



The Phyllis Schlafly Report

VOL. 16, NO. 5, SECTION 1

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DECEMBER, 1982

Essays on Feminism Versus Feminine

"Feminism" is a word currently used as a synonym for the "women's liberation movement." It was born in the mid-1960s with the publication of Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique*. From 1972 to 1982, feminism was the fashionable doctrine in the media, in colleges, and in women's magazines.

Feminism is an ideology which teaches that women have been mistreated since time began, and that even in America women are discriminated against by an oppressive male-dominated society. Feminism is a political movement which teaches that a just society must mandate identical treatment for men and women in every phase of our lives, no matter how reasonable it is to treat them differently; and that gender must never be used as the criterion for any decision.

Feminism is an economic movement which teaches that true fulfillment and "liberation" for women are in a paying job rather than in the confining, repetitious drudgery of the home, and that child care must not be allowed to interfere with a woman's career. Feminism is a psychological outlook on life which is basically negative; it teaches women that the odds are stacked so severely against them that they probably cannot succeed in whatever they attempt.

Feminism has nothing at all to do with being "feminine." Feminine means accentuating the womanly attributes that make women deliciously different from men. The feminine woman enjoys being a woman. She has a positive outlook on life. She knows she is a person with her own identity. She knows she can seek her fulfillment in the career of her choice, including that of traditional wife and mother.

A study by the advertising firm of Batten, Barton, Durstine & Osborne discovered that "the professional homemaker is a happy woman who feels good about herself and her ability to stick to her decision to remain at home, even under strong societal pressure to find an outside job." She is feminine and traditional, but not feminist.

Feminism Has Become Passé

In mid-1982, "feminism" went out of style; it became passé. The first evidence of this phenomenon was the series of news stories in *The Wall Street Journal* about the disruption in corporations and law firms caused by the wave of pregnancies at the managerial and professional levels. Since more women now hold high-level jobs, their time off for pregnancy causes se-

rious company disruptions. In the past eight years, the number of women over 30 having a child has almost doubled.

Then, many articles began appearing in pro-feminist newspapers and magazines which admitted that feminism is not desirable any more. *The New York Times Magazine* published a cover story on October 17, 1982, about feminism written by a feminist called "Voices From the Post-Feminist Generation." She told how one of her male friends asked her to get him a date with "a woman who's not a feminist." She replied that she didn't know any women who were not feminists. He told her she was wrong, and suggested that she inquire among younger women in their twenties.

So, this feminist writer in her thirties started interviewing smart young women in their twenties, and she learned quite a lot. She discovered that, among women in their twenties, "feminism has become a dirty word." She discovered that young women in their twenties have concluded that feminists are "unhappy," "bitter", "angry", "tired", and "bored," and that the happy, enthusiastic, relaxed women are *not* feminists.

The writer found that young women are turned off by feminism because of its "incredible bitterness." She admitted that "feminism had come to be strongly identified with lesbianism."

The New York Times Magazine article is only one of many similar articles that have appeared in the pro-feminist press. An Op-Ed piece written in October 1982 by another feminist in the *Chicago Tribune* started out, "Let's face it. The Revolution is over. I just turned 31 and all I want is a husband."

Other feminists in their thirties admit candidly that they have "baby hunger." That's the emotional trauma that comes over today's liberated woman when she turns age 30 and realizes that the clock is ticking and her years of possible motherhood are slipping away from her.

The 1983 fashions are already reflecting the tide against feminism. "Ladylike" is the word being used to describe the new styles. Dressing like one of the boys is out, and ladylike dresses are in.

Kramer v. Kramer

The movie *Kramer v. Kramer* is an important dramatization showing how feminism destroys marriage and how everybody, especially children, end up the losers. Since the plot is so dreary and uninspiring, the movie's success can be laid principally to the fact that it

touches one of the most sensitive nerves of today's society.

Mr. and Mrs. Kramer's marriage had none of the usual marital problems. There was no adultery, no alcohol, no financial worry, no physical indignity. The only problem was feminism. Mrs. Kramer began to think she wasn't a "whole person," and that she was "only" a wife and mother. She lost her self-esteem. She decided to abandon her husband and child in order to be liberated to seek her own self-identity. And so she walked out on her husband and child.

After she was liberated from marriage, and landed a job making more money than her husband, then she realized she wanted her child again. So she used the weapon of the court's traditional bias in favor of mothers. The traditional, middle-aged judge awarded her the child, even though she was the one who had walked out on the marriage. The audience "court" would have opted for Mr. Kramer.

