society of artists, writers, public intellectuals? What does society lose if those voices are silenced?

Dworkin argues that women’s writing, like women, is judged by a pretty veneer. This makes her bold, strong challenging works hard to accept, and like all women, not to be believed. What’s the impact on journalism, philosophy, or cultural criticism written by women if society’s default is not to believe women or to insist they be gentle?





### Mentors and Influences

Dworkin begins her quest to be a writer with confidence and a good education: "I thought I knew what I was doing." In your experience, what builds and erodes confidence?

Dworkin recalls her first public speech, a Hebrew school lecture in which she called out the adults for materialism she viewed as counter to Jewish values. The response she remembers was, "You're going to be the next president of the United States." What if she'd been shamed or condemned instead of receiving praise for her public speaking? Do you imagine she would have been willing, as an adult, to take on a prophetic role, calling out her communities for their shortcomings?

Dworkin admits to being gobsmacked with poet Allen Ginsberg, and his attention thrilled her. What are the benefits and pitfalls of being appreciated by someone whose work you admire?

Dworkin judges her own writing by Franz Kafka's standard:

"If the book we are reading does not wake us, as with a foot hammering on our skull, why then, do we read it? What we must have are those books which come upon us like ill fortune and distress us deeply. A book must be an ice axe to break the sea frozen inside us." Kate Millett's book *Sexual Politics* served that role for Dworkin: "Something in me moved..." Is there a book that had a profound impact on your life or thinking? Describe the experience of reading that book.

### Love, Sex, and Relationships

Borrowing from philosopher Martin Buber, Dworkin cites an "I/Thou" relationship as "pure love," which she defines as "Love without boundaries, or categories, or conditions, or making someone less than you are." What makes Dworkin hopeful that this type of love is possible? In contrast, she identifies racism and hate as I/It. How does this construction help Dworkin link misogyny, male supremacy, and gender-based violence?

What did you learn about love from Dworkin's relationship with John Stoltenberg?

Dworkin says, "I'm very compelled by the idea of a genderless society – that is, genderless in that gender, as we now know it, won't exist. [Male and female] those words are so corrupt. I mean, they describe very little about people's sexual potentialities..." What do you think it would be like to live in a genderless society?

Dworkin asks, "What impact does it have on us that intercourse is the central sex act in our society [given that it] allows us to accept inferiority, and makes inferiority synonymous with a certain kind of sexual pleasure." How would you answer that question?

Dworkin focused on heterosexual sex. Which aspects of her ideas about sex and power would also apply to gay, trans, or non-binary relationships? Did you hear anything that absolutely wouldn't apply?

## Discussion Prompts

### Form and Filmmaking

What did you learn from *My Name Is Andrea* about making documentaries?

How did Parmar use editing, music, and image to convey what Dworkin felt, as well as what she thought?

Dworkin thought she had a clear life plan and “then things happened to me that were incomprehensible.” How do these words land differently in, say, a speech than when heard as a voice over home movie footage of the speaker as a child?

How do Dworkin’s words (in voice over) influence your interpretation of protest images, including footage of events that took place years after she died (e.g., the 2017 Argentina Femicide is Genocide protest)?

What meanings did you make from Parmar’s choice to intertwine multiple actors playing Dworkin with footage of Dworkin, herself? Did each actor’s appearance make a difference to you? Did the ensemble approach help you connect to or identify with Dworkin in ways that a single actor would not?

In what ways did Parmar’s use of actors enhance understanding of Dworkin even as it challenged traditional documentary form? What are the advantages and disadvantages of including dramatizations?



### FILM CLIPS ON SELECTED TOPICS

To get a full sense of Andrea Dworkin's life, it is best to view the entire film. For situations where that's not possible, the ten clips listed in this section focus on her core ideas. They can be used in instances where class time does not allow for screening the full film or to review key ideas for discussion. See the Discussion Prompts for questions that relate to each segment.

#### **01:45 – 02:15 (30 sec.) I/Thou Love**

Dworkin (played by an actor) describes Martin Buber's I/Thou as "pure love" and prejudice, hate, and hierarchies as I/It.

#### **06:50 – 09:20 (2:20 min.) Intersectionality**

In a 1992 debate at Cambridge University, Dworkin cites James Baldwin as she describes the initial limits of American democracy, linking racism and sexism.

