

Dworkin view is based on a deeply reactionary Skinnerian concept of human nature — a model that removes values, judgment, critical reflection, and, indeed, thought itself. Through operant conditioning — in this case, extensive exposure to pornography and light sentences for sexual offenders — we can become anything and do anything. There are no inhibitions, no self-imposed restraints. Nothing, except fear of external social controls, could deter us from engaging in any anti-social act if we thought we could get away with it. In the end what we have is a police state with a liberal gloss.

On the second point, that pornography is a harm, there is no credible evidence from studies of either pornography or sex offenders, but the case for equality is a different matter. Both LEAF and the court were concerned about gender equality, which they regarded as endangered by pornography. They cited no evidence and, indeed, there is nothing in the vast social science literature — economics, political science, anthropology, sociology — to support

any connection between pornography and the various forms of inequality: race, gender, or class. A cursory review of recent cases on equality indicates that it is the ideal-

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ized woman, the stereotyped mainstream, family-centred woman, who is used by employers to justify pay inequity, hiring discrimination, lack of daycare, limited mobility, etc., not the lust-driven nymphomaniac of pornography.

LEAF failed to make a distinction between *degradation* and *devaluation*, and it is devaluation that supports the 66 cent dollar, job segregation, and underemployment. A greater fallacy is to define equality

in narrow terms. Equality in the feminist context is a transformative concept that challenges the patriarchal social order. It cannot be separated from freedom of expression any more than mind can be separated from body. Sections 2(b) and 15 of the Charter are one and the same. The tradeoff theory, implicit in liberal theory and explicit in the court's decision as well as the LEAF factum, creates a split not only between equality and liberation, but between the women's movement as an interest group and feminism as an insurgent social movement.

Censorship, as advocated by LEAF and upheld by the court, overprotects women, deprives us of our own repatriation, and puts a human face on gender inequality. That is what the Supreme Court, seeking to extend its control over new communication technology and reflecting a neo-conservative political atmosphere, has learned and how it learned it.

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WOMEN'S FEAR OF MALE VIOLENCE

by Michael D. Smith, Tracey Smith, Rachel Osborne, and Valorie Hemminger

How pervasive is women's fear of men's sexual and physical violence in public places? What strategies do women employ to make themselves feel safer? What is the relationship between sexual harassment in public and fear?

We address these questions using data from a recently completed survey of women in Canada. The survey was conducted in English and French by means of computer-assisted telephone interviewing (CATI) with a national probability sample of 1,990 working women. Female interviewers employed by

the Institute for Social Research, located at York University, conducted the interviews in spring and summer 1992.

In an effort to encourage respondents to answer sensitive questions honestly and fully, we employed a woman-centred approach to interviewing. This included using broad definitions of sexual harassment based on women's subjective experiences; following up reports of victimization with detailed questions about social context, consequences, and the like; making extensive use of open-ended questions to allow respondents to re-

late their experiences in their own words; and identifying and selecting the best interviewers available and training them with particular care. Our goal was to elicit data that did some justice to the delicacy and complexity of the subject matter while adhering to the fundamental principles of mainstream survey research, such as those that regard getting a representative sample.

THE Pervasiveness of Fear

The first part of the survey focused on women's fear of sexual and physical violence in public places. Respond-

ents were asked initially how afraid they felt for their personal safety alone after dark in four public settings. The proportions of women who said they were at least somewhat afraid in each of these settings are as follows: 33 percent felt either "somewhat" or "very afraid" walking alone

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in their own neighbourhood, 40 percent using public transportation, 76 percent walking to a car in an underground parking garage, and 79 percent passing by groups of unknown men or boys.

When asked about other possible fear-provoking situations, about a third of the women surveyed described one or more such situations in their own words. Their descriptions uncovered a corrosive anxiety about sexual and physical safety that permeates almost every aspect of women's lives, not only in the public sphere, but at work and home as well. Some typical responses:

In Public

When there is a carload of young men following me, like a carload of young men who are drinking. I get off the road if I hear them drive by.

Waiting for the bus at midnight. I feel very afraid at the stop at ...

In shopping malls or parking lots. I don't feel safe at all.

At Work

I'm a janitor in a high school. Sometimes I'm really scared with those kids, especially at night.

When I come out of work at night I sometimes have to lock

up the store by myself and sometimes that is scary.

Doing open houses. I'm a real estate agent.

At Home

You may think I'm paranoid, but I'm even afraid of sitting on my porch after dark. I'm even afraid to sunbathe there after there was a rape across the street. It's just not safe.

I'm afraid at home if my door is unlocked.

I'm scared after I get out of my car and walk to my house.

Parks, movie theatres, elevators, stairwells, museums, post offices, libraries, restaurants, bars, automobiles, streets, taxis, subways, buses, subway stops, bus stops, banking machines, work, school, and, although it is not a public place, home — virtually every imaginable public, semi-public, and private setting was named by at least some women as a site of fear.

