

Radical feminists question relevance of consent to morality of sexual acts

[Family](#), [Marriage](#)



Primoratz writes that "...radical feminists typically question the very relevance of consent to the morality of sexual acts. " Rape is to be quite frank, the lowest and most demeaning act a man can do to a woman. Most would say that rape is physically forcing a woman to engage in a sexual act against her will. Radical feminists take a hard stance against this and believe most " normal" sex is to be included when discussing rape. Feminists argue that the very social fiber of our society in which there is inequality of men and women needs to be changed. Men use sex as a form of control, a way to oppress women. Consent becomes irrelevant as women are not on equal ground. Feminists, who want legitimate sex, say that to have such would require major change in the social position of women. Catherine A Mackinnon says that's in our society sexuality is " a social construct of male power: defined by men, forced on women, and constructive of the meaning of gender. " She believes that all sex ranging from normal consensual sex, prostitution to pornography, and sexual harassment and rape is all showcasing the dominance of women by men. Women are often engaging in sex that they do not feminists argue that even with consent women will agree to sex for the purpose of pleasing a man, or to improve social acceptance. When a woman has sex with a man and does not want it, when she acts under compulsion, Feminists argue that this is rape. Morgan states " Rape exists any time sexual intercourse occurs when it is not being initiated by the woman out of her own genuine affection and desire. " Feminists claim that sure they may not be under the threat of a knife to the throat but they are nonetheless threatened and as such these situations can be called rape. Such acts may not fall under the same umbrella as what is known as

traditional rape, it is rape just the same. Wertheimer points out that a sexual offense is basically nonconsensual touching or bodily contact. This type of touching does not necessarily have to be violent and does not need to involve one penetrating the other. Another form would involve a violent assault or battery. Thirdly would be threats of violence. Finally a sexual assault may be from a fear of harms from penetration. These are all real forms of rape, not the type of rape that is expressed by the views of Radical Feminists. One must ask, are these statement made by Radical feminists truly in line with what is a sexual offense? Feminists also state, that woman who are coerced into sex albeit not physically threatened but by means of say threats to end a relationship, threats to find another lover, threats about how he feels about her and such are all forms of coercion. Thus, they are all forms of rape. In order for women to feel completely comfortable and make sex moral, they must be free of all forms of coercion. The problem with all this is that in our lives we are constantly coerced into things we may not want to do. Is this to say that all judgments or situations, in which one is coerced is therefore morally unacceptable? Primoratz says quite nicely that " every extrinsic consideration that gets us to do something is to count as coercion into doing it, and if we are truly free only in those actions we do for own sake, then we are all coerced in most of what we do and unfree most of the time. " Another problem is that sex that can used for the purposes of monetary gain, power, or social stature can all be seen as immoral even if both parties have agreed on consent. But this is not merely a problem blamed on the males of today, females do it too. For all sorts of different reasons than the ones Primoratz listed. Some may do it for drugs, alcohol,

clothes, or other petty items. Point is, sex is a tool used by both men and women alike. So all sexually activity can not be morally acceptable while men and women are socially and economically unequal? So all people should be on equal ground before they can engage in a legitimate sexual relationship? It is near impossible to achieve such a situation in a capitalistic society. It is not unreasonable to have sex for the simple enjoyment of it. Why must there be a deeper meaning? It is ok to objectify both him and her in the act of sex, for the sole purpose of mutual ends. Wertheimer tells us when one should consent to sexual relations and uses Susan Moller Okin to state " justice applies to some interfamilial issues, such as the control of economic resources and the distribution of household labor, does justice also apply to sex? " Wertheimer implies that is acceptable for a husband to want sex and that it may not be something the wife wants at that time or that often but is she obliged to serve her man? Are his needs and her wanting to satisfy his needs more important than her need to not want sex? He sort of tip toes around it and doesn't give a definitive answer. The argument as it pertains to movies is quite obvious, sure the wife or husband may be willing to put aside their urge to watch a certain movie but would the same issues be relevant to sex? Wertheimer describes what most of us refer to as " make-up sex". That couples sometimes use such a moment to reaffirm their desire to demonstrate that their relationship is strong and not succumbing to the issues of a meaningless fight. Wertheimer definitely objectifies women and makes it seem as though they are the ones who must comply with their man's needs. He uses his words wisely and states at the end " It might be argued that it is not merely that love can coexist with justice, but that to love

another person is to want to be fair to them, or, more precisely, to want to not be unfair to them, for to love someone is typically to want to be more than fair to them, to be generous. "