

On Women

by Arthur Schopenhauer

Because of feminism's ability to censure all debate this short work given below by Schopenhauer has been deliberately hidden so that we may not discuss his 'heretical' views of women.

However to exclude work from a philosopher, with such undoubted ability who has contributed so much especially to our understanding of the strength of the human will, simply on the basis that it doesn't comply with political correctness is contrary to common sense and the scientific need for finding the truth.

Political Correctness can be compared with panning for gold in the gravel of a river bed. To find the nuggets of gold one has to carefully examine each particle of 'non-gold' and so dismiss them as not being useful. This is a crude explanation of the scientific theory. On the surface Political Correctness vetoes any such search for valuable discoveries simply on the basis that some of the 'impurities' might be harmful to the prevailing ideology of state-feminism. In reality Political Correctness stamps out any dissent or even discussion and when one examines why it is obviously because even a child's logic can uncover the horrendous flaws in the feminist argument.

Whilst there are probably very few who would agree with everything he says I believe any discussion on his treatise will only be of benefit to our need for a productive analysis of what has gone wrong with a society where women can willingly and unilaterally end the life of their unborn child, can willingly and unilaterally end their marriage without due concern for the consequences and where 50% of the adult females in Ireland apparently already find themselves with a credit card debt that will take 11 years to pay off.

The National Mens Council of Ireland decided several years ago that we would not be regulated by political correctness because we believe that only by courageously addressing these problems by careful and full analysis of all the factors can we once again create social and political systems that truly protect the interests of all its citizens.

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<http://www.heretical.com/miscella/onwomen.html>
<http://www.theabsolute.net/misogyny/onwomen.html>

Schopenhauer: 'The truth can wait, for it lives a long time'

An abridged version of Arthur Schopenhauer's famous essay, "On Women"

Updated and edited Translation is by R. J. Hollingdale, from Arthur Schopenhauer: Essays and Aphorisms (Penguin 1970), and by T. Bailey Saunders.

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These few words of Jouy,

Sans les femmes le commencement de notre vie seroit privé de secours, le milieu de plaisirs et la fin de consolation,

more exactly express, in my opinion, the true praise of woman than Schiller's poem, *Würde der Frauen*, which is the fruit of much careful thought and impressive because of its antithesis and use of contrast. The same thing is more pathetically expressed by Byron in *Sardanapalus*, Act i, Sc. 2:—

“The very first Of human life must spring from woman's breast, Your first small words are taught you from her lips, Your first tears quench'd by her, and your last sighs Too often breathed out in a woman's hearing, When men have shrunk from the ignoble care Of watching the last hour of him who led them.”

Both passages show the right point of view for the appreciation of women.

The nature of the female

One needs only to see the way she is built to realize that woman is not intended for great mental or for great physical labour. She expiates the guilt of life not through activity but through suffering, through the pains of childbirth, caring for the child and subjection to the man, to whom she should be a patient and cheering companion. Great suffering, joy, exertion, is not for her: her life should flow by more quietly, trivially, gently than the man's without being essentially happier or unhappier.

Women are suited to being the nurses and teachers of our earliest childhood precisely because they themselves are childish, silly and short-sighted, in a word big children, their whole lives long: a kind of intermediate stage between the child and the man, who is the

actual human being, 'man.' One has only to watch a girl playing with a child, dancing and singing with it the whole day, and then ask oneself what, with the best will in the world, a man could do in her place.

Natural weapons

In the girl nature has had in view what could in theatrical terms be called a stage-effect: it has provided her with superabundant beauty and charm for a few years at the expense of the whole remainder of her life, so that during these years she may so capture the imagination of a man that he is carried away into undertaking to support her honourably in some form or another for the rest of her life, a step he would seem hardly likely to take for purely rational considerations. Thus nature has equipped women, as it has all its creatures, with the tools and weapons she needs for securing her existence, and at just the time she needs them; in doing which nature has acted with its usual economy. For just as the female ant loses its wings after mating, since they are then superfluous, indeed harmful to the business of raising the family, so the woman usually loses her beauty after one or two childbeds, and probably for the same reason.

