

### Issues Download #3 – Antipathy/Disposability

Could it be true that we care less about men's pain and men's lives than we do about women's? Warren Farrell writes:

I recently saw the movie *The River*. During the film Sissy Spacek has her arm punctured by a farm machine. The audience let out shouts of shock and revulsion. Several scenes later her husband – isolated from his family behind a picket line, living under conditions of squalor and low wages for weeks to earn enough to keep his family back in the warmth of their home – gets his face smashed in by the picketers. There was absolutely no reaction from the audience at the blood dripping out of the puncture wounds on his face.”<sup>i</sup>

As is true in war, men may be butchered and slaughtered indiscriminately in “action/adventure” movies. As in war, men on the movie screen are disposable. But the camera need only follow a woman around ominously, and the mere *threat* of violence toward a *woman* is apt to get the movie re-categorized as a “horror film.”<sup>ii</sup>

If a filmmaker wants maximum impact from the death or mistreatment of a character that has had little or no screen time, a woman is a more likely choice to play the victim because strong feelings of heartrending pathos can be wrung from an audience toward even an unknown female victim. The cult classic TV show *Twin Peaks* spent one and a half seasons solving the mystery of who killed Laura Palmer, a character we meet only in flashbacks but whose death becomes the obsession of the entire town. Could such pathos have been wrung from the murder of *Larry Palmer*?

The movie *Saving Private Ryan* graphically illustrates the sheer *disposability* of men. We bear witness to men suffering the horrors of war, yet our deepest sympathies are directed elsewhere. It is for the sake of his *mother* that Private Ryan is saved. That is, the male (Private Ryan) is not removed from the fray in order to spare *him* further horror, hazards, and hardships; nor is he removed to spare him the death that has already taken his brothers. No, the male is saved in order to spare a *female* (Mrs. Ryan) further sorrow. *And*, in the effort to save Private Ryan—for the sake of Ryan's mother—five *more* men die.

Note how often hostage negotiators make special pleas for the release of female hostages. Worldwide outrage forced Saddam Hussein to release the women and children from among his hostages, but *only* the *women* and children.<sup>iii</sup> Indeed, it's “women and children first” in every crisis situation. It is readily observable that 9 out of 10 pleas to help children in need feature the photograph of a girl.<sup>iv</sup> Where danger is present, (e.g., the Titanic) men often act on culturally reinforced instinct to protect women. On a daily basis, men routinely act as “bodyguards” for women, even at the risk—or cost—of their lives.

U.S. Secretary of Defense, Casper Weinberger spoke for many when he said, “I think women are too valuable to be in combat.”<sup>v</sup> As feminists observe that the *respected* male seems somehow more “important,” so masculinists observe that the *loved* female seems some-how more “valuable”—*intrinsically* valuable.

Author and men's rights activist Roy Schenk:

“I've hauled around a lot of GIs who have been blown to hell in close combat. I wouldn't want to do that with women,” was how Tech Sergeant Ron McCamish expressed it. . . . Obviously it is quite acceptable in our society to force men to risk and often lose their lives. But the overall attitude is that we cannot subject women to that threat. . . . In part, this is another aspect of men's training to protect women. But it clearly shows a value judgment that we men are somehow expendable.”<sup>vi</sup>

It is ironic that men who march off to war are vilified as the evil *cause* of war while men who refuse the battlefield are imprisoned for “draft evasion.” Some have been placed before firing squads and shot dead for “cowardice.” With such hostility directed against men who refuse the military role, is it any wonder that the guilt and shame internalized by conscientious objectors can goad such men into *volunteering* for even the most horrendous medical experiments?

In Minnesota, in 1944, Dr. Ancel Keys conducted an experiment to learn more about the effects of and recovery from starvation. More than two hundred conscientious objectors freely responded to Dr. Keys' initial call for volunteers. “It was amazing that so many men would volunteer to suffer for a full

year, under constant supervision, at no small risk—for free.”<sup>vii</sup> Only those who fail to understand the extreme male vulnerability to shame will be amazed at what men will suffer to escape excruciating accusations of “weakness” and “cow-ardice”—and suffer they did.

