

# TRANSITIONS

*JOURNAL OF MEN'S PERSPECTIVES*

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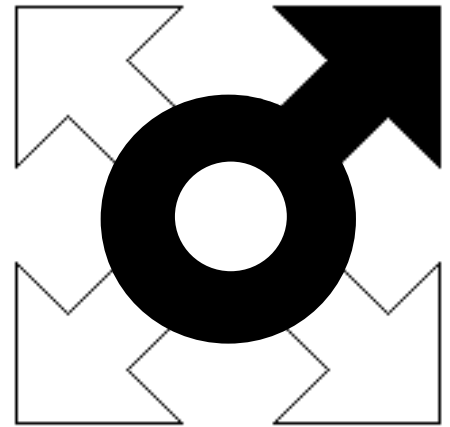
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## S. O. S.

By William J. Hetherington

The internationally recognized distress signal (SOS) was established in 1910 as an urgent request for HELP or RESCUE. Thus, I fraternally beseech those who receive this message to come to the assistance of one who has fought this battle, just as long and strong, as humanly possible on his own! I am asking that each one of you do what ever it is that you can possibly do to help. I need a law firm who is able to take this matter on the front burner and fight it with all the zeal and fortitude necessary to reverse this false conviction! I have stood for the truth and justice, now, for 20 long years in a hell on earth that only your imaginations can fathom. The fictional depictions on television are just that and the documentaries only skim the surface of the real time events that unfold on a daily basis within the confines of these places called penal institutions! Enough of the horrors of this place as they haven't killed me yet and therefore the obvious strength produced has not been enough to win my freedom to date. I simply need your assistance more, now, than ever before! The Governor just denied my request for Pardon / Commutation. The Parole Board won't see me again until 2007. I am at the mercy of the Court System to overturn this false conviction. This simply isn't going to happen without a law firm, media, and funds to make it happen! I am asking from the bottom of my heart for each one to focus and assist in any way possible. I do not have Internet access, computer, un-restricted phone use, or the ability to fight this system on anywhere near a level playing

field. If I did, I would not ever ask you to do for me what I could do for myself! I was denied a case number in the U.S. Supreme Court.

They would not accept my petition because it was typed. They require it to be done on a computer, see Rule # 33. The bottom line is my first maximum out date is 2010 and my final out date is 2015, and I have little doubt that they will make me do the whole enchilada just to make an example out of me for fighting them every step of the way! You can turn this around if you will do something, anything, to bring about a coordinated effort to find a law firm and donations to get my appeal before the court in a competent manner by appellate counsel. The issues have merit but I cannot do it on my own. Please visit the sites [www.williamhetherington.org](http://www.williamhetherington.org) and [www.ncfm.org/wil.htm](http://www.ncfm.org/wil.htm).

William  
September 2005

To contribute to William's defense fund, mail your check to:

William Hetherington Defense Fund  
c/o Attorney Jody Doak  
219 East Main Street, Suite 1  
Boyne City, MI 49712  
Telephone: (231) 582-6940

BE SURE to write "William Hetherington Defense Fund" in the memo field. **Note:** NCFM no longer manages Hetherington's defense fund, so donations are no longer tax deductible.

To send a donation to William's prison account, you MUST use a MONEY ORDER, CASHIER'S CHECK, or CERTIFIED CHECK, payable to William Hetherington.

**S.O.S. continues next page**

### Inside this Issue:

<i>Editor's Comment</i> .....	Page 2
<i>Partisan Sheehanigans</i> .....	Page 3
<i>Book Reviews</i> .....	Page 4
<i>Misandry</i> .....	Page 7
<i>NCFM News</i> .....	Page 9
<i>Human Condition</i> .....	Page 9

## ***Editor's Comment***

The news of the past week is that VAWA passed in both the House and Senate. At the time of this writing, they are in committee drafting the final document that they will send to W.

It's noteworthy that VAWA didn't just pass in the Senate; it passed unanimously. That tells me that even after all of our letter writing and campaigning, men are still not taken seriously as a political force.

I'm thinking it's time to get loud. George Rolph wrote a blog on Men's News Daily called "Men's Activists: Stop Asking and Start Telling!" You can see it at [mensnewsdaily.com/blog/2005/09/mens-activists-stop-asking-and-start.htm](http://mensnewsdaily.com/blog/2005/09/mens-activists-stop-asking-and-start.htm). Give it a read. If we had energy like this, we would not only will we have effect and grow the movement, we would inspire other men's groups to join with us, unifying the movement

Politicians won't vote with us when they're facing organizations like N.O.W. which are essentially unopposed. They are unopposed because we don't have their numbers. So, we must be loud, like they were back in the 60's. We have to be clever. We need to put ourselves where the media cameras will pick us up unexpectedly. Maybe even pull some stunts. We need to reach out to as many men as we can. Men have not woken up; we should make getting the word out to them our first priority.

