



## IF NOT NOW, WHEN?

### *Acknowledging Sexual Harassment and Identity Harassment*

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#### **ABSTRACT:**

*The sexual-harassment scandals are good news for women but bad news for men--not merely for the men who actually harassed women but for all men. All men are on trial, collectively, in the court of public opinion. And that court neither requires nor allows the presumption of innocence (let alone the presentation of evidence). At issue are two things: the absence of a voice for men in the public square, specifically as men, and the inability of boys and men to create a healthy collective identity in the face of societal indifference at best and implacable hostility at worst. This essay begins by discussing significant moral and intellectual problems in the fallout from these scandals. It continues by outlining a new way of thinking about harassment, one that not only holds men accountable for the sexual harassment of women (or other men) but also makes women accountable for the identity harassment of men.*

**Keywords:** sexual harassment, identity harassment, gender, sex, misogyny, male studies, men's studies, feminism, ideological feminism, women, Me too, Believe Women

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## INTRODUCTION

The title of this essay originated in three closely related principles of Hillel the Elder, who lived a generation before Jesus. “If I am not for myself,” he asked, “who will be? But if I am only for myself, what am I? And if not now, when?”<sup>2</sup> All three questions would be very helpful to ask now in connection with relations between men and women (or any other groups in conflict). I have chosen the third question for my title, however, because the allegations of sexual harassment by powerful men, beginning with those against Harvey Weinstein, make it so urgent for men to think independently about harassment of all kinds. What follows is not primarily about the alleged or admitted behavior of these men, because no one could possibly defend that. What follows is primarily about the *fallout* from those allegations: the *public discourse about men*—that is, about men in general.<sup>3</sup> The time for doing these things is never convenient, of course, or without risk. But the cost of hiding from conflict is abandoning hope.

Beginning in the first week of October 2017, a quickly growing number of women began to make allegations against Weinstein, a very powerful Hollywood mogul. A few women accused him of rape, the others of sexual harassment: unwanted touching or other unwanted behaviours such as flashing his genitals or asking them to watch him masturbate.<sup>4</sup> Because most or all of these women were aspiring movie stars, their allegations amounted more specifically to quid pro quo; they believed that refusing Weinstein’s advances would mean jeopardizing their careers. Some of those who complied did, in fact, become movie stars. And some of those who refused to comply did not.

Those events provoked this essay. Of major interest here is not, however, Weinstein himself. He became a symbol almost immediately of the archetypal boogeyman, but he was only one of many powerful men who succumbed to allegations of sexual harassment. Of major interest here is not the entertainment industry, moreover, because that is only one industry of many where women encounter sexual harassment. Of major interest here, finally, is not the story of #Me Too. That story is of profound importance but has already been the topic of countless interviews on news shows, articles in newspapers, cover stories for magazines, blogs and so forth. *Time*<sup>5</sup> has announced that the women behind this story are its collective Person of the Year. The *Merriam-Webster Dictionary* has declared “feminism” its Word of the Year.<sup>6</sup> Of primary interest in this essay is the impact of these developments specifically on *men*. And I use that word without a qualifier. I am not referring to “some” men or “many” men or “most” men. I am not referring specifically to men who sexually harass women (or other men). Rather, I am

referring to men in general, to men as a class.<sup>7</sup> Among them are men who actually care about the future of both men and women.

## BACKGROUND

The background of this essay is a society that has for several decades silenced men in the public square, denied them a legitimate voice specifically *as men* in any discussion of the social or cultural forces that have profound effects on them legally, morally, intellectually, spiritually, physically and psychologically. By now, women have the “dominant,” “privileged” or even “hegemonic” voice, one that commands respect, or at least demands it very effectively. And men, at the moment, have no legitimate or even acknowledged voice at all. This is not to say that no man ever speaks in public life. But very few men do so specifically *as men*. And even they usually speak from the perspective of feminism<sup>8</sup>—that is, depending entirely on the voice of women.<sup>9</sup> In other words, they merely react to what *women* are saying about men.<sup>10</sup> This silence of men has become so pervasive by now that few people are even aware of it. In connection with harassment, for instance, they hear only what women say about both themselves and men. Not every man experiences this silencing in the same way or to the same extent, of course, but fewer and fewer men—along with fewer and fewer of the women who care about them—can ignore the resulting silence from men without succumbing to the hypocrisy of political expediency.

The very possibility that men could be harassed, either by women or by other men, is now unimaginable to most people in a society that has classified women as one of its official victim classes and (white) men as its official oppressor class. These classifications rely on equation of “sexism” with “misogyny. I often read or hear that the misandric sexism of a gynocentric society, which flourishes at a national level despite the current president and his minority of supporters, amounts to nothing more than payback for the misogynistic sexism of an androcentric one. But that argument is about revenge, not justice, and therefore has no moral legitimacy at all. It is an excuse to condone misandry. It has nothing to do with equality, moreover, and everything to do with hierarchy. So, this essay is unambiguously one-sided. It must be one-sided, and I do not apologize for its one-sidedness. I write specifically about the ways in which men—boys and men—experience one significant cultural conflict at one particular moment in our shared history.

My immediate goal here is thus a limited one: to prepare the ground for both dialogue between men and women as classes (but also as individuals). Why only prepare? The answer is simple: Our society is very far from ready for inter-sexual dialogue. It might, however, be ready for inter-sexual debate.<sup>11</sup> Both forms of discussion require at least two personal or collective voices, not one. There can be no dialogue without a foundation of truth, however, and we have no way of establishing truth without debate. This essay is not in itself an example of inter-sexual dialogue, to be sure, but it is one side—the missing side—of an inter-sexual *debate* about harassment and therefore part of the necessary preparation for inter-sexual dialogue. Even writing it from the perspective of men has meant denunciation and even retaliation. My ultimate goal, nonetheless, remains to prepare for inter-sexual dialogue—which is to say, for men and women to negotiate as equals in the creation of a new social contract.

In what follows, I discuss the following: (1) sexual harassment and (2) the parallel phenomenon of identity harassment, which lies at the heart of my effort in this essay.

## **SEXUAL HARASSMENT**

Sexual harassment is *not* the primary focus of this essay. Before turning to the primary focus, however, I must discuss the current conflict over sexual harassment—not sexual harassment itself, for the most part, but the conflict over it, the *public rhetoric* that frames it. And I must do so from the perspective of men—not the men who actually harass women, but men in general.

The Weinstein scandal set a pattern for many to come. (That of Roy Moore was somewhat unusual because of its relation to an election and that of Al Franken because of its relation to political polarization even within his own party). The scandal was clearly an important news story, but it broke within the larger context of several other highly unusual and obviously important news stories: wildfires raging out of control in California, unparalleled devastation from Hurricane Maria in Puerto Rico, threats of nuclear warfare not only from North Korea but also from Washington and genocide in Myanmar. And yet, Weinstein was, in effect, the cover story for all American news shows that day, that week, that month and beyond. The allegations against him were serious and therefore worthy of coverage, but were they as serious as genocide or nuclear war? Countless journalists and pundits thought that they were. Coverage was both repetitive and politically slanted, to say the least. Turning on CNN for news about ever more heads rolling became something like a daily ritual. Every viewer became the equivalent of

Madame Defarge in *A Tale of Two Cities*, who records the names of condemned aristocrats in her knitting while gleefully watching the guillotine dispatch them in Place de la Révolution. It is surely useful, therefore, to ask precisely how this mentality came to prevail here and now.

From the beginning, when the Weinstein scandal broke on 5 October 2017, a general consensus emerged that sexual harassment was far more pervasive than anyone had imagined. In one case after another, moreover, a standardized vocabulary and a ritually enacted performance emerged to express and alleviate intense anxiety. Journalists and pundits would inform viewers of the latest allegations against “sexual predators.” Alleged victims would say that the latter had “shamed” or “humiliated” them or left them feeling “frozen.” After a day or two, the alleged perpetrators would respond. Some would deny the allegations against them. Others would admit their “inappropriate sexual behavior” but deny the sinister “interpretations” of it. Still others would confess at least some of their sins by issuing a formal apologies. First, they would explain that they had never known how “terrifying” their behavior must have been but should have known. Next, they would promise to enter therapy or take “sensitivity training” of some kind. Finally, they would agree that they deserved punishment—that is, unemployment and public humiliation—in any case.<sup>12</sup> Confessions in these circumstances function at least partly as attempts to assuage public opinion and thus to limit personal damage. Whether these men were actually guilty as charged or innocent—in which case they were merely bowing to public pressure or relying on financial inducements from their employers—was another matter, because none of these allegations actually went to court (although allegations of rape eventually will do so). If this pattern sounds both familiar and formulaic, there is a good reason. This is the pattern of ritual expiation that was so characteristic of the “show trials,” “purges” and “self-criticism” of Stalinist Russia and Maoist China.

The more women (and occasionally gay men) who “came forward,” viewers learned, the easier it would be for all women to “share” their stories and for society to “believe” them. And this has clearly been true. The tidal wave of allegations continues. The result is clearly a watershed for women and a breakthrough for one group of feminists. But these are ideological feminists, unfortunately, not egalitarian ones. Feminist ideology, like others, is a worldview that rests on a foundation of, apart from several other diagnostic features,<sup>13</sup> dualism: the belief that all of history is a titanic struggle between good (represented by “us”) and evil (represented by “them”). Some ideologies are on the political right, others on the left. Some are religious, others secular. Ideological feminism, which emerged from philosophies of both the right and the left,

both religious and secular, is as dualistic as every other ideology, which is what distinguishes it from egalitarian feminism. Ideological feminists have long been trying to convince all other feminists, let alone all women, of the need for concerted efforts to expose a pervasive “rape culture” and its matrix in “patriarchal privilege.” From this point of view, sexual harassment is not about sex at all but about *power*, about men using power *in order* to control and oppress women. In other words, male sexuality itself is about power. Sometimes, sexual harassment, like rape, really is about power. The obvious example would be some quid pro quo arrangements. At other times, though, it might actually be about sex. I will return to this topic.

By far the most commonly proposed solution to sexual harassment, at any rate, has been to ensure that more women than ever before are in positions of power. And this is surely a worthy egalitarian goal in its own right. (It makes no difference to commentators, by and large, that women are neither more nor less likely than men to misuse their power.<sup>14</sup> After all, any powerful man or woman can intimidate relatively powerless men or women).<sup>15</sup> But activists, who demand elaborate codes of sexual and political “correctness,” want to go much further than that. For them, these recent allegations of sexual harassment seem to prove their main point: that men really are brutal beasts and misogynistic bullies who can be tamed and controlled only by an stringent codes of sexual correctness and administrative (or legal) policies that favor the accuser instead of the accused. I do not think that we not need sexual correctness, or the smug self-righteousness that it encourages, but I do think that we need sexual etiquette; otherwise, communal life would be unbearable. And we clearly need a new one. But we need a *negotiated* code, not a code that one sex imposes unilaterally on the other. Meanwhile, corporations and other institutions need policies and procedures that are effective in deterring harassment and bringing to justice those who do harass.<sup>16</sup>

The prevalent interpretation of sexual harassment relies, I think, on surprisingly flimsy analysis. Much of it comes ready-made, in fact, from theories that have long been conventional wisdom among ideologically oriented feminists and “social justice warriors”. No reasonable person would argue against those who want to end sexual harassment by politicizing it. How else could women expect widespread acknowledgment of a longstanding problem, after all, and promote both legal and other attempts to solve it? The only question, from my point of view, is *how* they are politicizing it—that is, which interpretation of sexual harassment should be institutionalized.

In this section, I discuss some of the problems that conventional analyses of these sexual-harassment scandals have so far either oversimplified or ignored: (a) female victimhood; (b) female innocence; (c) the trouble with sex; (d) legal and constitutional problems; (e) moral problems and (f) cultural and political problems.

### ***Female victimhood***

By now, it seems outrageous to many people that any news story could be as serious as one that involves female victims, especially female victims of men.<sup>17</sup> (How many missing people are featured on news shows unless they happen to be female, young, attractive—and white?) From the perspective of men, though, it is lamentable that “violence” itself has come to mean “violence against women” and by men. Violence against women is not qualitatively different from violence against men. And even though most violence against men comes from other men,<sup>18</sup> this does not make their male victims less worthy of justice and compassion than female victims. Violence against men is not morally trivial. I disagree with General John Kelly, therefore, who claimed (in another context) that women (not men) are somehow “sacred.”<sup>19</sup> The fixation on women as a victim class is precisely what has “empowered” women, as more than a few women commented on blogs about the allegations, because every grievance mobilizes resentment and enough resentment requires a political solution. This is why Americans have a Violence Against Women Office, for instance, but no counterpart that monitors violence against men or, better still, an office that monitors violence per se. This is why Canadians have a government office called *Status of Women Canada*<sup>20</sup> but no counterpart for men. This is why Canada has launched a National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women but not for indigenous men (whose dismal fates outnumber those of indigenous women).<sup>21</sup> Meanwhile, not all men are alpha males; men in general are actually moving downward when it comes to medical, psychological, legal, educational and cultural matters. Women, though, are quickly moving upward.

### ***Female innocence***

Also, the Weinstein scandal and many similar ones have revealed a very common but dubious link between female victimhood and female innocence. I am not referring to the incontestable fact that victims are never morally responsible for what victimizers do to them. Rather, I am referring to the fact that adult victims, like all adults, are responsible for their own behavior—and the fact that even victimized people often find political or other reasons to victimize people in turn or to condone those who do. Men are by no means unusual in this respect.<sup>22</sup>

The alleged victims of sexual harassment claimed to have been “young and innocent” arrivals in Hollywood before encountering his depravity. And some of them had been. They claimed not to have known that their employers were likely to seduce or even rape them.<sup>23</sup> And some had not known. The trouble is that almost everyone else either did know, or should have known, what was going on and had been going on for a very long time.<sup>24</sup> Many of the women who “came forward” against Weinstein attacked all people, including powerful women such as Hillary Clinton, who eventually admitted that they had long known about his sexual harassment of women but remained silent for various personal or political reasons. Ross Douthat noted that political opportunism, which led them to distinguish carefully “pigs from prudes,” is not good enough to ensure healthy relationships between men and women or even the future of society.<sup>25</sup>

But public interest continued to focus less on the hypocritical behavior of these powerful bystanders, who were indeed of secondary importance, than on the shameful behavior of powerful men—or all men. At least one writer for the *New York Times*, for instance, commented on the silence of male power brokers in Hollywood, arguing that it was the responsibility of men per se to protect women.<sup>26</sup> This was a striking about-face for feminists, however, who have long insisted that women should be autonomous—that is, never dependent on men. And being protected by men really is inconsistent with being “equal” to men, let alone being independent from men.

Scandals of one kind or another, usually involving extra-marital affairs, divorces or “love children” but sometimes even murder, rocked Hollywood over and over again from the very beginning. The studios always tried to hide these scandals. But the “casting couch” was an “open secret” as early as the 1920s—and therefore long before the 1960s, when hedonism, exemplified by both Hugh Hefner’s *Playboy* and Helen Gurley Brown’s *Cosmopolitan*, came to prevail in society as a whole (a topic that I will discuss more fully). It now seems hard to imagine any potentate in Hollywood who refrains from sexual relations with other members of the community. Why would anyone be surprised at the accusation that these sexual relations often amount to sexual harassment? And straight men are not the only ones to face that accusation. Although very many gay people have contributed to the movie industry, they remained in the “closet” until recently. Now, even gay men “come forward” with allegations against producers, directors, musical performers and actors. Among the more infamous accusations have been those against Michael Jackson and, more recently, Kevin Spacey; in both cases, the alleged victims were little or teenage boys. Moreover, the casting couch was a feature of life not only

behind the camera but also in front of the camera; many movies were actually about ambitious and beautiful or talented women who used whatever advantages they had to get ahead. And these movies did not necessarily condemn them for doing so.<sup>27</sup>

As I say, though, not even the most naïve person deserves harassment of any kind. My point here is only to raise questions about claims of victimization. Today, society responds to these claims, especially by women, with an attitude that approaches reverence, in accordance with doctrinal orthodoxy, and therefore precludes careful analysis.

### ***The trouble with sex***

The prevailing assumption is that sexual harassment has nothing to do with sex, to repeat myself for emphasis, but everything to do with power and hatred (misogyny). I do not believe that facile assumption, because what ends up as sexual harassment often begins with sexual interest: teasing, flirting or even what earlier generations called “courtship.” Sometimes, in short, the motivation for sexual harassment amounts to play, no matter how clumsy and inappropriate. The trouble is that sexual behavior is too complicated, too easily misunderstood and too irrational, or at least non-rational. It always has been and always will be. There are too many mixed messages and crossed signals. This is what makes sexual play fascinating and delightful—Camille Paglia<sup>28</sup> has for many years defended it against denunciations by the puritanically inclined ideological feminists—but also disturbing. Not surprisingly, cultures have been preoccupied, to varying degrees, with its danger and the need to control it, whether heavily or lightly. Ideological feminists would explain my words in the most cynical possible way, of course, as the need of men to control *women*. That is definitely not what I am saying. I am saying merely that every society must ensure communal cohesion. And because sexual behavior does not always coincide with reasonable behavior, it is one feature of human existence that can easily threaten cohesion.

When the Weinstein scandal broke, many people said that they were “shocked” and “horrified” over such “atrocious,” “traumatic” or “sickening” allegations. I find those words very hard to square with some actual descriptions of what had happened (excluding rape). Not many women will thank me for saying that, and yet I am not quite alone in doing so. By early December, at least a few *women*, mainly maverick feminists, were expressing the same skepticism about public response to the allegations. Among them were Janice Fiamengo<sup>29</sup> and Claire Berlinski.<sup>30</sup> More about them in due course.

Allegations against Weinstein ranged from his fondling female genitals to fondling his own genitals in front of them. The allegations against Charlie Rose included his fondness for lewd jokes.<sup>31</sup> The allegations against John Conyers included verbal abuse and wearing only his underwear.<sup>32</sup> The allegation against Steven McLaughlin amounted to asking for nude photos of a woman on his staff.<sup>33</sup> The allegation against Garrison Keillor was touching a woman's bare back.<sup>34</sup> These experiences might be very unpleasant for most people, to be sure, but would they be life-shattering? Not many men would say so (not unless their jobs depended on compliance).<sup>35</sup> My argument here is what will surely anger many women, whose experience of sexual behavior will probably always be significantly different from that of men, but I refuse to hide from honest debate. To put it another way, I agree with Matt Damon.<sup>36</sup> I insist on making a distinction between relatively innocuous sexual behavior and harmful sexual behavior.

