

# The Woman Racket

♀♂ The new science explaining how the sexes relate at work, at play and in society

**Steve Moxon**

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This book is dedicated to  
Norman Kingsley Mailer  
(1923-2007)

A fearless and fierce critic of what he christened  
'the woman racket'

# Foreword

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If, like me, you turn to the very end of a book first, then you'll see that this one has been a full decade in the making. It's *not* a follow-up to my account of another racket that I encountered when working for the Home Office. That racket concerned immigration - the book being *The Great Immigration Scandal* - and my revelations led to the resignation of the government minister in charge, Beverley Hughes. The present book concerns a much bigger problem - in part a political scandal in which the Home Office is very much involved - but that's just a coincidence. And essentially this is more a popular science book than another exposé.

When I blew the whistle on the immigration scandal some four years ago, it provoked the predictable 'shoot the messenger' response from government and much of the 'liberal' media. However, within months - and certainly by the summer of 2006 (when the Home Office spectacularly imploded) - *The Great Immigration Scandal* was seen as somewhat prescient. If anything the problems were under-stated. The stories streaming out of the Home Office and from our so-called national 'borders' competed for the top prize in the 'you-couldn't-make-it-up' stakes.

Was this just a case of beginner's luck? Does foresight in one area mean that my arguments in another, unrelated, area should be taken any more seriously? In fact these matters are not unconnected. They are both similar facets of 'political correctness' (PC); albeit that how the sexes relate is more important in a more perennial way than recent trends in migration. My decade of research into men and women helped me to see the wider damage caused by PC in the part of the Home Office where I was working.

*The Great Immigration Scandal* was a hot-off-the press affair: it had to be out in the shops as soon as possible after the Home Office officially parted company with me. By contrast, I've had plenty of time to get this one right. And a convoluted genesis it most certainly has had. My original conception was of a P.J. O'Rourke-style polemic; but that was before I came to realise the astonishing extent of the scientific findings that underpinned my arguments. The science more than the politics began to drive the project. I spent several years getting fully conversant with a range of biology and psychology disciplines (my own undergraduate subject was psychology, but that was a long time ago, when the discipline was still labouring under the behaviourist delusion), and the book dropped any pretence of humour. The subject is far too important to be treated in any other than a serious manner, and the original polemic has evolved beyond all recognition into a work of popular science exposition.

This book is, for reasons of accessibility, distilled from an original text that includes full explanations of research that can only be briefly mentioned here. I have also written a long, fully referenced scientific paper on the function of dominance hierarchy and the male, that underpins the key strand running through this book.

The scientific paper is available on-line, along with supplementary notes to this book, for the benefit of those who wish to understand the exposition here in detail or who would question the provenance of some of the ideas that I develop ([imprint-academic.com/moxon](http://imprint-academic.com/moxon)). This allows the book to flow more easily, uncluttered with digressions or excess references. Referencing (other than new items, which are well archived on-line and therefore highly accessible) has nonetheless been retained where the findings are pivotal, likely to be greeted with particular scepticism, or can be expected to arouse the very prejudice which it is my purpose here to expose.

The arguments in *The Woman Racket* are grounded in recent research undertaken in a range of scientific disciplines, including the new science of evolutionary psychology (EP). Some critics argue that a biologically-based perspective underplays distinctively human attributes, as opposed to those we share with other species. But our higher cognitive functions are no less products of evolution than are our more basic motivations, so they are not as 'in control' of our behaviour as our intuitions would suggest they are. Higher cognition is fine-tuning or making more flexible the ancient evolutionary motivations - especially those of becoming more attractive to the opposite sex, and competing with same-sex others to this end. This certainly does not exclude the ability to ideate, no matter how much it may appear to have 'a life of its own'. Our 'conscious reasoning' is never other than instrumental to the 'tree' of motivation that drives us. Even the high point of ideation, morality, is now analysed as an evolutionary adaptation (eg; Ridley, 1997). Indeed, after the recent adaptationist turn in the humanities, even philosophers have joined in with the attempt to bring morality down to earth from the realm of Kantian abstraction (Katz, 2000).

Consequently, I make no apology for what might seem to some to be a form of reductionism. All science - on whatever level: physical, biological or social - is reductive. The opposing reductionist camp - the social constructivists, critical theorists, cultural anthropologists, feminists and their political allies - peddle their 'standard social science model' (SSSM), that the human neonate is a tabula rasa - a blank slate on which society engraves its story. Or to update the analogy, the status of the human subject is reduced to that of an empty computer memory, ready to be programmed. They've had it all their own way for over half a century, but the scientific community is now mostly united in the view that 'nature' is much more important than 'nurture'; the latter providing us not with the most important things we have in common but some of our idiosyncrasies. Nevertheless, notwithstanding the overwhelming evidence against it, the 'nurture' form of reductionism has become so deeply entrenched in popular thinking that it requires an equally powerful antithesis to counter it. You can only fight fire with fire.

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### How the Leopard Got His Spots

An empty but oft repeated criticism of evolutionary psychology is that it is on a par with Kiplingesque 'just so' stories; but this is an elementary misunderstanding of science. Any theory or hypothesis in science must be testable. (Strictly speaking, a hypothesis must be refutable, and a theory must be able to predict, so I will use the term 'proposition'.) A scientific proposition generically is that, counter-intuitively, *X* causes *Y*; and by virtue of this it can be shown that *Z* (or *W*, or whatever) does not cause *Y* (rather than this being obvious through simple observation and deductive reasoning).

Freudian theory doesn't pass muster here: a proposition that we behave in some way because our ego needs boosting is indeed a 'just so' story. This is why psychoanalysis is a pseudoscience. This isn't true of real sciences, such as evolutionary psychology.

So, for example, the EP theory of sex difference in what elicits jealousy is a counter-intuitive proposal that an adaptation to increase fitness causes men to be jealous in response to a long-term partner's sexual infidelity, whereas a woman is similarly made jealous by her partner's emotional infidelity. (This reflects the different problems the sexes have: men are concerned that they really are the father of their supposed children, and women are

concerned they and their children may be left to fend for themselves.) The standard view is that there can't be any sex difference in what elicits jealousy, because the sexes have exactly the same social psychology.

So here we have a proposition that is easy to test, and which faces an opposite standard view, so data that supports one will necessarily exclude the other. Surveys and experiments have been done using jealousy-inducing scenarios, and the EP proposition is supported. Methodological criticisms of the work have been answered by revised experiments. And a fall-back position of the opposing model that concedes a sex difference but that it is through reasoning, is countered by looking at spontaneous responses.

This sex difference in jealousy is apparent from simple observation, but the explanation of it is not; and distinguishing between rival explanations can't be decided without proper investigation.

