

“Expert at rape”

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Commenting on a verse of Srimad-Bhagavatam (4.25.41), in which a young woman accepts the sexual advances of a king, Srila Prabhupada says, “A man is always famous for his aggression toward a beautiful woman, and such aggression is sometimes considered rape. Although rape is not legally allowed, it is a fact that a woman likes a man who is very expert at rape.”

Understandably, this comment has raised questions. What is Srila Prabhupada saying? In 1999 a woman in the Hare Krishna community wrote me about this. Here is the reply I gave.

Thank you for your letter, regarding Srila Prabhupada’s comments about rape in the purport to **4.25.41**. You have asked for some further explanation.

Clearly, Srila Prabhupada does not intend to say that what women really want is, for example, to be mugged and violated in Central Park.

When you look at the translation and purport for **Text 42** and consider the two purports together, you can get a better understanding of Srila Prabhupada’s point.

In essence: The male wants to conquer, and the female wants to be conquered. A woman does not want to be sheepishly asked her hand by a bashful, weak-kneed Milquetoast. She wants to be pursued and won, to be fought over by strong and eager suitors, to be “swept off her feet.”

In that sense, a man is attractive to a woman when he is bold, strong, valorous, assertive, aggressive, “manly,” and so on.

Hollywood knows this, and so we have box-office stars like Sylvester Stallone, Arnold Schwarzenegger (or however he spells his name), et al.

When I lived in San Diego, I used to frequent a used book shop which (apart from the books I was looking for) had rows and rows of what the book trade calls “romances”—novels for whom the intended readers are obviously women. These books are not high literature; they are formulaic. But they sell like mad. And even from the covers, the formula is obvious: Whatever the details of the storyline, the woman is won, conquered, overpowered, possessed by a strong,

powerful man.

I don't mean to say that women have no taste for higher literature. My point is simply that Hollywood and the book trade are tapping into primal psychological veins, where the blood—you can bet your millions on it—is sure to be flowing. The film producers and book publishers know the heart of their audience.

Of course, “rape” carries with it images of guns, bruises, and brutal thugs—hardly what any woman hopes for. But the essential feature—a man who is strong and aggressive—is sexually attractive.

The ultimate attractive male, of course, is Krishna Himself. He carried off Rukmini Devi, snatching her like a lion from the clutches of the jackal Sisupala. Krishna married Satya after defeating seven bulls. Krishna married Lakshmana by carrying her off at her svayamvara ceremony, “in the same way that Garuda snatched the jar of nectar from the hands of the demigods.” And Krishna married sixteen thousand other wives after rescuing them from the demon Bhaumasura.

The rapists and romantic heroes of the material world are nothing but perverted reflections of Krishna. Krishna is the real object of love for all living entities. As long as we continue in material consciousness, identifying with our material bodies, as male and female, and forgetting Krishna, we have to continue forever as the cheaters and the cheaters—the rapists and the raped—in this miserable material world. And therefore our real business is to develop our dormant love for Krishna.

I hope this answers your question. Hare Krishna.