The nobler and more perfect a thing is, the later and slower is it in reaching maturity. Man reaches the maturity of his reasoning and mental faculties scarcely before he is eight-and-twenty; woman when she is eighteen; but hers is reason of very narrow limitations. This is why women remain children all their lives, for they always see only what is near at hand, cling to the present, take the appearance of a thing for reality, and prefer trifling matters to the most important. It is by virtue of man's reasoning powers that he does not live in the present only, like the brute, but observes and ponders over the past and future; and from this spring discretion, care, and that anxiety which we so frequently notice in people. The advantages, as well as the disadvantages, that this entails, make woman, in consequence of her weaker reasoning powers, less of a partaker in them. Moreover, she is intellectually short-sighted, for although her intuitive understanding quickly perceives what is near to her, on the other hand her circle of vision is limited and does not embrace anything that is remote; hence everything that is absent or past, or in the future, affects women in a less degree than men. This is why they have greater inclination for extravagance, which sometimes borders on madness. Women in their hearts think that men are intended to earn money so that they may spend it, if possible during their husband's lifetime, but at any rate after his death.

As soon as he has given them his earnings on which to keep house they are strengthened in this belief. Although all this entails many disadvantages, yet it has this advantage — that a woman lives more in the present than a man, and that she enjoys it more keenly if it is at all bearable. This is the origin of that cheerfulness which is peculiar to woman and makes her fit to divert man, and in case of need, to console him when he is weighed down by cares. To consult women in matters of difficulty, as the Germans used to do in old times, is by no means a matter to be overlooked; for their way of grasping a thing is quite different from ours, chiefly because they like the shortest way to the point, and usually

keep their attention fixed upon what lies nearest; while we, as a rule, see beyond it, for the simple reason that it lies under our nose; it then becomes necessary for us to be brought back to the thing in order to obtain a near and simple view. This is why women are more sober in their judgment than we, and why they see nothing more in things than is really there; while we, if our passions are roused, slightly exaggerate or add to our imagination.

It is because women's reasoning powers are weaker that they show more sympathy for the unfortunate than men, and consequently take a kindlier interest in them. On the other hand, women are inferior to men in matters of justice, honesty, and conscientiousness. Again, because their reasoning faculty is weak, things clearly visible and real, and belonging to the present, exercise a power over them which is rarely counteracted by abstract thoughts, fixed maxims, or firm resolutions, in general, by regard for the past and future or by consideration for what is absent and remote. Accordingly they have the first and principal qualities of virtue, but they lack the secondary qualities which are often a necessary instrument in developing it. Women may be compared in this respect to an organism that has a liver but no gall-bladder.

Female truth

The fundamental defect of the female character is a lack of a sense of justice. This originates first and foremost in their want of rationality and capacity for reflexion but it is strengthened by the fact that, as the weaker sex, they are driven to rely not on force but on cunning: hence their instinctive subtlety and their ineradicable tendency to tell lies: for, as nature has equipped the lion with claws and teeth, the elephant with tusks, the wild boar with fangs, the bull with horns and the cuttlefish with ink, so it has equipped woman with the power of dissimulation as her means of attack and defence, and has transformed into this gift all the strength it has bestowed on man in the form of physical strength and the power of reasoning. Dissimulation is thus inborn in her and consequently to be found in the stupid woman almost as often as in the clever one. To make use of it at every opportunity is as natural to her as it is for an animal to employ its means of defence whenever it is attacked, and when she does so she feels that to some extent she is only exercising her rights. A completely truthful woman who does not practice dissimulation is perhaps an impossibility, which is why women see through the dissimulation of others so easily it is inadvisable to attempt it with them. – But this fundamental defect which I have said they possess, together with all that is associated with it, gives rise to falsity, unfaithfulness, treachery, ingratitude, etc. Women are guilty of perjury far more often than men. It is questionable whether they ought to be allowed to take an oath at all.

