MYTHS ABOUT BATTERED WOMEN:

A JUST EXPLANATION

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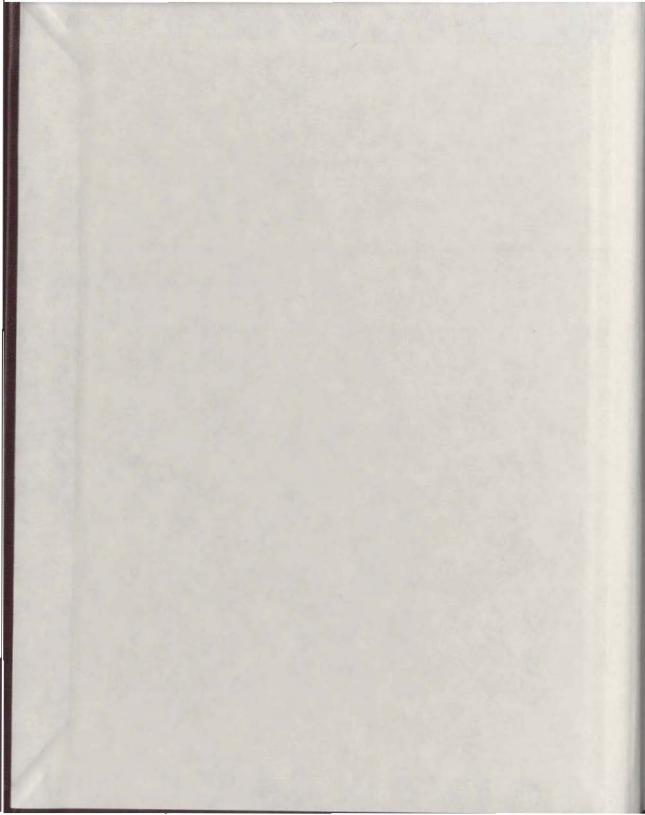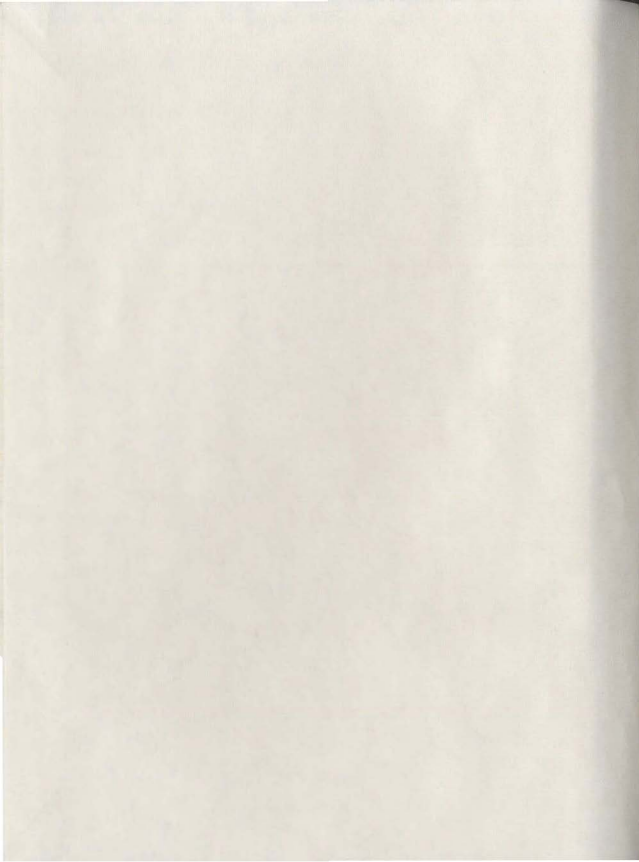
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MYTHS ABOUT BATTERED WOMEN: A JUST WORLD EXPLANATION.

by

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A Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Science

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ABSTRACT

People appear to believe that battered women are low income, masochistic women with no desire to leave their husbands, while research in the area indicates that these beliefs are largely untrue. An explanation for these incorrect beliefs may be found in Lerner's Just World Hypothesis (1965).

To test the application of this hypothesis to battered women, 234 subjects were each given a case study of a battered woman. The independent variables were Responsibility (High, Low and Undetermined) for the battering and Severity (More and Less). Case studies of three separate women were crossed with each of these conditions for a total of 18 cases. The dependent variables were 10 bipolar adjectives weighted for likability.

It was predicted that women in the Low Responsibility condition would be more negatively evaluated than women in the High Responsibility condition. This prediction was supported. As well, it was predicted that the more severe the harm, the more responsible the woman would be rated. While this prediction was not supported, it was found that for the More Severe harm condition, the husband was attributed more responsibility. Reasons are discussed.

Acknowledgements

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INTRODUCTION

Although virtually ignored in the 1960's and early 1970's, the problems of the battered woman have come under intensive study in the past six or seven years. Thought to be a problem of low incidence and therefore little concern, it received attention from neither the general public nor social scientists. With the rise of the feminist movement, however, and the resulting increase in concern for the battered woman, there came many studies on the incidence of battering.

Stark and McEvoy (1970) found that in a representative sample of 1176 American adults, one fifth of them approved of slapping one's spouse at some time. Gelles (1974) and Walker (1979) cite incidence rates as high as 60% and Schuyler (1976) states that:

> data from two Michigan Counties indicate that
> assaults against wives comprised 43% to 40%
> respectively - or a total of 740 - of the entire
> number of assaults recorded there in 1974. (p.
> 488)

With such high incident rates, researchers began developing and testing theories as to why women were battered and why they stayed with the batterer. As well, they attempted to disentangle the truths about battered women from the myths. According to Shultz (1960), one of the prevailing stereotypes of the battered woman is that she

is sadomasochistic. This assumption seems a little
ridiculous when one speaks to these women and looks at the
literature surrounding them. Gayford (1975) found that of
100 cases, 50% had attempted suicide. Carlson (1977) found
that, of 57 women's responses, 84% indicated consultation
with either police, (36%), women's groups (16%), friend
(14%), family (12%), social service (4%) or religious
adviser (2%) for aid. Star, Clark, Goltz and O'Malia (1979)
found that, of their sample of battered women, 88% felt that
they did not deserve the beatings. This does not seem to
indicate that the women's beatings are a fulfillment of
masochistic fantasies. Rather, it seems that the women are
very unhappy, as is indicated by the high suicide rate. As
well, they seem largely concerned with their protection from
their husbands as is indicated by the high rate of
consultation with outside agencies.