Why? Until politicians give men their rights back, men need to be smart. Washington cannot take away our basic choices, and we can exercise them to protect ourselves. Remember last year's article on self-defense for men. So, to defend ourselves against VAWA, we need to aggressively screen the women with whom we get involved. We can't marry the type

of insecure woman who will use VAWA against us after a simple argument.

This society has become one where men must have self-defense in mind during any dealings with women, as difficult as it may sound. It will take discipline for men to put intelligence first in their relations with women, but it will be easier once they know the life-devastating risk they take when they don't. Not only will this protect men, but it will show women that they will pay a price, on an individual level, for these acts of government that oppress men.

*Jason Leatherman*

## **S.O.S.**

Continued from Page 1

Regular checks, cash, and electronic transfers will NOT be accepted.

Send your money order to:

William Hetherington  
Prisoner Number #186155  
Hiawatha Correctional Facility  
4533 Industrial Park Drive  
Kincheloe, MI 49786-0001

Contributions to William's prison account help him to purchase supplies like soap, toothpaste, etc., as well as make copies and pay filing fees. You can also send personal letters to William at this same address. Please realize that anything you write will be read by prison authorities, so you may want to be careful about what you write.

## Corrections

Steve Van Valkenburg, founder of Men's Issues Online, wrote me with a correction for the "Web Sites to Watch" section in the last issue:

I was reading the July/August issue of *Transitions*, and found a small error on page 9. The web address of the blog site for anti-feminist satire is actually [www.feministing.org](http://www.feministing.org). The [www.feministing.com](http://www.feministing.com) site is the feminist site that is the subject of the satire (it's a scary place to go).

Thanks, Steve!

# Partisan Sheehanigans

By Mike Spaniola

When Cindy Sheehan was protesting in Crawford, Texas, outside President Bush's ranch, an obliging media portrayed her as one-woman-making-a-difference.

Nothing is quite that simple, including the "sheehanigans" of the Sheehanites. Michael Moore and such international socialist groups as Code Pink-Women For Peace and MoveOn.org help to publicize and orchestrate the protest operations.

Sheehan's son, Casey, died fighting in Iraq in April 2004. His death is as regrettable and noble as any that comes in the line of service and duty to others, whether the life lost is that of a police officer or a construction worker.

Sheehan took to accusing people of hypocrisy, but since when do Moore and comrades care about a Dead White Guy — past, present or future? To put Casey's death in perspective, 12 men die every day of the year, on average, in work-related incidents in this country [1]. The annual

workplace slaughter of mostly white males leaves behind nearly 5,000 grieving moms each year.

Moore's semi-autobiographically titled, *Stupid White Men*, was on the national bestseller list for more than a year. You may recall that Moore was thoughtful enough to delay the book's publication to allow the nation to grieve after 9/11. So one can assume that Moore understands Sheehan's need to grieve.

Sheehan is an anti-American agitator/activist playing the role of "woman as peacemaker." It is not just the death of her son, but her feelings as a mother about the death of her son that really matter. Call it the Private Ryan syndrome. Although Steven Spielberg's "Saving Private Ryan" was both stunning and stirring, the movie may have been more accurately titled, "Saving Private Ryan's Mother." After all, if not for the military's overwhelming concern with her feelings, Ryan may well have ended up just another male corpse on some World War II battlefield.

For maximum emotional appeal, some of her supporters have suggested that we refer to her as "Mother Sheehan," which would emphasize a woman's role as the giver of life. Her son's death, therefore, becomes the byproduct of the evil doings of men, and is bereft of any and all benefit to women, instead causing them only great anguish and personal bereavement.

Even Sheehan's immediate family has found her very public expression, if not exploitation, of her son's death to be distasteful. One of Casey's relatives recently stated in a letter to the *Drudge Report*: "The Sheehan family ... do[es] not agree with the political motivations and publicity tactics of Cindy Sheehan. She now appears to be promoting her own personal agenda and notoriety at the expense of her son's good name and reputation. The rest of the Sheehan Family supports the troops, our country, and our president, silently, with prayer and respect." [2]

At an anti-war rally at San Francisco State University last April,

**PARTISAN continues next page**

## TRANSITIONS

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## Partisan

Continued from Page 3

Sheehan reportedly said: "I'm going all over the country telling moms: 'This country is not worth dying for.' If we're attacked, we would all go out. We'd all take whatever we had. I'd take my rolling pin and I'd beat the attackers over the head with it. ..." [3]

These moms whom Sheehan lectures may well cringe to learn that Sheehan made those remarks at a rally for attorney Lynne Stewart, who represented Sheik Omar Abdel Rahman. He led plans to bomb the World Trade Center in 1993. The rally for Stewart came just after her conviction for conspiring with Rahman. While Stewart was serving as his attorney for his role in the bombing, she was passing

along information to and from his henchmen on the outside.

