

Are Women and Men Exactly the Same?

By Norm R. Allen Jr.

A Book Review

Sex Scandal: The Drive to Abolish Male and Female, by Ashley McGuire. Regnery Publishing: Washington, D.C., 272 pp., 2017, ISBN: 978-1-62157-581-8, Cloth, \$27.99.

Progressive readers of this book should always strive to keep an open mind. When I started to read it, I thought that it would be just another conservative or reactionary defense of patriarchal thinking. After all, the author puts “climate change deniers” in scare quotes (p. 42) and implies that climate change is not a reality. However, as one continues to read, she can see that the author’s well-researched book is thought-provoking and generally fair.

Ashley McGuire writes for liberal *and* conservative publications. Don’t let the blurb by Michelle Malkin fool you. McGuire seems to be a conservative or right-leaning moderate. She gleefully asserts that “Hillary Clinton’s [Presidential] campaign was...a spectacular failure” (p. 111) However, the author is not reactionary. She draws upon much research that suggests that women have several important advantages over men and vice versa.

This book provides what seems like a very simple solution to what seems to be a hopeless problem – police brutality. The simple solution is to *hire more women police officers*. Research shows that women and men have different policing styles. Men tend to be overly aggressive and emotional while women tend to be more calm and rational, reversing the stereotypes. Women cops are almost never involved in cases of police brutality or killings. They can assume command in chaotic situations and they know how to reason with suspects. Even in cases when they are faced with bigger, taller and stronger uncooperative male suspects, they can call for back-up which would usually arrive swiftly.

Women and men also have different approaches to doing business; and it pays to have women in business. McGuire writes that “researchers found a clear connection between greater profitability and having more women in executive

roles and on corporate boards.” (p. 186) These findings came from a study conducted in early 2016 by “the nonprofit Peterson Institute for International Economics.” (ibid) That study’s findings supported the findings of another study conducted in 2015. The 2015 study found “that companies with what the researchers described as ‘strong female leadership’ saw three times the rate of return on equity over five years as companies lacking a robust female presence at high levels did.” (ibid) This, the author contends, is because of “fundamental *differences* between men and women.” (ibid)

McGuire mainly objects to those that believe there are no real differences between men and women. She makes some arguments worth considering when it comes to gender-identified bathrooms. She points out that one never hears of women trying to sneak into men’s bathrooms to harass or harm boys or men. However, there are reports of men sneaking into women’s bathrooms to harass girls and women. Some of these men have dressed in traditional women’s clothing. Should girls and women have genuine fears about men in women’s clothing coming into women’s bathrooms?

The author slams Hollywood and popular culture as sexist. She writes, “...misogyny sells. And Hollywood’s head honchos and stars—plenty of women included—aren’t afraid to cash in.” (p. 111) She gives excellent examples, such as Robin Thicke’s “rape song” Blurred Lines and the disturbing lyrics of Grammy-nominated guitarist and producer Dr. Luke.

McGuire is totally opposed to the use of gender-neutral pronouns, a subject that most humanists do not seem to give much attention to. Some feminists, transgendered persons and others do not use “he” or “she,” for example. They prefer to use “ze” for he or she, believing gender is not important or that it simply does not exist. They believe it to be a social construct with no biological foundation.

Some go so far as to say that it is foolish to ask about the sex or gender of a newborn child. One critic asked how is it that we can know whether the child is a boy or girl until the child grows up and chooses – or rejects – a gender. (The author does go into great detail breaking down the differences between gender and sex.)

McGuire also draws upon much research to contend that, due largely, though not entirely, to greater natural upper body strength, men perform better as fire fighters and combat soldiers, than do women. She also points to studies that show that women are more likely to be injured in these kinds of occupations than are men.

In the introduction, the author tells a disturbing story of transgendered Mixed Martial Arts (MMA) fighter Fallon Fox destroying her women opponents. McGuire writes that

...Fox sent a female opponent, Tammika Brents, to the hospital after just two minutes of fighting. Brents suffered a broken skull and a concussion, and needed seven surgical staples. She said of the match, "I've never felt so overpowered in my life. I've fought a lot of women, and never felt the strength I felt in a fight as I did that night." (p. xiii.)

McGuire also discusses how Title IX was designed to increase girls' participation in sports and increase their athletic scholarship numbers. However, with co-ed sports, boys are dominating and taking scholarships away from girls.

Are girls/women and boys/men the same? Do we need sex or gender distinctions? Are we jeopardizing the opportunities, health and lives of girls and women by not recognizing differences between the sexes? These are all questions to which humanists should give much more attention. McGuire's book can certainly help lead the way, regardless of where one stands on these topics.