Premier Brian Pallister, of Manitoba, faced public censure for beginning his state of the province speech thus: "I want to thank Johanna [Hurme] for dressing up. I want to thank her for those heels. I notice they're a foot high," said Pallister, one arm still in a sling as the result of a hiking injury in New Mexico. "It's a humbling experience to come to you today, not just in this condition but having Johanna cut my meat for me meant a lot to me. Johanna—good luck in your upcoming term. Congratulations and thank-you for taking it on."<sup>37</sup> "Honestly," said Nahanni Fontaine, "in this day and age it's unfortunate and disappointing that women are still getting comments like the premier's about their bodies and appearance and you know, honestly they're quite shocking." Rebuked, Pallister explained that his remark had been "intended to be a joke about his height." His height is six feet eight inches. Besides, I doubt that outrage over any remark about female appearance is confined to "harassment" the workplace.<sup>38</sup>

A similar story reveals much about this new world that we have entered. It is surely not a representative story in any statistical sense, but, like the preceding story, it is a warning of what can happen when common decency and even common sense become acceptable casualties of a good cause. Sherry Romanado is a member of the Canadian Parliament. In early December, only weeks after the Weinstein scandal broke, she accused James Bezan, another member, of "humiliating" her. She was referring to a photo op with Bezan and one additional member several months earlier. "While standing for the picture," Bezan had to admit, "I made an inappropriate and flippant comment by saying, 'This isn't my idea of a threesome,' which was intended as a partisan comment about being in a photo with a Liberal member of caucus."<sup>39</sup> Bezan found it necessary to apologize not once or twice but five times<sup>40</sup> for trying to make what

sophisticated people, both men *and* women, had once enjoyed as a “risqué” joke.<sup>41</sup> By no means all women would lodge a formal complaint over that, not even today, but Romanado found his remark deplorably “sexual in nature.” She was neither a member of Bezan’s party nor his employee; he had no authority over her at all. Nonetheless, this incident had caused “great stress” for Romanado. It had “negatively affected my work environment.” Even some women find that reaction, well, reactionary.<sup>42</sup> I can hardly get inside her mind, but I must admit finding it hard to avoid the suspicion that her motivation in “coming forward” was to take advantage of the historic opportunity to attack a man, perhaps any man. That, too, causes humiliation.

You could explain the tearful reactions to some of these allegations as orchestrated attempts to mobilize resentment for political purposes. I prefer to explain them, however, as evidence that the sexual habits or interests of men and women do not always coincide and keep changing in any case both collectively and personally. What seems so shocking to some women now—the sight of a naked body, say, or the feel of an unwanted kiss—might not seem at all shocking to many men, including gay men. More to the point, they might not seem at all shocking even to many women. Otherwise, how could we explain the popularity among women of novels and movies that feature sex, including sado-masochistic sex? To take only one well known example, I would cite *Fifty-Shades of Grey*.<sup>43</sup> Enormously popular among women, it quickly became a cultural “meme.” We need to expect some level of confusion over sex, although, as everyone agrees, we need also to insist on some lines that no one may cross<sup>44</sup> and, in cases of doubt, on administrative processes that are fair to everyone.

The primary message that women have been sending with these sexual-harassment allegations is, of course, about far more than repeated episodes that they find unpleasant. It is about *intimidation* in the workplace. I see nothing trivial about that. The “quid pro quo” system amounts to an implicit or explicit bargain. If you do something for me, I’ll do something for you. One hand washes the other. As I say, bargains of this kind, what President Trump would call “deals,” do not necessarily rely on intimidation. But they can do so in the context of a power differential. This context makes the bargain look different. If you *don’t* do something for me, *I won’t* do something for you. That, I suggest, more than the acts per se (apart from rape), is what troubles so many people in the workplace—and with good reason.

But I must add several additional factors, which complicate matters. Sexual harassment really can be about sex, at least sometimes. And male sexuality is not, as some ideological

feminists, even male feminists, have argued, innately brutal.<sup>45</sup> This is not a minor matter. It is central to the entire discussion of sexual harassment. Egalitarian feminists believe that men and women are not only equal but also the same except for gestation and lactation. From this they conclude that men feel what women feel. More important, they conclude that men should *not* feel what women do *not* feel. Those men who fail to fit this paradigm, therefore, are perverts who must be controlled by rules, policies, laws, psychotherapy or incarceration. It seems most unlikely that men and women will agree in the foreseeable future on precisely which behaviors are acceptable, or tolerable, and which are not—except for intimidation and violence, of course, which are always unacceptable. Ideological feminists, however, do not make that argument. They do not argue for innate sexual equality. On the contrary, they argue that male sexuality is not only innately different from female sexuality but innately inferior to it. Male and female sexuality are not only innately different on physiological grounds, they add, but also intrinsically different on moral grounds. Unlike female sexuality, they argue, male sexuality is driven not by pleasure at all but by the urge to control, dominate or oppress. Of more importance to these feminists, (straight) male sexuality is driven not by pleasure but by the urge to control, dominate or oppress *women*.<sup>46</sup>

Before even considering possible solutions to the remaining power differentials in workplaces, therefore, we must first account for the stubborn difference between male sexuality and female sexuality. I do not argue that “men are from Mars, and women are from Venus.” They are much more alike than unlike in most ways, and that includes sexuality.<sup>47</sup> Nonetheless, I think that we must account for a few significant differences. We can quibble over the degree of difference between the sexes and extent of variation within each sex, but we cannot argue effectively, as egalitarian feminists have tried to do for many years, that men and women in the same circumstances or with the same opportunities have the same sexual needs, desires and expectations. At the very least, we must acknowledge the following problems while entering negotiations for a new code of sexual etiquette and its relation to sexual harassment.

First, we cannot eliminate the physical attraction between men and women (or, in some cases, between people of the same sex). Men and women now work side by side and will continue to do so unless we resort to sexual segregation, which is common in other societies but reviled in this one. Men and women in general, especially those who work together every day, will always flirt with each other and sometimes form “relationships.”<sup>48</sup> But the line between flirting and harassment is sometimes blurry. This is partly because sex is a very complex and

subtle phenomenon, one that has both physiological and psychological (and sometimes spiritual) dimensions—but also one that has several functions for both men and women. Moreover, the cultural rules that govern sex tend to change from one time and place to another. This is precisely what explains the enduring allure not only of sexual adventure but also of both sexual seduction and the enduring comedy of sexual incompetence. More to the point here, it underlies the conflict over what people now call “sexual harassment” (but have sometimes called sexual play even in the recent past).

Consider the firing of Charlie Rose by both CBS and PBS after allegations of his sexual “misconduct” emerged. The allegations were, as in many other cases, hardly the stuff of horror movies; among his worst alleged offenses were unwanted caressing and lewd jokes. Rose claimed that women had responded favorably to his attentions. It all amounted, nonetheless, to “she said, he said.” Norah O’Donnell and Gayle King, who had worked closely with Rose as co-hosts on *This Morning*, announced Rose’s fate without expressing the slightest doubt that he was a “sexual predator” and therefore that he deserved his fate—which is to say, that the allegations must have been true. Only hearsay and a half-hearted confession to “inappropriate behavior” sustained the allegations—Rose confessed to most of the allegations against him but rejected the prevailing *interpretation* of them. Both co-hosts made the moral (and political) decision to believe the women who had accused him. King was visibly upset. She did express personal shock and distress about her former friend and colleague. Like O’Donnell, however, she took the opportunity to denounce Rose and all other (alleged) offenders. She and O’Donnell protected themselves (and CBS) by saying what viewers clearly wanted to hear. In short, they exploited Rose’s fall from grace by preaching moralistic sermons to the converted instead of doing what they had so often done in the past—notably with Rose—by asking viewers to think carefully about what was going on in the news. In this case, that would have meant taking seriously the perspectives of both women and men.

Second, male sexuality depends heavily on visual stimulation,<sup>49</sup> a biological phenomenon that many feminists now link with the infamous “male gaze” or “the objectification of women.”<sup>50</sup> (This is not to say that men lack the ability to *love* women, only that the male experiences of love and copulation do not necessarily coincide.) Men will always want to have sex with beautiful women (or beautiful men), although they can also respect, like or love their female (or male) companions. Straight men will always try to seduce physically attractive women. And by no means all women want to eliminate seduction even in the workplace. “While plenty of women

are frustrated by unwanted romantic attentions,” writes one perceptive male observer, “how many would prefer the prospect of becoming an adult without ever having been desired?”<sup>51</sup> This does not mean raping them, although it can sometimes amount to harassing them. We cannot eliminate male sexuality, at any rate, without resorting to lobotomies or chemical castration. We can, however, use culture effectively to create an environment that discourages men from afflicting women with unwanted sexual attention—as long as we ensure that both women and men participate equally in the creation of that environment.

Third, men have evolved—whether through nature, culture or both—to take the initiative in sexual contacts and therefore to take the high risk of rejection (although women who take the initiative directly or indirectly, psychoanalytical theory notwithstanding, are by no means rare). This is why teenage girls used to wait anxiously for boys to ask them out on dates, but teenage boys used to wait just as anxiously for the courage to ask girls out. Men must learn how to back away and admit defeat without accepting the humiliation of being undesirable. Most men learn to do this by trial and error, which is neither easy nor safe. And it is infinitely more difficult and more dangerous when even trying to show interest in women, no matter how ineptly, is defined as sexual harassment—that is, an act of hostility. Sometimes, it might be. At other times, it might be something else entirely. So, in a moral universe, women must learn how to tell the difference just as men must learn how to accept “no.”

Finally, those whose beauty attracts the powerful, straight or gay, will probably always enjoy some degree of preferment, or “privilege,” whether directly or indirectly. That is unfair, but no spiritual luminary has ever said that life is fair. Sexuality makes human existence possible and often joyful but not easy.

The best explanation for what women experience as sexual harassment is not necessarily that of either egalitarian or ideological feminism. A better explanation would be much more complex and subtle than either one and therefore deserves closer examination; otherwise, if we criminalize male sexuality per se, the results will be catastrophic for both men and women—that is, for society as a whole. The best solution to these problems, in fact, is to establish rules of conduct that make sense to everyone, both men and women.

## ***Moral problems***

Everything about the mentality that underlies both these allegations and the responses to them by both men and women has a moral implication. But several problems are worth highlighting here.

As soon as male editors, journalists and pundits began to discuss their own places in the scheme of things, some of them resorted to an oblique form of self-righteousness: admitting silent complicity but also taking the supposedly high moral road of admonishing other men by emphasizing the personal responsibility of men to intervene on behalf of women. Some women used the same argument. “We need not just sensitivity training,” said Sheryl Sandberg, “but also accountability. That means firing not only the men who sexually harass but also the men and women who are complicit.”<sup>52</sup> By “complicity,” which quickly became a “meme,” she meant those who fail to intervene. Some commentators went further. “The responsibility extends, we are coming to understand, beyond the perpetrator, implicating an entire network of people who help create the conditions that allow harassment to occur—and to go unpunished.”<sup>53</sup> The authors continued with hypothetical situations in which “bystanders” overhear what they consider disturbing remarks or jokes and witness what they consider inappropriate gestures but say or do nothing. Instead, they should either intervene personally or—better yet—inform the boss. Otherwise, they are accomplices or collaborators. In a purely practical way, this makes sense. It is relatively easy to stamp out crime or even dissent, after all, by encouraging people to collude with the state (another form of complicity). But do we really want to support the mentality of vigilantes (those who take matters into their own hands immediately instead of resorting to slower procedures such as due process in courts of law)?<sup>54</sup> Do we really want to revive the kind of mentality that classified men as protectors of women (and therefore, by definition, the dominators of women)? Do we really want to encourage and reward informers (whose mentality would resemble that of the countless Stasi informers)? I doubt that many people would like the idea of spies watching or listening to them from behind the water-cooler, of tattle-tales spreading rumors that depend on suspicion and so forth. That would not only foster psychological liabilities such as self-righteousness but also undermine moral virtues such as loyalty to friends. After all, friends give each other the benefit of the doubt—and some level of doubt is likely in connection with gossip over such notoriously subtle matters as sex. Whatever the answer might be, it surely is not among these proposals.

And then there is the problem of revenge, or triumphalism. Many women would like nothing more than to rectify the problem of sexual harassment and get on with their lives—with their sons or brothers, their husbands or boyfriends, their male colleagues and so on. But some women want much more than that and say so proudly in the most influential venues. They want to *punish* men, not this or that man who is guilty of sexually harassing someone, but men in general. What appeals so strongly to these women is not only the actual victory of victims over victimizers but also, and possibly more powerfully, the symbolic victory of women in general over men in general. The German word for this is *Schadenfreude*: joy over the downfall of others—whether those others actually deserve their fate or not. This victory is not exactly a moral victory, because moral victories produce, if not immediately then eventually, forgiveness and reconciliation. I am not surprised to find that some women are still unready to forgive and reconcile with men in general. I am deeply discouraged, however, to find that some women are *unwilling* to do so.

According to Leeann Tweeden, Al Franken, the senator and former entertainer, harassed her in 2006 while performing a comedy sketch with her. Franken kissed her and then, in her words, “mashed his lips against mine and aggressively stuck his tongue in my mouth.” Fast forward eleven years. Tweeden sees a photo of the sketch and tells a reporter, in tears and with the by-now standard vocabulary, that she “felt violated all over again. Embarrassed. Belittled. Humiliated.”<sup>55</sup> Writing for the *New York Times*, Michelle Goldberg took what was becoming a common position. Franken’s apology, she declared, would not be enough to satisfy her and women in general. He should resign immediately, even though he had done good work for women and would continue to do so. Without Tweeden’s example and others like it, she reasoned, the momentum of women “coming forward” might eventually diminish. She advocated throwing Franken under the bus for a minor offense, in other words, and despite a career that he had marred only by a lewd comedy routine that he had made eleven years earlier. It was okay for Goldberg to indulge in political expediency (following public opinion to focus attention on sexual harassment), evidently, but not for others to do so from a different point of view (opposing public opinion to benefit from Franken’s feminist policies). Is it any wonder that cynicism is now rampant? Goldberg concludes, though, on an even more disturbing note: “The question isn’t about what’s fair to Franken,” she said, but what’s fair to the rest of us. I would mourn Franken’s departure from the Senate, but I think he should go, and the governor should appoint a woman to fill his seat. The message to men in power about sexual degradation has to

be clear: “We will replace you.” Only three months earlier, bigoted protesters at Charlottesville had chanted that “Jews will not replace us.” The trouble is that equality is utterly incompatible with replacement, just as justice is utterly incompatible with revenge. The road ahead is surely bleak if people can fail to understand even that fundamental moral logic. And many obviously do fail.

Even worse is a shift of attention from the guilt of men individually to that of men collectively. I am referring here not to men who are actually guilty, in other words, but to all men—to men as a class. The only explanation for this slippage is that some women really do consider all men guilty of sexual harassment. But “collective guilt” is philosophically incoherent, because it has no room for the personal choices that must be open to any moral agent. It is morally despicable, moreover, because it is the foundation for enduring hatred.<sup>56</sup> It would be folly, therefore, to gloss over this phenomenon as a temporary emotional rush that will eventually be replaced by sober moral insight. This is why I find Amber Tamblyn’s op-ed piece in the *New York Times* so disheartening: “Not everyone in my industry is in support of how quickly things are moving. There’s a lot of collateral-damage dread, a cloud of unease that has covered the industry lately with talk of potentially harmful side effects of such decisive actions. What if an innocent man is falsely accused? What if the repercussion doesn’t fit the crime? Whatever happened to innocent until proved guilty?” Those questions do not concern her. What concerns her is the future of women, not of men. “Can there be one [a new start] for men, free of humiliation, shame and violent assault against women? Women who are their wives, daughters, mothers and friends sitting next to them on couches? And what would it take to achieve it? That’s the question for men and their text chains right now, not the question of how soon they can ask about redemption. Redemption must be preceded by atonement. It is earned, not offered. If you want amends, you have to make them.”<sup>57</sup> Tamblyn uses the word “men” here with no qualifier, thus referring to men in general, not only guilty men. Every man is guilty, by implication, if not personally then collectively. Here is a vulgar example of the same thing. Campaigning for attorney-general of Michigan, Dana Nessel says in her ad: “So when you’re choosing Michigan’s next attorney general, ask yourself this: Who can you trust most not to show you their penis in a professional setting? Is it the candidate who doesn’t have a penis? I’d say so.”<sup>58</sup>

## ***Legal and constitutional problems***

There is nothing wrong with making an allegation. How else could anyone initiate procedures in the hope of finding justice? The trouble is that not all allegations occur in a court of law or any quasi-legal context that respects due process. Most of these sexual-harassment allegations, including those of the #Me Too campaign rely heavily—even entirely—on hearsay, not evidence, in the court of public opinion. And sometimes the allegations are anonymous—which, as Christie Blatchford points out, require *no courage whatsoever* from those who make them.<sup>59</sup> This does not necessarily mean, of course, that all allegations are false.<sup>60</sup> Even those that are true, however, can be problematic in view of their consequences. After learning of an allegation against him, Dan Johnson committed suicide.<sup>61</sup> In effect, this meant capital punishment. And, unlike his state of Kentucky, not all jurisdictions allow capital punishment.

Some people argue that allegations are probably true, because so many people “come forward” with them. But they might just as easily be false, precisely *because* so many of these people use the same standardized vocabulary, which could indicate a learned response rather than a spontaneous one. Worse, so many people believe them and use “social media” to make corporations do quickly what other institutions do slowly. President Trump’s populism, including the resentment that he fosters against legal immigrants, is thus by no means the only kind of populism that now threatens democracy.<sup>62</sup> In any case, history shows clearly that even multitudes of respectable citizens are sometimes motivated by fear, say, or malice. Consider the Nazi movement. Closer to home in time and space, consider the moral panic that was known first as Recovered Memory Syndrome but then as False Memory Syndrome.<sup>63</sup> For ten or fifteen dizzy years, most people took that seriously. Many psychologists believed all children, as a matter of professional principle, who told them that their parents had molested them. And some of these parents really had done so according to whatever facts came out in court. But these psychologists relied on the same principle, believing children who told them that their parents had joined depraved satanic cults and committed such crimes as human sacrifice and cannibalism.<sup>64</sup> Meanwhile, social workers were destroying thousands of homes by removing children from their families, legislators were changing laws accordingly and police officers were arresting parents. And then the moral panic was over. Enough people realized that children do sometimes lie or confuse what they imagine with what is true. Others realized that the lawyers were asking their clients leading questions in court. Still others realized that psychologists were giving their clients drugs to help them “remember” what had happened to them, decades earlier.

In short, things had gone way out of control.

