

Special Appendix to
“Rationalization, McDonaldization, and Increasing Stupidity of Human Beings”

**“#MeToo”, “Balance Ton Porc”,
trade deficits,
and historical materialism**

The controversial open letter which has recently appeared on *Le Monde* (10 January 2018), “Nous défendons une liberté d'importuner, indispensable à la liberté sexuelle”, is another outsider document. It is the principal reactionary document against the French version of the #MeToo movement, “Balance Ton Porc”.¹ The hundred women who signed the letter – the “Hundred French Women” – are more or less outsider critics of the dominant trend, albeit less sophisticated. The Hundred Women seem to be concerned about three things in this open letter: (1) the deterioration of the conception, and self-conception, of women to a “perpetual victim” without the ability to withstand the slightest discomfort; (2) the emergence of a totalitarian control over our every little, and formerly private, acts. What is only implicit in the open letter but something which many other commentators have pointed out is: (3) the Hundred Women are worried about the loss of a French specificity under French society's increasing Americanization.

“Le viol est un crime. Mais la drague insistante ou maladroite n'est pas un délit, ni la galanterie une agression machiste.

“Or c'est là le propre du puritanisme que d'emprunter, au nom d'un prétendu bien général, les arguments de la protection des femmes et de leur émancipation pour mieux les enchaîner à un statut d'éternelles victimes, de pauvres petites choses sous l'emprise de phalocrates démons, comme au bon vieux temps de la sorcellerie.”

(1) Thea Dorn has said something similar in an interview with Deutschlandfunk Kultur, “Das ist ein neuer Totalitarismus”.²

“In so einem System bin ich doch von morgens bis abends nur noch damit beschäftigt zu überlegen, hat mich wer beleidigt, hat mich wer komisch angeguckt, hat mich wer irgendwie genannt, anstatt den Leuten, den Menschen zu sagen: Kinder, das gehört zum Erwachsenwerden, das gehört, um in dieser Welt zu überleben, dass man eine gewisse Abwehrkraft entwickelt. Und wie gesagt, ich wiederhole es noch mal: Vergewaltigung ist ein widerliches, abstoßendes Verbrechen, aber nicht jeder, der mich Mäuschen oder Pussy oder ich weiß nicht was nennt, das ist kein Problem, das muss ich aushalten.”

1 The “Balance Ton Porc” movement has its own website: <https://www.balancetonporc.com/>.

2 10.11.2017, at: http://www.deutschlandfunkkultur.de/thea-dorn-zur-sexismus-debatte-das-ist-ein-neuer.1008.de.html?dram%3Aarticle_id=400306.

Both Thea Dorn and the Hundred Women have spoken here what I have always wanted to say. This is a typical leftist conservative position.³ The God-damned liberal progressives have always this obsession to rid the world of every insult and every instance of power relations, etc. But Dorn and the Hundred Women wish to remind us: while rape is bad and rapist must be punished, growing up means acquiring an immune system, to be able to withstand at least a little bit of insults and a little bit of unpleasant experiences without feeling the need to oblige the police to arrest the insulter or the fire department to eliminate the unpleasant experiences. At issue is the fear that, as we become increasingly intolerant of minor annoyances and so do everything to eliminate them, we are at the same time making ourselves increasingly weaker. The result is a tremendous curtailing of our original human strength and human potential.

Qualification: I should perhaps not give the impression that this disease – to make a big fuss over the tiniest discomfort – is entirely a leftist thing. Some days ago I watched two speeches given by a certain Heather MacDonald, a learned woman on the side of the conservatives. In the first speech, given at Kenyon College's Center for the Study of American Democracy,⁴ she deplores the victim mentality of those minority and women students who incessantly protest, rather ridiculously, that the campus culture is so hostile to them that “their very existence is at stake”. “Get a grip,” she tells them, “Don't you see how privileged you are, how much resources the school administration is already spending on making your campus life comfortable?” Here she spoke to my heart: the typical leftist tendency to exaggerate minor irritation into intolerable oppression in order to pretend to be victims as a way to acquire power. In the second, which is her interview at the O'Reilly Factor about the protest against her at Claremont McKenna,⁵ she dismisses the police's racism against blacks as nonsense. Here she contradicted my thinking: I do believe that the police has a problem with excessive force, which is overwhelmingly expressed against men, against blacks, or against black men in particular. What has particularly struck me is that MacDonald never seems to have realized that she and the leftists she criticizes actually share the same foundation. The leftist activists who ridiculously cry, when they experience the slightest discomfort, that “they are fighting for their very existence”, and the police officer who shot dead unarmed black children over the slightest suspicion that “their life was at stake” (that these children might be armed) are both motivated by the same hysteria characteristic of “spoiled children” – i.e. when people never have to experience any real suffering thanks to growing up in peaceful and prosperous America, or in peaceful and prosperous Western society in general, they become especially paranoid over their safety on the basis of tiniest discomfort and suspicion – which expresses itself on both the left and the right, *although in different domains*. While those on the left express their paranoia by turning the tiniest instances of discomfort into evidences of racist and sexist oppression, those on the right (here belongs “Blue Lives Matter”) express it by turning the tiniest possibility into the greatest certainty.

