

Weber Woman's Wrevenge

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WEBERWOMAN'S WREVENGE SEVEN

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Overseas correspondents should sent non-first class mail (fanzines, for example) to me c/o CSIRO, P O Box 1800, Canberra City ACT 2601, Australia. Letters (and any mail from within Australia) should be sent to my street address. The mail room at work won't be too thrilled to get stacks of weird fannish mail for me, but by the time anyone overseas reads this, and sends me a fanzine, and the fanzine gets here, it will probably be December and I just might be working out of a Regional Office. Australian readers will be warned in plenty of time if this happens, but overseas readers need a lot more lead time.

WEBERWOMAN'S WREVENGE is available for trade, contribution, letter of comment, artwork, or \$A0.60, \$US0.80, or equivalent per issue. Electro-stencils by Ron L Clarke, Faulconbridge, or Richard J Faulder, Yanco. The cover may be printed by Ron Clarke if I get organised in time, or by the Students' Union at the Australian National University if I don't. I'll let you know nextish who won the toss. An ISOPRESS Publication.

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THE COVER

This time by Alison Cowling. This woman looks like a survivor, but one who prefers a musical instrument to a weapon (okay, she carries a knife, but self-defense is sensible). I like to think of her as a tough person who doesn't take any shit off anybody, but who only fights when she has to, and then does a good job. So she's lost an eye -- you ought to see what her attacker looks like. (I'd love to know what Alison's story is...)

AN APOLOGY

Lastish I credited a piece of artwork on page 32 to Roelof Goudriaan. The drawing was actually by John Playford (who also did the cover), and I have no explanation for the mixup! Just incompetency... My apologies to John, but no promises that it won't happen again. Typing up the credits before doing the actual pages, doesn't help. This time I'll put the credits on the last page; perhaps then I'll get it right.

EDITORIAL

This is the first issue using the new format. Even with microelite type and fewer (and smaller) illos, I'm having difficulty fitting everything in. The lettercol is the section to suffer this time. After the rape essay and all the feedback, I felt it was absolutely necessary to have a somewhat lighter piece to balance things out. After that, there was not much room left.

The last six weeks or so have been rather eventful, not all of it fun. My parents left on April 28 to return to America. On the 30th I was on my way to Faulconbridge when my car died on the freeway just outside a place called Campbelltown. Well, it at least picked a fairly convenient spot, as Campbelltown is on the train line to Sydney and also the bus. That night, after getting a tow and determining that nothing whatsoever would be done about the car until Monday, I phoned Eric who drove down to rescue me. Monday I got hom by a combination of train and plane, and two weeks later the car was ready to be collected. I ended up having the engine reconditioned, at vast expense. The most inconvenient thing about the whole episode was that I had the entire issue of Wrevenge #6 in the car, expecting to collate it over the weekend. It stayed in the car for 2 weeks... one of the more imaginative reasons for a late issue that I've heard.

Twice I've advertised for someone to rent my spare room, and failed to find anyone suitable who was interested. Having shifted an amazing amount of fannish paper out of the room and rearranging my bedroom plus the lounge, I am a bit annoyed. Meanwhile I got the roof fixed, and the damaged ceiling in the spare room repainted, and my homeowner's insurance paid for it.

I also attempted to get the side fence replaced, but of three contractors I phoned, none seemed at all interested in quoting for the job. Other renovations have been dealt a blow by the car repairs' dent in my savings, but we continue to scheme, price things, and change our mind...

At work I'm into a busy season, working on the Annual Report (bullying people into writing their bits) as well as putting out a bimonthly magazine. Today I got two items I've been nagging about for almost a year: a new terminal, in two pieces so the screen can be set higher and the keyboard lower, as an aid to my back; and a small table as a work surface and place to put the microfiche reader. Just in time, too -- I like to spread out over all available surface (including the floor) when putting together something as complex as an Annual Report.

Winter has arrived in Canberra, and with it frosty nights and clear cool days (typical daytime highs are about 14°C (you Yanks can work that out for yourselves). As long as it's not too windy, it's very pleasant. But at 8 am, bicycling to work is a bit rough. I've been trying to ride as often as possible (two weeks on the bike while the car was in for repairs rather got me in the habit and I don't want to slack off again). I'm also swimming at least once a week at lunchtime, and playing softball usually twice a week, so getting a bit fit. It's a good feeling. In fact I did a lot of leaf raking and dirt-shoveling the last couple weekends, and my back held up very well, so all the exercises (including the Canadian Air Force 10BX every morning) must be helping.

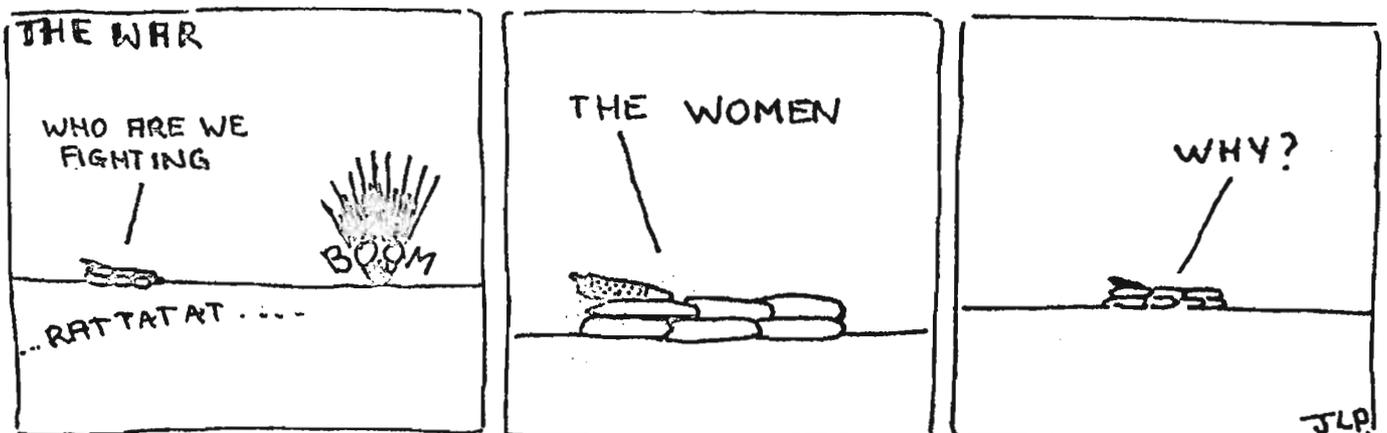
Last Saturday I voted in my first election since becoming an Australian citizen. I considered it delightfully ironic that it was an even more irrelevant election than usual, being

for the House of Assembly of the Australian Capital Territory. The ACT does not have self-government; the House of Assembly merely "advises" the Minister for the Capital Territory, who generally ignore the advice unless it happens to coincide with what he thinks anyway, or is on a topic he doesn't care about (the latter generally being of no political importance one way or the other). The campaign was enlivened by the usual assortment of silly candidates, this time calling themselves the Deadly Serious Party. They put out some absolutely delightful hoax campaign literature and one actually polled fairly well, having had the sheer luck to be first on the ballot paper. The Right to Life did a good job of telling me who not to vote for by publishing a list of those candidates who opposed women's right to choose. And the environmentalists really outdid themselves. Last year there was a referendum in Tasmania to decide which of two sites to use for a new dam. Many people objected because "No dams" was not an option, and a large percentage (over 35% I think) wrote "No Dams" on their ballot papers. This did not count, of course, but it did get a great deal of publicity. So the environmentalists in the ACT urged Canberra voters to support the Tasmania Wilderness Society by writing "No Dams" on our ballots, in such a way

that it would not invalidate our other votes, but would show how much support the issue has (the official talliers would not record those "votes" but the scrutineers did; about 40% of ballot papers said "No Dams").

To return for a moment to this issue; I recommend another special fanzine on rape, Kolvir, August 1978. Edited by Tim Daniels and Gil Fitzgerald, this Black Hole Inc publication doesn't have an address on it (but then the address would probably be out of date now anyway, so I suppose it doesn't really matter). Section headings are: Exploding the Mythos of Rape; What do Women Really Want?; What's a Little Rape Between Friends?; The Victims; and Gut Feelings. 121 pages. If you can find a copy, it's well worth reading. My copy was given to me by my friend Chris Callahan, who has an article in it on Rape & Myths in Recent SF.