Many mothers still grieve the loss of sons in the World Trade Center and Pentagon attacks of September 11, 2001. What must they think when Sheehan seems to invite, if not abet, further attacks against the United States? What must a mother of a dead fireman from that day think when Sheehan sees fit to retaliate only after the enemy is in our midst?

Sheehanites would do well not to ask for whom the bell tolls. Nonetheless, we're likely to see Sheehan's face on *Time* magazine's upcoming Person of the Year issue.

*Mike Spaniola has been an NCFM member since 1993 and has served as the group's letter-writing committee chairman. He lives in central Colorado.*

(1) <http://www.bls.gov/iif/oshwc/cfoi/cftb0193.pdf>

(2) [http://www.worldnetdaily.com/news/article.asp?ARTICLE\\_ID=45726](http://www.worldnetdaily.com/news/article.asp?ARTICLE_ID=45726)

(3) <http://www.townhall.com/columnists/lindachavez/lc20050817.shtml>

## Book Reviews

By J. Steven Svoboda

*Still A Dad: The Divorced Father's Journey.*

By Serge Prengel

New York: Mission Creative Energy, 1999.

In this world of both increasingly dire straits for fathers and rapidly burgeoning numbers of pro-male and pro-father books, Serge Prengel has done what might have seemed impossible: written a truly indispensable and utterly unique book on the subject of fatherhood and the divorce process. He has masterfully bridged the political and personal, even spiritual sides of the thorn-laden and mine-strewn trails of tears which he and countless other divorced men have been forced to tread.

Prengel has a talent which regrettably is increasingly rare these days, of being able to empathize with multiple points of view, despite their sometimes being in direct conflict. His own path as a divorced dad led him to open his heart and his brain wide enough in both compassion and spiritual understanding to enable him to pass by the elephant-sized troubles he confronted without their crushing him. And he has generously chosen to share the bounty of his learning with us so that we may benefit from it.

The author enjoys an almost breathtaking facility at deftly sketching the key points of a player's psyche in just a few words. "Even many, many months into the divorce proceedings, John has kept hoping: It won't happen to me." "A child needs certainties, simple answers, a sense that there is fairness and logic in the world, in order to feel reasonably safe." "Just imagine for a moment you're the judge. You have in front of you two bickering people... You have to make a decision, choose one or the other."

The drama which the author lays out for us and plays out for us is one which each month is repeated countless thousands of times around the country and around the world. Prengel ices the problem in a few simple, deadly words, asking, "How can [his alter ego John] find a way to be an equal parent within a system that only allows a one-up/one-down outcome to a custody dispute?" A few sentences later, the author chillingly concludes, "The system has no room for what he wants."

Why, Prengel asks, is a married man presumed an equal partner in budgeting child-raising expenses, but a divorced man has to make substantial pre-set payments to his ex-wife without any say in how the

money is used? Why is it, as the author aptly summarizes the divorced father's predicament, that you are a troublemaker and controlling if you try to retain some influence over your child's day-to-day life, and you're a deadbeat if you want to find a way to equitably share responsibilities and expenses with your ex-wife? How can divorce law be geared to fairness when winner takes all, humiliates loser, and does it all in the name of the child's best interests? Prengel makes pithy suggestions about the changes that needs to happen — a presumption of shared parenting, not just shared custody.

With the typical visitation schedule, Prengel wryly notes in another brilliant crystallization, a man becomes (if he is lucky) a sort of uncle to his son. Later, he aptly compares modern divorce with the medieval trial by ordeal, in which only a miracle could save the accused's life and prove him innocent.

But the story does not end here. Prengel continues to trace the all-too-frequent descent into misery that follows divorce for men with children. And then, he offers the conclusions to which he eventually came after years of torture and misery. No completely satisfactory

resolution is possible, of course, but acceptance is necessary, and it is very helpful to cultivate a Zen-like ability to continue on and retain hope after all hope seems lost.

Not that this is easy. Or fair. Prengel is no New Age polyanna, telling divorced fathers that if they go to enough workshops or retrain their thinking adequately, all will be well. He is simply offering prescriptions for survival and for salvaging shreds of happiness from an all too often dire situation.

