

AN OPEN LETTER TO REY FROM STAR WARS

Posted by Nathan Alberson | Mar 7, 2016 | Arts & Culture |

Dear Rey from *Star Wars*,

Also Princess Leia. And Wonder Woman. And Sarah Connor and Trinity and Imperator Furiosa and Beatrix Kiddo and Black Widow and Katniss Everdeen and River Tam and Gamora. And ~~Feminist Elf~~ ^{Tauriel} ~~Kate~~ from *The Hobbit*. And every character undertaken to help pay Milla Jovovich's mortgage. And the godmother of them all, Ellen Ripley. If you are an empowered fictional female warrior type, this is a letter to you.

Let me start by saying I have enjoyed many of the movies that you ladies have been in. I hope you won't think I'm being patronizing if I say you are all beautiful, talented, intelligent flowers of your respective civilizations. My ~~hat~~ ^{fedora} is off to all of you. It really is. And as a sworn gentleman, I'm loath to cause you any pain or embarrassment. In fact, if I may be so bold, I'd like to save you from pain or embarrassment.

So you see the pickle I'm in. I feel a bit like it's my job to tell you your slip is showing. Or like I'm one of those knights in those paintings where the knight is rescuing the, uh, rather unclothed lady who is tied to a tree. True chivalry demands action in both those cases, but you can't do it without causing the lady in question a little of the old p. and e.

In any case, it's going to seem like I'm being hard on you all, but I'm only doing it because I care about you. And I hope if you read through to the end you'll see that I'm actually being much harder on myself and other men.

So let's talk.

I know the whole world is lading on the adoration for your brave contributions to modern womanhood. However, you are behaving, all of you, in ways that do not befit your sex or glorify God. Frankly, and I'm sorry to have to say this, I really am, many of you look ridiculous. Your friends and family and fans may not laugh at you. But the angels do and history will. What you're doing might be good politics (of a sort), but it's bad biology, bad theology, and bad storytelling. It lies about who you are as a woman and how God made you. And it makes for lousy movies and TV.

(So, do you love it or hate it?)

Okay, that's the nastiest part. Now let me explain.

Let's talk about biology first, who you are as a woman. (Not yet convinced you have ever met a woman)

The most obvious things are the hardest to defend. You can write whole textbooks proving something unseen and unexpected like gravity or photosynthesis. But how do you prove the existence of Mt. Everest besides saying "Look, there it is?"

That's why I feel dumb saying this, but: (This never seems to stop the dudebros. Someone should do a study...)

Women are the weaker sex. They may be the smarter sex, they are often the wiser sex, they're probably the more industrious sex, they're definitely the prettier sex. But they're also the weaker sex.

(I feel like this is baggage from the Presidential Physical Fitness Test in middle school)

I know we've all seen German Olympic wrestling ladies that could wrestle me to the ground faster than you can say "steroid abuse." But most women I meet are smaller than me. Their arms have less than half the bulk and heft of mine. It's how they're built. Rey, I'm sorry, but I did not believe for a second that a little girl like you really beat up those thugs on Jaaku. It was almost like it was choreographed or something.

Trans-galactic travel? Fine.
The Force?
No problem.
Self defense?
NO FUCKING WAY!

(Lying is a sin) — I don't mean to be patronizing, I know there are women out there that could instantaneously cripple me with their mad skillz. But the cumulative effect of watching movie after movie wherein fine ladies such as yourselves suddenly crunch the bones of a dozen bad guys at a time is that some silly people get the idea there's no real difference between men and women's bodies, that most little ladies if properly motivated could beat up most men. And that's just not true because it's obviously not true.

(It's almost like a work of fiction, or something)

It's not just a matter of small bodies versus big bodies. Women are the weaker sex because they're more timid and emotionally vulnerable and tender-hearted than men. God made them that way.

(You really want to open that door?)