Neither side is able to see reality clearly. In this case I am the outsider critic who alone possesses a

3 Ortega's “spoiled children” as also increasingly hysterical and paranoid.

4 At: https://youtu.be/m1_zLGFTSZ0.

5 At: <https://youtu.be/Qw6ZEnUdLKs>.

correct view of reality and the correct insight – which I have always defined as “historical materialism”. When economic prosperity spoils the population, or when consumption conditions people to wasteful behavior, the spoiling and conditioning occur on both sides of the political spectrum. Thus while the left side is hysterical over sexism and racism, the right side is equally hysterical but over crimes, terrorism, and public safety in general. It's all because people from both sides have grown up under the same economic condition. And yet nobody perceives this.

(2) The Hundred Women seem to be expressing a libertarian concern, e.g., that freedom of speech is only meaningful when it includes the freedom to say offensive things. And so the “freedom to annoy” is essential to sexual freedom. (Perhaps one can say that, while protecting your opponent's freedom to utter offensive things against you is also protecting your own freedom to utter offensive things against your opponents, protecting the “freedom to annoy” only benefits men since women have far less desire to annoy men.) The Hundred Women express the fear that something like the Chinese Cultural Revolution is now happening in the West in the domain of gender relations.⁶ But above all they are expressing essentially the same concern which I have expressed in my “Rationalization, McDonaldization, and Increasing Stupidity of Human Beings”, although they couldn't really express it explicitly because they lack the theoretical sophistication. But they do intuitively notice the problem. They fear that the part of human behavior which is hitherto only *informally* regulated according to the background knowledge of the life-world, i.e. flirting and so on, might be from now on regulated *formally* in the “system”, resulting in loss of freedom and impoverishment of human experience. This fear for the further colonization of the life-world by the “system” underlies their objection to the criminalization of improper flirting behavior (“harassment”) to which this #MeToo movement seems to lead. (The man will not only have less freedom to flirt, but, insofar as the “system's” definition of what constitutes proper behavior can never catch up with the complexity of the understanding of the same thing inherent in the life-world, we will also all end up with impoverished relationship skills.) This fear for the increasing encroachment of the “system” upon the life-world goes hand in hand with the fear for the increasing intolerance of minor discomfort and irritation. Not only is the woman weaker and suffering a reduction of her human potential, but the validation of the weaker woman through the criminal justice system's protection will also lead to increasing systematization of the life-world and hence the impoverishment of human experience and human intelligence.

6 “La vague purificatoire ne semble connaître aucune limite. Là, on censure un nu d'Egon Schiele sur une affiche ; ici, on appelle au retrait d'un tableau de Balthus d'un musée au motif qu'il serait une apologie de la pédophilie ; dans la confusion de l'homme et de l'œuvre, on demande l'interdiction de la rétrospective Roman Polanski à la Cinémathèque et on obtient le report de celle consacrée à Jean-Claude Brisseau. Une universitaire juge le film Blow-Up, de Michelangelo Antonioni, « misogyne » et « inacceptable ». A la lumière de ce révisionnisme, John Ford (La Prisonnière du désert) et même Nicolas Poussin (L'Enlèvement des Sabines) n'en mènent pas large. Déjà, des éditeurs demandent à certaines d'entre nous de rendre nos personnages masculins moins « sexistes », de parler de sexualité et d'amour avec moins de démesure ou encore de faire en sorte que les « traumatismes subis par les personnages féminins » soient rendus plus évidents ! Au bord du ridicule, un projet de loi en Suède veut imposer un consentement explicitement notifié à tout candidat à un rapport sexuel ! Encore un effort et deux adultes qui auront envie de coucher ensemble devront au préalable cocher via une « appli » de leur téléphone un document dans lequel les pratiques qu'ils acceptent et celles qu'ils refusent seront dûment listées.”

