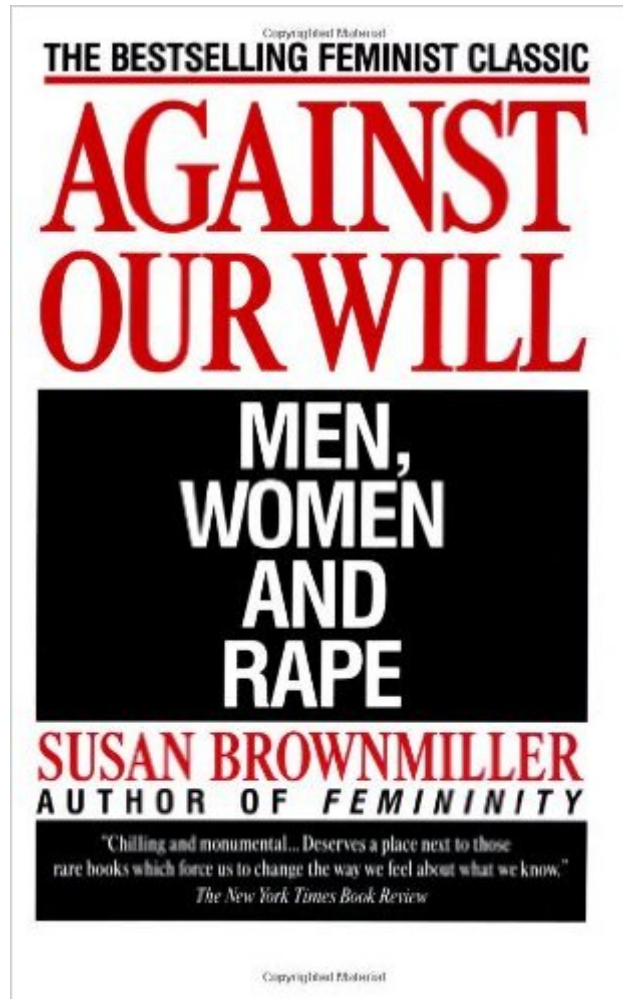


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Against Our Will: Men, Women, And Rape



Synopsis

"The most comprehensive study of rape ever offered to the public...It forces readers to take a fresh look at their own attitudes toward this devastating crime."NEWSWEEKAs powerful and timely now as when it was first published, AGAINST OUR WILL stands as a unique document of the history of politics, the sociology of rape and the inherent and ingrained inequality of men and women under the law. In lucid, persuasive prose, Brownmiller has created a definitive, devastating work of lasting social importance.Chosen by THE NEW YORK TIMES BOOK REVIEW as One of the Outstanding Books of the Year

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Published in the midst of the second wave women's movement AGAINST OUR WILL remains an integral book in the feminist literary canon to the present day. Employing an historical analysis Brownmiller reveals in exquisite detail how some men have been subjugating some women since Biblical times. Her thesis of the use of rape during wartimes as an arsenal for the winning army is especially strong and admirable. This section alone deserves to be read by anyone interested in gender and women's studies as it clearly demonstrates how rape has been used to further antagonize and horrify the defeated population. The utilization of rape during the World Wars, Vietnam, Bangladesh, and Serbia is certainly a difficult bit of knowledge to swallow. This book clearly demonstrates how rape has been used to keep some women on edge and weary of being both in public spaces and in their own homes.Despite Brownmiller's important thesis I have several

problems with AGAINST OUR WILL. Brownmiller has a tendency to over-emphasize her arguments with a deluge of statistics and case studies. It's almost as if she inserted every historical example she could find to further her arguments. Less is better in this instance. If she pared down her examples I believe her thesis wouldn't have been diluted in any such way. Another objection I have to AGAINST OUR WILL is her assertion of the following quote from her introduction, "Man's discovery that his genitalia could serve as a weapon to generate fear must rank as one of the most important discoveries of prehistoric times...[Rape] is nothing more or less than a conscious process of intimidation by which all men keep all women in a state of fear". My problem with this passage is two-fold.

Susan Brownmiller (born 1935) is an American feminist journalist, author, and activist; she co-founded the "Women Against Pornography" group in 1979. She has written other books, such as *In Our Time: Memoir of a Revolution*, *Femininity*, *Shirley Chisholm*, *Waverly Place* (a novel), etc. She wrote in the introductory section, "A Personal Statement" to this 1975 book, "I may have been shortchanged here and there, but I have never been coerced. Yet there did come a time when I knew with certainty that I HAD to write a book about rape | when a group of my women friends discussed rape one evening in the fall of 1970, I fairly shrieked in dismay, I KNEW what rape was, and what it wasn't. Rape was | a product of a diseased, deranged mind. Rape wasn't a feminist issue | I learned that evening | that victims of rape could be women I knew | I learned that in ways I preferred to deny the threat of rape had profoundly affected my life | Never one to acknowledge my vulnerability, I found myself forced by my sisters in feminism to look it squarely in the eye. I wrote this book because I am a woman who changed her mind about rape.

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