Though little more than living skeletons, the men had to endure horrific ordeals on the treadmill. One man, mortified by his own physical deterioration, broke down emotionally. “It was an era when the sight of a man crying was still rare and terrible.”<sup>viii</sup> At *any* level of torment, historically, men have been obligated to endure stoically. But the starving men were not the only victims of emotional suppression. Utterly ill-equipped to cope with male tears and equally ill-equipped to offer a fellow male emotional support, the experimenters “just hurriedly completed their measurements and left the crying man alone as soon as possible.”<sup>ix</sup>

Men more “important”/women more “valuable,” women intellectually suppressed/men emotionally suppressed: where feminists see only MP/FV, I see *mirror*-opposites everywhere I look.

Six months into the experiment, deranged with hunger, test subject #20 hatched off the middle three fingers of his left hand.<sup>x</sup> Was Sam Legg moved to become a masculist protesting the treatment of males? Did he come to understand his willingness to “volunteer” for torture as a form of “learned helplessness” and/or “internalized oppression”? Hardly. Despite loss of blood and risk of infection he refused food and successfully begged to remain in the experiment. “For the rest of my life,” pleaded Sam to Doctor Keys, “people are going to ask me what I did during the war. This experiment is my chance to give an honorable answer to that question.”<sup>xi</sup> Do women *ever* experience psychological coercion (“learned helplessness,” “internalized oppression”) at *this* level?

“The Great Starvation Experiment” was only one of many dreadful experiments conducted on conscientious objectors under the supervision of the Civilian Public Service (CPS). “The suffering of the CPS guinea pigs was the stuff of legend.

Forty eight CPS guinea pigs volunteered to wear lice-infested underwear in order to contract typhus. Other volunteers gargled the sputa from persons infected with pneumonia. Still another group strapped mosquito-filled boxes to their stomachs to contract malaria. The medical experiments satisfied some of the deep idealism held by these men; it allowed them to take risks and suffer for the betterment of their fellow man, all the while remaining true to their pacifist convictions.<sup>xii</sup>

Short of killing others, these men would endure *anything* to look themselves and others in the eye and say: “I might not have gone into battle, but I demonstrated my courage and paid the price for my country. I am a ‘real’ man.” Feminism’s power to define the terms has given “learned helplessness” and “internalized oppression” official credibility. In fact, these terms have been granted such *legal* credibility, they have been used successfully to defend women in courts of law—defend them even for the crime of killing their husbands.

Clearly, by any *rational* analysis of gender reality, these terms apply as well to men as to women, but what has reason to do with any of this? The terms are the exclusive property of females because only females have their own special “ism”—feminism.

While men who refused the battlefield searched their souls and agonized, their female counterparts were given a free pass. No such gnawing guilt trip was laid upon the souls of female “conscientious objectors.” “Rosy the Riveter” encouraged women to take on the onerous and hazardous work that men left behind. But at no time was Woman ever coerced, or even *asked*, to share in the collective guilt, to get a little blood on her hands even indirectly by, say, working in a munitions plant.

If women are so undervalued and disposable relative to men, then why weren’t women used to test the extremes of sleep deprivation, sensory deprivation, “g” forces, or the effects of LSD and many other dangerous drugs and medical procedures?

On the other hand, the lethal effects of radiation were well known when men were exposed to it in order to further medical knowledge on the subject. Just to satisfy military curiosity, U.S. soldiers were marched directly toward a mushroom cloud immediately following a nuclear test detonation (actual footage of this exists).<sup>xiii</sup> No masculist movement has raised awareness of male disposability. In general, we still believe that women are *the* victims specially entitled to virtually *all* cultural empathy.

Asking an audience to feel empathy toward men can result in dismaying levels of hostility. Christina Hoff Sommers describes the late *Playboy* columnist and men's advocate Asa Baber addressing an auditorium full of women.

Baber opened his talk by observing that on Mother's Day, the phone lines throughout the United States are jammed because everyone is trying to call home to talk to their mothers. On Father's Day, the lines are free. "We have to ask why there is so much less interest in fathers" . . . "It brought down the house," said Baber. "At first, I didn't get it. I thought my fly was open." But then he caught on and said, "If you think that is funny, you are going to think this is a laugh riot: I think the fact that our fathers are so much out of the loop is a major tragedy in our culture." . . . An outraged audience hissed and booed him.<sup>xiv</sup>

In fact, the ensuing hostility actually drove him from the stage.

Nancy Friday has also attempted stir up some "Sympathy for the Devil" male. Says she, "It wasn't unusual at those college lectures for angry young women in the audience to stand and shake their fists at me for being sympathetic to men. 'We don't give a damn about men!' they would yell. 'Why are you talking about *their* freedom?'"<sup>xv</sup> In her book, *Saving the Males: Why Men Matter, Why Women Should Care* (2008), Kathleen Parker allows that saving the males is an "unlikely vocation for a twenty-first-century woman."

