To achieve community control of breeding, would it "be just as effective," as Webb says, "to sterilize all men as to sterilize all women"? *By definition*, yes; but there has been no proposal to sterilize *all* of either sex. If only some are sterilized, and those only after they have had children, the effectiveness of the two alternatives is not the same.

Debaters tend to forget that we are not a perfectly monogamous people. Extramarital intercourse is not rare; and divorce and remarriage create what has been called "serial polygamy." For these reasons the sterilization of x men can be expected to be less effective in reducing births than the sterilization of x women.

My statement that women "want more children than the community needs" was based on the evidence assembled by Kingsley Davis [*Science* **158**, 730 (1967)]. But it must be admitted that "wants" are not permanent facts of life like chemical valence and specific chromosome numbers. We may be able to modify wants; we should seek to do so.

I do not think my identifying women as the intrinsically responsible sex in reproduction is the result of "blatant but possibly unconscious male supremacism," as Butler put it. Once women have at their command a perfect system of birth control (contraception plus elective abortion as a backstop), they will have almost complete power over the reproductive process. A woman who wants a child can easily find a man to furnish spermatozoa.

When women can completely avoid having children they do not want, men become powerless to "have children" by a unilateral decision. The sexes are not equal.

Power and responsibility need to go together; there really is no defensible reason why women should reject responsibility once they possess—and realize they possess—power.

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Wasting Waste

In "Waste-water treatment: The tide is turning" (31 July, p. 457), Robert Holcomb comments on the problems of disposing of the sludge produced by sewage treatment plants. He writes that the "sale [of sludge] as fertilizer or soil conditioner . . . will probably decrease

as disposal by incineration increases." If true, this is very sad, for the land in this country is in need of the organic material which the sludge would provide, while the air is abundantly full of the pollution caused by incineration.

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. . . Perhaps my ignorance makes me unduly alarmed, but can we really afford to continue to destroy the potential soil-conditioning and fertilizing components of sewage? What do the ecologists say—are we wasting waste?

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Vigor of Northern Hardwoods

In his article "Effects of pollution on the structure and physiology of ecosystems" (24 Apr., p. 429), G. M. Woodwell mentions that nutrient losses from cutting all trees on a watershed "will cause a large reduction in the potential of the site supporting living systems as complex as that destroyed—until nutrients accumulate again." I hope readers of this portion of Woodwell's article are not misled into believing that total tree removal per se (or "clearcutting" as referred to by foresters) will consistently bring about a deleterious change in the terrestial plant community (*1*).

When a mature stand of timber is clearcut, an almost identical living system as that removed can be regenerated immediately (*2*). Silvicultural studies at the Barlett Experimental Forest in New Hampshire show that northern hardwoods renew themselves when the mature stand is completely removed in small blocks, patches, or strips. In fact, species composition and tree quality of the regenerated stand in many cases are better than that found in the natural ecosystem.

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