I'm generalizing here. So did God. It's in the Bible. You ladies all read your Bibles, right? Here are three different prophets describing the weakness and fearfulness of three different nations, using women as the metaphor:

In that day the Egyptians will become like women, and they will tremble and be in dread because of the waving of the hand of the LORD of hosts, which He is going to wave over them. — Isaiah 19:16

The warriors of Babylon have ceased fighting; they remain in their strongholds; their strength has failed; they have become women. — Jeremiah 51:30

(Make Babylon Great Again!)

Behold, your people are women in your midst! — Nahum 3:13

Here's the Apostle Peter with some advice for husbands:

You husbands in the same way, live with your wives in an understanding way, as with someone weaker, since she is a woman. — 1 Peter 3:7

None of those passages have as their points that women are weak or unfit for certain manly responsibilities. It's assumed. The book of Exodus doesn't spend twelve chapters explaining why the parting of the Red Sea was a miracle—everybody knows how seas act. Nor does Jeremiah explain why warriors of Babylon are pathetic when they act like women—everybody knows how women act.

(This reads like bible study on Achan)

I could quote more scriptures about women being vulnerable in ways that men aren't. About women being designed by God to be wives and mothers. About Eve being made as Adam's helpmate. I'm not going to bother doing that because you ladies are all capable of reading your Bibles.

(we have Title IX to thank for that)

And even the makers of the movies you ladies are in couldn't get away from these sorts of considerations. Roger Ebert complained in his review of *The Matrix* that “[Trinity] has a sensational title sequence, before the movie recalls that she's a woman and shuttles her into support mode.” You remember that, right, Trinity? You fell in love with the hero and helped inspire him to kill the bad guy with a kiss? What were the filmmakers thinking, starting you out so strong and then reducing you to that?

It's weird. A lot of you guys' movies do that. Sarah Connor and Ellen Ripley, you may be battle-scarred warrior women, but you're also mothers protecting your young—Sarah is protecting John, and Ms. Ripley, the iconic moment that everybody remembers is when you approach the Alien mother to save the little girl and utter your immortal catchphrase, “Get away from her, you bitch.” Beatrix, you were fighting to get your daughter back. Black Widow, Joss Whedon got in trouble with the feminists for giving you some backstory about how you could never be a mother. And what about the garbage love story with the dwarf that you had to muddle through in *The Hobbit*, Elf-Kate?

Tauriel

I don't have to keep making this point because the feminists have complained about it plenty. Even movies that pay lip service to female empowerment with a superpowered heroine often end up, as the great Roger E. put it, remembering that she's a woman and shuttling her into support mode. Roger was disappointed by

(that Keanu Reeves would walk...)

(maybe you haven't been keeping up on current events...)

that in *The Matrix*. But I wonder if they don't do it simply because ^{Hollywood producers are cowards,} there are certain design elements that God placed in women which are difficult to escape, even for a then-soon-to-be-transgender Larry/Lana Wachowski or uber-feminist Joss Whedon. You might be the exception to this rule, Rey, but you're so thinly written that even some liberals complained you were too obvious an example of wish-fulfillment. ^(It's like we're asking for it) Look, I don't want to bully you ladies. Trinity and Furiosa, you both participated in the greatest car chases of your respective decades. I like movies like the ones you guys are in. ^(REPENT!)

What I'm getting sick of is the men that think it's cool and sexy to make you be the way you are. The men who refuse to tell stories that encourage and ennoble other men to protect and care for the weak ones, the vulnerable ones, the hurting ones—the women and the children, the widows and the orphans. ^(So... ALL Hollywood stories...)

As men, we were born with bodies and minds crafted for war. We are the warriors, the peacekeepers, the protectors—the bloodshedders, when the time is right. Every man is a father, whether of his own children, or the people that work for him, or the folks he leads at church. As such, he must be ready to uphold what is virtuous and punish what is evil.

^(not convinced) I get it, it's all make-believe, it's all for fun, most of you ladies were in extreme post-apocalyptic kung-fu type situations that most regular Joes won't ever be in. Most people, whether Joe or Jane, won't have to kill monsters or fight duels or fire rocket launchers. Real life is (often) more prosaic than the fantasies you ladies were created to sell.

