

## Reality Check:

As stated, the preceding Issues Download was written from a masculist perspective. Gender politics is essentially the politics of gender complaint. Feminism presents the rhetoric of female complaint. Masculism presents the rhetoric of male complaint. In its presentation of the male experience, masculist rhetoric is negative in its slant and victim-oriented because that is the mirror-opposite of feminism, and that is the nature of a *politicized* perspective. Masculism leads men (and women) toward a view of the world that focuses exclusively on the positives inherent in the female experience and the negatives inherent in the male experience. This is a *politicized* perspective in that it generates the emotional fuel (anger) required in order to bring about a political movement—the masculist movement.

As David Thomas said, I do not spend my whole time feeling miserable about being male. That is not the point. The point is that gender politics is a battle of rhetoric and if men chose to enter that battle, they'd find themselves well armed. In an effort to get men to “show up” for the Battle of the Sexes, masculism attempts the seem-ingly *impossible* task of goading men into mobilizing on their own behalf—enough, at least, so that *if* there should ever be something like an equalist movement, there would be masculist-savvy men enough to occupy the other side of the negotiation table.

Feminism is not simply the female perspective; it is the female perspective *politicized*. Polls indicate that the majority of women do not self-identify as feminists. Many women do not experience the world as feminism describes it. Likewise, many men do not experience the world as masculism describes it. Feminism and masculism are equally valid and equally flawed. Because they are equally flawed, they are equally vulnerable to counterargument and dismissal. Yet both feminism and masculism have *important* truths to offer.

To keep this masculism conscious, allow me now to remove my masculist “hat” and reflect on the meaning of all this. Rhetoric is the *art* of argument. There is no final proof. Yet rhetoric is also prose designed to persuade and so, like feminist rhetoric, masculist rhetoric attempts to assemble argument that is as unassailable as possible.

Therefore, I have tended to present these issues as less nebulous than they truly are. All gender issues are controversial. The sexual issues are *amazingly* hazy. And as soon as I get through venting about the vastly greater resources devoted to breast cancer as compared with prostate cancer, I read Cathy Young arguing that at least *some* of that extra emphasis is justified by the fact that breast cancer generally claims its victims at a younger age. And so it goes. There is *always* another fact, another truth, another angle—and thus these issues stretch on ad infinitum.

I have no problem with the open-endedness of gender politics because I do not enter gender politics with the goal of “wining.” I’m not trying to tell the reader what the world *is*; only what the world *looks like* from the politicized male perspective. I present the truths of Issues Download to prove that masculist rhetoric can do whatever feminist rhetoric can do and thus invite the reader to join me in taking a leap of faith. There is only one conclusion that satisfies; there is only one bottom line that takes into account *all* the truths, *all* the facts, *all* the angles—It All Balances Out!

Do I lack sympathy toward women? I happen to think that women are *drowning* in sympathy, that *super*-sympathizing with women is an underlying *cause* of women’s issues (more on that coming up). In any case, I present a vast litany of male complaint and conclude with It All Balances Out because I truly believe that Woman, in her own way, suffers her version of the human condition *equally*. I *do* sympathize with women; I just don’t sympathize with women *exclusively*.

Nevertheless, if this male complaint should seem exaggerated and one-sided, or feel gratingly negative and shrill with self-pity, let it hold up a mirror to the equal-opposite rhetoric of female complaint that currently saturates our world. And bear in mind that within feminist rhetoric there are no reality checks. Feminism doesn’t admit that its rhetoric is flawed and incomplete. Within female-ism there are no humble reminders of its limitations and no efforts to take in a bigger picture that would include female power, complicity, or accountability.

## Summary:

We have only skimmed eight of the major men's issues—each worthy of book-length treatment. Other men's issues include: anti-male bias within social services, shelters, charities, and throughout the criminal justice system. Also, juvenile homes and imprisonment as *causes* of male criminality (teaching, instilling, and promoting violent, antisocial, and criminal attitudes in the approximately *two million* men currently incarcerated within the U.S.).<sup>i</sup> Also, the vast majority of those falsely arrested, imprisoned, and executed are male.