Nature has made it the calling of the young, strong, and handsome men to look after the propagation of the human race; so that the species may not degenerate. This is the firm will of Nature, and it finds its expression in the passions of women. This law surpasses all others in both age and power. Woe then to the man who sets up rights and interests in such a way as to make them stand in the way of it; for whatever he may do or say, they

will, at the first significant onset, be unmercifully annihilated. For the secret, unformulated, nay, unconscious but innate moral of woman is: We are justified in deceiving those who, because they care a little for us,—that is to say for the individual,—imagine they have obtained rights over the species. The constitution, and consequently the welfare of the species, have been put into our hands and entrusted to our care through the medium of the next generation which proceeds from us; let us fulfil our duties conscientiously.

But women are by no means conscious of this leading principle in abstracto, they are only conscious of it in concreto, and have no other way of expressing it than in the manner in which they act when the opportunity arrives. So that their conscience does not trouble them so much as we imagine, for in the darkest depths of their hearts they are conscious that in violating their duty towards the individual they have all the better fulfilled it towards the species, whose claim upon them is infinitely greater. (A fuller explanation of this matter may be found in vol. ii., ch. 44, in my chief work, *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung*.)

Because women in truth exist entirely for the propagation of the race, and their destiny ends here, they live more for the species than for the individual, and in their hearts take the affairs of the species more seriously than those of the individual. This gives to their whole being and character a certain frivolousness, and altogether a certain tendency which is fundamentally different from that of man; and this it is which develops that discord in married life which is so prevalent and almost the normal state.

It is natural for a feeling of mere indifference to exist between men, but between women it is actual enmity. This is due perhaps to the fact that odium figulinum in the case of men, is limited to their everyday affairs, but with women embraces the whole sex; since they have only one kind of business. Even when they meet in the street, they look at each other like Guelphs and Ghibellines. And it is quite evident when two women first make each other's acquaintance that they exhibit more constraint and dissimulation than two men placed in similar circumstances. This is why an exchange of compliments between two women is much more ridiculous than between two men. Further, while a man will, as a rule, address others, even those inferior to himself, with a certain feeling of consideration and humanity, it is unbearable to see how proudly and disdainfully a lady of rank will, for the most part, behave towards one who is in a lower rank (not employed in her service) when she speaks to her. This may be because differences of rank are much more precarious with women than with us, and consequently more quickly change their line of conduct and elevate them, or because while a hundred things must be weighed in our case, there is only one to be weighed in theirs, namely, with which man they have found favour; and again, because of the one-sided nature of their vocation they stand in closer relationship to each other than men do; and so it is they try to render prominent the differences of rank.

Feminine charms

Only a male intellect clouded by the sexual drive could call the stunted, narrow-shouldered, broad-hipped and short-legged sex the fair sex: for it is with this drive that all its beauty is bound up. More fittingly than the fair sex, women could be called the unaesthetic sex. Neither for music, nor poetry, nor the plastic arts do they possess any real feeling or receptivity: if they affect to do so, it is merely mimicry in service of their effort to please. This comes from the fact that they are incapable of taking a purely objective interest in anything whatever, and the reason for this is, I think, as follows. Man strives in everything for a direct domination over things, either by comprehending or by subduing them. But woman is everywhere and always relegated to a merely indirect domination, which is achieved by means of man, who is consequently the only thing she has to dominate directly. Thus it lies in the nature of women to regard everything simply as a means of capturing a man, and their interest in anything else is only simulated, is no more than a detour, i.e. amounts to coquetry and mimicry.

Absence of genius

Nor can one expect anything else from women if one considers that the most eminent heads of the entire sex have proved incapable of a single truly great, genuine and original achievement in art, or indeed of creating anything at all of lasting value: this strikes one most forcibly in regard to painting, since they are just as capable of mastering its technique as we are, and indeed paint very busily, yet cannot point to a single great painting; the reason being precisely that they lack all objectivity of mind, which is what painting demands above all else. Isolated and partial exceptions do not alter the case: women, taken as a whole, are and remain thorough and incurable philistines: so that, with the extremely absurd arrangement by which they share the rank and title of their husband, they are a continual spur to his ignoble ambitions. They are *sexus sequior*, the inferior second sex in every respect: one should be indulgent toward their weaknesses, but to pay them honour is ridiculous beyond measure and demeans us even in their eyes.

