

Contraceptive needs more than slick ads

Encare Oval instructions are a bit like the Constitution. Much depends on how the reader interprets them.

But the contraceptive's advertisements, geared toward women who are concerned about their bodies and perhaps wary of the pill, promote it with the image that Encare is to women as condoms are to men; quick, effective and only required at the moment.

The carefree image isn't confined to Encare promotion; another suppository marketed under the name Semicid also sells itself as a chance to "say good-bye" to the pill, IUD, et al.

The implication is that these sup-

positories provide passports to discreet, unobnoxious and reliable birth control. However, family planning experts rate foam contraceptives at 70-85 percent effectiveness. Encare's active ingredient is the same used in most foam contraceptive.

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Birth control specialists stress that simultaneous use of more than one method of contraception is essential when using foams. Needless to say, a woman using suppository contracep-

tion in the same spirit men rely on condoms takes a bigger gamble.

Encare ads talk around the percentage questions, as do manufacturer representatives. They point to recent U.S. reports that will supposedly back the glowing accounts of earlier West German studies on Encare's sperm-killing capacity.

Meanwhile, Encare continues advertising on the strength of mere reference to the fact the tests have been conducted, and the company's word that the results were good. Nothing more.

If you choose to use suppositories alone, better add a stopwatch to your

cache of bedtime paraphernalia. Maximum protection lasts only during the time from 10 minutes to one hour after application. (Ready? Wait. . . begin!)

Agreed, Encare and its suppository siblings are potentially more convenient and systemically safer than most woman-oriented contraceptives, and we sure don't mind anything that makes it easier to avoid untimely pregnancy.

But just because a product offers convenience doesn't mean sexual partners should stake everything on one small, torpedo-shaped pellet that is actually little more than a capsulized incarnation of spermicidal foam.

YOURS

An old, itching scab

Biology Professor McConnaughey's Jan. 17 letter, 'The Prostitution of Science,' struck a nerve that elicited a particular sensation I liken to an old itching, scab that refuses to slough.

As an ex-engineer who at one time worked for Pratt & Whitney, the world's foremost manufacturer of jet engines, I can attest to the dilemma of economics and ethics on which McConnaughey focuses.

I remember Pratt & Whitney's 40th Anniversary celebration (my key chain says 1935-1975); it included an impressive display of aircraft which included some of the most sophisticated aerial weaponry in the world.

The Berrigan brothers, leading a pitifully small group of people, protested — in their concern for, and their fear of, that oh so subtle transition from the unsane to the insane — by throwing blood-red paint on the military aircraft. They generally disrupted the pervading atmosphere of smug accomplishment that tends to scum without an occasional stirring-up.

The following day I sat reticently silent (*that was my fault*) as my fellow engineers noisily and unanimously belittled the protest with the tapping of their red-tipped canes. These professional cohorts, these friends of mine, were considerate, law-abiding people; yet they worked merrily, many diligently, under the defence contracts and among the desktop issues of 'Aviation Week and Space Technology' which echoed the same unsanity.

I admire Professor McConnaughey's courage and fortitude in his assumption of personal responsibility, but I believe placing a blame specifically on the scientists, engineers and technicians, is as limiting in scope as those particular specializations.

Four decades ago Lewis Mumford wrote:

Choice manifests itself in society in small increments and moment to moment decisions as well as in loud dramatic struggles; and he who does not see choice in the development of the machine merely



betrays his incapacity to observe the cumulative effects until they are bunched together so closely that they seem completely external and impersonal . . . technics . . . does not form an independent system, like the universe: it exists as an element in human culture and it promises well or ill as the social groups that exploit it promise well or ill. The machine itself makes no demands and holds out no promises: it is the human spirit that makes demands and keeps promises.

A generalist by inclination, I extend Professor McConnaughey's "scientists as prostitutes" simile to more general terms; to other educators, to MBA students, to philosophers, to the bankteller: to ourselves.

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University umbrella umpire takes umbrage

Now that the rainy season is upon us, I feel compelled, as a concerned citizen of the University, to bring to the attention of my fellow students one of the more disreputable manifestos of the season; that is, the carrying of umbrellas.

My purpose in exposing this scandalous activity to the light of public censure is twofold. First, it is a simple cry of anger over the buffeting I have received from innumerable umbrellas in the course of the past few weeks.

By necessity I have honed my dodging skill to a razor-edged quickness of reaction; still, were it not for the fact that I wear glasses I would have at least one gouged eye, if not two, to go with the mass of contusions on my cheeks and shoulders.

A stoic disregard for these painful injuries has been my attitude in the past. It is my attitude no longer.

The sight, day in, day out, of hundreds of people, with monstrous disdain for the safety of others, sallying forth much as knights on horseback with leveled lances, sweeping all before them as they hold their umbrellas high, has finally proved too much to bear.

Rage and indignation have consumed me, and I had to act.

Of course, a letter is a pretty feeble manner of expressing one's anger, if that is all that is intended. Better I should knock a few of the hated devices from the hands of their owners, stomp them into the muddy turf, and send their owners sprawling after them, if all I seek is the mitigation of my rage.

But I have a second purpose in mind. I wish, beyond a statement of my displeasure, to look deep into the curious phenomenon of umbrella carrying, to list its implications, its hidden purposes and secret designations. What does it mean to carry an umbrella?

Upon first spying an umbrella, I think immediately of the twin terrors of privilege and elitism. There is something essentially undemocratic about the noxious contraption.

Rather than everyone sharing alike the vicissitudes of the environment, we have the disheartening picture of a snobbish clique flaunting their superiority as they swagger down the streets.

Oblivious to those around them, even to the point of stabbing unsuspecting travelers with the spiny metal tips of their unfurled umbrellas, which are raked across the faces of these unfortunate people, they

carry on as if a God-given right existed for them to dominate the sidewalks.

This sense of superiority on the part of the umbrella carriers, revealed as a disgusting unconcern for the rights of others, a crudity of manner which reflects a crudity of mind, is in fact a false one.

Behind this contemptuous regard of the exalted for the execrable, the deserving for the damned, lies an irrational fear of Nature.

To open oneself to the delights of a fine winter rain, to feel the invigorating flow of water on one's cheek and jaw, to meet the elements directly and profit by the experience, this brings a grimace of horror and revulsion to the umbrella carriers.

They will do anything, anything to separate themselves from the frightful visage of slavish devotion to the great idol Umbrella as he holds his fetish high.

If personal safety could be set aside, if I could pause from the challenging task of avoiding the next umbrella, which seems fated to lodge in my nose, I would laugh in the face of its carrier. To what ridiculous depths he sinks, to what absurd contrivances he is reduced!

There is nothing more comical than the sight of a hemisphere of cloth and metal bobbing down the street, the unbreakable grip of its terrified occupant proclaiming his slavish devotion to the great idol Umbrella as he holds his fetish high.

There is also nothing more chilling than when the umbrellas begin to gather. Taken in isolation they are comic; taken in concert they are disturbing, they are tragic.

If man is doomed to fall ever deeper into the gaping maw of an impersonal, uncaring world, surely the sight of hundreds of umbrellas parading through the campus, trumpeting their uniformity, each and every one the same depressing black, is a sign of it.

What is to be done? Simply this; we must snap out of it before it is too late. We must throw off the stultifying influence of the umbrella. Let us dispense with these hateful devices, let us banish them from our sight. Then shall we walk as brothers in the cool cleansing rain of God's good earth.

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