Within the uproar over, and condemnation of, the Hundred Women there is very little understanding of the peril which these Hundred Women have intuitively recognized, i.e. the danger in assuming that the victims somehow always have a better understanding of reality or are of better moral character than their victimizers. Because the victims are no different from the victimizer, when the victims get an upperhand, they will manifest the same abuses which their victimizers have formerly exercised on them. Any revolution where the victims finally topple their oppressors always results in another deplorable oppressive condition because of this essential equality between the victims and the victimizers. Then a minority who are above average in intelligence or sensibility will inevitably feel compelled to condemn the excesses and abuses involved in all this rectification. The non-thinking and less sensitive majority will then mistake the minority for protecting the oppressors when the latter are only raising legitimate skepticism about the rectification of the so-called “victims”.

(3) The Hundred Women are implicitly expressing the fear that a French specificity, *séduction à la française*, is being degraded by American puritanism which is colonizing France right now. There is the intuitive recognition that Americans believe in the superiority of the symmetry which characterizes the American system and view the French specificity based on asymmetry (i.e. traditional gender roles: the man as the pursuer and the woman as the object) with suspicion. Many commentators have pointed this out, but Barbara Vinken has expressed the problem most clearly in an interview with Deutschlandfunk.⁷ She specifically defends *séduction à la française* by arguing that the asymmetry between men and women which underlies the French specificity (the man as the pursuer and the woman as the object) does not necessarily entail an asymmetry in power (that the man is the more powerful and the woman the powerless) and that it is the Americans who, growing up in a culture where any asymmetry, especially between men and women, is automatically equated with asymmetry in power, have narrow-mindedly and mistakenly assumed that the French indulgence in gender asymmetry is a sign that French women are oppressed. The debate is somewhat similar to the question: when Americans condemn the veil as the sign of oppression of women in the Muslim world, are they simply practicing cultural imperialism? Do Americans have the right to judge this particularly Muslim custom according to their own cultural values? When the Muslims defend the veil as their cultural inheritance, are they only defending women's oppression under the pretext of respecting other cultures? Viewed in this light, the uproar the Hundred Women's open letter has generated in France is simply an indication of how much France has been Americanized in the past decades. The original French experience is being forgotten, and nobody is even aware of the forgetfulness.

While I do agree that France is in danger of being colonized by American culture, I ultimately advance historical materialism as the most primary explanation. To illustrate my point, I shall use an anecdote which my professor friend frequently uses. A Korean woman friend of his has this beautiful memory which she always cherishes. One day, when she is on the metro going home, a man, a complete stranger, continually stares at her. When she gets off the metro and is walking home, the man follows her. When she enters her home, the man lingers outside her home. When she comes out to ask the man

7 “Das Refinement zwischen den Geschlechtern nicht aufs Spiel setzen” (14.01.2018), at: http://www.deutschlandfunk.de/frankreich-und-die-metoo-debatte-das-raffinement-zwischen.694.de.html?dram:article_id=408243.

what it is about, he expresses his fondness of her and asks her out on a date. She feels totally flattered, and, for her, it is an extraordinarily romantic experience of which she will always cherish the memory, while, for any American woman, this would constitute “stalking” and the cause for police involvement. Why the difference? I assert that Korean culture in which this is a romantic experience does not differ randomly from American culture in which this is “stalking”. But, rather, *it is the economic substructure which has determined the cultural context in which women learn how to experience and make sense of the happenings around them.* A different economic substructure will determine a different culture in which women will learn to experience and make sense of the same happening in a completely different way. This is not to deny that there can be universals in human experiences. Rape will be experienced as traumatic by women in all cultures: this is simply a matter of human physiology, which is everywhere the same. But something that is not directly based on physiology – such as when a stranger man follows a woman home – whether the woman shall experience this as “stalking” and “harassment” or whether she shall feel flattered and cherish it as a beautiful memory depends on how she has been raised. Has she been raised in a “victim culture” common in the English-speaking world or has she been raised in a culture where male desires are viewed positively? The most interesting thing I propose here – the historical materialist method – is that a nation's status as an import nation or an export nation can serve as a reliable indicator of how a woman shall interpret the experience of being followed home by a man. Because South Korea runs trade surpluses each year, the Korean woman will experience it as flattery and beautiful. Because America runs trade deficit each year, the American woman will experience it as “stalking” and “harassment”.

