



SEXISM REARS ITS UGLY HEAD IN AN AIRPLANE

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I took an airplane trip the other day. It was a direct flight from Seattle to New Orleans on Alaska Airlines, if you must know. I had the occasion to use the rest rooms three times. Hey, it was a four-hour flight and I'm not as young as I used to be. (I used a different one each time. I even once snuck into the first-class lavatory, but don't tell anyone).

There, staring me in the face as I concluded my business (doing research for this essay!) was a pull-down shelf, stretching the entire width of the commode. It was the appropriate size for changing a baby's diaper. That was not what horrified me. Rather, it was the illustrated sign posted on this apparatus indicating its purpose. There were two figures indicated therein. One, a little baby, lying on his back. That was quite alright with me. The younger set needs help in this regard. However the other depiction was entirely offensive. It indicated an adult person (you could judge by the relative size of the two figures) standing above and leaning over the baby. That was the offensive part.

At this point I feel compelled to offer a trigger warning. Some readers, with delicate sensibilities, might be so offended by what I am now about to relate that they will keel over in a dead faint and need medical attention. Yes, they will feel "unsafe" without this trigger warning, and maybe, even so, with it. Having fulfilled my obligation to be sensitive (I'm a college professor and I have been inculcated with the wokeism now reigning on campus; I have learned how to deal with snowflakes) I can now relate what offended me: the adult leaning over the baby, ready to diaper the baby was wearing a dress!

I just knew that would shock your socks off! I gasped in dismay when I first saw this. It indicated that a woman (or a transgendered man; I have to be careful here; I am now treading in a veritable land-mine; I might be accused of violating the strict strictures of "inclusion" and "belonging" now rampant in higher education) was changing the baby's diaper. Oh, woe! As a man, a husband, married with children, I have indeed changed my fair share of diapers (ok, ok, far fewer than my wife) but still, I found this highly offensive. Why should it be assumed that a woman would be diapering a baby!? This is sexism run rampant! Men, too, can get pregnant, have babies, and change their diapers. Arnold Schwarzenegger did so in his 1994 movie *Junior*. That's proof enough for me. If it isn't for you, you're a sexist pig!

Then, to my utter dismay, I espied yet another offensive statement, accompanied by a picture, also in this very same set of washrooms, again, all three of them! Well, the statement was alright. 'twas not offensive. It indicated that only bathroom tissue was to be placed in the commode and flushed down. The problem was the figure placed next to this message. It was the picture of a man (well, at least "he"

was not wearing a dress; as I say, one can't be too careful nowadays, at deducing this sort of thing. If truth be told, it is extremely dangerous for academics such as I, even with tenure, to deduce anything at all in this context, while under the baleful eye of deans and provosts on campus). Nevertheless, courageous professor that I am, I am willing to go out on a limb here.

What is my conclusion on the basis of this figure? It is that men, but not women, are slobs. Now, this is perfectly acceptable to me; men, after all, are tyrants, exploiters, rapists (they have a penis; this must be true) responsible for all the ailments afflicting society. However, this only applies to straight white males. Men from other races are certainly not implicated in this charge; they are all angels, come down to earth to inspire the rest of us. Nor are even white males a threat to all that is good and holy, provided they are not heterosexual. The problem with the figure on the toilet was that it did not make this distinction! It indicted all males! This is something up with which we wokesters simply will not put!

So I urge my fellow snowflakes to boycott Alaska Airlines and all other air carriers who are so insensitive as to engage in these sexist, racist, offenses. Soon, your intrepid Paul Revere (me, that is) will examine railroads and bus lines to ensure there are no offenses against political rectitude therein.

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