

Of Feminism and Femininity: A Brief History

The Red Pill Room | 13 May, 2015 | by Ian Ironwood

One of the comments that popped up in my triumphant return take-down of Amanda Marcotte (who loves ya, babe?) was from a young woman upset with my tone. To wit,

While I agree your ideals, I can't keep reading your work. The caustic tone and phrasing of things as absolutes that works wonders in inciting men (presumably your intention) pushes me into a spiral of frustration hopelessness every time I read it (presumably not your intention).



I do feel compelled to answer this, here, because I don't purposefully try to alienate anyone, particularly my female readers. But I do understand that my tone seems caustic, and borderline misogynistic, as I address the larger male audience for whom this blog was originally intended.

It might seem a contradiction, that I advocate tirelessly for men and their interests, and yet want to advise women on the same subject. But please understand that they are two sides of the same coin, and that not every post is going to be targeted toward every segment of my audience.

The frustration you feel is real, of course. It's real because women today are being forced by circumstance into a really, really bad situation, and the realities of that situation just aren't. Yes, there is plenty of shadenfreude over here about the continuing antics of feminism, as well as some genuine militancy about the issues of men's human rights, but in the spirit of the forthcoming International Men's Issues Conference topic of building bridges between men and women, allow me to pour some objective foundations for your consideration.

(Trigger Warning: Mansplaining Ahead. Proceed With Caution)



Today's women are kinda screwed, partially by circumstance, partially by their own history as an identity movement (feminism, of course, but not feminism exclusively). I don't need to do yet-another tear-down of what's wrong with feminism, here, but even if you don't identify as a feminist you, as a woman, are affected by the feminist movement who includes you in their crusade whether you want it or not.

More, our society as a whole has been affected by feminism, particularly how women see themselves in the world. The struggle for Women's Rights and the adjustment our civilization has been making since the early 1900s, from an agrarian to a post-industrial economy, has broken some serious new ground in terms of humanity's capacity to deal with the change.

Industrialization changed *everything*, including femininity. It went through the same kind of transformation of self-identity and adaptation that masculinity did when the labor standard went from the day-farm laborer to the industrial factory worker. That might seem a subtle thing, but industrialization changed the nature of our mating patterns, our reproductive patterns (smaller, more nuclear families as opposed to extended families) and, ultimately, encouraged the functional shattering of the "traditional" family into its current scattered shards.



For femininity, the change involved re-imagining the gendered role of "Woman" from farmwife and matriarch of a large family, effectively co-managing an agrarian estate or business, to fellow laborer-for-wages outside of the home. The economic transition was profoundly transformative to the concepts of femininity in our culture, and with each succeeding generation the revolutionary impact of such factors as the Birth

Control Pill, Liberalized Divorce, increased mobility, and other changes in society made the situation even worse.

The cornerstone to this identity-crisis in femininity is caused, in part, by the confusing nature of the social signals she's getting. **Part of the evolved purpose of this blog is to help a young woman untangle that confusion by pointing out pragmatic, objective things that she can leverage into a better understanding of her own goals and how to achieve them, among other things. It's *not* to make you feel wretched.**

But that's part of the general Manosphere criticism of female society, that women do not - *in general* - want to face the unpleasant realities of the situation **unless they are forced to**. And part of OUR great frustration is seeing young women equivocate and avoid those realities after generations of defiant declarations that they can, indeed, handle (formerly masculine-oriented) adult levels of responsibility. Most men don't have the patience or interest in trying to explain our perspectives (which, as you've admitted, you've found helpful, even if they hurt your feelings) to the extent that I do, but I have a daughter and I dread the realities that she will have to face.

But back to the Industrial Revolution, because that's where this gets kinky. Femininity, as it was popularly understood, still clung socially to the traditional Agricultural ideals that had served it so well for thousands of years, even if the *application* of that femininity was changing. Before WW I, during the days of the High Patriarchy, a lot of the perfectly legitimate gripes about female oppression and inequality were utterly valid.