Another myth is that if the woman did not like her
situation she would get out of it. This is impossible for
many women for a variety of reasons. Children often keep
the woman in the marriage (Peretti, 1978), and many women
feel they have nobody to turn to because of the isolation
imposed by the jealousy of the husband. Carlson (1977)
noted that one of the characteristics of battered women is:

> the degree of isolation that most of them have
> experienced. Many had virtually no close friends
> or relatives with whom to share the pain and fear
> in their lives. (p. 458)

This social isolation was also noted by Gelles (1976),
Walker (1979), Star et al. (1979) and Hilberman and Munsen
(1978). Another reason many of the women stay in the
marriage is that they lack alternatives. Gelles (1976)
found that the more resources a wife has and the more she is
able to support herself and her children, the more likely it
is that she will have a low threshhold of violence and call
outside agencies to help her. Another reason for not
leaving and perhaps the most devastating of all, is that
noted by Pfouts (1978):

> a woman may endure abuse not because she enjoys
> it, but because the culture has taught her that
> she is somehow to blame for her predicament, and
> because the society makes it difficult to do
> anything about it. (p. 101)

Schuyler (1976) found that a woman is discouraged by
those she perceives as her only sources of aid. That is,
police officers claim exemption from intervening in cases of
domestic violence and officers of the courts refuse to issue
warrants. If a warrant does get issued, women have trouble
finding lawyers because many do not want to become involved
in domestic cases. Others are reluctant to take on a female
client for fear they will not get paid since few married
women have independent sources of income (Langley & Levy,
1977).

Another myth is that all battered women come from low
income families. Dibble and Straus (1980) found that

violence against spouses decreases as income goes up while
Peretti (1978) states that wife beating has been found to
occur in all socioeconomic classes. Steinmetz (1980) in a
review of studies, found that data showed abuse was not
determined by geographic area, racial, ethnic or religious
background or income levels. This is supported by Gayford
(1975) and Flynn (1977).

Thus, it appears that the myths about battered women,
that they come from low income families, are masochistic and
have no desire to leave their husbands are incorrect. Why
then, if the evidence suggests that these things are untrue,
do people persist in believing them? This persisting belief
may be explained by a need that people have to believe in a
Just World (Lerner, 1965; Lerner & Simmons, 1966; Lerner,
Miller & Holmes, 1976; Lerner, 1977 and Lerner & Miller,
1978).

The Just World Hypothesis argues that individuals are
motivated to believe in a just world where people get what
they deserve and deserve what they get (Lerner & Simmons,
1966). The basic premise of the Just World hypothesis is
that we believe that we live in a controllable, predictable
world. People make causal attributions in order to enhance
their feelings of control over their environment
(Wortman, 1976). (Henslin (1967) and Langer (1975) found

that people believe they control the world so much that they even believe that they have control over chance events-such as rolling dice or drawing for high cards.) If the world was not just it would be uncontrollable and unpredictable. If the world was unjust there would be little purpose in working hard and being a good person because there would be no reward for doing so. Our belief in a just world, however, encourages hard work and even if rewards are not soon coming, one believes that hard work will pay off in the end.

Our need to believe in a just world seems so strong that we will derive from outcomes, causes of the outcomes which support the belief. That is, we will find some reason from the outcome which justifies it. For example, if we are punished we must have done something bad to deserve it and if we are rewarded in some way we must have done something good to deserve it. When a cause is not immediately apparent we are motivated to search for the just cause of the outcome. That is, we must somehow find an alternate explanation, thus accounting for any seeming injustices which occur. This need for justice probably comes from a learning process. All of us, at least in Western Cultures, are taught to care about justice. Lerner (1977) states:

> Our most valued resource, human life, is often
> risked and spent so that justice will be done.
> Wars are fought, people maimed, killed, executed
> under the banner of justice. At the more mundane
> level, a great part of the socialization process-

> especially involving the allocation of desired
> resources- centers around themes of deserving and
> what is just.. (p. 4)

We must have justice. If there is none, we impose our own.

There is much empirical work to support this hypothesis. Lerner (1965) found that a person who arbitrarily received a large bonus was thought by an observer to deserve it. Subjects were 22 female freshmen who were led to believe that the experiment they were observing was investigating group productivity. They were informed that since enough funds were not available, only one of the people that they observed would get paid. The subjects were instructed to observe two people performing anagrams and to assess who contributed more to the task. They then listened to tapes of the "pseudosubjects", being informed beforehand who was to receive the bonus. Although there was no difference in amount contributed to the task, subjects consistently said more of a contribution was made by the subject who was paid for his work. Thus subjects rationalized or explained why one subject got paid and one did not even though they were informed at the beginning of the experiment that payment was by chance.

Walster (1966) found that the amount people blame others for the unintended negative consequences of their actions depends on the severity of the consequences. In her

study, subjects were asked to listen to tapes in which the consequences of a car accident varied from mild to severe. Though the accident was described as an "accident," in all conditions the owner was assigned some responsibility by the subject. The person owning the car was found to be rated as more responsible for the accident if the consequences were severe. Walster reasoned:

> when we hear of a person who has suffered a small loss, it is easy to feel sympathy for the suffer, attributing his misfortune to chance and acknowledging that unpleasant things happen to a person through no fault of his own. As the magnitude of the misfortune increases, however, it becomes more and more unpleasant to acknowledge that this is the kind of thing that could happen to anyone. Such an admission implies a catastrophe of similar magnitude could happen to you. If we can categorize a serious accident in some way as the victim's fault, it is reassuring. (p. 73-74)

In a study by Lerner and Simmons (1966) subjects were told that they were participating in a human learning experiment. They watched a student (pseudosubject), on videotape, react to a series of shocks. The "pseudosubject's" reaction was one of apparent stress. In the first condition the subject was able to "restore justice" by reassigning the victim to a reward condition of receiving money. In the second condition, the subjects could not reward the victim and therefore "restore justice". When the victims were evaluated by the two groups, significant differences occurred. Subjects in the victim-compensated condition rated the victim more favourably than

did subjects in the uncompensated condition. Because they were able to restore justice in the first condition, no alternate explanation was necessary. In the second condition however, what apparently happened is that subjects imposed justice by evaluating the victim less favourably. Being unable to redress the injustice, it was necessary for the subject to derogate the subject in order to maintain justice.

