



# #MeToo Has Ended Heterosexual Dating Forever

*- Any Man Who is "Disappointing" On A Date Will End Up Getting Sued Or Arrested*

*- Guys Who Don't Pay For Dinner Or Cabs Will Be Crucified and Called "Predators"*

*- Gold Diggers Are Now Easily Able To Extort Money From Tinder and Match.Com Dates*

| By ALICE B. LLOYD



Katie Roiphe, Jill Abramson, Ellen Pao, Anita Hill, and Betty Friedan. (Getty Images)



For anyone counting #MeToo casualties with a wary eye, one of 2018's first will have stood out. On January 13, in a lengthy exposé published on a website for college-age women, a 23-year-old photographer charged comic Aziz Ansari with the crime of being a bad date. The pseudonymous "Grace" described yielding to his awkward sexual advances and, even though she felt uncomfortable, declining to protest or get up and leave. While women may rightly see a semblance of injustice in his arrogance and her all-too-familiar acquiescence, Grace's assessment that their date amounted to sexual assault sent the movement into crisis. Had #MeToo, cautious optimists worried, gone too far?

Just as notable, though, was the ensuing intergenerational feminist-journalist feud. When the television anchor Ashleigh Banfield criticized Grace on the air, the reporter who had written her story, Katie Way, hit back by calling Banfield a "second-wave-feminist has-been." What Way meant was that Banfield was 50 and held the moderate feminist views typical of professional women her age.

These qualities put her out of touch with the dominant discourse, which equates male selfishness and insensitivity with sexual assault.

The “first wave” of feminism arose in the late-19th and early-20th centuries, when women claimed the rights of full citizenship: property ownership, the right to vote. Organizationally, it was indebted to the literal frontier, where women were indispensable workers, and to the widely popular temperance movement, which hardheaded ladies led.

Betty Friedan birthed the “second wave” in 1963 when she named the American housewife’s nameless malaise. And the feminists who under the second-wave banner rode the rising tide of civil rights, birth control, and elite coeducation into a renewed, liberationist demand for equal status in work and life tended to be practical revolutionaries. They were women who worked and who asked to advance at work according to their abilities.

It was only in October of last year that the Harvey Weinstein stories started to hit, yet it already has the unmistakable feeling of epoch-making history. Predatory men, perched on the ruling rungs of highly visible professions, fell one after the next. They continue to drop. In droves, women they’d harassed, raped, abused, flashed, pinched, and embarrassed—often over decades in power—confessed these long-hidden workplace nightmares and dream-killing disappointments. *There’s no stopping it*, per the dizzy refrain.

You can call it a “warlock hunt” (as essayist Claire Berlinski did in an incisive critique of #MeToo—an article half a dozen journals turned down); a righteous excision of perverts, power-abusers, and predators; or an unwinnable war for women’s freedom from worrying about sex at work. Whatever you call it, there’s no denying its purpose. What #MeToo’s critics all seem to miss is that the movement now underway represents a practical reorientation of the

struggle for women's equality. At its core is not a partisan argument, but an exceptionally American one: that we're past due our equal freedom.

An amnesia afflicts the current feminist revival if its proponents think "second wave" is a slur. Hard as it is to see from where Katie Way writes, the career women of the 1960s and '70s had the same inviolate goals as those of the #MeToo era. Understanding the historical reality of women's evidently still-unequal status requires we listen to the past to perceive what, after more than a century of struggle, still stands in our way.

### **Out on the Frontier**

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Not too long ago there were, for one thing, far more blatant barriers to entry, Shirley Tilghman reminds me. A microbiologist and former president of Princeton, Tilghman is a frank and thoughtful feminist. In 1993, she argued in a *New York Times* op-ed for the abolition of tenured professorships, believing that the vaunted tenure track, focused as it is on hard work during a woman's most viable child-bearing and -rearing years, is fundamentally discriminatory. In 2001, she became Princeton's first female president—and only the second in the Ivy League. By then she'd already been out on the frontier for years.

In the 1970s, Tilghman was a groundbreaking research scientist. She'd earned her Ph.D. at Temple University, and as a postdoc at the National Institutes of Health, she worked on the team that cloned the first mammalian gene. By the 1980s, she was a researcher at the Fox Chase Cancer Center in Philadelphia and a professor of biochemistry at Penn. She was also a single mother to her son and daughter.