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This book is part of this counter-blast. No doubt one day a mature and synthetic understanding how 'nature' and 'nurture' entwine will come to pass. In the meantime, this is an unashamed campaigning text, written from the scientific position of the triumph of the 'nature' perspective. Most of my claims should be prefaced 'from an evolutionary bio-psycho-sociological perspective', but that would be a little tedious, so please take that as implied throughout. Don't say I didn't warn you.

And while we are dealing with philosophical issues let me acknowledge that my historicist perspective is *sub specie aeternitatis* - history is viewed less as a series of random events and more as the expression of our underlying (biological) nature. (Although human nature may not be, strictly speaking, eternal, nevertheless the time-frame is long enough as to make no practical difference.) I'm aware that this puts me in uncomfortable company - Hegel is best known for viewing history as the unfolding of the universal *weltgeist* (world spirit); Marx just took the Hegelian perspective and secularised it. And a whole generation of positivist historians, such as Carl Hempel, attempted to explain (and predict) historical events in terms of universal 'covering laws'. This led to a historiographical backlash: under the influence of constructivist philosophers like Michael Oakeshott, historians are now only concerned with detailed historical events - 'just one damn thing after another'. This led Oakeshott to deny that there was such a thing as human nature: human characteristics (and human cultures) being nothing more than a contingent response to circumstances. History, from a constructivist perspective, is not so much teleology as tragedy, with the gods interfering in human affairs in an entirely arbitrary and contingent matter.

But this is something of an over-reaction (Oakeshott was always a polemicist). How is it possible to explain, say, ubiquitous Islamic dress codes [\[2\]](#) without understanding that man will *always* have a wandering eye? Feminists argue that it is unfair that women have to cover themselves up as a consequence, but what's the alternative? Chemical castration? Putting out men's eyes? Similarly, my 'Historical Blindsight' chapter shows how much of our 'patriarchal' history is in fact an attempt to protect and *privilege* (sic) women. This is not seeking to deny (I'm no David Irving) that individual men did not use the law of coverture to exploit individual women. I'm just arguing that the seemingly Jurassic practices have to be seen in the context of their time (when the focus was firmly on the family unit rather than the individual) and that they did serve a necessary function from the point of view of society as a *whole*. Even Oakeshott acknowledges that individualism is a modern invention.

I should also point out that in this book about the sexes you will find barely a mention of 'gender'. When I do use the term, it's in scare quotes or followed by '(sic)'. This is because the word 'gender' implies that the sexes are 'socially constructed', rather than essentially different in their nature. M

exposition is of the overwhelming evidence against this position, hence the abandonment of the loaded term 'gender' in favour of the (equally loaded) term 'sex'. This issue seems to me to eclipse the occasional usefulness of the term 'gender' to describe some quality of the sexes as distinct from the sexes themselves (or the sex act).

### **On Knowing Where to Draw the Line**

This book has been ten years in preparation and has undergone extensive revision at proof stage. Inevitably, as is the case with any book that alludes to current affairs, it's hard to know when to stop. I was contemplating adding a section dealing with David Cameron's capitulation to the pressure groups over the rape conviction statistics but decided that transient political events were not worth chronicling.

One area that I avoided due to lack of space was the increasing feminisation of childhood and education system. Our traditional all-or-nothing examination system has been replaced by a modular approach which favours girls' systematic study skills (but disadvantages the truly inspired student who fails to tick the right boxes). Boys are now three times as likely as girls to need extra help with reading at primary school - a statistic that is not unrelated to the lack of male role models at home (although the connection has been challenged) and the fact that 93% of primary school teachers are female. Competitive school team sports - along with any form of contest in which there are winners and losers - are frowned on, and our health and safety culture penalises boys' attraction to risk taking and unsupervised play. When did you last see a group of boys climbing a tree? Deprived of their natural diversions it is not surprising that 75% of the children suffering from ADHD (attention deficit hyperactivity disorder) are male. Anyone wishing to examine the devastating effects of the feminisation of childhood and education should read James Tooley's *The Miseducation of Women* (2002), and Sue Palmer's *21st Century Boys* (forthcoming: September 2008).

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thanking: the man whose dartboard features a pic of me, my long-suffering editor and publisher Kei Sutherland, to whom I also owe the evolutionary perspective on the size-zero modelling controversy (see page 196) and some of the other panels.

Steve Moxon  
Sheffield, November 2000

[1](#) Upward (top-down) reductionism explains mental processes as derived from the social-discursive environment, whereas downward (bottom-up) reductionism explains the same in terms of biological endowments (Valsiner & van der Veer, 2000).

[2](#) An adequate discussion of men-women in the Islamic and Hebraic traditions would require a whole book, so I limit myself here to one sentence (see also page 175, below): Islamic garb, like other phenomena such as foot-binding and female circumcision, is as much to do with female-female competition as it is with men jealously guarding their women.

# 1: Progressing Backwards -- The political and social foreground

We're told that men and women are the same. Or, rather, some of the time we're told this. At other times we're told that men and women are essentially and irrevocably different. We're further told that although men and women are different, this is really just something to do with the way we are at the moment, albeit that we have been that way for a long time, living in the sort of society we do. In time we keep being reminded, all will revert to how supposedly it should be and how it used to be in times of yore: i.e. men and women are the same after all. Even so, it's then insisted that actually, in the end, no matter what we do, men will never get to be *truly* the same as women: men and women are forever and totally different (except when it's more convenient to regard them as exactly the same).

We're also told that women are disadvantaged, and that they've got this way because of oppression by men. We're never told how or why this could be. We're not told why - especially if men and women are supposedly the same - there would be any point in one sex oppressing the other. We're not told how it can be - if indeed men are different to women and oppress them - that by most measures it is not women who are disadvantaged but men (or, at least, a large sub-group or even the majority of men). Nobody tells us why men are maligned as if they're at one with the very few at the top of the pile, whereas all women are championed irrespective of who they are, what they have done, or how they have lived their lives.

Confused? You certainly should be. The notion that males and females - or some essence of what male or female - are the same or different, oppressed or actually advantaged, is like a juggler with two balls up in the air. He never gets hold of either of them but is constantly palming each upwards and across the path of the other. Eventually the whole spectacle has to come crashing to the ground. That's what is about to happen to what we currently think about men and women.

The contradictory madness about men and women in which we wallow is not shallow. As I will be explaining in depth, it arises from the most profound prejudices we have; prejudices that are currently denied, being invisible to us. We are too close to them, so we can't see the wood for the trees, even though they are the very basis of our politics. They are what the philosopher R.G. Collingwood called 'absolute' presuppositions. They come from the hidden heart of what we are, in the fundamental difference - and complementarity - between men and women. These hidden prejudices are *against men and in favour of women*. It is because of this that astonishing nonsense about men and women can hold sway, hanging unsupported from the political sky. The general consensus about human social behaviour - at least within the chattering classes - is the most plainly false in history. In no other culture - and at no other point in the history of our own culture - have people got things so spectacularly wrong.