Miller (1977) provides evidence consistent with Lerner's assertion that the behaviour of people is guided by a justice motive. Subjects in this study were led to believe they were participating in an unpaid study of concept formation. Upon completion of the "pseudo" study, the subject was given the opportunity to participate in more studies in a similar vein, receiving pay this time. Payment was varied. Some subjects were paid a straight $3.00 (3/0) per session, some $2.00 (2/0) per session. Others were paid $3.00 with $1.00 going to a victimized family (2/1) or $2.00 with $1.00 going to a victimized family (1/1). The dependent measure was the number of subsequent sessions for which the subject volunteered. Miller found that subjects who were paid $3.00 with $1.00 going to a victim (2/1) volunteered for more sessions than when they could keep the entire $3.00 (3/0). In a previous experiment, Miller found that subjects thought $2.00 reasonable or deserving pay for

the task being performed. The just world explanation is that the subjects who received $2.00 felt this was just and also felt that the victim receiving compensation of $1.00 to be just. Therefore they signed up for more sessions than if they were the only ones who got a reward (3/0) and (2/0). Thus, people are even willing to make a small sacrifice to restore justice. This explanation is further supported by the finding that when the subject was paid $2.00 with $1.00 going to the victim (1/1), fewer sessions were volunteered for. Subjects in a previous experiment found $1.00 to be unreasonable or unjust pay. Here the subject did not get justice so fewer sessions were volunteered for. It seems that subjects are willing to help others if justice is attainable for all and will even find this more attractive than attaining justice only for oneself. This holds, however, only as long as it does not interfere with one's own deserved level. So again we find support for the Just World Hypothesis and its justice motive. People will try to restore justice by giving up some of their own reward to a victim.

When a person who suffers appears to be undeserving, there must be an alternate explanation for the subject in order to maintain a just world. Since the person's behaviour did not merit punishment and given no way to restore justice, the outcome must be attributed to a

characteristic of the person. The victim will be seen to be a person of no worth. Jones and Aronson (1973) found that the more respectable a rape victim was, the more responsible she was thought to be for her rape. That is, since as a result of her stated respectability, they could not derogate her, they blamed her by attributing her with responsibility. Subjects were presented with written accounts of a rape, the victims of which varied in respectability. They were given no opportunity to restore justice. Jones and Aronson found that a less respectable person was attributed less responsibility than a respectable person. This is in keeping with Lerner's Just World Hypothesis. Shown that a victim is reputable or respectable and thus cannot be derogated on these grounds, the alternate explanation to the viewer is that she must be blamed for her suffering by being held responsible. If the victim is not able to be helped and because of her respectibility, there is no opportunity to negatively evaluate her, then the only alternative is to blame her or find her responsible.

That a person is respectable and not responsible does not fit with our belief in our control of our world. This is because there would be no explanation for the victim's suffering. Apparently, people must put the blame on the victim in order to maintain their belief in a just world. If he is shown not to deserve the suffering because of his

actions then some other explanation is necessary. If this were not the case, then we could all suffer the same consequences as the victim.

In a study similar to Jones and Aronson (1973), Smith et al. (1976) also varied whether or not the victim was acquainted with an assailant who rapes her. One would expect that not knowing the assailant would make the woman not responsible or at least less responsible for her fate than if she did know him. However, this was not the case. When the victim was not familiar with him, she was assigned more responsibility for her fate. What seemed to be happening then, is that the less responsible the woman actually was, the more involvement or responsibility was imposed to restore justice. If the woman did not know the assailant, she had no control over her fate. Subjects were therefore motivated to impose justice by assigning her more responsibility.

Studies not directly concerned with the Just World Hypothesis have supported the Hypothesis as well. For example, while studying the attitudes of rape counselors, police, rapists and ordinary citizens toward rape, Feild (1978) found that citizens' attitudes were more similar to police and rapists than to rape counselors. He found that the citizens tended to attach a negative stigma to a rape

victim. The citizen group attributed a greater responsibility to a woman for rape prevention and for causing a rape than did the counselor group. For the ordinary citizen, rape is a threat which, if not controllable, could happen to them. Therefore, they must assign some control to the situation. This control comes from imposing justice. The ordinary citizen attributes responsibility to the victim and thus restores justice. Unlike the rape counselor, they are unable to help the victim in any way and therefore the option or alternative they choose is to assign responsibility to the victim.

These experiments demonstrate people's need to restore justice. People are motivated to attempt to restore justice if this is possible. First choice seems to be helping the victim. If this is not possible, justice is in some way imposed; this may be done by assigning responsibility to the blameless or negatively evaluating the victim. People seem to go through several steps until they are able to restore their just, controllable world.

Rationale

Research on the Just World Hypothesis suggests a reason for the stereotypes of battered women. The battered woman is a victim. This is something which, if not controllable,

could happen to anyone. Therefore, some explanation is needed for the battering of this woman.

Most people are unable to restore justice by aiding battered women. They can either assign responsibility to the battered woman or derogate her. They assign responsibility by saying that she deserved her battering, she caused it herself. If responsibility cannot be assigned then the victim will be derogated. As stated earlier, people believe battered women to be low income, masochistic women who have no desire to leave their husbands.

There seem to be three steps or alternatives here: aiding the victim, assigning responsibility, or derogating the victim. If the first two are unavailable, that is, if the option of assigning responsibility was taken away by telling people the victim was not responsible, as well as an inability to help the victim, then the only alternative would be for people to negatively evaluate the victim. Thus, the degree to which a woman is thought to deserve her battering will be dependent on factors such as the person's ability to help the victim, responsibility for the battering, and her personal characteristics.

In the present study subjects were given case studies of battered women and asked to rate the woman in the study

on various bipolar traits related to likability. The independent variables were Responsibility of the victim and severity of harm. The Low Responsibility condition indicated that the woman had no knowledge, prior to the marriage, of her husband's tendency to batter. The High Responsibility condition indicated that the woman knew prior to marriage that the husband had a history of battering. Severity of harm was manipulated by having the more severely battered women sent to the hospital upon consultation with a doctor while less severely battered women were allowed to return home.

Based on previous research it was predicted that the less responsible the battered woman was perceived to be for her situation the more negatively she would be evaluated. Based on Jones and Aronson (1973), if the woman is thought to be responsible she would be better liked than the woman who is not thought to be responsible. Severity of the battering was also considered here. Severity of the beating would, according to Walster (1966), lead observers to perceive the woman as more at fault or responsible. Following from Walster (1966), it was predicted that the severely battered woman will be perceived as more at fault by being attributed more responsibility.

METHOD

A pilot study was done to assess the effectiveness of the manipulation of Responsibility.

Pilot Study

Subjects: Forty-two first year college students were paid to participate in the study. They were recruited from first year psychology courses. Although given the opportunity, no subjects refused to take part in the study.