This whole business of male attitudes towards women was brought home to me again last night when I gave a lift to a stranded (male) motorist in the pouring rain and he showed his gratitude (?) by attempting to fondle my leg. He got an elbow in the bicep for his efforts, and fortunately quit. His comment? "You don't like that, huh?" How DARE men be so presumptuous? In indignation, I leave you to (?) enjoy this issue of Wrevenge...



THE POLITICS OF RAPE

by Jean Weber

Rape has been in the news a lot lately, because of conferences and draft legal changes. I believe rape is a very misunderstood crime, because of the complexity of people's opinions on male-female relationships in general, and on sex and sexuality in particular. In this paper I will discuss the following points:

- 1) Social conditioning of both males and females sets the scene for rape to occur
- 2) Historically, rape was a property crime, and similar attitudes persist today
- 3) Rape is about power, not sex

The material in this essay is supported by research, including these works:

Paul R. Wilson, The Other Side of Rape, University of Queensland Press, 1978.

Susan Brownmiller, Against Our Will: Men, Women and Rape, Penguin Books, 1975.

Anne Summers, Damned Whores and God's Police, Penguin Books, 1975.

(There are quite a few more books and articles on the subject, but I have not read them; they are referenced in the above books.)

A Definition

The legal definition of rape varies slightly among the Australian States, but generally it is, "Any person who has carnal knowledge of a woman or girl, not his wife, without her consent, or with her consent, if the consent is obtained by force, by means of threats or intimidation of any kind, by means of false or fraudulent representations, or (in the case of a married woman) by impersonating her husband."

Defense against the charge of rape is usually based on the woman's having "consented". The victim's past sexual history is often presented as evidence of her consent. This arises from prevailing community attitudes towards the proper roles of males and females, in sexual relations and in society as a whole. And note that most rape laws exempt husbands (even when the couple is separated). Legal changes are directed at removing the onus on women to prove they did not

consent, to specifically disallow use of a woman's past sexual history (except in certain instances), to broaden acts of rape to include other than penis-in-vagina, and to grade the offense according to the amount of force used, or whether weapons used. Also to cover homosexual rape under the same law.

Assumptions about Men, Women and Sex

Many people still believe that women enjoy violence in sex, want to be dominated by a "real man", or even want to be raped. No doubt there are a few women around who have these desires, just as there are male masochists who enjoy being beaten up. However, such people are definitely a minority, and hardly typical, normal, or necessarily healthy in their outlook.

Our society teaches us that men should be aggressive, dominant, and take the initiative in male/female relationships, even when it does not support or condone physical violence. Some segments of Australian society *do* support violence, in the view that "real man" keeps his woman in line, with a few slaps in the face (or elsewhere) if necessary.

Women and girls are taught to be submissive, passive, and not to take the initiative; they are also taught to use "feminine wiles" to trap and keep a man, and various subtle and not-so-subtle ways to use sex as a weapon, or a bargaining point.

Many men and women do not accept these polarised views of men and women today, at least not consciously, but unfortunately many do.

Both men and women often seem to assume that the man must "talk (?) the woman into sex", because of the folklore that she is passive and he takes the initiative. Folklore also tells us that women often say "no" when they want to be "talked into it." This was certainly true when I was a teenager, when "nice girls didn't", even when they wanted to; so if the guy talked you into it, you could soothe your conscience. No doubt this is still a problem for many girls and women, particularly those from strict religious backgrounds. And a girl who takes the initiative is presumed to want it all the time!

Women as Property

Susan Brownmiller gives us a very useful historical look at the legal crime of rape over the centuries. It is clear that, in the past, rape was a *property crime*.

This is hardly surprising, because women *were* property under the law, until this century in many countries. A female was the property of her father until she married, when she became the property of her husband.

In ancient Babylon, and in many other societies since, women were purchased as wives by paying a "bride price" to their fathers. If an unwed woman were raped, her value was diminished (she was damaged goods) and the rapist could be put to death while the victim was considered guiltless. A *married* woman who was raped, shared the rapist's guilt; the crime was considered adultery regardless of the circumstances and both persons could be put to death.

Hebrew society held much the same views on rape, and the purchase of brides, with the exception that a virgin was considered guilty if the rape took place within the city (she should have called for help) but not if she were outside the city or working in the fields. In the latter case, the rapist had to pay the bride price to her father, and the two were required to marry. Except if she were already betrothed, in which case he was stoned to death and she went unpunished (although probably sold later as a concubine).

In the Middle Ages, females were allowed to inherit property if there were no male heirs, but a landed heiress could not marry without permission of her overlord, under penalty of losing her inherited fortune. However, if a man "stole" an heiress and married her, he could obtain her property; this practice was specifically made illegal in the 15th century.

In the 13th century, a raped virgin could "save" the rapist by marrying him (castration and blinding were typical punishments for rapings virgins in those days). At the end of the 13th century, the Statutes of Westminster extended the law to cover the forcible rape of married women as well as virgins, with no difference

in punishment to offending males, and the custom of "redemption through marriage" was abolished.

Of course most of these considerations applied only to females of the propertied classes. The courts rarely bothered with commoners and, in fact, noblemen raped peasant women - particularly those on their own estates - without fear of prosecution.

In feudal Europe, there was a custom of giving the manorial lord the right to take the virginity of the bride of any one of his vassals or serfs unless the bride and groom paid a tribute to prevent this.

I've gone on at some length on the past legal aspects of rape for two reasons: first, because I found the details so fascinating; and second, because I think these historical attitudes are very much still with us, although in modified forms.

One other aspect needs to be mentioned: rape in war. Susan Brownmiller goes into great detail on this topic, just as she does on women as property, but it boils down to this:

Most societies, when waging war on their neighbours, considered women as one of the legitimate spoils of war, to be used (raped) at will by the conquerers. In fact, one way of getting even with male rivals, was to rape their women.

Modern Attitudes

Few men in our society today, of course, would express a belief in women-as-property, nor would they probably be conscious of thinking of women that way. But there seems to be still the attitude that if a sexually active woman does not belong to *one* man, she is - or should be - available to all men. That is, if a woman is not "chaste" (i.e. virgin or married), she is a slut.

I personally have met several (well-educated) men who were very indignant that I did not wish to have sex with them, when they knew I have sex with other men. Their attitude seemed to be, how dare I refuse them? Of course they were feeling rejected, and they could not face that. Many of my female friends have had similar experiences. Then there is the opposite

situation, where if a woman is living with a man, other men won't have anything to do with her; they respect the first man's "property rights".

There is also the practice, still common, of seducing or raping someone's wife or girlfriend to punish *him* for some real or imagined slight.

So, things are complicated. Societal attitudes (conscious and unconscious) make heterosexual relations tricky for both sexes. How is a man to know whether the woman wants to be seduced or not, when she is reluctant?

Many men I know are very worried about the issue of "consent" to sexual intercourse, fearing that women will be more likely to falsely accuse men of rape, if consent is not an issue. To me this indicates just how grey is the area between "seduction" and rape in many people's minds. It also indicates that most men (and women, too) think rape is about sex or lust.

So I can sympathise with men who are concerned that they (or other men) might be falsely accused when the young woman has second thoughts, or her parents find out. But that is quite a different thing from a man who beats up a woman who has said no - and yet many juries don't convict rapists - even when the victim has nearly been murdered - because she "consented" (after having been beaten, and fearing for her life) and there were no witnesses - presumably the juries think she enjoys violence, it turns her on! There is the third area, in between these two, where the woman "consents" out of fear of violence, because the man is bigger and stronger than she. If there are no witnesses, it is only her word against his that he threatened her, especially if there was no knife or other weapon. How can she prove he threatened her? Another bit of folklore tells us that rape is the most horrible thing that can happen to a woman, so if she does not scream and fight, despite threats and possibly the presence of a weapon, if she is not beaten to within a centimetre of her life, she must have consented, and therefore the man is innocent.

The other factor heavily used in defence of accused rapists, is the past sexual history of the woman.

Here the woman is effectively put on trial rather than the rapist. If she was neither a virgin or a chaste married woman, particularly if she is known to have had sexual relations with several men over a period of time, her testimony is unlikely to be believed. This goes back to the idea that if a woman does not belong to one man, she belongs to all. It is a view derived from religion and the historical status of woman as property.

Rape is about Power, not Sex

Interviews with rape victims, especially those who have not reported the rape to police, show that the most common factor is the expression of power and, often of hate and/or contempt for women, on the part of the rapist.