Many of his statements have an ability to resonate on multiple levels, on the individual level in response to the specific post-divorce situation, politically as directions for change, and as general prescriptions as to how we all may improve our lives whatever our marital state may be. "There is a lot to be gained for men in leaving the adversarial game." Constantly thinking of all the players at once, Prengel astutely explains in separate sections why this change would be good for men, for children, and for women. (He does miss several other ways it would help women — by changing perceptions of women, by encouraging women to marry, and because long-term men's welfare and women's welfare are inextricably interconnected.)

Prengel's writing and thinking is wonderful to behold. He makes numerous deft points that seem obvious and yet integrate different disciplines, connecting large and small scale in a way that is all too rare: "Since even in war, there are limits that cannot be crossed, known as 'war crimes,' why do we rely on the law of the jungle for conflict resolution in divorce?" Two pages later, he brilliantly shows the perfect applicability to adversarial divorce of a chart developed to describe the differences

between a healthy relationship (the column entitled "Equality") and "one in which the woman is abused" (the column entitled "Power and Control").

Despite his own story and obvious personal pain, Prengel's tone throughout this book is admirably judicious and balanced. The second half focuses on the transformations men must undergo if they are to survive what often becomes the hellish loss of their partner, children, finances, house, and self-respect, often all in close succession. Prengel succinctly lays out the conflicting emotions, and reminds us that "in addition to fighting with your ex and with the legal system, you're also fighting a battle within yourself." Ultimately, the author helps us realize, this is the most important fight of all. And it's the only one we can count on winning, but only if we are open to giving up everything we thought we would have forever. A key moment in John's path comes when he lets it all go. "John's heart opens up when he sees how much he's willing to give his child, without anything in return."

Prengel also addresses shame and the shadow, issues not usually considered in books also bearing significant political content. He deftly finds a way around a central paradox: he is giving advice in this book, from the outside, suggesting that men can only find the inner truth they need to fight these battles by going inside. "I don't really know what YOU should be doing." And we get practical suggestions: Relax the pressure you put on yourself to do the right thing. When you are with your child, ask open-ended questions and reveal your thought process to the child. Don't project your anger onto your child, and always speak positively of your ex. Let go of what is holding you back from a fulfilling life by acknowledging the hurt the process caused your child. Unusually for a men's movement book, Prengel sagely guides us away from a focus on our own pain.

Anyone who can take *Still A Dad* for what it offers, even if aspects of it don't fully speak to them, is bound to reap a rich harvest. While it may occasionally veer

**REVIEWS continues next page**

## Letters Campaign

In recent years we have learned that writing letters to media people, advertisers of products, politicians, publishers, etc., can have an effect, especially if there is a group of letter writers willing to mobilize under the direction of a coordinator. We want you to write to our coordinator and volunteer to be contacted to write letters and we would appreciate knowing about any ideas you have for campaigns.

**Please volunteer and write to:**

**Bob McInnes**  
**NCFM**  
**P.O. Box 582023**  
**Minneapolis, Minnesota**  
**55458-2023**

### *Transitions* Needs Your Talent

*Transitions* is always looking for your contributions in writing on issues affecting men. If you have an article or essay, please submit it for publication. Send all work to : **Jason Leatherman, Editor-in-Chief, at [jwleath@yahoo.com](mailto:jwleath@yahoo.com)**. Please put "Transitions" in the Subject line. Also, see <http://www.ncfm.org/writel.htm>.

## Reviews

### Continued from Page 5

toward sound-bite and appear to lack deep analysis, this is actually probably one of the most deceptively complex and valuable books ever written for men. Even the book's physical characteristics are lovely, down to the intimate yet universal cover picture of father and son holding hands. "The journey starts when we begin to notice the sacred where it is."

### *Why Men Don't Iron: The Real Science of Gender Studies.*

By Anne & Bill Moir.

London: Harper-Collins Publishers, 1998. 319 pp.

I found this somewhat eccentric book always enjoyable, usually entertaining, occasionally careless and/or infuriating, periodically enlightening, and ultimately unique and invaluable. In format as well as tone the Moirs are a bit reminiscent of the Rich Zubaty who wrote, *Surviving the Feminization of America*. *Why Men Don't Iron* calls a spade a spade and is packed with lots of facts I had never heard before, and the mere publishing of the book strikes me as a political act, especially in England.

The husband-and-wife authors possess a good facility for the pithy overview of complicated facts. They make no apology for their firm belief, backed up by numerous cited scientific studies, in a biological basis for sexual differentiation. While I was intrigued by their reasoned

questioning of Kinsey's widely accepted statistic that ten percent of the population is gay and their assertion instead that 1-4% of the population is homosexual, I found unacceptable and repellent their firm anti-gay bias. The book is interspersed with canned dialogs between Anne and Bill, which I thought were mostly rather forced and dumb.

