Academia's War Against Marriage

November 19, 1997

Google Ads are provided by Google and are not selected or endorsed by Eagle Forum

The war on marriage that the feminists in academia are waging hit me this year when I received the Winter issue of my alma mater's alumnae magazine, the Radcliffe Quarterly. In 52 pages under the heading "Scenes from the Family," the editors didn't include any discussion of a successful family based on a man and a woman honoring their solemn promises "to have and to hold . . . for better, for worse . . . till death do us part."

Instead, the feature article laid down the feminist line that a woman's identity disappears in marriage and that "marriage is bad for you, at least if you're female." Without any shame, the author admitted that she acquired her husband by breaking up another marriage that had lasted 15 years and produced three children.

She argued that, "Instead of getting married for life, men and women (in whatever combination suits their sexual orientation) should sign up for a seven-year hitch." If they want to "reenlist" for another seven, they may, but after that, the marriage is "over."

Another article described a "marriage" of lesbians in San Francisco. Still another extolled the wonderful life of a child born out of wedlock, and yet another explained divorce as "a significant life event that confronts individuals with the opportunity to change."

The New York-based Institute for American Values recently completed a study of 20 post-1994 college social science textbooks used in 8,000 college courses. Called "Closed Hearts, Closed Minds," the report concluded that most of these textbooks give a pessimistic if not downright hostile view of marriage, emphasizing marital failures rather than its joys and benefits.

College textbooks view marriage as especially bleak and dreary for women. The textbooks are inordinately preoccupied with domestic violence and divorce, and view marriage as archaic and oppressive, not just occasionally, but inherently.

The textbooks give the impression that children don't need two parents and aren't harmed by divorce. They omit all the evidence that children in single-parent homes are far more at risk than children in two-parent homes.

Some textbooks are larded with anti-family rhetoric. "Changing Families" by Judy Root Aulette focuses on battering, marital rape and divorce, with no mention of any benefits of marriage.

"Cutting Loose: Why Women Who End Their Marriages Do So Well" by Ashton Applewhite is an example of the new genre of books attacking marriage as a bad deal for women. The author dumped her husband after reading feminist Susan Faludi's "Backlash."

Now Applewhite seeks social approval for her walk-out by encouraging middle-aged women to find independence by doing likewise. She gives advice on how to deal with lawyers, manipulate child custody arrangements, and find new relationships.

The publication of another new book, "On Our Own: Unmarried Motherhood in America" by Melissa Luddtke, attracted Hillary Rodham Clinton, Maryland Lt. Gov. Kathleen Kennedy Townsend and Senator Ted Kennedy to a book party at the home of PBS journalist Ellen Hume. Mrs. Clinton was thanked for her assistance as a "reader of the book in progress."

When the sexual revolution and the feminist revolution blasted into America's social consciousness in the late 1960s and 1970s, the voices raised against them came primarily from older women. Now we are starting to see acute bitterness from the generation that believed the liberationist lies and have discovered that, contrary to feminist ideology, women, indeed, have a biological clock.

The Independent Women's Forum has just published an issue of its "Women's Quarterly" that is guaranteed to enrage the feminists. Called "Let's Face It, Girls: The Sexual Revolution Was a Mistake," it levels a broadside attack on feminists for teaching young women that liberation and fulfillment come from romping around like men in casual sex while building their all-important careers.

They are angry because they discovered too late that the cost of uncommitted sexual relationships is that "the window for getting married and having children is way smaller than one can possibly foresee at age 25."

So, we hear the anguish of babyless fortyish women frustrated by their inability to get pregnant, spending their money and tears on chemicals and on clinics dispensing procedures with high failure rates. They've even realized that a lot of female infertility comes from exposure to sexually transmitted diseases, and that's a high price to pay for those dead-end serial relationships.

In this Women's Quarterly, Carolyn Graglia exposes the consequences of the foolish feminist notion that men and women are equal in their sexual desires. This myth, which is contrary to all human experience, has deprived women of the societal support they need to refuse to engage in casual sex.

Far from being empowered in their relations with men, women have lost control over ordinary relationships. Adult, educated women are now demanding that the government (or plaintiff attorneys) protect them from "date rape" and "sexual harassment" in situations that, in the pre-feminist era, unsophisticated high school girls could handle with confidence, knowing that a No would be respected.