Procedure: Two case studies were used. These case studies described two battered women, Marion and Joan, and gave information as to their social status. For each case study there were two conditions: either the woman had pre-marital knowledge (High Responsibility) of her husband's tendency to batter or the woman had no prior knowledge of the battering (Low Responsibility). The four case studies (2 women by 2 levels of Responsibility), (see Appendix A) were randomly ordered and distributed in two classes. Each subject received one case study and was asked to read it and answer questions about it.

A questionnaire was used to assess the Responsibility manipulation. It contained six questions, five fillers and one question concerning assignment of reponsibility (see

appendix B). A thirteen point scale was used to rate level of Responsibility.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Husband Completely Responsible						Both Equally Responsible						Wife Completely Responsible

A low score on the scale indicated that the husband was responsible, while a high score indicated that the wife was responsible.

Results of Pilot Study

T-tests were performed between conditions of High and Low Responsibility. No differences were found between case studies and therefore data were collapsed across them. Significant differences were found (t=1.716, d.f.=40, p<.05) and the Responsibility manipulation was clearly in the predicted direction, Low Responsibility having a mean of 5.57 and High Responsibility a mean of 7.0. It was decided to continue with the main experiment.

Main Experiment

Subjects: Two hundred and thirty-four first year college students were paid to participate in the experiment. Subjects were run in groups of approximately 30 recruited as in the pilot study. As in the pilot, there were no refusals.

Materials: To increase the external validity of the results, three case studies describing women of varying socioeconomic backgrounds were used. Although these studies were fictitious, they were, for authenticity, based loosely on descriptions of actual battered women, provided by a social worker in the field.

A questionnaire included the question on the Responsibility manipulation as well as 10 bipolar adjectives which had been selected for their mean rating on likability (Anderson, 1968). These adjectives were:

friendly-unfriendly

honest-dishonest

kind-unkind

trustworthy-untrustworthy

sincere-insincere

warm-cold

pleasant-unpleasant

likable-dislikable

unselfish-selfish

courageous-cowardly

A t-test was performed on the adjectives to test for differences in ratings on Likableness and a significant difference was found ($t=27.8$, d.f.$=17$, $p<0.001$). The positive adjectives (Mean$=520$) were rated higher on Likableness than the negative adjectives (Mean$=82$). These adjectives were balanced for meaning with the positive adjectives having a mean of 370 and the negative having a mean of 372. A t-test was performed and no difference was found between amount of meaning of the positive (Mean$=370$) and negative (Mean$=372$) adjectives ($t=.107$, d.f.$=17$, $p=.758$). The thirteen point scale used in the pilot study was again used in the main experiment for the responsibility question. A seven point scale was used for the 10 bipolar adjectives with a low score indicating a negative evaluation and a high score indicating a positive evaluation. Questions on the victim's satisfaction and happiness were also included (see Appendix C).

Procedure: Responsibility of harm was manipulated by the inclusion of a sentence about pre-marital knowledge of the husband's tendency to batter. In the High Responsibility condition, the sentence read:

They dated for a long time before they were married and during this time (woman's name) learned that (husband's name) first marriage ended

because he physically beat his wife.

In the Low Responsibility condition, the sentence read:

> They had not been dating long before they were
> married and it wasn't until a couple of months
> after they were married that (woman's name)
> learned that (husband's name) first marriage ended
> because he physically beat his wife.

A condition of Undetermined Responsibility was also included. This was done to see where subjects would place the level of responsibility. In this case no mention was made about the woman's knowledge of the husband's tendency to batter.

Severity of harm was manipulated by the inclusion of two sentences about hospitalization. The More Severe condition included the sentence:

> Last week, following a beating, (woman's name)
> went to the doctor. He examined her, felt that
> the damage was serious, and had her admitted to
> the hospital.

while the Less Severe condition included the sentence:

> Last week, following a beating, (woman's name)
> went to the doctor. He examined her, felt that
> the damage wasn't serious, and sent her home.

There were three cases (Lorraine, Joan and Marion), each one with three levels of Responsibility (High, Low and Undetermined) and two levels of severity (More Severe and Less Severe) for a total of 18 cases (see Appendix D). The 18 cases were as follows:

CASE 1: Marion, with High Responsibility and More Severe harm.

CASE 2: Marion, with High Responsibility and Less Severe harm.

CASE 3: Marion, with Low Responsibility and More Severe harm.

CASE 4: Marion, with Low Responsibility and Less Severe harm.

CASE 5: Marion, with Undetermined Responsibility and More Severe harm.

CASE 6: Marion, with Undetermined Responsibility and Less Severe harm.

CASE 7: Joan, with High Responsibility and More Severe harm.

CASE 8: Joan, with High Responsibility and Less Severe harm.

CASE 9: Joan, with Low Responsibility and More Severe harm.

CASE 10: Joan, with Low Responsibility and Less Severe harm.

CASE 11: Joan, with Undetermined Responsibility and More Severe harm.

CASE 12: Joan, with Undetermined Responsibility and Less Severe harm.

CASE 13: Lorraine, with High Responsibility and More Severe harm.

CASE 14: Lorraine, with High
Responsibility and Less Severe harm.

CASE 15: Lorraine, with Low
Responsibility and More Severe harm.

CASE 16: Lorraine, with Low
Responsibility and Less Severe harm.

CASE 17: Lorraine, with Undetermined
Responsibility and More Severe harm.

CASE 18: Lorraine, with Undetermined
Responsibility and Less Severe harm.

The case studies were randomly ordered and distributed to subjects who were in eight classes of approximately 30 each. Each subject received one case study and was asked to read it and answer questions about it. They were asked to rate the woman on responsibility and to rate her on the 10 bipolar adjectives. The happiness and satisfaction scales were also rated.

RESULTS

Check on Manipulation

Results indicate that the Responsibility manipulation was effective. An Anova was performed on the data and although the manipulation was not seen to be significant, it was in the predicted direction (F=2.425, d.f.=192, p<.09). An a priori contrast was performed between the Low Responsibility(Mean=5.65) and High Responsibility(Mean=6.57)

conditions. The difference was found to be significant
(t=-2.097, d.f.=230, p=.037) and the means were in the
predicted direction (see Table 1). A post-hoc comparison of
the condition of Undetermined Responsibility (Mean=5.87)
showed that it was not significantly different from either
of the other Responsibility manipulations but was in the
direction of the Low Responsibility condition. This will be
discussed later.

Likability

A Pearson Correlation was performed on the 10 bipolar
adjectives. All of the adjectives were found to be
significantly intercorrelated except for courageous, which
was not correlated significantly with friendly (p=.12), warm
(p=.16), and unselfish (p=.12) (see Table 2). These 10
items were then summed to form one variable which was named
Likability. High scores indicate a high amount of
Likability or a positive evaluation, while low scores
indicate a low amount of Likability or a negative
evaluation. Results for each of the components are found in
Appendix E.