Her female colleagues at Fox Chase, several of whom were mothers too, drew strength from each other's borderline-delusional assurances, she recalls: "We

just kind of lived in this slightly made-up environment where we said, ‘There’s no problem here.’” Her decision to leave Philadelphia for Princeton in 1986 came down, she says, to the needs of her two young children—the new job meant she could afford a house mere minutes from the elementary school, the pediatrician, and her office.

Tilghman said a mantra-like secular prayer for guilt-free endurance to keep from drowning in the demands of her double life: “There is only one of me, I can only be in one place at one time. I love my work. I love my children,” she’d remind herself. “I’m not going to feel guilty when I’m in one place or the other.” Knowing they were someplace women hadn’t been before, working mothers of her generation had to trick each other into thinking it could actually be done, Tilghman tells me—only half-joking. In so doing, they proved that it could.

Kenyon College political philosopher Pam Jensen recalls endemic self-doubt among her female peers in graduate school at the University of Chicago in the 1960s. *Can women be philosophers?* They debated in earnest a problem few women today would entertain even under extreme protest. The draft was on then, Jensen reminds me, and men’s lives depended on academic success sufficient to defer their service. Doubts about the morality of a controversial war and its soldiers’ sacrifice created a state of perpetual unrest in which women were not full citizens. On the wartime campus, context was king.

And so it is today, she says. “It’s natural that women students have a great deal more confidence: They will find open doors and support for what they want to achieve.” But to Jensen, the conventional route of postgraduate marriage and motherhood, the sort of life Friedan painted as a prison, relieved the pressure to be brilliant, “to be Plato.” “I had something to go home to, and that was delightful. I think I felt the need to prove my usefulness,” and a second life at

home provided purpose to fall back on. Men in the field, presumably, worried less about whether they were “useful.”

“The principle of equality is deeply, deeply embedded in our American souls,” Jensen reminds me, moving to the subject of #MeToo’s civic usefulness. Making the most of it requires we remember: “Rather than being driven by our culture, we should allow our political principles—the ones that argue for the equality of men and women, and the equal education of men and women—to come forth.”

But as Tilghman notes, the question of whether women can succeed in their careers often has a simple, practical set of answers. As president of Princeton, she didn’t move against tenure, but instead started a backup child-care benefit for students and employees, which sent a clear message to working mothers. And she made it a point to hire women—“Not because I had a quota and not because I set out to say, ‘No matter what, this is going to be a woman,’”—which sparked a minor scandal. Her unofficial affirmative action policy, critics said, was born from an unfair, politically biased pro-woman agenda. Tilghman sees it differently. Many of the women she promoted have gone on to wider success, including Amy Gutmann, the president of the University of Pennsylvania, and Anne-Marie Slaughter, who served as director of policy planning at the State Department and now leads the think tank New America. In reality, the difference in Tilghman’s hiring practice was simpler than some feminist conspiracy: “I could see women leaders more clearly than some of my male colleagues,” she says.

### **Banding Together**

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Women witness each other’s trials and receive their lessons together. Anita Hill’s testimony in the early 1990s told American women “a very familiar

story” according to psychologist Leonore Tiefer. Now, with the Weinstein scandal and its unending aftermath, “There’s a sense we’re not going to do it the same way again.” The old story is being revised, and “the consequences are going to be different.”

There’s danger, though, in distraction from collective concerns. Feminist gains come from women’s real experiences and real opportunities. The impractical inventions of activists and theoretical feminists, the stuff of the “third wave,” do not typically touch the lives of working women. Any social movement with individual self-knowledge and self-fulfillment as its collective aims has probably missed the point, says Tiefer, a professor at Columbia who studies human sexuality within its always-complex social context. “Younger women seem to be concerned about themselves as individuals and their lives in ways that I don’t think—and my mother didn’t think,” she observes.

In 1969, Tiefer was a Phi Beta Kappa with a newly minted Ph.D. from Berkeley. Her adviser was Frank Beach, head of the American Psychological Association. “Frank wrote letters hither and thither,” recommending her to top research institutions around the country. But Beach believed, she recalls, “women were not suited to science jobs because they’re going to get married and have babies. He did not want to throw the whole weight of his reputation behind somebody’s application when they were only going to stay in the job two or three years before bailing out.”

