

Men and Marriage

“[Gilder is] the Nation’s leading Male-Chauvinist Pig Author”

TIME MAGAZINE

“Controversial, passionately argued, and vitally important, George Gilder’s *Men and Marriage* reminds us of timeless truths that undergird healthy civilizations. To the precise extent we ignore his message, we will fall into a state of inexorable societal decline.”

BEN SHAPIRO, Editor Emeritus, *Daily Wire*,
Host of *The Ben Shapiro Show*

“If I didn’t have my brain, I’d want Gilder’s.”

RUSH LIMBAUGH, Host of *The Rush Limbaugh Show*

“There are a few writers in this country who stand head and shoulders above the rest of us and one of the most brilliant is George Gilder. *Men and Marriage* is one of the classic books on marriage of all times. I have recommended it for more than 30 years.”

JAMES C. DOBSON PH.D., Licensed Psychologist

“The genius of George Gilder is that he can venture into the heart of this tempestuous rage aware that tis fury is about to break full force on our heads, and yet send back this calm, rational, even hope-filled message in a bottle. The question is: Will we read it? And, even more important, will we heed it?”

CHRISTIANITY TODAY

“*Men and Marriage* . . . is an outstandingly important and well-argued book.”

NATIONAL REVIEW

“George Gilder’s book *Men and Marriage* is an extraordinary achievement precisely because it is today as simultaneously prescient and relevant as when most of it appeared fifty years ago. *Can we imagine?* It is that very deepest of encouragements that reality stubbornly remains reality, or more specifically that the foundational nature of that thing we call human biology especially in the concomitant traditional and complementary roles of men and women is as undeniable as ever, precisely because it really is reality, and not some vanishing social construct, as the madmen have over and over blithered. Just as Newton in the 17th century told us how gravity works and still works and always will work Gilder told us in the 20th century and tells us again now how men and women and marriage work and still work and always will work. To be reminded of these particular eternal verities as they continue to be attacked by the sour souls of our own day is needed and deeply heartening and generally wonderful.”

ERIC METAXAS, author of *Bonhoeffer* and *Is Atheism Dead?*, and founder and host of *Socrates in the City*.

“Any book that begins with a foreword from Douglas Wilson should be taken seriously. So should this: right now the average 25-year-old American male is more likely to still be living with at least one of his parents than with a wife and child. That is

the Death of the West quantified. You can tell a lot about a culture by the state of its men and marriages, and the current state of both is sorrowful. Which is exactly why Gilder's formative work is rightfully being reloaded for a new generation before it sadly becomes America's final one."

STEVE DEACE, BlazeTV host of *The Steve Deace Show*

"Our culture is deeply confused about the character and purpose of men and masculinity in the twenty-first century. George Gilder offers an incomparably incisive and thought-provoking meditation on men today, especially the ways in which marriage matters for men. This book deserves your attention, whether or not you agree with his vision."

BRAD WILCOX, Director of the National Marriage Project, University of Virginia

"The first time the Bible ever says something is not good is when Adam did not yet have a wife. Just as in physics, the greatest release of explosive cultural power comes not from fission, but from fusion. Through marriage, women transform men into the most powerful force in all creation. Gilder's book shows that this is not just one option among many but a fixed law of the creation order. To ignore it is both sexual and civilizational suicide."

JERRY BOWYER, President of Bowyer Research,
and author of *The Maker Versus the Takers:
What Jesus Really Said About Social Justice and Economics.*'

“Centuries ago Jean-Jacques Rousseau observed that ‘the two sexes have so strong and so natural a relation to one another that the morals of one always determine the morals of the other,’ but then he clouded his analysis with the idea that people were naturally good. George Gilder’s *Men and Marriage* provides an unblinking, unromantic look at how the creation of a new woman under our feminist regime has brought about a new, less responsible, weaker, man. Modern rulers do not want anyone to notice, but Gilder’s recovery of old wisdom on sexual relations is indispensable for understanding our situation and for a way forward.”

SCOTT YENOR, Professor of Political Science at Boise State, Washington Fellow at the Claremont Institute, author of *The Recovery of Family Life*.

“*Men and Marriage* is that most rare book where time has transformed clear observation, fresh thinking, and compelling writing into terrifying prophecy. When I first encountered George Gilder’s concept of ‘sexual suicide’ over forty years ago, the moral confusions and vast dangers of ‘the sexual revolution’ launched in the 1960s became clear. In 2023, an America long distinctive for its marriage-centered and child-rich ways now records astonishingly low marriage and fertility rates and the public celebration of homosexuality, transsexuality, and other forms of sterile existence . . . all foreseen in George Gilder’s analysis. He fairly parcels out blame for this social, cultural, and religious failure. Given their direct assault on the sexual

distinction and fruitful marriage, the feminists are prominent here. However, George Gilder also indicts those high-status men whose embrace of easy divorce and “trophy wives” equally violated the vital “sexual constitution” undergirding ordered liberty. His central argument—that full recognition of the physical, mental, and operational differences between men and women lies at the core of a healthy society—has only gained in relevance.”