Because historical materialism has been pretty much lost as an insight nowadays, nobody can understand anymore what all this #MeToo hysteria – from Weinstein to AI Franken to #Me-Too to “Balance Ton Porc” to Trond Giske – is really about. It is really very simple. The words of Marx and Engels in *Deutsche Ideologie* ring so true even today. First, the principle of historical materialism:

“Hieraus geht hervor, daß eine bestimmte Produktionsweise oder industrielle Stufe stets mit einer bestimmten Weise des Zusammenwirkens oder gesellschaftlichen Stufe vereinigt ist, und diese Weise des Zusammenwirkens ist selbst eine 'Produktivkraft', daß die Menge der den Menschen zugänglichen Produktivkräfte den gesellschaftlichen Zustand bedingt und also die 'Geschichte der Menschheit' stets im Zusammenhange mit der Geschichte der Industrie und des Austausches studiert und bearbeitet werden muß....”

Then:

“Die verschiedenen Entwicklungsstufen der Teilung der Arbeit sind ebensoviel verschiedene Formen des Eigentums; d.h. die jedesmalige Stufe der Teilung der Arbeit bestimmt auch die Verhältnisse der Individuen zueinander in Beziehung auf das Material, Instrument und Produkt der Arbeit.”

Then Engels's masterful summary in *Anti-Dühring*:

“Die materialistische Anschauung der Geschichte geht von dem Satz aus, daß die Produktion, und nächst der Produktion der Austausch ihrer Produkte, die Grundlage aller Gesellschaftsordnung ist; daß in jeder geschichtlich auftretenden Gesellschaft die Verteilung der Produkte, und mit ihr die soziale Gliederung in Klassen oder Stände, sich danach richtet, was und wie produziert und wie das Produzierte ausgetauscht wird. Hiernach sind die letzten Ursachen aller gesellschaftlichen Veränderungen und politischen Umwälzungen zu suchen nicht in den Köpfen der Menschen, in ihrer zunehmenden Einsicht in die ewige Wahrheit und Gerechtigkeit, sondern in Veränderungen der Produktions- und Austauschweise; sie sind zu suchen nicht in der *Philosophie*, sondern in der *Ökonomie* der betreffenden Epoche. Die erwachende Einsicht, daß die bestehenden gesellschaftlichen Einrichtungen unvernünftig und ungerecht sind, daß Vernunft Unsinn, Wohltat Plage geworden, ist nur ein Anzeichen davon, daß in den Produktionsmethoden und Austauschformen in aller Stille Veränderungen vor sich gegangen sind, zu denen die auf frühere ökonomische Bedingungen zugeschnittene gesellschaftliche Ordnung nicht mehr stimmt. Damit ist zugleich gesagt, daß die Mittel zur Beseitigung der entdeckten Mißstände ebenfalls in den veränderten Produktionsverhältnissen selbst – mehr or minder entwickelt – vorhanden sein müssen. Diese Mittel sind nicht etwa aus dem Kopf zu *erfinden*, sondern vermittelst des Kopfes in den verliegenden materiellen Tatsachen der Produktion zu *entdecken*.”

The service economy with import of manufacturing goods is the latest form of “division of labor” which determines how women and men shall relate to each other – in terms of how they are each related to what is produced and consumed. Furthermore, it is not because women and men suddenly become “smarter” that they at once notice they live in an “unjust” patriarchal system and proceed to eliminate it, but because the underlying system of production and consumption has changed. If women begin complaining about sexism *en masse*, it is because the traditional patriarchal arrangement is no longer suited to the current regime of production and consumption. This explains why, the more a country is consumption-oriented and the more it is a service economy, the more its female population shall complain about sexism. The clearest predictor of whether and how much the women of a given country shall complain about sexism – whether the #MeToo fire shall burn wild there – is, interestingly, the country's import-export numbers. All English-speaking countries run trade deficits, and that's why women in English-speaking countries complain the most about sexism among all nations in the world, why the #MeToo fire is burning the wildest there, and why feminism is the strongest in these countries. Feminism is the second strongest in France, and France also runs trade deficits. In Germany feminism has always been weak, and the women there complain about sexism rather infrequently, because Germany has been consistently running trade surpluses since the 1950s. Women in Japan, China, and Russia never complain about sexism because all three countries, like Germany, have been consistently running trade surpluses. (Russia is different from China and Japan in that it is not a pure “export nation” since what it exports is not manufactured goods but raw materials and energy.) Even India, where a recent surge of “feminist fire” (women complaining about sexism and sexual victimization) has caught worldwide attention,⁸ has been running trade deficits. The only