But he did strongly recommend Tiefer for a professorship in psychology at Johns Hopkins and, she remembers, “got a letter back, which I have in my filing cabinet, saying, ‘It looks like a great person, but we don’t hire women’—black and white. I remember Frank giving me that letter and both of us saying, ‘That’s really too bad.’ And we kept looking. It’s not like you fall down dead and say, ‘Discrimination!’ I’m not sure I even knew the word.” Colorado State came

courting, and “They thought getting a Phi Beta Kappa to a second-rate school was a coup, which it was.”

At CSU, she awoke to the women’s movement. And as an overqualified professor—one every day more acutely aware of what might have been had she been born a man—Tiefer took to revolutionary leadership. “When I read that stuff in 1972, it wasn’t just that I sat up and said, ‘Oh my God, this is true. Why didn’t I know this?’” she recalls. It was the new sense of togetherness: “It was all validated by other people’s stories.”

In the living rooms of her female colleagues and friends, she formed the Fort Collins chapter of the National Organization for Women. In one campaign, they petitioned the local paper to desegregate men’s and women’s job listings. Changing the old stories about what women could and couldn’t do, “It became my struggle. I had to do something about this. It was my job.”

For Lynn Povich it actually was her job. She led a 1970 sex-discrimination lawsuit against *Newsweek*—recounted in her 2012 book, *Good Girls Revolt*, which became an Amazon-produced TV series in 2016. Forty-six women fact-checkers were wasting their educations and talents in the all-female research pool beyond which there were no opportunities for them at the magazine. Women with their journalistic ambition hardwired—Nora Ephron, for example, and Ellen Goodman and Jane Bryant Quinn—quickly left for publications where they would be promoted. But Povich stayed and plotted. She was determined not just to write the story but to be part of it. They announced their lawsuit the day the magazine ran a cover on the women’s movement under the headline “Women in Revolt.”

“I wouldn’t say we were braver,” Povich counters my comparison to today’s fighters for workplace equality, “No.” But “I do believe you need to know your history to understand where you are and where you’re going. Things are not



being invented for the first time. They're progres-sing from these foundations. And so many young women have said to me that until they saw the series on TV or bought the book they had no idea women of my generation were treated this way or this was what men said or did.”

For Povich, #MeToo manifests the same strength-in-numbers strategy of the complainants from the *Newsweek* research pool: “If you do it as a group, it’s so much more powerful—and nobody is retaliated against,” she says. “Younger women have said to me they didn’t have, until very recently, a sense of sisterhood or protesting together as a group beyond the web.”

#MeToo has touched her own work in a way, too. *Good Girls Revolt* was canceled after a single season. But the Amazon Studios executive producer who decided its fate, Roy Price, had to resign in October after being accused of sexual harassment.

### **Going It Alone**

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By now, everyone who cares to has read a cached copy of the “S—ty Media Men” list—a Google spreadsheet deleted within days of its creation but still working its way around the web. For a few days, it circulated among the inboxes of women in media, mostly in New York, collecting the names of men whose misdeeds range from the possession of an abrasive personality to multiple alleged rapes. Deserved firings and awkward exposés swiftly followed fevered coverage of the list.

The list’s originator outed herself early in January when a rumor that she’d be named in an essay by feminist skeptic Katie Roiphe whipped around Twitter. The resulting controversy, in which an online activist offered to pay writers to pull their pieces from *Harper’s*, where Roiphe’s was set to be published, only

proved what turned out to be her actual point. “Social media has enabled a more elaborate intolerance of feminist dissenters,” she argued in the piece. Indeed, they have enabled a more elaborate intolerance of everything.

Contrary to her subjects’ suspicions, Roiphe’s piece is far more occupied with the Twitterati than with the creation of a list that bore a sometimes unthinking revenge. “The need to differentiate between smaller offenses and assault is not interesting to a certain breed of Twitter feminist,” Roiphe charged, citing several anonymous interviewees who agree with her line of thinking but wouldn’t say so on the record for fear of the feminist lynch mob. “One of them,” Roiphe tells me, “did say, ‘You’re taking a bullet for the team.’”

These anonymous critics of the movement were, quite understandably, afraid of the response their comments would incur. “I’m not on Twitter, so I don’t live in that world, thankfully,” Roiphe adds. “But I do think people are afraid—of the anger, but also of professional repercussions.” The list and its keepers served up a uniquely digital-age destruction.