ALLAN C. CARLSON, Author of *The American Way: Family and Community in the Shaping of the American Identity*

“George Gilder is the great American Bard of the cyber world, learned and melodious.”

WILLIAM F. BUCKLEY, JR.

MEN AND MARRIAGE

George Gilder

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To my mother and Gilly

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FOREWORD

I OWE A GREAT INTELLECTUAL DEBT TO George Gilder, and in multiple areas—economics, technology, sexual sanity, intelligent design, and more. It all began back in 1981 when I was but a callow youth, still in my twenties. I read *Wealth and Poverty*, probably because the whole country was reading it, and I was suitably impressed. Shortly after that, and probably because I was looking for more material from this “great author” I had found, I came across his book *Sexual Suicide*. That book was an earlier iteration of some of the themes in his later book, *Men and Marriage*, the book you are now holding in your hands.

One of the great lessons I learned from him was a lesson that got me canned during the beta-testing era of cancel culture. Back in the eighties, I was a weekly columnist for our local newspaper, and shortly after that I got the additional

coin of public opprobrium—for being right in his work that has urged a return to sexual sanity, or for his part in the Discovery Institute, which has been invaluable in undermining a hard Darwinian materialism, and putting intelligent design on the map.

A man with so many true friends, and so many true enemies, must be what we should reckon to be a true thinker and author. This is a man well worth reading.

DOUGLAS WILSON

Easter 2023

PREFACE TO THE 2023 EDITION

“IN THE BEGINNING WAS THE WORD.” THIS canonical revelation of St. John has become the governing vision of my life, extending from economics and technology, science and morality, to home and family. In all these fields, ideas prevail and transcend and rule the lower domains of matter and flesh below. Human beings are made in the image of their creator, to be creative.

But at the time I began this book in the 1960s, I was embroiled in a set of beliefs that was termed the “sexual revolution.” This perverse movement could be summed up as: “In the beginning . . . and in the end . . . is only the flesh.”

At the time, I was unmarried, and thus less than fully a man. Beyond all the exceptions and caveats—heroes, priests

Signs of the beginnings of such a great awakening are visible in America today, from Moscow, Idaho to Ashbury Christian University in Kentucky to the Jewish pro-family triumphs in Israel to Opus Dei's pro-family Catholic revival movement around the world. As the absurd extremes of the revolution against truth become increasingly manifest, the truth increasingly prevails and its momentum grows. We can be sure of ultimate triumph as creative men and women seek the prayerful guidance of their creator.

GEORGE GILDER
2023

PROLOGUE

**THE PRINCESS
AND THE BARBARIAN**

ONCE UPON A TIME IN A DISTANT MOUNTAINOUS land there was a young and beautiful princess who loved to wander in the woods. The forest was deep below the snowcapped peaks and the valleys were quiet and safe. She could go freely without care or fear. She could saunter along the trails that took local merchants and messengers toward the passes to neighboring lands and brought them back laden with news and commerce. She could watch for birds radiant among the leaves and sometimes glimpse a deer dancing through the brush. In summer she could swim in the brooks that hurtled down the mountains and gathered in pools in the crevices. She was carefree and gay, at ease with nature and the world.

CHAPTER 1
**THE NECESSITIES
OF LOVE**

Love is a desire for generation and birth in beauty.

PLATO

THE CRUCIAL PROCESS OF CIVILIZATION is the subordination of male sexual impulses and biology to the long-term horizons of female sexuality. The overall sexual behavior of women in the modern world differs relatively little from the sexual life of women in primitive societies. It is male behavior that must be changed to create a civilized order.

Men lust, but they know not what for; they wander and lose track of the goal; they fight and compete, but they forget

the prize; they spread seed, but spurn the seasons of growth; they chase power and glory, but miss the meaning of life.

In creating civilization, women transform male lust into love; channel male wanderlust into jobs, homes, and families; link men to specific children; rear children into citizens; change hunters into fathers; divert male will to power into a drive to create. Women conceive the future that men tend to flee; they feed the children that men ignore.

The prime fact of life is the sexual superiority of women. Sexual love, intercourse, marriage, conception of a child, childbearing—even breast-feeding—are all critical experiences psychologically. They are times when our emotions are most intense, our lives are most deeply changed, and society is perpetuated in our own image. And they all entail sexual roles that demonstrate the primacy of women.

The central roles are mother and father, husband and wife. They form neat and apparently balanced pairs. But appearances are deceptive. In sexual terms, there is little balance at all. In most of these key sexual events, the male role is trivial, even easily dispensable. Although the man is needed in intercourse, artificial insemination has already been used in hundreds of thousands of cases. Otherwise, the man is altogether unnecessary. It is the woman who conceives, bears, and suckles the child. Those activities that are most deeply sexual are mostly female; they comprise the mother's role, a role that is defined biologically.