Regarding food, the Moirs certainly take on conventional wisdom, challenging popular conceptions that vegetables and low-fat diets are healthier and claiming that saturated fat actually helps promote health. Men need more protein than women, they assert, and are better advised to eat plenty of beef. They further claim that soya is the richest source of the feminizing hormone estrogen and thus unhealthy for men.

The Moirs then plunge into children's sex differences, documenting the many differences and showing that today we are drugging boys and bringing them up to be "better behaved," that is, more like girls. I enjoyed the popularized explanation of how a bath of hormones during the third month of pregnancy leads to sexual differentiation between male and female fetuses. Boisterous behavior and aggression are wired into our male children while they are still in the womb.

The Moirs outline some fascinating studies of male rats feminized through deprivation of testosterone, as well

as of masculinized female rats, and how they demonstrate how hormones control behavior. Further proof is provided by other studies of boys with an extra female chromosome and girls with a hormonal abnormality resulting from exposure to high levels of male hormones while in the womb. Rats and humans tend to behave according to the hormones with which they are dosed prior to birth rather than their genetic predisposition.

The authors adroitly show that current educational approaches are poorly founded. "Equality is confused with sameness, and the confusion does neither sex any good." Although we may strive to provide equal opportunity, due to gender differences, we must not expect equal outcomes. Other fascinating research has demonstrated that male brains tend to operate on one side at a time, while females operate bilaterally when problem-solving. The contrast is marked enough that one can tell, merely from pictures of neurological activity, which brains are male and which female. These differences between male and female brains will inevitably lead to learning in different ways and the pursuit of different interests. An educational system in denial of this fact will cause damage. Instead, the Moirs write, we need schools which do not seek to change boys to suit them but rather are altered to be as boy-friendly as they already are girl-friendly. As the authors note, our current educational system fosters a sense that masculinity is bad. Some hope does exist — when male-only schools are created, boys' performance rises dramatically.

Surprisingly, the Moirs fail to analyze from a political standpoint various conditions they mention which predominantly affect males. These include sudden infant death syndrome (which may in fact be a euphemism for matricide of male infants), greater male accident-proneness, and attention deficit disorder (ADD, sometimes known as ADHD).

Later on in the book, I greatly enjoyed the discussion of competition without the almost obligatory negative tones one hears whenever the subject arises in mainstream society. The glass floor afflicting male workers is also evaluated

## Volunteer Needed for Men's Hotline

NCFM is in need of someone to operate our "hotline". What this means is that you would get about one call every week or two from someone needing assistance. You should be familiar with the court system as well as men's resources and be able to offer some support to callers. All calls are returned COLLECT, so you won't incur any costs. If this sounds like something you'd like to try, please contact Naomi at 516-482-6378 or [susansusansusan@hotmail.com](mailto:susansusansusan@hotmail.com).

starkly in the context of a clear portrayal of the woeful male employment situation. The Moirs also provide a great, hard-headed analysis of the fallacies behind the quota idea.

Anne and Bill Moir nicely analyze male and female emotions, effectively arguing that a man is already in touch with his emotions, but they simply are not the same as the female emotions. The extended analysis of gender differences regarding feelings is inspired. I agree with them that men are less sensitive, for better and for worse. Their analysis of gender differences in parenting ability is also dead on.

Disturbingly, odd logical holes and errors seem to crop up repeatedly. Surely, despite what the Moirs write, men are not more demanding about their working hours than women? The authors claim that men are paid significantly more than women even after allowing for age and experience differences, flying in the face of common sense and basic economics as well as playing into feminists' hands. And yet they fail to incorporate into their analysis of wage equity their statement on the immediately succeeding page that men work longer hours than women. Surely this is a factor relevant to pay equity calculations? In the

authors' all-or-nothing discussion of the nature/nurture controversy, I wanted to ask why it isn't possible that both affect the development of male risk-taking behavior. Do the authors really believe that most fathers would allow their baby to stay filthy rather than risk being seen using a "baby changing station"? How can it be true, as they claim, that half the full-time workforce is male and one quarter is female?

Ultimately, such shortcomings only moderately reduce the impact of this iconoclastic, delightfully opinionated book, which I would highly recommend to any potential reader.

## Misandry

By Edward M. Stephens, M.D.

"What is misandry?" was the question I posed to the audience at the Massachusetts Medical Society conference on Men's Issues in the summer of 2004. A few timid hands went up in response, with attempts at relating the etymology of the word to misogyny. When asked about the meaning of misogyny, there was a universal understanding that it represented a hatred of or denigration of women.