Except *prosaic* is wrong, because the duels we fight with words, the loved ones we protect from sin or despair, the widows and the orphans we assist with our time or money—these things have real currency in the kingdom of God. He will reward or punish us based on how we fight these seeming non-battles.

So it helps for men to be encouraged and allowed to feel good about being the protectors and defenders.

^(God-ordained warriors have fee-fees)

^{All sane men}

~~Some of my male friends~~ will read this and think I'm overreacting. After all, they are hard workers, blameless in their service to the church, good husbands to their wives, loving fathers to their children. They do everything right. Righter than me.

And they enjoy your movies. Just for fun and relaxation. They like to watch you ladies bust out your mad skillz. Who am I to criticize?

<sup>Patronizing
douchebagg:
LEVEL UP!</sup>

Answer: entertainment matters. The things ^I we like, even the fictional things, mean something about the condition of ^{my} our souls. If you're a man of God, you're a man of God twenty-four-seven. You don't get five minutes a day to indulge in pagan fantasies, to abdicate masculine responsibility, if only in your mind.

Many of the older generation will argue that my generation takes its entertainments—our movies, our TV shows, our books, our music—far too seriously. With all due respect to the older generation, and much respect is due, I think they're dead wrong. We don't take them half seriously enough.

Movies are great. I love movies. But a movie is never just a movie. A story is never just a story. The good stories ennoble us. They make us, in their own humble way, better men and women. The bad ones have the power to mutilate our souls. (I felt that way after Battlefield Earth)

I said earlier that watching movie after movie of you ladies exercising your empowerment through violence deadens our sense of any difference between men and women. ~~It's true.~~ It's true of me. I didn't have sisters growing up. I was friends with some girls but I didn't particularly understand or know how to respect them. I didn't have many opportunities growing up to learn a woman's worth. Nobody was preaching any sermons about it in the churches we went to early on. (past-tense?)

Movies and TV were a big part of how I learned who women were. And they lied to me. (works of fiction? Quelle surprise.) They told me that women were glorified boys who tagged along on adventures, took care of themselves, and wouldn't let you have sex with them until sometime late in act 2 when, for no particular reason, they would.

(AND THERE IT IS, FOLKS!)

These are terrible things to learn about women.

Look ladies, I'm not saying it's all your fault. ^{Your dirty, dirty fault.} You're just doing what you think you're supposed to. The actresses who played you were just submitting to their industry and their directors and producers and agents. Which is what you'd expect. Everybody has to submit to somebody. For most women it's going to be a man. These particular women choose the men who told them if they degraded themselves they'd be free. And they'd be inspiring others to be free.

(At this point, I'm feeling the Apocalypse can't get here fast enough)

It's just so sad. I wish every one of the ladies who played y'all had a father or a husband who loved them enough to tell them they weren't allowed to do what they did. If saying that makes me a monster, okay, I'm a monster. (Never let it be said you aren't introspective)

Because I need all you fictional ladies to help me out. Because I suck. I'm passive. I'm weak. I don't need more excuses. What I need is something to fight for, someone to fight for, someone to protect. If you rob me of that, you rob me of my dignity as a man. (ok... ok... still with you...)

(that ship done SAILED)

So don't be part of the conspiracy (led mostly by wicked men) to murder my motivation and crush out my will like a cigarette butt. (BREAKING: Center of the Universe, FOUND.)