Those presumably repentant professionals should worry about a closely related problem right now: the Believe Women movement. Although this movement did not originate with the Weinstein scandal and its many spinoffs, its ostensible goal has always been to make the courts “sensitive” to the needs of women who charge men with rape or, now, sexual harassment (an important distinction that not all members of this movement agree to make). Sensitivity is always a good thing, and the accuser surely deserves the same level of it as the accused does (which is, lamentably, not always high). But why abandon due process? For feminists such as Lindy West of the *New York Times*, the answer is simple: speed and efficiency.<sup>65</sup> Not all women would do so, and several have already come out of the closet to say so. I have already referred to Claire Berlinski, for instance, who rejects the prevailing approach to sexual harassment as a witch hunt.<sup>66</sup> She was a pioneer. After only a few months, the list of female dissenters now includes foreign female movie stars such as Catherine Deneuve (and one hundred other Frenchwomen)<sup>67</sup> and American female academics such as Christina Hoff Sommers<sup>68</sup> but also feminist icons such as novelist (and author of *The Handmaid’s Tale*) Margaret Atwood<sup>69</sup> and even Germaine Greer.<sup>70</sup> Sarah Vine calls the movement a “feminist jihad.”<sup>71</sup> The case of Aziz Anansi, who was accused of bad manners more than anything else, provoked even more controversy among feminists: Lindy West of the *New York Times* argued that men deserve to be hunted down, because feminists had been trying for years to warn them of a reckoning to come.<sup>72</sup> But for other feminists, this case was the last straw. Heather Wilhelm of the *Chicago Tribune* accused contemporary feminists of waging a war on common sense. By this, she meant discouraging women from taking responsibility for their own behaviour. And she was not by any means alone.<sup>73</sup>

Even the *New York Times* published one article by someone who challenges its own feminist editorial policy. Bari Weiss discusses what has been going on among her male friends and colleagues in the wake of so many allegations of sexual harassment. “While we women revisit our sexual histories,” she writes, “the men I know—old and young, liberal and conservative—are doing the same from the flip side. An older conservative friend told me that he was considering reaching out to a girl he went on a date with in high school to apologize for kissing her in the car. She didn’t say no, and she kissed him back. But he worries that she felt pressured. A close friend, a progressive, told me about a college hook-up he regrets. He is spending time wondering about how the woman thinks about the experience: Did it leave a scar?”

Or is it arrogant to even assume she remembers his name?”<sup>74</sup> These innocuous and almost amusing stories leave her more than a little uneasy. Though grateful for the women who have challenged sexual harassment, she worries about the new movement’s effects on both men and women.

I can’t shake the feeling that this mantra [“believe women”] creates terrible new problems in addition to solving old ones. In less than two months we’ve moved from uncovering accusations of criminal behavior (Harvey Weinstein) to criminalizing behavior that we previously regarded as presumptuous and boorish (Glenn Thrush). In a climate in which sexual mores are transforming so rapidly, many men are asking: If I were wrongly accused, who would believe me? I know the answer that many women would give—are giving—is: Good. Be scared. We have been scared for forever. It’s your turn for some sleepless nights. They’ll say: If some innocent men go down in the effort to tear down the patriarchy, so be it. Emily Lindin, a columnist at Teen Vogue, summed up this view concisely last week on Twitter. “I’m actually not at all concerned about innocent men losing their jobs over false sexual assault/harassment allegations,” she wrote. “If some innocent men’s reputations have to take a hit in the process of undoing the patriarchy, that is a price I am absolutely willing to pay.”

Talk is cheap, of course, because Lindin herself would pay nothing at all; innocent people would do all the paying. “I think the worry is justified,” continues Weiss.

And it’s not because I don’t get the impulse to burn it all down. It’s because I think that “believing all women” can rapidly be transmogrified into an ideological orthodoxy that will not serve women at all. “If the past few weeks have shown us the unique horrors some women have faced, the answer to it can’t be a stringent new solidarity that further limits the definition of womanhood and lumps our highly diverse experiences together simply based on our gender. I don’t think that helps women. Or men. I believe that the ‘believe all women’ vision of feminism unintentionally fetishizes women. Women are no longer human and flawed. They are Truth personified. They are above reproach. I believe that it’s condescending to think that women and their claims can’t stand up to interrogation and can’t handle skepticism. I believe that facts serve feminists far better than faith. That due process is better than mob rule.

By early December, more feminists were having second thoughts about what was going on at least in Congress. Zephyr Teachout focused on the hasty removal of Al Franken from elected office. She began with a prudent disclaimer: strongly supporting both #Me Too and “zero tolerance” for sexual harassment:

And yet, a lot of women I know—myself included—were left with a sense that something went wrong last week with the effective ouster of Al Franken from the United States Senate. He resigned after a groundswell of his own Democratic colleagues called for him to step down.

Zero tolerance should go hand in hand with two other things: due process and proportionality. As citizens, we need a way to make sense of accusations that does not depend only on what we read or see in the news or on social media.

Due process means a fair, full investigation, with a chance for the accused to respond. And proportionality means that while all forms of inappropriate sexual behavior should be addressed, the response should be based on the nature of the transgressions ...

Finally, the nature of the behaviors matter, too. Proportionality means that after investigating, Congress should fully consider the best response to the revealed conduct.

My first job out of law school was representing people on death row in North Carolina, where I often saw the impact of hasty prosecutions. I represented a man on death row whose lawyers had spent all of eight hours looking into his claim of innocence. I met men whose lawyers had never looked into their backgrounds. I also lived in the legal environment that produced the Duke University lacrosse case, in which three students were falsely accused of rape by the prosecutor in the case, who was later disbarred for his conduct. The quick rush to public condemnation of the players, fueled by the media, ended up hurting the accuser and the accused.

As citizens, we should all be willing to stay ambivalent while the facts are gathered and we collect our thoughts. While the choice to fire the television hosts Charlie Rose and Matt Lauer were the choices of private companies, condemning a sitting lawmaker is a public choice and one our representatives should make judiciously.

Congress should empower an independent arbiter to investigate complaints—like a Government Accountability Office, with trained experts in the field. Clearly understood mechanisms for reporting should be established. A timetable should be set that ensures complaints receive a prompt response. Both the accuser and the accused could submit questions and would have access to trained advocates and free legal consultation.

The independent arbiter would then make a nonbinding proposal addressing what happened and what should be done. It could include a call to resign or for censure, or a range of other responses tailored to the findings.

We need a system to deal with that messy reality, and the current one of investigating those complaints is opaque, takes too long and has not worked to protect vulnerable women and men from harassment. And the current alternative—off with the head of the accused, regardless of the accusation—is too quick, too easily subject to political manipulation and too vulnerable to the passions of the moment.<sup>75</sup>

By now, many commentators forget to use the word “alleged.” By now, moreover, politicians find it politically expedient to proclaim, “I believe the women.” This is what Mitch McConnell said in connection with the allegations against Roy Moore even in the absence of any evidence against Moore.<sup>76</sup> Worse, this movement of believers wants to dispense with due process for the accused.

But I have an additional and entirely different reason for challenging the Believe Women movement. If belief replaces due process, the result undermines not one but two fundamental principles of our society. Yes, it allows the court of public opinion to take precedence over the court of law, as it has in connection with so many of these allegations. And yes, it overturns the presumption of innocence. In addition, though, “belief”<sup>77</sup> undermines constitutional law, which separates church and state. If we allow this principle to succeed, it would mean establishing in law a secular orthodoxy that amounts, in effect, to a religious orthodoxy. And that would make rejecting any of its doctrines tantamount to religious heresy.

### ***Cultural and political problems***

Stephen Baskerville<sup>78</sup> has argued persuasively that sexual politics is no longer merely the result of applying egalitarian principles to gender according to the pattern already established in connection with class and race. Rather, he says, gender has become the final and ultimate frontier of utopia. The goal of sexual politics is now to eliminate not only gender but also sex and thus to erase an earlier distinction, gender being a cultural system and sex a given of the natural order. This explains the rapid evolution of sexual politics to include the “transgender” movement, which asserts an infinite variety of shifting sexual identities and behaviors, all of which are equally legitimate and thus worthy of the same status and the same rights that society once accorded only to males and females. This, in itself, is not problematic in an egalitarian society. Very problematic, though, are at least two closely related beliefs.

One belief is that every institution, every tradition, every identity, every behavior and indeed every boundary, including both sex and gender, is a spurious “social construction” that allows some people—that is, straight, white, men—to oppress others. Another belief is that we can “deconstruct” all of these—and must do so—in order to create a utopian society for women (and minorities). Revolution, not reform, is therefore the ultimate goal; the new social order can be built only on the old one’s ashes. Even the most cherished and durable institutions, notably the family and the university, must be destroyed root and branch.

Baskerville points out, though, that sex, unlike class or race, is private and intimate. As the feminist proverb puts it, nonetheless, the personal is political. It is no longer enough to rely on objective legal codes and due process to scrutinize and punish public behaviors; we must now rely instead on *subjective* intuitions or *fleeting* sentiments to scrutinize and punish private behaviors. Not even the most intimate features of daily life are beyond the scope, therefore, of contemporary moral panics<sup>79</sup> or witch hunts.<sup>80</sup> Consequently, sexual politics requires a level of speech control (punishments for political incorrectness) and thought control (ideological indoctrination) that even totalitarian regimes of the last century seldom reached.<sup>81</sup> Not all feminists agree with these ideas, which are clearly extreme even now. Most women do not, obviously, which is why they continue to love the men in their lives. But like so many ideas that sound extreme, or radical, at first, these are quickly becoming widespread, even fashionable, in the most influential circles—especially in the ideological circles that produce not only “social justice warriors” but also journalists, lawyers, judges, social workers, psychologists and so on.

In short, both the Sexual Revolution and this current Sexual Counter-Revolution have gone out of control. Their analogue is the French Revolution, which ended up as a Reign of Terror (but without the blood). Ideology has become an end in itself. Revolution has taken on a life of its own. This sounds apocalyptic, I know, but history is littered with similar dead, or deadly, ends. No one in our time needs a guillotine, of course, to attain revolutionary goals. Any powerful movement (one example being that of President Trump and his relatively few but intensely loyal supporters) can easily pervert democratic institutions and sweep away legal or moral traditions—seriously harming huge groups of people in the process.

Weinstein and many of the other alleged offenders are surely coarse, vulgar, brutal men. Many observers point, not surprisingly, to President Trump as an obvious analogue (although I will suggest later that Trump is both similar to and different from Weinstein.) But how did he and Trump get that way? Were they born that way (as either males or mutants of some kind)? Or are they the products and perpetuators of a “rape culture”? Is the only difference between lewdness and rape one of degree? And have women contributed in any way at all to conflict between the sexes? These are some of the questions that have guided my own efforts, direct or indirect ones, to interpret the sexual-harassment scandals and, indeed, sexual harassment itself.

## IDENTITY HARASSMENT

I turn now from what has rightly attracted a great deal of attention to what has wrongly attracted no attention at all: the cultural context of sexual harassment, which includes the parallel phenomenon of *identity harassment*. Though hidden, so far, this is a major problem. It is also the primary focus of this essay. I suggest that we will never solve the problem of sexual harassment without also solving the problem of identity harassment.

Like sexual harassment, identity harassment is a kind of collective sickness, or neurosis. For too long, men have tried to ignore the harm that identity harassment has done to them. Everyone knows that admitting vulnerability (or hiding from it in the case of cowardice) is what men consider the “fate worse than death.” Women know this as well as men, and some have always used that knowledge to their own advantage. But things are changing. This much would be clear to anyone who reads Janice Fiamengo’s new collection of autobiographical essays by unusually articulate men: *Sons of Feminism: Men Have Their Say*.<sup>82</sup> One man, the son of highly educated immigrants from India, experienced both racism and misandry throughout his years in elite schools and colleges. “Feminism,” he writes, “was a cultural force that had the effect of dehumanizing me in a manner far more severe than the experience of racism that people make TV movies about. The key difference between racism and feminism is that people cared about the effects of racism on us. But nobody cared about the effects of feminism on its sons.”<sup>83</sup>

Given the current and dramatic context of so many sexual-harassment allegations, it would be easy to assume that my focus here would be on the identity only of those innocent men who face allegations of sexual harassment. Their personal and professional reputations are on the line, after all, and society considers them guilty until proven innocent. But that assumption would be wrong. Of primary importance here is not the personal identity of men as individuals, but the *collective* identity of men as such and therefore of all men—all boys and all men.

My metaphorical framework is a medical one, although I do not argue that the problem is actually a medical one. (I do not argue, for instance, that Weinstein and similar men are the hapless victims of “sex addiction.”) For the sake of convenience, though, I discuss this problem as a cultural and collective pathology with (a) its symptoms; (b) its diagnosis; (c) its etiology; (d) its prognosis; and (3) its cure, if any.

## **Symptoms**

I have already said that the sexual harassment scandals are dramatic symptoms of a much deeper problem than any privileges that our society gives to men and denies to women. I now add that this deeper problem involves the privileges that our society *gives* to *women* but *denies* to men. Why is this problem “deeper” than the other? That is simply because the former is now very visible, the latter still deeply hidden. The two problems are actually two sides of the same coin, but I discuss here the one that so many other people ignore.

Despite a few allegations of rape, public outcry has focused mainly on allegations of sexual harassment. Not many observers found it necessary to make a clear distinction, thanks to many years of linguistic inflation for ideological purposes, between “sexual harassment” and “sexual assault.” Sexual harassment can include everything from lewd remarks or a pornographic picture on someone’s desk to groping, quid pro quo arrangements with the office manager and even rape. Sexual assault can include rape but also sexual harassment. There was a reason for this blurring of legal terminology—that is, for using very broad categories instead of narrow ones. It was to convince the public that seemingly trivial problems are actually at one end of a continuum that *begins* with trivial problems such as looking at someone a few seconds too long but ends in rape. These trivial problems are, by extension, forms of rape. Almost every man is a rapist, therefore, not only in theory but also in practice. Given this premise, it might make sense to talk about a “rape culture”<sup>84</sup> in which all men control all women by fostering the constant fear of rape. This point of view should remind Americans of the Jim Crow South, when the Ku Klux Klan terrorized all black people by lynching some of them and thus fostering constant fear in all of them. So now, all men, including black men, are supposedly the equivalents of Klansmen. That is the essence of misandry, the sexist counterpart of misogyny.<sup>85</sup>

Here is one case study: the many ways in which male students are harassed on college campuses. These problems are pervasive and their proposed solutions crude. More important, contempt for men in general is both implicit and explicit. (The reverse phenomenon is seldom explicit, because male students lack institutional support for their harassment of female students; misogyny is a counter-culture, if anything, not the prevailing one.) The lingua franca in academic settings is no longer some form of Marxism but some ideological form of feminism. Most colleges have daily student-run newspapers that comment routinely from a feminist point of view on current events and therefore function as organs of propaganda. They advertise or promote “women’s centers,” “rape crisis centers” and “safe spaces for women” but oppose them

for men.<sup>86</sup> Many colleges require new students to attend lectures that indoctrinate them on current standards of both sexual correctness<sup>87</sup> and political correctness, warning them of penalties for failing to conform or even to question political orthodoxy. Women's groups on campus organize "take back the night" protests or encourage other forms of protest against "rape culture." Some of these groups indulge, without fear of censure, in explicit hatred toward men.<sup>88</sup> In Canada, university chapels hold annual liturgies on 6 December to commemorate the mass murder of women by Marc Lépine in 1989 and indirectly to promote the belief that he was a *typical* man, not a deranged one.<sup>89</sup> Faculties offer courses in "women's studies" or "gender studies," which seldom refer to men at all except as the ultimate problem that women and sexual minorities must overcome. Activists disrupt classes and silence those who speak at or attend "offensive" lectures by classifying them as "misogynists" or "rape apologists" (apart from anything else) and thus undermine the principle of free speech. In addition, they introduce the formerly religious notion of orthodoxy: doctrines that no one may challenge. Teachers at many colleges must provide students with "trigger warnings" before mentioning anything that might prove challenging, including any attempt to question feminist doctrines. Public opinion on campus supports the silencing of any man who dares to argue with this or that aspect of feminism. And those who do so in crude ways can end up suspended or even expelled for creating an "offensive" or "threatening" atmosphere for female students. On V-Day (once Valentine's Day and now Vagina Day) female students (and possibly some intrepid male students) can attend performances of *The Vagina Monologues*.<sup>90</sup> It all adds up to a very censorious, hostile and intimidating environment for young men, many of whom become either apathetic and listless or truly hostile to women. And the latent hostility that arises from an environment that ignores men at best and denounces or punishes them at worst is particularly dangerous on a college campus. This is where the prevalent mentality of both male and female students is adolescent, after all, and the most popular social events involve binge drinking.

And in the temporary absence of serious charges, trivial ones will do. Consider "mansplaining," men explaining to women what women already know.<sup>91</sup> Never mind that many women enjoy explaining "patriarchy" to men, condescendingly at best, despite the deluge of "information" festooned on walls, featured in campus newspapers, and included in mandatory indoctrination sessions for first-year students. And now there is "manspreading," men taking up too much room on public transportation.<sup>92</sup> Never mind that women do the same thing, usually because they are either wearing pants instead of skirts (and therefore have no need to worry

about opening their legs) or because they like to use adjoining seats for purses or parcels. It must seem to many male students (let alone men who are not students) that women have developed an infinite capacity to keep inventing new accusations against them. If men take up too much room on the bus, then maybe, they take up too much room in the world. Even the label “sexual predator,” now ubiquitous (both on and off college campuses), is very problematic. That word is a zoological reference to instinctive killing (albeit for survival). Equally problematic are standardized references to the “survivor” of harassment or rape. People survive only when death is the alternative, as it is for those who end up in extermination camps or have cancer. The same linguistic inflation is clear in references beyond hospitals to “toxic” masculinity or beyond chemistry labs to “testosterone poisoning.” The verbal assault on male sexuality, male students, male bodies, male conversation—the male sex—is both prevalent and relentless on most campuses (and, of course, everywhere else). This is ironic, to say the least, given the fact that many students—both male and female, both straight and gay—continue to have sexual relations with each other.

But the harassment of men on campus, which is where so many young men “come of age” and therefore try to solidify their identities as men, involves much more than theories and words. And it flows from the top down. Feminist lawyers and legislators have found ways of modifying legal and quasi-legal policies to favour female students and punish male students (even, once again, by undermining the fundamental principles of due process and the presumption of innocence). Consider the official interpretation of Title IX in the *Civil Rights Act*,<sup>93</sup> which the Obama administration made mandatory in the form of guidelines for all universities that receive federal funding (which is to say, almost all of them). The “dear colleagues” letter interpreted Title IX in a way that required colleges to set up what amounted to kangaroo courts for those accused of specifically sexual offenses. Hearings took place behind closed doors, not in public courtrooms. Although colleges had some leeway, the accused did not necessarily have the right to be represented by lawyers, to see the evidence against them and to question or even to know the identity of their accusers. Administering many of these hearings, moreover, were not impartial college officials. On the contrary, they were often from the local Title IX office, which had a vested interest in getting convictions (and therefore suspensions or expulsions). This meant a conflict of interest. Above all, these hearings required the lowest possible standard of proof.<sup>94</sup> In effect, the accused were often presumed guilty until proven innocent (as they are in the court of public opinion, not in a court of law).

This system dispensed in short, with fundamental features of due process for the accused.

Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos rescinded these guidelines in 2017, partly because so many “guilty” students and teachers were suing their colleges and winning. But defenders of those guidelines are most unlikely to concede defeat in the near future.<sup>95</sup> Activists in California proposed a bill in 2017 that would have enshrined the guidelines in state law, but Governor Jerry Brown vetoed that bill. Not all governors, however, will follow his lead.<sup>96</sup> Meanwhile, the Canadian parliament is considering legislation that would undermine defense attorneys in sexual-conduct cases by forcing them to reveal their cases to the prosecution, thus shifting the historic focus of legal protection from the accused to the accuser.<sup>97</sup>

Although the overt negativity toward male sexuality is probably most common on college campuses, whether many female students welcome that negativity or remain ambivalent, it presents a challenge to all relationships between men and women. This negativity relies heavily on the notion that men “objectify women.” And men do precisely that in erotic contexts (just as women objectify men in erotic contexts), because that is an inherent, though fleeting, feature of *every* erotic encounter whether straight or gay. The problem is that some men come to think of women *only* as sources of physical pleasure. But some women come to think of men only as sources of physical pleasure (although, historically and cross-culturally, women have objectified men primarily as sources of material resources and prestige). But the word “objectification” still refers always to men as the perpetrators, not women (and not only, I think, because male sexuality is probably more visually oriented than female sexuality). The implication is that any effort to seduce a woman, or even any sign of attraction to a woman, is evidence of “objectification” and therefore of misogyny (as if sexual desire itself were tantamount to hatred). Given this profoundly cynical mentality, it is hardly surprising that many ideological feminists follow Andrea Dworkin<sup>98</sup> in denouncing *every* act of heterosexual intercourse, even one that appears to be consensual but cannot be, she said, because no women can ever truly consent under patriarchy. So every sexual encounter, for women, amounts to rape. Moreover, these feminists follow Sheila Jeffreys,<sup>99</sup> who said that marriage is a form of legalized prostitution.

And this openly misandric atmosphere follows men from college into the larger world. After graduating (at a rate much lower than that of women),<sup>100</sup> they can expect no respite at work or even at home. It is another “open secret,” for instance, that hiring committees in many fields covertly favor female candidates.<sup>101</sup> Family courts, moreover, routinely deny fathers many

of the rights that mothers claim for themselves.<sup>102</sup> The message to boys and men is that fatherhood amounts to assistant motherhood at best and a liability to families at worst. Single motherhood is now a matter of heroic struggle against poverty for some women and an admirable choice for wealthy women. And the advent of gay marriage has reinforced that message. I am gay, but I differ from many other gay men by opposing gay marriage. My reason for doing so has nothing to do with gay relationships, which I strongly support, but with the need of children for both mothers *and fathers*. I disagree with supporters of gay marriage, therefore, who believe that two mothers are just as effective for children as both mothers and fathers (although, logic and consistency notwithstanding, no one seriously argues against the idea that children need mothers).

In fact, fatherhood is eroding quickly. This leaves men with an *unprecedented* problem. They face not only society's hostility (bad though that is) but also its indifference.<sup>103</sup> Unless boys and men can create a healthy collective identity for themselves (not allowing women to impose a negative one on them), the outlook for harmony between men and women is very dismal. By a "healthy" identity, I mean one that would allow men to make at least one contribution to society that is (a) distinctive; (b) necessary; and (c) publicly valued.<sup>104</sup>

Because women can now be providers and protectors, either on their own or with help from the state, neither of those historic functions can serve any longer as a source of identity for men. But can women be fathers as well as mothers? If so, then the last source of healthy identity for men is gone. And many people now do believe that fathers amount to nothing more than assistant mothers. This source of social tension<sup>105</sup> will not go away merely by changing laws or policies (some of which might still be necessary) even with the best of intentions (which is not always the case).

### ***Diagnosis***

Our society suffers from the harassment of men by women no less than that of women by men. I do not refer primarily to specifically sexual harassment of men by women, although that is by no means missing from the picture.<sup>106</sup> Rather, I refer to another form of harassment, one that women use very effectively against men (partly because they have created a climate that silences opposition by both custom and law). I must discuss this other form of harassment here, because no one else, to my knowledge, has isolated it as the direct counterpart and functional equivalent of sexual harassment<sup>107</sup> (although I see no causal link between them). Before

proceeding, I must make two things clear.

First, I am discussing mainly collective identity, not personal identity. At issue for me here is how men think and feel about being male, not so much about being whoever they are as individuals. Of course, collective identity and personal identity can be closely related. I say “can be,” because most men seldom thought of themselves as men at all until very recently (unless there was a war going on, say, or a ship going down), which is why establishing a men’s movement was difficult (although early feminists found it just as hard to recruit complacent women.) Most men thought that only horrible men or perverted men got into trouble for criminal behavior, that only bad fathers lost contact with their children, that only lazy or inadequate men lost their jobs, that only vulgar men got into trouble with women and so on. Now, men must think more carefully their collective identity. They have no other choice, because women have thrown down the gauntlet. All men are under attack at all times in the public square. The personal has become political for men no less than for women.

Second, identity harassment is closely related to sexual harassment but also significantly different from it. In both moral theory and legal theory, *motivation* is a necessary factor in understanding offenses or crimes. Is the motivation of a sexual harasser to harm the *identity* of a victim? Was that what Charlie Rose, for instance, really wanted to do? I doubt it. I doubt that even Harvey Weinstein did. I see no evidence that he cared at all about his targets, let alone about their identity as women. Nor do I think that men in general approve of this behavior for that reason (if they do at all). Rather, I think that sexual harassers care only about satisfying their own urges with or without consent from women (although they almost certainly prefer consent, even if only for practical reasons). It is true that victims might experience sexual harassment in a way that calls into question their own identity as women. Some alleged victims have used the word “humiliated,” which does suggest an undermined identity. But this does not mean that sexual harassment is *about* identity and therefore one aspect of it. And what if the sexes were reversed? There are women who sexually harass men, and some men might experience these sexual advances as humiliating enough to undermine their identity as men. But other men, possibly most men, would experience this phenomenon as a fantasy that has come true (unless the initiator were ugly or poor, of course, or repulsive in some other way).<sup>108</sup> But my main goal here is to describe societal phenomena (what people actually say and do collectively), not personal ones (which are, at least to some extent, inaccessible).

The motivation of an *identity* harasser, however, really is to harm the identity of a victim. Identity harassment is the deliberately cultivated and carefully designed product of a movement. The motivation really is, both implicitly and explicitly, to undermine the identity of targets—that is, of boys and men. Identity harassment is about the deliberate shaming and humiliating of male people per se. It has the explicit approval of society, moreover, which is why the state has been able to institutionalize it in many ways— including legal and quasi-legal ones.

Within one or two generations since the advent of second-wave feminism, ideologues have created a society that allows them, routinely and without fear of retribution, to ridicule, shame, silence, denounce and punish men as a class or at least straight, white, men.<sup>109</sup> Not all women take advantage of this arrangement, to be sure, but they can do so very easily. And, at this particular moment, more than a few radicals do precisely that. This has created and even institutionalized a double standard. Women may say whatever they want about men without fear of being denounced for sexism, but men may say whatever they want about women only at the cost of being denounced for sexism—a denunciation that, like racism, can have serious consequences. If we were to adopt a single moral standard, of course, both women and men would think twice before indulging in sexism. This seldom-discussed or even noticed problem, this double standard, has had dire effects on boys and young men. I say this partly because of statistics on their rates of dropping out of school, committing suicide and turning to crime and other forms of antisocial behavior. All of these rates are much higher for men than they are for women. It is no secret among women that men are quickly falling behind women in almost every way,<sup>110</sup> including one of the most important of all: education.<sup>111</sup>

Identity harassment is the result of sexism in the form of misandry. Those who wield identity harassment as their weapon of choice are primarily women (along with a few male feminists), and those who suffer from it are boys and men. Those who wield sexual harassment as their weapon of choice are primarily men, and those who suffer from it are girls and women. I suggest that both harassment and sexism come in two flavours, therefore, not one. The two forms of each coexist, but most people notice and acknowledge only one of each: sexual harassment (of women) and misogyny (contempt for women). Misogyny has long been a major preoccupation of society. Misandry remains below the radar. Women have tended to ignore it and sometimes condoned it for political reasons, but even men have tended to do so for reasons of their own.<sup>112</sup>

So harassment, whether of women or men, is one symptom of a deeper problem. What I find most troubling about public response to sexual harassment is not the fact that it draws attention to ugly things that some men say or do to women, which are indeed deplorable but also denounced over and over again. What I find most troubling is the way that it hides ugly things that women say or do to men, which are either ignored or condoned. The hypocrisy of this double standard emerges whenever the bad behavior of some powerful man creates a major scandal. If we reject that double standard, and I do, then we are left with only one possible diagnosis: profound and pervasive sexual polarization.

### ***Etiology***

How did we get here? I have already alluded briefly to Hugh Hefner's *Playboy* and Helen Gurley-Brown's *Cosmopolitan*. Both publications were products of, but also instigators of, the Sexual Revolution. They would have been impossible without the birth-control Pill, to be sure, but they encouraged readers to explore this technology's implications far beyond the original medical and demographic ones. Both publications advocated rebellion against the sexual morality of earlier generations. Both advocated the same hedonistic way of life, which featured sexual "freedom" along with freedom from many other constraints on personal behavior. Among those constraints had been respect for restraint in general, which included respect for etiquette in particular as it had applied to both "ladies" and "gentlemen." For a while, those who had grown up in the early twentieth century (and those who still lived in conservative religious communities) fought back. But they lost the cultural war.<sup>113</sup> The collapse of an older moral code, along with the material prosperity of a burgeoning economy, made a hedonistic worldview increasingly attractive. It should surprise no one that more than a few of the men who are now succumbing to allegations of sexual abuse came of age, so to speak, at a time when the "rules" really had been very different—which is to say, when there had seemingly been no rules at all. There were still rules of common decency, in fact, but some alpha males chose to ignore them.

Society's attitude toward sex is changing quickly but not necessarily in ways that deserve applause. In one way, we are going into reverse by replicating and even exaggerating an earlier attitude toward sexuality. As I say, the Sexual Revolution has turned into a Sexual Counter-Revolution. Many women, especially young women, have had second thoughts about that earlier revolution, which had given them sexual freedom but at the cost of sexual danger. I think that their proposed solution, vigilantism, is even more dangerous. In any case, Mona Charen concludes that feminists need at least to rethink a fundamental alliance that accompanied the

birth of their own movement.

Beyond partisanship, the feminist record is unhelpful. From the inception of “second wave” feminism in the 1960s, the movement embraced sexual “liberation” as part of women’s liberation. Feminists weren’t so much upset that some men behaved like pigs as they were that women couldn’t do the same without loss of reputation. It was the “double standard” they took aim at, not sexual license itself. In fact, much second-wave feminist literature was devoted to boosting the idea of women’s supposedly superior orgasmic capacity compared with men. In *Sexual Politics*, Kate Millet declared that “all the best scientific evidence today unmistakably tends toward the conclusion that the female possesses, biologically and inherently, a far greater capacity for sexuality than the male ...”

Like the New Left they emerged out of, feminists joined hands with sexual revolutionaries in rejecting all of the old sexual mores—including marriage. “Destroy the patriarchy,” they chanted. They agreed with the Playboy Foundation (a contributor to the NOW Legal Defense and Education Fund) that linking sex with morality at all was an outdated idea.

And so professional feminists actually helped midwife the loose sexual culture we have today. Arguably, this culture has permitted men to behave even more shabbily toward women than the old mores did. This may sound odd, but I think it’s true—even the sexual harassment has become grosser than it was a few decades ago. I know of a few women who faced harassment in the 1970s and 1980s (myself included), but honestly, it was practically as polite as a Victorian drawing room compared with the stories we are hearing now about Louis C.K. or Harvey Weinstein or Mark Halperin. Womanizers used to at least make an effort at seduction. Now they seem to act out repellent narratives from porn movies ...

To find our way out of this mess, we need to apologize to our ancestors who understood that sexuality requires careful fencing. Openly sexual talk—such as Matt Lauer and others apparently indulged—does not belong in the office. Watching porn should not be normalized. And at the risk of being called a prude, I’ll also add that we should clean up our language. Profanity defiles. Let’s rediscover aspiration.<sup>14</sup>

Now, some women want to have their cake and eat it, too. Intentionally or unintentionally, they send a double message to men. They still demand freedom to have sex with men (or with women) in any circumstances that they like. But they now demand in addition, at least in the workplace, freedom *from* men, including even the most innocent expressions of sexual interest from men. In short, we have returned to the days of “look but don’t touch,” except that even looking is now taboo in connection with the “objectification” or at least discomfort of women. This is definitely not a symbolic message of respect for men. And it suggests, ironically, that men need not show much respect for women in return (although rape

and all other forms of violence are inexcusable in any circumstances). To put it another way, women expect men to treat them as equals, to treat them just as they treat other men. That would be fine except for the fact that not all men treat *other men* with respect. Weinstein and the others exemplify what happens when equality amounts not to equal respect but to *equal disrespect*.

Similarly, women now claim the right to dress in ways that men (or other women) are likely to find sexually provocative or at least seductive. And no one advocates a revival of medieval sumptuary laws. Both men and women should have a legal right to wear, or not wear, whatever they like. But rights entail responsibilities, and those are clearly not high on the list of priorities for either sex right now. Many women argue that they use clothing, or lack of it, as a form of aesthetic, social or political self-expression. And who would oppose freedom or self-expression? But that does not make their choices immune to criticism. Clothing, or lack of it, is not only a matter of freedom or self-expression. It is also a symbolic language that reaches beyond any individual to the community and therefore imposes the need to dress in ways that respect other people. This is definitely not to say that the clothing of women, or lack of it, is the cause of rape (which would make no sense, in any case, of a phenomenon that is by definition coercive). It is to say that women are responsible for their own behavior, including the double messages that they sometimes send through clothing that they themselves buy.

Underlying that historical factor is an additional one: the rise of neo-Romanticism. Underlying that historical factor is an additional one: the rise of neo-Romanticism. I refer here to the growing preoccupation with personal feeling, which found fertile soil in post-war prosperity, materialism and conformity. Many people sought private refuge from increasing public cynicism, too, and found it in charismatic Christianity, pop psychology and therapeutic movements. This was the beginning of a "cultural revolution." In the 1950s, young people such as the beatniks began to rebel against the bourgeois conformity and respectability of their parents. In the 1960s, many young people became hippies and thus part of a much more pervasive "counter-culture." This took many forms, among them the political agitation on college campuses and elsewhere but also widespread interest in communes and other "alternative lifestyles." These often fostered interest in Asian religions but also new religious movements that advocated meditation or the use of psychedelic or other drugs to achieve altered states of consciousness. By the 1970s, this focus on the non-cognitive, often in amorphous movements, was being institutionalized in explicitly therapeutic movements or institutions for the rich such

as EST and therapeutic talk shows such as Oprah Winfrey's. What united many—not all but many—of these phenomena was the gradually increasing focus on self instead of community, on personal gratification or “growth” instead of communal needs and, especially, on feeling instead of thinking. Noticing this phenomenon in the 1970s, Tom Wolfe referred to the “me decade.”<sup>115</sup> Christopher Lasch referred to roughly the same thing as a “culture of narcissism.”<sup>116</sup>

What makes this brief look at cultural history relevant to this discussion is what it reveals about the context of sexual harassment. Neither the hippies nor their parents gave men permission to indulge their sexual appetites in any circumstances or at any cost. But two things separated the hippies from their parents. First, the hippies sincerely believed that men and women had the same sexual appetites. Second, they sincerely believed in hedonism and were therefore inclined to indulge in pleasure as an end in itself. Cultural standards notwithstanding, in short, some men did whatever they liked. But even those men sometimes had to hide what they were doing. The public square has recently come to indicate both continuity and discontinuity with all that. Weinstein and men like him inhabit a cynical world that assumes the counter-cultural rejection of rules such as formal etiquette but extends that rejection to include a rejection of basic morality. So these men represent discontinuity not only with the historic past of gentlemen but also with the recent past of hippies. Their victims, on the other hand, inhabit a world that assumes the enforcement of rules in the form of excessively elaborate and punitive codes of sexual or political “correctness.” In that sense, these women represent (unwitting) continuity with the historic past of ladies. At the same time, though, the preoccupation of both young women and young men with feeling, not thinking, has been with us since only the 1960s. By now, it has led to implacable demands for “safe spaces” and “trigger warnings” instead of intellectual rigor.

Some observers, mainly bloggers, either suggest or say that all or most men harass women sexually. (To my knowledge, no one suggests that Weinstein represents all or most Jewish men, Bill Cosby represents all or most black men, Kevin Spacey represents all or most gay men.) To many, it seems that the very similar allegations against many other men confirm the notion that men, uniquely, are prone to evil. The accusers generally refrain from stating that Weinstein (or fill in the blank) is Everyman, which would be impossible to prove. But many have either said or implied that he took from women forcibly what *all* men feel “entitled” to take from women. So he and other powerful men determine the identity and cause the behavior of all other men. In short, all men are always on trial in the court of public opinion. To cite only one example, listen

to Michelle Goldberg in an op-ed for the *New York Times*: “Sure, [Al] Franken made plenty of sexist jokes when he was with “*Saturday Night Live*,” but I thought he was one of the good guys. (I thought there *were* good guys.)”<sup>117</sup> And, given the current tendency to forsake due process in hearings about sexual offenses by “believing” women, the court of public opinion most often finds that all men are guilty as charged. From that point of view, all men are like germs in the body politic. This brings me to the conspiracy theory of history, on which rests the basis of ideological (but not egalitarian) feminism.

Gender was supposedly established in the remote past exclusively by men and exclusively for men. This is why feminist ideologues refer to our society, no matter how much has changed for women and how quickly, as “the patriarchy.” It is self-evident even to the ideologues that not all men actually become alpha males—who are members of an elite group by definition—and therefore do not benefit substantially in terms of wealth, power and prestige. But all men, supposedly, benefit in some measure from the system and therefore support it (the exceptions being either minority men or perhaps converts to feminism of one kind or another). All men supposedly hope, no matter how unrealistically, to become alpha males—if not factually then at least vicariously or symbolically. From that point of view, Weinstein was not some grotesque anomaly; on the contrary, he was a “traditional” masculine role model. From my point of view, it is politicization of this kind, exploiting highly sensationalized high-profile scandals by interpreting them ideologically, that we must challenge.<sup>118</sup>

The sexual harassment of women by men is an androcentric perversion of male identity, I suggest, and identity harassment of men by women is a gynocentric perversion of female identity. I focus here on identity harassment and its historical link with sexual harassment, as I say, because no one else has. Identity harassment originated with ideological feminists.<sup>119</sup> According to them, despite their “diversity,” all of world history revolves around women—or, to be more subtle and more precise, around a direct or indirect conspiracy of men to oppress women. But here is a very significant problem. This theory fails to explain Weinstein’s behavior along with that of President Trump and some other alpha males. If women were the archetypal victims and men the archetypal victimizers, a symbolic polarity that Hollywood itself has made ubiquitous in popular culture since the 1980s (during the replacement of egalitarian feminism with ideological feminism), then we would still have to explain the fact that Weinstein, like Trump, was widely known as an equal-opportunity bully. When it came to intimidation, he acted very badly with both women *and men*. He reacted with screaming tantrums and even

violence to any man who got in his way. He was notorious, in fact, for his vulgar verbal and physical abuse of other *men*. He lunged at men or punched them in the face, often in front of witnesses. (Weinstein felt the need to *hide* his attacks on women, however, which indicates that knowledge that his own behavior toward *women* was transgressive and not an acceptable feature of “rape culture”.) Many of these bullied men considered pressing charges but ended up settling out of court, receiving payments in exchange for their silence. In business, he was ruthless with other men in getting what he wanted.<sup>120</sup> Weinstein repeatedly ridiculed, humiliated, exploited and intimidated other people, women or *men*, to suit himself. In short, he could treat *anyone* with contempt.<sup>121</sup> Had Weinstein been gay, he would surely have made sexual advances on other men. So, if I must apply a specifically moral category to a fundamentally amoral person, I would call Weinstein neither misogynistic nor misandric but misanthropic. And I would use the same classification for President Trump, although there is one big difference between these two men.