A man does not need to physically bash a woman to force her to have sex with him; he does not necessarily even have to make her believe he will bash her. There are many other forms of power which men often have over women: for instance, economic power (he could be her boss and threaten to sack her).

In a more subtle form, the fear of rape (and bashing or murder) serves to keep women from living as they wish. It is dangerous to walk at night in most cities, for both men and women. But if a man is bashed and robbed, a jury will not consider he wanted to be robbed (they might think him stupid for putting himself in that situation, but it will be no defense for the thief). However, a woman walking alone at night is often considered to be "asking for it" and a rapist acquitted -- though her contribution was no more than that of a man's in similar circumstances: stupidity at worst.

So, because we think rape is about sex, women must be guardians of their "virtue". Women are accused of "enticing" rape if they wear certain types of clothing - usually whatever is the fashion that year. So a woman must seriously consider whether what she wears in public can be used against her. Women have the burden to protect themselves when it is men who commit the crime. To me, this indicates another use of power, not by

individual men but by society in general, to keep women in a state of fear. It is a process of intimidation. Police and legal procedures reinforce this intimidation, by effectively putting the woman on trial, first in taking evidence for committal, then in the trial itself. The man's sexual history is not admissible, though he may have raped many women in the past. So women are intimidated from living autonomous lives, and then from reporting a rape, much less making a court case, except in the most extreme circumstances.

Myths and Misunderstandings

The traditional picture of the rapist is: a monstrous figure, leaping from the bushes, or of a different race and/or of a lower socio-economic group, and if he's not one of the above, definitely drunk. The picture suggests uncontrollable sexual urge, yet a large percentage of rapes are premeditated.

Where do rapes take place? About half of the rapes about which information is available (most not reported to police) take place at home: either in the victim's home or the rapist's home. Approximately one quarter take place in a car, and the remainder outside or in some other place.

Who are the rapists? Two sets of figures are available for Australia: Paul Wilson's survey of unreported rape, and figures from the Sydney Rape Crisis Centre.

<u>Person</u>	<u>Wilson</u>	<u>RCC</u>
Father	10%	10%
Other relatives	11%	
Member of family		15%
Spouse, partner	9%	
Lover, friend	16%	17%
Casual acquaintance	9%	
Hitchhiking	6%	8%
Stranger	33%	30%
Unstated	7%	8%

Most rapists are known to their victims and, in fact, may be trusted by them, which is why a woman may find herself in a rape situation. She may not have realised she was in danger.

What weapons do rapists use? In Paul Wilson's study, 10% of victims

were threatened with weapons, usually knives. 90% of rapists did not use weapons, but 30% used their fists, and 30% threatened to use fists.

Rape is not confined to one class.

Convicted rapists are more likely to be from the lower socio-economic group not because of the propensity of that group to rape, but because of the nature of our judicial system. There is no evidence to suggest that one race rapes more than another.

What are the Solutions?

There are no easy solutions, of course. Legal changes are coming, and they are extremely necessary and important, but not sufficient.

The big changes need to be in society's attitudes towards male/female relationships. A society that can laugh at a "joke" like "when rape is inevitable, lie back and enjoy it" has obviously missed the entire point, that women do not enjoy being forced into sex, and that rape is in fact not sex, but a demonstration of power by one person over another.

Men who enjoy seducing women, but who would not force themselves upon women, need not fear false accusations if they take what women say at face value, rather than being arrogant and assuming they know what women "really" want (even when they might be right!). Both men and women must learn more respect for each other.

Women need to stop accepting their husband's bashings, to report sexual harassment at work to unions or management, to stop feeling guilty or responsible for men's inability to control themselves, to stop allowing themselves to be victimised, and to be honest with themselves about their own sexual needs.

Men must learn to treat women as people, to accept the changing roles of women and men in society, to deal with their own emotions instead of denying them, to accept what women say at face value, and to express feelings in ways other than anger.

It will not be easy.

This paper was first published in the October 1980 mailing of ANZAPA, and subsequently in APPLESAUCE; also distributed informally. 11/9/80

INSTANT FEEDBACK

(Some of the responses to the preceding article, which appeared in one of the apas in which it was originally published, ANZAPA and APPLESAUCE)

(Jack Herman)...you've talked very little about the politics of rape and a lot about the sociology of the crime...I cannot disagree with much in the first couple of pages of the piece. The definition seems fair, the assumptions about sex obviously do exist and the history is quite reasonable although you gloss over the most numerous area of rape - women as spoil of war. On the latter, I concur that the property thing was an influence as was the need for the soldier to reinforce his victory over the enemy by despoiling his women.

I'm not sure of the efficacy of the assertion of the modern attitude towards chaste and loose women... I am prepared to believe that there are men whose attitude is that if she will put out for him she should do so for me! Do you class as rape, by the way, women who are pressured into sex with their boyfriend's friends? ((Yes-JHW))

...after 2½ pages I was going right along with you until you blandly asserted that rape is about POWER not SEX. If many rapists express hate and/or contempt for women this may arise out of a frustration arising from their own lack of success with women. Many cases of rape arise from an attempt to express a forbidden passion: father for daughter, brother for sister, uncle for niece etc. In most of these cases the power relationship is fairly clearly established and there is no need for a rape to establish it. Similarly in a marriage, the power relationship can easily be expressed in terms of overt violence short of rape and often is. The rape is the sexual expression of some built-up frustration arising from inadequate sexual information, inadequate sexual success, or presence of some 'forbidden flower'. In this way, I see rape as a quintessential sexual crime, not one of power.

I really see no proof in your article to back up your assertion that rape is about power. That 50% of rapes occur in the home where power relationships are established is evidence to lead us away from the POWER conclusion and towards a sexual one.

((To Jack I replied: the examples or reasoning you use to suggest a sex motive are much the same examples or reasoning I use to support my thesis that it's a power motive. Sex is part of the power relationships in the home, if the man forces sex upon his wife (or any relative upon any other). True, he may feel sexual desire, I'm not discounting that, but to force the fulfillment of that desire on someone who may not want it (at a given time anyway), or who may feel powerless to prevent it, is a misuse of power. How can you think it is not? The same holds for other situations where the woman and the rapist know each other, even if not in the same household, or even in stranger-rape: the rapist may feel lust or desire, but fulfilling that lust or desire by force is power.--JHW))

Jack later replied: I've been thinking more about your rape article...the more thought I put into it, the less I am able to fully differentiate between the power aspect and the sexual aspect...it seems to be a moot point to argue which is the more important, although the aspect of power relationships underlies most inter-personal dealings in our society and is of incredible importance.



(Christine Ashby)... Although I am aware intellectually that rape is all about power, what I cannot comprehend is the connection between aggression and sex. How can a man be sexually aroused by the sight of a whimpering victim? I'm not talking about psychopaths, because most rapists aren't, they're quite sane. Is my imagination deficient? Pornographers (and others) would have us believe that women are supposed to be turned on by the thought of being victims, but I can't comprehend that either...

(Sally Beasley)... I cannot disagree with your article on rape, only add that the social attitudes towards rape are tremendously damaging. I counselled a 13-year-old girl who had been raped by 2 strangers and saw herself as responsible for the rape because she'd accepted a lift, was wearing 'older' clothes, etc. It took her over a year to get over the experience sufficiently to relate freely to males again. The rapists weren't even charged with rape, only carnal knowledge, and they were given a year's probation - when they were finally sentenced, a year after the rape.

(John Newman)... Having established that, at least in many cases, rape is about power, it must then be true that it is power, and power-play, that needs to be controlled. Men do not need to learn to treat women as people'. In general, men (and women) play the same power games with all others, but in cross-sexual conflict this (sometimes) takes the form of rape while, when between those of the same sex, it may find expression as physical, economic or verbal attack, or some other anti-social behaviour.

Your example of a woman being raped by a man getting even with her lover is illustrative here, for that rapist is treating the woman as a person. The same way he is treating her lover as a person, at least.

Similarly, the 'men who enjoy seducing women' in many cases are men who have come to terms with the dreary, irritating fact that so many women enjoy the power game of saying 'no' when no is no longer the intent.

Certainly, both men and women could do a lot less of assuming they know all about what each other want.

As you point out, to assume anyone 'wants' to be dominated may well be true, but will generally be arrogant wish-gratification.

Perhaps we will know that the problem is solved when 13 year old girls are no longer obnoxious, no longer proud and arrogant with the knowledge of their developing value on the sexual commodities market.