#### **10:40 – 12:00 (1:20 min.) Pain Past Words**

News reports showing a self-immolation in Vietnam inspire Dworkin to profound commentary on human expressions of "pain past words."

#### **14:45 – 20:35 (5:50 min.) Prison Rape**

Dworkin describes a sexual assault by prison doctors. She reveals that the horror left her mute, until an ally who believed her made it possible for her to tell her story. For additional commentary on how the threat of rape robs all women of their freedom, extend the viewing to 24:05.

#### **34:45 - 36:25 (1:40 min.) Ignoring Fascism**

Dworkin is inspired by an Aimé Césaire poem criticizing those who noticed but did nothing in response to the rise of fascism. The scene includes documentary footage that invites comparisons of Nazi Germany to more recent events.

#### **38:18 – 45:10 (6:52 min.) Marriage**

Dworkin recounts her happy marriage turning into a

nightmare of beatings. She explains how the violence robbed her of her voice and how she found it again.

#### **52:45 - 56:22 (3:37 min.) Femicide**

An Argentinian protest against femicide and a gathering after the Montreal Massacre provide the backdrops for Dworkin talking about the need to grieve and to fight back.

#### **56:40 - 1:00:12 (3:32 min.) Harassment and Taking Back the Night**

Dworkin challenges the acceptance of street harassment as routine or benign, urging people not to accede the night to men. The segment includes footage of a Take Back the Night march and more recent protests, including protests demanding justice for Sarah Everard, who was just walking home when she was raped and murdered by a London police officer.

#### **1:00:00 - 1:12:11 (12:11 min.) Pornography**

In a variety of venues, Dworkin makes her case against pornography, including explanation of the Dworkin-MacKinnon Ordinance, counterarguments, and responses. She ends by explaining that there is nothing that has happened to her that isn't common for women.

#### **1:16:43 – 1:19:53 (3:10 min.) Intercourse**

In mainstream media appearances, Dworkin's attempts to explain her nuanced arguments about current constructions of sex and sexuality that reinforce male dominance are met with misunderstanding and intentional distortions.

#### **1:24:03 – 1:27:53 (3:50 min.) Truce**

Addressing a conference of anti-sexist men, Dworkin urges the audience to understand that women are every bit as human as they are, and to act accordingly. She invites them to help her reach a dream: a 24-hour truce in which there is no rape.

### EXTENDING THE LEARNING

These suggestions for possible follow-up require additional investigation beyond watching the film:

- Dworkin frequently cites authors whose work influenced her thinking and writing. Read something by an author she mentions (e.g., James Baldwin, Allen Ginsberg, Franz Fanon, George Jackson, Kate Millett, Franz Kafka, Walt Whitman). Describe how the writer's work relates to the themes Dworkin cared about.
  - Read Buber's *I and Thou* and discuss Dworkin's observation that prejudice or hate shifts I/Thou into I/It. Consider the implications of Buber's framing for relationships in the digital world.
  - Dworkin critiques the way many well-known male authors describe heterosexual intercourse. Go back to literature you have read to investigate the language authors use to describe intercourse. Does the language assume female inferiority? If so, what are the implications of continuing to read and study these works as part of the standard literary canon?
  - Research any or all of the pop music songs used in the film's soundtrack. Then go back to the film and discuss the messages conveyed by including them at particular moments. Here's the list of songs (in the order they are heard in the film):
    - "American Woman" (1970) Guess Who
    - "All Along the Watchtower" (1968) Jimi Hendrix Experience
    - "Yellow Submarine" (1966) Beatles
    - "Different Drum" (1967) Stone Poneys
- Identify something you have in common with a person in the film and create a piece of art, music, or writing that tells your story.
  - Review the resources at [Fight the New Drug](#) (an initiative to help young people to examine the influence of pornography on their expectations about sex and sexual partners without being anti-sex, religious, or partisan). Design your own PSA or other resource that specifically addressed the need to counteract the false notion that women want to be brutalized or are aroused by abusive treatment.



## Discussion Prompts

- Plan an action.

Finishing a discussion by planning action steps can serve as an antidote to frustration, cynicism, or hopelessness. The context for planning matters.

Part of the trauma that survivors of rape or sexual assault experience is the feeling of helplessness when you're forced into a situation over which you have no control. In order not to repeat that pattern, it is especially important to give people in the room as much control as possible over what happens next.