There are also numerous but vague issues regarding women's evident freedom to roam at will throughout the realms and roles of both masculinity and femininity while men remain relatively constrained. For example, "They were textbook tomboys. Now Pink, Avril Lavigne and Alicia Keys talk about their flip side." Pop star Alecia Moore, better known as Pink, says it best:

I enjoy being a girl. . . . I'm a woman and I like to be cute. I love to wear dresses. But I'm still a tomboy. I like to go dirt-bike riding. . . . I grew up climbing trees with my brother. It's who I am. I'm both a tomboy and a woman. . . . On my wedding day my friends and family were shocked I was in a pretty white dress. I loved it! I loved feeling like a princess. It's so fun to feel sexy and it's so fun being a girl.<sup>ii</sup>

A man can't imagine roaming from one gender realm into the other with comparable ease and freedom. Any little girl can don a baseball cap, T-shirt, jeans, and sneakers—the exact same outfit the boys are wearing—and join their opposite sex out on the playing field. By contrast, a little boy who dons a dress and joins his opposite sex to play with dolls risks a trip to the nearest psychiatrist. No male can proudly declare himself a "janegirl" and do so without diminishment to his masculine identity the way any female can proudly declare herself a tomboy at no cost to her feminine identity.

"In almost every realm of life, from clothing to jobs, it's considered perfectly fine for girls and women to do male things," comments Jean Twenge, a psychology professor at San Diego State University, "but it's not considered fine for males to do female things."<sup>iii</sup>

According to fact-based reality, in *countless* ways, women have the power and men are the victims.

Perhaps the single most important point to be made here is this: whatever Woman's claim to owning victimhood and powerlessness may be, whatever grip upon the human psyche it may have, *it is based on something other than logic*. It is based on something primal and instinctual and erotic and mythopoetic and chivalrous and sentimental and emotional and *irrational*. And this is why logic proves so ineffective against it. The logical case that turns feminism upside down has *long* been available to thinking men. In his book *The Fraud of Feminism* (1913), E. Balfour Bax made the case a century ago and expressed the exasperation masculinists have been expressing ever since:

It is rarely that anyone takes the trouble to refute the legend in general, or any specific case adduced as an illustration of it. When, however, the bluff is exposed, when the real facts of the case are laid bare to public notice, and woman is shown, not only as not oppressed but as privileged, up to the top of her bent, then the apostles of feminism, male and female, being unable to make even a plausible case out in reply, with one consent resort to the boycott, and by ignoring what they cannot answer, seek to stop the spread of the unpleasant truth so dangerous to their cause.<sup>iv</sup>

To be sure, Woman has a long list of complaints. But . . . so what? Man, should he issue them, has a long list of complaints as well.

By what "reasoning" then is the MP/FV gender belief system maintained? It would seem that the traditional, foundational, irrational, unexamined network of assumptions that float so hazily in the mind add up something like this:

Men enjoy a patriarchal paradise of male power and privilege; therefore, when it comes to considerations of victimization, men become invisible. Since men occupy "paradise," any and all female suffering is received as *proof* that women suffer more—actual *comparisons*, unnecessary. Should the "privileged" sex have the temerity to complain, the assumption that men have *the* power and are therefore autonomous beings *solely* responsible for their self-inflicted miseries, negates empathy toward men. Besides, it is unseemly for big, strong, "tough as nails" men to complain in any case.

On the other hand, women, being “powerless,” rate *only* empathy/*no* accountability for their miseries because *their* miseries are “forced” upon them by “patriarchy.” Moreover, Woman’s complaints prove that Man’s not doing his job. If Man was *really* doing his job, he would so perfectly protect and provide for her—solve her problems, carry her burdens—that Woman should be left with *no* complaints. Besides, women, being essentially “angels,” should never be made to suffer anything in any case.

Later in the book I’ll address the value of sentimentality, the emotional richness sentiment adds to human life. But for now I wish only to suggest that the above “reasoning” may be sentimentally resonant and emotionally compelling, but *logically*, it is *bankrupt*.

The light side of Man’s indulgence of Woman’s cosmic complaint is a sincere love of Woman and a sincere desire to protect and please her and gain her admiration. The shadow side of Man’s indulgence is a deep fear of Woman and a desire to enable Woman’s flight from accountability that he may keep the gift of accountability all to himself. In this way Man maintains relative ownership of responsibility and adulthood, and Woman remains safely ensconced within an angelic group of humanity known collectively as *innocent* “women&children.” Thus the myths of Male Power and Female Victimization dominate the belief system century after *century*.

But in *this* century, the game has truly changed. Having added a great deal of male power to her arsenal, her war against Man is wreaking havoc and both sexes are racking up war wounds. Do damage to Man and Woman does damage to her partner for love, for life, and for childrearing. All of society suffers the consequences. Do damage to masculinity and Woman does damage to her sons—so much so that the parents of an astonishing one-in-five boys has been worried enough about their sons to seek professional help for them!<sup>v</sup>

The cost of maintaining the feminist fable has become *too high*. We desperately need the rational to overcome the primitive instinctual so we can finally see *both* sides of gender reality.

