

THE WAR ON MEN

by Suzanne Venker

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MARY-LOUISE PARKER admits to liking things that are “psychologically dangerous.” *The Weeds* actress never married, but she has two children—one from a previous relationship and one who is adopted. When a man once asked her if her being a mom meant the two of them would not be able to go out alone together very much, Parker replied, “Yes, that’s exactly what it means. It means you come fourth – ’cause it’s my kids, my job, and my family.”

Welcome to twenty-first-century America.

In the span of a few short decades, this nation has managed to demote its men from respected providers and protectors of the family to superfluous buffoons. “Name a sitcom from 1970 forward that depicts a strong, responsible, intelligent father figure. Fathers in sitcoms are good-hearted, but they are also depicted as immature, dumb, lazy and incompetent. Do we seriously believe this drumbeat of messages has no impact?” writes *New York Times* reader Allan Bird.

It has major impact. Today’s sitcoms, *and* commercials, routinely paint a portrait of the idiot husband whose wife is smarter and more capable than he. Ward Cleaver is long gone. So is Cliff Huxtable, *The Cosby Show’s* enlightened but successful father of five. In their place is The New Dad: unemployed, unaware, and thoroughly emasculated.

What on earth happened?

Gender equality advocates, a.k.a. feminists, insist they have it all figured out. American women, they say, have taken their rightful place in society—the one that’s been denied them for centuries—and men have become slackers. They don’t have good jobs, and they spend all their time playing video games.

Well, maybe so. But the obsession with video games, as well as the proliferation of Internet pornography and rise of the “man cave,” make sense when you think about it. Men are burning off the testosterone America rejects.

Women's role in society has changed dramatically, no question. And this does alter the dynamics between men and women—on that point feminists and I would agree. But female ambition, in and of itself, isn't threatening to men. "Men know women are powerful, and we don't mind that one bit. It empowers us that you're empowered," writes clinical psychiatrist Paul Dobransky, M.D. "Unless, that is, you disempower us in order to feel empowered."

And there it is.

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What I have to say in the pages that follow may sound blasphemous. But it's comments like Mary-Louise Parker's that are blasphemous. This type of male bashing, which almost always falls under the radar, is par for the course in modern America. At a Los Angeles press conference to promote the film *Switch*, Jennifer Aniston said women are realizing more and more "that you don't have to settle, you don't have to fiddle with a man to have that child."

Fiddle?

If you're tempted to dismiss such comments as Hollywood drivel, consider these remarks by other high-profile females:

Author and journalist Natalie Angier begins an article in *The New York Times* by writing, "Women may not find this surprising, but one of the most persistent and frustrating problems in evolutionary biology is the male. Specifically. . . why doesn't he just go away?"

In a CNN interview with Maureen Dowd about her 2005 book, *Are Men Necessary?*, Dowd says, "Now that women don't need men to reproduce and refinance, the question is, will we keep you around? And the answer is, 'You know, we need you in the way we need ice cream—you'll be more ornamental.'"

Lisa Belkin, a blogger for *The New York Times*, wrote, "We are standing at a moment in time when the role of gender is shifting seismically. At this

moment an argument can be made for two separate narrative threads—the first is the retreat of men as this becomes a woman’s world.”

In an article in *The Atlantic* entitled “Are Fathers Necessary?” author Pamela Paul wrote, “The bad news for Dad is that despite common perception, there’s nothing objectively essential about his contribution.”

You come fourth. Fiddle with a man. Go away. Will we keep you around? *Imagine* if such statements were made about women. Impossible! Just for grins, let’s see what that would look like.

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In a CNN interview with Mike Dowd about his 2005 book, *Are Women Necessary?* Dowd says, “Now that men don’t need women, the question is, will we keep you around? And the answer is, ‘You know, we need you in the way we need ice cream—you’ll be more ornamental.’”

Liam Belkin, a blogger for *The New York Times*, wrote, “We are standing at a moment in time when the role of gender is shifting seismically. At this moment an argument can be made for two separate narrative threads—the first is the retreat of women as this becomes a man’s world.”

In an article in *The Atlantic* entitled, “Are Mothers Necessary?” author Patrick Paul wrote, “The bad news for Mom is that despite common perception, there’s nothing objectively essential about her contribution.”

Changes things, doesn’t it? Lest you think I’m exaggerating my case, or making much ado about nothing, consider this. In November 2009, Maria Shriver—along with the Center for American Progress—produced an exhaustive, four-hundred-page document titled *The Shriver*

Report: A Woman's Nation Changes Everything. In it, Shriver and company claim we are no longer living in a man's world. "As we move into this phase we're calling a woman's nation, women can turn their pivotal role as wage earners, as consumers, as bosses, as opinion-shapers, as co-equal partners in whatever we do into a potent force for change. Emergent economic power gives women a new seat at the table—at the head of the table."

Three years later, Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg echoed these sentiments. In November 2012, in response to a question about what would constitute an acceptable number of female Supreme Court justices, Justice Ginsburg answered, "Now the perception is, yes, women are here to stay. And when I'm sometimes asked when will there be enough and I say when there are nine, people are shocked."

With such overwhelming evidence of female power, how can anyone— no matter what their political persuasion—believe there's a war on women? We have it backwards. *Men* are the ones under attack.

To a large segment of the population, the idea that men can be victims at all is preposterous. "Everyone" knows there's more work to be done for women to achieve so-called equality. "Everyone" knows the patriarchy is alive and well. That is the message of the feminist elite.

Americans have been had. Feminism isn't about equal rights, nor is it about providing women with choices. I don't care how pretty feminists package their agenda—the mission is clear.

Feminism is a war on men.