

WOMEN'S LIB WHAT MEANS TO WHAT ENDS?

Dear Sir:

As one of the middle-aged (tho' definitely not well heeled) matrons who attended Women's Week on the U. of A. campus recently, may I suggest a few questions and impressions resulting from these meetings. My attendance was motivated by interest in the current Women's Liberation Movement and a growing desire to learn more about problems facing women in today's changing society.

Those responsible for initiating and planning these forums on crucial social and legal issues, presented and discussed by highly qualified guest speakers and participants of panels, deserve well-earned thanks for their efforts to enlighten those in attendance.

However the January 27th Gateway editorial, "Women's Week Contributes to Women's Oppression", indicates strongly that the author took little time, if any, to write truthfully or accurately. Personal prejudices were lumped together as the confirmed opinion of all in attendance, such as labelling the forums as "simply an exercise in futility."

Further from this editorial: "One sign implored the visitors to become a 'total woman' by joining the Junior League." The

'total woman' display was not sponsored by the Junior League, and who, one might question, has the predisposed and uninformed prerogative to assume such organization, or any other displaying in the SUB theatre lobby, aren't accomplishing anything of basic benefit, help and motivation in developing women?

To quote again from the editorial: "A woman from the audience Wednesday night, who very deeply felt her oppression and wished to speak upon it was quickly silenced by the Chairman of the panel, apparently acting upon a rather perturbed glance from Dean Munroe." I was there, it was Tuesday night, and no perturbed glance was evidenced from Dean Munroe. I might add that the Chairman was entirely within her right to suggest, following a lengthy contribution from the floor, that perhaps the issue might be continued in a seminar group.

If reporting, even in an editorial, is to be of any benefit to readers, let's at least report facts as they are! The Editorial in the February 3rd issue, Gateway Editor Contributes to Women's Oppression," comes as a much needed reply.

The following are a few considerations that come to my attention as an off-campus

member of the audience during Women's Week.

Without doubt, women today have just cause to activate change in legislation and society to meet their needs and interests and achieve greater personal fulfillment, but does this necessitate degrading militant procedures to achieve these goals--castigating men, condemning marriage, wifehood and motherhood as undesirable forms of life? From the January 27th editorial I quote: "We have to question the Society in which women willingly sell their bodies and their souls for a husband who will provide them the economic security they feel they need." The originator of the above quotation completely overlooks the fact that men and women are fundamentally equally people, and basically important as decent and worthwhile human beings, with individual needs and goals that can best be met and realized in cooperation with each other.

The oft-heard 'Male Chauvinist Pig' and all it implies is unthinkable name-calling for any woman who respects herself or has any sensitivity for others. One male, speaking from the floor during Women's Week, suggested since men were considered 'Male Chauvinist Pigs', women then should equally be titled 'Female

Chauvinist Sows.' He had a point!

Though it may sound archaic to some, it is never-the-less a fact that many intelligent, dedicated, sincere and responsible couples enter marriage every year determined in desire and applied effort to throw our escape clauses, stay with their mates, and succeed. These couples welcome and love children that come to them, honestly try to set a good example in wholesome relationships within the family group structure. Such parents try to provide for their children a foundation of security, self-worth, respect for themselves and others. This is the basis for a sound, democratic society.

Women's Lib is missing the boat if it degrades its potential by becoming a hate campaign directed against men or children. In whatever circumstances a child arrives in our society, (planned, wanted, or not) that child arrives with a spark of potential ability that is entitled to development and realization, and is of equal import to his/her parent(s). If today's exponents of Women's Lib are genuinely concerned about interaction between the sexes in the next generation and generations to follow, then let's do some serious thinking about the quality of our homes. Let's

teach both sexes from infancy how to behave, treat each other, and cooperate together in a positive sense.

One last question. Why do so many supposedly intelligent and education young women feel the compelling need to grovel in barnyard and human excretions, punctuate and mutilate their vocabularies with four-letter words and repugnant oaths that repel and disgust those within earshot? The English language affords an abundant choice of terminology and expression above the manure level that is explicit, understandable, and forceful. What are they trying to prove?

