California Seduction: Trains and Women

Contributed by Jan Lundberg / Donna Sheehan and Paul Reffell
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We are beginning to remember that, as always, it is the Feminine that possesses the empathy and guidance that the focused and systematic Masculine requires. That is what has made humans a successful species, and the suppression of it has pushed our world to the brink of destruction. - Donna Sheehan and Paul Reffell

Jan's introduction:
My early autumn adventure to southern California, my previous homeland, wasn't an historic event. But two worthwhile observations bubbled up to fit with two news stories:

Observation #1:

The Amtrak passenger trains that the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Transportation & Housing recently voted to derail do work fine, considering the insufficient money Amtrak has to work with. The policy-bias the corporate state has for roads, motor vehicles and air travel undermine mass transportation in the U.S. Unlike other countries, freight rules the tracks in the U.S., frequently hampering timely passenger service.

Funding and low prioritization just begin to explain Amtrak's semi-dysfunction. It's also a failure of compromised politicians to engage the heart and mind. Good old fashioned corruption comes into play as well. Let's say Joe Congressman hates Amtrak for its subsidies, and wants the "free market" to rule. But the roads, motor vehicles and airports have truly massive subsidies, related to the even bigger subsidy of military extravagance and waste.

Joe Congressman's granny who is too old to drive might need to take the train from city A to city B. She might even take her grandchildren, Joe's kids, on the train and have a wonderful family experience. But no, shut down Amtrak, Joe's ideology says -- as do his campaign contributors.

A few nights ago I was camping out above the ocean west of Santa Barbara, and the Coast Starlight startled me as it rumbled by just above the breakers. It was a romantic sight, with the observation car's skylights aglow. The noise and sight were over in a flash -- unobtrusive and energy-efficient (as long as enough passengers are pulled along). I noticed that the once-a-day train was a few hours behind schedule. But Amtrak diehards still book passage.

Two days earlier I was inconvenienced by a 2 1/2-hour-late train, and was finally offered an Amtrak bus connection instead. The seats were not comfortable, but the ride took almost 50% less time on the road than the train would have taken. Still, we rail riders like the train, especially if we are car free. One reason is that we can relax, get a cocktail perhaps, meet people, perform music, etc. Although I was forced to take the bus, at the station I had met a wonderful woman from Asia, and we established a friendship. This would not be as likely to happen with cars and jets. I imposed several songs on her with my guitar, which she didn't seem to mind, and I recruited her (I hope) in anti-nuclear power activism.

Observation #2:

In Santa Barbara a few days earlier, I was walking around the fancy shopping downtown tourist area with my backpack and guitar. Not one woman would make eye contact with me. One might think I was wearing a bathrobe and slippers, drooling and shuffling along. Or that a big sticker on my guitar case proclaimed something sexist or racist. But the next day I found myself in the same place wearing the same suit, sans backpack and guitar case, and several classy dames noticed me and seemed friendly.

The implications are disturbing, for I was the same guy on both days, doing what might be my best work while thinking of how to further help my family. I think we can say with confidence that materialism and consumerism are getting more rampant. In the 1960s and 1970s a normal sort of man with a backpack and guitar was unobjectionable to female

passersby. He might have sported the guitar-case sticker "Kiss Me, I'm A Musician" with respectable results. Why? In those days the adventure of travel and music were more appreciated, signaling an adventurous spirit. Back to Santa Barbara's shopping paradise: on the second day I appeared as if I might be a reliable catch with a splendid income. But any guy appearing so might just turn out to be an alcoholic or worse.

Society's values seem to be worsening. I've written many a column and song about it, but a biological and evolutionary analysis might be the simplest explanation for what's going on. And this is what Culture Change offers, forthwith below: read "The Malleable Male - Or Evolutionary Suicide?" by Donna Sheehan and Paul Reffell, who wrote previously "Evolutionary revolution: Divining seduction - Women Initiating Courtship, Partnership and Peace" in Culture Change, Sept. 2008.

My new Asian friend may or may not transcend the stereotypical materialism of a woman focused on the man's wallet rather than the man. But I was encouraged that when I played and sang to her in L.A.'s Union Station, a homeless man behind us earned her praise for his singing along. He was outfitted with a bicycle and trailer, and he was not a ticket holder. Too few people in Consumerland, male or female, appreciate the low-income, low-tech survivor who pollutes little and doesn't contribute to the war economy.