The data was analysed by a 2 (gender) by 3 (women) by 3
(levels of Responsibility) by 2 (levels of Severity) Analysis
of Variance for the dependent measures of Likability and
Responsibility (see Tables 3 and 4). (For a complete table

Table 1

Comparison of Responsibility Cells for Responsibility

Group	Means	Comparison Between Groups		significance
		Comparison Group	t-values	
L. R.	5.65	H. R.	-2.097	$p < .037$
H. R.	6.55	U. R.	1.586	$p > .114$
U. R.	5.87	L. R.	.504	$p > .615$

Table 2

Correlation Matrix of the 10 Bipolar Adjectives

	Friendly	Honest	Kind	Trustworthy	Sincere	Warm	Pleasant	Likable	Unselfish	Courageous
Friendly	1.0000	0.2763 P=0.000	0.6120 P=0.000	0.4704 P=0.000	0.3726 P=0.000	0.4728 P=0.000	0.6386 P=0.000	0.3763 P=0.000	0.2599 P=0.000	0.0759 P=0.127
Honest	0.2763 P=0.000	1.0000	0.3041 P=0.000	0.5003 P=0.000	0.4069 P=0.000	0.2490 P=0.000	0.2018 P=0.001	0.3911 P=0.000	0.1903 P=0.002	0.3838 P=0.000
Kind	0.6120 P=0.000	0.3041 P=0.000	1.0000	0.4833 P=0.000	0.4449 P=0.000	0.4316 P=0.000	0.4953 P=0.000	0.4709 P=0.000	0.4659 P=0.000	0.1215 P=0.034
Trustworthy	0.4704 P=0.000	0.5303 P=0.000	0.4833 P=0.000	1.0000	0.5291 P=0.000	0.3239 P=0.000	0.3750 P=0.000	0.5195 P=0.000	0.3244 P=0.000	0.1685 P=0.005
Sincere	0.3726 P=0.000	0.4069 P=0.000	0.4449 P=0.000	0.5291 P=0.000	1.0000	0.2723 P=0.000	0.2952 P=0.000	0.4710 P=0.001	0.3905 P=0.000	0.3075 P=0.000
Warm	0.4728 P=0.000	0.2490 P=0.000	0.4316 P=0.000	0.3239 P=0.000	0.2723 P=0.000	1.0000	0.5895 P=0.000	0.2143 P=0.001	0.2691 P=0.000	0.0642 P=0.167
Pleasant	0.6386 P=0.000	0.2018 P=0.001	0.4953 P=0.000	0.3750 P=0.000	0.2952 P=0.000	0.5895 P=0.000	1.0000	0.4026 P=0.000	0.3197 P=0.000	0.1079 P=0.052
Likable	0.3763 P=0.000	0.3911 P=0.000	0.4709 P=0.000	0.5195 P=0.000	0.4710 P=0.000	0.2143 P=0.101	0.4026 P=0.000	1.0000	0.3449 P=0.000	0.2777 P=0.000
Unselfish	0.2599 P=0.000	0.1903 P=0.002	0.4659 P=0.000	0.3244 P=0.000	0.3905 P=0.000	0.2691 P=0.000	0.3197 P=0.000	0.3449 P=0.000	1.0000	0.0757 P=0.128
Courageous	0.0759 P=0.127	0.3838 P=0.000	0.1215 P=0.034	0.1685 P=0.005	0.3075 P=0.000	0.0642 P=0.167	0.1079 P=0.052	0.2777 P=0.000	0.0757 P=0.128	1.0000

Table 3

Anova table of Likability by Responsibility,

Severity, Case and Gender

Source of Variation	DF	F	Signif. of F
Main Effects	6	2.760	0.014
Responsibility	2	5.799	0.004
Severity	1	0.011	0.916
Case	2	0.371	0.691
Gender	1	3.353	0.069
2-Way Interactions	13	0.375	0.976
Resp. by Severity	2	0.158	0.854
Resp. by Case	4	0.560	0.692
Resp. by Gender	2	0.358	0.700
Severity by Case	2	0.613	0.543
Severity by Gender	1	0.083	0.773
Case by Gender	2	0.078	0.925
3-Way Interactions	12	0.742	0.709
Resp. by Severity by Case	4	1.324	0.263
Resp. by Severity by Gender	2	0.299	0.742
Resp. by Case by Gender	4	0.213	0.931
Severity by Case by Gender	2	0.836	0.435
4-Way Interactions	4	1.492	0.206
Resp. by Severity by Case by Gender	4	1.492	0.206
Explained	35	1.037	0.421
Residual	186		
Total	221		

Table 4

Anova Table of Responsibility Manipulation by

Responsibility, Severity, Case and Gender

Source of Variation	DF	F	Signif. of F
Main Effects	6	2.130	0.052
Responsibility	2	2.425	0.091
Severity	1	3.950	0.048
Case	2	1.373	0.256
Gender	1	1.195	0.276
2-Way Interactions	13	0.717	0.746
Resp. by Severity	2	0.942	0.392
Resp. by Case	4	0.286	0.887
Resp. by Gender	2	0.306	0.737
Resp. by Case	2	0.495	0.610
Severity by Gender	1	3.823	0.052
Case by Gender	2	0.166	0.847
3-Way Interactions	12	1.250	0.252
Resp. by Severity by Case	4	0.945	0.439
Resp. by Severity by Gender	2	0.281	0.755
Resp. by Case by Gender	4	2.347	0.056
Severity by Case by Gender	2	0.501	0.607
4-Way Interactions	4	1.295	0.274
Resp. by Severity by Case by Gender	4	1.295	0.274
Explained	35	1.208	0.212
Residual	192		
Total	227		

of means refer to Table 5).

There were 3 separate cases used in the study to increase the external validity of the results. When Likability was analysed by case no significant differences were found (F=.371;d.f.=2,186;p=.691). The rest of the results will therefore be discussed as collapsed across cases.

As was predicted, the woman in the Low Responsibility condition was liked (Likability, Mean=46.00) less than the woman in the High Responsibility condition (Likability, Mean=50.48) and the Undetermined Responsibility condition (Mean=47.43). This difference was significant (F=5.799;d.f.=2,186;p=.004). A post hoc comparison (Sheffe) between these cells for Likability was then performed and it was found that the High Responsibility condition differed significantly from both the Low Responsibility (t=-3.53,d.f.=225,p<.001) and Undetermined Responsibility condition (t=2.92,d.f.=225,p<.006), (see Table 6).