Weinstein knew very well that he was acting in ways that society would *not* openly tolerate—and had not openly tolerated, or at least not consistently tolerated, even during the heyday of *Playboy*; quid-pro-quo sex went on, yes, but behind closed doors. This is why Weinstein tried so hard to prevent these women, through bribery or blackmail or some other form of intimidation, from talking. This is why he hired an “army of spies,”<sup>122</sup> years before the scandal broke, to find ugly secrets about the women who eventually accused him of harassment or rape. President Trump, on the other hand, might not have known that he was acting badly ten years earlier when bragging to his confidant on the infamous *Access Hollywood* tape. His words suggest that he saw himself as a playboy, whose wealth and status made him irresistibly attractive to women. He clearly says, in the way of an adolescent boy, that women liked being groped by him. He says nothing about them resisting him, which really would have been tantamount to admitting criminal behavior. Trump might well have been lying or deceived, of course, but the evidence that we actually have does not indicate that he was lying or deceived. This does not, of course, make him a nice man, much less a gentleman.

My point here is this: Whatever the origin of either Weinstein’s or President Trump’s behavior might have been, it was something other than either personal or cultural hostility specifically, much less uniquely, toward women. Misogyny is not, therefore, an all-purpose explanation.<sup>123</sup>

## ***Prognosis***

In early 2018, the prognosis seems very negative indeed. Women now have many opportunities to discuss the sexual code (or lack of it) from their own point of view, which is at it should be. Men have very few opportunities to do the same thing, however, which is definitely *not* how it should be. It is hard to make this argument convincing, because it depends on ideas that seem counter-intuitive in a world that relies increasingly, though often unwittingly, on ideological feminism—beginning with its assumption that evil is characteristic of men, not women. Must we believe that men have a great deal to learn about women but not that women have anything to learn about men? Must we assume that the solution to every conflict between men and women is to make allowances for women but either punish men or send them off for “sensitivity training”?<sup>124</sup> President Trump and his dogged supporters notwithstanding—they rule today only because of a flaw in the electoral system—feminism has become the lingua franca among our society’s most influential members. To the extent that they adopt ideological forms of feminism, their hegemony is not a good thing. I am glad that millions of people are now listening to women and dismayed that they are not listening to men.

But history is full of surprises.

## ***Cure***

Is there a cure to this cultural sickness in two forms, sexual harassment and identity harassment? I must admit that I do not actually know how to answer. Otherwise, I would have the Nobel Peace Prize. I do know that abandoning hope would still be premature.

Sexual harassment and identity harassment coexist as two sides of one coin, so we are very unlikely to cure one without also curing the other. It makes no moral or therapeutic sense to denounce Weinstein’s habit of harassing women but to ignore his habit of harassing men. Of much greater importance, it makes no moral or therapeutic sense to denounce the ways in which men harass women but ignore the ways, no matter how different, in which women harass men. The very idea of women harassing men still sounds preposterous to those who assume that “men have all the power,” which is what most people (including the alpha males who actually do have more power than most other people) continue to assume. It sounds much less preposterous to those who study the statistical and other evidence, no matter how surprising.

In any case, women have already taken steps to solve their own problems by using their own historic forms of power: forms of power. They can manipulate men through shame or fear

and bypass the legal system to punish men." Whether they succeed or fail will depend ultimately, however, on how men react. And men have only begun to analyze their own problems, let alone to solve them. By now, they can choose from several strategies, few of them promising. Some agree to become metaphorical lap dogs or trained seals, conforming to whatever passes as politically correct and hoping that women will pin medals on them as a result. Male feminists in particular, are at least as likely as other feminists to adopt ideological versions of feminism despite the cost: self-loathing for themselves and contempt from men who reject feminism as an expression of male identity. Other men try strategies that are more radical but not in good ways: dropping out of school, out of society or even out of life itself. Among them are those who stay safely away from women, known as Men Going Their Own Way. Also among them are those who rebel. They say, in effect, that even a negative identity is better than none at all. The most pragmatic and admirable strategy, I think, is to serve the community of men (and indirectly society as a whole) by providing the services that boys and men desperately need: legal advice, medical advice, psychological counseling, study groups, mentoring, shelters for male victims of domestic violence and so on. In my own part of the world, these men join the Canadian Association for Equality.

And yet I can think of only one way to go *beyond* applying bandages, necessary though that surely is, and actually end sexual polarization along with the resulting harassment of both women and men: challenging both misogyny and misandry through inter-sexual dialogue. This method would begin by cultivating empathy, not suspicion and resentment. As I say, though, our society is not even remotely ready for dialogue (in which both sides win) and not really ready even for debate (in which one side wins and the other loses but truth emerges).<sup>125</sup> First, we must acknowledge the crisis. "They have treated the wound of my people carelessly," warned Jeremiah, "saying, "Peace, peace," when there is no peace."<sup>126</sup> As for the foreseeable future, we are more likely to see peace in the Middle East than we are to see peace between men and women. We have no "national conversations" about anything these days, only ranting on both sides. This is due largely to the current hegemony of identity politics (which ultimately precludes concern for society as a whole), of comparative suffering (which assumes that suffering can be quantified adequately and therefore compared "objectively" but with competing political goals in mind) and the mobilization of resentment (which hides behind the notion of "levelling the playing field"). Dominating public discourse is not merely fragmentation, in short, but polarization: men vs. women but also blacks vs. whites, liberals vs. conservatives, rich vs. poor

and so on.

Meanwhile, some men would avoid any controversy that might endanger whatever remains of good will between the sexes. (Millions of men and women actually continue living happily together no matter how many scandals reach the news, to be sure, but they might well turn out to be anachronisms.) I can hardly disagree on how dangerous it would be to fan the flames of enmity, even inadvertently, but there is another danger to consider: that of passively allowing further erosion of collective identity among boys and men. That would be catastrophic, because boys and men have already endured half a century of being collectively on trial in the court of public opinion, let alone the courts of law that ideological feminists have so effectively “reformed.” Worse, what begins as defensiveness often ends up as offensiveness—and I am not referring merely to lewdness or other “micro-aggressions.” (Consider the rise of President Trump as one analogy; he is the almost inevitable result of some people not listening to other people—which is to say, of the very political correctness that he deplores.) In my opinion, doing nothing about the current state of affairs would be expedient but also counterproductive and morally bankrupt. It would be self-destructive, at any rate, for the very people who want to create a healthy collective identity for themselves as boys and men.

The current focus on sexual-harassment and indifference to identity harassment, gives women the advantage in conflicts with men. This state of affairs *gives power to women*, in fact, and they wield it very effectively though not always wisely. The same state of affairs *denies it to men*, even the power to defend themselves. What would happen, though, if men began to make their own allegations of *identity* harassment? It could hardly increase the level of tension between men and women, but it could sustain the current level. Or, it could create a balance of power and thus support the case for negotiation through dialogue. What, then, about all the anger on both sides? Remember that anger is not incompatible with dialogue. Indeed, there would be no need at all for dialogue in the absence of conflict that generates anger. And that means anger on both sides, not only the side that his adversaries promote. The goal is not to hide that anger but to control it, or channel it, in ways that can lead eventually to reconciliation.

We could begin by noticing and then rejecting double standards. We can hardly have men grabbing women (or other men) with abandon, for instance, so we can hardly afford to dismantle the laws or policies that regulate sexual relations. But if we are going to ban men from “indecent exposure,” for instance, then we should ban women from doing the same thing; they

got on well enough for centuries without breast-feeding on the streets or going topless on public beaches. If we are going to protect the identity of accusers in rape trials, moreover, then we should protect that of the accused as well. If we are not going to assume that a woman's sexual history defines her behavior ever since, then we should not assume that a man's sexual or criminal history defines his behavior ever since; we should judge every case, in other words, on its own evidence. If we are not going to identify alleged victims, then we should not identify alleged perpetrators. And if we are going to have laws against perjury, then we should apply them to everyone—including those women who bear false witness in rape cases. This kind of adjustment is do-able before the Second Coming, I think, and would respect the underlying psychologies of both sexes.

## CONCLUSION

It seems clear that the tidal wave of hostility toward men, some of it but not all of it earned, will make it extremely difficult in the foreseeable future for men to defend themselves effectively as a class. But men must find a way to do so. And defensiveness is not necessarily a sign of neuroticism, much less of unmanliness. Sometimes it is a flickering sign of hope. It is among the few resources that men have.. And yet men must use it without falling into the tempting trap of blaming others—that is, women—for all of their problems. Men are not wrong for rebelling against identity harassment, after all, but women are not wrong for rebelling against sexual harassment. This moral balance gives me some hope.

Whatever goes on now, we must at least try to prepare ourselves for the possibility of a more promising future. If we allow even one more male generation to marinate in self-pity and self-loathing, then the consequences for everyone will be unbearable. This is what makes all three of Hillel's sayings provocatively applicable here. I paraphrase the first two, below, by using plural forms to indicate collectivities. Both men and women should read each carefully with that in mind.

*If we are not for ourselves, who will be?*

*But if we are only for ourselves, what are we?*

*And if not now, when?*

## AUTHOR PROFILE



**Paul Nathanson** has a BA (art history), a BTh (Christian theology), an MLS (library service), an MA (religious studies) and a PhD (religious studies). Of particular interest to him is the surprisingly blurry relation between religion and secularity: how religion underlies seemingly secular phenomena such as popular movies and political ideologies. With Katherine Young, he is writing a series on the problem of masculine identity in an age of identity politics and sexual polarization. Four volumes are already in print: *Spreading Misandry: The Teaching of Contempt for Men in Popular Culture*; *Legalizing Misandry: From Public Shame to Systemic Discrimination against Men*; *Sanctifying Misandry: Goddess Ideology and the Fall of Man*; and *Replacing Misandry: A Revolutionary History of the Male*

*Body*. The fifth and sixth volumes will be *Managing Misandry: Men's Voices on the Meaning of Manhood* and *Transcending Misandry and Misogyny: From Feminist Ideology to Intersexual Dialogue*.

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<sup>1</sup> **Editor's Note:** Paul Nathanson has collaborated with Katherine Young on four volumes on misandry, with two additional volumes forthcoming. Dr. Nathanson's essay is followed in this issue by a response from Dr. Young.

<sup>2</sup> Pirkei Avot 1:14.

<sup>3</sup> It might seem unnecessary to preface every last statement about it with disclaimers such as "some men," "many men" or "most men" (unless statistical data are readily available, which is by no means always the case). Similarly, but for different reasons, it might seem unnecessary to preface every last statement about women with disclaimers such as "a few women," "many women," "most feminists" or even "in some feminist circles." Readers should know from the context which men or which women are under discussion in any passage. And they should know from universal experience of life in this world that virtually nothing applies to all men or all women—not even the configuration of sex chromosomes. Unfortunately, these qualifiers really are sometimes necessary in this overheated conflict, no matter how tedious they might be for readers.

<sup>4</sup> Some of the allegations were very serious ones. Rape is always a very serious matter. Other allegations could be arranged on a continuum between somewhat serious and not serious. This is very difficult to say, because of the intensely emotional and politicized environment that these allegations have generated. Besides, even the "not serious" allegations have serious cultural implications for everyone who wants to create a new social contract. I do not argue that anyone should ignore the discomfort of coarse behaviours, which would be aberrations in any legitimate code of sexual etiquette. I do argue, however, that we must distinguish between violent crimes such as rape and non-violent ones such as lewdness joking, sexting, groping, or flashing. One young man has alleged that he was groped, at the age of fourteen, by Kevin Spacey. Sitting with him in a bar, Spacey reached into the young man's pants and fondled him. This was very distressing to the young man, partly because he not gay and therefore worried about ridicule. Many other people have alleged that they had to watch men masturbate in front of them or even listen over the phone to men masturbating. These things should not happen. But using a combination of public shame and criminal penalties to *destroy the lives* of these men is surely overkill. A better answer, I suggest, would be to find consensus on a new code of sexual etiquette and then make sure that everyone learns it by the time that they reach college or go to work.

<sup>5</sup> Editorial board, "The Silence Breakers: The Voices That Launched a Movement," *Time*, 18 December 2017.

<sup>6</sup> John Patrick Pullen, "And Merriam Webster's Word of the Year Is ... *Time*, 12 December 2017.

<sup>7</sup> By "class," I do not mean an economic class, because every economic class includes men, but a demographic one.

<sup>8</sup> See, for example, Michael Kimmel, *Guyland: The Perilous World Where Boys Become Men* (New York: Harper, 2008). He believes that boys grow up with a sense of "aggrieved entitlement" to privileges that women have not had and should not have. I argue that boys do indeed grow up with a sense of aggrieved

entitlement—not to privilege but to a healthy collective identity. I will return to that topic.

- <sup>9</sup> Justin Trudeau, the current Canadian prime minister, prides himself on being a feminist. He refrains from accusing all men of brutality, being a man himself, but he does call for the government to arouse more public attention (and more money) than ever to the cause of (male) violence against women without even acknowledging violence against men—that is, violence per se. By doing so, he demonstrates that Canada has room only for those who support women (which is a good thing) but who also, either explicitly or implicitly, that it has no room for men (which would be inconceivable in any society that cares about all segments of the population). Trudeau’s “comments also come at a time when industries ranging from politics to entertainment have been grappling with widespread allegations of sexual misconduct, commonly featuring unwanted overtures toward women. ‘Ending gender-based violence means transforming a culture that devalues women and dismisses their voices,’ Trudeau said in the statement released Saturday. “Together, we must challenge the prejudices and inequalities that allow this violence to persist ... To change this reality, we must actively seek out and listen to the voices and needs of women, especially those cast furthest to the margins.” (*National Post*, 26 November 2017).
- <sup>10</sup> Some men react with hostility to the gendered beliefs of *outsiders*. Others react with respect for gendered traditions within their own communities. But they all react. Even in this age of President Trump, men do not set the agenda for public discourse about sex and gender. The ideal would be for men to *participate actively with women* in doing so.
- <sup>11</sup> Debate is symbolic warfare. One side wins, the other loses; one idea is more convincing, the other less convincing. Out of intellectual conflict, though, truth can emerge. We use debate very effectively for legal, legislative and academic purposes. For some purposes, though, it is not so effective. For those, we need dialogue, which is symbolic reconciliation. Both sides win, because both endure.
- <sup>12</sup> Not all women are comfortable with these public humiliations and apologies. See Claire Berlinski, “The Warlock Hunt,” *The American Interest*, 6 December 2017, [the-american-interest.com/2017/12/06/the-warlock-hunt/](http://the-american-interest.com/2017/12/06/the-warlock-hunt/). “For God’s sake,” she writes, “why are these men all humiliating themselves? It’s not like confessing will bring forgiveness. They *must* all know, like Bukharin, that no matter what they say, the ritual of confession will be followed by the ritual of liquidation. If they said, “You’ve all lost your fucking minds, stop sniffing my underwear and leave me the fuck alone,” they’d meet exactly the same fate. Why didn’t [Nikolai] Bukharin say [to his Soviet jailers during Stalin’s “purge” of 1937], “*To hell with you. You may kill me, but you will not make me grovel?*” I used to wonder, but now I see. Am I the only one who finds these canned, rote, mechanical, brainwashed apologies *deeply* creepy? Isn’t anyone else put in mind of the Cultural Revolution’s Struggle Sessions, where the accused were dragged before crowds to condemn themselves and plead for forgiveness? This very form of ritual public humiliation, aimed at eliminating all traces of reactionary thinking, now awaits anyone accused of providing an unwanted backrub.” Berlinski uses the word “warlock” in her title, presumably for the male victims of this witch hunt, even though the word “witch” can refer, and did for many centuries, to both women and men.
- <sup>13</sup> See Paul Nathanson and Katherine K. Young, *Spreading Misandry: The Teaching of Contempt for Men in Popular Culture* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2001), 194-233. In addition to dualism (“they” are inherently or even innately evil), the diagnostic features of ideology include essentialism (“we” are inherently or even innately good), hierarchy (“we” should dominate, and “they” should submit), collectivism, selective-cynicism, consequentialism (the end justifies the means), utopianism, revolutionism (as distinct from reformism) and quasi-religiosity (functioning in many or most ways as the functional equivalent of religion).
- <sup>14</sup> Josh Rottenberg and Amy Kaufman, “The Fallout: How the Harvey Weinstein Scandal Exposed Sexual Harassment as Hollywood’s Dirty Little Secret,” *Los Angeles Times*, 12 October 2017. See also note 29.
- <sup>15</sup> Sexual harassment is a form of intimidation, or bullying, and therefore one of its defining features is a *power* differential. After all, it would make no sense for people to try bullying those who are *more* powerful than they are.
- <sup>16</sup> Rape is a criminal offense and therefore accusations of rape should go courts of law, not college committees.
- <sup>17</sup> In 1992, Women’s Urgent Action dedicated a monument in Ottawa’s Minto Park to “all women abused and murdered by men.” This monument listed the names of 39 local women. Controversy erupted, however, only eight years later, when the group learned from a court that one of the listed women had not, in fact, been murdered. The group had to erase her name but announced that it would replace that name with the name of another woman whose status as a murder victim was still pending in the court system. According

to Simone Thibeault, “a former social worker and member of the women’s group, “The justice system has not been there for a lot of women, has not been respectful of what these women are going through in these types of situations. Therefore it’s difficult to respect it. I think it’s improved over time, but there’s still a long way to go.” Thibeault says it would be wrong to wait for closure by the legal system when naming victims. She says her group would end up waiting years to properly grieve for women who have been murdered” (“Minto Park Monument Controversy,” *CBC News*, 31 March 2000) [cbc.ca/news/canada/minto-park-monument-controversy-1.248385](http://cbc.ca/news/canada/minto-park-monument-controversy-1.248385).

Many monuments commemorate Marc Lépine’s murder of 14 women at the University of Montreal on 6 December 1989. These have become pilgrimage sites, visited with particular solemnity on the anniversary. Colleges across Canada mark the occasion with liturgies that rely heavily on those used for commemorations of the Holocaust. For more on that, see Paul Nathanson and Katherine K. Young, *Legalizing Misandry: From Public Shame to Systemic Discrimination against Men* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2001), 53-78.