Why then was misandry, the hatred or denigration of men, such a culturally elusive concept? Let's hear how Paul Nathanson and Katherine Young describe the problem in their book length investigation: *Spreading Misandry: The Teaching of Contempt for Men in Popular Culture*. Their treatment provides, "... strong evidence that man-hating has become pervasive in contemporary popular culture: men are routinely portrayed as evil, inadequate or (at best) 'honorary women.'" They propose that this is happening in our culture to the extent that, like the air around us, misandry is invisible.

Misandry, a misandrous culture and misandric responses are so pervasive they are as invisible as the air. Misandry has become so deeply entwined in our culture that few people — including men — even recognize it.

Have you seen the movie, *Tadpole*, in which three adult women have sex with a teenage boy? This was national comedic fare, without a whisper of protest from any group. It simply went under the radar of all because of male/female stereotypes. Both

men and women would be outraged at the portrayal of rape/child abuse if the gender roles were reversed and it was adult men having sport with a teenage girl.

*"Misogyny has been studied and taken seriously for decades. Misandry, on the other hand, has been either ignored or trivialized for decades. . . . Political pressure has eliminated a great deal of misogyny . . . but some of the political pressure used against misogyny has indirectly exacerbated misandry."* (Nathanson & Young)

As I write this, I have in front of me a copy of *News for Women in Psychiatry*, the Newsletter of the Association of Women Psychiatrists. In the President's message, Altha Stewart, M.D., takes some strong stands on gender issues. Some examples:

*"Discussion of issues of access, quality of care and quality improvement tools that promote positive outcome must include gender variables if overall improvement of services to women is to be achieved. The culture of gender must not remain an afterthought as the field of psychiatry is being transformed."*

*This year our resident fellows are Sarah Barios, APA/Bristol-Myers Squibb Fellow; Carrie Ernst, APA/GlaxoSmithKline Fellow; Luisa Gonzalez, APA AstraZenica Fellow; and Nakia Scott, APA/AstraZenica Fellow.*

*"Our Committee is composed of a diverse group of psychiatrists [women only, author's note] who take their responsibility to the APA organization and membership earnestly. We reviewed the charge of the Committee, which is to 1) define and advocate preventive therapeutic actions to meet the mental health needs of women; 2) Promote the recruitment, involvement and retention of women psychiatrists . . . 3) Review and stimulate research in women's mental health . . . 4) Provide information, networking, and collaborative opportunities for women colleagues at all stages of career development."* [bold emphasis is the author's]

I am in whole-hearted agreement with Dr. Stewart. The obvious question: Where is the organization working on the needs of men?

In a conversation with the Commissioner of Mental Health in Westchester, I was told there were services for men, i.e., drug and alcohol programs.

Where are the other programs? Where are the services for men and boys to diagnose and intervene in depression, to interdict suicide, to prevent male-male violence and homicide, that recognize domestic violence against men and create programs of education for boys that promote success in school?

Perhaps the mental health needs of men have slipped beneath the radar of

**MISANDRY continues next page**

# Misandry

Continued from Page 7

cultural misandry to the point where we have specialty groups, fellows, supported by industry, for one gender, without the corresponding needs of the other gender appearing in focus.

I think Dr. Altha Stewart is right when she avows, “. . . we are obliged to take all opportunities to lay the foundation for institutionalizing the practice of including gender factors when considering each issue of importance in psychiatry today.”

The Committee on Men's Issues of the Psychiatric Society of Westchester was created to begin the same work for men

as the Committee on Women's Issues of the APA and to create new settings on our psychiatric radar screens that don't miss misandry.

The Committee on Men's Issues invites men and women interested in the special needs of men to join in the work on this new frontier in psychiatric services.

Dr. Edward Stephens is the Chair of the Committee on Men's Issues for The Psychiatric Society of Westchester, a district branch of The American Psychiatric Association. He is also currently serving

as the president of NCFM's Greater New York Chapter.

“Misandry” was originally published in the Spring 2005 issue of *The Westchester Psychiatrist* and is reproduced with permission. The Psychiatric Society of Westchester's Committee on Men's Issues was founded by Dr. Stephens and is the first-ever such committee within a district branch of the APA. Dr. Stephens can be contacted in care of NCFM, GNY via e-mail at [ncfmgnny@themalevoice.org](mailto:ncfmgnny@themalevoice.org) or by leaving a message at (516) 482-6378.

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## What's Happening??

# National Coalition of Free Men News

### WEB SITES TO WATCH

(by Jason Leatherman)

If you've been reading Transitions for long, then you'll know Francis Baumli. He has written many excellent articles for us. He recently told me that he has started a publishing web site called Viaticum

Press International. You can visit them at:

[www.viaticumpressinternational.com](http://www.viaticumpressinternational.com)

According to the site, Viaticum Press International is a worldwide consortium of exclusive publishers with a focus not only on quality of writing but also on garnering qual-

ity readers. And of course, they are all friendly to our cause. If you're an author, you should bookmark this page. As much as I wish Francis would do nothing but write more great articles for Transitions, I wish him the best with this endeavor!