It was also predicted that the More Severe the harm, the more responsible the woman would be found to be. This was not the case. The midpoint of the scale was 7 with the husband's responsibility condition on the lower end. As the husband's responsibility increased, the wife's decreased as

Table 5

Table of Means for Responsibility and Likability

Group	Responsibility Mean	Likability Mean
L. R.	5.65	46.00
H. R.	6.55	50.70
U. R.	5.87	46.91
L. S.	6.35	47.84
M. S.	5.66	48.15

Table 6

Comparison of Responsibility Cells for Likability

Group	Means	Comparison Between Groups		significance
		Comparison Group	t-value	
L. R.	46.00	H. R.	-3.56	p < .001
H. R.	50.70	U. R.	2.92	p < .004
U. R.	46.91	L. R.	.692	p > .49

a function of the scale. In the More Severe condition, more responsibility was attributed to the husband (Mean= 5.66) whereas in the Less Severe condition, less responsibility was attributed to the husband (Mean=6.35). This difference was significant $(F=3.95; d.f.=2,192; p=.048)$. This was, though, still in the direction of the husband's responsibility. There were no differences found between levels of severity for Likability $(F=.011; d.f.=1,186; p=.916)$.

Data was also analysed by gender of subject. Although no significant differences between gender for the Likability variable were found, females rated the woman more positively (48.86) than the males (46.62), $(F=3.35; d.f.=1,186; p<.06)$.

For the measure of happiness, it was found that the woman in the More Severe abuse condition (Mean=2.51) were seen to be significantly less happy $(F=3.97; d.f.=1,192; p<.048)$ than the women in the Less Severe abuse condition (Mean=2.82). It was also found that the women Joan and Lorraine were seen as significantly more happy than Marion $(F=4.91; d.f.=2,192; p<.008)$. Looking closely at the case studies no apparent reason was seen for this result. Marion's description did not seem to differ significantly from the others on socioeconomic or other factors.

For the variable of satisfaction it was found that women with Low Responsibility (2.31) were significantly less satisfied than women with High (Mean=3.04) or Undetermined (Mean=2.80) Responsibility (F=5.716;d.f.=2,192;p<.004). Women with Less Severe abuse were also significantly more satisfied (Mean=2.95) than women with More Severe abuse (Mean=2.48),(F=6.48;d.f.=1,192;p<.012).

DISCUSSION

The results of this experiment show strong support for a Just World explanation for attitudes toward battered women. As was predicted, women in the Low Responsibility condition were evaluated more negatively than women in the High Responsibility condition. This was seen to be true, not only for the summed variable, Likability, but for all 10 components of the summed variable. Because the responsible person is seen to be at fault, there is no need to search further for a just explanation. If she is not responsible, then the only alternative left to the observers to restore justice is derogation of the victim. The More Responsible woman seemed to be seen as in control of her fate or at fault whereas the woman in the Low Responsibility condition has no control and is clearly not at fault. How is it, then, that observers can reconcile this lack of fault with the beatings? They derogate the victim. If she is beaten,

there must be a reason. If it is not that she is
responsible, then some other explanation is necessary. The
subjects evaluate her negatively and thus justify the
beatings and restore their just world. The explanation to
themselves is that this could not happen to them because it
happens only to bad people.

In looking at the condition of Undetermined
Responsibility, it was seen that it did not differ from the
High and Low Responsibility. Subjects did, however,
evaluate the victim negatively, as negatively as they did
the woman in the Low Responsibility condition. Evidently,
the restoration of justice does not follow, in sequence, the
alternatives stated earlier. Rather, when several
alternatives are available, a choice is made about how to
restore justice. In this case, instead of assigning
responsibility, the subjects chose to negatively evaluate
the victim.

In real life, of course, responsibility of the battered
woman is not manipulated. For the most part, the woman is
in a condition of Undetermined Responsibility when seen by
observers. Therefore, it is this condition which is most
similar to the world outside of the laboratory. If the
woman is seen in a negative light, it could have a number of
repercussions. A battered woman often seeks help from

outside agencies (Carlson, 1977). If the people working in these agencies are unable to give her aid, they might view this woman negatively. Then it is probable that they will be less inclined to do their utmost to come to the aid of other battered women.

These repercussions may also affect the woman's outcome in the judicial system. If lawyers and judges view the battered women negatively, their chances of getting a fair deal are greatly reduced. That women have trouble getting out of their marriage and getting help from outside agencies was seen earlier. The Just World Hypothesis, then, explains many of the problems that battered women have when trying to escape from their marriage.

It is to be hoped that these agencies, given the opportunity to reward the victim by giving them solace and protection, would not derogate the victim and find them at fault. However, as was seen in Feild's (1978) study on rape victims, policemen who were given this opportunity, still thought of rape victims in the same light as the rapists did. It is possible then, that this will be true for battered women as well. This puts the battered woman in a vicious bind.

The results also showed that, unlike Walster (1966),

the woman in the More Severe harm case was seen as less responsible for her fate. Walster found that the more serious the harm, the more at fault the victim (or the person who caused the harm) was seen to be. In the present context, it could be argued that the husband is the person causing the harm. (In all conditions, he was attributed a greater proportion of the responsibility for the battering). If interpreted in this manner, the results support Walster in that the More Severe the harm, the more responsible the person who caused the harm is seen to be.

As mentioned in the results, there was a trend for females to rate the woman more positively than did the males. This difference did approach significance. It is possible that they identified with the battered women in some way. This was suggested by Lerner and Matthews (1967) who reasoned that identification with a victim is an important determinant of whether a person responds to a victim with compassion or rejection. If observers identify with the victim, they are likely to respond with sympathy and understanding, rather than rejection.

For battered women this has some serious implications. If females identify with the battered women but males do not, the women again may have trouble finding help. Most police officers, judges and lawyers are male. Because this

is so, they do not identify with the battered woman and may view her negatively. Perhaps, then, it is best for battered women to seek out female lawyers, judges and police officers to ensure more aid. Since Transition House workers are generally female, the victims would get better help from them because the workers would view them less negatively.

For the measure of happiness, the woman with More Severe abuse was seen to be significantly less happy than the woman with Less Severe abuse. This is understandable and expected.