Finally, if the feeling a man is bound up with is anger, what he (and everyone else) needs is a way to express it as anger, not (for instance) as sex or domination.

(Diane Fox)... Agree about the power-rather-than-sex; after all, prostitutes would not be all that difficult to find if a man simply wanted some casual sex. For that matter, if physical relief was all that was needed, masturbation could be enough. Many men who commit rape already have abundant means to have sex with a willing partner, and might even have ordinary sex more often than the average man. Many are married, or have a girlfriend, etc.

(Eric Lindsay)... I am not at all sure that I am in any way qualified to comment on your long, and obviously well thought out article on the politics of rape. I obviously have relatively little interest in the topic, since I am highly unlikely to be either victim or offender, and am not a feminist. Politically an anarchist, I take it as a truism that groups try to obtain power, and include in this remark a very wide range of groups.

The descriptive aspects of your article seem to indicate that many problems occur from the restrictive definitions of rape. Assuming that you have any laws at all, I would think it better to eliminate any reference to rape, or indeed to sexual offences, and concentrate on a constant factor in crimes against the person. That factor is violence, or the threat of violence. This would also tend to render pointless any previous history of sexual relations, and any present relationship between the parties (such as husband/wife). If violence is used against a person, they would have a right to proceed at law. Same situation if a threat of violence occurs.

Naturally, a person charging assault, after being subject to rape, must themselves be valued, at law, as being something other than themselves merely property. You do make the point that women were, and are, often regarded as property. Legally so in the past, in some countries. To some extent still so in some aspects of laws, even in the West. And to a large extent, as sexual property of some man in social situations.

Given that it is difficult to rapidly change attitudes, I suspect that changes in the law will have a relatively minor effect on the incidence of rape. Better laws may make convictions more likely, and perhaps also encourage more rape victims to complain, and this seems a worthwhile change. No doubt the people at women's refuges would have a good idea of how many rape victims actually lodge complaints with the police; I would suspect about one in four.

None of the above, of course, touch upon the assertion that rape is really about power more than sex.

In a time of unemployment, it certainly is likely that bosses would be able to pressure women. Likewise, women have often been accused, in courts (read the papers) of encouraging rapists because of what they wear. It seems salutary to

remind oneself that what a person wears is objective, however what an onlooker makes of that is subjective. If I see a woman who looks attractive, that attractiveness is something that exists solely in my consciousness; it does not mean that the woman set out to attract me (she may have done so, or she may have set out to attract someone else, or she may be totally unaware that her garb could be considered attractive - her reasons are not material to the matter.)

None of the above, nor your article, touch the solution to the problem, and that solution is not simply to change attitudes (although changed attitudes are certainly the most desired long term solution). The question is, what can women do to protect themselves, since they can not rely upon either the law, nor changed attitudes,



(Leanne Frahm)... I wonder if perhaps you might have decided your conclusion, and then worked your evidence to fit--it's a common enough practice nowadays. And I wonder if perhaps 'power' is no more the cause of rape than 'jealousy' is the cause of murder--it's one cause, but there might be as many causes for rape as there are for murder.

What set me along this train of thought was watching my eight-year-old son watching tv--hardly suitable, but one of those comedies that involve the ubiquitous dumb blonde stripping to her bra. He clutched his genitals, and said, half-surprised and half-complaining, "That makes my penis pop up!"

Now that's not a learned response. He's never been in the company of naked men popping their penises at a blue movie. (Or maybe he has -- must ask his father.) What he was responding to is an ages-old instinct of survival through random and indiscriminate breeding, an instinct that most men are born with.

It's been one of the strictures of civilization that men learn to control, if not the reflex, at least the subsequent action. This must be one of the strongest social conditionings which society applies to a person, for which we are truly grateful, but it is not always complied with.

A rapist is a person in whom this conditioning fails. Why?

And another why. Why do women regard rape as such

a degrading crime? What makes a bashing easier to cope with than a rape which may not injure her physically at all? What is there about rape which is so repellent to the victim? Logic fails me on that, I just know it is. But an understanding of this question might help an understanding of rape itself.

So, I believe, as you do, that there are two types of rape -- the premeditated and the unpremeditated -- but we differ in that I ascribe many causes to a man's dismissing of his conditioning.

In the second, the unpremeditated, excitement, anger, alcohol can all be contributing causes for the social conditioning to fail. The first two are primitive emotions, and very strong, and the third has a primitising effect on the emotions. As such, they can be strong enough to overthrow artificial conditioning, comparable to the overthrowing of conditioning that allows a person to murder.

With premeditated rape, we're getting kinkier. In this case, a rapist decides consciously that the pleasure he gets from the sex act is more important than social mores, and power over his victim can certainly motivate one type of rapist. Plain old lust, and nobody to share it with, can motivate another. Another might feel that by forcing intercourse on a woman, he'll have tied her to him emotionally, and that she'll like him back. And so on.

But basically, the rapist needs to express his sexuality before any of these suppositions can be fulfilled.

I also disagree with the tenor of your article, in that it smacks too much of plaintive innocence. Women cannot be totally absolved, especially today, and here, from the state of the society.

'I wouldn't do this naked cetrspread if it weren't tastefully done,' she simpers, wide eyes on the camera, tastefully stroking her labia. And pop! Up goes another penis that stays up.

You state, 'Women have the burden to protect themselves when it is men who commit the crime.' (the same argument applies, incidentally, to all victims of any crime, anywhere.) But like it or not, we're all sending sexual signals, positive and negative, to each other, whether consciously or unconsciously, as is the lady above. Don't forget that women are also being protected by the 99,9999% of men who don't commit rape, despite the flagrant signals some women transmit.

(I disagree that men are conditioned to control their sex urges; in many cases they are conditioned to exploit women to satisfy these urges. The urges are natural; what society teaches us to okay to do about those urges is another matter. . . . Many subcultures in our own society (never mind other societies) teach boys and men that women are to be dominated, and/or that females who do not belong to one man, are available to all. Small wonder men rape!

Your statistic is much too high; I doubt even 95 percent of non-rapist men would be realistic. Rape is a very common occurrence, although much of it is not legally rape in some states (eg rape in marriage).

And as for the sex motive, see my remarks to Jack Herman. --

(Eric Lindsay responded as follows to Leanne's remarks above): A more relevant question than asking why social conditioning fails in the rapist, is to ask why it succeeds in most men. I would propose that, outside a tribal situation, rape is the norm. Over the past few thousand years, the abnormal situation of

restraint has applied within the larger group of the nation, however the widespread reporting of rape during war seems to indicate that respect for persons normally applies only within a 'known' group, which is now somewhat artificially extended to national or even world groupings.



(David Grigg)... A possible solution, I feel, is to actually abandon efforts to try to define rape. Rape as a crime should be abolished! In its place should be a wider definition of assault and bodily injury, so that forcible intercourse would rank alongside being bashed on the head, kicked in the groin or whatever. Because of the emotional turmoil it causes, however, sexual assault should attract penalties like those for causing 'grievous bodily harm'. But I don't think we are ever going to abolish rape as an act -- you are right about the power syndrome. Have you read any of Legman's 'Rationale of the Dirty Joke'? He is obviously a very twisted guy himself, but he suggests that rape is revenge against women by sexually insecure men, and that gang rape in particular is a form of homosexuality--the gang rapist is really wanting to screw the other men involved, and is merely using the woman as a third party to do this. I'm not sure I agree with that, but it is an interesting viewpoint.

((Two of the most thoughtful responses I received were from women who had been victims of rape or attempted rape, which I am reprinting below.--JHW))

(Vera Lonergan)... I'd never given it much thought before, but you're right, rape isn't about sex or lust, it is an expression of a man's power over what he often considers an inferior being. The rapist is often a man of low intellectual ability and little imagination.

Liverpool has the highest incidence of rape in Australia, and while I lived there and worked at Moorebank, I met many girls who had suffered the horrid experience, or who had girlfriends who had.

I worked with soldiers for a long time, and some of them had distinctly odd attitudes to women. A lot

of those soldiers had served in Vietnam, and although they rarely had to fight, most of their soldierly tasks being confined to sentry duty, they followed the example of the others, and unfeelingly raped any local girl they could get their hands on. They didn't even consider these girls to be human, they were referred to as 'Monkeys'. A lot of the girls were diseased and the rapists often became infected, which caused them to despise the girls even more. The local women were employed in menial tasks around the camps, such as cleaning the shower blocks and latrines, and if one of these women were cleaning out a latrine when a soldier wanted to use it, she would either be kicked forcibly out of the way, or pissed on. Apparently none of the women dared to complain, and this treatment continued for years.