"The Malleable Male - Or Evolutionary Suicide?" explains much, but there's something else going on besides mating dances and material security. Some have triumphed over these challenges by not playing the same old game. A gay female today might be the best example of being liberated, by not looking for Mr. Rich to satisfy her perceived material needs. To go even deeper a moment, the dominant culture is also characterized by endless growth, control of the population, and domination of nature. It so happens that dominating nature has to do with dominating the female aspect of our species today. However, as sex roles and gender issues are often the top social-justice concerns, it's easy for there to be too little cohesion around addressing nuclear hell, climate destabilization, and trying to live the petroleum-free future today.

The Malleable Male - Or Evolutionary Suicide?

Make someone happy, Make just one someone happy...

When Jimmy Durante wrote those words he could have been summing up the adaptability of men. Men are always doing things that make them happy, but the underlying reason for their doing all those things is the need to procreate. Doing what they like to do is a turn-on for men, but it is also meant to be a turn-on for a prospective mate. To that end, most of what men do is a mating display to attract women, even if they are not conscious of it. In fact, according to evolutionary psychologists like Professor Geoffrey Miller of the University of New Mexico, most of what we now take for granted as culture is actually male behavior based on display for females.

Evolutionists have long understood that the males of most species will tailor their appearance and behavior to the preferences of the females they want to attract. In an interview for our film of Baring Witness, itself a celebration of the power of the female human form to influence men’s behavior, Professor Miller points out, “if a woman advertises herself in a way that says, ‘I’m looking for a warrior prince, somebody who has got his status through aggression, conquest, domination, etc.’, guys will respond in the predictable way in trying to fulfill that role”.

It seems that men will tailor their actions and image to whatever signals women give about what they want from men, including the scary, long-term, responsible role of father to their children. In other sexual species, signals of abundant

strength, energy and genetic health are thought to be the most attractive to females, as well as the ability to provide sustenance and protection in those that require the males to share in the rearing of offspring. In humans though, the strengths being advertised (perhaps falsely) can be displayed in ways that are deleterious to the species and counter-productive to the quest for sex.

Everything from acquisition of wealth to riding Harley-Davidsons without mufflers, from altruism to aggression, from blowing things up to curing disease, just about everything a man does, makes or invents, is based on display tactics that he has been taught to believe will be successful. The peacock's tail is the most obvious example of male display, and one that barely allows the male to survive his predators. Other species are not so lucky and have suffered extinction due to "runaway" traits—traits that are selected over and over through generations, and become more and more pronounced – one possible victim was the Irish elk, which had huge antlers that may have led to its downfall.

One of the most important driving forces behind evolution is female selection for mating. Male animals will assume almost any discomfort and will physically adapt to almost any female preference if it means they will have the chance to pass their genes on to the next generation. Peacocks grow larger tails; bullfrogs croak louder; if enough women chose men with big feet, within two or three generations big-footed men would be the norm. And while human sex may not always be for the sole purpose of procreation, men have a lot in common with peacocks and bullfrogs when it comes to display. In the human case, male display is complicated by the active and resourceful human brain (itself a product of display), which has given men so many ways in which they can advertise their skills and traits.

Humans are inquisitive and adaptable. With their large brains and cooperative societies, they are capable of surviving anywhere they can build shelter, and they have shown themselves to be able to invent and make anything they put their minds to, including "gods".

For thousands of years the male humans have been in charge of redesigning their environment to suit their needs. They have built cities, wiped out predators and engineered food production using synthetics and huge machinery. They have discovered how to make machines fly, how to send them to other planets, they have created languages, writing, poetry, mathematics, music and visual arts. They have thought up ever more ingenious and effective ways of killing each other.

Human males generally regard all this unequivocally as "progress". It goes unquestioned and men see the progress as a means unto itself. "I progress therefore I am." Evolutionary scientists, however, see a simple reason behind the drive for progress and in the very growth of the brain that produces it. Sex.

When distilled down to its core most male behavior is based on the primal need to display desirable traits in order to be selected for mating by females. The need to pass genes on to succeeding generations is the great driving force of all life on our planet, and in most sexual species it is the males who display while the females select.