When nature divided the human race into two parts, she did not cut it exactly through the middle! The difference between the positive and negative poles, according to polarity, is not merely qualitative but also quantitative. And it was in this light that the ancients and people of the East regarded woman; they recognised her true position better than we, with our old French ideas of gallantry and absurd veneration, that highest product of Christian–Teutonic stupidity. These ideas have only served to make them arrogant and imperious, to such an extent as to remind one at times of the holy apes in Benares, who, in the consciousness of their holiness and inviolability, think they can do anything and everything they please.

No argument about polygamy

There can be no argument about polygamy: it is a fact to be met with everywhere and the only question is how to regulate it. For who is really a monogamist? We all live in polygamy, at least for a time and usually for good. Since every man needs many women, there could be nothing more just than that he should be free, indeed obliged, to support many women. This would also mean the restoration of woman to her rightful and natural position, the subordinate one, and the abolition from the world of the lady, with her ridiculous claims to respect and veneration; there would then be only women, and no longer unhappy women, of which Europe is at present full.

The vanity of women, even if it should not be greater than that of men, has this evil in it, that it is directed on material things — that is to say, on their personal beauty and then on tinsel, pomp, and show. This is why they are in their right element in society. This it is which makes them inclined to be extravagant, especially since they possess little reasoning power. Accordingly, an ancient writer says, [Greek: *Gunai to synolon esti dapanation physei*].¹⁰ Men's vanity, on the other hand, is often directed on non-material advantages, such as intellect, learning, courage, and the like. Aristotle explains in the *Politics*¹¹ the great disadvantages which the Spartans brought upon themselves by granting too much to their women, by allowing them the right of inheritance and dowry, and a great amount of freedom; and how this contributed greatly to the fall of Sparta. May it not be that the influence of women in France, which has been increasing since Louis XIII.'s time, was to blame for that gradual corruption of the court and government which led to the first Revolution, of which all subsequent disturbances have been the result? In any case, the false position of the female sex, so conspicuously exposed by the existence of the "lady," is a fundamental defect in our social condition, and this defect, proceeding from the very heart of it, must extend its harmful influence in every direction. That woman is by nature intended to obey is shown by the fact that every woman who is placed in the unnatural position of absolute independence at once attaches herself to some kind of man, by whom she is controlled and governed; this is because she requires a master. If she is young, the man is a lover; if she is old, a priest.

Property and inheritance

In India, no woman is ever independent, but in accordance with the law of Manu, she stands under the control of her father, her husband, her brother or her son. It is, to be sure, a revolting thing that a widow should immolate herself upon her husband's funeral pyre; but it is also revolting that she should spend her husband's money with her paramours — the money for which he toiled his whole life long, in the consoling belief that he was providing for his children. Happy are those who have kept the middle course — *medium tenere beati*.

In almost all nations, whether of the ancient or the modern world, even amongst the Hottentots, property is inherited by the male descendants alone; it is only in Europe that a departure has taken place; but not amongst the nobility, however.

That the property which has cost men long years of toil and effort, and been won with so much difficulty, should afterwards come into the hands of women, who then, in their lack of reason, squander it in a short time, or otherwise fool it away, is a grievance and a wrong as serious as it is common, which should be prevented by limiting the right of women to inherit. In my opinion, the best arrangement would be that by which women, whether widows or daughters, should never receive anything beyond the interest for life on property secured by mortgage, and in no case the property itself, or the capital, except when there cease to be male descendants. The people who make money are men, not women; and it follows from this that women are neither justified in having unconditional possession of it, nor fit persons to be entrusted with its administration. When wealth, in any true sense of the word, that is to say, funds, houses or land, is to go to them as an inheritance they should never be allowed the free disposition of it. In their case a guardian should always be appointed; and hence they should never be given the free control of their own children, wherever it can be avoided.