Although there were many delinquents in Liverpool, I think a lot of the rapes there were done by soldiers, of which there were many companies stationed in the area. I had two attempts made on me, neither of which succeeded, probably because I kept my wits. The first one was at a drunken party near a river, hundreds of yards behind the OR's mess. A bunch of girls from work had attended a party at the Mess, and after closing hours, decided to join some of the visiting soldiers down by the river. I didn't want to go, but when I found one of my very naive and virginal friends had gone, I went to fetch her back. When I reached the spot, one of the guys whom I knew slightly, offered to show me where she was, but when he started dragging me towards the bushes near the river, I got the message, and resisted. We were both pulling hard in opposite directions, and he had firm hold on my arm so I couldn't get away, so without thinking about it I kicked him solidly in the balls. He doubled up, I grabbed one of the more harmless guys who told me the girl I was looking for had gone back to the buildings ten minutes previously, so I made him escort me back.

On the way back we came across my silly friend, crying hysterically because the fellow who'd tried to grab me, had broken the strap of her real leather handbag. He'd tried the same trick on her, and she'd tried to hit him with her bag.

This guy was one of a bunch of CM from Adelaide who had their annual camp at our depot. I'd gotten to know a couple of them fairly well over the years, and they were basically nice guys. This particular one was the younger brother of one of my friends, he'd been in trouble before for rape in Adelaide, and most of the other guys disliked him, yet none of them attempted to stop him when he tried to drag me off. They thought he was within his rights, and that we deserved such treatment for being so silly as to come down to the river.

A lot of soldiers seem to have this attitude that any woman who places herself in an accessible situation, has to be 'asking for it'. Later the same year, I was walking to Liverpool late at night to post some Christmas cards, when I was offered a lift by three guys in a Volkswagen. Safety in numbers, I thought, and jumped in. They had a carton of beer in the back, said they were going to a party, and invited me along. So, after I'd posted the cards, I went along. They drove out along Heathcote Road, and into the Rifle Range, and I started talking. The car stopped, two of the guys got out and went for a walk, and I kept talking. After awhile the other two came back, the one in the car exchanged places with one of the others, and still I kept talking. Those two came back and there was another exchange, but Vera didn't stop talking. Then those two came back and also got into the car, and still I kept up the talk. I raved on about work, my

cats, my landlady, my family, my flat, work, etc, etc, repeating myself constantly, but keeping up a constant stream of friendly inane chatter, asking questions, letting them know that I also worked for the Army, pretending that I knew a couple of their officers, and going on endlessly. After awhile they all relaxed and joined in the conversation, then we all drove home to my flat for a cup of coffee.

I had been scared at first, but once I was sure that I had the situation under control, I was able to relax, and even enjoyed myself. There can't be many girls who can talk their way out of a pack rape. But as I said earlier, most rapists, in fact most soldiers, and these were Infantry, are dumb. One of these guys called around several times thereafter, and made a few half-hearted attempts at seduction, but as I didn't find him attractive, that didn't work. He tried to scare me once by telling me that they had planned to rape me that night, but the silly fool never was able to figure out why they had changed their minds. He thought I was a nice friendly girl.

Neither of these attempts bothered me in the least. I've told many people about them, and advised them to act friendly and show no fear if they found themselves in the same situation, but so far, none of my friends has had to try it.

There was a further attempt on my virtue a few years later, and that one scared me, and scared me for a long time. It was just after I'd broken my leg. I still had the plaster cast on, and I'd gone out one evening on my crutches to deliver some cosmetics to a customer down the road. I used to sell Holiday Magic. I was coming back home when I was accosted by a fellow I knew. His wife was one of my customers, and was a cousin of my current boyfriend. We chatted for a while on the footpath, then he walked me home, and asked if he could come in for a while. I didn't mind, the accident had upset me, and I was feeling very lonely. My boyfriend appeared to have deserted me, and I was glad of some company. We played cards and drank coffee for awhile, when he expressed to desire for something stronger. I had some cheap Bradvino and offered him that, but didn't take any myself, as I had no desire to get pickled while on crutches.

I think he'd been drinking earlier, and he soon started making suggestive remarks. Apparently he'd broken up with his wife, and was bitter about her throwing him out, and he'd been calling on his mother-in-law earlier to get her to intercede for him. I tried to keep the conversation neutral, and appeared to be succeeding. Then I had to go to the loo. Using the toilet was a bit of a hassle on crutches and with the jolly great cast which came almost up to my crotch, but I had managed, and was just finished when he walked into the bathroom. I jumped up, dragging up my panties and slacks, thinking only that he wanted to go himself. But before I could grab my crutches which had been placed in the corner, he picked me up and threw me onto the bed. And when he tried to pull my slacks down, I started crying and wailing for my mother. Any other time, I might have been able to keep control of the situation, but my self image had received a devastating blow in the accident.

So I became completely hysterical, howled my stupid head off, and completely lost control. This sort of upset his plans too, and if he'd had an erection, he certainly didn't have one now, and my caterwauling was turning him off more, so he started slapping me around. I just lay there and screamed for my mother. Somebody came and started banging on the door, but instead of crying 'Rape' or yelling for the police, all I did was to



keep crying for my mother, and the person went away again, with no thoughts of getting help.

Then this fellow decided that, as it was my fault that he'd lost his hard-on, I should help him get it up again, and he tried to thrust the thing in my face. Another time, I would have bitten it hard, but now I just turned my face aside and cried harder. He tried to kiss me, and I put my hand over my mouth, and he bit it, hard enough to draw blood. I had a bruise for months afterward. Still, all I could do was cry and turn away from him. I just couldn't fight back, and I couldn't make any sarcastic remarks. All the time the bastard kept telling me how good he was, and how much I was going to enjoy it. In the end he was begging me to let him, but all I did was keep crying.

Eventually he came to his senses and stopped trying, trying to comfort me and quiet me down. He probably thought I'd gone around the bend. He even offered me money "for doctor's expenses" for my hand which was very badly bitten, but I threw it back at him, and he finally left.

I didn't move for a long time, then crawled into the bathroom for my crutches, and sat and thought about the whole thing. I was furious with myself for going to pieces, for not hurting him as he'd done me, and for not calling for help. I promised myself all sorts of vengeance if he ever returned, but he didn't. I told his sister-in-law what happened a few weeks later, and she probably passed it on to his wife. When my boyfriend finally came back, I wouldn't let him in, and refused to see him again, and I tried to forget the whole thing and have nothing further to do with any of those people.

Even though this guy hadn't been able to complete his intentions, I felt soiled and used to my core. It was the most degrading experience imaginable, and yet, he hadn't done it out of lust for my lily

white body. I looked anything but sexy then, in my baggy winter slacks and jumper, and of course the cast. He had merely tried to take out his spite and anger at his wife's rejection on me. I was a woman too, and he'd wanted to use me, and treat me like a thing, in the way he couldn't treat her.

Most of the girls I've known who have been raped, say it was very impersonal, the guys seemed to want to hurt them, to treat them like trash, beat them up, smear filth on them, to degrade them and take out their feelings of spite on the girls. It was never a sexual thing. And all the girls felt like me afterwards, fouled and spoilt and unable to make themselves clean. The bruises and other injuries had always been secondary to the feeling of shame and of being soiled.

Even the penetration wasn't a sexual thing, it was merely the final proof of his superiority over his victim after she'd been beaten. The rapist never seemed to act as if the rape were enjoyable to him. It was an expression of his anger and rage, and often he beat the girl some more after the penetration, or urinated over her. When it was all over, he usually left in disgust, calling insults at her, never acting as if he'd done something enjoyable, but as if she had trapped him into something ugly and sordid. Sometimes he made further threats to come back and teach her another lesson, and to hurt her some more if she tried to cause trouble for him. And always there was this thing that he'd only given her what she deserved.