We are absolutely *sure* that the battle between Woman and Man is a battle between David and Goliath with Woman cast as little David, the underdog, hopelessly outmatched and in need of extra help, extra empathy, extra empowerment. But this parable has something to teach us. Let us not forget that in the end David defeated Goliath because David, sling in hand, ultimately possessed *the superior weaponry*.

#### **“Arrows” #4: The Donner Party**

Because logic by itself has never proven effective against the MP/FV paradigm, I have added these “arrows” essays as a means of adding a purely emotional component.

Many years ago I watched a documentary on the Donner Party, an ill-fated group of pioneers headed across country to settle in the old west. The historian David McCullough narrates with his usual mesmerizing ease. But when the camera focused upon him, there was a recurring theme to his commentary.<sup>vi</sup> It was an “arrow” that pierced me over and over again.

Of the 81 members comprising the Donner Party—15 women, 25 men and 41 children—22 of the men perished while all but 5 of the women endured. In relaying these facts—and in what I regarded to be a rather smug, self-satisfied manner—McCullough invited the viewer to join with him in admiring the greater apparent strength and resilience of the women who managed to survive as compared with the apparently weak and relatively frail men who, under identical conditions, mostly all died off. If those are the facts of the matter, then why didn’t I take my medicine like a man? Because, contained within the documentary itself, was evidence enough to suggest that the men had essentially sacrificed themselves so that the women and children could live. For additional background, among other sources, I read George R. Stewart’s classic, *Ordeal By Hunger*.<sup>vii</sup>

The ordeal began in May of 1846 with the endless trek across the Great Plains. The men walked plying the whips that kept the oxen moving. “Driving oxen was man’s work. The women sat in the front seats of the wagons knitting.”<sup>viii</sup> What Stewart’s book makes clear is that *all* the work, all the physically arduous *work*, was man’s work.

With no road to travel on, the men had to build their own. “It was exhausting . . . the unceasing labor rapidly wore them down both in body and in temper.”<sup>ix</sup> Both the book and the documentary describe endless campaigns through intractable stretches of wilderness: “they struggled as if still in the nightmare, to open about six miles of road, cutting timber and hacking through brush, digging down side-hill, rolling out boulders, and leveling for creek-crossings.”<sup>x</sup> And from the documentary: “Time and again the hostile terrain brought them to a standstill while the men cursed and toiled and hacked a road through the dense undergrowth.” They hacked their way through dense thick-ets, pulled wagons sunk up to their axles in mud, hauled heavily laden wagons up embankments with block and tackle and cut down trees with axes; this they did hour after hour, day after day, week after week for *months* on end.

Men cut timber to mend the wagons and replace broken axles. On one such occasion, “a chisel slipped, and the blood spurted from a long gash across the back of 62-year-old George Donner’s hand. It was bound up, and he made light of it; there were other things, he said, more to be worried about than a cut hand.”<sup>xi</sup> We don’t know the half of men’s sufferings because men make “light” of them and keep their vulnerability hidden. All bravado notwithstanding, before the advent of antibiotics, cuts of this kind frequently led to infections that resulted in amputation and/or death.

By October, six of the Donner Party had died. Not surprisingly, all but one was male. The 81 remaining travelers made it as far as the foothills of the Sierra Nevada Mountains when they were trapped by record snowfall. With hands numbed by the cold, men labored for hours to cut firewood, suffering frostbite, while women and children stayed warm burning the firewood inside their makeshift camp.

It was *men* who undertook the nearly hopeless efforts to cross the snow-covered mountains on foot in order to seek and bring back help. Many died in the effort while others, thwarted by impossible conditions, hobbled back to camp nine-tenths dead. For the rare man who made it all the way to California and safety, “Honor, no less than love, demanded his return, for no man could have held up his head in the West of those days who had left his wife and child and was not ready to risk his life to bring them out.”<sup>xii</sup> And this they did. Men are, and have always been, honor *bound*. The bindings of honor are, in their own way, as real as bindings of rope. In not complaining but making light of his pain and suffering, a man is effectively bound and gagged.

Because his family was starving, William Eddy was given a little coffee. “This he prepared in a hot spring and gave to Eleanor and the children, stubbornly refusing to keep any of the scanty supply for himself. It was sufficient joy to see the children revive.”<sup>xiii</sup> Later: “Eddy had not eaten for forty-eight hours. Eleanor was almost as badly off, and even the babies had had nothing but the sugar and some coffee since leaving the sink.”<sup>xiv</sup> If they shared food equally, then why was his wife Eleanor *almost* as badly off?

