

# In the Cant of the Enemy

Social and literal dying

By Woodrow Willow

I intended to go to, but ended up missing this year's Everyman Gathering. Some weeks previous to it, I'd run out of Welbutrin SR, but figured I could get along without it, maybe drop it from my medications list altogether. I was doing so well on the regimen I'd been on that, paradoxically, I got cocky and felt I could do without an ingredient in the regime that was supporting my well-being in the first place. "Not!" I learned, the hard way. I ended up having to contact David and cancel my registration - the process involving all those delays, miscommunications and anguished feeling of incompleteness you get when you break your word.

Well, I guess if nothing else, I'm qualified to write about male depression.

"MLA slashed his wrists because he saw himself, at last, fresh out of resources .... And when he had reached out - albeit in nonverbal, "masculine" style - to other men, he got a busy signal."

As far as suicide goes, I'm well aware, thanks to *Everyman*, and no thanks to the established media, that a heavy majority of suicides are male. In my own case, however most of the suicides that have touched my personal life - a next door neighbour, a great grandmother, a grandmother, a sister - have been women. More on that later, For now let's return to the men.

One reason I think the hard numbers of percentages of suicide "favour" men over women (or, as Canada's Chief Public Health Officer, Dr. David Butler-Jones, implicitly puts it, "men are just more successful at it"), is that men are more sexually-oriented. One might even say they have been designed by (Mother) Nature as sexual specialists, and the core meaning of life for them is, like it or not, centred in libido, in erotic energy, in - how hesitant we are even to approach the word these days - *sex!*

The corollary of this would be: Take *away* this sexual-aggressive charge of energy - accomplished these days most effectively through certain drugs (heavily prescribed for males, especially boys) which are officially administered as antidepressants, but whose most immediate effect is simply to keep males from acting up - take away this erotic energy, and you pull the subject's "spirit" out from under him. Of course, "pro-social" pharmaceuticals aren't all to blame, and can even, as I indicated above be "life-preservers." The abnormal flux of natural biochemicals at certain key periods in human development and ageing are also implicated. You may have heard recently of scientists isolating the biochemical oxytocin and identifying it, since it increases greatly during sex and childbirth, as "the love drug" or "the trust drug." This would go a long way to confirming what my surviving sister has for some time suspected to have been the causal chain in every one of my female relatives' suicides; that is, postpartum depression

severely aggravated an already existing mental illness in these women, and menopause finished them off, as it were (each of them killed herself in her early 50s). So in the case of both men and women you have *despair* resulting from, as the word implies, the *spirit* (of Mars primarily in men's case, of Venus in women's) being taken away.

I believe that feminists have always been well aware of Woman's-Relationship-to-Man as a potential weapon to help cut men off from the source of their power. I don't mean feminism's heterosexual puritanism alone. No, the umbrella principle here is contained in a quip of black humour I saw back in the eighties in a British men's magazine:

*Q: What is the definition of male chauvinism?*

*A: Anything that could conceivably make a man happy*

On the train into town a couple of weeks ago, I sat next to a pair of middle-aged women. I found I'd sat down in the midst of a dialogue about a man in close relationship with the woman nearest me.

"But," the woman nearest me was finishing, "he's always got some kind of project going, at least, I mean, he keeps busy, I can't complain about that."

"Yes," said the woman furthest from me, "but does he ever *finish* what he starts?"

First woman (after long thought): "Well. Hardly ever, I'd have to say."

"So," concluded the second woman, "he starts things and he never finishes them."

The first woman was silent, doubtless a bit nonplussed or embarrassed that she had gone off half cocked with loyalty, and flaunted one single reason not to complain about this man with whom she is in close relationship. She was quickly shown the error of her ways by her companion, however who shot this apparently lone positive remark down like a low-flying Icarus.

And I say the second woman's redundant summary was not an isolated or chance piece of dialogue, Her tautology was part and parcel of the perpetuation of the mindset feminism has been pounding into the heads of women until that mindset has achieved the pavlovian, dictatorial, and ubiquitous power (for women) of fashion; in a word: *Whatever you say, do, feel or think, make sure it is in no conceivable way supporting a man in his masculine spirit.*

Do I believe that there really is a conscious conspiracy in Western society to break men's spirits and, ultimately, cut down on their numbers (until, in accordance with one radical feminist vision, they "make up no more than ten percent of the population")? I believe it is at the very least unconscious (and, as any psychologist can tell you, probably all the more potent insofar as it is). I have indicated before in this space the historical truism that conquerors have always, when possible, killed all the men and enslaved all the women and children, At the very least the incoming "alpha male" (read "global corporatism", "economic consolidationism", "hypercontrolled technosociety") prefers a passive-receptive clientele among which to set up

shop; so, in these polite, commercial times when the calculator is mightier than the sword, and where you can't kill *all* the men, you break them with chemical castration and feminization, and/or you get them to kill themselves.

There is yet one more weapon that can be used by contemporary Western society to unplug and undermine men in their masculinity, It is a power that, until very recently, men used, for the most part, to make work *for* them; and that is the traditional cultural perception of what is practically *the* definition of masculinity, especially in North America; to wit: "You're a man, you an take it, And you can take it alone."

Between last issue of *Everyman* and this, I received news from my best friend (whom I'll call "BF" here) of the suicide of a mutual longtime acquaintance (hereinafter referred to as "MLA"). I can testify that "MLA" had been abused as a child (even by the standards of the time, the '50s and '60s), and singled out by his parents amongst his siblings *for* that abuse. "BF", who had been friends with MLA from boyhood, speculates, and my recollections would agree with it, that it might have had a lot to do with MLA's being "the oldest boy".

BF tells me that at MLA's funeral he came nearer to tears than he can ever recall. "I held back, though," he quickly added - BF is, probably somewhat by natural temperament (Scorpio), a boys-don't-cry traditionalist. *Why*, BF repeatedly wondered, to himself and to me, *couldn't* MLA *his friend from childhood, have come to him first?* He knew I knew what he meant - we had both belonged to men's teams at one time.

But that time was long ago. MLA had, in fact, briefly contacted BF a little before the end, though he didn't "come to" him in the sense BF meant it. Though from his circumstances at the time it was evident that MLA was in trouble, he never actively communicated, even to his old friend, that he needed help. And (besides the fact that men often need to be hit right over the head to receive messages), BF and I both know why.

Because, bighearted as I know BF to be, he, like me, like nearly all men by middle-age, had undergone what we might call male-island-drift syndrome: He got a wife, and children, got genuinely immersed in his work - and the drift along the way has been, in the end, a drift away from other men, even a childhood buddy, MLA slashed his wrists because he saw himself, at last, fresh out of resources (he had been fired from his job that day, fairly recently separated from his wife, long alienated from his children). And when he had reached out - albeit in nonverbal, "masculine" style - to other men, he got a busy signal.

I'd be lying to you if I said that my sister didn't commit suicide under what I see as very similar conditions. Still, I wonder, would MLA have been allowed to become so desperate if he'd been in a men's group? Or if, for that matter, BF and I were still on men's teams? *Everyman* is scheduled to address this topic next issue, Here's yet one more reason to support David in keeping it alive.

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