I may be wrong, but it seems to me that most rapes are committed by men who can't face up to their own women, and take out their feelings on someone else. I've never known a girl who had been raped by someone in her family, nor by someone who was just after sex. Ordinary sex is so easy to get nowadays, that there's no need for anyone to have to commit rape. In Liverpool, one could always go to the council car park where any night there would be several young girls eager to do anything for the price of a fix, and if you had a bit of money, there was the local brothel, right across the road from the railway station. There were also plenty of girls at the local casino, and if you didn't care for pros, there were hundreds of school girls hanging around the local milkbars who'd do just about anything for a drink or a meal. My brothers, and just about every guy I knew, had been accosted by them at least once. Yet, although or maybe because Liverpool has so many young tarts, easy lays, pros, or whatever you want to call them, it still has the country's highest rate of brutal rapes.

Maybe the rapists are down on all women because they feel disillusioned with the ones around, and take out this hatred on their victim. The girls I knew who had suffered this molestation were all fairly respectable, but then, I didn't have anything to do with the other kind, who may have made up the majority of rape victims. I never tried to find out.

((Thank you, Vera, for sharing those experiences with us. I think it goes a long way to counteract Jack's claims earlier.

((I had intended to include another true-life story but will postpone it till next time; it concerns the police attitude more than the rape itself. I also have responses on legal aspects for next time, and a suggestion or two about 'solutions'. -JHW))

#####

A QUESTION OF ETHICS

by Jean Weber

The speaker strode briskly down the aisle, white robes swirling, and mounted to the lectern. Facing the Hall and the ranks of Representatives sitting attentively, the Speaker intoned, "This House is now in session. What is the order of business?"

Standing, the grey-robed Clerk replied, "Today we debate a proposed Amendment to the Constitution, the so-called Equal Rights Amendment, which states in full, 'Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged on account of sex.' The actual question before this House for a vote, is whether or not to approve this Amendment for a plebiscite."

The Speaker looked at the panel of lights on the lectern. Most glowed green or red, indicating requests to speak for or against the proposal. "The computer will assign a random speaking order. Each person may speak for a maximum of five minutes. Representative Aileron, you may begin."

Aileron rose, adjusting grey robes. "I support the proposal. All persons, male or female, must be judged on their individual merits, not on the supposed characteristics of their gender. Among any randomly selected group of men, some will be strong, others weak; some aggressive, others timid; some clever, others lacking in intelligence. The same is found among women. The 'average' characteristics are those usually considered 'normal' or appropriate for that sex. While it is true that the average differs greatly between men and women on some factors, it is also true that individuals may have characteristics which are considered those of the other sex. We pride ourselves on our programs to offer equal opportunity to persons disadvantaged by reason of their race, religion, country of origin, and so on, yet we set legal barriers in the way of one sex, preventing them from full opportunity for personal development. This is inconsistent and unethical. In simple justice, we must remove these legal barriers and allow men and women the same opportunities."

###

"Bah," I said to nobody in particular. Six or seven women turned from the television to look at me. "We gave 'em the vote. What more do they want?"

###

"Representative Mellon."

"I speak against the proposal. Aileron's arguments are persuasive philosophically, but we must seriously consider the practical consequences of our actions. What would happen

if this Amendment were passed? Remember your history! For thousands of years, this planet was divided against itself. Tribes made war on their neighbors. Nations arose, and made war with each other. Weaponry advanced until we all stood at the brink of nuclear disaster. Only at the last moment did reason prevail, nations lay down their arms, and a socialist world government bring stability and prosperity to the world. And who had made war for thousands of years? Men! Who brought peace to the world? Women! For five generations, there has been no war, because women have ruled, and men have been barred from policy-making decisions. If this Amendment is passed, we could not prevent men from once again being judges, representatives or executives. Why, men could sit once again in this very Council! Do you want to take the chance of letting men back into power? Men are not suited for public office! They're too emotional. Their innate tendency is to become physically aggressive, to use force, not words, to win their point. To my mind, the chance we have - both women and men - to fulfill ourselves intellectually, artistically, athletically, all the benefits of civilization and peace, are worth denying some alleged 'rights' to aggressors, to men."

###

"That's right, sister," I said approvingly. "Men don't consider themselves 'manly' unless they settle a dispute by fighting about it."

"It's not just the aggression," added another woman. "It's their whole set of priorities. The progress we've made in social welfare, medicine, all the biological sciences, once the male pre-occupation with things - weapons, automobiles, you name it - was replaced. And the capitalist pre-occupation with profits, not people--"

"Shaddup and let us listen!" A voice from the group.

###

"Mellon is right. We must remember our history. At the same time, we must look around us at the changes in society over the past five generations. Where once children were taught that it was appropriate for men to be aggressive, this is no longer the case. Now that there is no longer any advantage to aggression, men no longer feel compelled to act that way, so only those with naturally high aggressive quotients do so. These naturally aggressive men are catered for through sport, employment in dangerous jobs, and so on. I submit that the average mentioned by Aileron has shifted to a far less aggressive level than was true five generations ago. These New

Men are ready for full participation, and will use their new powers wisely and well."

###

"What a lot of nonsense! Yes, there's always been some men who lived by their intellect, not their bodies, but they still dominated - through cleverness, or fear of reprisals, by hiring bodymen to do the physical chores, keeping others in line."

"Yeah, and keeping women pregnant, then making them vulnerable through their children."

"So there's more of that type around now. Whoopee."

"To hear you talk, all men are beasts, just slightly removed from the animals. Lots of men aren't like that. Look at Peter for instance. He's gentle and kind, he loves children and is a good teacher..."

"Yes, but look at Peter. He's smaller than average and not very co-ordinated. In the aggressive man's world, he'd be a misfit, a failure. He'd never have been able to get himself a woman."

###

"If you're concerned about aggressive men seeking public office, I'm sure the Qualifications Boards could handle the problem. Policy-making requires both academic and psychological qualifications; many women are not qualified for executive positions, nor would many men be approved. May I remind you that less than a generation ago, the vote was returned to men. At the time, there were dire predictions about where this would lead. These consequences have not eventuated. Already more and more local councils are allowing men to sit on them, without disastrous effects. I believe these fears to be based on a misunderstanding of the effects of the Amendment. It would merely require that the same criteria be applied to both sexes."

###

"She's right - the customs that keep men from certain jobs wouldn't be affected by the Amendment - only the laws. But I fear the customs may be eroded as women forget. I was not alive at the time of the Revelation, but my grandmother was, and she told me what it was like Before, and how much better After. She says we can keep men from decision-making jobs by their lack of proper psychological qualifications - but once the Amendment is passed, the law won't protect us. What's to prevent the customs being changed so men can be qualified?"

"C'mon, even if the Qualification Boards did pass them, men would still have to compete with qualified women for the top jobs, they wouldn't automatically get them."

"Yes, but have you considered that men might out-compete women for some jobs, simply because they might be more available. Women no longer have to quit their jobs when they

get married or have children, but we still have not figured out how to get men to do their share of the housework and child care, even in group living arrangements. So most women still continue to earn many of their work points at home duties. That's been one of the problems from the beginning of the time when women could compete outside the home - they were still expected to do most of the work within it, and thus didn't have time for outside activities unless they could get somebody else to do the housework."

"Dammit, we've always kept the world running, doing the shitwork while the men made laws and war - the difference is that now we're getting the credit for it."

###

"My sisters from the so-called developed countries are living in a dreamworld. Their men may have changed - thought I doubt it - but the majority of the world's population still lives by ancient customs. The Council of World Governments may keep men from making major decisions, but in many villages in Asia, Africa and South America, men still conduct their lives much as they've always done. The Qualification Boards don't determine who's fit to marry and raise families. Men still use religion, children and brute force to control women. It will take a lot more than five generations to change them. Okay, the women aren't as submissive, more and more leave the villages to go to the cities or form new villages, but it all takes time. We need more time - with women sitting in the councils, controlling economies, enforcing the laws, educating children - in some of these villages, despite our best efforts, many are still illiterate. Do you know there are places today without even television? We're committed to uncluttered lives as well as fulfilled lives, we rhapsodize on self-sufficiency and tending our own gardens - what about the people who've never had anything else but subsistence living? Who have never really been exposed to the great changes that have taken place - who still live in the fifteenth century, not the twenty-second?"

###

"Did you know that, before the Revelation, even in this country men not only beat their wives, but claimed that their God approved of such behavior?"

"I heard that somewhere, too."

"Not only that, but in rape cases, if the woman wasn't married and wasn't a virgin, it was generally assumed that she'd enticed the man, that she wanted to be raped, she was turned on by a display of masculine aggression, that she really enjoyed it but wouldn't admit it."