The nominally equivalent role of father is in fact a product of marriage and other cultural contrivances. There is no

CHAPTER 2

**THE BIOLOGICAL
DIFFERENCE**

IN RECENT YEARS, A NEW PROFESSIONAL has emerged in America: the sexologist. Usually a woman, conservative in dress and temperament, confident, with formidable credentials, she comes forth to utter the final word on contemporary sexual behavior. In this oracular role, though, she does not speak for herself. She represents an institution or an academy—some large and august first-personage plural—the learning of which looms up behind the speaker like a convocation of eminent ghosts, for which she is only a modest medium.

This would not matter necessarily. Her views are more significant if widely and prestigiously held. But what has this Delphic corporation learned about sex? Ask it any question

and the answer is the same: “We don’t know this”; “We have no evidence for that”; “Our experiments are inconclusive”; “Our knowledge is limited”; “We just don’t know.” In fact, if one presented in one place all the expressed opinions of these collective experts, one might suppose they were discussing some great mystery—the nature of God, perhaps—and one would have to conclude that all the “available data” from the “most knowledgeable sources” and most learned authorities, commanding all the “best experimental evidence,” had as yet failed to substantiate widely heard rumors and superstitions concerning the existence of “sex.” To be sure, *something* is going on out there, but as to what it is exactly . . . well, “We have very conflicting data on that point. We need more research.”

The issue about which “we” are most assuredly and doggedly agnostic is the existence of two biologically different sexes. Dr. Babette Blackington, for example, a few years ago alerted a presumably perplexed television audience to the hitherto unknown possibilities of male breasts. “Men’s breasts, you know, can be induced to lactate,” she said, “and the woman’s clitoris can be made to ejaculate.” Thus she expressed in vivid terms the ultimate vision of the sexual liberationist: the two sexes are essentially identical, inessentially and arbitrarily divided.

To most people over the centuries this view would have seemed preposterous. And so it is today. For after all these years, scientists are finally affirming what nonexperts have always known: that there are profound and persistent

CHAPTER 3

AFTER THE HUNT

PERHAPS THE CLEAREST LESSON OF ANTHROPOLOGY is that a tribe's sex roles—its births, matings, kinship ties—largely shape its nature and durability. In the modern world, the links between sex and civilization may seem more obscure, but our civilization also largely derives its forms and possibilities from sexual arrangements. A job, a custom, a ritual, an institution not only plays an immediate role in production or consumption: it also plays a role in the sexual constitution of society: the intricately woven armature of eras that generates our will, vitality, and creative force.

One of the key concerns of every society is how to respond to the unprogrammed power of male sexual energy. Mead goes to the heart of the matter: “The central problem

CHAPTER 4
**TAMING THE
BARBARIANS**

A fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be in the earth. . . .

YAHWEH TO CAIN

BIOLOGY, ANTHROPOLOGY, AND HISTORY all tell the same essential story. Every society, each generation, faces an invasion by barbarians.¹ They storm into the streets and schools, businesses and households of the land, and, unless they are brought to heel, they rape and pillage, debauch and despoil the settlements of society.

1. I first heard the concept of the generational barbarian invasion, as well as many other concepts in this volume, from Daniel Patrick Moynihan.

These barbarians are young men and boys, in their teens and early twenties. If the truth be known, all too many of them are entirely unsuited for civilized life. Every society must figure out ways to bring them into the disciplines and duties of citizenship.

A young man enters the decisive phase of his life when he resolves on marriage and career. Typically, at the time, he is rebelling against his parents, his teachers, and his church. Joining with his peers, he pursues rites of virility, group tests of male identity, often defying physical danger and the law. His earnings capacity, meanwhile, is at its nadir, and his sex drive is a governing passion.

At this point, economic incentives and bureaucratic rules alone are impotent to make him a useful citizen. He becomes law-abiding and productive, in essence, because he discovers it is the only way he can get sex from the women he wants, or marriage from the one he loves. It is the sexual constitution, not the legal one, that is decisive in subduing the aggressions of young men.

The outcome is set by work and women. If he finds work that affirms his manhood and a girl who demands that his sexuality succumb to hers, he is likely to become a valuable and constructive citizen. If, on the other hand, he sees long-term employment and marriage as a woman's world, he will tend to exploit both jobs and women as short-term ways to money and pleasure.

In these terms, the sexual role of most jobs is more important than their economic function. In its extraordinary

CHAPTER 5
**THE PRINCESS'S
PROBLEM**

I know lots of girls who don't want to get married or have children. And very vocal they are about it. Well, they are trying to cheat on their biology

DORIS LESSING

LET US DREAM A DREAM OF LIBERATION, a dream of young women. . . . Susan does, as she leans back into the softness of her chair in her nineteenth-floor office at Rancour House and lets her eyes rest on her small but privileged view of the East River.

CHAPTER 6
**THE BARBARIANS'
REVENGE**

THE SINGLE MAN. AN IMAGE OF FREEDOM and power. A man on horseback, riding into the sunset with his gun. The town and its women would never forget, never be the same. But the man would never change, just move on. To other women, other towns. As he rides away, the sunset gilds his silhouette.

The single man. The naked nomad in the bedrooms of the land. The celebrity at the party, combed by eyes of envy and desire. The hero of the film and television drama: cool, violent, sensuous, fugitive, free.