Imagine the ancient Hellenic goddesses Hestia and Ceres reigning over Femininity - the aggregate self-image of women in general - during that time. A woman's self-worth (according to advertisements and documents from the period) was largely tied into quasi-mystical ideas about Hearth and Home, Abundance and Prosperity . . . along with the hard work every farm wife was expected to do. That was in addition to her sacred reproductive responsibilities. **"Hearth & Home" was the gold standard for Femininity for thousands of years.**



But with the change in industrialization and demographics, the laws and social structure were forced to change as well. First WW I, then the excesses of the 1920s, then the Great Depression all took their turns with Femininity. And eventually the goddess Athena took over guidance, after Pear Harbor. It was time for Women to see themselves as more than just tenders of hearth and home. Their hard work and ingenuity was needed first to dig themselves out of the Great Depression and then even more for the War effort. Femininity, at that time, defined itself as "Woman As Determined Warrior".

When you examine advertisements and commercial art from this time period (see my archives for ample examples) what you see is a focus on femininity as an essential part of the war-time economy. With the shortage of men in play, due to either economics or conscription, the reflected focus of femininity was in its strength, it's determination, it's power to endure hard times - all noble characteristics intrinsically attached to the feminine self-perception.



But this Depression and War-time femininity also expresses a deep longing for better times . . . not as factory workers or secretaries, but as wives of well-employed husbands. Rosie the Riveter might have wanted to sling steel to beat the Jerries and the Japs, but she wasn't doing it out of a sense of feminine empowerment, she was doing it to **further her long-term reproductive goals**. As soon as the War was over, she planned on getting married and having an *ass-load* of kids, because that was **her reward** for sacrificing her best reproductive years for the good of her nation. A heroic husband with a good job and ass-load of kids. Your grandparents.

After the social crises of the Great Depression and WWII, during which the normal cycles of mating were suspended due to economics and war, the definition of femininity settled back down a bit, as a generation of pent-up social desire to reproduce was manifested in the great Post War economic boom. The strength, determination, and endurance implicit in femininity was replaced with a much more light-hearted and romantic ideal. American women had put off their reproductive futures for four years or longer, thanks to the war, and for them a defining characteristic of femininity, outside of marriage, was **motherhood**.

Yes, that same icky, evil, oppressive Motherhood that the feminists revolted against.

Femininity indulged in an explosive outpouring of pent-up maternal longing, after WWII. So many young men hadn't returned from the war, or did so with war brides, and so many women had been forced to endure a essential halt to their reproductive plans, even though their bodies were screaming to make babies. It's as if Athena, goddess of war and determination, laid aside her spear and (after a brief but intense reign by Aphrodite, as the frustrated desires of the Western World were allowed to play out in millions of hasty weddings) let Hera, Goddess of Motherhood, take over.



For a generation Hera shaped femininity into a baby-making *machine*. **Maternal sensibilities and domesticity replaced feminine allure as the defining character of 1950s Femininity**. With post-War prosperity, a return of the man supply, and ample government subsidies, the Greatest Generation proved their

worth by making a *whole lot* of babies. The Boomers.

The backlash to this was that the mad cultural expectation to fill the longing for rugrats after the war caught up a lot of women who weren't necessarily inclined to get married and have kids. That wasn't unprecedented - about 20% of women in advanced preindustrial societies don't marry or reproduce, and society has always had an economic role for these women, usually as childcare, nursing, teaching, or other professions. In fact, the Depression and the War saw these women attain sudden prosperity by virtue of their badly-needed professional skills.



They suddenly became leaders of whole legions of former farmgirls whose marriage prospects had enlisted and who wanted to help out and make a little cash for their future. **A future replete with the things they had been denied by the Great Depression: healthy babies, clean, well-built homes, husbands with good jobs that could provide a wage that could elevate them economically.** By the 1940s, with the need to draft women into the workforce as part of the pursuit of Total War, the capabilities of women to handle traditionally male responsibilities had broken that wide open. Little girls could grow up, go to college, and become doctors, lawyers, reporters, or technicians. *Before they got married.*

In the 1960s, a generation later, there was a revolt against the social pressure to either be mommies or professional spinsters, largely revolving around the near-universal idea of "patriarchal" early marriage. Femininity was once-again in crisis, this time not from a lack of reproductive prospects, **but from a lack of coherent self-identity in the face of a multitude of choices.** This is where the real birth of the modern feminist movement began, with the ***Feminine Mystique***, as a popular reaction to the cultural expectations of the Greatest Generation that had been built up for the purposes of winning a war.

