

## Discussing the Gender Learnings in the Patriarchal System

for the ebook (2014) *Stories from My Teachers. On the English Language, Lifelong Learning & Our r-EvoLution*, with infinite sadness but also with loving fury! (michelle, 2013)

Considering how critical I am of how badly gender issues are presented in textbooks, I decided to put together this in case students are interested in preparing for well-focused gender discussions -- mainstream gender discussions are grotesque in every sense, and brutal, cruel. The quotes below come from the chapter called "Know Your Enemy: A Sampling of Sexist Quotes" in *Sisterhood Is Powerful. An Anthology of Writings from the Women's Liberation Movement*, edited by Robin Morgan (Vintage Books, 1970). I included info about the men who stated them and it is frightening that considering the diversity of their cultural backgrounds or occupations, they agree so clearly on women's inferiority or lack of a human mind.

Why do people mistrust feminists, when the case is that most people have not read a single feminist book, or met a feminist in their lives? Isn't this hate and mistrust of women thinkers and activists consistent with the century-long traditional idea that women are not to be trusted, that they are inferior intellectually, physically, spiritually to Man, the true image of God, the Father? Why hate feminists when thanks to this nonviolent struggle our lives are better, more truly human? And why should genitals play a more important than human minds in determining our identities and roles in society?

We're all antifeminists when we don't think twice because we are brought up learning what Men and Women are supposed to do in patriarchy, not learning how to be human. That's the power of mass culture, and we've had that for centuries -- not today's developing diversity. The fact is it could be much better for us all if we thought a bit more...

Here are some key ideas we've been led to believe century after century. Incidentally, consider the issue of the masculine in language being "neutral", like today's antifeminists claim. Women have not existed as human beings with social and political rights, with their own identity, until the 20th century, and just in some places on our planet. We need to learn to identify the true enemy: sexism, and develop some respect for social movements, like feminism, which are helping us become better.

Can you collect similar quotes from your traditions or present society? Try to explain what's wrong with these quotes, why you think they're considered sexist.

**Know Your Enemy: A Sampling of Sexist Quotes.** From *Sisterhood Is Powerful. An Anthology of Writings from the Women's Liberation Movement*, edited by Robin Morgan (Vintage Books, 1970)

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. The glory of a man is knowledge, but the glory of a woman is to renounce knowledge. --Chinese proverb</li><li>2. Do not trust a good woman, and keep away from a bad one. --Portuguese proverb</li><li>3. Women are sisters nowhere. --West African proverb</li><li>4. Whenever a woman dies there is one quarrel less on earth. --German proverb</li><li>5. Never trust a woman, even though she has given you ten sons. --Chinese proverb</li><li>6. In childhood a woman must be subject to her father; in youth, to her husband; when her</li></ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>husband is dead, to her sons. A woman must never be free of subjugation. --The Hindu Code of Manu, V</li><li>7. I thank thee, O Lord, that thou hast not created me a woman. --Daily Orthodox Jewish Prayer (for a male)</li><li>8. There is a good principle which created order, light and man, and an evil principle which created chaos, darkness, and woman. --Pythagoras (c. 570 BC-c. 495 BC), Greek philosopher and mathematician</li><li>9. We may thus conclude that it is a general law that there should be naturally ruling elements and elements naturally ruled ... the rule of the</li></ol> |
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freeman over the slave is one kind of rule; that of the male over the female another ... the slave is entirely without the faculty of deliberation; the female indeed possesses it, but in a form which remains inconclusive ... --Aristotle (Politics, c. 350 BC), Greek philosopher