In life and death situations, the children come first. Whatever’s left goes to the women, and *if* there’s anything left after that, it goes to the men. Just as the men of the Titanic sacrificed themselves so that most of the women and children could survive, evidence suggests that the same basic principle held sway within the equally mortal dangers faced by the Donner Party.

Nevertheless, reverence for the women reverberates throughout the documentary. “Somehow, Margaret Reid had managed to keep all her children alive. So had Peggy Breen and Tamsen Donner.” Somehow? I don’t believe in magic. Pure female superiority alone could not keep children from starving. Consumption of calories must have had something to do with it. And why no such reverence toward the men who had miraculously kept the women and children alive? How about the two men who had earlier rode on ahead, crossed the mountains and returned with other men and seven mules bearing food?

Only when conditions became utterly desperate did women join with men in attempting to cross the mountains on foot. The “Forlorn Hope,” as they called themselves, consisted of nine men, one boy of 12 and five women. In the aftermath, “Only 2 of the 10 men had made it through. All five women had survived.” In this way the viewer is led over and over again to conclude that the women were stronger than the men. But didn’t this documentary just get through making it clear that the women survived by eating the men who died? A little later we’re told that: “Two thirds of the women and children made it through. Two thirds of the men perished.”

The documentary is relentless on the matter, and, without further explanation, what else can the viewer conclude but that the women survived out of superior female strength while the men died owing to inferior male weakness? I guess we are to believe that even children are stronger than men.

But what *really* happened?

A more recent (2003) Discovery Channel documentary<sup>xv</sup> shed light on the matter by exposing two men to the same conditions that the Donner Party had endured. To glean more detailed information, the men had scientific instruments attached to them, and their exertion, heat loss, and calories burned were measured. “And from that [data] we can estimate how long they would have until they starved.”<sup>xvi</sup>

The Discovery Channel documentary makes *no mention* of the ratio of dying men/surviving women with which McCullough seems obsessed. How could it? Having established the connection between exposure/exertion/calorie burn and starvation, mention of the much higher male mortality rate would have made the male sacrifice much too obvious to pass the gates of political correctness.

*If* the Donner men even allowed themselves an *equal* portion of food throughout the ordeal (rather than chivalrously refusing even that much), then with their larger size and muscle mass, the men would, of course, tend to starve faster than the women. Additionally, men’s bodies burned precious extra calories to stave off the freezing cold they were more often subjected to. And men exhausted their fuel burning countless thousands of calories in grueling unceasing labor.

There is no mystery why more men than women died of injury, exposure, and starvation. Even in dying, the men’s bodies provided sustenance the women and children could feed upon. Despite McCullough’s insinuations, the men did not die of male inadequacy. They died of heroism. The women did not survive out of female superiority. They survived out of chivalry.

In arguing that It All Balances Out, there are more than just facts to consider. There is also the *emotional* component. Whatever monopoly feminists may presume to have on feelings of moral outrage, I can assure you that aware men can match those feelings note for note.

As I watched, I felt like reaching right through the TV screen and choking that smug feminist male to death. With what that historian knew of the whole story, how *dare* he cast women in the light of strong heroic survivors and men in the light of inadequate, dying weaklings?

But my rage extends beyond the neutered academics who champion the FEMale chauVINIST party line. I admit to being angry with the feminists themselves. Their self-righteous rhetoric is omnipresent in our world and is, after all, the *source* of the misandry that surrounds us. It is feminist ideology that has created a cultural environment where the knee-jerk impulse to flatter the female and shame the male is expressed *automatically*. I very much doubt that McCullough and company harbored any anti-male agenda. Nevertheless, whatever their intentions may have been, media injustice like this is *torture* to endure, and it is everywhere!

I can’t begin to convey the wounding of such staggering injustice toward my kind. It disgusts me. It is *evil*. Even when men are taking on the very worst of it, even when they are shielding women to the point of sacrificing their very *lives*, it is *still* against some absolute *law* of political correctness to say anything positive about males, *ever*.

Disparaging male toughness, strength, and courage cuts men to their core. It was to maintain their masculine image that those men took on *extra* hazards and hardships. In return, men ask only for fair acknowledgment, but we will *not* give it to them.

To add further insult to injury, there is the wound that comes of fighting an uphill battle against those (both female *and* male) who would suppress this very writing. It is all well and good for a man to writhe in agony over the cruelty of such injustice, but god forbid a woman should suffer the slight upset that may come from reading about it. To be an aware male is to suffer outrage upon outrage!