For the measure of satisfaction, it was seen that women with Low Responsibility for the battering were significantly less satisfied than women with High Responsibility. This is understandable. The woman with Low Responsibility was described as having no knowledge of her husband's battering prior to marriage. She, therefore, would be seen as more dissatisfied with her lot. The woman with Less Severe abuse was also seen as more satisfied than the woman with More Severe abuse. Again, this result was expected. It is natural that one would perceive a woman with More Severe abuse as less satisfied than one with Less Severe abuse. Thus, where restoration of justice is not involved, subjects' perception of the victim tend to be in a "common sense" direction. Here, too, the victim was already

derogated so there was no further need to justify her suffering.

It has been seen that the Just World Hypothesis does play a role in attitudes toward battered women. The less responsible woman is derogated, whereas the more responsible woman is not. As well, it was seen that the amount of harm played a role in assignation of responsibility and that gender differences were found.

The results have, in all likelihood, a high degree of external validity. Three separate cases were used to maximize external validity. The general population's major contact with the battered woman is through written news reports and subjects read about the battered woman, therefore this method seems to possess external validity. These results then, may be representative of the general population, at least to some degree. The main problem with the external validity is that a student population was used. This is supposedly a more educated population. One would assume that a more educated population would not make these assumptions about the victims but this is, at least for this study, not the case. It can be seen that it is important to study a more general population, as well as pertinent subgroups of the population like lawers and policemen.

Conclusion

Lerner's Just World Hypothesis appears to play a large role in people's attitudes toward battered women. The implications for these battered women are that unless they seek help from women, their chances of enlisting aid may be impaired. Because of people's need to restore a just world, they perceive battered women to be bad people who deserve their fate. There are more global implications of Lerner's hypothesis as well. Rubin and Peplau (1975) state:

> a strong belief in the just-world may encourage acceptance of existing social and political institutions. As a consequence, this belief may discourage social activism of the sort designed to correct real injustices. (p. 81-82)

It seems necessary to somehow change people's belief in a just world, or at least modify it slightly. For this the whole socialization process may have to change slightly. Rubin and Peplau (1973) suggest that parents should stop telling children that all their misfortunes are a result of some punishment. They also suggest that changes in television's message that "good guys always win" and "bad guys always lose" might also be helpful.

Meanwhile, what of battered women? More research is necessary. The next logical step would seem to be a similar study using lawyers, doctors, judges and policemen as subjects. Further work with gender differences would also

be of interest.

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Appendix A

4   Marion(not her real name) is 35 years old and has been married for 10 years. Her husband, Bob(not his real name), is 37 years old and this is the second marriage for both of them. They are from a small community (population 1000) on the Avalon Penninsula. Marion works part-time at the fish plant in the summer months while Bob collects Social Assistance. Neither Bob nor Marion finished high school although she did finish grade ten. Bob quit after grade eight. They have four children ages 2, 4, 8, and 9. They had not been dating long before they were married and it wasn't until a couple of months after they were married that Marion learned that Bob's first marriage had ended because Bob had physically beat his wife. This is about the time that Bob began to beat Marion. He has continued to do so until the present time.

Marion(not her real name) is 35 years old and has been married for 10 years. Her husband, Bob(not his real name), is 37 years old and this is the second marriage for both of them. They are from a small community (population 1000) on the Avalon Penninsula. Marion works part-time at the fish plant in the summer months while Bob collects Social Assistance. Neither Bob nor Marion finished high school although she did finish grade ten. Bob quit after grade eight. They have four children ages 2, 4, 8, and 9. They dated for a long time before they were married and during this time Marion learned that Bob's first wife left him because he physically beat her. However, Marion did not feel that this would be a problem in their marriage. Bob started to beat Marion a couple of months after they were married. He has continued to do so until the present time.

Joan(not her real name) is 38 years old and has been married for
14 years. Her husband, John(not his real name), is 40 and all this is the
second marriage for both of them. Joan works part-time while John owns
and runs a small business which is doing well. They are both from the
city. Joan never finished high school but John did and then went on to
do several business courses. They have four children ages 5, 7, 10,
and 13. They had not dated for a long time before they were married
and it wasn't until a couple of months after they were married that
Joan learned that John's first wife had left him because he physically
beat her. This is about the time that John began to beat Joan. He
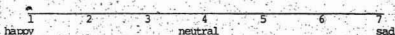has continued to do so until the present time.

Joan(not her real name) is 38 years old and has been married for 14 years. Her husband, John(not his real name), is 40 and this is the second marriage for both of them. Joan works part-time while John owns and runs a small business which is doing well. They are both from the city. Joan never finished high school but John did and then went on to do several business courses. They have four children ages 5, 7, 10, and 13. They dated for a long time before they were married and during this time Joan learned that John's first wife had left him because he had physically beat her. However, Joan did not feel that this would be a problem in their marriage. John started to beat Joan a couple of months after they were married. He has continued to do so until the present time.
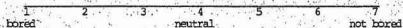
Appendix B

From the information given in the case study, please estimate the following:

1. Do you think this woman is;

```
1        2        3        4        5        6        7
happy                  neutral                    sad
```

2. Do you think this woman is;

```
1        2        3        4        5        6        7
bored                  neutral                not bored
```

3. Do you think this woman is;

```
1        2        3        4        5        6        7
lonely                 neutral               not lonely
```

4. Do you think this woman is;

```
1        2        3        4        5        6        7
satisfied              neutral            not satisfied
```
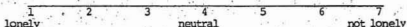
5. Do you think you would like to meet this woman;

```
1        2        3        4        5        6        7
yes, very much         neutral           no, not at all
```

6. Who do you think is most responsible for this woman's situation?

```
1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10   11   12   13
Husband              Both                     Wife
Completely          Equally               Completely
Responsible         Responsible           Responsible
```
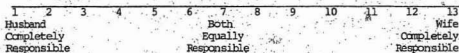
Appendix C

From the information given in the case study, please estimate the following:

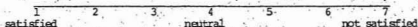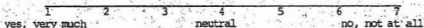1. Do you think this woman is

```
  1 ------ 2 ------ 3 ------ 4 ------ 5 ------ 6 ------ 7
happy                    neutral                      sad
```

2. Do you think this woman is

```
  1 ------ 2 ------ 3 ------ 4 ------ 5 ------ 6 ------ 7
satisfied                neutral              not satisfied
```

3. Who do you think is most responsible for this woman's situation?

```
1 -- 2 -- 3 -- 4 -- 5 -- 6 -- 7 -- 8 -- 9 -- 10 -- 11 -- 12 -- 13
Husband                    Both                        Wife
Completely                Equally                   Completely
Responsible              Responsible                 Responsible
```

Now, please rate the woman in the case study on the following traits:

1.
```
  1 ------ 2 ------ 3 ------ 4 ------ 5 ------ 6 ------ 7
unfriendly               neutral                   friendly
```