The real story of men and women, that cuts through all of this, has only fully crystallised within the last few years with a deluge of new science. It will be a revelation to almost all, having been merely scratched on the surface in self-help pop titles like *Men are from Mars, Women are from Venus*. It is not merely that men and women are different. We all knew that. And ordinary people, at least, admit it. It is that they are different in ways far beyond what anyone had thought. Men and women are all unequal, but it is not women at all, but men - not all men, but the majority - who make up the biggest disadvantaged sub-group in every society. Women by contrast are universally and perennially

privileged: *over-privileged*. This unconditional favour has no counterpart for men, who have to meet certain criteria even to be afforded the most basic consideration.

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Even so, you won't find me suggesting adding men to the ever-expanding list of 'victims'. As it stands there's but a minority of people who aren't already on this list. It really would be the case that 'we're all victims now'. Instead, the real story of men and women is the key to tearing up the entire list and throwing it away.

The revolution that we are supposedly undergoing towards an androgynous, unisexual world is a revolution that is dead. Revolution has always been a case of 'meet the new boss, same as the old boss' (as The Who's Roger Daltrey sang back in 1971), and the revolution regarding men and women is very much the same case in point. We've merely been chasing our own shadows, perpetuating the same old attitudes in a new guise. The benign consequences of wising up to see this can hardly be over-stated. We're set now for what really *is* a revolution: a science-inspired revolution of understanding.

This is a book of popular science, intended to explain the psychology that underlies the prejudice that in turn reveals why politics manifests in the way that it does. Of necessity I tackle political issues and I'm aware that this is an awkward mix, but such is the nature of the project. Thus the rest of the first chapter sets the scene before the science proper starts. This may appear to distract from the science but it's essential to outline the seriousness of the political issues from the off. Some readers will disagree with me on the politics, but that need not affect the science. If you're not interested in my analysis of the political and cultural developments that have led to our current problems then by all means skip the rest of this chapter.

Politics naturally comes up at regular junctures in the rest of the book because this is how so often what I'm discussing manifests. The penultimate chapter, on the position of men in family law, deals primarily with political developments - there being little science in this context to present. The point of course, is that the family is very much the domain of women and an expression of their separate world, with men in effect included on sufferance. I could hardly ignore this area, given the controversy over child contact and divorce settlements that can't be understood other than by the prejudice towards men that the science in turn explains.

Politics is in the end a matter of conjecture, but its manifestation and the social psychology that underlies it can be informed by science. Never before has there been a time when political debate was more in need of this than today.

## **The Great Disruption**

Even if there hasn't been a revolution proper in the relationship between the sexes, certainly we have experienced a major social shift, beginning in the 1960s and continuing apace. Opinion differs as to quite what this is and what factors led to it. It's an interesting question as to whether our current ideas about men-women are (or are in part) a product of this, or whether it was this broad social change that gave rise to our altered ideas. Whatever the answer, the two have become subsequently entwined.

What, in general, determines social change? Do ideas matter or is it more, as Marx insisted, a matter of the economic and technological infrastructure? Callum Brown (2000) attributes the decline of Christianity in the West to the hedonistic philosophy of the 1960s, whereas older clergy have been known to claim that it was all down to the *Radio Times*. (A.J.P. Taylor's famously quipped that the cause of the Great War was railway timetables.) According to this Taylorite view, the death of Christian Britain was an accidental consequence of the BBC scheduling *The Forsyte Saga* at a time

that clashed with Evensong.

So what gave rise to this great cultural change, or, as Francis Fukuyama put it, *The Great Disruption*? Most of this chapter is devoted to *ideational* factors - the reaction of Left-leaning intellectuals to their banishment from the commanding heights of economic theory. But first of all we need to take a quick look at more concrete factors. Was the key cause change in the workplace, or new education policy?

Well, both were significant, but they now look more like second-order factors: those that arrived in the wake of change to then drive it further, rather than the initial cause. Probably top of most people's list of prime causes is the advent of universal, near-infallible (and unobtrusive) contraception with the Pill from 1961, the availability on general prescription of the Pill. Reproduction was now no longer inevitable.

The obvious impact of this is the removal of the constraint on women's options caused by repeated childbirth, and women henceforth not necessarily being defined in terms of child-rearing. But family size had long been in decline. The truth is that this wasn't the critical impact that the Pill had. It has now been largely forgotten that the Pill produced a profound shift of identity in *both* sexes. Before the Pill, by unspoken collective agreement, everyone's lives were mapped out before them as an inevitable consequence of the overriding necessity to form and sustain a family. Since time immemorial, the focus has been not on the individual but the family - the basic economic unit of society. (Economists view the division of labour as the principal generator of surplus wealth, and the division within the traditional social unit was inevitably based on sex.) With the removal of the obligation on everyone to prepare for reproduction, there has been a disengagement on the part of both sexes - in their different ways - from the age-old duties to household, family and community; instead to embrace the social abandon of individual freedom and rights.

Coincident with the invention of the Pill, which in a way deprived woman of her archetypal role as mother, other technological change made woman's role as a home-maker increasingly redundant - and correspondingly made the world of work much more woman-friendly. Was it the case then that women were 'liberated' into education and the workplace, or was it because they had no other place to go? If it was the latter, then women were understandably peeved when they arrived at university in the '60s and '70s to find that they were still expected to make the tea while the boys plotted the downfall of capitalism - and then went on to find similar attitudes in the world of work.

At the same time great increases in personal wealth drove expectation to wider horizons. But what most of all opened everyone's eyes to new possibilities was the extension of life itself. With life expectancy as it was a century ago, a woman would have spent all or almost all of her life within her family: first her natal family, and then (without any transition) into the one she created herself. She may well not have survived long enough to see her eldest child follow suit. By the late twentieth century, huge increases in longevity meant that a woman could expect to live fully half her adult life free of any sort of child rearing. This one factor alone, it has been argued, explains the rise of feminism (Davis, 1982).

Fukuyama gives centre stage to all of these factors to explain what he dubs the 'great disruption'. His 1999 book is to date the most comprehensive investigation of the phenomenon. He's looking at a cluster of related changes, not least the massive rises in crime and the falls in some forms of 'social capital'; but he sees the core change as concerning the family, men and women.