One of the reasons we so concern ourselves with women’s vulnerable emotions is that women make no effort to hide those vulner-able emotions. Upsetting a woman results in an emotional outburst, tears and tirades that leave men puddles of shame. One of the reasons we concern ourselves so little with men’s vulnerable emotions is that we don’t fully embrace the truth that men *have* such emotions. And that’s largely because men make *every* effort to hide those emotions. Part of the point of these “Arrows”

interludes is simply to reveal my own male vulnerability. I cannot ask men to show their vulnerability if I'm not willing to risk the same ridicule.

I am a logical man. I do not vent just to be self-indulgent. Every-thing is written to make a point. And the point, ultimately, is always the same: It All Balances Out. Men are loath to express the kinds of feelings I'm expressing. While emotional reveal of this kind is every-where expressed within the feminist literature, the male equivalent is largely missing. The illusion is thus maintained that *only women* suffer this kind of sexist torment. That's wrong. But the only way to prove it wrong is for men to *express* their true hurt and pain.

## The Battle of Rhetoric

In our world today the greatest enemy men face is the belief that men have *the* power and women are *the* victims. This MP/FV paradigm is not only false, it is *poisonous*. Feminism is Man's enemy to the exact degree that it teaches, enforces, and exploits the MP/FV belief system.

Not only does a belief in MP/FV lead inexorably to the Man-Bad/WomanGood (MB/WG) paradigm, additionally, it is the MP/FV paradigm that allows feminists (Woman's self-appointed spokes-persons) to come to the bargaining table saying in effect: "We women have *nothing*, you men have *everything*; just *give* us half of what you've got because that would only be fair." In his gender-political ignorance, his chivalry, and his blindness to the feminine shadow, Man sees no flaw in Woman's demand; so his honor and his integrity compel him to pour from his glass half "full" into Woman's glass half "empty" because that is only "fair."

Gender politics is essentially a battle of rhetoric and Man is losing this battle even to the point of abject absurdity.

*Clearly*, the assumption that men have *the* power leads to the assumption that justice is served by taking power away from men and giving it to women. If women are *the* victims, "fairness" dictates that women must be compensated with extra empathy plus special female-only attentions, efforts, advantages, and protections (feminism, affirmative action, quotas, Title IX, The Violence Against Women Act, women-only shelters, Offices of Women's Health (federal and state), President Obama's new White House Council on Women and Girls, over a thousand female-centric organizations of all kinds, plus *massive* federal funding to support women—emotionally, parentally, financial-ly, educationally, domestically—and to advance women—in business, science, academia, government, military—and so on). Moreover, if women are *the* victims then men are *the* victimizers and should be punished accordingly. The costs to men (male-only conscription and battlefields, restraining orders, "beatdead dads," mass imprisonment, "sexual harassment" lawsuits, vulnerability to false accusations, permanent stigmatization) are, again, plain to see.

In short, the MP/FV paradigm is an absolute *disaster* for men and, ultimately, *all* of Man's gender-political woes and rapid decline can be traced to its ubiquitous and subversive influence.

And yet, ironically, the farther men sink, the more they cling to the MP/FV paradigm as if it were a life raft. In the preface to the 25th anniversary edition of *The Manipulated Man*, author Esther Vilar explains it best. In recounting the costs she has incurred for daring question the MP/FV paradigm, she acknowledges the expected fem-inist hostility—"violent threats have not ceased to this date."

However, I had also underestimated men's fear of re-evaluating their position. Yet . . . the more that increasing unemployment forces them to adopt obsequious behaviour towards customers and superiors - then the more they have to be afraid of a recognition of their predicament. And the more essential it becomes to maintain their illusion that it is not they who are the slaves but those on whose behalf they subject themselves to such an existence.

As absurd as it may sound, today's men need feminism much more than their wives do. Feminists are the last ones who still describe men the way they like to see themselves: as egocentric, power-obsessed, ruthless and without inhibitions when it comes to satisfying their instincts. Therefore the most aggressive Women's Libbers find themselves in the strange predicament of doing more to maintain the status quo than anyone else. Without arrogant accusations, the macho man would no longer exist, except perhaps in the movies.<sup>xvii</sup>

Since emotional reality is what you make of it, men cling to the increasingly unsupportable notions of male power and privilege in an effort to cling to the fine feelings that accompany those illusions. But, for men, clinging to the MP/FV paradigm to keep from drowning is like clinging to an *anchor* to keep from drowning.