COPING WITH FEAR

Canadian women go to considerable lengths to reduce their fear and to protect themselves from dangerous men. The women in this survey were asked how often they employed three specific measures to make themselves "feel safer" when they were out in public. Their responses: 73 percent stayed away from certain streets, 25 percent carried something to defend themselves with, and 7 percent carried something to alert other people with either always, most of the time, or some of the time.

Asked if they take other steps to protect their safety in public places, a majority of all women (63 percent) said "yes" and then described the steps they take. A preliminary analysis of this material resulted in six overlapping categories of coping strategies. We labelled these: (1) precautions, (2) avoidance, (3) self-defence,

(4) fitness, (5) appearance, and (6) demeanour. Most responses spanned more than one category, as these examples suggest:

Precautions, Avoidance

Going into my car, I try to look in first. In the elevator, early in the morning, if I see someone suspicious, I don't go in, I wait.

Self-Defence, Fitness

I carry my keys in my hand and I put one key between each finger. I try to stay fit so I can run if I have to.

Appearance, Demeanour, Avoidance

I try to make myself look unattractive, mostly with my hair and facial expression. I don't make eye contact. I have a self-contained attitude when I'm coming home really late. I don't feel comfortable or at ease unless I put on a tough exterior.

HARASSMENT AND FEAR

Government-sponsored crime victimization surveys have found consistently that women are much more afraid of being a victim of violent crime than men, but much less likely to suffer a violent victimization. According to these studies, most of which define violence in narrow, legalistic terms, women's

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fear of violence is greatly out of proportion to their risk of actually being victimized, which is low. This has led to the suggestion in some quarters that women's fear is subjective — that is, not based on actual

experiences with violence. Yet surveys by feminist researchers that define violence on the basis of what women themselves consider violence, including terrifying experiences with non-criminal street harassment, obscene phone calls, and the like, have uncovered very high levels of victimization.

Consider just one finding from the study at hand: 9 out of every 10 women interviewed reported having been subjected at least once as an adult to some form of unwanted sexual attention by a male or males in a public place. Almost all of these women provided an in-depth account of their worst experience of this sort.

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Although the majority of the women were not physically injured or sexually assaulted in the strict legal sense of the term, most were shaken emotionally. As they made clear, it is not necessarily *what* happens during such episodes that produces these feelings; it is the not knowing and the lack of control over how such episodes will end, the nagging, gnawing sense that something horrible *could* happen.

The account that follows (from over 1,800 similar stories) conveys something of this sense. It also underlines the point that concern about sexual and physical well-being is part and parcel of most women's normal daily routines. Consider just

one such routine, travelling home from work:

I was waiting in the subway, coming home from work. A man came up beside me and started saying he would like to perform various sexual acts with me. Then I went over to a group of men, hoping they might sort of protect me. Then the subway came and I got on further down the platform. But the man ran and got on the same car. He stared at me and said to the other people, "She thinks I'm following her" and other things. Then he came very close and stared at me and made me feel very uncomfortable. I got off the subway when it was my stop and that was that. He didn't follow me off ... I was terrified. I had just moved here and I had to come home late at night. I was surprised because the man looked nice at first. You wouldn't think he would be the type to do these sorts of things.

Some feminists propose that the threat and reality of male sexual and physical violence are important factors in the social control of women, keeping women in a state of anxiety and leading them to narrow the scope of their lives in an effort to protect themselves from danger. The data presented here provide compelling evidence that this is so. One thing is clear, women's fear will end only when men's harassment and violence does.

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WESTERN REPORT

WATCHING THE ABORIGINAL HORIZON

by Roger Gibbins

Over the next few months western Canadians, like all Canadians, will avoid any long-term political thinking pending the upcoming federal election. This election will be of particular interest in the region given the uncertain future of the Reform party. It will provide the first full test of fire for Reform, and recent polls suggest that success is far from certain. A lot will depend, of course, on the prime minister's decision about his own future.

It is not, then, a time for bold regional initiatives on the national stage. Nor is there any indication that western premiers would welcome any such initiatives. In the wake of the October referendum, the game plan is to stick close to the home fires.

The lull, however, will not last because the next major challenge is on the horizon. It will come from the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, whose research teams are fanning out across the country. Although the commission's report has yet to be written, there is no doubt that it will thrust Aboriginal self-government back to the centre of the national stage. Within the commission, and perhaps only within the commission, constitutional politics are alive and well.

Given the lull on other fronts, it is an opportune time to look ahead to one of the most complex and intriguing public policy questions the region is likely to face.

THE CENTRALITY OF THE WESTERN SCENE

Although the commission's mandate is national, the west will pro-