At the end of the movie, Mr. Kramer was unhappy, Mrs. Kramer was unhappy, and the child was the unhappiest of all because he was left with only one parent and he loved them both. The marriage was forever destroyed. And the only cause was the psychological problem created by feminism (women's lib).

Kramer v. Kramer is one of the most instructive movies of our time. It shows that feminism is anti-family and a cause of divorce. It proves that the real victim of women's lib is the child. It proves that women's lib doesn't always look like Bella Abzug; it can also look like Meryl Streep.

Love, Success, and Liberation

"Love and Success: Can We Have It All?" was the headline over an article in *Glamour* magazine. The subhead proclaimed the feminist answer to that question in large type: "Yes, say today's high-powered young women. Reining in your ambition is no longer an acceptable price to pay for love."

The article started off with enthusiastic examples of highly-paid professional or business women who are successful in their careers, just like men. One was a lawyer, one a doctor (license plate MS MD 1), one a vice president of a large corporation.

It all sounded so perfect — until the fine print on the back page revealed the costs. One survey shows that, among women who earn \$50,000 or more, the divorce rate is four times the national average. Another survey shows that, among women who earn \$25,000 or more, the divorce rate is more than twice the average for all women.

A third survey shows that, among professional and managerial women whose median income is \$20,000 to \$25,000, 46% are single, 19% are divorced or separated, and 58% are childless, all figures much higher than the national average. A fourth survey shows that women who go on to graduate school divorce more often than those who stop after four years of college.

The November 1982 issue of *Psychology Today* carried an article called "Real Men Don't Earn Less Than Their Wives" which frankly reports that research shows that the rate of divorce for women who hold nontraditional jobs is twice as high as for those who hold

traditional jobs. It concludes that the "risks to marriage are serious but not insuperable."

The real answer to the "love and success" question is, anything's possible, but a woman who tries for both at the same time should know in advance that it is a high-risk lifestyle and she should be prepared to pay the price.

Until the 20th century, women always participated in the labor force just like men, whether on the farm or in the craftsman's shop. It simply required the productive labor of both husband and wife, and often their children too, to make ends meet. When the Industrial Revolution swept across America in the 19th century, women worked in the factories just like men.

One of the greatest achievements of the American economic system is that, by the end of World War I, our productivity had increased so much that the average working man was able to bring home a wage sufficient that his wife did not have to labor in the factories, mines, or fields. "Female emancipation" meant freeing women from the harness of the labor force so that they could have a better quality of life in a home environment.

Over the last ten years, inflation and high taxes have cut so deeply into the take-home pay of the average working man that women are being pushed by the millions out of the home into the factories and even into the mines. Almost half of all American wives are now in the labor force.

The funny thing is that some people call this "liberation." They even brag about the higher and higher percentage of women in the labor force, as indicated by government statistics.

The rationale behind the current push for affirmative action for women is that "an oppressive society," "business discrimination," and "the outdated stereotype of woman in the home" are to blame when a given category of employment includes fewer than 50% women. Affirmative action programs are designed to force employers, through federal and financial penalties, to increase artificially the percentage of women employed in each job classification, especially the "nontraditional."

The fourth annual "American Family Report", a national survey conducted by Louis Harris and Associates for General Mills, has plenty of evidence to indicate that most women have not chosen full-time labor-force participation as their life's goal. The survey results show that 39% of women would prefer to work only at home, and another 14% would prefer to do only volunteer work, making a total of 53% who do not want to be in the labor force at all. Another 32% want part-time work only, leaving only 12% of all American women who want full-time employment in the labor force.

In response to the question, "Do you think the trend toward both parents working outside the home has had a generally positive, a generally negative, or no effect at all on families?", 52% of Americans answered "generally negative."

In the days before the federal government took such an active role in regulating employment, one man's wage could support a wife and family. Now, with high taxes and high inflation, it seems to take 80 hours of work a week to support a family. Instead of progress, might this be regression to a 19th century economic system?

Rock Music, Motherhood, and Censorship

One of the top-ten rock records of 1982 was "I've Never Been To Me," sung by "Charlene" and issued by Motown Records. And thereby hangs an amazing tale of ideology, timing, social trends, and censorship.

The song was first released in 1976. Its timing was wrong and it didn't catch on. In early 1982, a disc jockey played it one night, and all his phone lines lit up with immediate enthusiasm. The song became an overnight sensation.

In the first two stanzas of the song, Charlene sings about her exotic life enjoying sexual encounters all over the world. She was living in a liberated "paradise" on earth. When she "ran out of places and friendly faces" in the United States, she continued her travels to Greece and Monte Carlo, because she "had to be free." As she sings it, "I've been undressed by kings, and I've seen some things that a woman ain't s'posed to see."