They didn’t have lists like that back in the day, former *New York Times* executive editor Jill Abramson tells me. But, she says, there were lunches. The earlier version of women in media watching out for each other was subtler and non-newsmaking. “I can remember the first day I went to work in the Washington bureau, two women reporters took me out to lunch to tell me everything: who to watch out for, who was a real asshole.”

She knew her place in the chain of women’s history too, she recalls. At a New Year’s Eve party at some point early in the Clinton years—at Sally Quinn and Ben Bradlee’s Georgetown townhouse, no less, “very glitterati”—Abramson caught three glamazons of mid-20th-century feminism putting their heads together: Lauren Bacall, Betty Friedan, and Madeleine Albright. These were women whose power and success no man dared constrain.

“They were engaged in what was obviously a fun and lively conversation,” Abramson recalls. “I was thinking they were like a chain, one necessary for the other. Lauren Bacall being this cool, glamorous movie star who wore pants back in the Hollywood golden age. She begat, even though their age difference wasn’t that big, Betty Friedan. And Friedan begat Madeleine Albright”—who was secretary of State at the time. The willful women Bacall played on the big screen suggested a sharp discrepancy between women’s intelligence and personal power and our domestic erasure during the baby boom, Abramson says. And the feminism Friedan spun from the housewives’ empty lives certainly helped precipitate Albright’s appointment. Every president since Gerald Ford has made certain to appoint at least one woman to his cabinet.

Abramson’s public firing in 2014 fits in this historical chain, too. *Times* publisher Arthur Sulzberger Jr. replaced her after not quite three years atop the editorial food chain, saying he believed “new leadership will improve some aspects of the management of the newsroom.” Abramson, it was reported, had recently discovered her salary and pension did not measure up to her male predecessors’ and had complained. Her inquiries to the “top brass,” Ken Auletta reported in the *New Yorker*, were said to have “set them off.” “I had clashes with the men who were above me,” she recalls, “but I don’t think they were any more acute than those of any of the male [executive] editors.” What she had, she recalls, was a reputation for being “pushy.” Her successor, Dean Baquet, praised her in his inaugural remarks to the newsroom—for her *ambition*.

Abramson was the first woman to hold the executive editor spot—arguably the pinnacle of American journalism. Sulzberger had offered it to her over the phone in 2011, and she didn’t think to ask at the time what her predecessors’ compensation had been. “My advice to younger women now is don’t do what I did,” she tells me. “Just be very straightforward and ask those questions. I was stupid not to.”

She's especially sensitive to the disappointments the next generation of women will inherit. And it's not just because of the last presidential election, although it's that too. Abramson was at the Javits Center on election night, planning to collect some color for a celebratory piece pre-written for the *Guardian*; instead, she saw exultation collapse into sobbing. "Seeing so many younger women literally prostrate with grief was gut-wrenching," she recalls, noting these are the same young women who marched the day after the inauguration and now tweet #MeToos.

"The climb is steeper and harder than you imagine," Abramson says she wants to tell them. #MeToo may have "put the fear of God into men in the workplace, but is it going to make them move over and promote more women into positions of power in society?" That, too, is women's work. "I'm the one," Abramson adds, describing her decision back in 2008 to move Jodi Kantor from editing Arts & Leisure to writing and reporting on political news. "I could tell she would be a totally kickass reporter." Not quite 10 years later, Kantor's reporting on Harvey Weinstein helped set another wave in motion.

### **Building the Future**

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But before Jodi Kantor started reporting her first Harvey Weinstein story, there was Susan Fowler, a woman with a bad boss and a blog. And before there was #MeToo, there was #DeleteUber.

Fowler was just 25 and had been at her dream job as an engineer at Uber for barely a year when she wrote the 2,900-word post that would upend the swaggering startup sector. Her manager had propositioned her for sex and, when she complained, Uber's HR department protected him because, based on his productivity reviews, his value outweighed any unease on the part of the women forced to report to him. Those who complained were, further, punished

with negative reviews. An external audit confirmed Fowler's account of Uber's practices. And just four months after Fowler reflected on "One Very, Very Strange Year at Uber," the ridesharing giant's founder and CEO Travis Kalanick had to step down amid a raging flurry of accusations.