A valuable theme for Women's Lib might be suggested from Harold Cardinal's *The Unjust Society* p. 26, when he says:

"It is only when men (and women) are able to accept their differences as well as their similarities and still relate to each other with respect and dignity, that a healthy society exists."

Women's Liberation Movement has potential to raise and equate women's rights, but let's consider carefully the ways and means to achieve these ends.

N. Card
433-7333

FACTS LAID BARE

Dear Sir:

First, in reply to Patrick Spelliscy's 'non-letter', my former article was not written merely to impress readers, but in order to say something serious about an important issue. I do not apologize to Mr. Spelliscy for not presenting my case at the 'idiot-level for his benefit, nor do I see the slightest similarity between my attempts to clarify a difficult subject by means of well-ordered argument, and his stream of verbal diarrhoea. (sic).

Secondly, my concern is to examine issues in as unbiased and objective manner as possible, without allowing my personal sentiments to distort my arguments. John Bryson has been thus far the most eloquent 'pro-life' spokesman to appear in the Gateway; he seems aware of the issues, and presents studies and statistics to lend credibility to his persuasively written arguments. My former article of Jan. 13 was a modest undertaking which was intended to point out two primary confusions in Bryson's original presentation. Subsequent feedback has indicated that I was not explicit enough, so I shall reformulate my case.

1. On the status of the fetus, there are two complementary confusions by the pro-life proponent and the pro-abortionist, which are roughly (at the risk of over-simplification): "The fetus is a human being, and nothing less", and "The fetus is part of the woman's body, and nothing more", respectively. Neither is correct!

The latter ignores the fact that the fetus has potential for becoming a human being. The former, however, finds in the adult an undisputable example of a human being, finds no precise point in time when he magically became one, and erroneously concludes that he was always one.

In "What is a Human Being", Bryson attempts to draw the distinction between 'human being' as a member of a species, and as an individual. However, his terminology again (note the warning in my first article) is misleading. 'Man' is the term commonly used to designate the species; 'human being' may be used as a synonym only at the cost of obscuring the standard meaning. 'Human being' is an evaluative term (i.e. implying values) involving factors such as skills, habits, interests, hobbies, attitudes, beliefs, emotional ties, etc. which are the basis for our attitudes within interpersonal relationships. These are the considerations which we value in human beings, not, by way of contingent fact, that human beings are members of a certain species.

2. My second argument was intended to show how human rights devolves from society, and to preclude an appeal to 'natural rights' by either the pro-life or the pro-abortion stand. Again, I have found the pro-life proponent more often guilty of this claim, and combined with the illicit transfer of value from 'human being' to 'man', due to ambiguous use of these terms in ordinary language, it presents a persuasive, though fallacious argument.

Bryson's claim that a one-year-old baby has more rights than an adult is not only misleading, it is simply false! As the child matures into an adult, both rights and obligations multiply. In infancy, the child is protected by society and his rights are rights from..., which may be better viewed as obligations which the parents accept, as members of society, to raise the child. However, I do not wish to press the point, for even granting that the infant has rights, this says nothing about his status as a human being, for there are analogous rights which animals have been granted.