"Oh, c'mon, you're exaggerating!"

"I'm not! There's more, too - women who rebelled against their situation were considered

mentally ill, particularly if they weren't sure what they wanted, but knew they were desperately unhappy in their present situation. They were often treated with drugs, electric shock and so-called 'analysis' to help them 'adjust', accept and fit in with the male rules of society."

"Where do you get this stuff?"

"I'm taking a history course."

###

"I agree that we've done a lot to change male behavior through education, therapy, and displacement activities, sports and so on. But I still maintain that aggression is basically genetic. We won't get significant behavioral changes until it's bred out of the race. Women must refuse to have children by aggressive males. Maybe we should consider having qualifications for marriage and parenthood."

###

"I don't know why our foremothers didn't dispense with men entirely. It isn't as if they are biologically necessary any more."

"Not all women like making love with other women."

"Maybe they haven't found the right woman!"

"Yeah, well, after all, for thousands of years, men and women have lived together, usually in situations of male dominance, true. But it's hard to change habit, especially when it must have had evolutionary survival value in the past."

"It's the companionship, the psychic warmth of another human being, they're seeking."

"I've heard that some women even like to be dominated, in private of course, by men."

"Well, every society has its perverts."

###

"If we approve this Amendment, and it is affirmed by a plebiscite, what's next? They'll try to legalize pornography - violence for the sake of entertainment! They'll want sado-masochism decriminalized on the grounds that it's between consenting adults. They'll claim freedom of speech for all manner of things - depictions of warfare as heroic, fighting as manly, theft as clever, rape as sexual excitement. You know what a problem our foremothers had, getting the free speech laws amended - even women supported them, until they learned the difference between the erotic and the pornographic, and the truth about how harmful some of the porn is. You remember how hard it was to establish world-wide peace. Some of those places like Palestine and Ireland, the women were just as warlike as the men - not just urging their sons and lovers off to fight, but sometimes even fighting themselves."

###

"People really used to have a real hangup about sex and eroticism. They thought the only proper reason to have intercourse was to produce children - procreation not recreation. People used to believe that 'good' women did not experience sexual excitement; those women who did were whores or worse, having been captivated by the Devil. And, of course, homosexual relations were strictly out."

"There she goes again, the talking encyclopedia."

"I can do one better. In some parts of the world, women's clitorises were surgically removed at puberty, to remove the seat of sexual excitement, so that the women would be faithful."

"What?!"

"That's because, in places where female sexuality was acknowledged, it was often considered insatiable and therefore dangerous because a woman wouldn't be faithful to one man but go fucking others too."

"What's 'faithful'?"

"That's where a woman is considered to be property, see? She belonged to one man, like a dog or something. Even in the nineteenth century (and the twentieth in some parts of the world), women were legally unable to own property, they and their children were the property of the husband. The woman could not travel or do lots of things without his permission."

###



"And what about homosexuality? Not all of us are supporters of these crimes against nature. Many regional and local councils still prohibit unnatural acts, and certainly would not allow same-sex marriages or other open flaunting of perversions. This so-called Equal Rights Amendment would stop us from protecting our families - our children - from abominations."

###

"What was that about people used to have hangups?"

"She's wrong anyway. The Amendment wouldn't stop discrimination against homosexuals."

###

"What we're really talking about here is the balance between freedom and licence. Freedom of the individual must be tempered with responsibility, because one person's freedom is limited by the freedom of others. But where do we draw the line between protecting society through law against the excesses of some, and improperly infringing on individual freedom? I submit that treating all men as actual or potential dangers to society is an infringement of the rights of men who are not and would not be aggressors."

"We have laws to prohibit wrong behavior, and would continue to enforce them. Do we so greatly fear that men, once returned to positions of power, of decision-making, would automatically abuse their responsibilities, changing the laws back to the old days, condoning abuse? Surely five generations of peace have taught us something! And lastly, do not forget that repression breeds rebellion. If we continue to deny men their full equality of opportunity, they could start to band together in non-violent protest, even as women did long before the Revelation. Can we take the chance of plunging society into suspicion, subversion, and so on, again?"

###

"My grandmother told about those days -- about the Second Depression, with all the unemployment, how married women were scapegoated for taking jobs from young people. Everyone was accusing everyone else of 'causing' the problem. Men increased international tensions to take people's minds off the economy, remembering how the Second World War had been good for business. Then the laws were changed again, overturning all the reforms, making women give up their jobs and their independence. Gran says she remembers the Years of the Revelation -- the great Women's Strikes, the virtual collapse of things, the confusion, the fear, the retreats into the country and self-sufficiency. She was too young to really understand what was going on, but she felt the excitement of it all - the revival of women's collectives and the eventual take-over of nations by women. It must have been a fantastic time, a combination of fear and hope--"

###

"The real question before us today is whether the People should have an opportunity to vote on this issue. For if we disapprove the proposal, we are really saying that WE will make the decisions, not the People. In doing this, we will be saying, we don't think you're qualified to make such a decision, or that we don't trust you to make the correct decision. Is it true, sisters, that we don't believe the People of the world are sufficiently educated to decide this issue?"

"Representative Obura has made a strong case for this very point of view. But again, I refer you to history - when the first socialist states were set up in Russia and China, their leaders did not believe the People were sufficiently qualified, and used that as an excuse to stifle discussion and concentrate power among an elite. Granted, those leaders were men, using new tools to advance old male goals, but some of them truly believed, as we do, in advancing the lot of the common people. Others were corrupted by power and abused it."

"Are we so arrogant, sisters, to believe that it can never happen among women? Do not be naive - there are women who would abuse power, only constant vigilance prevents it. We are committed to democracy - indeed, we have a higher level of participatory democracy than has ever existed before - but we all know it can be improved. At some point we must widen the scope. I say let it be now. Even if we personally disapprove of the Amendment, let the People decide!"

The debate continued for days, until each of the Representatives had stated her view. Some merely said, "X or Y has covered all the reasons why I support (or oppose) the proposal"; others filled their allotted five minutes with impassioned oratory. It didn't really matter; they'd said it all before. The true test would come if (when?) the vote was put to the People. Many people didn't know and didn't care about the thoughtful arguments presented by the Council of World Governments; others, even in the villages of the so-called developing world, had watched the tapes of this and earlier debates, and were prepared to argue their views with their more apathetic relatives. Some schemed, some plotted, some wept.

At the lectern, the white-robed Speaker said, "We will now record our votes."

* * * * *

In case anyone's in any doubt, this piece (which was written about two years ago) was intended as a send-up of some of the more ridiculous arguments against the US Equal Rights Amendment. However, several men to whom I showed it became very upset about the references to male aggression, as if I believed every word!

Letters

NEVILLE ANGOVE
P O Box 770
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23 May 1982

...Cretinism does not mean that the measured IQ (must never leave out that qualifier) is under 45 points. Cretinism is a pathological amentia caused by a severe thyroid deficiency (and can be prevented if diagnosed early enough), and one of its characteristics in untreated cases is a low measured IQ. It is an illness with a known cause, and since it affects mentation, it is a mental illness. The fact that the NSW Anti-Discrimination Board would like it to be treated as a handicap instead is meaningless, since mental illness is a handicap... Australian libel laws I have been told by a journalist and a solicitor both, contain specific references about claiming someone has a mental illness (considered in the same paragraphs with claiming someone has a contagious disease). If you therefore call someone a cretin, you are technically claiming that they are mentally ill, and the onus is on you to prove that is not what you meant and not what the average person would accept you meant...

(I find the reasoning that an illness that affects the mind is by definition a mental illness, a bit hard to follow. But even if I accept that definition, in most people's minds 'mental illness' is synonymous with 'insane' or some variation thereof. Thus those who are concerned about fair treatment of people with sub-normal intelligence do not want them lumped with the 'insane', especially as in the past all such were lumped in together and shunned by so-called 'normal' people. Surely making such a distinction is to the benefit of the handicapped? Or does it just make things that much worse for the allegedly 'insane', which modern medical thought seems to want to integrate into society as much as possible, too.--JHW))

(Neville goes on at some length continuing an argument with Christine Ashby and Gary Mason, but I do not have the space to reprint all of it. Pity. He then offers the following references to back up his comments on cretinism:

The British Journal of Psychiatry; The American Journal of Psychiatry; British Medical Bulletin; and Journal of Verbal Learning and Verbal Behaviour. Also, Peter Hays' New Horizons in Psychiatry.--JHW))

Christine Ashby
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South Melbourne
Vic 3205, Aust.