*But do we really want to?*

Whether you can call all this a liberation of women or a change in women's lifestyle because they had nowhere else to go, is another interesting question. (It strikes me that the relative collapse of the *raison d'être* of female life - motherhood and home-making - and the elevation of the male world of work to the be-all-and-end-all, can hardly be characterised as male redundancy, but so runs the standard line. It smacks of irrationally lashing out in frustration at what has been lost and the inadequacy of what was on offer by way of replacement.) Yet human beings are nothing if not adaptable, and we would expect that women would be quite able to adapt to the world of work, without somehow 'feminising' it. Sure enough, it's hard to think of any work that at least some women couldn't do. (As I will explain in chapter nine, that was never the issue.)

However, it is a different question altogether as to whether women would actually *want* to opt for what were not distinctively female roles unless they had little if any choice - wartime munitions factories may have demonstrated that women could do men's work, but many or even most women were glad to return home once the armistice was signed. The answer to this motivational question is complex and in the main what I'll be talking about when I come on to the science. But there were also ideological factors. The new set of contingencies through which women were obliged to see the story of their lives provided fertile ground for various strands of feminism. Neo-Marxism underwent a revival, and then morphed into a strange new way of thinking about disadvantage, and about men and women in particular. This, along with other varieties of feminism, had an impact on sustaining the 'great disruption'. This is the focus of the rest of this chapter.

“Our problem now is to do away with the household and to free women from the care of children.”

Anatoly Lunacharski  
Soviet Commissar of Education in the early 1930s

Twenty-five or thirty years ago, the Left was beginning to look like it was out for the count. But in reality it was the beginning of a retrenchment that would have a much more pervasive influence on society than traditional (economic) socialism. For today, the Left looks like it's on a roll, taking hold of all major political parties in the wake of the compromise over market economics and the rapprochement between the socialist and liberal wings that had separated 100 years previously. Conservatives have largely abandoned their habitual realism in favour of Left-styled utopianism under the influence of so-called neoconservatives (many of whom were formerly Trotskyites). How can this dramatic swing to the Left be explained and what has it to do with the topic of this book?

Over recent decades standards of living have improved beyond recognition, removing the problem of absolute poverty completely - even for the most wilfully feckless - thereby placating the mass people and distracting them from their allotted role in the Left project. It looks like Marx was wrong in his choice of opiates - when given the choice the proles all trooped off to Ikea on Sunday, and shopping was a lot more fun than religion. The masses changed in the eyes of those in power, from downtrodden workers to be kept in their place, to an army of consumers that had to be appealed to. Margaret Thatcher understood her Marx much better than the Comrades and agreed with him that ideology was an epiphenomenon of material factors; so she concentrated on changing class consciousness by letting the masses buy their council houses (along with cheap shares in the government board). As a result, perception of class and of conflict between the bosses and the workers faded. Thatcher's ousting of Labour in 1979 is now entrenched, and then the Soviet block spectacularly disintegrated in 1989.

The worldwide collapse of the Marxist/socialist experiment - both in practice and in theory - meant that the intelligentsia had to perform a dramatic rethink and they turned to academia for help. Since the turn of the twentieth century the dominant idea in the humanities and social sciences was that society itself was the most powerful force, influencing or even determining how we all behaved and thought. In earlier decades this took the form of the social-engineering projects of the behaviourists, as symbolised by B.F. Skinner's utopian vision *Walden Two*. During the flower-power generation - the 1960s - the idea was expressed in a very different, and far more anarchic, fashion, but the goals were equally utopian. However, by the end of that influential decade, the innocent 'we can change the world' spirit had already gained a hard political edge - partly as a consequence of the anti-Vietnam war protests.

Yet it was already dawning on the Left that they had got the wrong end of the stick. As we've just seen, the real legacy of the '60s was a materialistic obsession with 'keeping up with the Joneses' and against this 'sell-out', radical political philosophy was impotent. The 1960s gave rise not to a more socialist society but to Margaret Thatcher. The end of Marxist-Leninist class war came with the defeat of Arthur Scargill; whereas the demise of Derek Hatton's brand of Trotskyite entryism showed that an even deeper subterfuge would be needed, where people would not express their politics directly (and so be exposed as part of the 'loony Left'), but in a deeply encrypted fashion.



*The double life of B.F. Skinner.*

*Skinner liked to view his work as scientific but he only entered psychology after failing as a stream-of-consciousness novelist. His utopian novel *Walden Two* (1948), shows that his real passion was for top-down social engineering.*

But the dream of the Left to engineer a better society, although mangled beyond recognition, was not going to die. In fact, Marx and Thatcher were both wrong: utopianism is very deep-seated. It's a near unshakeable mindset in the West, being the core remnant of Christianity (Gray, 2007). Something would have to be refashioned, because an entire new elite was still in a different frame of mind from the rest of society. Sizeable numbers of those with a Leftist mindset had found positions away from the commercial ('capitalist') world: in education, the media, social services and government. The people now collectively redrew the picture of 'oppressed' versus 'oppressors' according to a predictably self-serving rationale; spiced or kick-started by what had filtered down from a few key political philosophers such as Herbert Marcuse, Michel Foucault and Erich Fromm, building on the work of the 'Frankfurt School' of cultural Marxism (Jay, 1973).

### **A recapitulation of a previous political crisis**

In the Britain of the 1980s a bigger and more influential elite, born of the 1960s expansion in higher education, was recapitulating what had happened in central Europe in the interwar years. It had become evident even then that the Soviet experiment was failing to compete economically with Western capitalism. Marxism had not brought about a widespread change of mindset at the time, so this was not a crisis for the man in the street. But it was indeed a crisis for intellectuals and those who were minded to put the theory to practical revolutionary test, because Marxism was an *economic* theory if it was anything. So an organisation was set up to develop a model of Marxism that could be applied in Germany and other European countries without encountering what had befallen the USSR. The Institute for Social Research opened at the University of Frankfurt in 1923. The name originally intended for it was the Institute for Marxism, to copy the Marx-Engels Institute in Moscow in dressing up Marxism as a science. But reference to Marx was expunged when it was decided that it served its purpose better if the Marxist inspiration was concealed.



*Max Horkheimer (front left), Theodor Adorno (front right), and Jürgen Habermas, luminaries of the Frankfurt school of cultural Marxism*

The 1920s were spent fruitlessly trying to resurrect Marxism as a viable economic force to rival Western capitalism. From 1930, the Frankfurters gave up and turned from socio-economics to an examination of the culture from which socio-economics grows or into which it has to be bedded down. This is where the 'critical theory' that is taught today in university humanities departments was developed. It is an extension of the Marxist idea of a dialectical critique designed not to find truth (as in Hegel) but to engineer revolutionary change. For doctrinaire reasons it had to be maintained that Marxist theory was basically sound, so it must be something else that is found wanting. As Raymond Raehn noted:

When these revolutionary opportunities presented themselves, however, the workers did not respond. The Marxist revolutionaries did not blame their theory for these failures. They blamed the Workers.