The American dream, the Superstar. If one were only rich, young, famous, one would revel as a single man. One

would be Steven Spielberg or Bruce Springsteen or Joe Montana or Mick Jagger or Sean Penn. Or whatever young man currently leads in arousing fantasies of multifarious wealth and women.

But the fact is—as every society hostess learns as she seeks “eligible” escorts for single women at her parties—if one is young, rich, and famous, one is most likely a married man. Of the men above only Jagger, at last report, was even nominally single, and he was living with the mother of his two youngest children in a near-marital setting.

If one were actually a single man, unattached—free in the spirit of our dream, our memory of youth that improves with age, our love ’em and leave ’em Lancelot, our easy-riding ranger—one would be . . . ? Well, we know from the statistics: In general, compared to others in the population, the single man is poor and neurotic. He is disposed to criminality, drugs, and violence. He is irresponsible about his debts, alcoholic, accident-prone, and susceptible to disease. Unless he can marry, he is often destined to a troubled and abbreviated life.

Of course, there are many exceptions. Millions of single men have managed to become disciplined and valuable citizens, and millions of divorced men have survived to a happy and productive old age. Bachelors are a fluid group, with every man single, at least for a while; millions are merely temporary bachelors looking for a wife, and most will eventually find one.

Nevertheless, the bachelor pattern is overwhelmingly marked by lack of sustained commitment and lack of

CHAPTER 7

CRUISING

IN THE HOTHOUSE CRUISES OF MANY MALE homosexuals—short-term, intense, violent, abandoned to the rule and worship of the most worthy phallus; moving from body to body to hungry body with scarcely a glint of human recognition beyond the beckoning flesh; repeatedly coupling and climaxing, all beneath a clinging, heating, and lubricating blanket of anonymous steam; pulsing to the rhythm of the hunt and the chase, with no fear of procreation or entanglement and usually no expense—these men can enact for free the ultimate male fantasies of hedonistic and ecstatic sex.

This circus of the senses repels most men, particularly the ones well socialized by women, and even offends many homosexuals who lead discreet and civilized lives. The leading writers and experts on the subject assume that only a

fixated homosexual could adopt such behavior. They treat the problem as an anomaly on the fringes of society, posing no threat to anyone and unrelated to other social developments. Because psychologists cannot explain homosexuality, they discuss it in terms of sickness or mystery. But homosexuality is merely the most vivid and dramatic manifestation of the breakdown of monogamy—an extreme expression of the sexuality of single men.

In denying the danger of gay liberation and its possible threat to social order, experts assume that an aroused young man is a reasonable being. They deny the possibility of a death wish lurking amidst the gardens of lust. They ignore the dark and demonic inversions hiding within the sunny pursuits of sensuality. But sexual decisions all too often slide down slippery slopes of accident and compulsion rather than step rationally toward pleasure. Sexual hungers spring not from the rational heights of the brain but from its glandular depths, not from the lofty cortex but from the unruly domain of the hypothalamus. A major goal of every civilization must be to bring these compulsions under control by the force of aspiration, worship, and reason. It is not easy.

For example, society has never succeeded in controlling the related male circus of heterosexual prostitution, which is far more expensive and scarcely less repellent. The dank and dingy massage parlors, the fetid half-hour hotel rooms, the menacing mince of the streetwalker, the glower of her pimp in the shadows all defy the illusion that men are remotely reasonable about sex.

CHAPTER 8

GHETTO "LIBERATION"

NOWHERE IN AMERICA IS THE BREAKDOWN of monogamy so dire and drastic as in the ghetto. Detailed statistics are not available for the inner city itself, but overall black totals are heavily influenced by ghetto conditions. The black illegitimacy rate is 56.5 percent, more than five times higher than the white rate.¹ Only 41 percent of black children under eighteen are living with two parents, a level thirty-nine points below the white figure of 80 percent.² Because the ghetto often cannot enforce monogamy or perpetuate

1. Computed from data in U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, *Vital Statistics of the United States, Monthly Vital Statistics Reports*, "Nativity" (Hyattsville, MD: National Center for Health Statistics, 1985).

2. Computed from data in U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Current Population Reports*, Series P-20, No. 380, "Marital Status and Living Arrangements: March 1982" (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1983).

marriage, most older ghetto women lack husbands, and young ghetto men lack the stabilizing influence of legal links to wives and children. Marriages are under siege. Even some 22 percent of nominally wedded black couples actually live apart.³ With nearly 60 percent of black men single (compared to 38 percent of white men), the temper of the community is shaped by unmarried males.⁴

The results are predictable. Some half of our violent crimes—murders, robberies, rapes, and other felonies—are perpetrated by and against ghetto residents. In proportion to their numbers, young ghetto males commit seven times more homicides and 30 percent more suicides than young white males.⁵ Perhaps half of our addict population—and a similar proportion of our prisoners—comes from the ghetto. Although such statistics are not fully reliable, it is not prejudice or paranoia that defines the inner city, in the words of Daniel Patrick Moynihan, as “a tangle of pathology,” or as the epitome of our domestic problems.