The culprit for this identity crisis was, unsurprisingly, the institution of Marriage. Marriage became increasingly unpopular because the former agrarian-based, patriarchal post-War nuclear family had devolved into the suburban, dual-income family in a culture of infidelity, contraception and liberalized divorce laws. Women could and were making their own money, attempting to exercise their own goals, and the internal family conflicts with the old patriarchal model had a hard time acclimatizing to this. Cue Archie Bunker.



And Hugh Hefner.

First, there was another brief reign of Aphrodite, who returned to binge on the erotic excesses of the first industrial generation to enjoy wide-access to contraception in human history. The Kinseys, Masters & Johnson, Marilyn Monroe, the Playboy Mansion, and the turbulent counter-culture fueled this introspective quest of Femininity and its sexuality.

Quite the party, as exploding sexuality allowed Femininity to define itself as "Woman As Sex Kitten/Sexual Being" in a long-overdue way. Infidelity and premarital sex had been all but banished as serious impediments to experimentation, and the issue of illegitimacy became far less of a social problem.

But that didn't help much with the *basic* problem. As Agrarian/Post-War ideals about marriage and family were still standard, enjoying a lot of sexual freedom in a public way caused problems for women trying to establish their femininity.

Women - *some* women - began to define their Femininity with Family as a *minor* aspect, if present at all. That was at odds with the feminine Prime Directive of reproduction, so the real damage to Femininity began.

So feminism tried to take over the issue by striking at the heart of the perceived oppressor, and the fun, fearless, divorce-happy era of the 1970s began. Laying aside the political ramifications, the hit that Femininity took was *staggering*.

Women's self-image was muddled irreparably by the insistence that they could both pursue their reproductive strategies (get married and have children) as well as pursue their career and financial goals (Work outside of the home). "Woman As Mother" took a backseat to "Woman As Independent Earner". Hera's reign fell with the ascent of Diana, the goddess who *demand*s equality with men.

That was problematic, and it remains problematic to this day.



The source of the problem is that "Woman As Independent Earner" encompasses little, if anything, of the previous incarnations of Femininity. And it is increasingly distant from the long-established roots of feminine identity, so much so at this point that one can easily say that Femininity has fractured, and is experiencing a severe crisis.

"Woman As Independent Earner", the Strong, Independent Woman archetype, has been promoted by feminism and non-feminist women alike as a lofty goal to aspire to. Loftier than any other, save only in the most conservative enclaves. **The "Feminine Mystique" that was once a point of rebellion has now eroded into a caricature of former feminine glories.** Encouraged by feminism to reject marriage and the pursuit of reproductive goals in favor of education and vocational aspirations, the remnant of the old standards still hold women up to personal and social expectations far more in line with the Agrarian past.

Femininity is experiencing an identity crisis again because now that it has successfully established "Independent Earner" into its matrix, it doesn't know how to make it relate to the other cast-off identities a woman has in her metaphorical closet. The problem is that "Independent Earner" is now the **dominant** paradigm in Femininity, at direct odds with "Home & Hearth" and "Motherhood". And it's sharing a mostly-unhealthy relationship with "Sex Kitten", these days.



Marriage is at the heart of this problem. Little girls are not encouraged, trained, or educated to grow up to become *good wives*. They're educated, trained and encouraged to *enter the workforce* (usually through a credentialed college) and *compete* with boys to the exclusion of all else. The the vague idea

of "getting married someday" is, of course, floating around in their heads along with "when I win the lottery", but a young woman's more immediate concerns revolve around her social life, not her future. Feminism and popular culture keep the wedding as the fantasy, and marriage as the rite-of-passage, but without explanation of marriage's utility or benefit, only it's dreaded dangers and threats of stealing female independence. It's an *emotional* expectation, not a pragmatic one. **Unfortunately, it's also the only real discussion of marriage most young women have today.**