To empower participants:

1. Start by brainstorming a list of possible actions.
2. Help the group (or individuals) to narrow the list and choose their focus.
3. Plan next steps.

Initial brainstorming can be done in pairs, small groups, or with everyone together, and it can focus on either individual or collective actions.

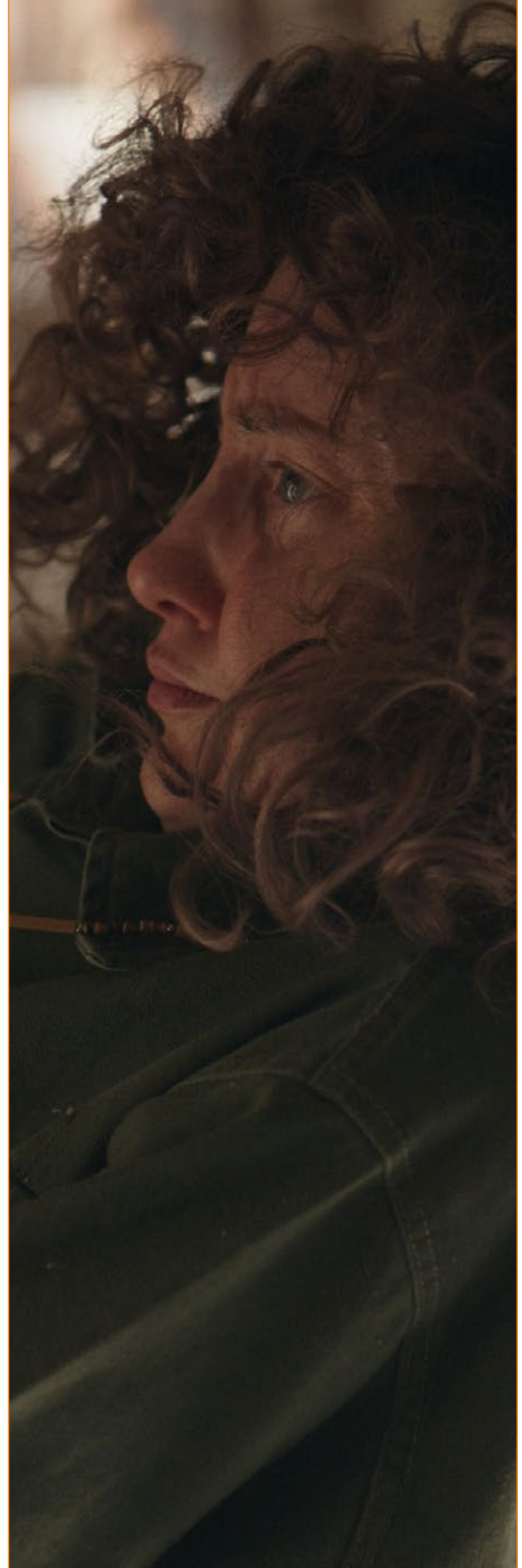
If people are having trouble getting started, you might start by inviting participants to complete a fill-in-the-blank, such as:

"I will share what I learned today with \_\_\_\_\_."

or

"Now that I know \_\_\_\_\_ [insert something they learned from the film], I will \_\_\_\_\_."

Keep in mind that for some participants, talking—especially speaking in public about sensitive issues—is, by itself, a powerful action step.



# Facilitation Tips

## BEFORE A SCREENING

Because *My Name Is Andrea* deals with difficult and disturbing subject matter, be prepared to help people who experience strong reactions. You can:

- Invite people to assume that someone in the room may be dealing with difficult emotions, so the tone and content of comments should be appropriately respectful. Model how to offer opinions in serious but gentle ways.
- Let people know that it's okay to step out for a moment to gather their thoughts.
- Ask audience members: During this discussion we'll be addressing sex, gender, and violence. Pause for a moment to assess your comfort level. Is there anything I can do that would make this discussion easier for you?
- For a campus screening, arrange for and announce ways for students to support one another, perhaps by meeting after class with an assigned partner or getting together as a general group in a scheduled, but optional, informal gathering.

Be aware that for viewers who have personally experienced gender-based violence, it is possible for the film to be more than disturbing; it can be traumatic.

During and after the screening, take time to observe body language and reaction. Differentiate between people who may be upset (which is a healthy reaction) and people who are experiencing trauma.