But all that sexually liberated "paradise" didn't make her happy. She's all alone now, and she's "crying for unborn children that might have made me complete." Hence the refrain of the song, "I've been to Paradise, but I've never been to me."

The lyrics give Charlene's personal advice to the "discontented mother and the regimented wife" who fantasizes about the exciting life she doesn't have. Charlene wishes someone had told her the truth about real love before she wasted her youth on "lies."

Anyone who has been watching the lifestyle sections of metropolitan newspapers and the national magazines knows that stay-at-home motherhood now is "in" — especially for feminists in their thirties and forties who have discovered that the calendar is catching up with them and that there is more to life than just having a well-paying career.

But this rock tune goes even farther. It implies that having a baby is necessary to make a woman "complete." Even more remarkable, it says that real "truth" is not only in having a baby but in loving and living with only one man.

For years, teenage girls have been taught just the opposite. Through a combination of peer pressure, classroom sex courses, X- and R-rated movies, suggestive TV programs, soft-porn literature, and rock music, they've been taught that sex with any partner is OK if you feel comfortable about it, that housewives lead dull and unrewarding lives, and that fulfillment for women means liberation from home, husband, family, and children.

Now at last, young women are hearing about the joys of a husband and children from a rock record. Times surely have changed. But, wait a minute, there's more to this story. As soon as "I've Never Been To Me" became a hit song, the liberals and the feminists caught on to its clear pro-family message, and they set out to silence it.

A columnist for the *Washington Post* wrote an indignant column about it. He was upset because "the pendulum is swinging back" to motherhood. He said the song ought to be called "the Phyllis Schlafly national anthem." He concludes that the song's popularity is a social commentary which proves that a "reaction has set in" to the feminist movement which he says was good because it "shattered stereotypes" and it "liberated women."

Now comes the most interesting part of this story about the "motherhood song." After it became so popular and its message so clear, Motown Records accommodated the liberals by issuing a censored version of "I've Never Been To Me." Of course, Motown and the radio stations don't use the word "censored"; they call it the "edited version."

Anyone who tuned in on local "adult rock" radio stations during the first half of 1982 could hear the song within a couple of hours of listening. Some stations played the original version and some played the censored version. What was censored out of the "edited version" is the middle part where Charlene interrupts her singing to talk straight to the housewife who thinks she is missing out on liberated living.

In the censored passage, Charlene says: "Hey, you know what Paradise is? It's a lie, a fantasy we create about people and places as we like them to be. But you know what truth is? It's that little baby you're holding, and it's that man you fought with this morning — the same one you're going to make love with tonight. That's truth; that's love."

"Censorship" is the current chic slogan of the liberals who today are trying to intimidate pro-family activists who object to obscenity, profanity, blasphemy, immorality, and violence in textbooks, other school materials, and television programming. It is clear that the liberals are like the thief who tries to conceal his crime by pointing to someone else and crying "stop, thief." The pressure groups against motherhood and against traditional moral standards are really the most ruthless censors of all.

Mary Cunningham: A Generic Name

Andrew Hacker, a political science professor at Queens College in New York City, wrote an article in 1980 for *Harper's Magazine* called "Why Women Killed the Equal Rights Amendment." The thesis of his article was that women, not men, were responsible for the defeat of ERA, and that wives killed ERA because they saw it as a threat to their security in the home.

Professor Hacker wrote: "Now husbands are increasingly apt to have as colleagues high-powered younger women who understand their professional problems in ways a wife never can. These affinities can emerge as easily in a patrol car as in planning a marketing campaign. Shared work, particularly under pressure, has aphrodisiac effects."

Professor Hacker was so right. A few weeks after his article was published, the Mary Cunningham story broke. She was the 28-year-old business school graduate who went to work for William Agee, president of Bendix Corporation. In about 15 months, he promoted her to executive vice president at a tremendous salary. They made trips together. He divorced his wife, and she divorced her husband.

William Agee was the co-chair of the National Business Council for ERA. It is not surprising that he is for ERA; he obviously enjoys working with a "high-powered younger woman."

But what about Agee's first wife who was cast aside after 23 years? Mary Cunningham got her "equal rights" at the expense of Mrs. Agee. Wives oppose the Equal Rights Amendment because they intuitively understand the truth of Hacker's thesis.

What was called "the Bill and Mary Show" became such a high-charged personnel situation at Bendix that Mary resigned and moved to a big job at Seagram Wine Companies. Some months later, Bill and Mary were married, and now she gives speeches and newspaper interviews.

According to an October 1982 interview in the *Washington Post*, Cunningham "sees herself as a victim, a public example of what she says is anti-female bias in corporate America. Repeatedly, she refers to the 'pain' she has experienced, how she has carried the burden of 'ugly' rumors and innuendoes because she was rapidly promoted."