# The Human Condition Is Impartial with its Abuse, Regardless Of Gender

By Darrin Albert

### Hypotheses:

\* The human condition can be equally cruel to both sexes, when all variables are subject to inquiry.

\* Both sexes are equally responsible for the ills in society (gender disparity, in both its biological and socialized elements, was forged by both man and woman).

### Definitions:

*Existentialism:* A philosophical approach that deals with existence. Existential philosophers believe that existence is the only knowable reality because individuals cannot know about their origin or eventual end (Gladding, 2001, p. 46).

*Phenomenology:* The theory that individuals behave according to the way they perceive their worlds (Gladding, 2001, p. 92).

Existential oppression/abuse, then, occurs when: **a person's subjective pursuit of happiness and well-being are decreased by a perceived threatening obstacle in that person's life.** There are many potential tribulations/obstacles in this world, including: physical disease, emotional disease, gender profiling, racial profiling,

mal-adaptive thought processes that create negative self-fulfilling prophecies, dangerous surroundings, physical pain, emotional pain, patriarchy/matriarchy (when and where these exist), expectations of entitlement (when and where these exist), and etc.

**When a person feels hurt physically or emotionally, he/she has suffered existential oppression.** Quality of life is the variable that determines abuse/oppression, not external circumstances.

Feminism is a template that uses patriarchy as the standard to test abuse/oppression. This is simplistic, however, because patriarchy is only one element of a multi-faceted human condition. It is not the "whole gestalt," if you will. Also, patriarchy violates the phenomenological/existential idea of subjective perception, because it asserts that abuse/oppression can be objectively measured irrespective of how events are perceived by each individual.

Following from this, then, existential abuse (or oppression) is a paradigm that looks at self-in-relation. Every situation is unique, and must be analyzed in terms of its own context. With existential oppression, emotions are more relevant than external circumstance. Because of the nature of subjective self-in-relation, one can draw assumptions regarding existential oppression:

1) Some men consider the average woman to be in a one up position to them, and some women consider the average man to be in a one up position to them. For example, some men may believe that being a homemaker is less stressful and safer than many "male occupations." And some women may believe that being a homemaker is menial, low status, and not very self-fulfilling. With existentialism, it depends on the individual's perception.

2) Sometimes men oppress (hurt) women and sometimes women oppress (hurt) men, resulting in negative affect.

3) Sometimes men hurt other men and sometimes women hurt other women (intra-gender oppression). An unattractive woman may feel more oppressed than an attractive woman and an unsuccessful/poor man may feel more oppressed than a rich/successful man.

4) Men are not more or less evil than women and vice versa.

5) Machismo and shame are oppressive, because they can "brainwash" a male into "taking it like a man" and suffering more than his female counterpart.

6) A woman's reasons for anxiety, depression, and suicide are not more or less valid than a man's reasons.

**HUMAN continues next page**

# Human

Continued from Page 9

7) Servitude under authority is considered oppressive when such an arrangement is perceived as threatening and as a hindrance to pursuit of happiness/well being.

8) Both genders can be oppressed/abused by rigid gender roles.

## Existential Power

Abuse of power can certainly hurt people. It seems that each gender has certain powers that can be abused to take advantage of the opposite gender:

### Men (patriarchy and physical power)

On average, men tend to have more muscle mass (this is not always true). This power advantage is reduced when weapons are involved, such as in domestic violence situations. Some assert that this muscle mass advantage has led to an economic patriarchy. Some men use the power of success as a way of attracting women. Often times a woman will reinforce male aggression, competition, and patriarchy by placing mating value on aggressive alpha males with high financial security (this is evident in the wild and in traditional gender roles).

### Women (matriarchy and psychological power)

In general, women have sexual power. Prostitution and pornography are examples of the market value of female sexuality. Many men feel under a spell when they see a beautiful woman. Unattractive women lack this power. Beauty power reinforces women not resorting to using achievements and success as a means of survival or attracting love like so many men often feel forced to do. Men have seldom "gotten by" in life with beauty alone. Because male beauty is not sufficient for attracting women, and perhaps not even necessary, men often "buy their love" from a woman by providing for her, taking almost all initiative in dating situations, and paying for diamonds and dates.

## The origins of sexual disparity

It is unknown as to what came first in history: male muscle power or female beauty power. It is the classic chicken/egg debate applied to gender. Until the origins of gender disparity are discovered, it is inconclusive and presumptuous to brandish blame unto males.