Now, although the theory was not found wanting (though very clearly it was, because the foundation of Marxism is the idea that it is historically inevitable) it was felt that capitalism must be in some way more insidious than previously thought. The reasoning went along the lines that if the people were to act according to the Marxist prescription, then somehow they would have to be provisionally liberated to allow them the freedom necessary to act according to what was (supposed to be) inevitable. The shift of ideological conflict from economic to social issues is an extension of the Marxist conception of all power being economic - itself a fundamental mistake - to the even more mistaken idea that all social interactions are invariably about 'power', and are therefore economic.

The whole enterprise exported itself to the USA in 1933 with the rise of Hitler, who was a direct competitor in that he had his own ideas about revolution that radically dispensed with the Marxist analysis of class warfare. There was no option other than exile, and here they could dedicate themselves in a comfortable if still more alienated ivory tower to indulge in the usual quest of thinkers in Western civilization: that of biting the hand that fed them. Now without any contact with reality, and a zest for revenging Nazism, the Frankfurters ascribed to Nazis a supposed distinct authoritarian personality that rendered all individual adherents psychologically unbalanced. This was



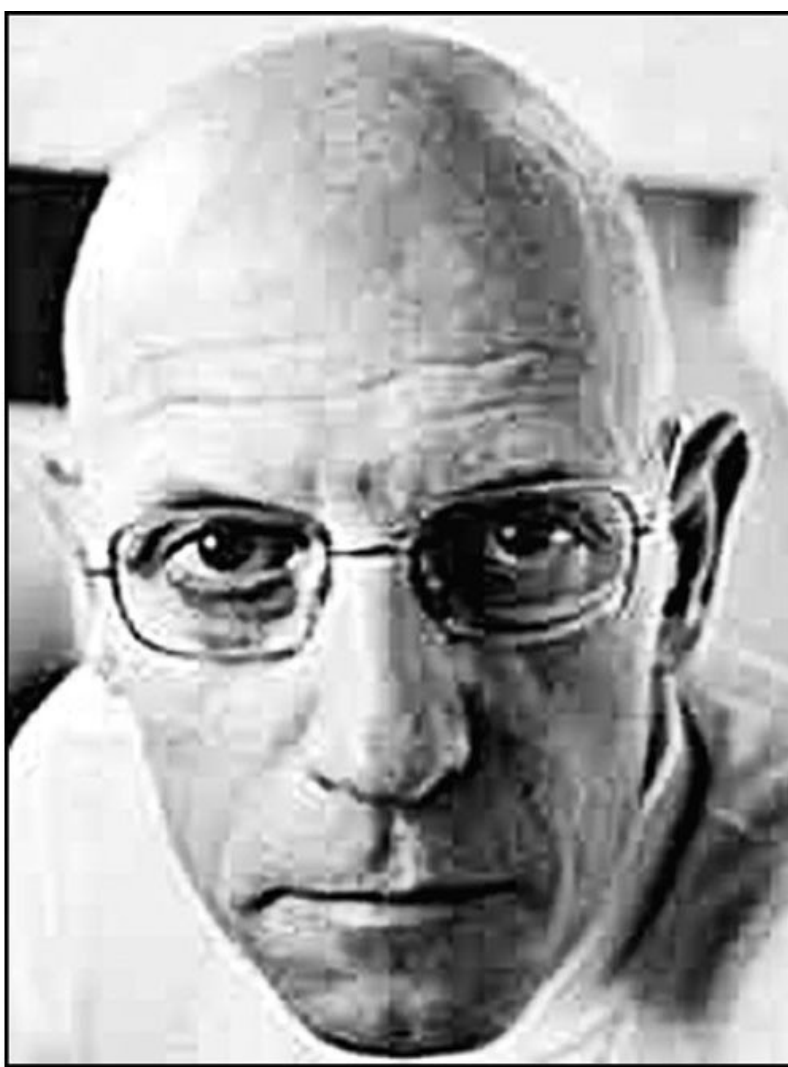
then applied generally to people living in western civilization as the answer to why the workers weren't revolting.

They used the only tool then available - and now long comprehensively discredited - Freudian psychoanalysis. This was the work of Erich Fromm, who was the pivotal figure to have broken from Marxist orthodoxy to look instead to culture and inter-personal relations (Burston, 1991). They were his ideas that underpinned the subsequent trajectory of the whole Frankfurt School, for all the internecine conflict would see him largely written out of the history (McLaughlin, 1999). The idea was that everyone supposedly was suffering from the Freudian 'repression' of early family experiences in childhood. Whereas Freud saw repression as aberrant and requiring lengthy sessions on his couch as a patient, the Frankfurters saw repression as inherent in all families within capitalist society. They were taking their cue from Marx and Engels, who had both decried the pivotal function of the family in 'bourgeois' society. If the family itself was seen as intrinsic to capitalist society, then since the Marxist analysis is that capitalism is pathological, then so too must be the family. (Of course, not only is there no evidence for the unscientific concept of 'repression', but the family is the universal building block of human social grouping and will arise no matter what kind of society is imposed or attempted. You only have to stop and think of the various extant non-capitalist traditional societies right down to hunter-gatherers, and the invariable failure of any form of 'commune' that revoked the family, to realise that the family can hardly be some invention of early industrialism.)

The key publication by the Frankfurt School was the book that put the seal on the wedding of Marx and Freud: Herbert Marcuse's *Eros and Civilization*. This was the main conduit through which ideas passed to the 1960s student rebellion, and the origin of the notion of total rebellion to bring about neo-Marxist nirvana of free sex and no work: 'a new civilization where work and productivity were unimportant'.

According to William Lind, *Eros and Civilization* was the book that 'put the match to the tinder'. University of Pennsylvania professor Alan Kors concurs that Marcuse was the key figure in the development of political correctness (Kors & Silvergate, 1999). He turned and returned consistently in his late writings to the subject of feminism, claiming that 'the Women's Liberation Movement is perhaps the most important and potentially the most radical political movement that we have'. Marcuse was a major inspiration to socialist feminism as he saw in it the promise of 'a socialism which could no longer be understood as a change in social institutions, but had to be deepened to include a vision of a change in consciousness and the very instinctual structures of human beings deformed by exploitation and domination' (Cerullo, 1979).