10. If thy wife does not obey thee at a signal and a glance, separate from her. --Sirach 25:26
11. When a woman thinks ... she thinks evil. -- Seneca (c. 4 BC- AD 65), Roman Stoic philosopher
12. Creator of the heavens and the earth, He has given you wives from among yourselves to multiply you, and cattle male and female. Nothing can be compared with Him. --Holy Koran of Islam
13. And the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, made he a woman and brought her unto the man. And Adam said, This is now bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. -- Genesis 2:22-23
14. How can he be clean that is born of a woman? -- Job, 4:4
15. Suffer women once to arrive at an equality with you, and they will from that moment become your superiors. --Cato the Elder, 195 BC
16. Let the women learn in silence with all subjection ... I suffer not a woman to usurp authority over men, but to be in silence. --St. Paul
17. Wives, submit yourselves unto your husbands ... for the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church. --Ephesians 5:23-24
18. The five worst infirmities that afflict the female are indocility, discontent, slander, jealousy, and silliness ... Such is the stupidity of woman's character, that it is incumbent upon her, in every particular, to distrust herself and to obey her husband. --Confucian Marriage Manual
19. God created Adam lord of all living creatures, but Eve spoiled it all. --Martin Luther (1483-1546) German monk
20. All witchcraft comes from carnal lust, which is in women insatiable. --Kramer and Sprenger, Inquisitors (Malleus Maleficarum, c. 1486)
21. A man in general is better pleased when he has a good dinner than when his wife talks Greek. -- Samuel Johnson (1709-1784), English writer
22. The whole education of women ought to be relative to men. To please them, to be useful to them, to make themselves loved and honored by them, to educate them when young, to care for them when grown, to counsel them, to console them, and to make life sweet and agreeable to them--these are the duties of women at all times and what should be taught them from their infancy. --Jean Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778), French philosopher
23. Women have no moral sense; they rely for their behavior upon the men they love. --La Bruyere (1645-1696), French philosopher
24. Most women have no characters at all. -- Alexander Pope (1688-1744), English poet
25. I never knew a tolerable woman to be fond of her own sex. --Jonathan Swift (1667-1745), Anglo-Irish writer
26. Man for the field and woman for the hearth: Man for the sword and for the needle she: Man with the head and woman with the heart: Man to command and woman to obey; All else confusion. --Alfred, Lord Tennyson (1809-1892), British poet
27. Men are men, but Man is a woman. --G. K. Chesterton (1874-1936), English writer
28. Nature intended women to be our slaves ... they are our property; we are not theirs. They belong to us, just as a tree that bears fruit belongs to a gardener. What a mad idea to demand equality for women! ... Women are nothing but machines for producing children. --Napoleon Bonaparte (1769-1821), French war monger
29. To men a man is but a mind. Who cares what face he carries or what he wears? But woman's body IS the woman. --Ambrose Bierce (1842-1913), US American writer
30. Regard the society of women as a necessary unpleasantness of social life, and avoid it as much as possible. --Count Leo Tolstoy (1828-1910), Russian writer
31. A woman who is guided by the head and not the heart is a social pestilence: she has all the defects of the passionate and affectionate woman, with none of her compensations; she is without pity, without love, without virtue,

- without sex. --Honoré de Balzac (1799-1850), French writer
32. And a woman is only a woman but a good cigar is a smoke. --Rudyard Kipling (1865-1936), English writer
  33. Women have great talent, but no genius, for they always remain subjective. --Arthur Schopenhauer (1788-1860), German philosopher
  34. One must have loved a woman of genius to comprehend the happiness of loving a fool. -- Talleyrand (1754–1838), French diplomat
  35. If the feminine abilities were developed to the same degree as those of the male, her (woman's) maternal organs would suffer and we should have a repulsive and useless hybrid. --P.J. Moebius (German scientist, 1907)
  36. The great question that has never been answered, and which I have not yet been able to answer despite my thirty years of research into the feminine soul, is: What does a woman want? --Sigmund Freud (1856-1939), Austrian neurologist
  37. The woman's fundamental status is that of her husband's wife, the mother of his children. -- Talcott Parsons (1902-1979), US American sociologist and Harvard university teacher
  38. Man's superiority will be shown, not in the fact that he has enslaved his wife, but that he has made her free. --Eugene V. Debs, (1855-1926) US American union leader
  39. Women should receive a higher education, not in order to become doctors, lawyers, or professors, but to rear their offspring to be valuable human beings. --Alexis Carrel, Man, the Unknown (1935) French surgeon & biologist
  40. Woman as a person enjoys a dignity equal with men, but she was given different tasks by God and by Nature which perfect and complete the work entrusted to men. --Pope John XXIII (1881-1963)
  41. The only position for women in SNCC\* is prone. --Stokeley Carmichael, 1966, militant in the Civil Rights and the Black Panther movements \*Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC, pronounced "snick")
  42. It would be preposterously naive to suggest that a B.A. can be made as attractive to girls as a marriage license. --Dr. Grayson Kirk (President of Columbia University during the 1968 protests)
  43. Women, in general, want to be loved for what they are and men for what they accomplish. The first for their looks and charm, the latter for their actions. --Theodor Reik (1888-1969), US American psychoanalist
  44. My secretary is a lovable slave. --Morris Ernst (1888-1976), attorney and co-founder of the American Civil Liberties Union, on the 50th Anniversary of his having hired Paula Gross, secretary
  45. The only alliance I would make with the Women's Liberation Movement is in bed. -- Abbie Hoffman (1936-1989), took part in the 1968 protests in the USA
  46. Women are usually more patient in working at unexciting, repetitive tasks ... Women on the average have more passivity in the inborn core of their personality ... I believe women are designed in their deeper instincts to get more pleasure out of life--not only sexually but socially, occupationally, maternally--when they are not aggressive. To put it another way I think that when women are encouraged to be competitive too many of them become disagreeable. --Benjamin M. Spock, Decent and Indecent (1970), US American pediatrician
  47. Women? I guess they ought to exercise Pussy Power. --Eldridge Cleaver, 1968, Black Panther leader

I'm not including the selection of saying about "a woman's place", on page 36. I think this is enough to help us focus things better.

Quotes have been numbered so you can take notes.