**A specific example:** In 1985 Lenore Weitzman, Ph.D., published a book claiming that in the aftermath of divorce women and children suffer an average 73 percent drop in their standard of living while men enjoy an average *increase* in their standard of living by 42 percent.<sup>xviii</sup> Largely in response, Sanford Braver (with Diane O’Connell) wrote *Divorced Dads: Shattering the Myths*.

“If ever anyone needed any evidence to fuel their outrage against divorced fathers,” says Braver, “to contribute to their bad divorced dad beliefs . . . this was what they were waiting for.”<sup>xix</sup> With the voracious manner in which the media and academia and divorce judges devoured Weitzman’s MP/FV stats, says Braver, “It would probably be fair to say that Weitzman’s findings are the most widely known and influential social science results of the last twenty years.”<sup>xx</sup> But how did Weitzman find a 73 percent drop where other researchers, including Braver, had found a 27 percent drop? Evidently, she did the number crunching that revealed divorced women *retaining* 73 percent of their former standard of living and mistook it for a 73 percent *decrease* in standard of living.

Seven years after publication, Weitzman finally admitted her original figures were wrong. “Weitzman apparently accepted the erroneous finding at face value because it fit with the woman-victim stereotype she preferred to believe,” asserts Braver. “And it caught the popular imagination for the same reasons. It ‘proved’ what we wanted to believe: Divorced moms suffer, while bad divorced dads profit.”<sup>xxi</sup> The findings were embraced and disseminated sans skepticism because, like other Ms-information, these figures appeared to affirm deeply internalized MP/FV and MB/WG paradigms.

Angered by the gross injustice contained within Weitzman’s grossly inaccurate stats, Braver took a deeper look at the situation—this time unconstrained by chivalry—and discovered mitigating factors he’d previously ignored. For example, there are a number of tax breaks accorded divorced mothers owing to their more common status as homeowners and heads of households with dependents as compared with divorced fathers more often taxed as renters and singles without dependents. Braver also added into the equation extra expenses many noncustodial fathers paid above and beyond childpayments (medical/dental insurance, gifts, food, clothing, etc.). In addition, many divorced fathers bore the extra cost of starting from scratch, having to purchase everything from linen to silverware, curtains to furniture.

Taking these and other factors under consideration, Braver concludes that, at the time of Weitzman’s study, divorced mothers and fathers actually experience *the same* short-term 3 to 5 percent drop in economic standard of living. But, over the long-term, women tend to improve their economic situation through increased dedication to schooling/career, then improve their situation further by marrying a new breadwinner (while continuing to receive childpayments from her old breadwinner). Meanwhile, divorced fathers tend to marry into new financial *obligations*.<sup>xxii</sup> But these truths, not so widely embraced, have had little effect upon the MP/FV/MB/WG fallout that came in the wake of Weitzman’s erroneous findings.

According to the best available fact-based *reality*, men fare *worse* in the aftermath of divorce, both economically *and* emotionally. Men are far more likely to forgive and go on loving and pining after their former spouse. Divorced husbands are far more likely to suffer parent-al alienation plus greater levels of depression and social isolation, more often seek psychiatric help, more often lose their jobs, and commit suicide.<sup>xxiii</sup> Given these truths, it’s not surprising that men initiate only a fraction of all divorce actions. According to MP/FV, however, Bad men, having *the* power, enjoying the “fruits” of divorce, abandon their families; while, Good women, *the* victims, suffering divorce, struggle vainly to establish and maintain committed relationships. The “solu-tion”? Legislate extra punishments that would dissuade feckless, over privileged men from abandoning their families.

Let Bruce Walker, executive coordinator at the District Attorney’s Council in Oklahoma City, paint a picture of what the MP/FV/MB/WG fallout actually looks like:

Deadbeat dads are the special targets of politicians hungry for the perfect scapegoat. Child-support enforcement must be tougher and tougher until all of these deadbeat dads are made to feel the lash, and all will be well. I have put hundreds of these deadbeat dads in jail, and I have collected child support from tens of thousands of them. I was the primary or only trial attorney in three child-support enforcement offices for eight years, and then I ran the Oklahoma child-support enforcement program for three years. . . . Many deadbeat dads are homeless, and an even greater percentage are poor. Because the calculation of a woman's income excludes many of the social welfare benefits she receives, the statistical picture of women in poverty is highly misleading. Not only are many deadbeat dads destitute, it is often their failures as providers which led their ex-wives to divorce them. I prosecuted one deadbeat dad who had been hospitalized for malnutrition and another who lived in the bed of a pick-up truck. Many times I prosecuted impoverished men on behalf of ex-wives who had remarried successful men and were living in comfortable conditions.<sup>xxiv</sup>

Beat-dead dads (men) are scapegoated, targeted, alienated, hounded, impoverished and imprisoned all under the pernicious falsehood that men have *the* power/women are *the* victims.