3. Computed from data in U.S. Census Bureau, *Current Population Reports*. Reported in William Julius Wilson and Kathryn M. Neckerman, “Poverty and Family Structure: The Widening Gap between Evidence and Public Policy Issues,” *IRP Conference Paper* (Madison, WI: Institute for Research on Poverty, 1985), 6. This article is a revised version of a paper prepared for presentation at the conference on “Poverty and Policy: Retrospect and Prospects,” December 6–8, 1984, in Williamsburg, Virginia.

4. Statistics computed from U.S. Census Bureau, “Marital Status.”

5. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, *Vital Statistics of the United States, Monthly Vital Statistics Reports*, “Death Rates by Age, Race and Sex in the United States” (Hyattsville, MD: National Center for Health Statistics, 1985).

society if the men are constantly disrupting it. Whether among blacks or whites, male socialization through love, family, and work is indispensable to social peace and prosperity.

The drama of the unsocialized black has become the commanding motif of American culture. Driven to the wall, threatened with emasculation, surrounded everywhere by formidable women, the black male has summoned from his own body and spirit the masculine testament on which much of American manhood now subsists. Black jazz is the most important serious American music, acknowledged around the world if not in our own universities. Our rock culture finds its musical and rhythmic inspiration and its erotic energy and idiom in the jazz, gospel, dance, and soul performances of blacks. The black stage provides dramatic imagery and acting charisma for both our theater and our films. Black vernacular pervades our speech. The black athlete increasingly dominates our sports, not only in his performance but also in his expressive styles, as even white stars adopt black idioms of talk, handshakes, dress, and manner. From the home-plate celebration to the touchdown romp, American athletes are now dancing to soul music. Black men increasingly star in the American dream.

This achievement is an art of the battlefield—exhibiting all that grace under pressure that is the glory of the cornered male. Ordinarily we could marvel and celebrate without any deeper pang of fear. But as the most vital expression of the culture—widely embraced by a whole generation of American youth—this black testament should be taken as a warning.

For much of it lacks the signs of that submission to femininity that is the theme of enduring social order. It suggests a bitter failure of male socialization. By its very strength, it bespeaks a broader vulnerability and sexual imbalance. Thus it points to the ghetto as the exemplary crisis of our society.

CHAPTER 9
SUPPORTING FAMILIES

A man in the home is worth two in the street.

MAE WEST

FAR FROM A RACIAL PROBLEM, THE CRISIS of the ghetto is an American tragedy: a part of a far broader disorder of American politics and culture. For just as our poverty programs disrupt black families and our established media disparage sex roles, so the broad drift of American social policy undermines work and marriage. The most direct pressures come from welfare incentives for family breakdown and tax penalties for male providers. Both poor and lower-middle-class families are the victims of a partly inadvertent war by America's elites against the

CHAPTER 10

SEXUAL POLITICS

THE 1980S SAW WHAT WAS ONE OF THE greatest miracles in the history of American politics and the climactic triumph of one of the supreme political leaders ever to emerge in America. That leader was a woman, and though she is well known today, she has never achieved the honor and celebrity of her many inferiors. The national newsmagazines have never granted her a cover story or full appreciation. The dimensions of her achievement are still not understood, even by the conservative publications that gave her their moderately enthusiastic support. The newest history texts pay heavy credit to her adversaries but scarcely acknowledge her epochal role.

None the less, when the histories of this era are seriously written, Phyllis Schlafly will take her place among the tiny

number of leaders who made a decisive and permanent difference. As much as Martin Luther King, Earl Warren, John Kennedy, Lyndon Johnson, and Eugene McCarthy on the left and Ronald Reagan, Barry Goldwater, Robert Bartley, William Buckley, and Jack Kemp on the right, she changed the political landscape of her country. In fact, by the measure of the odds she faced and overcame, Schlafly's achievement excels all the others'.

Schlafly's ten books suggest the scope of her activities. *A Choice Not an Echo* sold 3 million copies and helped spark both the Goldwater movement and the Reagan candidacy. Her works on military strategy spurred the campaign that finally triumphed with Reagan's adoption of the High Frontier defense scheme. But the centerpiece of her achievement was the victory against the Equal Rights Amendment, a mobilization against all the most fully established and prestigious forces in American life.¹

Opposed to her were 90 percent majorities in both houses of Congress; every live American president and president's wife; every major state governor except an ambivalent Ronald Reagan; all leading mayors; both political parties' platforms and leadership; every major newspaper, magazine, and television network; the League of Women Voters; all the old-line Protestant denominations; the National and World

1. Carol Felsenthal, *The Sweetheart of the Silent Majority: The Biography of Phyllis Schlafly* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1981). This fascinating book, by a feminist, tells of her unexpected discovery of the miracle of Phyllis Schlafly. Most of the facts on Schlafly came from this text.