Three theories for the origin of gender disparity are biology, patriarchy, and matriarchy. Biology and social evolutionary theory suggests that men and women evolved together and are equally responsible for gender disparity in all its forms (including male muscle mass and female sexual power). Patriarchy theory suggests that the market value of female sexuality followed as a result of a male dominated society. Matriarchy theory suggests that the market value of female sexuality followed as a result of a man's weakness to female beauty power.

## Potential Existential Privileges (either from statistics or traditional gender roles)

Existential privileges can also play a part in affecting a person's sense of well being and self-esteem. It seems each gender has certain potential privileges in our human condition. Many of these are discussed in books like *The Myth of Male Power* (1993) by Warren Farrell, *The Other Side of the Coin* (1982) by Roy Schenk, or evident in traditional gender roles.

### Men:

- Men tend to have more muscle mass, on average, than women.
- Men generally are paid more than women (not necessarily for the same work, however).
- Men are not considered tramps for having too much sex.
- Men are held to a lower level of morality (boys are snakes and snails and women are sugar and spice). This is the concept of "lady-like behavior."
- Men often times get more recognition for ideas in society.
- Unless a man is in prison, he is far less likely to be raped as a woman.
- Men are less likely to attempt suicide as a woman.
- Men are less likely to be objectified by their looks (which can lead to eating disorders and strict dieting standards).
- Women are socialized to be less "assertive" than men and more "fearful,"

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which can lead to difficulty in climbing the corporate ladder.

- Men are not taught that they are the only victim of an only oppressor. This can lead to less socialized anger than women.

#### Women:

- Women are far less likely to complete suicide as a man.

- Women are far less likely to be homeless as a man.

- Women are far less likely to be a victim of violence as a man, even when rape is included.

- Women outlive men by about 5 years.

- Women are far more likely to receive custody of children in divorce settlements.

- Women do not have to "take it like a man." Those are code words for "men are supposed to suffer and women aren't." This is manifested in the full range of emotional privileges accorded to women, such as crying and vulnerability.

- Women are not obligated to initiate courtship rituals to "buy their love." This is manifested by males buying dates and wedding rings.

- Women are usually spared first in life and death situations (spare the women and children first).

- Women receive validation and support from a movement called feminism.

- Female virgins are considered pure and worthy, and male virgins are considered sexually inadequate (in pop culture and excluding religious emphasis on virginity).

- Women are not judged by how successful they are. Women can attract love and survive on beauty standards alone, without the need to achieve and earn it. Unattractive women lack this power.

- Women are far less likely to be imprisoned, and for the same crimes are often given lesser sentences.

- Women are not forced to file for the selective service, and have seldom died in any war.

- Men earn more than women, on average, but women spend more than men, on average.

#### Questions to foster critical thinking:

There are some questions about gender that need more thought in academia, so as that the concept of existential oppression can be more complete:

- How do women reinforce male aggression and dominance by placing mating value on aggressive alpha males? Do nice guys finish last?

- If evolution is true, why did nature select that men develop more muscle mass on average than women? If females place mating value on men who are stronger and taller, and men place mating value on women who are thinner and smaller; would this lead to the average male obtaining more muscle mass than the average female over the course of thousands of years, thus leading to patriarchal structures (when and where these exist)?

- How did it come to be that women have beauty power and men do not? Why are there so few male prostitutes? Does female beauty power reinforce a man's need to compete with other males to win her favors? Does the average man have a higher sex drive than the average woman?

#### Conclusion:

In reference to the first hypothesis, it is apparent that the human condition seems impartial with its abuse when the whole picture is studied. This includes an active look at all the existential privileges of both genders, the existential powers privy to both genders, and most importantly the quality of life of both genders.

In reference to the second hypothesis, it is not apparent how gender disparity came about; in all its forms of social roles, differential gender powers, and biological difference. But this ambivalence is a boon to men, because it means that it is presumptuous to blame men for the ills in society.

Existential gender oppression is a much broader and "big picture" look at oppression and its related concepts than feminism. It is an approach that attempts to see the "whole gestalt." Quality of life (including the will to live and the means to survive) are what is truly important. Patriarchy (when and where this exists) is but one cruel hand of a harsh and multi-faceted human condition. Also, feminist

theory has not the authority to accuse men of being oppressors in a world of unknown gender origins. All these are reasons why the term *feminism* should be replaced with a gender neutral term like *existential gender abuse/oppression*.

*Darrin is a counseling graduate student at NDSU State University.*

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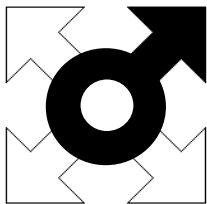
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