In Silicon Valley, it's mostly men who are building the future: Women hold just a quarter of computing jobs and, as of 2016, only 15 percent of executive positions at the top tech companies. But it's this female minority which has triggered a workplace reformation. Fowler was far from the first to take her account of Silicon Valley sexism public. But her writing resonated—the post went viral—and her accounts of being sexually pursued by superiors, excluded from workplace camaraderie, and ignored when she complained through the appropriate channels got women talking to each other about their own experiences. Sometimes women talking to women is enough.

Take the case of Justin Caldbeck, the fallen head of Binary Capital, who hit on women when they pitched him for funding for their startups. Caldbeck's habits were whispered about but only came to light when a female founder who'd sought funding from Binary showed a reporter his late-night texts—instead of ignoring them and avoiding him as other women had done or acquiescing, as he'd hoped, in the interest of her career. Another founder told the same reporter Caldbeck had groped her at a work dinner. Significantly, the two women were friends who confided in each other before deciding to go public. Eventually, six women accused Caldbeck of unwanted advances, and he had to resign from Binary.

It doesn't surprise Telle Whitney that the culturally aggressive, gatekeeping venture-capital sector feels some of the valley's sharpest "growing pains." VCs' make-or-break power over startups feeds a Weinsteinish sense of entitlement. A veteran of the valley who led the Anita Borg Institute—which advocates for women in technology—until her retirement last year, Whitney describes an

increasingly anxious sense of urgency to recruit and retain female technologists. Ideally, fear of firings, costly legal battles, and public shame wouldn't have been required. But it's an encouraging type of male anxiety, she thinks, compared to the conditions under which she worked in Silicon Valley a generation ago.

“Most of the women I knew then—and quite candidly, it isn't that different today—were often the only woman on the team,” Whitney recalls. “It was important to me to find other women who were doing some similar things.” Whitney met Anita Borg while she was working on a doctorate at Caltech in the early 1980s. In those days, “I was so tired of not having any women around. I was consciously searching for other technical women.” And so was Borg. “She became my closest friend.”

Borg started an email list for women working in systems technology. Calling themselves “Systers,” they hoped they could guide each other through the mostly male tech world. Yet in some respects, the outlook has worsened since then. While women's representation in law and medicine has risen to around parity in this last generation, in computer science it's plummeted. Women in tech quit at twice the rate of their male counterparts, despite lavish paid-leave benefits. Look to the middle-management level, Whitney says, to see what work really remains. Somewhere between the C-suite and the junior coders, the sum of many small decisions defines a company's “culture.” While her comrades were the women who stayed, “Most of my mentors, throughout most of my career,” Whitney admits, “were men. If I thought about what I wanted, the people who had done that were all men.” Working closely with mostly men remains a prerequisite for success in Silicon Valley.

Seventy-four percent of women in computing jobs—software developers, data engineers—complained of gender discrimination in a recent Pew report, compared with roughly half of women who work in science, technology,

engineering, and math (STEM) fields more broadly. Tech companies, Whitney explains, follow the same face-saving practices for harassment allegations as congressional offices and Hollywood studios. The nondisclosure agreements women sign in a settlement “really tie their hands” when it comes to condemning predatory behavior by powerful men in Silicon Valley. Plus, “It’s really considered to be a career stopper to report any kind of harassment”—too often “people who chose to report it were sorry that they did.”

Ellen Pao, in her 2017 memoir *Reset*, remembers discouraging a junior female colleague at the powerful venture capital firm Kleiner Perkins from reporting the inappropriate actions of a superior. At the time, Pao wrote, she was thinking of the retribution this woman might have in store. It was practical advice. But, she came to wonder, was it right?

The story of Ellen Pao stands today as the most telling of Silicon Valley’s feminist fables. Fired from Kleiner Perkins in 2012, she sued for discrimination—and lost. They had declined to promote her from junior partner because she was a woman, she alleged, and then fired her for complaining. The firm followed the old script throughout a multiyear legal campaign against Pao. Kleiner’s attorneys convinced the press that her discrimination complaint may have seemed like “the right issue” at the “right time” but was, on its merits, entirely wrong. They had a public affairs firm, the Brunswick Group, spread this line far and wide.