It is exceptionally important to respond to those experiencing trauma, but unless you are a trained counselor, your role is to refer people to an experienced professional that you trust, either on campus or in the community. Be prepared with that contact information just in case. Or invite a professional to join you at the screening and let them take responsibility for attending to a person in trouble so you can keep the discussion going for everyone else.

When the screening is part of a class, no student who is likely to have a traumatic response should be forced to watch the film or reveal their personal experiences, but exemptions from viewing should be rare. The potential of vulnerable students being triggered should not preclude screening the film for the majority, especially if opting out means not engaging with the troubling issues raised in the film. In fact, for students who have survived sexual violence, speaking about the experience publicly and/or knowing that others are taking the issues seriously can be empowering. With your leadership, a screening and discussion of *My Name Is Andrea* can create a healing space.

Even the most experienced facilitators benefit by preparing themselves in advance. So, prior to the discussion:

□ **Be clear about your role.**

If you are a professor, you may want to slightly shift your typical leadership. In a film screening, think of the film as the teacher. Your job is to be a facilitator – to keep the conversation flowing and avoid having students limit comments to those that they think you want to hear.

Great facilitators shepherd a process that enables people to:

- feel comfortable
- share honestly and respectfully
- learn from one another
- stay on track
- use the available time in a purposeful manner
- work through any challenges that may arise.

Facilitators should avoid:

- telling people what they will experience, think, or feel. This almost always provokes resistance.
- providing answers to participants or interpreting the film for them.
- using jargon or language that might be heard as condescending or judgmental.
- making yourself the center of attention by responding to each comment.
- asking your own questions (except for clarification) or making interpretive comments.
- other than, perhaps, a very brief introduction, speaking about your personal or professional background or content expertise.
- taking exclusive responsibility for the success of the conversation. If there's a concern about how the dialogue is unfolding, raise it matter-of-factly. If the concern is shared by the group, guide everyone to work together to figure out how to address it. If the group doesn't share your concern, move on.
- losing your cool. If you are having a hard time managing feelings, find a moment to take a break, go off by yourself to collect yourself, call on your resilience, remember your strengths, and remember your role.

□ **Preview the film.**

View *My Name Is Andrea* and reflect on your own experiences and emotions around the issues it raises. That way you aren't trying to process your own raw reactions while you are also trying to engage others in a dialogue.

□ **Choose discussion prompts.**

Review the discussion questions in this guide, and choose a handful that you think will be most useful. In particular, choose your opening and closing questions.

- **Decide what strategies you'll use to make people comfortable.**

Many people are not comfortable talking about sex or sexual violence. It's not something that most people get a lot of practice doing, especially in public. Think about how you might acknowledge the lack of experience and let people know it's okay. Everyone's in the same boat.

- **Anticipate potential glitches.**

Plan your strategies for dealing with things that might derail the dialogue (e.g., offensive language, raised voices, a person who wants to dominate the time, people who interrupt while others are speaking, etc.). See the "Responding to Challenges" section for suggestions. If you suspect that the screening might attract protestors, make any security arrangements you deem necessary.

- **Educate yourself on the issues.**

You don't need to be an expert, but it can be helpful to know important facts and be aware of common misconceptions. If you aren't already well-versed in Dworkin's work, use the sites listed in the Additional Resources section of the guide to familiarize yourself with the issues.

## DURING THE DISCUSSION

- **Take a moment to establish basic ground rules.**

These are intended to create safe space and keep the discussion on track. Rules would typically include things like speaking only for oneself without generalizing or presuming to know how others feel (sentences that start with "I", not "we" or "everyone" or "people"), no yelling, no use of personal put-downs, sharing your name the first time you speak, etc.

As you establish guidelines, take care not to be seen as demanding "political correctness" or asking people to code-switch from the routine way they speak. Help the group distinguish between language they may not like but can tolerate and "put-downs," which are off limits. Define what's off limits as language that makes someone so angry, hurt, or upset that they can no longer hear what the speaker is saying. It might be something as simple someone saying, "That's stupid." Or it could be a racial, sexual, or gender slur. The words are off limits not because they are politically incorrect or offensive, but because they actually block the open communication that allows the group to have a discussion.