When I tell my women friends I want to save the males, they look at me as if noticing for the first time that I am insane. And then they say something like "Are you out of your mind? This is still a male-dominated world. It's women who need saving. Screw the men!" Actually, that's a direct quote. The reality is that men already have been screwed—and not in the way they prefer. For the past thirty years or so, males have been under siege by a culture that too often embraces the notion that men are to blame for all of life's ills.<sup>xvi</sup>

Indeed, I call it the all-fault-is-male rule.

Actually, saving the males is the *perfect* vocation for a twenty-first-century woman. Men have been acting as women's heroes for millennia. Now is the perfect time for women to step up, earn respect by holding womankind accountable for the damage the shadow side of feminism has done men and, at long last, *be* heroes. Heroes get respect; self-proclaimed victims, "damsels in distress" who insist that it is *they* who always and forever "need saving," do not. Too bad, then, that women who are concerned enough about men to have noticed the sufferings of men and who are *woman* enough to want to rise up in defense of men are so rare as to be stared at as if "insane."

Feeling and expressing empathy toward women is going with the flow. Express empathy toward men and you are apt to find yourself paddling upstream against the wind, a rather *icy* wind at that. We are still not prepared to love men enough to lend them empathy; nor are we prepared to respect women enough to hold them accountable.

In his book *The Myth of Male Power*, Dr. Farrell compares and contrasts the events surrounding a male oil tanker captain responsible for an oil spill, vs. the events surrounding a female air traffic controller responsible for the deaths of 34 airline passengers.

Captain Hazelwood was tried, convicted, fined, and imprisoned. The sudden, unexpected schedule change that forced this exhausted captain and crew back to sea was ignored. His name and person were publicized, reviled, and everywhere made the butt of jokes. That the Captain and his crew had been drinking the night before got massive press. That they had been drinking with the understanding that they were now *off-duty* got no press at all. By contrast, we don't know the air traffic controller's name because friends, colleagues and officials (many male, presumably) all rushed to protect her. They took her to a hotel room, comforted her there for days, furnished her with "humor therapy" and a counselor, shielded her from the press, and focused on *her* grief, not the grief of the injured or of the families of the dead.<sup>xvii</sup>

It may occur to the reader to wonder: If we respect men so much, then why are we so quick to heap contempt upon them? Paradoxically, the contempt toward Captain Hazelwood was born of high expectations toward him. Being a man and a ship's captain, we expect him to perform without lapse of judgment or attentiveness. When he failed, he fell from those high expectations. The ruthless public reaction also carries the expectation that, being a man, he ought to be able to take it like a man. We expect

men to be competent and tough. Though disgraced, Hazelwood retained his high status as an adult man and as a ship's captain and was judged and treated accordingly.

But, when the female air traffic controller failed, she was let off the hook. She wasn't subjected to contempt because, in terms of competence, we expected less of her in the first place. She wasn't attacked in the media because we don't expect a woman to be tough enough to take it. Upon committing her fatal error, she immediately lost her professional status and even much of her adulthood, being transformed into a "damsel in distress" and protected accordingly.

It all comes down to a simple formula: Accountability without compassion is ruthless. It is what we more often direct at men. It is respecting men but not loving them. Compassion without accountability is infantilizing. It is what we more often direct at women. It is loving women but not respecting them.

When a man makes a fatal error he receives no empathy. When a woman makes a fatal error she receives nothing but empathy. Fault and blame are heaped upon him, while she is protected from fault and blame. Although women suffer all things along the respect axis, they are compensated with extra privilege in all things along the love axis.

Because we love women more than men, women have the greater *power* to elicit empathy. In fact, our disproportionate sympathies toward women provide the underlying emotional support for the women's movement. In reference to her early days in feminism, Nancy Friday writes, "There were men who were good feminists and who fought for women's rights."<sup>xviii</sup> Christina Hoff Sommers concurs: "It is worth remembering that Seneca Falls [feminist gathering] was organized by both men and women and that men actively participated in it and were welcomed."<sup>xix</sup> Both sexes love women more, so *both* sexes have championed and raised women's concerns to the level of major societal concerns. But the zero-empathy-toward-men rule leaves men powerless to raise their concerns to an equal level. Thus, the conspicuous presence of feminism, together with the conspicuous absence of masculism, is *itself* a measure of how much more empathy women enjoy compared to men.