8 See, for example, Deutschlandfunk report, “Indiens junge Frauen rebellieren im Netz” (15/08.2017), at:

exception to this rule is Norway, whose population has a strong feminist consciousness and yet which runs trade surpluses.⁹ This might be due to the fact that Norway's principal export is oil rather than manufactured goods, i.e. it is, like Russia, not a real “export nation”, not a real manufacturing country. In short, all nations which do not have a strong manufacturing sector but which are based on a service economy are marked by a strong feminist consciousness among their population, which causes the women in these countries to complain incessantly about sexism, *both rightly or wrongly*.¹⁰

I must emphasize “rightly and wrongly”. The lack of a manufacturing sector means the consequent devaluation of males and their values (principally, production) and the consequent overvaluation of

http://www.deutschlandfunk.de/aktion-fuer-geschlechtergleichheit-indiens-junge-frauen.807.de.html?dram%3Aarticle_id=393514. See also, for example, the excellent 2014 “die Story” documentary, “Vergewaltigt: die Angst der Frauen in Indien” (aired on ARD on 24.03.2014 at 22:00).

- 9 The burning of the #MeToo fire in Norway is illustrated by the recent scandal engulfing the Social Democrat Trond Giske. See Deutschlandfunk report, “#metoo in Norwegen: Minister stürzt - und seine Partei mit ihm” (09.01.2018), at: http://www.deutschlandfunk.de/metoo-in-norwegen-minister-stuerzt-und-seine-partei-mit-ihm.795.de.html?dram%3Aarticle_id=407862.
- 10 All data come from OEC (<https://atlas.media.mit.edu/en/profile/country/>) and they are for the year 2016 (export/import, deficit (-) or surplus (+), all numbers in US dollars):

US: exp. 1420B/ imp. 2210B, -783B
UK: exp. 404B/ imp. 625B, -220B
Australia: exp. 159B/ imp. 181B, - 22.5B
Canada: exp. 387B/ imp. 399B, -11.38
New Zealand: exp. 32.5B/ imp. 35.7B, -3.17B
France: exp. 485B/ imp. 540B, -54.98
India: exp. 256 B/ imp. 344B, - 88.1B
Sweden: exp. 135B/ imp. 139B, -4.24B
Norway: exp. 89.4B/ imp. 72.3B, +17.1B
Japan: exp. 605B/ imp. 583B, +\$21.6B
Russia: exp. 282B/ imp. 180B, +102.B
China: exp. 2060B/ imp. 1320B, +736B
South Korea: exp. 483B/ imp. 389B, +93.7B.

It must be noted (1) that Canada might again be a case like Norway and Russia. Its trade deficit is relatively small and yet its feminist consciousness is almost as strong as America's, but this might be because Canada's major export is also oil. *Because it is the lack of a manufacturing sector which has caused the women in a given country to complain about sexism, the export of raw materials and energy tends to obscure the picture by offsetting the trade deficit numbers which are supposed to reflect only the lack of manufacturing in the given country.* And (2) that Germany might also be a special case unseen anywhere else. Feminist consciousness is very strong in German academia thanks to American influence, but not among the general population. (Thea Dorn's complaints in *Die neue F-Klasse* (2006) are perhaps a reflection of this.) Although the #MeToo fire has not been burning wildly in Germany, several years ago something similar, #Aufschrei, started by Anne Wizorek (one of the most well-known German feminists), was burning quite wildly. There was then the episode with the CDU member Jenna Behrends (“große süße Maus”) which aroused some public attention in autumn 2016. (Deutschlandfunk and Deutschlandfunk Kultur have reported on the Jenna Behrends episode multiple times since September 2016. See also Deutschlandfunk's interview with Anne Wizorek on 26.09.2016. Wizorek's website is at www.annewizorek.de.) While all Western developed countries have turned into consumerist wastelands, Germany alone maintains a strong productive capacity, guaranteeing its resistance to feminism and yet accepting it half-heartedly because feminism is supposed to conquer all Western developed countries. *Feminist*

females and their habits (principally, consumption) due to their greater utility for a consumer culture, and the consumer culture then conditions a “victim culture”, which both increases consumption by putting on the pedestal worthless members of society who only consume resources and can't produce anything, and enables women to gain power over men as a way, again, to increase consumption (since women are the primary consumers in every society). As a society consumerizes and institutes a “victim culture” in order to reverse male-domination into female-domination, women initially raise legitimate complaints about the oppression of women – both the US of 1970s and India today exemplify this phase – but, when this initial phase has succeeded and men and women have become more or less equal, women will continue to complain about the oppression of women in order to push the existing condition of gender equality into the next phase, the oppression of men. Only then is the process complete and consumer culture fully actualized. During this second phase, then, women are complaining *wrongly* about sexism, the oppression of women they complain about is purely imaginary. All English-speaking countries are currently in this phase, and France is almost there.