Note that words do not need to be spoken with malicious intent to be off-limits. Many people use humor to mask or cope with uncomfortable situations and may justify their language as just being a joke. If someone says something offensive in a joking way, don't overreact. Instead, calmly invite them to rephrase without the slur or attack.

Depending on your situation, rules might also include agreement that what is said remains confidential. Be very clear about whether recording is permitted, and if there are journalists present, make sure the audience knows. Encourage people to speak with others who were not present about topics that came up, but without attaching names to who said what and without repeating any story that was shared in confidence.

Invite people to add any other rules they think are essential and ask for some sign of agreement before moving on.



## Facilitation Tips

- Use your spoken language, body language, and tone to create a welcoming atmosphere where people feel comfortable expressing all sorts of views. Convey the feeling that “we’re all in this together.” Steer participants away from rhetoric that seeks to identify enemies or losers rather than work towards solutions.
- In a sentence or two, explain your role. Be clear, concise, and transparent.
- **Pose an initial question and then be guided by the interests and needs of the group.**  
As long as the conversation is more or less on topic, don’t feel like you need to impose a structure or ask a list of predetermined questions.
- Help those who are having trouble finding their voice with gentle follow-up probes: “Tell us more about that...” “Thanks for being brave enough to share that. I wonder if you could talk a bit more about how you connect it to what you saw in the film...”
- If appropriate for the situation, leave time for planning action steps.

### Responding to Challenges

In the rare instance that a discussion is intentionally disrupted, take a cue from Dworkin’s initially calm demeanor, even when people say incredibly offensive things. Be the leader in the room. Don’t respond to anything specific a provocateur says or engage in a shouting match, but do make it clear that you will not allow a disrupter to abuse anyone else in the room.

If appropriate, give the disrupter (or a spokesperson if it’s a group) two minutes to have their say and let them know they have forfeited the privilege of saying anything else. Invite them to stay and listen quietly, but if they can’t do that, ask them to leave. As a last resort, ask security to remove them. If you’re able, diffuse the tension with humor. Invite everyone to take a breath and continue the event.

Planned disruptions are unlikely, but it is not uncommon for people to spontaneously respond with strong emotions, especially if they are being asked to reflect on aspects of their core identity. As a facilitator, there are a range of strategies you can use to de-escalate if an emotional reaction overheats. Those strategies fall into two categories: prevention and response. Prevention strategies make it less likely that tensions will escalate in the first place. Responses are strategies to address tensions as they arise.

### Prevention

- Structure the discussion to provide everyone who wants to speak a chance to be heard. Depending on the size of your group, strategies might include using go-rounds (where each person takes a turn speaking), limiting opportunities to speak for a second or third time until everyone has had a first chance, and/or dividing the audience into small groups or pairs. You may also want to appoint a timekeeper and place time limits on speakers. For this film, it would also be appropriate to decenter men’s reactions by reserving the first several comments for women.

- If your screening has a particular purpose (e.g., encouraging participation in a local initiative), be sure that everyone understands the goal up front. If the discussion strays too far off topic, get things back on track by validating the importance of other concerns and then gently reminding speakers of the purpose of the screening. Or politely ask the speaker to explain how what they are saying relates to the purpose. They may see a link that you don't and that can provide the group with valuable insight.
- Be consistent about intervening when people stray from the group's ground rules. If you let things go with one person, it will be much harder to be seen as fair if you redirect another later. If you need to intervene, gently interrupt with a reminder of the ground rules. If the speaker needs help, offer an alternative way of phrasing or engaging that's in keeping with the rules.
- At the beginning of the discussion, remind people that they will be engaging in a dialogue, not a debate or defense. A debate is about staking out a position and trying to convince everyone else that you are right and they are wrong. A dialogue is about exchanging ideas in order to learn from one another. That means actively listening as well as talking. Discussion is about learning, not winning. Winning happens when everyone in the room walks away with new insight and a deeper understanding of the issues, not necessarily when everyone agrees.
- Remind people that when coping with sexual violence or sexist discrimination, one strategy does not fit all. What works for you might not be the best strategy for someone else. So participants don't need to insist that "We all should..." in order to feel supported in the option(s) they choose.
- Plan ahead to convene more than one meeting to address the topic. The prospect of having more time can alleviate a sense of urgency, so no one feels the need to say everything they are thinking before the end of the screening event.