Arlie Hochschild's *The Second Shift* had quite an impact. In our extra empathy toward women/antipathy toward men, we were all too easily convinced that married women work their first shift on the job and a "second shift" at home, while married men put in their only shift at work—then come home and watch TV, beer in one hand, remote in the other. From time immemorial we've been told that "A man works from sun to sun, but a woman's work is never done." Studies into the question, however, indicate otherwise. Joel Waldfrogel for slate.com:

Everyone from economists and sociologists to Oprah knows that wom-en work more than men. Their longer combined hours, at the home and at the office, stop men from taking afternoon naps on the couch and cause fights that end with men spending nights on the couch. And yet according to new study, those longer hours are a myth, because it's just not true that women carry a heavier load. . . . In the United States and other rich countries, men average 5.2 hours of market work a day and 2.7 hours of homework each day, while women average 3.4 hours of market work and 4.5 hours of homework per day. Adding these up, men work an average of 7.9 hours per day, while women work an average of—drum roll, please—7.9 hours per day. This is the first major finding of the new study. Whatever you may have heard on *The View*, when these economists accounted for market work and home-work, men and women spent about the same amount of time each day working.<sup>xx</sup>

What ought to be understood as *A View*—namely, the feminist view—has shoved all other gender perspectives off the map until *A View* has become *The View*. Nevertheless, when contributions both inside *and outside* the home are accounted for, (including a man's longer average workweek and commute time), a University of Michigan study tells us that women average fifty-six hours per week fulfilling their role in marriage, while men average sixty-one hours per week fulfilling theirs.<sup>xxi</sup> Yet the disparity may be larger than that.

*The Second Shift* lists fifty tasks more often performed by wives than husbands and it is likely that the University of Michigan study took such tasks under consideration in compiling its figures. In his book, *Women Can't Hear What Men Don't Say*, Warren Farrell lists fifty-four tasks more often performed by husbands than wives, but it's doubtful the U. of M. researchers had similar masculist awareness.

Farrell's list includes: full-time bodyguard; driving the car when both he and she have had too much to drink or when driving conditions are particularly bad or when entering a city where neither she nor he has ever been; coaching Little League; raking and mowing and weeding and trimming and other yard work; remodeling jobs; painting; assembling/fixing things; lifting and moving heavy objects; car maintenance; taking out the garbage; shoveling snow; salting sidewalks; cleaning out the grill, the gutters, the fireplace, the basement, the attic, and so on. Perhaps it is because we so completely take for granted many of the tasks men perform, that they don't seem to fully register.

Shoveling snow off the roof to prevent roof collapse, painting atop a ladder, moving the piano, getting underneath the car to fix it—men's duties include all chores most likely to result in injury and/or heart attack; yet because these tasks don't come under the definition of "housework," studies ignore them. Here we have yet another example of feminism's power to define the terms. By defining housework to mean tasks done on a *daily* basis, not tasks done on an *as-needed* basis, feminism spotlights female efforts while male efforts remain under appreciated.

For every dollar a man spends, a woman spends about a dollar and forty cents—yet feminism gets considerable mileage out of the notion that women's work is "unpaid." On payday, many a husband comes home and hands his paycheck over to his wife. Rarely does a wife pay her husband. It is men's work around the home that tends to go unpaid *and unrecognized*. At any moment a husband is expected and obligated to protect and defend his wife at the risk of or cost to his own health and/or life. What is he paid for that?

"Typically, men are more active than women," asserts Anne Moir. To back the claim she cites a South Carolina study of over 2,000 adults, ages 30 to 60, concluding that "men were 43 percent more active than women."<sup>xxii</sup> So what perceptual biases would account for the common assumption that men are the "lazy" sex?

Consider: A man comes home from a hard day at work. His wife sleeping on the couch looks to him like an angel. Returning each day to this lovely sweet innocent makes all his toil, all his life worthwhile. He goes to the linen closet to drape her in a blanket, keep her warm and safe. He kisses his woman-child on the cheek filled with adoration.

A woman comes home from a hard day at work. Is the sight of her husband sleeping on the couch an equally warm experience for her? Does he appear an angel, or more like a lazy burden? I dare say that his laying there does not make her life worthwhile. She probably does *not* adore his passivity. However exaggerated this compare-and-contrast may be, nonetheless, I believe it contains an accurate snapshot of the male-female perceptual biases in these matters.