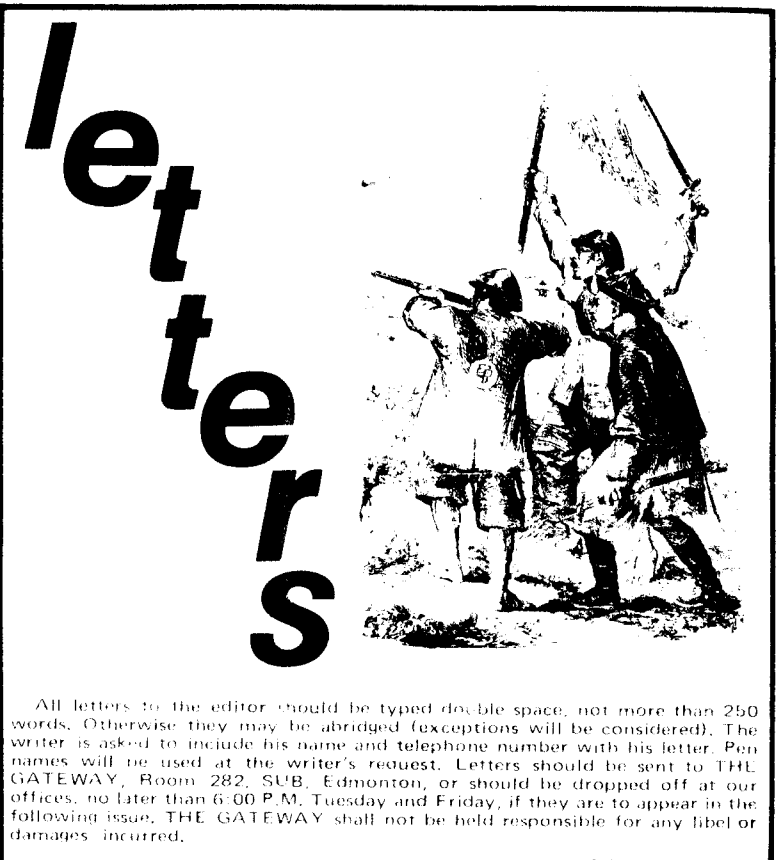
Fortunately, in most instances (but not all...note the laws protecting sacred cows in India), the order of priority is reasonable: Animal's rights are subordinated to human rights.

This brings us to consider the central issue, the attempted resolution between the right of a human being to control his/her body and the 'right' of the fetus to life. (please be aware that this is only one formulation of the problem, not necessarily mine, and that whichever one you choose will likely prejudice your decision.) How is the question to be decided? The weight of human sentiment based on an understanding of the facts and their implications will decide. My purpose has been, and will continue to be, to present the facts and lay bare their implications.

Ron Leonard
Phil. Dept. 12-15

Bread from Feds

Once again it is time to apply for bread from the Feds. But OFY (Opportunities For Youth) is not designed for the benefit of hip student capitalists. Instead the government states concern for communities and their quality of life. One of the most obvious plans of the Feds is to buy up burned-out Marco Polo freaks who've come down out of the revolution to write travelogues and memoirs on government money. The overwhelming majority have origins somewhere in the amorphous bulk of the middle class and have further distinguished themselves by a desire to return to forge their compromises, if indeed they ever left. On page 2 of the application handout it is stated that "Projects cannot be accepted if they are projects of a political character". It appears



All letters to the editor should be typed double space, not more than 250 words. Otherwise they may be abridged (exceptions will be considered). The writer is asked to include his name and telephone number with his letter. Pen names will be used at the writer's request. Letters should be sent to THE GATEWAY, Room 282, SUB, Edmonton, or should be dropped off at our offices, no later than 6:00 P.M. Tuesday and Friday, if they are to appear in the following issue. THE GATEWAY shall not be held responsible for any libel or damages incurred.

that behind the 'quality of life' rhetoric, some more innocuous fiddling with the banality of middle class existence is on the agenda. But while the Secretary of State Department spends money chasing 'quality of life' alternatives, Indian Affairs and Northern Development continues to block the attempts of Northern Alberta Indians to develop real alternatives to the life presently being forced even more brutally on them by the white man. Trudeau plans to turn Indian Education completely over to the provinces within the next few years, which means bussing kids off the reserves to provincial schools where they are hyped full of middle class values that are alienating to them--values which even the Secretary of State Department is beginning to grumble about. We have seen Opportunities For Youth, which is opportunities for students, which is opportunities for white middle class kids since there is a 97% high school drop-out rate

for native students. The opportunities for native youth are much more lucrative--prostitution and petty crime. The Northern Alberta Indians want their own school facilities with which to develop an Indian way of life as an alternative to the present choices of either stagnation on the reserves or an exodus to the skid rows and jails that compose the margins of the white man's way of life. Right now a very brave man, Chief Ralph Blackman of the Cold Lake Reserves, continues to lead his people in an occupation of the offices of his oppressor in the CN Towers. They've been there for more than four months. People who take quality of life seriously and who are interested in breachings of the existing repressive class hegemony have a solidarity with the struggle of the Cold Lake Indians. We must not be defeated.

David Baugh
Larry Trotter