Womankind's uneasy relationship with marriage can be traced directly to feminism. Feminism viewed marriage as "slavery", both sexual and practical, to the "patriarchy", denying women agency, rights, or self-determination. But, interesting enough, early feminists rarely wanted to get rid of marriage altogether, because they still saw marriage and family as necessary elements of Femininity. Even in the throes of the 1970s "Women's Liberation" phase, as Second Wave feminism took hold, feminism didn't want to eliminate marriage . . . **they merely wanted total control of it.**

Feminism grew to despise marriage, as it radicalized in the 1980s, and that had a powerful effect on Femininity. Marriage wasn't mere slavery for individual wives, it was PATRIARCHAL OPPRESSION, in the classic Marxist sense. Using financial independence and security as a basis, feminism began strongly encouraging girls AWAY from investing in the skills and attitudes that might prepare them for successful marriages, and replaced them with the more masculine-oriented desire for professional achievement and financial domination. **"Power" became the focus of a young woman's education - the power that came from their vulnerability as a protected class, the power that came from controlling the cultural consensus over "women's affairs", the power over any marriage or relationship she happened to enter into.** Feminism preached the sermon of Feminist Empowerment so loudly in the 1980s that it led to a schizophrenic approach to marriage by *Femininity*.



On the one hand, the "romantic desire" for a permanent relationship is there . . . **but feminism has successfully re-written the social rules enough to use any woman's apparent success in a relationship as *prima facie* evidence of her failure as "Independent Earner".** A woman who is successful in her professional life is NEVER lauded for her relationship or her family, even if she has them. **Particularly not her husband.** Admitting that you actually fell for the patriarchal oppression of marriage makes you automatically suspect in feminist circles, until you successfully divorce. **The only successful perspective on marriage a feminist has is the actual "getting married" part, not the "being married" part.**

Not convinced? See how much die-hard feminists recoil when you use the "traditional" trappings of a marriage commitment. Words like "wife", "husband", "our marriage", a woman taking her husband's last name, the term "Missus", all of the old hallmarks of a successful commitment have been utterly demonized by feminism. They have successfully distilled the institution to its celebratory and financial basics: the ring, the dress, the party, and the honeymoon. After that, **there is no more feminist celebration of marriage.**

You see, the thing that bothers them is not so much the "oppression" of the thing . . . it's the *permanence*.

To feminism, making a permanent commitment does not confirm a woman's adult ability to face up to her adult responsibilities . . . **it implies an irrevocable commitment to one potential breeding partner in a way that precludes feminist "agency" to make a better mate selection at a later time.** They want to make as much space as possible for commitment-smashing Hypergamy. Feminists don't want to get married any *less* than their ancestors, they just don't want to BE married if something better comes along, as an exercise of their independent feminist agency. With the presupposition that all men participate in the Patriarchy by virtue of the XY chromosomes, **to a feminist a "successful" marriage is one in which a woman divorces her first husband in time to marry her second, "real" husband. For awhile.**

If that sounds like a *massive* rationalization for opportunistically screwing around on your husband in the name of political power, you wouldn't be the first to note that.



This affects non-feminist women, too, because **you are all part of the same big Sexual Marketplace and Marriage Marketplace.** When feminism first flooded the SMP with young, nubile, sexually active girls in the late 1960s who had access to birth control, it *utterly* screwed up the MMP because it also liberalized divorce in such a way that made predatory hypergamy a bloodsport back in the Mad Men days. That is, it encouraged the "men are like houses; get what you can manage and then trade up!" ideal in female romantic relationships.

And when there is a sudden flood of sexually available pussy on the market with no firm goal of commitment, that completely screws up the carefully-laid plans of marriage-minded women to get carefully laid on their wedding nights. Feminism hijacked Femininity's code and re-wrote important parts of it so that now nothing really works right.

Your confusion and difficulty is the result.

Perversely, the divorce cycle and reluctance to pursue marriage that feminism tacitly endorses and culturally celebrates among young women is highly detrimental to their over-all welfare. Looked at objectively, **the smartest thing a young woman can do for her financial and reproductive future security is to form a strong alliance with an ambitious young man early, get married, and have children within the protective confines of the marital home, under the protection of her husband.** She will have a more secure home for her children, enjoy a lower chance of DV or sex-related health issues, raise healthier, more secure and higher-achieving children who will have far lower chances of encountering violence in their lives.