2.
```
  1 ------ 2 ------ 3 ------ 4 ------ 5 ------ 6 ------ 7
honest                   neutral                  dishonest
```

3.
```
  1 ------ 2 ------ 3 ------ 4 ------ 5 ------ 6 ------ 7
unkind                   neutral                       kind
```

4.
```
  1 ------ 2 ------ 3 ------ 4 ------ 5 ------ 6 ------ 7
trustworthy              neutral               untrustworthy
```

.52

5.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
sincere			neutral			insincere

6.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
cold			neutral			warm

7.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
unpleasant			neutral			pleasant

8.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
likable			neutral			dislikable

9.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
selfish			neutral			unselfish

10.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
courageous			neutral			cowardly
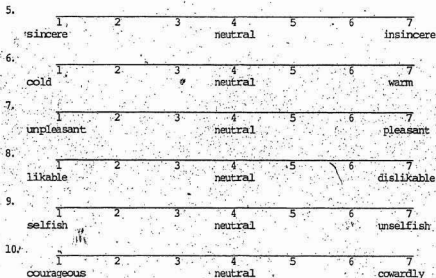
Appendix D

Marion(not her real name) is 35 years old and has been married for
10 years. Her husband, Bob(not his real name), is 37 years old and this
is the second marriage for both of them. They are from a small community
(population 1000) on the Avalon Penninsula. Marion works part-time at
the fish plant in the summer months while Bob collects Social Assistance.
Neither Bob nor Marion finished high school although she did finish grade
ten. Bob quit after grade eight. They have four children ages 2, 4, 8,
and 9. They dated for a long time before they were married and during
this time Marion learned that Bob's first marriage ended because he
physically beat his wife. However, Marion did not feel that this would
be a problem in their marriage. Bob started to beat Marion a couple of
months after they were married. This beating has continued until the
present time. Last week, following a beating, Marion went to the doctor.
He examined her, felt that the damage was serious, and had her admitted to
the hospital.

Marion (not her real name) is 35 years old and has been married for 10 years. Her husband, Bob (not his real name), is 37 years old and this is the second marriage for both of them. They are from a small community (population 1000) on the Avalon Penninsula. Marion works part-time at the fish plant in the summer months while Bob collects Social Assistance. Neither Bob nor Marion finished high school although she did finish grade ten. Bob quit after grade eight. They have four children ages 2 4, 8, and 9. They dated for a long time before they were married and during this time Marion learned that Bob's first marriage ended because he physically beat his wife. However, Marion did not feel that this could be a problem in their marriage. Bob started to beat Marion a couple of months after they were married. This beating has continued until the present time. Last week, following a beating, Marion went to the doctor. He examined her, felt the damage wasn't serious, and sent her home.

Marion (not her real name) is 35 years old and has been married for 10 years. Her husband, Bob (not his real name), is 37 years old and this is the second marriage for both of them. They are from a small community (population 1000) on the Avalon Penninsula. Marion works part-time at the fish plant in the summer months while Bob collects Social Assistance. Neither Bob nor Marion finished high school although she did finish grade ten. Bob quit after grade eight. They have four children ages 2, 4, 8, and 9. They had not been dating long before they were married and it wasn't until a couple of months after they were married that Marion learned that Bob's first marriage had ended because Bob had physically beat his wife. At about this time Bob began to beat Marion. This beating has continued until the present time. Last week, following a beating, Marion went to the doctor. He examined her, felt that the damage was serious, and had her admitted to the hospital.

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Joan(not her real name) is 38 years old and has been married for 14 years. Her husband, John(not his real name), is 40 and this is the second marriage for both of them. Joan works part-time while John owns and runs a small business which is doing well. They are both from the city. Joan never finished high school but John did and then went on to do several business courses. They have four children ages 5, 7, 10, and 13. They dated for a long time before they were married and during this time Joan learned that John's first marriage ended because he physically beat his wife. However, Joan did not feel that this would be a problem in their marriage. John started to beat Joan a couple of months after they were married. The beating has continued until the present time. Last week, following a beating, Joan went to the doctor. He examined her, felt that the damage was serious, and had her admitted to the hospital.

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Lorraine (not her real name) is 53 years old and has been married for 25 years. Her husband, Paul (not his real name), is 60 years old and this is the second marriage for both of them. Lorraine is a farmer and Paul, until he hurt his back 15 years ago, was a fisherman. Both are from a small community in Trinity Bay (population 1000). Both Lorraine and Paul have little formal education. They have two children ages 20 and 22. They dated for a long time before they were married and during this time Lorraine learned that Paul's first marriage ended because he physically beat his wife. However, Lorraine did not feel that this would be a problem in their marriage. Paul started to beat Lorraine a couple of months after they were married. This beating has continued until the present time. Last week, following a beating, Lorraine went to the doctor. He examined her, felt that the damage was serious, and had her admitted to the hospital.

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Appendix E

When Likability was broken down into its 10 component parts, several interesting things emerged. The case was seen to have no effect on 9 of the components while the trustworthy component was significant over cases $(F=3.19; d.f.=2,187; p=.043)$. This difference was assumed to be a statistical artifact of the multiple comparisons and was not looked at further.

The Low Responsibility person was found to be significantly less pleasant $(F=4.43; d.f.=2,187; p<.013)$, warm $(F=5.80; d.f.=2,187; p<.004)$, friendly $(F=4.43; d.f.=2,192; p<.013)$, honest $(F=3.46; d.f.=2,192; p<.033)$, kind $(F=3.035; d.f.=2,187; p<.05)$ and trustworthy $(F=5.20; d.f.=2,187; p<.006)$. She was also found to be less likable, less unselfish, less courageous and less sincere. Although these last four were not significant, all were in the predicted direction and likable was approaching significance $(F=2.70; d.f.=2,186; p<.07)$.

Gender differences occurred for trustworthy, sincere and unselfish. Females (4.99) found the woman to be more trustworthy than did the males (Mean=4.49), $(F=7.75; d.f.=1,187; p<.006)$, Females (Mean= 5.12) also found the woman to be more sincere than did the male subjects (Mean=4.34), $(F=25.12; d.f.=1,187; p<.001)$, and for unselfish, the females (Mean=5.41) found the woman to be

more   unselfish   than   did   the   males
(Mean=4.91),(F=9.262;d.f.=1,186;p<.003).   In   all   three
cases, then, the female viewed the woman more positively. A
significant interaction between responsibility, gender, case
and abuse was found for friendly. A significant interaction
between abuse, case and gender was also seen for trustworthy
(p=.050).   No   explanation   could   be   found   for   these
interactions and they will not be discussed further.