Thus, when the outsider critic sees all this #MeToo hysteria in the US, he sees nothing but false reality – either false complaints or exaggerating small discomforts into political oppression while completely overlooking the increasing advantages in being a woman in Western developed nations. The Hundred Women are intuitively noticing this happening in France as well. But, whereas I understand the cause – historical materialism: the society of service economy is rapidly transforming into oppression of men by making people believe in an imaginary oppression of women, all in order to accelerate the development of the consumer culture – the Hundred Women and their likes, again because they lack theoretical sophistication, don't really understand why this excess is happening. Any more sensitive soul will notice that all this “oppression of women” seems to be pure bullshit – either made-up fantasies, or exaggeration of nothing into something, or the result of selective presentation of parts of reality – but only the historical materialist will have grasped the root cause by, for example, looking for correlation between #MeToo and trade deficits.

The topic which I do not discuss in this section is how the outsider critic – both the theoretically unsophisticated like the Hundred Women and the theoretically endowed like myself – is necessarily “going against history”. Both “Me Too” and “Balance Ton Porc” are movements going along with

consciousness is imported into Germany from English-speaking countries under their influence and, seen in this light, Germany would never have developed feminist consciousness if left on its own, just as the anti-footbinding movement in late nineteenth century China was based on liberal ideas imported from the West under the pressure of Western imperialism, and, if left alone, China would never have accepted any anti-footbinding ideology or paid attention to the anti-footbinding cries of outsider critics like Li Ruzhen (李汝珍) from earlier times because gender equality was against China's destiny (incompatible with China's agrarian economic substructure). And (3) that while the #MeToo fire generally never burns in a country which runs trade surpluses, it doesn't burn either in an under-developed, still traditional, country which runs trade deficits, e.g. Morocco, Pakistan, Turkey, and Belarus. These cases have to be especially investigated. My gut feeling is that only when a country has passed through the production phase of capitalist development (full scale industrialization such as the US between 1880 and 1950 and China today) does the following import, or consumption, phase entail a strong feminist consciousness (frequent complaints by women about sexism). Feminism is the twilight from the production culture's transition into a consumption culture. Neither Morocco nor Pakistan have entirely passed through the production phase, and their import phase is not due to outsourcing of manufacturing.

history as history ever approximates to its final goal. It's the destiny of all Western developed countries except for Germany to consumerize completely and become female-dominated or oppressive of men – until the whole world economy comes crushing down. This means that any resistance to #MeToo and “Balance Ton Porc” is doomed to fail since one never wins while going against history. The Hundred Women will never get anywhere. It also means that Steve Bannon's “economic nationalism” is both the most effective weapon to kill feminism once and for all in America and a historical dead-end, never realizable. This “going along with history” or “going against history” is the topic for another section.

Qualification: Among the theoretically unsophisticated, when the insight into the (historical materialist) root cause of the #MeToo wild fire does make its appearance, it is only spoken of vaguely and in a nebulous fashion. I cite here only one example in order to illustrate the “type”. I have found recently, for example, Susanne Führer's interview with Susan Neiman, “#MeToo bedeutet eine moralische Revolution”.¹¹ The interviewer Führer is in fact more insightful than Neiman the philosopher in that she asks:

“... nämlich dass sich moralische Normen dann ändern, wenn es ökonomisch opportun erscheint....”

And, when Neiman refutes this somewhat “historical materialist” explanation, goes on:

“Okay, dann komme ich mit einer anderen These. Der Typ Weinstein ist ein Auslaufmodell, also dieser einsame mächtige Mogul, der alles allein entscheidet, der seine Launen auslebt wie er will, also Citizen Kane in der Realität. Heute ist Teamwork gefragt, Flexibilität gefragt, interkulturelle Kompetenz, Schnelligkeit. Das heißt, dieser Typ Unternehmer ist einfach überhaupt nicht mehr gefragt. Und deswegen war es auch relativ leicht, ihn zu stürzen. Man sagt ja auch über James Levine, jetzt, wo er sowieso sehr alt ist und im Rollstuhl sitzt, da traut ihr euch....”

