

A recent article in The Washington Post, entitled “Why Can't We Hate Men?”, authored by academic feminist Suzanna D. Walters, contains many falsehoods. But Walters' most ridiculous assertion therein was “The world has little place for feminist anger.” This is arrant nonsense. For on the gender file in the western world, at least, there is little room for anything else but feminist anger. In fact, the welcome given to Walters' sexist diatribe in an influential mainstream newspaper is prima facie evidence for the causal acceptance in our culture of collective male-bashing. It illuminates the egregious disparity between the near-criminalization of stereotyping all other identifiable groups for the faults of some members, and the near-total indifference to sweeping indictments of all men on exactly that basis. Since the mainstream media is the last place open-minded readers should look for objective proofs of the damages feminism has inflicted on innocent boys and men, this shaming article very much included, the publication of two books that tell quite another tale, is both timely and important.

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} In this column, I review Sons of Feminism: Men Have Their Say; next time, Daughters of Feminism: Women
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Supporting Men's Equality. Both volumes are compilations of personal stories – “lived experience,” as the social justice warriors like to say – recounted by men who suffered or witnessed injustices that can be directly traced to feminism-inspired enmity against the male sex. Many of the authors in Sons of Feminism were “mugged by reality,” a trope usually applied to former leftists who suffered personal disappointments as a result of their investment in progressive politics.

That is, these “sons of feminism” accepted the tenets of feminism uncritically until they suffered its consequential personal injustices. The editor of Sons of Feminism, Janice Fiamengo, Professor of English at the University of Ottawa and author of the popular video series, The Fiamengo File, was herself an enthusiastic feminist who was mugged by reality, which adds credibility and piquancy to the book's conception and execution. In her introduction to the book, Fiamengo explains her growing disenchantment with the feminist movement. In 1999, as a full time university teacher, she noticed the decline in numbers of men in the humanities, and as well the general indifference to it. Men constituted only 25% of those studying English in her department. Fiamengo came to understand that feminist domination of the humanities landscape was creating acute discomfort for men. Literature written by men, she noted, was taught as evidence for male oppression of women, rather than for its intrinsic aesthetic and intellectual value, while female authored texts were taught as positive contributions to the culture. This seemed very wrong to her, as it would to anyone who loves literature for its own sake and not as an ideological artifact, useful only as social-justice propaganda. But that feminism-based teaching paradigm is now etched in stone in the academy. Fiamengo writes: “The story of male advantage and female disadvantage is a cultural narrative of such undisputed legitimacy that it seems impervious to contrary evidence.” Wishing to shed light on “what seems to me the greatest and most under-recognized injustice of our time,” Fiamengo began her video series in 2013, which elicited a flood of feedback from appreciative men, and the germination of this book. In response to her tender for submissions answering the question, “How has feminism affected you?” she received far more responses than she could include in this book. But what she did include is a cross-section – socio-economically, racially, sexually and professionally – of the most common ways in which innocent men are unfairly caught up along with the guilty in the incessantly, indiscriminately trawling feminist grievance net.

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} Taken together, the stories paint a portrait of a society, in which the lives, happiness and self-realization of girls matter more than those of boys (this from Day One in school); in which divorce can, entirely based in a mother's stated desire, with the collusion of courts and social service agencies, easily disenfranchise fathers from their children's lives; in which career or educational ruination follows ineluctably on the basis of false sexual-harassment allegations; and in which highly qualified male academics are unable to translate their superior professional merit into a career so that gender quotas can be met, even by much lesser-qualified women. Fiamengo is at pains to point out – and my reading corroborates – that not a single victim of our gynocentric cultural matrix contributed to this compilation of expressed hatred towards women. Indeed, most of them expressed their desire for intimacy and love, and their bewilderment at the unstated but all too obvious obstacles put in the way of such an outcome. What I read over and over again in these stories was a fear of women's unique power: the power to humiliate and shame men, expressly because men desire them so much. As one man writes of this yearning: "we hand over to women the judgment of who we are as men." Oddly enough, feminists persist in thinking of themselves as powerless, even when they are demonstrating their power. This came through with clarity in an account by David Shackleton (the editor of *Daughters of Feminism*), who once invited feminists to lead a discussion at his men's forum in Ottawa, hoping to prove that honest, civil and constructive dialogue was possible between feminists and men who had suffered domestic violence or other forms of abuse at female hands. It was a debacle. The feminists were not interested in the men's stories at all. The leader said, "Don't tell me about your pain. Your pain is insignificant. You are the oppressor!" The men were rendered dumb with shame and incredulity. Shackleton saw that the feminists had assigned themselves not only the role of leadership in the discussion, but "also the emotional and moral centre of the experience." He concludes, "They did not register their power over us as a feeling of power... They felt powerless and abused even as they exercised that power." This strikes me as a core attribute of feminism. In order to be true to its Marxist dogma, any deviation from status as the oppressed may bring down the whole ideological house of cards. Better not to see the "oppressor" as a human being with human emotions, legitimate needs, or realistic fears. "Paul" from *New Zealand* (numerous authors use first names or pseudonyms out of fear of reprisals) writes that he is "scared that I won't have the physical strength to protect those I love." He notes, accurately, that the charge of "cowardice" is always a shaming insult to a man, but not to a woman. (It is interesting that observers have mentioned disapprovingly that no male engineering students acted to stop Marc Lepine, the 1989 Montreal mass murderer of 14 women, but nobody ever asks why none of the women engineering students acted to stop him either, even though they were considered the equal of men in all other ways.) There isn't a single story in this collection that does not raise questions that most people have not ever stopped to consider as questions. In one Canadian town of 300,000 residents, for example, we learn from a man who suffered intimate partner violence that while many resources are available to abused women, there is not a single resource for men abused by their intimate partners, even though 34% of recorded calls for help come from men. People still don't believe, in spite of overwhelming evidence, that women can and will exercise unprovoked violence, and that abused men suffer the same distress from it as abused women. Some of the more fascinating stories in this collection are those that deal with the perils of being a man in feminism-dominated institutions. Unsettling stories of false allegations and unlevel playing fields abound in the humanities, so it is often assumed that a man can avoid such problems by enrolling in STEM subjects. That may have been true in days past, but it is no longer true. Two writers in *Sons of Feminism* testify to the infiltration of their disciplines – mathematics and astronomy – and its negative effects. Painful reading. Academically speaking, feminism is The Blob. There is no escape. *Sons of Feminism* is descriptive, not prescriptive, so do not read it expecting solutions. But for the many men who feel they are alone in their sexual and

societal marginalization, this book will provide them the comfort of knowing that they are in fact legion. Sons of Feminism will not make them whole, but may serve at least to mitigate their feeling of invisibility, and shore up their sense of human dignity. This is in itself a commendable and valuable contribution to a worthy struggle for gender justice in a misandric era.