Meanwhile, Erich Fromm argued in his book, *Escape from Freedom*, that man's nature causes him to throw his freedom away and embrace fascism unless he 'masters society and subordinates the economic machine to the purposes of human happiness'; i.e., adopts socialism. In other words, man is intrinsically bad and needs a new society to make him good. No ideology with such a gloomy view has ever caused anything but grief. Just how a good society is supposed to emanate from universally bad people is never explained. It's a denial of the fact that morality resides within individuals, having been produced by the evolutionary process (Ridley, 1997). It's a misplaced faith in society as a supra-organism in which somehow the organisation, intelligence and indeed morality of humanity are supposed to reside, rather than in human beings themselves. The foolishness that underpins 'cultural Marxism' is just as you might expect from a fusion of the wishful thinking (historicism) and pseudo-economics of Marx with the psychobabble of Freudian 'psychoanalysis' - the two great unscientific armchair theories of the twentieth century mutually accommodated as if two platforms of ungrounded speculation could make up for each other's deficiencies.



*Michel Foucault, who traded in the neo-Marxist cause in favour of a depressive and sarcastic nihilism*

Fromm was perhaps the best known Freudian-Marxist, through his text beloved of students, *The Art of Loving* (and, for the younger generation in the 1950s and 1960s, his book *The Sane Society*). It was something of a bible for many students on the psychology degree I took in the late 1970s. They declared themselves to be Freudian-Marxists (in between vehemently denouncing the notion that intelligence is in any way heritable, in proto-PC style, or that inherent biological distinctions, especially sex - had any role at all to play in psychology). This unholy fusion aggressively assimilated the 'me-me' self-centredness that had grown out of the 1960s, and in the end developed into a form of extreme feminism. Fromm is one of the few members of the Frankfurt School who engaged directly with theorizing the problems of gender (sic) and the differences between men and women. Fromm anticipated later attempts to produce a feminist Marxism and poststructuralist analyses of the 'socially constructed nature of gender' (Kellner, n.d.).

Another notable Freudian-Marxist, who shared some common intellectual ground with the Frankfurt School, was Michel Foucault, who gave up the cause in profound disillusionment, developing the apathetic relativism with which we're all too familiar. Foucault was a depressive and sarcastic nihilist; his anti-humanism leading him to a theory of the insidiousness of 'capitalist' social 'power' that makes us control ourselves in the prison of our own minds. This he called 'micro-fascism'. He certainly captured the zeitgeist. Although Foucault made few references to women or the issue of sex in his writings, his treatment of the relations between power, the body and sexuality stimulated extensive feminist interest. His idea that the body and sexuality are cultural constructs rather than natural phenomena made a significant contribution to the feminist critique of biologic

‘essentialism’.

The feminism derived from the ideas of these writers went beyond the idea of destroying the family, to destroying any separateness between the sexes, and promoting the displacement of men in favour of a ‘matriarchy’. Once again this was taking a cue from Marx in his notion of ‘a community of women’ (as outlined in *The Communist Manifesto*). With the abandonment of the workers, the large constituency of the supposedly oppressed was deemed to be women. As recently as 1993, Frankfurt School member Wilhelm Reich claimed (in his book, *The Mass Psychology of Fascism*) that matriarchy was the only ‘natural society’. According to Raymond Raehn (Raehn, 1996):

Critical Theory as applied mass psychology has led to the deconstruction of gender in the American culture. Following Critical Theory, the distinction between masculinity and femininity will disappear. The traditional roles of the mothers and fathers are to be dissolved so that patriarchy will be ended. Children are not to be raised according to their biological genders and gender roles according to their biological differences. This reflects the Frankfurt School rationale for the disintegration of the traditional family.

Writing about multiculturalism in 1994, Richard Bernstein agrees:

The Marxist revolutionary process for the past several decades in America has centred on race and sex warfare rather than class warfare as in earlier times. This reflects a scheme more total than economics to restructure American society. As the social revolutionaries readily proclaim, their purpose is to destroy the hegemony of white males.

This revolutionary social programme, originating in the Frankfurt School of cultural Marxism, is now usually referred to as ‘political correctness’.

### **‘Political correctness gone mad’**

The idea behind political correctness (PC) and the ‘speech codes’ which are a principal embodiment of it, is that even-handedness merely preferences the powerful, so that when there are competing claims between questions of liberty and social equality, there needs to be a re-balancing in favour of social equality. Enter the idea of dismissing the individual and championing the supposedly disadvantaged group. It’s in a sense an appeal to utilitarianism (an ethics based on the happiness of the greatest number) writ large and is diametrically opposed to the (original) Anglo-American liberal tradition (the word liberal is derived from *liber*, Latin for ‘free’). This is before American liberalism became contaminated by cultural Marxism and ended up decidedly illiberal. (To a certain extent the rump of English liberalism was protected by the existence of an avowedly socialist party.)

Imagine there is at issue the liberty of an individual - who belongs to no sub-group deemed by PC to be disadvantaged - then no matter how serious the liberty issue may be, if competing against this the social equality question regarding a disadvantaged sub-group of society (no matter how slight the disadvantage); then the sub-group is always championed and the individual is always undermined. The sub-group deemed disadvantaged by PC in any instance could be (and usually is) embodied as another individual. So it is just a contest between two individuals; but one will have PC on their side, and the other will have PC as an enemy. The outcome is automatically pre-judged.

This individual, victimised not by being deemed so by PC but actually made so by PC - that is, oppressed by PC - may be simply a guest speaker who is prevented from taking to a platform, or, more usually, self-censors what he/she was going to say. This is an issue of free speech, and important more in principle than in any dire impact personally. But it may be that the liberty question is much more serious, such as the proper examination of facts in a trial, where this individual faces the possibility of long-term incarceration. The principle is the same.

You can see why adherents of PC can use twisted logic to then consider this system beyond criticism. But it is one thing to adopt the absurd premise of treating competing claims to rights in the way that PC does; it is quite another to unquestioningly accept a list of forms of disadvantage that ensure status as disadvantage, which then automatically sorts all individuals within society into either someone PC must support or someone PC must 'decapitate' (the word often used). The crazy logic of PC's adherents completely falls apart as soon as there is any error here. In fact, the dire consequences of making an error is at the root of why all societies have the very checks and balances that PC purports to render obsolete. The point is that PC has made exactly such a profound error regarding men-women, as this book explains and details.

Political correctness seeped into the American university system, actually taking hold firmest in the more elite institutions, and by the time anyone saw that the pursuit of knowledge itself was being fundamentally undermined, it was past reversing. As T. Kenneth Cribb confirms (Cribb, 2004):

Though some pundits have claimed that the prevalence of the ideological intolerance known as Political Correctness has been exaggerated, the opposite is closer to the truth...(the university environment is) dominated by suspicion that is far more intense than anything spawned by anti-Communist Senator Joseph McCarthy in the 1950s.