Lawrence C. Chin
19 January 2018
Los Angeles, USA
Last revision: 21 May 2018

Addenda I

#MeToo as “ideology” and “false consciousness” in the Marxian sense

11 At: http://www.deutschlandfunkkultur.de/philosophin-susan-neiman-metoo-bedeutet-eine-moralische.990.de.html?dram%3Aarticle_id=407170.

Herbert Marcuse summarizes the meaning of “ideology” and “false consciousness” according to Marxian historical materialism in *Soviet Marxism* in this way:

“For Marx and Engels, ideology is an illusion (*Schein*), but a necessary illusion, arising from a social organization of production which appears to man as a system of independent, objective laws and forces. As a 'reflection' of the actual social basis, the ideology partakes of the truth, but the latter is expressed in false form. The ideas of the ruling class become the ruling ideas and claim universal validity, but the claim is founded on 'false consciousness' – false because the real connection of the ideas with their economic basis and therefore their actual limitations and negations do not enter consciousness. A specific historical content appears as universally valid and serves to provide a prop for a specific social system.”¹²

Thus, feminism and the “#MeToo” movement are a reflection of the relevant nations' status as import nations (as consumer society). These cries about the oppression of women (*both* when they are true *and* when they are not true) are the ideas of the new ruling class (women as consumers) which claim universal validity and which are becoming the new ruling ideas. They are “false consciousness” not because they express a false reality (although they could) but because their connection to the economic base, i.e. consumption without production as the new economic substructure, is masked. They serve to provide a prop for the consumerist way of life and economic form.

Lawrence C Chin
8 February 2018
Los Angeles, USA

Addenda II

Hanna Rosin's *The End of Men*

In this connection I should perhaps bring attention to Hanna Rosin's *The End of Men and the Rise of Women* (2012).¹³ Rosin has described how the transformation of economy in advanced capitalist nations (principally the USA, but also other countries) has ushered in the rise of women in influence and power and the correlative decline of men to the point that women are surpassing men in economic success and societal influence – that society in these countries are becoming increasingly female-dominated. Her observation exactly corresponds to mine and this rise of women under postmodern condition is the complement to the correlation I have advanced here between complaints about sexism and de-manufacturing. Rosin notes first of all the most fundamental fact – that most of the jobs lost since the Great Recession were men's jobs and that women are much better suited to the new economy than men are:

¹² Marcuse, p. 124.

¹³ Her ideas first appeared in the form of an article: “The End of Men”, *The Atlantic*, July/ August 2010.

“In the past, men derived their advantage largely from size and strength, but the postindustrial economy is indifferent to brawn. A service and information economy rewards precisely the opposite qualities – the ones that can't be easily replaced by a machine. These attributes – social intelligence, open communication, the ability to sit still and concentrate – are, at a minimum, not predominantly the province of men. In fact, they seem to come more easily to women.”¹⁴

In other words, Rosin figures among the minority of intellectuals who have noticed that the cause for a capitalist society's transformation into a matriarchy is its de-manufacturization and consumerization. She then goes on to describe women's increasing domination of the new economy (“Of the fifteen job categories projected to grow the most in the United States over the next decade, twelve are occupied primarily by women”, *ibid.*) and higher education (women outnumber men in the student body of all universities and perform, on average, better than men) and so on and so forth. Clearly, women are doing much better than men in the new consumer society.

Rosin's book is much richer in details than I have the space to summarize here (e.g. women's additional advantage in “erotic capital”). A confusion that might arise in reading Rosin's masterfully insightful and objective description is related to her failure to distinguish between a minority of men's continual domination of specialized domains like politics and STEM fields because women lack interest in them (domains where ambition and abstract thinking are particularly demanded) and women's increasing domination of the rest of society (which operates increasingly according to social intelligence and communication in which women have greater interest than men). Rosin has not produced a complete picture of the new world in her book. Nevertheless, Rosin is, perhaps like Susan Faludi before her, a fair and objective appraiser of the changing relationship between women and men in postmodern societies. She points up, and describes, the obvious: that consumer societies the world over are becoming matriarchies. For this reason, she is no friend of the feminists: she has no interest in producing an imaginary picture depicting women's continual suffering under patriarchal conditions. Even within Rosin's framework, feminism, like this #MeToo movement, can be seen as merely a *ruse* to facilitate the society's transition to women's domination of men (to gain power by pretending to be victims).