CHAPTER 11

**THE PERILS OF
ANDROGYNY**

TO THE SEXUAL LIBERAL, GENDER IS A cage. Behind cruel bars of custom and tradition, men and women for centuries have looked longingly across forbidden spaces at one another and yearned to be free of sexual roles. The men dream of nurturing and consoling; the women want the right to be tough and child-free. Today it is widely believed that the dream of escape can come true at last.

This belief leads to a program of mixing the sexes in every possible way, at every stage of life. In nurseries and schools, in athletics and home economics, in sex education and social life, the sexes are thrown together in the continuing effort to create a unisex society. But the results

are rarely as expected, and the policies are mostly founded on confusion.

Some of the confusions arise in the schools, where the androgynous agenda has made the greatest apparent headway and its effects can best be studied. It turns out that what seems elemental to many expert educationists is actually bizarre from the long perspective of history and anthropology.

Until recent years, for example, most American parochial schools have kept strict sexual segregation. The boys and girls joined chiefly on ceremonial occasions—assemblies and graduations. Even the playground was divided into male and female territories. The restrictions were lifted only during carefully supervised dances, when young couples made their way chastely around the floor of the gym under the watchful eyes of nuns. Any unseemly body contact brought a swift reprimand: “Leave six inches for the Holy Ghost.”

There is no room for the Holy Ghost any longer at most of our schools. The bodies and minds rub together from kindergarten to graduate study. The result is perfectly predictable. Sexual activity occurs at an increasingly younger age. In communities where the family cannot impose discipline, illegitimate children are common. Classrooms become an intensely sexual arena, where girls and boys perform for the attention of the other sex and where unintellectual males quickly come to view schoolbooks as a menace to manhood.¹

1. Patricia Cayo Sexton, *The Feminized Male: White Collars and the Decline of Manliness* (New York: Random House, 1969), quoted from the paperback (Vintage Books, 1970), 125–32.

CHAPTER 12
WOMEN IN COMBAT

HELMETED YOUNG WOMEN CHARGING over beaches under fire with bayonets fixed, teenage girls occupying oil fields in an energy crunch, Marine coeds bunking down on bivouacs in combat zones, female pilots shot down and captured behind enemy lines. Such images may seem sheer fantasy—the farthest shores of radical feminism or an arresting montage for a futuristic film. Until recently, in fact, the military services and many sexual liberals dismissed the idea of warrior roles for women as “unthinkable.” But today, when the subject comes up, the word more often chosen, by high officials in the Pentagon and by outside observers, is “inevitable.”¹

1. This chapter is a revised and updated version of George Gilder, “The Case against Women in Combat,” *New York Time Magazine*, January 28, 1979, 29ff. Most uncredited material comes from that article.

Current law for the navy and air force still prohibits—at least formally—the use of women in “combat roles.” The same undefined prohibition has been assumed by the army but never made explicit in law. In recent years, however, many Pentagon observers have come to believe that, because of growing personnel shortages, the United States cannot maintain an adequate combat force in any of the services without using women more widely and flexibly.²

Experts downplay the one-time fantasy of women warriors by citing the changing nature of warfare and military technology. Women may indeed serve in “combat,” it is suggested, but combat will no longer entail the use of bayonets and physical force. Instead, battles will occur on some high technology computer-scape well beyond the reach of conventional weapons. In the future, combat will be a video game; there will be no front lines.

The issue of women in battle, however, cannot be so easily rationalized or evaded. Conventional combat remains common in a world where many modern weapons are too destructive to use. Most actual military and police activities, as opposed to happily hypothetical nuclear wars, entail the direct threat or application of personal and physical force, whether against rioters, prisoners, terrorists, or guerilla armies. All the once unthinkable fantasies of combat

2. Dan Cragg, “Women in the Army,” *Washington Times*, June 2, 1983, reprinted in part 1 of *The Impact of the Equal Rights Amendment*, Hearings before the Subcommittee on the Constitution of the Committee on the Judiciary, United States Senate (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1985), 378.

CHAPTER 13
THE JOBS FRONT

BETWEEN THE PHYSICAL WORLD AND THE strobe-lit stage of the media—between fact and phantasmagoria—American families struggle for footing in the valley of the shadow. Monsters lurk in the darkness; we are afraid. We turn to the experts, seeking guidance and light, but every map they offer seems only to lead us deeper into the slough. We consult the networks, but they throng the shores of the deep broadcasting variations on the Loch Ness News.

Stalking now into view is a unisex chimera. You can't miss it. From TV green room to blue movie, nursery to news central, now looms the amazing story of the "sexual revolution in employment." Proclaimed and embodied by blond priestesses of network news, at once fiercely female

and strangely sexless, and celebrated from the thrones of talk-show kings, it emerges in alternating news reports and prime-time fictions that melt together in our minds in an almost inseparable flow of images.

