

We must throw off these clumsy collective descriptions which so confine our lives and re-discover the essence of ourselves. It is good fun to throw cabbages, and an excellent way to draw attention to blatant social abuses, but the real struggle is against society's deriding representative - the Insidious Devaluer within.

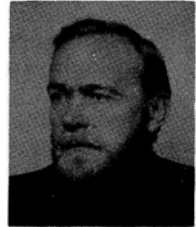
References

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Mark Matthews

Fed up with Feminism



Introduction.

The motivation for this article has been building for a considerable time. The stimulus to actually do it arose from a proposal by feminists that the editor should in future ban all words which have sexist connotations. In principle the idea is sound but the extreme lengths proposed need challenging. I accepted long ago that gestures were necessary along with real changes. For example we now say chairperson and draughtsperson and I insist that to follow their own logic we should also introduce woperson. Or is it woeperson?

To make my case clear I have structured this article rather formally. Following this introduction I have detailed firstly the situation as I see it. This is followed by my criticisms and fears; balanced by my hopes and suggestions. I have also added a conclusion. I believe my position to be moderate but in order to create emphasis I have taken the male view wherever a mutual position seemed unclear.

My critics will be pleased to know that some six years ago I was classed as one of the M.C.P.'s for the year by Vogue. The issue was my suggestion that to relieve executive stress, secretaries should have a knowledge of massage. Oh dear, I bet I have done it again. Men rally round, we have to make a stand somewhere.

The Situation.

Historically the roles have invariably been polarised. Men were masculine and dominant. While in terms of civil liberties the women were definitely in a weak position I do not know if they were less happy. In any event they invariably avoided having to go to war. Equally there have been a number of female rulers who were not noticeably different in style to male peers. I do not think there is a great merit in using history in this issue.

In recent times it would seem that there are as many women kept at home as there are men sent out to earn money.* And while it is true that men held virtually all top jobs they nearly all had wives who spent the money. It is likely that for every battered wife there is a man driven to despair. Though I am ashamed of rape and apologetic for leers and indecent exposure I cannot help wondering why the men are so frustrated or bitter. There must surely be something wrong with the women they have known.

I could go on and on but the simple point is that we, male and female, are in this one together. There are victims on both sides and the sad thing is that it is often a serial effect.

There is one final point concerning the future. It seems highly likely that due to pollution, or over population, or lack of resources or the use of computers and automation that the future will be very different. Earning a living will become a minor part of life. If things go well there will be much more leisure, if things go badly it will be a question of survival. For mankind and womankind, for us and life itself.

Criticism and Fears.

My essential criticism is that the arguments put are often trivial and one sided. The tone is always one of them and us and to deny the point is almost certainly to get branded as an M.C.P. The fact that female chauvinist cows make the attack is never raised.

I am also disturbed to notice that the male persons are invariably gentler and warmer than the female.** It is almost role reversal. This is O.K. by me but it is not likely to encourage much support for the development of softer qualities in men.

A further criticism is of the way the fanatics imagine they speak for all women and therefore assume right is on their side.*** In my experience most women, as against wopersons, do not share their views to any significant degree. The fact, shared by a great many, leads to the cause being seen as a cult rather than a valid and evolutionary trend.

My main fear is that the real aim will be overlooked because feminists become discredited. There is undoubtedly much prejudice against women's abilities but this will not be changed by feminists pursuing trivial and disruptive aims. Nonetheless it is probable that many women will be influenced and may, therefore, disrupt what was a stable and happy relationship. It is so much easier to blame than resolve. And as most individuals lack the experience of conflict resolution the outcome is likely to be negative. Most people do not realise that it may be better to be happily subserviant than a miserable free person.

Hopes and Suggestions.

My deepest hope is that the emphasis in future will focus on achieving more respect for what have been traditionally female qualities. This cannot be

done by feminists adopting traditionally male qualities. In this sense I am suggesting that the issue be independent of gender/sex.

Close to this hope is one on greater co-operation. Instead of the 'men are pigs' approach I hope to see more of 'this is a crazy situation'. It is my view that the former approach while initially effective will in the long term be disastrous. While it may be diminishing to be a sex object it is equally diminishing to be addicted to the female body. If we cannot work together men will initially suffer but once they break the pattern women will be even worse off.

My suggestions are simple. Firstly feminists should develop a sense of humour, laugh at yourselves you F.C.C.'s. Secondly women should be encouraged to appreciate gentle men. Once men see that women are sincere in this then the changes will be rapid. Equally to enforce this message the emphasis on success and money must be changed.

Finally feminists should get to know men better. Not the men who are committed but the average guy.

Conclusion.

Extremists are necessary to give bearings. In this sense the work has been done. Yet the real work is surely only beginning. Life is an art form and we have to create the present and the future. The relationship between man and woman is deep and complex, capable of tremendous variety. It is not something to be risked for an ideal nor even material progress. Men do cry, but not often in public.

** I accept that in many couples the wife also works. The point is that it is stupid to view the one who stays at home as necessarily exploited. Women do live longer which may indicate healthier life patterns.*

*** This point was also made by John Rowan in this magazine in January 1978 page 13, fourth paragraph.*

**** The process by which feminist spokespeople (Isn't it silly) gain influence is clever. Their logic is: Women have been oppressed by men hence all men must accept a share of the blame. If one denies this there is rejection, if one accepts there is guilt. To talk with feminists on this subject every male must be guilty. The point is well illustrated in John Rowan's article. (See above but paragraphs 5 and 6) John suggests we must face the criticisms of women only. They must also meet those of uncommitted men, not the blind support of those who feel guilty. If the rules of the club are males must feel guilty then feminists become just another manipulative force for their own ends, sex aside, this isn't on.*