Cunningham says, "it's part of living to suffer and part of leadership to be controversial." However, the only people on whom she appears to have exerted her "leadership" are her two husbands, plus Agee's flamboyant corporate maneuverings involving Bendix and Martin Marietta.

But she is correct when she boasts that she is "now a generic name." A "Mary Cunningham" is a smart, attractive, ambitious young woman who makes work interesting for an older, already-successful man, and enables him to feel young again "the second time around."

In February 1972, the *Phyllis Schlafly Report* published its first article on feminism called "What's Wrong With Equal Rights For Women?" It told how a New York University professor named Warren T. Farrell provided the ideological rationale for why men should support women's lib. When his speech to the American Political Science Association Convention was stripped of its egghead verbiage, his argument was that a husband should no longer be "saddled with the tremendous guilt feelings" when he leaves his wife after she has given him her best years. The Bill and Mary Story are the glamorous personification of the essence of women's lib.

Princess Grace and Cinderella

The passing of Princess Grace was the occasion of hundreds of news stories and features, as well as the cover of *Time* magazine. Many of the stories (intentionally or unintentionally) conveyed the subliminal message that her life was "the last fairy tale," that her love story was unique and could never happen again, or that her accident on the winding mountain road punctured the "happily ever after" ending of her love story.

The reason for those cynical undertones was that Princess Grace was the modern personification of the Cinderella fairy tale, which for years has been a hated villain of the women's liberation movement. Princess Grace's very existence proved that an American "Cinderella" can marry her Prince Charming, go to live in his palace on the hill, and live happily ever after (which, of course, means until death do us part).

When the women's liberation movement emerged in the United States in the mid-1960s as a result of Betty Friedan's book called *The Feminine Mystique*, one of the quirks of its ideology was a passionate debunking of the Cinderella fairy tale. That harmless children's story became a bete noire of the women's liberation movement; it was labeled a "stereotype" of women's oppression which must be censored out of children's books.

Women's lib ideologues inveighed against the "myth" and "delusion" of Cinderella, which encouraged

little girls to believe that a Prince Charming could come along and that they would live happily ever after. Cinderella was decried as the ultimate in "sexist" child-rearing.

The publication of the book *The Cinderella Complex* in 1981 by Colette Dowling sent shock-waves through the women's liberation movement. Written by a feminist, the author argued regretfully that most women do have a secret desire to depend on a husband who will support and defend his wife.

One day while I was in a television studio, a young woman producer accosted me with the question, "Mrs. Schlafly, do you believe in the thesis of the book *Cinderella Complex*?" I said, "Yes, I think most women would like to marry a man who will support and defend her." She replied, "I'm afraid you're right. But I'm trying to overcome that feeling."

Since the young woman was in her twenties and nice looking, I told her she didn't really need to try to overcome her Cinderella complex — her Prince Charming just might come along some day. Her heart told her I was right, but her "liberated" mind refused to accept it.

One thing is sure. If you make up your mind that you will never find your "Prince Charming", you won't. If you decide in advance that it is impossible to "live happily ever after," you won't. But it all can happen to you if you make up your mind that it can happen. I know — because it happened to me.

I found my "Prince Charming" in a small law office in a little town of 40,000 people in downstate Illinois, and we've lived happily ever after for 33 years. Millions of other women have found their "Prince Charmings" in even less likely places. And they have lived happily ever after because they worked hard at making their marriages succeed.

Princess Grace was the glamorous personification of the Cinderella fairy tale because (unlike some other Hollywood "queens") she remained true to her marriage vows. I never understood why Grace Kelly would choose European royalty when she could have had a fine American man who could have built a splendid business or professional career; but love conquers all, and to each her own.

The real lesson of all this is that happy, enduring marriages do still happen despite great obstacles of circumstances and "liberation" propaganda. Other women are not as beautiful as Grace Kelly, and their Prince Charmings are not as rich, and their homes do not have as many rooms as the Monaco palace. But their love is just as fulfilling, and they do live happily "until death do us part."

We are indebted to Grace Kelly for providing a role-model who proved on the world stage that a modern, talented woman can find fulfillment forever as a wife and mother in a traditional family.

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Box 618, Alton, Illinois 62002
ISSN0556-0152

Published monthly by The Eagle Trust Fund, Box 618, Alton, Illinois 62002.

Second Class Postage Paid at Alton, Illinois.

Subscription Price: \$10 per year. Extra copies available: 50 cents each; 4 copies \$1; 30 copies \$5; 100 copies \$10.