But that don't fly in Feminist Town. Respecting marriage denigrates Womanhood, even as it elevates Femininity.

Womanhood is far more important for feminists, because Womanhood is about Power, and Femininity is about Happiness.

By denigrating the power of lifelong marriage as a goal for a young woman, advising her to max out her SMV early and ignore her MMV until all the decent dudes are long gone, **feminism manages to screw young women out of reproductive options even as it fights to secure reproductive rights for them.** Because while feminism was screwing around with our basic social operating system for the benefit of women, it got drunk on its power and ignored the fact that men, too, have agency as individuals and societies, not just as part of the Evil Patriarchy.



That doesn't mean that women suddenly stopped wanting to live Happily Ever After and be mommies when they grew up. It just meant that if they did that in preference to a career, they would be scorned and lose status in large parts of the Matrix. And an increasing number of them ended up disappointed and cheated out of their best shots at that, because feminism was demanding that they Fight Patriarchy, not fuck it. The 1980s was replete with encouragement for girls that they could, indeed, have it all - and that marriage, motherhood and family would be available for all, once the career-building financial independence was done.

Problem was, by the early 1990s, when those dudes were *supposed* to be lining up to marry the women of that cohort, a whole lot of them *just didn't show*. The male fear of divorce and reluctance to engage with a feminist-oriented female culture that *went out of its way* to humiliate and emasculate men (particularly young men), as well as cool stuff like free porn and video games, made young men take a good hard look at the Femininity that their stunted Masculinity was supposed to be attracted to . . . and they recoiled in horror.

Women, meanwhile, recoiled in *confusion*. After feminism instructed them that boys would be oh-so-horny for their big paychecks and astonishing achievements, the boys just didn't show up with rings in their pockets. The "femininity" that was supposed to be the traditional bedrock of masculine attraction and mating was . . . *gone*.

What was left - what *you* are left with - is pretty desolate, from a masculine perspective. There was no dedication to children, except in abstract, no devotion to domestic skills, no cultivation of a warm and loving heart to encourage his own perseverance in the face of adversity. Instead young men looked at what their futures held with these determined, driven, *highly*-competitive girls who saw marriage and family as check boxes and his role as "guest husband" in her domestic fantasies. They looked at it, saw the pain and agony of their divorced dads, saw the misery in the eyes of their

married friends, and realized that *it just wasn't worth the effort*.

By that point feminism's odd ideas about sex had progressed to where sex within marriage was the absolute most boring, patriarchal, non-feminist sex you could have. They denigrated husbands and men in general in popular culture and made the term itself one of cultural disrespect. With that kind of painful humiliation to look forward to in the institution formerly known as marriage, the young men had a decision to make. So the dudes shrugged, went back to porn and video games and women went crazy, a little.



Male rejection of Femininity, in the form of suddenly-declining marriage rates and suddenly-increasing delays in first marriage should have sent a signal to women about the trouble they were in, but they were enjoying the power trip of wielding real political power, and paying attention to something as mundane as a marriage without masculine abuse was a waste of time - after all, as long as women were happy, men shouldn't have anything to complain about, according to feminism.

Not that women were particularly happy. Thankfully, the antidepressant revolution was at hand, too.

In the early 1990s Femininity had become a pale shade of its former self. While overt sexuality ("Sex Kitten") was still strongly present, all of the supporting structures that lent to male attraction were missing. In its place was "Independent Earner", and "Power Broker". While those elements flattered feminism's ideas about what Femininity looked like, they did damn little to make those young women at all attractive prospects for good long-term relationships. By the turn of the century, the men who felt driven to become husbands and fathers had wed, while the ones on the margins were procrastinating and being accused of being "commitment-phobic" when, in fact, **they just knew a bad deal when they saw one.**

Things got complicated with the rise of so-called "Fourth Wave Feminism", the Grrl-power social movement that attempted to re-combine Femininity and Feminism. Instead it made things worse, as girls tried

Archived from theredarchive.com