



Erogenous zones and dangerous drones

by M. Kaufman

When I was in Grade Six, and we were all trying to figure out the basics of sex, a friend explained the difference between "fucking" and "raping". In the latter, he said, you tie the

girl to a tree. I laughed at the time, as if it were all a joke.

A year or two later, when all the guys were preoccupied with getting to "first base"-- that is, a serious kiss-- another friend told me about erogenous zones. The back of a girl's

neck, for example, was like an Aladdin's lamp to conjure up a girl's desire. If rubbed enough the girl would melt under your fingers. I wore out many a neck in the months that followed.

The stories shock me now: one is

simply hideous while the other is simply silly. Both stories, though, have much in common. These tidbits of advice shared the assumption that sex was something boys, or men, got. We might get it by force or we might get it by smooth moves, but in the end, the issue was about our pleasure and desire.

The one thing that was incomprehensible to me in Grade Six was that males could force themselves on females by something less than bondage to a tree. After all, the girls we knew at the time were not only taller than us, they certainly were not going to be pushed around. Little did I know that within a few years a certain male prerogative would begin to assert itself. We would have power,

who are fearful to walk to the corner store at night (although an even greater danger is from someone they know).

Perhaps what is most surprising about all this is that it hurts men too. Men who harm or coerce or rape don't do so because men are naturally bad or predatory beasts. It's because of the ways that we've learned to be men. We've learned that to be real men means to assert our power and control, although not usually through physical force. It also means shutting down our capacity to feel what others feel, an indispensable quality if you're interested in meeting your own needs without regard for others.

And so let's not waste energy debating statistics. (Whether it's ten percent or thirty percent of women who have been sexually assaulted, we've got a terrible problem on our hands.) Let's not waste energy countering that women are not always angels. (Of course they're not, but men are not regularly beaten or raped by women.) Let's not waste time with needless charges about "male bashers" or "they're saying we're all guilty until we prove ourselves innocent" (No one says all men are rapists or batterers.)

The ball is in the men's court. We can protest and counter-charge 'til we're blue in the face, but that won't make the problem go away.

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power to get what we wanted by persuasion ("I love you more than life itself" or perhaps the more pedestrian "aw come on, it'll be fun"), hard luck stories ("I'll die of blue balls if we don't"), manipulation ("what the hell, let's just have one more drink"), or for some guys, if all else failed, sheer physical force.

Such things poison relationships between women and men. Even if you're the gentlest guy in the world, the woman you're interested in probably has some experiences of coercion, manipulation, sexist put-downs, or assault. What happened to her will effect any relationship she enters into.

What's more, sex becomes a game, a contest of wills. Rather than communicating our feelings and desires, and knowing we'll be respected for what we want or don't want, both men and women circle around, hint and try to guess what the other person is thinking.

The greatest harm of all is done to women. Study after study in the United States and Canada suggest that between 20 and 30 percent of university-aged women are survivors of sexual assault. Many others feel the potential of assault and join the fifty percent of Canadian women

to be real men means to assert our power and control

Better that we rise to the occasion and listen carefully to the voices of women, voices that have been buried for far too long. Better we urge our student councils and administrations to adopt clear codes of conduct about sexual harassment and dating behaviour. Better that we encourage educational programs on our campuses. Better that we look at ways that our own attitudes and behaviour might contribute to the problem, whether we know it or not. And better that we learn to challenge the men around us to change and do it now.

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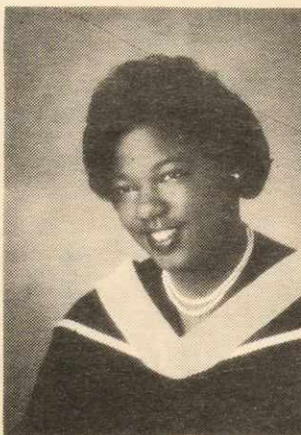
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take place if a union is established. The members of EWOC are confident the university will not threaten the organization by such a manoeuvre, since the administration has been known to take a "hands-off" approach.

Students will not be greatly affected by the union in short-term, but long-term goals could include quality of education being secured, reasonable class size, and adequate facilities. Thus, with the formation of a union, there would be a central organization to represent all teach-

ing assistants, sessional lecturers and undergraduates throughout the various departments.

With the significant increase in its membership, EWOC will soon possess enough employees for the Labour Relations Board to conduct a vote to determine whether or not a union will be established. Optimism is high within the EWOC organization and endorsements from other organizations further intensify the need for a union.