- <sup>18</sup> According to the FBI, 90.2% of violent offenders (murder) were men, but 77.4% of the *victims* (murder) were also men. Clearly women are not equal to men either in being violent or in being the victims of violence. See “Crime in the United States,” United States Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2010, [ucr.fbi.gov/crime-in-the-u.s/2010/crime-in-the-u.s.-2010/offenses-known-to-law-enforcement/expanded/expandhomicidemain](http://ucr.fbi.gov/crime-in-the-u.s/2010/crime-in-the-u.s.-2010/offenses-known-to-law-enforcement/expanded/expandhomicidemain).
- <sup>19</sup> Jonathan Lemire and Catherine Lucey, “Kelly Defends Trump’s Condolence Calls, Lashes out at Congresswoman,” *Globe and Mail*, 19 October 2017.
- <sup>20</sup> The Minister of Status of Women is a member of the federal cabinet in Canada; most provinces have ministers with similar responsibilities.
- <sup>21</sup> Adam Jones, “Aboriginal Men Are Murdered and Missing Far More Than Aboriginal Women: A Proper Inquiry Would Explore Both,” *National Post*, 27 April 2017. “According to Statistics Canada data compiled by my research assistant Penny Handley, approximately 2,500 aboriginal people were murdered in Canada between 1982 and 2011, out of 15,000 murders in Canada overall. Of the 2,500 murdered aboriginal Canadians, fully 71 per cent—1,750—were male, and 745 were female (and one was ‘of unknown gender’).”
- <sup>22</sup> See, for example, Marlene Jaeckel, “The Empress Has No Clothes: The Dark Underbelly of Women Who Code and Google Women Techmakers,” *Medium*, 3 December 2017, [medium.com/@marlene.jaeckel/the-empress-has-no-clothes-the-dark-underbelly-of-women-who-code-and-google-women-techmakers-723be27a45df](https://medium.com/@marlene.jaeckel/the-empress-has-no-clothes-the-dark-underbelly-of-women-who-code-and-google-women-techmakers-723be27a45df).
- <sup>23</sup> Powerful people, including powerful women, said the same thing to excuse themselves from remaining silent instead of informing on Weinstein. They resorted to hypocrisy in the wake of early allegations against Weinstein. Hillary Clinton, for instance, eventually had to excuse her silence about Weinstein, a close friend and a generous supporter to her campaign and to other liberal causes, by claiming that she had known nothing about his unsavory behavior. Who had really known, after all, what was going on behind closed doors in the offices or houses of movie moguls? Years earlier, moreover, she had found it expedient to blame her husband’s dalliance with Monica Lewinsky as much on her as on him. Feminist supporters of Bill Clinton, including Gloria Steinem, announced that his sexual behavior with Monica Lewinsky was trivial compared to the good that he had done and could still do for women. *Quid pro quo*. When scandals target people of your own sort, especially if you take their money and use their support, denouncing them is problematic. It was not in the interest of liberals or feminists to denounce Weinstein, for instance, because he supported their causes generously. Ironically, you could say that he and they had a *quid pro quo* arrangement: He supported their causes, and they ignored his sexual activities.
- <sup>24</sup> Thelma Adams, “Casting-Couch Tactics Plagued Hollywood Long Before Harvey Weinstein,” *Variety*, 17 October 2017.
- <sup>25</sup> Ross Douhat, “Our Broken Sexual Culture Goes Far Beyond Disgusting Harassment: As a Society, We Are Actually in Some Serious Trouble on the Mating and Propagation Front,” *New York Times*, 5 December 2017.
- <sup>26</sup> See Roxane Gay, “Dear Men, It’s You, Too,” *New York Times*, 19 October 2017.
- <sup>27</sup> During the Depression, Warner Brothers produced several backstage musicals, in fact, which refer by innuendo to casting couches in New York’s theatre industry. By far the most famous and successful of its kind was 42<sup>nd</sup> *Street* (Lloyd Bacon, 1933). Viewers learn very quickly that the ambitious show-girls will do *anything* to leave the chorus line and become stars. Ruby Keeler plays Peggy, a dancer who is not merely ambitious but *hungry*. Illicit sex might be a fate worse than death back home, she learns from her new

friends, but it is better than starving to death in the big city. And yet she refrains from a romantic involvement with Julian, the producer. This is because she has found true love with Billy, the show's young tenor. Viewers never find out if he has the same *coveted opportunity* as Peggy does to become a star. In the original novel by Bradford Ropes, however, Billy does indeed sleep with Julian and reaps the reward for doing so. Hollywood movies made it clear, moreover, that casting couches operated not only in the entertainment industry. In *Baby Face* (Alfred E. Green, 1933), Barbara Stanwyck plays Lily, an ambitious and self-confident woman who sleeps her way up, socially and economically, from a bank's clerical offices on the ground floor to its managerial ones on the top floor.

It is true that what caused most public outrage against old Hollywood was due to what went on in front of the camera, but the close link between debauchery in front of the camera and debauchery behind it was obvious to everyone—and not only within the entertainment industry. Moviegoers in “Peoria” knew or at least suspected what was going on, which is why they routinely denounced Hollywood (and often New York) for decadence and sinfulness, which eventually forced the entertainment industry to clean up its act (if not on in the studios then at least in the movies that they produced there). Increasingly, therefore, conservative and religious leaders attacked Hollywood's decadence. By 1933, studios found it necessary to cooperate with the National Legion of Decency, rating and censoring movies in connection with the level of debauchery that viewers would see but doing nothing about the infamous casting couch that viewers could not see. Hiding reality, of course, was something that could be left to the dream factories.

The casting couch had never been a sign of professional morality. Professionalism had never had anything to do with Hollywood (although it should have with the passage of time and the rise of unions, film schools and so on). The casting couch was not only a cynical sign of power (for those with power), however, but also an opportunistic sign of ambition (for those who wanted power). The Hollywood moguls (and many of their equivalents in other industries) were not “professionals” at all. They were not refined gentlemen. They did not learn their trade at film school or take Professional Ethics 101. To put it bluntly, they were ruthless and even brutal businessmen in an industry that rewarded physical beauty, whether female or male, more highly than anything else—even more than acting ability (although the most successful moguls understood that some acting talent and the ability to dance or carry a tune could be helpful). The actresses, too, were not professionals (except, perhaps, for a few stars from the Broadway stage or even the London stage). They did not go to film school or take Feminist Ethics 101. They were not, for the most part, refined ladies who fainted at the sight of someone's genitals or the sound of a lewd joke (although they sometimes played characters that did). They were talented, by and large, but also tough and ambitious businesswomen. And, as I say, the same applied to young actors. All of these people, both female and male, learned very quickly what the price of a breakout part in a new movie could be and saw that price in the context of opportunity. On the whole, they paid it willingly. Some rose almost overnight from the lower ranks.

Much of that world is no more. Today, people expect a much closer match between the ideal and the real. But some things have obviously not changed. Business remains what it was in the 1920s. And sexuality remains what it has been since the dawn of human history. First, consider what has continued to occur in front of the camera. In *Swimming with Sharks* (George Huang, 1985), Kevin Spacey plays Buddy, the studio boss from hell. He brutally harasses his *male* employees in every way except the specifically sexual one. In *Hollywoodland* (Allen Coulter, 2006), Ben Affleck plays George, an ambitious young actor. Soon after arriving in Hollywood, he has an affair with Toni, the wife of a movie mogul. She claims that her marriage is “open,” so George becomes a “kept man.” Toni does use her influence to get jobs for George but not ones that are good enough to reward his talent.

Most recently, the scope of these movies has come to include gay perpetrators—and male victims. “Women,” writes Adams, “aren't the exclusive victims of the casting couch. The notorious agent Henry Willson, the subject of Robert Hofler's book ‘The Man Who Invented Rock Hudson: The Pretty Boys and Dirty Deals of Henry Willson,’ played the same power game with generations of boys and young men seeking Hollywood recognition. Counting Hudson, Tab Hunter and Troy Donahue among his clients as well as Lana Turner and Natalie Wood, the predatory Willson had a reputation as a “casting couch agent,” trading liaisons for opportunity in the ‘40s, ‘50s and ‘60s” (Adams, “Casting-Couch Tactics”). Until very recently, gay victims were even more desperate to avoid “coming forward” than female victims were, because being gay was in itself enough to destroy their careers.

<sup>28</sup> Camille Paglia, *Sexual Personae: Art and Decadence from Nefertiti to Emily Dickinson* (New York: Vintage, 1990). That book quickly became both famous for recognizing the power of female sexuality and notorious for refusing to romanticize it. This point of view set the tone for most of her later books, articles and

interviews.

- <sup>29</sup> Janice Fiamengo, “#Me Too,” transcript of panel discussion, Canadian Association for Equality (Ottawa, 8 December 2017). “When I was trying to think how to begin this talk,” said the author, “it occurred to me that the safe way to begin would be to affirm that I’m opposed to sexual assault and sexual harassment—get that out of the way. But I really can’t say it because I don’t know what the terms mean anymore. They have been stretched to such an extent by the plethora of self-proclaimed victims who have been coming forward of late. I don’t want to lend even momentary lip service to a truly bizarre social trend that doesn’t distinguish between the innocuous and the criminal. And I especially don’t want to lend support to a movement, symbolized in the #Me Too hashtag but going on for years now, that operates on the assumption that a man is probably guilty if a woman says he is. We’re at a remarkable moment in our history, in which the contradictions of feminist ideology, rather than causing the movement to lose public momentum, actually seem to be causing it to pick up steam, and in which contempt for men has become so normalized that sweeping condemnations of all men are now perfectly acceptable. The contradiction in feminist ideology that is most striking is the assertion that women are fully as capable as men to exercise their talents in the public sphere—that anyone who says otherwise is exhibiting the rankest bigotry and the most vile misogyny—coupled with displays by women of the exact opposite—of a Victorian-era fragility of epic proportions.”

At another point in her talk, Fiamengo remarked that “every day seems to bring fresh denunciations, more women coming forward, more men publicly called out, more affirmations of outrage, more abject apologies by men and promises to do better, and ever more determined declarations that something will be done. This is surely a phenomenon of mass hysteria, in which thousands of women claim to have been sexually terrorized by a range of behaviors that include lewd remarks, jokes, compliments, requests for dates, expressions of sexual interest, or fully clothed physical contact in public spaces.”

- <sup>30</sup> Berlinski, “Warlock Hunt.” Even Berlinski finds it necessary to begin with a disclaimer. Her problem is not with the campaign against sexual harassment, which is a serious problem, but with the turn that it has taken. “Recently I saw a friend—a man—pilloried on Facebook for asking if #Me Too is going too far. ‘No,’ said his female interlocutors. ‘Women have endured far too many years of harassment, humiliation, and injustice. *We’ll tell you when it’s gone too far.*’ But I’m part of that ‘we,’ and I say it is going too far. Mass hysteria has set in. It has become a classic moral panic, one that is ultimately as dangerous to women as to men. It now takes only one accusation to destroy a man’s life. Just one for him to be tried and sentenced in the court of public opinion, overnight costing him his livelihood and social respectability. We are on a frenzied extrajudicial warlock hunt that does not pause to parse the difference between rape and stupidity. The punishment for sexual harassment is so grave that clearly this crime—like any other serious crime—requires an unambiguous definition. We have nothing of the sort.”
- <sup>31</sup> Andrew Buncombe, “Charlie Rose Sacked by CBS after Being Accused of Groping, Lewd Phone Calls and Indecent Exposure,” *Independent*, 21 November 2017.
- <sup>32</sup> Yamiche Alcindor and Sheryl Gay Stolberg, “Conyers Scandal Highlights Divisions, Generational and Gender,” *New York Times*, 28 November 2017.
- <sup>33</sup> Sarah Maslin Nir, “New York Assemblyman Is Disciplined for Sexual Harassment,” *New York Times*, 29 November 2017.
- <sup>34</sup> “I put my hand on a woman’s bare back I meant to pat her back after she told me about her unhappiness and her shirt was open and my hand went up it about six inches. She recoiled. I apologized. I sent her an email of apology later and she replied that she had forgiven me and not to think about it. If I had a dollar for every woman who asked to take a selfie with me and who slipped an arm around me and let it drift down below the beltline, I’d have at least a hundred dollars” (Garrison Keillor; quoted in Maya Salam, “Minnesota Public Radio Drops Garrison Keillor over Allegations of Improper Conduct,” *New York Times*, 29 November 2017). According to Keillor, the two remained friends “right up until her lawyer called.”
- <sup>35</sup> I rely here not on statistical studies, if there are any, but on anecdotal evidence. This makes no difference for my purpose here, though, because I am not arguing that men and women have identical sexual responses—only observing what should be obvious to everyone: that there is a great deal of variation both between the sexes and within each sex. The fact remains that some women are terrified by sexual situations that other women (and men) do not find at all terrifying. Of importance here is not the reason for this variation but the mere fact of its existence. This is what makes finding common ground or even mutual understanding so very difficult. In *this* sense, the primary problem is *not* sexual intimidation in the workplace but the much deeper one of sexuality itself. Attitudes, perceptions and responses are deeply embedded in every person. Communities are not merely bureaucracies. Any significant shift in sexual

attitudes would probably take more than one generation and require changes much more fundamental than new policies and procedures in the workplace (although these will always be necessary).

- <sup>36</sup> Bret Stephens, “When @MeToo Goes Too Far”, *New York Times*, 29 December 2017.
- <sup>37</sup> Bartley Kives, “Premier under Fire for Thanking Chamber Chair for Wearing High Heels, Says Comment Was Joke about Height. *CBC News*, 7 December 2017, [cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/pallister-hurme-heels-speech-comments-1.4438745](http://cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/pallister-hurme-heels-speech-comments-1.4438745).
- <sup>38</sup> How many parents would even now refuse to comment on the physical beauty of their young daughters for fear of sending the currently inappropriate (but nonetheless correct) message that this physical attribute could be advantageous later on? Some would but not many. It is true that men have been preoccupied with the physical appearance of women (partly because that is how male sexuality works and partly because of gendered stereotypes), but women are by no means alone in having to face gendered stereotypes that focus attention on superficial qualities. How many parents would now refuse to comment on the physical prowess of their young sons for fear of sending the currently inappropriate (but nonetheless correct) message that these physical attributes could be advantageous later on? Not many. In both cases, remarks of this kind can build confidence—although there is no reason to reinforce gendered stereotypes by failing to comment on a daughter’s physical strength, say, or on a son’s beauty.
- <sup>39</sup> James Bezan, quoted in “‘This Isn’t My Idea of a Threesome’: Tory MP Apologizes for ‘Flippan’t Comment to Liberal,” *Toronto Star*, 4 December 2017.
- <sup>40</sup> Christie Blatchford, “Tearful Liberal MP Should Accept James Bezan’s Fifth Apology and Move On,” *National Post*, 6 December 2017.
- <sup>41</sup> There was a time, within living memory, when sophisticated people, men and women alike, actually enjoyed “risqué” jokes and “double entendre.” They enjoyed cleverness and wittiness. Mae West became famous precisely for her risqué jokes, which she wrote for herself. And consider the famous scene in *To Have and Have Not* (Howard Hawks, 1944), when cheerfully and effortlessly seductive Lauren Bacall says to Humphrey Bogart: “You know how to whistle, don’t you, Steve? You just put your lips together and blow.” I have never read about female viewers walking out of theaters or complaining that the screenwriter had “humiliated” them. Even relatively innocent movies in those days of censorship, such as those of Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers, relied heavily on this kind of humor. The Great Depression notwithstanding, viewers smiled at their balletic scenes as graceful metaphors of the process that begins with attraction (first his and then hers), continues with rejection (her rejection of his perseverance, due most often to mistaken identity) and concludes with reunion. These movies presented life as a beautiful and joyful dance between men and women as equals. (And, contrary to popular opinion, Rogers did not do everything that Astaire did only backwards and in high heels. She danced side by side with Astaire, not following his “lead.” And he alone did the choreography. I make this minor point only to indicate that Astaire and Rogers represented a paradigm of sexual equality, not “patriarchy.”). This was an ideal, of course, and not everyone attained it. But every society must have an ideal of personal behavior in daily life. Do we have a better one?
- <sup>42</sup> Fiamengo, “#Me Too.” The speaker put it this way: “I find it concerning that someone with governmental responsibility for a file as serious as veterans affairs would allow herself even for an hour—not to mention seven months—to be distracted by such a trivial matter. Are women really such delicate reeds, such psychologically fragile entities that a few words uttered in jest in a public place, and then repeatedly apologized for could wreak such emotional havoc. It seems they are.”
- <sup>43</sup> Both the original novel, *Fifty Shades of Grey*, by female author E.L. James (London, Vintage, 2011), and its filmed version (Sam Taylor-Johnson, 2015) have been massively popular among women. Here is the author’s own description of the story: “When literature student Anastasia Steele goes to interview young entrepreneur Christian Grey, she encounters a man who is beautiful, brilliant, and intimidating. The unworldly, innocent Ana is startled to realize she wants this man and, despite his enigmatic reserve, finds she is desperate to get close to him. Unable to resist Ana’s quiet beauty, wit, and independent spirit, Grey admits he wants her, too—but on his own terms. Shocked yet thrilled by Grey’s singular erotic tastes, Ana hesitates. For all the trappings of success—his multinational businesses, his vast wealth, his loving family—Grey is a man tormented by demons and consumed by the need to control. When the couple embarks on a daring, passionately physical affair, Ana discovers Christian Grey’s secrets and explores her own dark desires. Erotic, amusing, and deeply moving, the *Fifty Shades Trilogy* is a tale that will obsess you, possess you, and stay with you forever” ([eljamesauthor.com/books/fifty-shades-of-grey/](http://eljamesauthor.com/books/fifty-shades-of-grey/)). Clearly, not all women are prissy enough to fit the current stereotype (or that of the Victorian period). Feminists would

have to work very diligently indeed at any attempt to explain away all those women as hapless dupes of “the patriarchy.”