### Response

- **Take the floor.**

Should people begin to argue or shout, the very first step is to call a time-out. Once you have regained control of the room, choose an action, or combination of actions, that interrupt the energy without shutting down the conversation.

For example:

- Acknowledge the depth of feeling and importance of the issue and pause the discussion to give everyone a chance to write down a one- or two-sentence response. Quick poll the group – do a go-round giving everyone a chance to say something brief (or pass) before anyone else can speak. To keep things moving, you might ask speakers to provide their comment as a "headline" rather than an entire article.
- Summarize the points of view of the major opponents. If they feel heard, they will feel less need to shout. Start with a phrase like "Let me see if I understand..." If people are calm enough, you might ask those most engaged in the argument to summarize what they think the other person is saying.

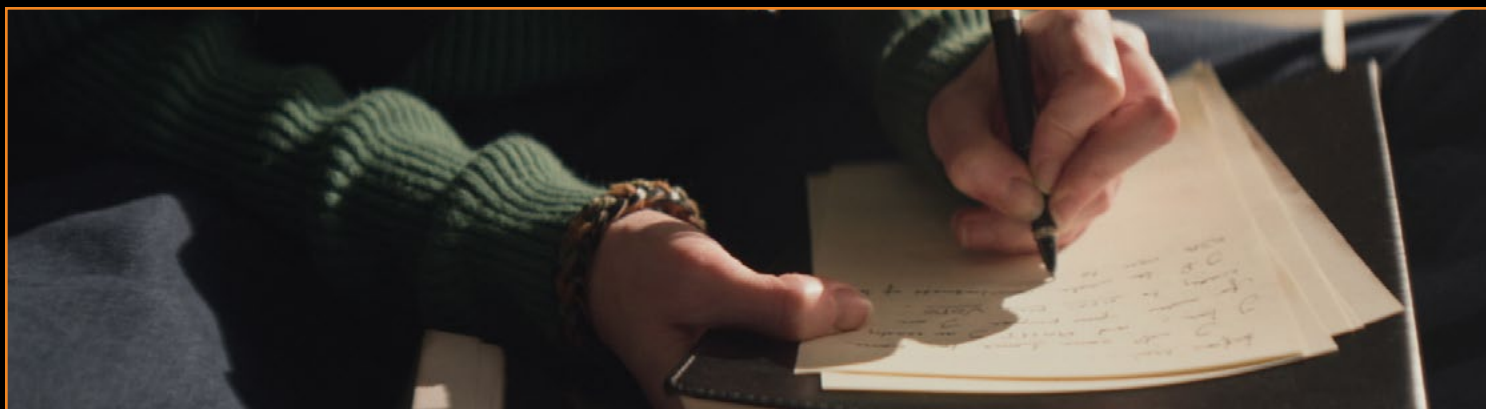
## Facilitation Tips

- Transform the core issue under debate into a question and break into dyads or small groups to discuss that question. After several minutes, bring the group back together and ask for volunteers to share what came up for them in the breakout discussion.
- Remind the group that the purpose of dialogue is to increase understanding, not to win an argument. Or, remind the group that everyone in the room has good intentions and is trying to do their best. If the group has already identified common ground, remind people of the views they share. Then ask if people feel ready to resume the discussion or if they want to take a short break.

### □ **Take a break.**

In instances where there has been a major blowup, change the energy in the room by interrupting it and giving people a few minutes to cool down and regain their composure. Depending on what has actually occurred, you may want to take additional steps:

- If someone appears to have hurt or offended another, pull those involved aside during the break. Work with them on examining the intention of what they said and check in with the offended party about whether that matched the effect that the speaking had on her/him. If there is a gap, work with both until the person/people offending can deliver their statement in an acceptable way.
- During the break, check in with people who are visibly upset. If someone is having a hard time controlling anger, grief, or other strong feelings, speak to the person off to the side. Ask about the emotion, what sparked it, and what's helped them to move through it in the past. Explain that you want to ensure that their perspective is heard by others and that you want to work with them to shift their speaking to make that possible. Ask them how you can best support them when the group comes back together.
- When you reconvene, restart the discussion by acknowledging what happened, noting that it is evidence of how very important and meaningful this conversation is. Let people know that intensity is normal when we dialogue about things we care about. Express appreciation for people's willingness to stay invested in the process. Depending on the situation, you may also want to take some time for speakers who have offended or disrupted to apologize to the group allowing others in the group to share their experience of what happened.



