

The "Eve" Syndrome

by Kristin Koessler

It would seem that woman should not have been made in the first production of things. For the Philosopher (Aristotle) says that "the female is a misbegotten male." But nothing misbegotten or defective should have been made in the first production of things. Therefore woman should not have been made at that first production.

— St. Thomas Aquinas

In lying, men are commoners, women are aristocrats.

— Abel Hermant

Among all the wild beasts, there is none more harmful that the woman.

— St. John Chrysostom

There is a good principle which created, light and man, and an evil principle which created chaos, darkness and woman.

— Pythagoras

Throughout history, inequality between the sexes, has progressively developed because of the sexist tradition that began with Adam and Eve during creation. From the moment Eve persuaded Adam to eat the forbidden fruit with her, men have used this as a trigger and just cause for their unjust treatment of woman. Even today with new evolution theories and changing religious beliefs, men still have a sinful, evil image of woman embedded in their subconscious. Not only is this evident in mere man/woman interaction and competition such as at the work place, home and school, but in the media. Television, radio, books, magazines, and newspapers are actually helping to promote this evil, distrustful, inferior, lying, image of women. According to the media of today, woman is seductive and uses her sexuality to try to gain power and corrupt men.

The advertisements in today's magazines are a prime example. It is difficult to find an ad that is straightforward, honest, and centered on the actual product they are trying to sell. Each advertisement is different but they all have the same message: the product they are selling will make you more desirable and sensuous, etc. and that in turn will make you more beautiful and sexy. Their product will give you the sexual power to dominate, persuade, captivate and manipulate the male sex. The idea that women are intelligent individuals capable of achieving power and success through intelligence, education, and work is completely ruled out. According to these advertisements, sex is power. With it they can dominate, manipulate and weaken the male sex.

Women are also being downplayed in writing. Women want to be taken seriously and treated equally. They want to be respected for their intelligence not their bodies. However, breezing through many current women's magazines, you find some shocking titles:

"The New Seductress" ¹

"The Joy-No-Kidding-of Sex" ²

"Daring Little Dating Looks" ³

"Boss Lady-pretty power principles to bank on" ⁴

"Clothes Minded: Clever Cleavage Tricks-Three Show-and-Don't Tell Looks; Evening Add-Ons You Can't Do Without; Have a Fling With a Wild Thing" ⁵

"Twelve Types of Sexual Wives" ⁶

"The Lady They Call Madame Sex" ⁷

This does not have anything to do with women's abilities or intellect. It gives the message to woman that they can be as intelligent and as hard working as they like but they must never forget that this is a man's world. Man is the superior beast and the only way to overcome him is with the power of sex. With sex the woman is in control.

Is this really true or is it just deeply imbedded subliminals? Do people really believe sexuality is the key? Do people really believe that women are evil and use their sensual powers to manipulate and corrupt men? Look at some of the most publicized women of the year: Fawn Hall, Jessica Hahn, Donna Rice. They all have one thing in common. They are generally viewed as corrupters or destroyers and are all accused of using their good looks and sexuality to gain publicity or promotion and to protect, control, or manipulate their men in some way. Vanna White, one of the biggest household words today, gained her publicity by parading across our T.V. screen every evening charming "Wheel of Fortune" viewers with her coy smile, attractive figure and revealing clothes. In the past women such as Marilyn Monroe, Fanne Fox, Mata Hari, Cleopatra, Delilah, Scarlett O'Hara, Madonna, and Viki Morgan all used sexuality to gain success, fame, power, and/or fortune.

Ever since Eve first offered Adam a snack, women have been capable of destroying men through temptation. Delilah, Cleopatra, and Mata Hari-powerful, smart, gals all-knew that the way to a man's heart is not only through his stomach."⁸

Women today must make a decision. They want to be treated as equals and respected, yet society and the media tells them they can only do it through sex manipulation. What does a woman do when success today is almost always linked with a woman's sexuality instead of her intellect and true natural abilities? Society should make an effort to undo the underlying "Eve" syndrome by following Elaine Morgan's suggestion in her essay "The Man-Made Myth:"

"It is time to approach the whole thing again right from the beginning: this time from the distaff side, and along a totally different route."

It is time for men to stop downgrading women and for women to stop encouraging inequality through giving in to the sex power trap. Inequality has formed partly because of the male prejudice but is also the fault of women's insecurity.

FOOTNOTES

1. Scovell, Nell; Mademoiselle Nov. 1987
2. Bernikow, Louise; Mademoiselle Nov. 1987
3. Mademoiselle Nov. 1987
4. Mademoiselle Nov. 1987
5. Mademoiselle Nov. 1987
6. Fox, James, Cosmopolitan, Nov. 1987
7. Cosmopolitan, Nov. 1987
8. Scovell, Nell; Mademoiselle, Nov. 1987