- <sup>44</sup> Not everyone agrees that sexual behavior can be subtle, let alone that the rules keep changing and double messages keep intruding. Listen to one blogger: “The recent discussion regarding sexual harassment has taken an even darker turn for women, it seems. I cringed when I read that Owen Cunningham, a director at a design firm, suggested that it ‘cancel the holiday party’ until it has been figured out how men and women should interact. Really? Do your male employees truly need explicit instructions on how to not inappropriately touch, leer at or utter sexist statements to their female co-workers? Most reasonable human beings implicitly realize what is inappropriate and what is not, even if they do happen to be standing, spiked eggnog in hand, under the mistletoe. I was also deeply unsettled by the article’s statement that some men ‘said they planned to be a lot more careful in interacting with women because they felt that the line between friendliness and sexual harassment was too easy to cross.’ It is not. There is a very deep chasm, not a thin line, between appropriate social interactions and sexual harassment” (Carolyn Martin, “Letters,” *New York Times*, 21 November 2017). One problem is that this blogger refers to “reasonable human beings,” and sex is not a reasonable phenomenon.
- <sup>45</sup> In this case, it is worthwhile to examine the blatantly ideological (surely not scientific) argument of a male feminist: Stephen March, “The Unexamined Brutality of the Male Libido,” *New York Times*, 28 November 2017. Worth noting are the comments; among those who challenge the author’s assumptions are not only male readers (some of whom are dismissed for defensiveness) but also female readers (who clearly still hold the moral high ground no matter which point of view they espouse).
- <sup>46</sup> See, for example, Marilyn French, *Beyond Power: On Women, Men and Morals* (New York: Summit Books, 1985).
- <sup>47</sup> See Roy F. Baumeister, Kathleen R. Catanese and Kathleen D. Vohs, “Is There a Gender Difference in Strength of Sex Drive? Theoretical Views, Conceptual Distinctions, and a Review of Relevant Evidence,” *Psychological Bulletin*, 136.1 (2010): 21–38. The authors argue that men have a stronger sex drive than women. See also Jennifer L. Petersen and Janet Shibley Hyde, “A Meta-Analytic Review of Research on Gender Differences in Sexuality, 1993–2007,” *Psychological Bulletin* 136.1 (2010): 21–38. They argue that the differences are negligible. For my purposes here, though, difference in sex drive would make no moral difference. Even if men do have “raging hormones,” after all, that still would not excuse coercion, intimidation or violence.
- <sup>48</sup> Michael Gurian, “What Will We Teach Our children about Sexual Boundaries?” Blog, Gurian Institute, 7 December 2017, [gurianinstitute.com/blog--newsletter/what-will-we-teach-our-children-about-sexual-boundaries](http://gurianinstitute.com/blog--newsletter/what-will-we-teach-our-children-about-sexual-boundaries). “In the past two decades of doing this work,” writes Gurian, “I noticed both the possibility and impossibility of legislating sexual dynamics. First, the impossibility: more than ½ of dating, romantic partnership, and marriage grows from workplace relationships. Most people in a workplace over a period of decades will likely feel some kind of sexual confusion at some point. Research has indicated for decades that men feel more sexual confusion than women; men tend to be more awkward in their sexual dance. But most women, too, at some point, will feel feelings for someone that surprise them, and in many cases, they will act on those feelings.” Gurian writes in this blog from the perspective of “corporate sexual harassment training,” but he writes also from that of someone who experiences sexual abuse in childhood. He clearly takes the flood of sexual-harassment allegations very seriously and raises some thoughtful questions about the current attitude of corporate America in general and about “zero tolerance” policies in particular. “A social debate about sexual boundaries should be a primal debate. It should be and is one about which I feel qualified to speak. While there are ways that women can’t understand men, and men can’t understand women, if we let “men can’t understand” be the “new” thought of the #MeToo movement, we will fail ourselves and our children. We’ve heard that idea before, and it creates a gender war that helps fuel the situation we are all in now ... [One] business leader I talked with told me, ‘No one today wants to look like they are not on the side of this momentum. Zero tolerance for any female discomfort may be coming back.’ While this kind of policy may have seemed to work in small pockets—workplace bubbles—workplaces understood over the years that “hostility” and “hostile work environment” were more realistic than “I felt uncomfortable” because “uncomfortable” was, in its own way, too amorphous, and too unfair.” Gurian’s suggestions are about clear definitions of sexual harassment in the workplace and effective but fair policies for coping with complaints. But he worries also about the highly sexualized tone of popular culture and its effects on children.

For someone with an abiding personal and professional interest in the specific psychological needs of boys, though, he confines himself to marginal comments. Yes, he realizes that parents, including the

parents of sons, should worry about the rising tide of a puritan and punitive mentality; both women and men are likely to suffer as a result. Yes, he realizes the probability that sexual harassment of men by women will increase with the rise of women to power in the corporate world. He says nothing, however, about the *particular kind* of harassment that boys and men face in this increasingly gynocentric world. Of course, no one can say everything in one entry of a blog.

- <sup>49</sup> Leon F. Seltzer, "The Triggers of Sexual Desire: Men vs. Women: Are Male Brains Hard-Wired to See Females as Sex Objects?" *Psychology Today*, 11 May 2012; see also his main source: Ogi Ogas and Sai Gaddam, *A Billion Wicked Thoughts: What the World's Largest Experiment Reveals about Human Desire* (New York: Dutton, 2011). By "experiment," they refer to the internet and how the brain uses it. These authors rely on evolutionary psychology, which can easily succumb to biological determinism. They do not argue that male brains are hard-wired to see women only or always as sex objects, nonetheless, merely that they do so in the run-up to copulation.
- <sup>50</sup> If male physiology depended exclusively on visual stimulation, of course, then it would be impossible for visually impaired men to have sex—and yet they do.
- <sup>51</sup> Krish, "My Father," in *Sons of Feminism: Men Have Their Say*, ed. Janice Fiamengo (Ottawa: Little Nightingale Press, 2017).
- <sup>52</sup> Sheryl Sandberg, quoted in Nicholas Kristof, "Steinem, Sandberg and Judd on How to End Sex Harassment," *New York Times*, 25 October 2017. Sandberg refers to both "men and women who are complicit," an expression of fairness that eludes many commentators.
- <sup>53</sup> Max Fisher and Amanda Taub, "The Interpreter: Sexual Harassment Takes a Village," *New York Times*, 22 November 2017; my emphasis.
- <sup>54</sup> Fiamengo, "#Me Too." The speaker reminded her audience that "There are many countries in the world where community justice is still a primary mode of dealing with a range of perceived offences or social problems—where accused persons are surrounded in the street, denounced, heckled, even beaten and killed. No one is seriously recommending physical violence in cases of male sexual predation of women—yet. But we are talking, quite openly and without reservation, about the character assassination of accused men, about making it impossible for accused individuals to pursue their livelihoods or maintain their reputation—all while the pillars of the community stand by and applaud the angry mob. We can pretend it's a higher form of justice, but it's the same old brutal scapegoating mechanism our ancestors sought to abolish.
- <sup>55</sup> Goldberg, "Franken Should Go."
- <sup>56</sup> One obvious example in the West is anti-Judaism, which originated with the belief that all Jews of all times bear the guilt of those who actually conspired with the Romans to kill Jesus.
- <sup>57</sup> Amber Tamblyn, "I'm Not Ready for the Redemption of Men," *New York Times*, 30 November 2017.
- <sup>58</sup> Dana Nessel; quoted in Amanda Terkel, "Michigan Candidate Has an Idea How To End Harassment: Vote For Someone Without a Penis," *Huffington Post*, 29 November 2017.
- <sup>59</sup> Christie Blatchford, "What Happened to Brown Is Fundamentally Wrong. Every Man in the World Is Now Vulnerable," *National Post*, 26 January 2018. Blatchford refers to the dumping of Patrick Brown, leader of the Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario, after two *anonymous* allegations that amounted to flirting (which he stopped when asked to do so). No one in his own party, let alone the nation's "feminist" prime minister, asked for an investigation, in or out of court; they threw him under the bus because of nothing more than hearsay.
- <sup>60</sup> One allegation against Roy Moore really was false. Jaime T. Phillips, who claimed to have borne his child when she was 15, was acting in concert with a scheme to discredit the senatorial candidate with his Republican colleagues (Matthew Haag, "Woman Tried to Dupe Washington Post with False Claim about Roy Moore, Paper Says," *New York Times*, 27 November 2017). Phillips could not be charged with perjury, of course, because she had not lied in court. But even those who do lie in court seldom face charges for doing so, which is what failed to happen when a Canadian court showed clearly that two women had relied on "outright deception" and "collusion" in falsely accusing Jian Ghomeshi of rape. This case galvanized the Canadian movement to "believe women." Even the leader of a political party denounced the court's decision and thus undermined the country's legal system.

Other infamous examples include the false allegations of rape against Duke University's lacrosse team (Justin Block, "10 Years Later, The Duke Lacrosse Rape Case Still Stings," *Huffington Post*, 12 December 2016, [huffingtonpost.ca/entry/duke-lacrosse-rape-espn-30-for-30\\_us\\_56e07e33e4b065e2e3d486f7](http://huffingtonpost.ca/entry/duke-lacrosse-rape-espn-30-for-30_us_56e07e33e4b065e2e3d486f7)) and the

false allegation of rape by Columbia University's "mattress girl" (Mona Charen, "It's High Time Columbia's Mattress Girl Was Discredited," *National Review*, 3 August 2017). The latter dragged around the mattress on which a male student had allegedly raped her; this functioned also as a work of performance art for one of her classes. "It has become a feminist catechism," writes Charen, "that women must be 'believed' when they make accusations of rape. As the University of Montana tells incoming freshmen, 'almost no one lies.' But of course they do. The woman who spun the lurid tale to *Rolling Stone* about being gang-raped at the University of Virginia invented every detail. The Duke lacrosse players were falsely accused. So were the Scottsboro boys. Again, this doesn't mean all accusations are false or malicious, nor is every case of alleged sexual misconduct merely a matter of "regretted sex." But [Emma] Sulkowicz has dined out on dubious victimhood for years, and it's high time she was discredited."

<sup>61</sup> James Higdon and Marwa Eltagour, "A Lawmaker Accused of Molesting a Teen Killed Himself," *Washington Post*, 14 December 2017.

<sup>62</sup> One fascinating but terrifying article in the *New York Times* points out the declining ability of legal or governmental structures to maintain order and the rise of commercial or popular ones. It was not really NBC that fired Matt Lauer; it was public pressure that forced the giant corporation to do so. Within one day of the allegation against him, NBC did what older democratic institutions would have taken much longer to do. To describe this phenomenon charitably, NBC heeded the will of the people. To describe it less charitably, NBC bowed to mob rule and functioned as the guarantor of vigilante justice. "The modern American capitalist system is far from perfect. But for all its flaws, our system—and the digital communication channels it enabled—has delivered social justice more swiftly and effectively than supposedly more enlightened public bodies tend to. As we observe and adjust to the socio-sexual storm we're all in, let's appreciate the powers and paradigms making it possible: feminism, but also free markets" (Elizabeth Nolan Brown, "NBC Didn't Fire Matt Lauer. We Did," *New York Times*, 29 November 2017).

<sup>63</sup> Paul Nathanson and Katherine K. Young, *Legalizing Misandry: From Public Shame to Systemic Discrimination against Men* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2006), 3-26.

<sup>64</sup> For some reason, not many psychologists got on the bandwagon of belief to support claims of alien abduction.

<sup>65</sup> Lindy West, "Donald Trump Did It," *New York Times*, 13 December 2017. "Yes," she says, "President Donald Trump has sexually harassed women. This concludes my ethics investigation." Infuriating West is the idea the idea of business as usual pending thorough investigations. Without actually denying the need for those, she trivializes them as legal niceties that merely delay public recognition of what she considers truth. "I am so tired of participating in the collective national farce that things happening right in front of our eyes might not really be happening. That we do not already know the truth about what our president and the nation he rules think about women. We know. Anyone who says he doesn't know is lying." This is the very populism that gives Trump a bad name.

<sup>66</sup> Berlinski, "Warlock Hunt." In this feverish political atmosphere, it is worth quoting the author at some length:

The things men and women naturally do—flirt, play, lewdly joke, desire, seduce, tease—now become harassment only by virtue of the words that follow the description of the act, one of the generic form: 'I froze. I was terrified.' It doesn't matter how the man felt about it. The onus to understand the interaction and its emotional subtleties falls entirely on him. But why? Perhaps *she* should have understood his behavior to be harmless—clumsy, sweet but misdirected, maladroit, or tacky—but lacking in malice sufficient to cost him such arduous punishment?

In recent weeks, I've acquired new powers. I have cast my mind over the ways I could use them. I could now, on a whim, destroy the career of an Oxford don who at a drunken Christmas party danced with me, grabbed a handful of my bum, and slurred, 'I've been dying to do this to Berlinski all term!' That is precisely what happened. I am telling the truth. I will be believed—as I should be.

But here is the thing. I did not freeze, nor was I terrified. I was amused and flattered and thought little of it. I knew full well he'd been dying to do that. Our tutorials—which took place one-on-one, with no chaperones—were livelier intellectually for that sublimated undercurrent. He was an Oxford don and so had power over me, *sensu stricto*. I was a 20-year-old undergraduate. But I also had power over him—power sufficient to cause a venerable don to make a perfect fool of himself at a Christmas party. Unsurprisingly, I loved having that power. But now I have too much power. I have the power to destroy someone whose tutorials were invaluable to me and shaped my entire intellectual life much for the better. This is a power I do not want and should not have ...

Over the course of my academic and professional career, many men who in some way held a position of power over me have made lewd jokes in my presence, or reminisced drunkenly of past lovers, or confessed

sexual fantasies. They have hugged me, flirted with me, on occasion propositioned me. For the most part, this male attention has amused me and given me reason to look forward to otherwise dreary days at work. I dread the day I lose my power over men, which I have used to coax them to confide to me on the record secrets they would never have vouchsafed to a male journalist. I did not feel 'demeaned' by the realization that some men esteemed my cleavage more than my talent; I felt damned lucky to have enough talent to exploit my cleavage ...

Revolutions against real injustice have a tendency, however, to descend into paroxysms of vengeance that descend upon guilty and innocent alike. We're getting too close. Hysteria is in the air. The over-broad definition of 'sexual harassment' is a well-known warning sign. The over-broad language of the Law of Suspects portended the descent of the French Revolution into the Terror. This revolution risks going the way revolutions so often do, and the consequences will not just be awful for men. They will be awful for women.

Harvey Weinstein must burn, we all agree. But there is a universe of difference between the charges against Weinstein and those that cost Michael Oreskes his career at NPR. It is hard to tell from the press accounts, but initial reports suggested he was fired because his accusers—both anonymous—say he kissed them. Twenty years ago. In another place of business. Since then, other reports have surfaced of what NPR calls 'subtler transgressions.' They are subtle to the point of near-invisibility." In the parlance of college campuses, these are "micro-aggressions."

- <sup>67</sup> Rachel Donadio, "France, Where #MeToo Becomes #PasMois," *Atlantic*, 9 January 2018.
- <sup>68</sup> Christina Hoff Sommers, "A Panic Is Not an Answer: We're at Imminent Risk of Turning This #MeToo Moment into a Frenzied Rush to Blame All Men," *New York Daily News*, 26 November 2017.
- <sup>69</sup> Margaret Atwood, "Am I a Bad Feminist," *Globe and Mail*, 15 January 2018.
- <sup>70</sup> Alison Flood, "Germaine Greer Criticizes 'Whingeing' #MeToo Movement," *Guardian*, 23 January 2018.
- <sup>71</sup> Sarah Vine, "Madness of This War against Men: Yes, Dirty Old Men Who Grope Women Are Vile, But the Hysteria over the Presidents Club Reflects a Growing Hatred of Men and Betrays Feminism, Common Sense and the REAL Victims of Sexual Abuse," *Daily Mail*, 26 January 2018.
- <sup>72</sup> Lindy West, "Aziz, We Tried to Warn You," *New York Times*, 17 January 2018. She wonders why men failed to see the writing on the wall about "rape culture," Actually, she is correct about that much. Most men (and women) were so appalled by what they considered dangerously crazy but safely confined to college campuses that they chose to ignore what was happening. But what was once radical and remote is now mainstream. This is the price of complacency.
- <sup>73</sup> Heather Wilhelm, "The Feminist War on Common Sense," *Chicago Tribune*, 19 January 2018. See also Emily Jashinsky, "After Aziz: Is Casual Sex a Feminist Achievement or a Setback?" *Washington Examiner*, 27 January 2018; Bari Weiss, "Aziz Ansari Is Guilty. Of Not Being a Mind Reader." *New York Times*, 15 January 2018; Caitlin Flanagan, "The Humiliation of Aziz Ansari: Allegations against the Comedian Are Proof That Women Are Angry, Temporarily Powerful—and Very, Very Dangerous," *Atlantic*, 14 January 2018; Faith Moore, "The Lie of Modern Feminism Is Beginning to Bite Feminists in the Butt," *PJ Media*, 18 January 2018. <https://pjmedia.com/lifestyle/lie-modern-feminism-beginning-bite-feminists-butt/>.
- <sup>74</sup> Bari Weiss, "The Limits of 'Believe All Women,'" *New York Times*, 28 November 2017.
- <sup>75</sup> Zephyr Teachout, "I'm Not Convinced Franken Should Quit," *New York Times*, 11 December 2017.
- <sup>76</sup> Editorial Board, "Mitch McConnell Believes the Women: Good for Him," *New York Times*, 13 November 2017.
- <sup>77</sup> Because my field is religious studies, I recognize the close connection between belief and religion (although the two are not synonymous), especially in what were once Christian countries. In this context, belief amounts to established doctrinal orthodoxy. To challenge or even question that is to indulge in dangerous heresy. Western countries (even those, such as Britain, that maintain state churches) have moved far away from the notion that doctrines of any kind, religious or secular, should govern legislation.
- <sup>78</sup> Stephen Baskerville, *The New Politics of Sex: The Sexual Revolution, Civil Liberties, and the Growth of Governmental Power* (Kettering, Ohio: Angelico, 2017).
- <sup>79</sup> Moral panics occur in periods of unusual communal stress or anxiety. Without an obvious way to relieve the stress or anxiety, communities identify and target scapegoats. Eventually, moral panics go out of control and communal leaders end them but only after great damage. They need not involve "mass hysteria" in the popular sense of that expression. The infamous Salem witch trials took place in courts that magistrates led and according to established legal procedures, though not ones that would be acceptable now (partly as a result of the witch trials). Six of the twenty people hanged as witches were men.
- <sup>80</sup> Do the many allegations of sexual abuse amount to a contemporary witch hunt? You could argue that there

is one big difference between these allegations and, say, the allegations in seventeenth-century Salem: those accused of witchcraft were innocent, because we now know that witchcraft was really an illusion and therefore harmless. The analogy holds, though, because the witch hunters were still wrong by our moral and legal standards, whether their victims were guilty or not. But consider another and much more recent analogy: the infamous Red Scare. In that case, many of the accused were indeed guilty of being Communists and therefore not necessarily harmless. We now look back in horror at McCarthy, the instigator of those infamous hearings, not because of his stupidity—the existence of Communists in Hollywood was not a mendacious fantasy or illusion—but because he was a manipulative demagogue who fostered something like public hysteria, disregarded the constitutional right to freedom of speech, insisted on vindictive punishments for those who refused to cooperate with him (according to their constitutional rights) and encouraging the vice of betrayal (naming names). The Red Scare was not quite, however, a moral panic. It was orchestrated by government officials, not by the public. Moreover, those who had aroused suspicion of having Communist sympathy or of having had Communist affiliation seldom confessed or repented. The explanation, I suspect, is that much of the population gradually came to sympathize with the accused, not the accusers, seeing more to fear in the House Un-American Activities Committee than in the Communist Party.