In the media parade, sultry detectives belted in karate follow firepersons glossy with bright red lipstick; Charlie's Angels and Rather's maidens race after police cars; masqueraded West Pointers march on with hard-hatted construction queens and hod carrierettes, glamorous dealers in corporate leverage, lesbian mayors, women dunking basketballs, and space cadettes actually tumbling in space; vengeful call girls flaunt their guns on *The Streets of San Francisco* and the streets of New York—all interspersed with homosexual magnates and middle linebackers, men finding new fulfillment in nursery and needlepoint, and epicene authors and psychologists of every imaginable sex bemoaning the tortures of being a man or a woman, or not. Before this vivid show in *son et lumière*, our very own lives somehow pale to inconsequence. Our very bodies fade away in our minds, replaced by the strange creatures on the screen and their manic messages of change.

But surely this time the change is real. Drastic shifts in sex roles do seem to be sweeping through America. Though allegedly hobbled by sex discrimination, women everywhere seem to exhibit career patterns increasingly like men's. If feminists continue to complain that the movement toward employment equality is painfully slow, sociologists offer endless data to prove that it is inexorable. Even the careful

CHAPTER 14

**SEX AND THE SOCIAL
SCIENTIST**

TO EXAMINE THE BASES OF FEMINIST claims and policies, it is often necessary to ponder the field of sociology. Contrary to the usual view, sociology can be fun. Indeed, in recent years sociological studies, particularly researches of a feminist bent, have even verged on becoming quite divertingly raunchy. In leading sociological journals, for example, one can discover the amazing fact that publicly supported colleges and universities in the United States today give courses in sexual behavior, featuring, as audiovisual aids, the regular display of movies with titles like *Ping-Pong Orgy* and *Western Lust*. These institutions also conduct and publish studies based on solar research at nude beaches,

as C.S. Lewis contended in a famous essay, entails nothing less than the abolition of human nature.⁸

The different roles of men and women, the love that arises from them, the allegiance to one's own family, the worship of God, the possession and improvement of property, the production of wealth, the cultivation of excellence and beauty, the competitive masculine rituals of sport and play, the emergence of loyalty to kin and community, church and country—all are among the highest values of human life. Because they spring from human reality, they can be fulfilled in ordered freedom in a democratic society. Achieving economic planning, income equality, bureaucratic rationality, and sexual liberation—the retrenchment of religion and suppression of sex roles—requires a totalitarian state. And in the end, as Communist regimes everywhere show, the result defies the ideal. For the ultimate source of cooperation, community, productivity, and equality in every society is the nuclear family that the humanist vision would erode or destroy.

8. C.S. Lewis, *The Abolition of Man* (New York: Macmillan, 1976).

CHAPTER 15

THE HOME FRONT

The family . . . is the native soil on which performance of moral duty is made easy through natural affection so that within a small circle a basis of moral practice is created, and then is widened to include human relationships in general.

I CHING

NEARLY A CENTURY AGO, KARL MARX AND Frederick Engels first anticipated and revealed to the world the secret dream of the sexual liberal. “In communist society,” they wrote, “where nobody has one exclusive sphere of activity but each can become accomplished in any branch he wishes, *society* regulates the general production and thus makes it possible for me to do one thing today and another tomorrow, to

hunt in the morning, fish in the afternoon, rear cattle in the evening, criticise after dinner, just as I have a mind, without ever becoming hunter, fisherman, shepherd or critic.”¹

The contemporary liberal would wish to banish male bias from the dream. Assigning to “society” the duties not only of “general production” but also of reproduction, the new dreamers would extend to women as well as men the life of a British country squire. Liberating both sexes from restrictive roles and moral codes, the dream would bring a new spirit of sharing—of jobs, bodies, vocations, and pleasures. People would be full “human beings” rather than oppressed men and women.

There are two serious problems with this arrangement, and unfortunately both are fatal. The first problem is that except in an abstract sense there is no such thing as “society.” Both production and reproduction, therefore, will be left to particular human beings. The second problem is that there are no “human beings,” just men and women. Since the nature of things assures that men will do most of the production and women most of the reproduction, we are back where we started before Marx and his modern followers began their reveries.

The communal dream always fed on the vast ignorance of intellectuals like Marx about the production of wealth, and their aristocratic disdain for the lives of ordinary men and women. To Marx and Engels, the role of men seemed

1. Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *The German Ideology* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1965), 44.

In rediscovering for the secular world this feminine morality, rooted in “webs of relationship,” Gilligan has written an important book. What she and the male moralists she criticizes do not see is that the self-sacrifice of women finds a perfect complement in the self-sacrifice of men. On this mutual immolation is founded the fulfillment of human civilization and happiness. For just as it is the sacrifice of early career ambitions and sexual freedom that makes possible the true fulfillment of women, it is the subordination of male sexuality to woman’s maternity that allows the achievement of male career goals, that spurs the attainment of the highest male purposes. In his vaunted freedom and sexual power, the young single man may dream of glory. But it is overwhelmingly the married men who achieve it in the modern world. They achieve it, as Scripture dictates and women’s experience insists, by self-denial and sacrifice.

The fact is that there is no way that women can escape their supreme responsibilities in civilized society without endangering civilization itself. The most chilling portent of our current predicament, therefore, is the conjuncture of a movement of female abdication with a new biochemistry, which shines direct and deadly beams of technocratic light on the very crux of human identity: the tie between the mother and her child.