MP/FV-inspired divorce “reforms” include: alimony and child-payments set higher, often higher than men facing a “he-cession” can afford; increased aggression in hounding and/or imprisoning fathers for failure to pay what they are unable to pay; and “mandatory withhold-ing of child support from all fathers’ paychecks by the employer” (applicable in all 50 states).<sup>xxv</sup>

No longer do divorced fathers enjoy the solace of giving *directly* to their former families. Fathers pay the state and suffer the humiliation of being *presumed* “deadbeat” at the outset. All this, and mothers more often retain the children plus the family home and property, while men more often suffer paltry unenforced “visitation” rights, parental alienation, restraining orders, ex parte proceedings, false accusations, and going broke from legal fees attempting to overturn those false accusations.

Despite feminist indoctrination, by their *own* surveyed admission, “women actually reported feeling *more control* over the divorce settlement process than men . . . more ‘empowered’ than men. If any party feels he or she lacks empowerment, it is the fathers.”<sup>xxvi</sup> A subsequent survey found not one father who believed the system favored him in any way, but “*three times as many mothers thought it favored mothers as thought it favored fathers*. Indeed the newer reforms appear to have further tilted an already uneven playing field.”<sup>xxvii</sup> [Emphasis in the original] Even so, feminists “have unceasingly called for reforms that would, as law professor Kathleen Mahoney calls it, ‘level the playing field for women.’”<sup>xxviii</sup>

Even if Man’s cup should be ¼ full while Woman’s cup is ¾ full, feminists will demand that Man pour from his cup into hers to “level the playing field for women” (e.g., Emma Watson’s “HeForShe” campaign). The MP/FV paradigm is Man’s greatest enemy because belief in it leads to the widespread desire to take from and punish men. The degree to which Man embraces and reinforces belief in MP/FV is the degree to which Man foolishly draws unwarranted hostility in on himself. Man is thus manipulated into contributing to the anti-male prejudice that undermines him.

Fem-stats like Weitzman’s seem to offer the world proof of MP/FV/MB/WG, yet the *phenomenon* of fem-stats actually indicate the opposite. The outraged male reaction that demands greater giving to women/taking from men is indicative of ManGood. The feminist glut of self-serving stats and the *seven years* it took this feminist author to admit her error, are indicative of WomanBad. Ignoring mitigating factors within the male experience is indicative of MaleVictimization through the withholding of empathy toward men. And the degree to which feminist findings are unquestioningly embraced, circulated, and acted upon is indicative of FemalePower.

Newly confronted with masculist research and the undeniable facts of MaleVictimization, feminism typically responds with: “Patriar-chy” victimizes *both* sexes! Thus, men *remain solely* responsible for outcomes. But gender issues cannot be properly addressed so long as half the force of influence begetting those issues continues to be protected from accountability. More than this, in directing full societal blame and hostility at “Patriarchy,” feminism seeks to “win” the Battle by destroying Patriarchy while Matrisensus keeps right on going. But, in the Battle of the Sexes, the only *win* position is a *draw*.

It’s time to replace feminism with equalism.

Woman’s demand to be given half of Man’s power—while giving nothing in return—wreaks havoc because feminism’s “equality” is *false*. An analogy may help us picture this more clearly.



Suppose Man and Woman each has a pound of rice. He has a pound of white rice; she has a pound of brown rice. Imagine they exist within some beige environment in which his white rice stands out clearly while her brown rice tends to blend into the background. Wom-an, working the situation, says: “You have *all* the rice; I have none. If you were a Real Man, you’d give me half your rice because that would be fair.”

Now if Man—irrationally clinging to the MP/FV paradigm—gives Woman half his “rice,” leaving himself with one-quarter and she with three-quarters, is he being honorable, or is he only having his masculine obligation for honor used against him?

In coming to understand that the traditional gender system was a deeply flawed yet essentially balanced system, we come to understand that women rising/men sinking leads not toward, but *away* from *true* gender equality. For this reason, *true* gender equality must be *negoti-ated*, not *manipulated*.

The MP/FV paradigm is a *disaster* for men. Rather than foolishly embracing it, men must repudiate it. It is false and, in a sense, it is killing us! By extension, it is a disaster for women as well. Diminish men and you diminish fathers, husbands, brothers, and sons. Daughters, wives, sisters, and mothers suffer accordingly.