At root, PC is an attempt to bring about a political goal by pretending that it is already a *fait accompli* - the ultimate elision of 'ought' and 'is'. It involves lying about what pertains in the present in order to bring about what is supposed to be inevitable: it's what philosophers call 'teleology masquerading as politics.

For example, because it's held to be axiomatic that men and women are identical in all respects, then the existence of any sex difference is denied. Inasmuch as the sexes are as yet not identical, it is presumed that they will soon be so; and it's therefore deemed important not to reinforce supposed stereotypes for fear of delaying the 'inevitable' change. Conversely, any sex difference must be amplified, to portray it as the supposed oppression of women that the making identical of men and women will erase. This is not just in the case of sex differences too apparent to disguise: anything that highlights the oppression of women must be exaggerated, however slight it may be. PC is nothing but self-contradictory.

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Most definitions of PC are more to do with how it presents itself on the surface. Anthony Browne take in his book *The Retreat of Reason* is that it is: 'an ideology that classifies certain groups of people as victims in need of protection from criticism, and which makes believers feel that no dissent should be tolerated.' A liberal heresy whereby an argument is put forward not for its rationality but for its appeal to emotion (especially the feeling of virtue of those making the argument); it's at its strongest when this involves the suppression of any opinion that is at odds with PC. In a nutshell, it

‘the dictatorship of virtue’. This would be bad enough if the virtue was real, but - as the present book reveals - the supposed virtue PC promotes is itself far worse than a vice. The picture PC paints of disadvantage and oppression is not merely false, but regarding the sub-group that PC most despises (men) it’s the diametric opposite of the reality.

In his book *Institutional Injustice*, Martin Mears, an ex-president of the Law Society, claims that political correctness is the mindset that has taken over most of the establishment, including the judiciary. PC is usually dismissed jokingly as some sort of irritating zealotry, but of little practical consequence. This is because the great majority of people still don’t know what PC really is or where it came from. The term itself was inherited from Soviet Russia, where it dates back at least to the 1930s, and meant ensuring that the comrades kept to the party line. Indeed, Khrushchev employed it in his famous ‘secret’ speech to denounce Stalin. This reads very ironically today: ‘Instead of providing his political correctness and mobilizing the masses, he often chose the path of repression’ (Khrushchev, 1956).

PC was picked up and used in earnest by the ‘New Left’, before being used sarcastically by some portions of the Left in the 1980s. It was only subsequently that it acquired a new lease of life as a term of derision by conservatives in the 1990s. So the notion that PC had a recent conservative origin - even the term, let alone the actual political philosophy it denotes - is clearly in error. The notion gets merely one-line mentions in oft-cited newspaper articles by Will Hutton and Polly Toynbee, and there is a distinct paucity of scholarship regarding this claim, even within the most extreme confines of academia (a handful of critically savaged or highly partisan articles and books in the previous decade that dismiss critics on the grounds that PC is beyond criticism: Wilson, 1995; Scatamburlo, 1999; Schultz, 1993; Messer-Davidow, 1993).

Such is the ignorance of the origins of political correctness, using the term PC is often portrayed as a *Daily Mail* backlash - ‘political correctness gone mad’ - which is a deep irony, in that PC, as we have just seen, is itself a backlash against the failure of economic Marxism. And this is not simply the case of Left-leaning intellectuals trying to deny the depths to which their own philosophy has descended, because PC has evolved from the grass-roots as well as from intellectuals, to produce what is as much an emotional attitude as it is a documented creed.

### **Looking up from the pavement**

The top-down analysis of Mears, Browne, Lind, Raehn and others is mirrored in the view from the bottom up. Those who grew up through the 1970s and ’80s, will have matured in synchrony with the emergence of an acrimonious politics, that was ‘personal’ right down to the provincial pavement. Extreme feminism (along with virulent ‘anti-racism’) became an oppressive presence that could entail direct persecution of individuals by self-appointed bigots. There was a widespread flavour of frustration, but this seemed less to do with the reversal of extreme politics after the defeat of Labour (and, later on, the withdrawal of Labour patronage from extreme feminist and other movements), and more to do with a ferocious self-righteousness - a personal self-consciousness of membership of a sub-group that could claim to be oppressed.

The aspect of the intellectual polemic that many ordinary people picked up enthusiastically is that whereas classical Marxism saw history as all to do with the ownership of the means of production, ‘cultural Marxism’ had a different one-dimensional account of history - i.e. which group has power over other groups. Any member of any group identified as a subgroup by virtue of ‘gender’, sexu-

orientation, ethnicity or disability, automatically had victim status. It was as if all social life and social history mirrored the experience of the black slave under the white slave-owner. This was the perfect excuse for failure, at the same time as it provided a passport to a new social life as a confirmed member of a new club, and even a focus for turning frustration and anger into a legitimate perpetration of abuse. Most could place themselves in a supposedly disadvantaged sub-group, but a particular could trumpet an 'I'm more egalitarian than you' moral supremacy on behalf of others. Starting in single-issue organizations, college clubs, local Labour Party ward and constituency associations etc., these people took their acquired prejudices into the workplace.

Until the end of the 1970s, asserting the interests of the ordinary working man was the cliché resolution of any pub argument about social justice. But the 'working man' seemed to be immune to change, even when spearheaded by a vaunted student elite. So now the attitude of the would-be revolutionaries transformed into a far wider phenomenon to give up as a hopeless cause the acquisitive and relatively affluent worker, who had consistently failed to 'rise up' when he had the chance. Now, in the eyes of an ever-broadening swathe of the politically minded, he would be lumped together with the bosses in the ranks of the oppressors.

The wannabe revolutionaries had, after all, come through the universities at the time when students were seen as the new vanguard that could prod the quiescent workers to wake up to their subjugation. At that time the workers were regarded in a not dissimilar way to how women used to be - and many ways still are - seen: as being in a state of 'false consciousness'. They had to be liberated from themselves as much as from the system. At the same time, because so many like-minded people had taken refuge within the various organizations of the state, the state came to be seen as not the creation of the bosses that had to be replaced, but the new instrument of social change.

As this generation moved on to fill roles that were supposed to be those of 'oppressors' - albeit much less so, for some reason, than in the commercial sector - then the desire for self-justification demanded that the whole rationale had to be pushed still further. The complete jettisoning of 'the workers' from any consideration within the 'progressive project', left a vacuum where previously ordinary people had been thought of as victims of 'the system'. The vacuum came to be filled with easily identified subgroups in the wake of the American civil rights movement (that itself could trace its origins to the anti-slavery coalition), starting with blacks and other ethnic minorities. Then the focus shifted decisively to women. (This was a reprise of what happened in the nineteenth century in both Britain and America, when the anti-slavery campaign begat a women's rights movement. Because women were half or more of the population, then the 'progressive project' thereby restored to majority status the 'oppressed'; albeit according to a new definition, and in respect of a completely different group of individuals. In former days, the main question would have been one of class; middle-class women would not have been included. No more. The new perspective was very much for women of the middle class, so women had to be regarded as homogenous, even though conspicuous they are not.