# Background Information

## TIMELINE OF KEY EVENTS AND PUBLICATIONS

Rather than a strict chronological accounting, *My Name Is Andrea* juxtaposes events and insights that are sometimes decades apart in time. This timeline can help answer questions that might arise about the sequence of key events featured in the film or things directly related to those events:

- 1946 Andrea Dworkin is born in Camden, New Jersey
- 1955 sexually assaulted in a movie theater
- 1963 Vietnamese monk self-immolates to protest U.S. military intervention
- 1965 enrolled at Bennington College; at NY Women's House of Detention after arrest at an anti-war rally, given a rape-like internal gynecology examination; travelled briefly to Europe
- 1968 graduated from Bennington; moved to Amsterdam
- 1969 married Cornelius (Iwan) Dirk de Bruin
- 1971 left de Bruin; connected with another expatriate, Ricki Abrams, who helped her survive
- 1972 returned to the U.S.
- 1973 Pacifica Radio interview
- 1974 publishes *Woman Hating*; meets John Stoltenberg, a gay man and lifelong soulmate
- 1976 published *Our Blood: Prophecies and Discourses on Sexual Politics*; divorces de Bruin
- 1978 Take Back the Night March
- 1979 Times Square Anti-Pornography March
- 1980 published *the new womans broken heart: short stories*
- 1983 published *Right-Wing Women*; Midwest Men's Conference; first proposed the Dworkin-MacKinnon Anti-Pornography Civil Rights Ordinance in Minneapolis
- 1985 published with co-author Catharine MacKinnon *The Reasons Why: Essays on the New Civil Rights Law Recognizing Pornography as Sex Discrimination*. New York: Women Against Pornography
- 1986 published *Ice and Fire: A Novel*
- 1987 published *Intercourse*; Donahue TV show
- 1989 published *Pornography: Men Possessing Women*
- 1989 Montreal Massacre, École Polytechnique
- 1991 Banff, Canada speech; Ron Reagan Show; KBOO Radio interview
- 1992 published *Mercy*; Cambridge University debate; Larry Josephson interview
- 1993 published *Letters from a War Zone*
- 1997 published *Life and Death: Unapologetic Writings on the Continuing War Against Women*
- 1997 BBC *HardTalk* interview
- 1999 dosed with a date-rape drug and raped in a Paris hotel room
- 2000 published *Scapegoat: The Jews, Israel, and Women's Liberation*
- 2002 published *Heartbreak: The Political Memoir of a Feminist Militant*
- 2005 after several years of declining health, Dworkin died in her sleep of heart disease

### GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

According to the United Nations, which has called violence against women and girls an “epidemic”:

- In 2022, more than five women and girls were killed every hour by someone in their family.
- Of the 81,000 women and girls killed globally in 2020, 58% (47,000) died at the hands of an intimate partner or family member. This is equivalent to a woman or girl being killed every 11 minutes in their home.
- Around the world, 1 in 3 women and girls aged 15 and older have experienced physical or sexual violence at least once in their lifetime. That’s an estimated 736 million women. This figure does not include sexual harassment.
- Women who have experience sexual violence have higher rates of depression, anxiety disorders, unplanned pregnancies, sexually transmitted infections and HIV compared to women who have not. Problems can last long after the violence has ended.
- Most violence against women is perpetrated by current or former husbands or intimate partners. More than 640 million women aged 15 and older (26%) have been subjected to intimate partner violence.
- Of those who have been in a relationship, almost one in four adolescent girls aged 15–19 (24%) have experienced physical and/or sexual violence from their partner.

### DWORKIN-MACKINNON ANTI-PORNOGRAPHY CIVIL RIGHTS ORDINANCE

Dworkin and MacKinnon's novel anti-pornography legislation defining pornography as a civil rights violation rather than as a criminal act of obscenity was first introduced in Minneapolis in 1983. The title came to refer to a handful of proposals in jurisdictions across the U.S. through the early 1990s.

The [full text](#) of the Minneapolis ordinance includes this definition of pornography:

(gg) Pornography. Pornography is a form of discrimination on the basis of sex.