Part of human "progress" has been to make this simple dynamic very complicated. It's our big brain, always figuring out new ways of doing things, plus the formation of societies ruled by males, rather than by a partnership of males and females. When men started to decide what women should find attractive, the dating and mating game became a minefield of doubts and misunderstandings between the sexes. The natural course of sexual selection became diverted by the formation of patriarchies, which took the evolutionary power of the female and subdued it through arranged marriage, restrictions on female freedoms and the religious taboos concerning sex and procreation. Men took control of mating choices and taught succeeding generations of women the traits that men found desirable in men, rather than the traits that women might naturally have selected for. Thus, not only did women lose control of mate choices, their preferences were gradually changed as well. Generations of daughters were born with innate preferences for men with traits that men wished to maintain so that their lives could be as "masculine" as possible, with little to deter them from rapacious "progress" with little thought of peripheral consequences.

We are finally reaping the dubious rewards of millennia of such social and genetic engineering. Unencumbered by truly effective alternative modalities from the female half of the species, men have ridden roughshod over the Earth, laying waste to wildernesses and forests, slaughtering those humans unfortunate enough to be in their way, and have finally found a way to obey their own Biblical injunction, straight from the lips of their own “God”—take dominion over the earth and its beasts—by threatening the destruction of natural systems and tipping the delicate balance of Nature towards annihilation of our species, and many others before we die.

Women were also trained to be vain and demanding, to give men the excuse and impetus they needed to create “progress”. After all, their natural drive is to display for women, so what better way to display than to accede to their wives’ demands for more stuff, more money, greater social standing? Thus, both men and women have been complicit in perverting evolution by promoting patriarchies, creating and obeying societal standards that have served to suppress the Feminine. Some cases are overtly brutal, such as the cliterectomies carried out by West African women on their daughters and grand-daughters, or the foot-binding of Imperial Chinese girls’ feet by their mothers. Others are less overtly horrifying, but no less damaging in the long run, like the refusal of American mothers to discuss sex and birth control with their daughters and sons, so prolonging the ignorance and confusion and sustaining the patriarchal, feminine-suppressing status quo.

We have reached a point beyond blame and retribution, even if the latter were possible. No-one is personally to blame for obeying the rules of the societies our forefathers created. We are suffering the effects of the conditioning of millennia. But most people will do anything for a quiet life, so close consideration of our behavior and destructive ways, or making radical change in them, is an unattractive prospect to most. But the writing on the wall is becoming clearer with time, and humans are awakening to the need for new paradigms and consciousness of the consequences of our current actions.

Radical change in the form of partnership societies is a dream that can come true, if we begin soon enough. It takes one woman at a time, returning to her natural place as initiator of partnership and guide to her chosen mate. When men are guided into true, creative and conscious partnership with women, not only are couples and co-workers happier and more fulfilled, the work of living becomes easier and more effective. Men and women together, balancing the focused intention of one with the holistic vision of the other, taking responsibility for their actions, listening deeply to each other, understanding the foundations of each other’s cognition, just might bring us to an era of less destruction.

There will be resistance, of course, from men who only hear the drumbeat of centuries of aggression and from women camp followers egging them on in hope of plundered swag. But the future is with the males who can adapt to the necessities of survival and the mating preferences of females, and with females who can stand up and choose mates that will benefit, not hinder, the species, as is the case with most of Nature’s creatures.

The malleable male—the peacock, the bird of paradise, the bullfrog, the mindful man—will be the key to his species’ survival, be he Alpha or Beta. The runaway traits that have brought us and many other species to the brink must be slowed and stopped in their tracks. As the era of feminine awakening continues in the human race, the masculine transformation must take place if we and coming generations are to reap the benefits of the true progress of our species, in new, exciting directions and with new inventiveness and attentiveness. And it starts now...
Check out the web site SeductionRedefined.blogspot.com and the book Seduction Redefined: A Guide to Creative Collaboration of the Feminine and Masculine.

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Posted by Donna Oehm Sheehan and Paul Reffell, in Marshall, California, on Thursday, September 15, 2011 at SeductionRedefined.blogspot.com. Donna Sheehan's and Paul Reffell's previous well-known work: Baring Witness - The New Peace Movement as portrayed on Culture Change (see graphic example) in Evolutionary revolution: Divining seduction - Women Initiating Courtship, Partnership and Peace, Sept. 2008

House Subcommittee Approves Shutdown Budget for Amtrak!

"This proposed budget is a direct attack on the right of Americans to travel by train" - National Association of Railroad Passengers