In this roundabout way, the oppressed were redefined as non-male or non-white (or non-heterosexual, or non-able). By default, white male workers need not apply to join the ranks, no matter how low a class to which they belonged. (For a study of the jettisoning of the 'ordinary working man' by the politically-correct intelligentsia see Michael Collins, *The Likes of Us: A Biography of the White Working Class*.)

It is a testament to the emotionality of the shifts in intellectual analysis that a similar process had happened in the minds of ordinary if politically-minded people. Highfalutin' texts mirrored the general feeling of those who would be the willing cogs in a new state machine. So it is that the political work

in which we now live is a bizarre inversion of what it was only, say, three decades ago; with over socialism now residing in a nostalgia zone akin to 'the summer of love'. The main body of the workforce, then as now, are men (because men work full-time and continuously, whereas women still typically work part-time and/or discontinuously, if at all). Instead of being handed the control of the means of production, as Marxism demanded and predicted (indeed purported to guarantee), working men have been falsely demonized as a mass of oppressors. The state has become a growing parasite on those who do the real commercial labour on which all prosperity depends. In a fantastic form of double-speak, the state's quack form of Marxism imposes an economics that does not merely 'oppress' workers, but now intervenes in private family life to the extent that the workers' own families have been effectively sequestered for the state's own use. And sexual life as well as male family life is subject to unwarranted intrusion in what is a quantum leap of oppression.

Social work is perhaps the pivotal area, because the staff here are at the interface between government, academia and people in families. This is not some articulate and powerful elite but mostly ordinary lowly professionals. The dire situation in social services has been documented from the inside by Ken McLaughlin (McLaughlin, 2004):

Mirroring the demise of the political left, social work's move from a macro to a micro critique of social power meant that more and more attention was being paid to interpersonal relations. For radicals who had become disillusioned with the prospect of change in a wider political sense, the workplace provided an opportunity to continue their political mission and ease the radical conscience...Gradually there was a move away from seeing the State as problematic to seeing interpersonal relations as the site and source of conflict. The personal was very much political, and being 'anti-oppressive' had become a 24/7 job. You were either anti-oppressive or oppressive.

For all its talk of empowerment, anti-oppressive theory betrays contempt for the masses, whose behaviour and thoughts do not match current middle-class ideals. Its conflation of words and action, public and private, political and personal in social work theory has provided the authorities with ever-increasing justification for intruding in people's lives.

The extent of the backlash (against PC) is exaggerated....It is rare for the criticisms actually to be addressed - especially the charge that new forms of social work are illiberal and intolerant, in imposing speech codes or increasingly intruding in the private realm....Most importantly, talk of a PC backlash overlooks how these 'radical' theories and practices are now embraced by most sections of the British establishment. It is not only the social work profession that talks about endemic, institutional or unwitting racism - the police and judiciary are just as likely to use such language.

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Post hoc attempts to justify the *real* backlash - the Marxist redefinition of 'class' in response to the defeat in the economic sphere - have failed to provide any tenable theoretical support. Men and women are separated by no criteria that fulfil sociological notions of class. Biologically, the idea that male dominance is inter-sexual (men over women) is absurd, so there can be no such thing as male 'power' over the female - this is a major point at issue that I will be discussing in chapter three. What we suppose to be some historical glitch whereby a garden-of-Eden type sex equality has been temporarily usurped by - quite what, no-one seems to know - is a chimera.

The whole edifice rests on a vague imagining of an overarching description of masculinity, both within and without individual men, whereby somehow women are victimised. This is the ghost in the machine of society that somehow gave rise to 'patriarchy'. No mechanism for this has ever been tendered, let alone tested empirically, for the reason that researchers well know that nothing of the kind does or could exist.

This is a classic paradox. A man who ceases to be an ordinary pro-social man and descends into criminality is deemed himself to be a victim of 'patriarchy'.<sup>[2]</sup> He is deemed merely sick, and for reasons outside of his control. A criminal must not be viewed as being intrinsically wicked, or he will be impervious to the social engineering of the state (social engineering being, after all, the raison d'être of the state). So we get the attitude that male criminals are essentially quite decent, while ordinary male citizens (the collective perpetrators of 'patriarchy') are the real criminals. This is what the psychiatrist Charles Krauthammer identified as: 'the vast social project of moral levelling'. He explains:

It is not enough for the deviant to be normalised. The normal must be found to be deviant. Therefore, while for the criminals and the crazies deviancy has been defined down, for the ordinary deviancy has been defined up.

Normal, middle-class (male) life then stands exposed as the true home of violence, whilst regarding the places where it is actually rife - on the streets of damaged communities - excuses are made for social disadvantage.

There is also a more sophisticated take on this whereby men are thought of as simultaneous intrinsic agents of 'patriarchy' and passive victims of it at the same time - as part of some imagined cybernetic feedback loop. This is handy because, as soon as the faulty reasoning begins to be exposed there is the flipside retreat to the position that it is not men themselves who are being attacked but the abstraction of 'patriarchy'. The notion of 'patriarchy' really is just a convenient fig-leaf to avoid the charge that the rhetoric is always directly attacking individual men and/or the mass of men. It's the perfect cerebral gulag. From the spirit of the 1960s that Ian MacDonald brilliantly analyzed as *Revolution in the Head*, we have now come to the 'oppression in the head' of our contemporary totalitarianism - a Foucauldian self-fulfilling prophecy.

What is not argued is that men are held to be incapable of transcending 'patriarchy', whilst the 'system' continues to be itself that of 'patriarchy'. So although it is their political duty to attempt the impossible feat, only when the agents of political change - non-men (all women plus non-white non-heterosexual or non-able-bodied men) - have fulfilled their supposed revolutionary destiny, can men begin to live their lives in a non-'patriarchal' manner.

So pervasively has PC penetrated the establishment that there is almost nobody prepared to gainsay it; most people see PC as just a problem of the political classes and the 'metropolitan elite' being completely out of touch through their own self-interest. Not understanding the origins of PC - despising the masses for their apostasy - the complaint is that if only those who 'rule' us could get closer to the people, then all would be well.

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Was ever a situation so set up for a fall? Perhaps there will be just a gradual dawning followed by 'what was *that?*' inquisition, but could there be rapid implosion? Once the blindfolds with which the



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