*How did the feminist revolution happen, such that women have today taken over society in the English-speaking world? Why #MeToo now, and not before? Because the traditional patriarchal institutions and arrangement of gender relations are no longer in line with the current economic model, the current consumerist, service-oriented, and information society. As Marx has noted in *Misère de la philosophie*:*

“Une classe opprimée est la condition vitale de toute société fondée sur l'antagonisme des classes. L'affranchissement de la classe opprimée implique donc nécessairement la création d'une société nouvelle. *Pour que la classe opprimée puisse s'affranchir, il faut que les pouvoirs productifs déjà acquis et les rapports sociaux existants ne puissent plus exister les*

¹⁴ Rosin, p. 5.

uns à côté des autres.

“Eine unterdrückte Klasse ist die Lebensbedingung jeder auf den Klassengegensatz begründeten Gesellschaft. Die Befreiung der unterdrückten Klasse schließt also notwendigerweise die Schaffung einer neuen Gesellschaft ein. *Soll die unterdrückte Klasse sich befreien können, so muß eine Stufe erreicht sein, auf der die bereits erworbenen Produktivkräfte und die geltenden gesellschaftlichen Einrichtungen nicht mehr nebeneinander bestehen können.*”

Thanks to the changing economic structure, women have successfully liberated themselves in the societies in question.

Lawrence C Chin
4 May 2018
Revised: 9 June 2018
Los Angeles

Addenda III

Svenja Flaßpöhler

In a recent Deutschland Funk interview (“Ein sträflich generalisierender Diskurs”, 07.05.2018) Svenja Flaßpöhler summarizes the arguments which she has advanced in her new book, *Die potente Frau*, which she has written in support of the arguments of the Hundred French Women. Two arguments in particular come to my attention, exactly the same arguments which the Hundred French Women have put forward, but which Flaßpöhler has formulated in a clearer form.

In the first place, Flaßpöhler also decries the prevalent conception of woman in the #MeToo debate as a purely passive victim, the very conception adopted directly from patriarchal stereotypes but which is this time positively valued. Flaßpöhler complains because this conception runs directly counter to her own, alternative, conception of women's “Potenz” – her version of the “potent woman”, which the Hundred French Women will certainly regard as their ideal as well. Again, the argument is that such “victim conception” cuts down a woman's human potential.

The second argument is more important in my connection. Flaßpöhler makes the same argument about the harmful effect of trying to banish every possibility of sexual harassment from society. The way she puts the matter clarifies the meaning which the Hundred French Women have tried to bring into our awareness. A society in which the very possibility of sexual harassment is eliminated is one in which the very possibility of flirting is also eliminated.

“So einfach ist es ja nicht, weil, wenn man sich alleine schon den Begriff der Verführung anguckt, da steckt das Führen drin. Wer verführt, führt einen anderen dahin, wo er vorher

nicht war, er weckt einen Willen, von dem er nichts wusste oder den er so gar nicht hatte. Das heißt, wer verführt, manipuliert immer ein Stück weit und vor allem macht er den ersten Schritt, er übertritt eine Grenze, so klein sie auch sein mag. Und deshalb ist doch jede Verführung immer in Gefahr, vom jeweils anderen als Belästigung wahrgenommen zu werden. Das hängt schon davon ab, ob mir der Gegenüber, ob ich den attraktiv finde oder nicht, ob mir sein Gesicht gefällt, ob mir die Stimme gefällt oder nicht. Und insofern würde ich sagen, wer eine Welt will, in der ganz bestimmt nie jemand etwas als Belästigung empfindet, der will im Grunde genommen eine Welt ohne Verführung, und dagegen bin ich entschieden.”

It's like saying: because going out of one's house necessarily involves risk – one could be hit by a bus, robbed, or attacked – one therefore never goes out. In the process, one misses all the fun life has to offer. In order to enjoy the benefits of life, one must accept a certain risk. There is of course no right or wrong answer to this question. The hardcore feminists are perfectly willing to give up flirting altogether in exchange for the total elimination of sexual harassment, but there are also women, like Flaßpöhler or Catherine Deneuve, who are not willing to pay such price.

Note that Flaßpöhler also agrees that this “patriarchy” of feminist discourse is already passé in Western societies. She is a thinking being in contact with reality, and so says the obvious. But this the feminists will certainly never accept as true.

Lawrence C. Chin
16 May 2018
Los Angeles