CHAPTER 16

**THE SEXUAL SUICIDE
TECHNOCRACY**

A BOOK ABOUT MEN AND MARRIAGE WRITTEN during the last half of the twentieth century labors under a cloud. Now no larger than a man's hand, it promises to shadow all debate about human sexuality for decades to come. Now mostly confined to laboratories, it is emerging year by year to become a major force in the definition and prospects of the two sexes, of masculinity and femininity.

The cloud is biogenetic engineering, and it makes technically possible for the first time in human history a change in the very essence of sexuality. Often seen as offering a new liberation of women—and actually promising a series of

CHAPTER 17

WHY MEN MARRY

MEN MARRY FOR LOVE. BUT WHAT DOES this mean beyond what they got in their lives as single men: the flash of a new face, new flesh across a room? The glimpse of breasts shifting softly in a silken blouse. The open sesame of a missing ring. The excited pursuit, the misunderstood meanings, the charged meetings. The telling touch of hands. The eyes welling open to the gaze. The scent of surrender. The pillowed splash of unbound hair. The ecstatic slipping between new sheets. The race. The winning. The chase and the conquest . . . and back on the road. Definitely back on the road. Free again. Strong again. For new women, new pursuit. What more is there in life—in love—than this?

Marriage means giving it all up. Giving up love? That is how it seems to the single man, and that is why he fears it.

He must give up his hunter's heart, forgo the getaway Honda growl, shear off his shaggy hair, restrict his random eye, hang up his handgun, bow down and enter the cage. At bottom, what he is is hunter. No way he will be hubby.

And yet, he will. For years he lunges at women's surfaces, but as time passes he learns of a deeper promise. For years he may not know the reasons or believe them or care. The heart, it is said, has its reasons. They spring from the primal predicament of man throughout the history of the race: the need to choose a particular woman and stay by her and provide for her if he is to know his children and they are to love him and call him father.

In procreative love, both partners consciously or unconsciously glimpse a future infant—precarious in the womb, vulnerable in the world, and in need of nurture and protection. In the swelter of their bodies together, in the shape and softnesses of the woman, in the protective support of the man, the couple senses the outlines of a realm that can endure and perpetuate their union: a pattern of differences and complements that goes beyond the momentary pleasures of reciprocal sex.

Marriage asks men to give up their essential sexuality only as part of a clear scheme for replacing it with new, far more important, and ultimately far more sexual roles: husband and father. Without these roles, a woman can bear a child, but the man is able only to screw. He can do it a lot, but after his first years it will only get him unthreaded, and in the end he is disconnected and alone. In his shallow heats and

The man has found a vital energy and a possibility of durable change. It has assumed the shape of a woman. It is the same form that has caught his eye and roiled his body all these years. But now there will be depths below the pleasing surfaces, meanings beyond the momentary ruttings. There will be a sense that his vessel contains the secrets of new life, that the womb and breasts bear a message of immortality. There will be a knowledge that to treat this treasure as an object—mere flesh like his own, a mere matrix of his pleasure—is to defile life itself. It is this recognition that she offers a higher possibility—it is this consciousness that he has to struggle to be worthy of her—that finally issues the spark. And then arises the fire that purges and changes him as it consumes his own death. His children . . . they will remember. It is the only hope.

The man's love begins in acknowledgment of inferiority, but it offers a promise of dignity and purpose. For he then has to create, by dint of his own effort, and without the miracle of a womb, a life that a woman could choose. Thus are released and formed the energies of civilized society. He provides, and he does it for a lifetime, for a life.

AFTERWORD

THE FAITH OF FATHERS

IN THE SPRING OF 1981, I WAS ASKED TO give a speech to the forty-fifth reunion of my father's Harvard class. The invitation came as a pleasant surprise and solved a difficult problem. For months I had been receiving in the mail various messages from my own Harvard class, which was also gathering for a reunion, and I had not yet decided how to reply.

It was the twentieth anniversary of my graduation from college with a head full of liberal and secular ideas. It had taken me most of the interim to recover the wisdom of my youth: the beliefs in God and family taught me, chiefly by my mother, as I was growing up on a farm in Massachusetts.

Now my Harvard class was preparing a set of reunion seminars that seemed to repeat all the liberal pieties I had

progress—of businesses and families as well as societies—depends on an entrepreneurial willingness to defy the odds. It is in the nuclear family that the most crucial process of capitalist defiance and faith is centered.

Here emerge the most indispensable acts of capital formation: the psychology of giving, saving, and sacrifice, in behalf of an unknown future, embodied in a specific child—a balky bundle of possibilities, which will yield its social reward even further into time than the most foresighted business plan. In this venture, few mothers—and no societies—can succeed without enlisting the fathers.

Marriage is the key to the connection of fathers to this central process in the creation of life and the production of wealth. The golden rule and perennial lesson of marriage is “give and you will be given unto.” It is the obvious message of motherhood. But societies thrive only to the extent that this maternal wisdom becomes as well the faith of fathers.