- <sup>81</sup> Both the Nazis and the Communists encouraged people to spy on each other; no one could feel safe from informers—that is, their neighbors, religious leaders, work mates, friends, relatives or even parents. Children, their loyalty redirected in schools and youth organizations, sometimes did turn their parents in to the authorities for demonstrating lukewarm loyalty to the regime. In both cases, though, the state preferred to leave families and private life alone. Not so here and now. No institution is more hated in the world of sexual politics than the family, for instance, its traditional form (headed by one father and one mother) being the supposed origin of gender and therefore also of patriarchal oppression. Also, the moral panic over “repressed memory syndrome” focused primarily on alleged cases of incest (although some of the most notorious cases targeted teachers at day-care centres).
- <sup>82</sup> Janice Fiamengo, ed., *Sons of Feminism: Men Have Their Say* (Ottawa: Little Nightingale Press, 2017).
- <sup>83</sup> Pat Kambhampati, “A Son of Feminism,” in Fiamengo, *Sons*, 31
- <sup>84</sup> See Susan Brownmiller, *Against Our Will; Men, Women and Rape* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1975).
- <sup>85</sup> The definition of misandry as a *collective mentality*, not merely a personal vice, does not quite correspond to the definition of misogyny in Kate Manne, *Down Girl: The Logic of Misogyny* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017). For Manne, “sexism” (the ideas that promote toward women) is the ruling collective mentality of our society and “misogyny” the cultural mechanisms that enforce it. But I think that sexism has not one but two sides: not only hatred toward women (misogyny) but also hatred toward men (misandry). Moreover, I see a larger context for both misogyny and misandry in hatred toward outsiders. And there are always many of them. Our society is surely not hostile to either women or men but compassionate to all other people. Rather, it fosters hatred for either women or men and many additional groups. This is precisely what accounts for the many fault-lines—these include ethnicity or race, sex or sexual orientation, language, religion and so on—along with sharply increasing polarization on all fronts at the same time. But I do agree about the need to assign a label to the enforcing cultural mechanism in each case. This is why I have focused attention in this essay on both sexual harassment (the cultural enforcement of misogyny) and identity harassment (the cultural enforcement of misandry).
- <sup>86</sup> Some feminist activists oppose centres for men, often successfully, and not merely because of competition for scarce government dollars. They suspect, without evidence, that these would be centres for the promotion of “hegemonic masculinity.” I seriously doubt that the kind of men who feel a need to discuss their problems as men, thus revealing their vulnerability, would be likely to use these centres for that purpose. They are, however, likely to discuss the misandry that pervades college campuses and emanates directly from ideological feminism.
- <sup>87</sup> These codes depend on the notion of “affirmative consent,” which refers to *explicit and even enthusiastic consent* to “sexual” moves all the way from endearing words, hand holding and kissing to intercourse. “I cannot believe that men in workplaces are turning to private group chats, consulting expensive lawyers and considering cancelling holiday parties before considering a very simple solution to many of their questions about sexual harassment: simply asking women, or anyone for that matter, if something is O.K. with them before doing it” (Amanda Wessel, “Letters,” *New York Times*, 21 November 2017). That is common sense. The trouble is that seduction might not be compatible with common sense. And rape, of course, is compatible with neither common sense nor seduction.
- <sup>88</sup> Occasionally, even college students pay a price for explicitly misandric statements. Sarah Semrad, for

instance, “resigned” as vice-chair of the Wisconsin College Democrats after tweeting, “I hate f-----g white men.” (Nikita Vladimirov, “Wisconsin College Dems Leader: ‘I Hate F\*\* White Men’” and “College Dems Leader Resigns after Declaring Hatred of White Men, *Campus Reform*, 13 and 14 November 2017).

- <sup>89</sup> See *Legalizing Misandry*, 53-78. Lépine was “typical,” it was said, not because all or even most men murder women, but because all or most men would *like* to murder women but are afraid to do so.
- <sup>90</sup> The play, by Eve Ensler, made its Off-Broadway debut in 1996 and quickly became popular among student activists due to its intense exploration of female sexuality as a form of female empowerment. The text, sometimes performed as written and sometimes improvised, has provoked opposition from both conservatives and feminists, though for different reasons. Some conservatives disapprove of its vulgarity, for instance, and some feminists disapprove of its focus on the vagina instead of the clitoris. Productions feature both “consensual and non-consensual sexual experiences, body image, genital mutilation, direct and indirect encounters with reproduction, sex work, and several other topics through the eyes of women with various ages, races, sexualities, and other differences ... A recurring theme throughout the piece is the vagina as a tool of female empowerment, and the ultimate embodiment of individuality ... Every V-Day [Vagina-Day] thousands of local benefit productions are staged to raise funds for local groups, shelters, and crisis centres working to end violence against women” (“Vagina Monologues,” *Wikipedia*, 2017, [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The\\_Vagina\\_Monologues](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Vagina_Monologues)).
- <sup>91</sup> This phenomenon is by no means confined to college campuses. Erin McCann, “A Mansplaining Hotline? Yes, Actually, Sweden Has One,” *New York Times*, 16 November 2016. Callers may report incidents to their union.
- <sup>92</sup> This scandalous behavior, too, is evidently widespread way beyond college campuses. It became the target of a crackdown by the New York City (Emma Fitzsimmons, “A Scourge Is Spreading: MTA’s Cure: Dude, Close Your Legs; ‘Manspreading’ on New York Subways Is Target of New M.T.A. Campaign,” *New York Times*, 20 December 2014). See also George Gene Gustines, “The New Yorker Said No, But These Cartoons May Just Make Your Day,” *New Yorker*, 21 September 2017. Although the magazine does not publish all submitted cartoons, at least not immediately, it does publish some of them anyway in small samples of second-raters; for a magazine that has earned fame since the 1930s for its cartoons, even this status sets a high standard. In one cartoon by Maggie Larson, for instance, a group of women are at their exercise class. The leader directs their movements as follows, “Feel you sense of entitlement, gently rise, your regard for those around you and common courtesy fall away as you sink downward facing manspread.”
- <sup>93</sup> Title IX of The Civil Rights Act of 1964 was supposed to foster gender equality in higher education. Its main use, at first, was to ensure that the same amount of money be available to athletic programs for women and for men. This meant that if not enough women wanted to participate in this or that athletic activity (such as a women’s football team), the college would have to spend no money on it but also that it would have to spend no money on the same athletic activity for men (which meant no money for, say, the men’s football team). For many years, however, its main use has been to coerce colleges into setting up parallel courts on campus for sexual-assault or sexual-harassment cases. These courts, unlike real ones, could use the *lowest possible standard of proof* (unlike actual courts and therefore get *more convictions* than real courts).
- <sup>94</sup> Civil law requires only the “preponderance” of evidence to support a guilty verdict, unlike criminal law, which requires evidence of guilt “beyond a reasonable doubt.” But trials for criminal offenses should be held in courts of law, which must respect due process, not in the board rooms of colleges. Title IX does not empower colleges to jail anyone, of course, which is why it requires only the lowest standard of evidence. This makes it relatively easy to convict students (or teachers) and thus favour the accuser instead of the accused. This, in turn, undermines the general legal principle that allowing the guilty to go unpunished (by making it hard to convict them) is better than allowing the innocent to be punished (by making it easy to convict). Advocates of the Obama guidelines argue that expulsion is a minor inconvenience compared to incarceration and therefore that this bias toward the accuser instead of the accused is justifiable. But expulsion is *not* a trivial matter. Anyone who is expelled for a sexual offense is most unlikely to be accepted by another college, which would have disastrous results over a working lifetime.
- <sup>95</sup> Anne McClintock, “Who’s Afraid of Title IX?” *Jacobin Magazine*, 24 October 2017. For another point of view, see Laura Kipnis, *Unwanted Advances: Sexual Paranoia Comes to Campus* (New York: HarperCollins, 2017).
- <sup>96</sup> As of this writing, the Senate of Massachusetts, for instance, has unanimously passed a bill that would go even further than the old Title IX guidelines (Jorin Burkhart, “Massachusetts Lawmakers Approve Bill to Impose Campus Rape Training Derided as ‘Junk Science,’” *College Fix*, 17 November 2017,

thecollegefix.com/post/39099/). The “scientific” trend, “trauma-informed response,” requires officials to take into account the irrational or incoherent testimonies and behaviours of alleged victims such as continuing to date their alleged rapists, sending them enthusiastic letters of appreciation, asking for more of the same and so on. Advocates of these women argue that hearings or trials should assume that *confusion is in itself evidence of veracity*. See Emily Yoffe, “The Bad Science behind Campus Response to Sexual Assault,” *Atlantic*, 8 September 2017).

<sup>97</sup> Tonda MacCharles, “Bill to Clean up Criminal Code Clarifies Sex Assault Laws,” *Toronto Star*, 6 June 2017.

<sup>98</sup> Andrea Dworkin, *Intercourse* (New York: Free Press, 1987).

<sup>99</sup> Sheila Jeffreys, *The Industrial Vagina: The Political Economy of the Global Sex Trade* (London: Routledge, 2009).

<sup>100</sup> For some dismal statistics, see Margaret Wentz, “Here’s the Gender Gap That Matters,” *Globe and Mail*, 8 December 2017. “Here’s the picture, according to economist Mark Perry writing for the American Enterprise Institute. For every 100 men enrolled in U.S. graduate schools, there are now more than 135 women. In 2016, women earned 57.4 per cent of the masters’ degrees and 52.1 per cent of the doctoral degrees. Women earned more doctoral degrees in seven of the 11 graduate fields tracked by the Council of Graduate Schools, including education, arts and humanities, public administration and biology. Men earned most of the doctoral degrees in only four fields: business, engineering, math and computer science, and physical and earth sciences ...”

The same statistics describe men in Canadian universities. “Today,” reports Wentz, “56 per cent of all UBC [University of British Columbia] graduate students are female. Women dominate in five of the eight fields tracked by UBC, sometimes by overwhelming margins: they make up 75 per cent of graduate students in education, 65 per cent in health sciences, 58 per cent in humanities, 67 per cent in non-health professional areas, and 56 per cent in social sciences. Women make up 44 per cent of the sciences. They lag significantly in only two areas: business and management (38 per cent) and engineering (26 per cent). ‘Men have increasingly become the second sex in higher education,’ writes Mr. Perry.

“What’s clear from these trends is that educational inequality has worked its way up from elementary school, and is now solidly entrenched at all levels of attainment. This, in an age when higher education and cognitive skills are more important than ever. Why? Surely one reason is the temperamental differences between males and females. Females aim to please; males tend not to give a darn. Females don’t mind sitting still and colouring inside the lines; a lot of men go crazy. The modern world demands the type of social skills that women are very good at. Most young men simply aren’t wired to sit in classrooms until their mid-to-late 20s.

“And that basically explains the feminization of veterinary schools. They’re hard to get into. They require many years of extra schooling. The vast majority of the applicants are female because the guys don’t even bother trying. They’ve gone missing in action.

“Higher education has become so feminized that it’s hard to see how it can be re-engineered to appeal to men. Meanwhile we’ve hit another watershed. A record number of men are marrying women who are more educated than they are. That’s because, as the Institute for Family Studies reports, wives now have more education than husbands do. Among newlyweds, the trend is even more pronounced. In 2015, it says, nearly a third of newlywed women married down, educationally speaking.”

<sup>101</sup> These preferences remain covert, because laws forbid *overt* preferences on the basis of sex, sexual orientation, race, religion and so on. That technicality is most unlikely to deter hiring committees that need to satisfy administrative or governmental policies by demonstrating their “diversity.” For one example of this double standard (advertising for “staff of diverse voices and life experiences,” which could apply to straight men no less than to straight women, but actually intending to hire only a candidate with two x-chromosomes), see an article on the Democratic Party by Christine Rousselle, “DNC Email: Straight White Men Need Not Apply,” *Townhall*, 30 October 2017, townhall.com/tipsheet/christinerousselle/2017/10/30/dnc-email-straight-white-men-need-not-apply-n2402482.

<sup>102</sup> See Nathanson and Young, *Legalizing Misandry*, 125-158, 415-438.

<sup>103</sup> Women experience the indifference of society in ways of their own. But many women, notably feminists and especially ideological feminists, assume that society cannot be indifferent to both their own needs and those of men. That assumption is either naïve or cynical but is false in any case.

<sup>104</sup> See Paul Nathanson and Katherine K. Young, *Replacing Misandry: A Revolutionary History of Men*

(Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2015).

<sup>105</sup> I do not argue that feminists caused this identity problem, although I do argue that ideological feminists have greatly *exacerbated* it. Rather, that identity has become more and more problematic since the Neolithic period with the advent of horticulture and then agriculture, which began a series of technological and cultural revolutions that has profoundly affected men's (and women's) perception of the male body in connection with its value to society.

<sup>106</sup> Women are still less likely to use specifically sexual forms of aggression when harassing men, but that is changing. To the surprise of many, sexual harassment is indeed a problem for both women and men. According to one British survey, 60% of female employees—but *also 40% of male* employees—claimed to have been sexually harassed at work (Laura Bates, "Sexual Harassment in the Workplace is Endemic," *Guardian*, 23 October 2013). This information appeared in the *Guardian's* "Women's Blog," which reports on the Everyday Sexism Project. Given the relatively few gay men in any population, it is unlikely that most of these allegations from men were about sexual harassment by other men; most were probably about sexual harassment by women. Allegations from men have been increasing in the United States, too, from roughly 10% of all cases in 1985 to 16% in 2010. Either this phenomenon was occurring more often than in the past or more men were reporting it. It is no longer astounding for the men to allege that even female colleagues or superiors have sexually harassed them (Alice Gomstyn, "Sexual Harassment of Men is Growing But Not Equal," *ABC News*, 26 March 2010). This is partly because there are more women working alongside men than ever before, which means more women who wield power from positions of authority. And Canada is no exception to this trend of men alleging sexual harassment. One case made the evening news, mainly because the alleged victim happened to be a well-known journalist and his alleged victimizers were two former (male) members of Parliament (Marianne Dimain, "Male Victim of Sexual Assault Says Stigma Kept Him from Coming Forward," *Global News*, 6 November 2014).

Reports from male employees are at least as under-reported as those of female employees and will probably be more under-reported for some time to come due to the fact that society now expects women to go public and rewards them for doing so. Like women, male victims of sexual harassment are afraid of both retaliation and shame. The latter, for men, is due to specifically masculine conditioning that has remained strong despite other cultural changes. Men characteristically fear the shameful stigma of victimization, in particular, because the very essence of masculinity in our culture (and many others) has been precisely the ability of men both to defend themselves and protect others. A "real man" wouldn't complain; he would "take it like a man." Moreover, male victims face retaliation not only from those who harass them but also from women both at work and elsewhere. This is because women have invested very heavily in their collective status as a class of victims, and men as a class of victimizers; they resent men, not surprisingly, for undermining the political and ideological status quo. Not surprisingly, many male victims expect no one takes their allegations seriously. Ironically, this is precisely what female victims once found, albeit for different reasons.

<sup>107</sup> At first, I used "sexual harassment" to include *both* kinds of harassment, but some readers found that confusing. Double meanings always do confuse people at first. Nonetheless, people really do need to think carefully about a phenomenon that few of them have ever thought about, or ever would, and how it relates to one that they think they know a great deal about.

<sup>108</sup> Rape or murder is another matter. Jack the Ripper, for instance, truly wanted to humiliate his female victims *per se* and indirectly to undermine the identity of all women *per se*. Even so, I doubt that he caused many women who read about him in the newspapers to recoil from their own identity as women. Their bodies were in danger, not their identities as women.

<sup>109</sup> A more telling but also more provocative word for any biologically defined group would be "race."

<sup>110</sup> Hanna Rosin, "The End of Men," *Atlantic* (July-August 2010). Lest it be thought that Rosin's point of view was sympathetic, I must add here that it was not. On the contrary, her tone throughout was snide and triumphalistic. For a very different take on this topic, see David Millar Haskell, "The Future Is Female, Not Male—and It's Not Fair," *Ottawa Citizen*, 20 October 2017.

<sup>111</sup> Mark J. Perry, "Table of the Day: Bachelor's Degrees by Field and Gender for the Class of 2015," *American Enterprise Institute*, 7 August 2017; [.aei.org/publication/table-of-the-day-bachelors-degrees-by-field-and-gender-for-the-class-of-2015/](http://aei.org/publication/table-of-the-day-bachelors-degrees-by-field-and-gender-for-the-class-of-2015/). American women took home 56.4% of all bachelor degrees, for instance, in 2015.

<sup>112</sup> The most obvious reason is shame. Many men are ashamed or afraid to admit, even to themselves, that they are vulnerable in any way. That undermines their notion of masculinity. Another reason is personal

advantage. They believe that ignoring the problems of men will please their girlfriends or wives.

- <sup>113</sup> The struggle against restraint in all forms came to have mythic significance for young people ever since. Not surprisingly, Hollywood created cinematic myths to celebrate the victory, over and over again, of sexual freedom over sexual “repression.” More famous than any other was *The Graduate* (Mike Nichols, 1966). Ben graduates from college and wonders what to do with his life. Apart from anything else, he wants to marry Elaine. But her mother seduces him, which makes him realize that conventional morality is stifling. Fifteen years later, movies were still exploring sexual freedom. In *Pump up the Volume* (Allan Moyle, 1990), for instance, Christian Slater plays a charismatic young man whose family moves from sophisticated Chicago to a small town that has actually banned all dancing. Neither the respectable town nor its staid high school would ever be the same.
- <sup>114</sup> Mona Charen, “Is Feminism the Answer to Sexual Harassment?” *National Review*, 1 December 2018. Charen begins with a reference to the partisan politics that led feminists such as Hillary Clinton to acknowledge the allegations against Harvey Weinstein belatedly (let alone those against her own husband) and Nancy Pelosi to acknowledge the allegations against John Conyers grudgingly.
- <sup>115</sup> Tom Wolfe, “The ‘Me’ Decade and the Third Great Awakening,” *New York Magazine*, 23 August 1976.
- <sup>116</sup> Christopher Lasch, *The Culture of Narcissism: American Life in an Age of Diminishing Expectations* (New York: Warner, 1979).
- <sup>117</sup> Michelle Goldberg, “Franken Should Go,” *New York Times*, 16 November 2017 (my emphasis).
- <sup>118</sup> Nathanson and Young, *Legalizing Misandry*, 3-78.
- <sup>119</sup> Paul Nathanson and Katherine K Young, *Spreading Misandry: The Teaching of Contempt for Men in Popular Culture* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2001).
- <sup>120</sup> Emily Yoffe, “Harvey Weinstein Is Also a Jerk: That Alone Should Have Gotten Him Fired,” *Washington Post*, 22 October 2017. See also Maureen Dowd, “Harvey Weinstein: Hollywood’s Oldest Horror Story,” *New York Times*, 14 October 2017.
- <sup>121</sup> Ironically, men of this kind recognize a kind of *equality* between men and women. They treat women brutally, just as they treat other men. They exploit women and then dispose of them, just as they use other men. They use coarse language and make lewd jokes with women, just as they do with other men. They physically assault women, just as they assault men (except that straight male bullies don’t rape other men).
- <sup>122</sup> Ronan Farrow, “Harvey Weinstein’s Army of Spies,” *New Yorker*, 6 November 2017.
- <sup>123</sup> The word “misogyny” has come to function, like “fascist,” as an all-purpose denunciation. It has no intellectual content, only emotional content. It has come to mean *anything at all that women dislike* no matter what its cause. Those who use the word in this way—and this is probably its most common use—can therefore dismiss as a hater of women any man who challenges any feminist doctrine.
- <sup>124</sup> Actually, many feminists do want to re-educate women but not necessarily in ways that will enable them to live happily with men. What we need is a new way of educating both young boys and young girls, one that generates mutual respect.
- <sup>125</sup> Debate is probably the prelude to dialogue, because dialogue makes no sense without the acceptance of truth on both sides. And debate is the best way of finding truth, which is why it prevails in both legislatures and universities.
- <sup>126</sup> Jeremiah 6: 14.

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