(1) Pornography is the sexually explicit subordination of women, graphically depicted, whether in pictures or in words, that also includes one or more of the following:

- (i) women are presented dehumanized as sexual objects, things or commodities; or
- (ii) women are presented as sexual objects who enjoy pain or humiliation; or
- (iii) women are presented as sexual objects who experience sexual pleasure in being raped; or
- (iv) women are presented as sexual objects tied up or cut up or mutilated or bruised or physically hurt; or
- (v) women are presented in postures of sexual submission; or
- (vi) women's body parts - including but not limited to vaginas, breasts, and buttocks - are exhibited, such that women are reduced to those parts; or
- (vii) women are presented as whores by nature; or
- (viii) women are presented being penetrated by objects or animals; or
- (ix) women are presented in scenarios of degradation, injury, abasement, torture, shown as filthy or inferior, bleeding, bruised, or hurt in a context that makes these conditions sexual.

(2) The use of men, children, or transsexuals in the place of women in (1) (i - ix) above is pornography for purposes of subsections (1) - (p) of this statute.

In 1992, Dworkin and MacKinnon crafted this overview for members of the Judiciary Committee of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, who were considering a vote to adopt the legislation:

#### THE ANTI-PORNOGRAPHY CIVIL RIGHTS ORDINANCE

##### A BRIEF DESCRIPTION

1. The *Statement of Policy* summarizes evidence of the harm pornography does to the legal and social status of women and to society as a whole. When assessing constitutionality, courts measure laws against legislative findings.
2. The *Definition* is a concrete description of the materials the pornography industry makes and sells: graphic sexually explicit materials that subordinate women and others. It is not a description of any ideas pornography expresses. By contrast with the Indianapolis version of the ordinance, this definition is not restricted to violent material. This is because the violence of pornography is not limited to materials that show violence. Women are coerced into materials that show no violence. Rapists use materials showing what appears to be consenting sex to stimulate their rapes and to select their targets. Children are abused to make pornography that shows no violence. Pornography showing no violence is violently forced on women and children.

3. The *Coercion* provision permits anyone coerced into sex acts so pornography can be made of them to stop the pornography and to get damages for their abuse. It only addresses materials made through aggression that is proven to be done against individual human beings. There is no First Amendment protection for coercion.
4. The ordinance prohibits *forcing* pornography on others against their will. Already illegal in the workplace under sexual harassment laws, these acts are not protected speech. This provision reaches only those who do the force, not those who publish the materials. The First Amendment protects unwilling viewers, not perpetrators of forced viewing.
5. Legal experts are clear that it will be very difficult to prove that particular *assaults* are directly caused by specific pornography. It should be difficult. Pornography which contains only words sometimes causes assaults. When it can be proven to do so, the victims should be allowed to sue the pornographers.
6. Being in pornography can destroy a person's reputation. The *defamation* provision allows recovery for unauthorized use of a person in pornography in ways that take into account the existing laws of libel.
7. The *trafficking* provision addresses a slave trade, covering only materials made through the sexual use of living or dead humans or animals. Materials must, in addition, be graphic, sexually explicit and subordinate women or others in the place of women. Literature is not covered. Because isolated parts are excluded, most of Playboy and Hollywood movies would not be covered either.

For an example of a legal counterargument, see this article by Winifred Sandier. She concluded that the legislation was unconstitutional, a position that would later be affirmed by a U.S. Federal Court:

[Sandier, W.A. \(1985\) "The Minneapolis Anti-Pornography Ordinance: a Valid Assertion of Civil Rights?" Fordham Urban Law Journal \(13:4\)](#)

### ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

#### [My Name Is Andrea](#)

In addition to information about the filmmakers, screenings, and reviews, the official website of the film includes an excellent short list of organizations working to end violence against women and girls. It also includes a list of Dworkin's books and texts that others have written about her work.

#### [Ms. Magazine interview](#)

#### [POV Magazine interview](#)

Each of the publications in these links featured different portions of a 2023 interview in which the filmmaker goes into depth about her reasons for making a film about Dworkin as well as her production choices.

#### [United Nations Women](#)

For a global perspective on initiatives to end violence against women, check the resources United Nations Women and the UN Trust Fund to End Violence Against Women, including [Shine](#) (projects at the grassroots level) and [UNite to End Violence Against Women](#). A summary is available [here](#).

**If you or someone you know needs help, call or text the National Sexual Assault Hotline at 1-800.656.HOPE or visit <https://rainn.org>**



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