

Half Time at the Super Bowl

by Phyllis Chesler



No, I was not there, I'm not a fan of blood sports, but I did watch the performances of Shakira and JLo. Oh, am I behind—or perhaps, against the times. I understand that younger women may view their performances as a defiant and joyful female ownership of sexuality. That it may be. Fine. But why not defy fully-dressed instead of half-naked? Here's what I saw.

The pageantry and choreography reminded me of Leni Riefenstahl's camera work in "The Triumph of the Will," (a Nazi propaganda film) and in "Olympia," in which she documented the summer Olympics in Berlin.

At half-time, as intended, the light show stunned, deafened, and overwhelmed; the requisite and wholly perfected Michael Jackson athletic gym-style dancing dominated; human geometric

patterns amazed. Was it Weimar/Berlin or Roman-era decadence or, were we seeing mock-ups of orgies the likes of which took place in pre-Biblical times when the newly freed Jewish slaves worshipped the Golden Calf? Male singers and dancers were fully dressed. The women were all half-naked and shook everything they had in erotically exaggerated ways. Shakira made animal noises, animal faces—and belly-danced. JLo exposed her buttocks, wore several outfits, including a black dominatrix leather number, and briefly pole danced. The fact that they did so “well” does not change my mind about the Bread-and-Circus times in which we live.

OK, I get it. Men risk bodily injury to make many millions as football players. Women tease, tempt, excite with their voices and their half-naked dancing. Pre-adolescent and adolescent girls (and boys) are watching and learning...