

Woman, April 1985

"I want a perfume that says to a man, 'Go to hell!'"

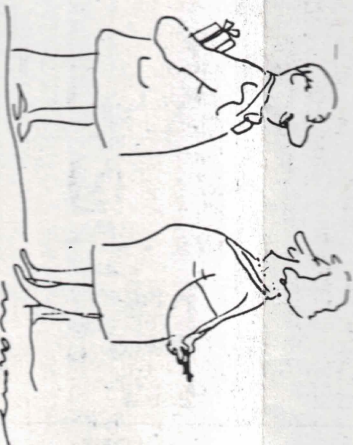
ITEM: Why has a formula emerged to make a "self-improvement" book a best seller? A formula that says Men Hate/Women Love, as in:

Men Who Hate Women and the Women Who Love Them
Men Who Can't Love
Women Who Love Too Much
Smart Women, Foolish Choices

ITEM: The movie *Fatal Attraction* found millions of women identifying with Glenn Close's attempts to murder the man who would not leave his family for her once she had sex with him: the same "Death Wish" that made millions of moviegoers cheer as Charles Bronson killed his muggers. "Men" have become America's new muggers — especially those men who want sex for free. The new sexism is the new death wish. Men who get sex without commitment are seen as taking advantage of women in the same way that muggers have victimized the innocent.

ITEM: Why does an ABC/Washington Post random sampling that finds that more than 90 percent of women are *happy* with men receive almost no publicity, while at the same time a skewed sample that finds more than 90 percent *unhappy* makes the front cover of *Time* magazine?

"My birth-control device."



"Your surprise first!"

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cept that women love too much. (Translation: These jerks are not worthy of her love.) As a whole, the book lists more than 5,000 complaints about men. *None* about women. Except that women don't complain enough.

If a man in one of my workshops stood up and said, "There are 15 major problems in love relationships. All 15 are problems with women . . . The only problem with us men is we love too much, so I'd like to form a group of 'Men Who Love Too Much' and discover why women are afraid of intimacy with us loving men," no one at the workshop would be sure whether to stone him or pity him.

One of Hite's "new" discoveries is male emotional and psychological harassment of

completing goodbyes 45 minutes later. So she leaves by herself, takes the car, but sees him follow her into the parking lot. Rather than pick him up, she, *by her own account*, swerves the car around and tries to run him over. Her attempted homicide is called *male emotional harassment*.

If a husband tried to run his wife over with a car and justified it because it took her 45 minutes to leave a party, it would be called "blaming the victim." Yet in the 900 pages of Hite's report, there is no category for female abuse of men. There are many categories like "The Happy Story of One Woman's Revenge." Happy revenge? This is what makes the Hite Report the Hate Report.

Enough. There is anger. But why turn men into objects (Foolish Choices, Peter Pans, Men Who Can't Love)?

When *either* sex gets rejected it turns the other sex into an object. Why? It hurts less to be rejected by an object. For example, in doing research for *Why Men Are the Way They Are* I discovered men typically risk sexual rejection about 150 times between eye contact and intercourse. To handle rejection, men turn women into sex objects. Hence pornography. Pornography offers access to the woman without fear of rejection.

Just as men have felt deprived of sexuality with the desired woman, so women — as the divorce rate rose during the 1960s — felt deprived of economic security from men. In Stage 1, marriage meant men providing economic security for a lifetime. In

you — it's ruin.

Enter the new sexism. If her last relationship broke up, it was because he was "Foolish Choice A" or "Foolish Choice B." Or not only was he a woman-hater, but the relationship itself was "Wendy's Dilemma." If her next man sensed her alienation and was afraid to commit, it was because he was immature — a Peter Pan, as in *Peter Pan Syndrome*. Or choice two, he was "A Man Who Can't Love." Her only problem was that she was "addicted" to "loving too much." Translate: She loved men who weren't worthy of her.

Like male anger and its pornography, female anger and its pornography are understandable. Male pornography, though, gets called "pornography," as in obscenity. Female pornography is called "romance," akin to love. Her soft porn is called "self-improvement." A person calling the process of objectification self-improvement or love increases self-righteousness. Self-righteousness increases alienation, not love. And in the process, the male fear of commitment is reinforced. And she becomes even angrier.

How is the cycle broken? By understanding men from *men's* perspective. (Most men do not see themselves as Foolish Choice A or Foolish Choice B.) Fortunately, thousands of women are beginning to sense it is time to go beyond the "men are jerks" stage to hearing men from a perspective that rings as true to the man. ■

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