Additionally, Woman will not rate authentic respect until she is prepared to come to the bargaining table speaking honest truth. “If,” concurs Esther Vilar, “someone should want to change the destiny of our sex—a wish I had then as I have today—then that someone should attempt to do so with more honesty.”<sup>xxix</sup> Imagine Woman coming to the bargaining table in *all* honesty.

Woman says to Man: You have power, *I* have power; I experience victimization, *you* experience victimization—let’s *negotiate*. At that point Woman shows up as a high-integrity *adult* to be respected and bargained with. When it comes to loving men and respecting women—out to the truest and fullest extent—the MP/FV paradigm is that which stands in the way and It All Balances Out is that which clears the path.

So long as women are encouraged to view themselves as *the* victim sex and view men as the sex with *the* power, a battle (now escalated to a war?) between the sexes is inevitable. The “oppressed” sex will rail against their “oppressors” and their “oppressors” will, as always, run and duck for cover. The future “ceasefire” in the Battle of the Sexes in favor of a cooperative era of Peace, Love, and Understanding between the sexes is the reward; and it is attainable, but there is a deep psychic hurdle to jump.

Delving into the realms at the other end of the balance beam—realms from which both sexes tend to recoil—that is the hurdle to jump if we are to reach the perception of balance needed to bring about that ceasefire. We must dare recognize female power/accountability no matter how un-chivalrous it may *feel*. We must find the courage to recognize male victimization/vulnerability no matter how disconcert-ing it may *feel*.

However much it may disturb our collective image of the Marl-boro Man, we must resist the impulse to dismiss male complaint (but *only male* complaint) as “whining.” The three actors who played the part of the Marlboro Man—Wayne McLaren, David McLean, and Dick Hammer—*all* died of lung cancer!<sup>xxx</sup> Like it or not, male vul-nerability is *real*.

Despite their validity, men’s issues remain virtually unknown. It is said that women are powerless, but what greater power can there be than control over what is thought, what is said, and what is believed?

The vast majority of us, female *or male*, are incredulous that men could possibly have issues as women do. So it’s widely but falsely assumed that masculism must have something to do with “maintaining male supremacy.” That damning assumption keeps masculism from gaining credibility, which keeps men’s issues unknown. Nevertheless, if feminism at its best is about women seeking a fair shake in this world, then masculism at its best is nothing more sinister than men seeking the exact same thing for themselves.

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- iii Garcia, Guy, *The Decline of Men: How the American Male Is Getting Axed, Giving up, and Flipping Off His Future* (New York: Harper Perennial, 2009) p78.
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- v Tyre, Peg, "Struggling School-Age Boys: A new study says parents are right to worry about their sons," *Newsweek*, September 08, 2008. <http://www.newsweek.com/id/157898?GT1=43002>
- vi The American Experience: The Donner Party, WGBG Educational Foundation, WNET/Thirteen and Steeplechase Films, (1992), Directed by Ric Burns, PBS Paramount, DVD video. Note: When I saw this Ric Burns documentary on TV, it was presented as an episode of *The American Experience*. As such, short sequences hosted by David McCullough were filmed to introduce the documentary and integrate it into the series. These added sequences increased the number of references to women characterized as strong survivors as compared to the weak dying men. These inserts are not included in the DVD version cited above.
- vii Stewart, George R., *Ordeal By Hunger: The Classic Story of the Donner Party* (New York: Pocket Book edition, 1971)
- viii *Ibid.*, pp.8-9.
- ix *Ibid.*, p.26.
- x *Ibid.*, p.29.
- xi *Ibid.*, p.67.
- xii *Ibid.*, p.77.
- xiii *Ibid.*, p.59.
- xiv *Ibid.*, p.61.
- xv *Unsolved History: Donner Party*. Produced by Termite Productions for the Discovery Channel, Discovery Communications, Inc., 2003.
- xvi *Ibid.*, Pottgen, Paul, a representative from LifeCheck Corp.
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- xviii Braver, Sanford L., Ph.D., with O'Connell, Diane, *Divorced Dads: Shattering the Myths* (New York: Tarcher/Putnam, 1998) p.55.
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- xx *Ibid.*, p.58.
- xxi *Ibid.*, p.62.
- xxii *Ibid.*, pp.84-85.
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- xxiv Walker, Bruce, "Deadbeat Dads? Look Closer!" *Christian Science Monitor*, August 16, 1996, p.18.
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- xxvi *Ibid.*, p.101.
- xxvii *Ibid.*, p.103.
- xxviii *Ibid.*, p.94.
- xxix See, <http://www.theabsolute.net/misogyny/vilar.html>.
- xxx [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marlboro\\_Man](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marlboro_Man) (retrieved 06/17/10)