Because women are more often valued for what they *are* (intrinsic values) and men are more often valued for what they *do* (extrinsic values), a resting woman is not experienced in quite the same way a resting man is experienced. The image of the resting man takes on more weight and prominence in the mind because it is a relatively distasteful image. Words like "lazy," "indolent," and "burdensome" come to mind much more readily.

Media bias telling us that men are "lazy," make less effort, and suffer fewer sacrifices is a form of gender bigotry. Even worse, women who believe such assertions are invited to feel righteous, victimized, and enraged at men. Wives taught to see no fault in themselves but to see only laziness, slovenliness, insensitivity, oppression, and dominance in their husbands will be wives with one foot out the door. Women do in fact initiate about 70 percent of all divorce actions.<sup>xxiii</sup> Men are relentlessly ridiculed for their fabled "fear of commitment." It would seem that, for many women, "commitment" is a sacred word indicative of adult maturity, but only up until the marriage contract has been signed. How many of those female-initiated divorces can be attributed to feminism's well-funded, systematic, and zealous dedication to poisoning the waters between women and men?

Disposable on the battlefield, disposable in hard/hazardous labor, disposable in divorce, disposable in parenting, disposable in prisons, disposable on the streets—Antipathy/Disposability is a men's issue because it is primarily men who are deprived of the support and concern that comes with gaining empathy, caring, and compassion. And it is primarily men who suffer the disposability that results.

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- i Farrell, Warren, Ph.D., *Why Men Are the Way They Are: The Male-Female Dynamic* (New York: Berkley Books, 1986) p.229.
- ii Yet another great Warren Farrell insight.
- iii “Foreign Women and Children Can Leave Iraq, Hussein Says,” *Los Angeles Times*, August 29, 1990, cited by Farrell, Warren, Ph.D., *The Myth of Male Power: Why Men Are the Disposable Sex* (New York: Berkley Books, 1993) p.142.
- iv Ibid., p.230.
- v Ibid., p.126.
- vi Schenk, Roy U., *The Other Side of the Coin: Causes and Consequences of Men’s Oppression* (Madison, WI: Bioenergetics Press, 1982) p.37.
- vii Tucker, Todd, *The Great Starvation Experiment: Ancel Keys and the Men Who Starved for Science* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007) p.46.
- viii Ibid., p.158.
- ix Ibid., p.158.
- x Ibid., p.5.
- xi Ibid., p.171.
- xii Ibid., p.46.
- xiii See the readily available video: *Atomic Cafe*.
- xiv Sommers, Christina Hoff, *Who Stole Feminism?: How Women Have Betrayed Women* (New York: A Touchstone Book/Simon & Schuster, 1994) p.255.
- xv Friday, Nancy, *The Power Of Beauty: A Cultural Memoir of Beauty and Desire* (New York: HarperCollins, 1996) p.319.
- xvi Parker, Kathleen, *Save the Males: Why Men Matter, Why Women Should Care* (New York: Random House, 2008) p.vi.
- xvii Farrell, Warren, Ph.D., *The Myth of Male Power: Why Men Are the Disposable Sex* (New York: Berkley Books, 1993) p.210.
- xviii Friday, Nancy, *The Power Of Beauty: A Cultural Memoir of Beauty and Desire* (New York: HarperCollins, 1996) p.327.
- xix Sommers, Christina Hoff, *Who Stole Feminism?: How Women Have Betrayed Women* (New York: A Touchstone Book/Simon & Schuster, 1994) p.35.
- xx Waldfogel, Joel, “Couch Entitlement: Surprise—Men Do Just as Much Work as Women Do,” <http://www.slate.com/id/2164268/>, April 16, 2007.
- xxi Farrell, Warren, Ph.D., *The Myth of Male Power: Why Men Are the Disposable Sex* (New York: Berkley Books, 1993) p.37. Source: F. Thomas Juster and Frank P. Stafford, “The Allocation of Time: Empirical Findings, Behavioral Modes, and Problems of Measurement,” *Journal of Economic Literature*, vol. 29, June 1991, p. 477.
- xxii Moir, Anne and Moir, Bill, *Why Men Don’t Iron: The Fascinating and Unalterable Differences Between Men and Women* (New York: CITADEL PRESS/Kensington Publishing Corp., 1999) p.58
- xxiii Ahrons, Constance, Ph.D., *The Good Divorce: Keeping Your Family Together When Your Marriage Comes Apart* (N.Y.: HarperPerennial/HarperCollins, 1995) p.35.