25 May 1982

I fail to see what the alternative could be, if you were a parent, to applying your theories of child-raising on a live subject... What is so horrific about wanting to do a good job of bringing up your children? I agree that one ought not to have a child simply in order to have a guinea pig to experiment on; that deprives the child of any personal integrity. Having produced a child, though, you have a positive duty to provide it with some basic training so that it will fit into society in due course...

(I quite agree; my only point was that having a child for the purpose of experimentation horrified me; not wanting to do a good job of raising a child if one had one.--JHW))

Frank Macskasy offers us a whopping non sequitur when he attempts to connect the survival through medical intervention of deformed babies with the decision by some people not to have children (not apparently because of the risk of hereditary defects). After all, if you don't like what the stork brings you, you can always leave it in the hospital (you can, too, nobody is ever forced to keep an unwanted child).

(I am quite frankly astonished to learn that fact; I thought there were laws that DID force one to keep the child, or alternatively to be charged with neglect and punished in some way.--JHW))

Discussion on this topic always seems to me to beg the question of just how you define an 'extremely' malformed child, and where you should accordingly draw the line concerning medical intervention. A child with pyloric stenosis will grow up quite healthy if operated on; a child with severe spina bifida will, if operated on, grow up with normal intellect but paraplegic and facing a good deal of surgery during childhood; you can't operate on a spastic child and it's not likely to die either; you can successfully operate on a Downes Syndrome child with a hole in the heart, but it will always be mentally retarded. There is much to be said for the old legal dictum 'thou shalt not kill but needst not strive officiously to keep alive', but these days it is not always clear what precisely constitutes officiousness (for example, all premature infants are automatically popped into humidicribs). Another interesting aspect of the discussion is the way babies are treated as a special case. Is this something to do with the view that they are their parents' property? If you as an adult suffered severe injuries in an accident and your next-of-kin refused to consent to life-saving treatment, I venture to suggest that they would either (in Australia) find themselves overridden, or else they would find themselves charged with manslaughter.

(Surely the next-of-kin is not necessarily going to be stuck with the care (and cost) of keeping the relative alive, however, which is in practice what happens to parents of dependent children.--JHW))



Marc Ortlieb
P O Box 46
Marden, SA 5070
Australia
30 May 1982

Oh, dear. More on the cut/uncut debate. I thought that Masters and Johnson had established that it wasn't the circum size, but the way it was used that was important.

I do wish you wouldn't publish such sensible articles as Judith's on the position of housewife. It doesn't give one much to argue with. It could well be that the lack of esteem accorded to housework has something to do with the small acquaintance that males in general have with it. I mean, keeping a place in the condition in which I keep it doesn't take much effort...

While I can appreciate Leslie David's view on the military, I think she's being a little too generous to soldiers. Situations vary, as do people's reasons for joining the military. Personally I'd like to see a discrimination between purely defensive armies, and offensive armies. I can accept a person who joins an army to defend their own country, however, every time I suggest this, I get lectures about how the best form of defence is attack. The other factor is, of course, once one is in the army, one has little choice but to follow the government's idea about what the army should do. I would have been nowhere near so vehement in my opposition to conscription during the

Vietnam War, had the conscripts been guaranteed the right to remain in Australia.

((I think a good response to Marc's comments on the military is the following letter--JHW))

Richard Hryckiewicz
Base Radio
RAAF Base
Richmond, NSW 2755
Australia

I've finally found someone else that agrees with my view of being in the armed forces... Leslie David.

31 May 1982 Pretty much from the time I joined the RAAF, I've been of the opinion that the sole role for the military is to keep international peace by supplying some form of deterrent on home territory. Unfortunately there are quite a lot of people that see the military is a parasite on the rest of the community and as such should not be in existence, until there happens to be a war on. What they don't realise is that there must be at least a core for the rest of defence to form around.

Another thing that isn't realised in a lot of cases, is that the military tends to get involved in a lot of civil emergencies that don't get publicised and as such, no one sees the work that we do for the benefit of the rest of the community. A prime example of this is the fact that the first help to arrive in Darwin after Cyclone Tracy was a RAAF Hercules. From then on, RAAF Hercules wore the brunt of the work in resupplying the area with emergency food, medical supplies, and other necessities that were required at the time.



((TWO People, Diane Fox and John Alderson, wrote to tell me that castrated men could, indeed, have normal sexual intercourse, if the operation had been done after puberty, according to Diane. I am quite astonished to hear this, and I suspect my misinformation is shared by 99% of the population, both male and female. Otherwise, why would castration be such a popularly suggested punishment for persons convicted of sexual crimes? John Alderson goes on to state that vasectomy is one form of castration, and here I believe he is quite incorrect, or at least defining his terms differently from, for example, the dictionary. 'Castration' removes the testicles (or at least the testes); vasectomy merely disconnects the plumbing while leaving the testes in place, and still producing hormones (and sperm). I may quote at more length next issue from both these letters, as they were quite interesting.--JHW))

JON NOBLE
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Springwood, NSW 2777
Australia

27 May 1982

On the having of children, I must add my voice to R. Lauraine Tutihasi's expected chorus of 'Just wait till you have a baby of your own'. This is one area in which I doubt the validity of 'gedanken' experiments. I speak from experience. Certainly a desire to experiment in 'child raising' is a horrible reason for having a child, but once such a child exists then its parents must decide how to bring it up, which in practice can amount to the same thing, an experiment in applied psychology...

The tales of Arthur... present a fascinating study in the mixing of history, myth and legend. The stories combine both myth and legend. The legends are based partly on an historic 6th century British chieftan, partly on 12th century romantic traditions (largely French), and partly on Celtic traditions. There were almost certainly historical bases for some of the stories. The historic Arthur as a 6th century Romano-Celtic chieftan fighting off the Saxons (and Christians?) and the 12 battles may well have really occurred. There are also much older mythic elements in the stories, from a pre-Roman Celtic tradition, Merlin himself and the quest for the Holy Grail are almost certainly pre-Roman pre-Christian tales added to the Arthur tradition.

RON L CLARKE
6 Bellevue Road
Faulconbridge,
NSW 2776, Aust.
25 May 1982

...the main reason Susan (his wife) doesn't have an outside job is because she thinks that the 'old-fashioned' way of raising children is much better than the neighbour/creche ever is.

It makes living a bit closer to the bone, but then one wage does enable one to put out zines, and enables Susan to write and also edit zines, which she loves to do. She has dozens of overseas pals she writes to, both fan and mundane...

((I reckon it depends on personalities; I've seen so many children who suffered at their parents' hands, that the alternatives cannot be seen as always worse. Of course it would help in a reasonable choice if the quality of the available services met one's standards. Most city children now go off to pre-school part-time at the age of 3 or 4, so the difference between that and full-time away-from-home care is a matter of opinion.--JHW))

I think the major thing a feminist has against them is the name. To the vast mass of people it conjures up a picture of a violent female... which scene is not guaranteed to make friends. What is needed is a publicity campaign to change the image the word conjures up...

((We try, but the media naturally prefers the more flamboyant though less representative members of any group. That is why I consider it very important for moderate feminists like myself to define ourselves as feminists, so that not only the violent elements are so identified. Of course, those who think I'm far out aren't likely to be reassured, but you can't educate everyone.--JHW))

REBECCA LESSES
66 Hall Avenue
Somerville, MA
02144, USA
22 May 1982

I think it would be worse to lose your mind (rather than becoming a physical wreck). Watching my grandmother (who has Alzheimer's Disease, a degenerative disease which attacks

the brain cells and eventually is fatal) lose her memory is really awful. When my mother was sick, she started to lose her memory from drugs, surgery and disease, and I think it was more frustrating to her than physical weakness. At least it was worse to watch. There's something about losing the integrity of the mind that is terrifying... it's like losing the core of being.

((Julie Vaux sent several letters, including some from her overseas travels; if I have room next time I may reprint some. Dave Dismore continues to send clippings of his bicycle ride across the USA in favour of the Equal Rights Amendment. I also heard from Kevin Dillon, Richard Faulder, Jan Finder, Harry Andruschak (who sent clippings about Astronaut Sally Ride, who will be America's first woman in space) Mike Schaper, and no doubt others whose letters I have misplaced, though possibly answered. Some I will share with you next time.--JHW))