In the new context of #MeToo, Pao’s experiences sting afresh. One of *Reset*’s more searing moments recalls a futile attempt to follow Facebook COO Sheryl Sandberg’s ubiquitous advice to “lean in.” The pushiness and self-promotion Sandberg encourages play well at a place like Kleiner Perkins, where VCs are supposed to prove their worth by talking over each other in partner meetings. (Pao’s bosses paid for her to take professional coaching, so she could learn to take charge and “own the room.”) With Sandberg’s words in mind, Pao arrived

early and took a seat at the conference table on her boss's private jet. But when the others, all men, arrived, they started talking about porn and prostitutes. How can women "lean in," she wondered, when it's so clear they're not wanted in the club?

Not quite three years after Pao lost in court, it's hard to imagine any PR campaign, no matter how expensive, could convince us this so-called "soft sexism" wasn't feeding a discriminatory culture. Today, a public sympathy Pao couldn't have seen coming would easily overpower Kleiner Perkins's opposition. Yes, something is very different now. Still, Whitney says, women need to remain wary—of retribution, of losing their colleagues' trust, of being branded disloyal or untalented and resentful. Fowler may have pushed into panicked soul-searching mode a class of men who had, not long before, successfully smeared Pao. There may be a world-changing movement afoot. But, Whitney reminds me, "Technical gurus are the future." The fastest-rising companies tend to depend on one or two brilliant men, she says, and "when a young engineer or intern reports that he's harassing her, management often doesn't want to hear it."

Counting the number of women in management at a company remains the telling test. If there's just one, she's a token. But find a C-suite at or near gender parity, and you'll see credible cultural evolution born from these women's cumulative experience of a form of discrimination that not so long ago had no name.

### **What Our Mothers Knew**

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Our most insightful tourist may have seen it coming. Alexis de Tocqueville celebrated American women's worldliness as a youthful humor that evolves into a matronly reserve. In *Democracy in America*, he described the daughters



of our young republic and predicted “that the social changes which bring nearer to the same level the father and son, the master and servant, and superiors and inferiors generally speaking, will raise woman and make her more and more the equal of man.” Between cloistered superiority—for America owes its “singular prosperity and growing strength . . . to the superiority of their women”—and free lives lived fully in the world, American women will choose as Americans must.

The cruel irony of the American female condition seems to be that despite all they learn of the world as it is, women can never transmit these lessons to their daughters. Everyone has to learn them for herself. It was Leonore Tiefer who showed me this generational barrier when she told me about her mother: a music teacher and opera lover who might have been a composer or a famous critic. But, being a woman, she taught music and history at the local high school all her life—never even promoted to department head.

“I am my mother’s daughter,” Tiefer acknowledges, “and I think part of my availability to be affected by [the feminist movement] was a result of her lack of opportunities in the ’30s and ’40s.” Tiefer waited years to give her straightforwardly sexist rejection from Johns Hopkins a second thought, but when she did—after what she refers to as her feminist awakening—she remembered her mother’s professional disappointments. “When women say #MeToo,” Tiefer tells me, “we’re really talking about our mothers.”

And it stands to reason that a natural motherly bias pervades the most honest intergenerational discussions of #MeToo. We don’t ever really listen to our mothers. Second-wavers like Tiefer didn’t see what their mothers’ lives had been until they read about their disappointments in the feminist literature of the 1970s. “My mother had told me all of this, but I hadn’t had the life experience to agree,” she tells me. “Who believes their mother?”

When I think about my own mother, who's never not worked for long, she's less a jilted genius derailed by family than a fairly typical woman of her generation (born 1953). Her first career, in publishing in the late 1970s and '80s, was one of consistent meritorious promotion pockmarked by boorish behavior from bosses. Her second, in nonprofit fundraising from the 1990s onward, was weighed down in its early years by two demanding daughters.

It's the sort of story women of my generation know too well to listen to it. And it makes me wonder whether a #MeToo conscious of its inheritance will be about much more than women's equal opportunity, unimpeded by predatory perverts in the workplace. The freedom to call a creep a creep—and not just destroy him, but change the course of history—means more when we remember how hard women have worked, bit by bit, proving our equal measure while also bearing our extra biological burden, just to claim our natural freedoms in the first place. In the sweep of history, #MeToo is just another episode of liberal democracy setting right what stubborn inequalities remain.

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Article Tags CULTURE, [FEMINISM](#), HILLARY CLINTON, POLITICS, WOMEN, POLITICAL CORRECTNESS, SEXUAL HARASSMENT, #METOO