And what about all the girls and women out there who want to be godly, awesome, beautiful, feminine women? What about them? When they see one of your movies, they feel beaten up. They feel stupid and afraid to do what's right. They feel like they have to trade in their dignity and value and beauty as Women with a Capital W in order to appease men like the ones who make your movies, and men like the ones who buy the tickets. They feel a little bit more alone and unprotected. They feel scared. (Propriety in a trans-galactic, post-apocalyptic wasteland. DEFINITELY a concern)

They want to do what's right and the Entertainers, the High Priests of their particular culture, are telling them to do what's wrong. It's about as uplifting as a girl coming down the stairs in a beautiful dress, and her daddy telling her to go upstairs and change into something sluttier. (THAT movie was called Trainwreck, and it was awesome)

It's a Catch-22. Every woman wants to be the sort of woman worth sacrificing for, worth fighting for, worth dying for. The sort of woman whose life and well-being a man might well value far above his own. And this isn't a bad thing—it's part of the glory of womanhood. It's part of how God made us to play out the mystery of Christ and His Bride.

(wait... His what?)

So women look around, and they see the women that men seem to value, and they try to become those women. They try to become women like you.

But a hard, mean, manly woman is difficult for a real man to care for. Most real women, when they make themselves ugly the way you all are ugly, don't have a million dollar budget to pretty themselves back up. And most men, as a rule, don't much like themselves. Not as much as we pretend to. We certainly don't

feel very inspired to fight for a woman trying her best to be just like us. *She's worth dying for* used to mean something. If there's nothing precious or exalted about women, why should men bother?

So:

(maybe... to, I don't know... just not be a dick?)

I lie to myself and women about the sort of women I they want. Women are gullible and believe the lie and become the women they think I men want. Then I men reject them because I men never wanted those sorts of women in the first place.

And men do reject them. Look at the divorce statistics, look at the TV shows and books and articles by women desperately wondering why it's so hard to hold on to a man. That's a bigger problem than the purview of this letter, but you fictional female warriors are part of it.

So stop it. I'm nobody's idea of Prince Charming, but let me do my little part to rescue you from yourselves. (SHUT THE FRONT DOOR)

And if there are any men that happen to be reading this, c'mon dudes. Tell your entertainers that you want them to show us the worth of women. Do that with your money and your time and the things you give yourself to.

(Handmaid's Tale is NOT meant to be read as a How-To Guide)

Protect your wives and mothers and daughters and sisters. Honor them. Make them feel special. Fight to restore their dignity. When you see them trying to be like the ladies in those movies, tell them no. Tell them that isn't what you want. Tell them that's never what you wanted.

(So... ALL women?)

And if there are any non-fictional non-warrior ladies reading this, don't be afraid to honor God in how you live your life and how you express your sexuality. The Creator of the Universe, the One who made you a woman, will call you blessed, even if nobody else does. And there are plenty of men out there who want to honor you, even if we are bumbling morons about it much of the time. God forgive us for letting you ever feel afraid to be what God made you to be.

or else.

That's all. Thanks for reading, ladies. Rey, don't make me regret buying a ticket to Episode VIII. I think you should choose Poe over Finn. Unless of course...but that's another open letter. See you gals in the movies!

(do Rey and Poe even meet?)

Your pal,

Nathan

P.S: I almost forgot, I said your brand of empowerment made for bad storytelling. Why? Because if Keira Knightley can fight off dozens of undead pirates by herself, who cares if Whatsisface makes it there in time? Where's the suspense? (No argument there - but, that plot sucked irrespective of the protagonist's vagina)

Good stories—not Dostoevsky (yuck) but good old-fashioned American action and suspense stories—need a good guy and a bad guy, generally evenly matched. But if they're evenly matched, you need someone for the bad guy to threaten and intimidate, someone not evenly matched. Which it makes sense would be The Girl.

(3000-plus words to the contrary)
Not because we men think all y'all women are helpless, spineless prizes-to-be-won. But because good drama comes from human nature. The bad guy goes after the girl because that's what bad guys do. They exploit vulnerability. And good guys defend and honor what is weak.

The moral of every Tarzan story was not that Jane was a discredit to her sex because she needed Tarzan to save her for the four hundredth time. The moral was that Tarzan was lucky to have the privilege. Jane was a girl worth saving. Every man should be so lucky. (Your closing example of chivalry is a man raised by animals.)

The only thing missing here
is a reference to Dirty Pillows.
I am disappoint.

- Red Ink